



Stepping through the Open Door

John Armstrong's painting of a surreal landscape is the kind of place one might imagine in a dream. It makes us wonder about all the strange things we might find if we stepped through that door and went exploring...

In this activity, we'll show you how to make your own open door and populate the land beyond with whatever you like, from the bizarre to the everyday – or a mixture of both!

John Armstrong, *The Open Door*, 1930, Oil on canvas, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (On Loan from a Private Collection, 2004) © The Estate of the Artist



Materials you will need:

Cardboard (any old box or packaging will do)
Glue stick
Masking tape or sellotape
Scissors
Ruler

Pencil
Pictures you can cut out from magazines, catalogues, old books (but first check you are allowed to cut up the books!)

How to make it



1. Draw a wall and door on a piece of cardboard. Don't make it too small - this one is about 25-30 cm wide.



2. Cut out the cardboard shape.



3. Paint the door and the wall surrounding it. You can copy John Armstrong's design, or make up your own design if you want to.



4. Cut out the door. Turn over the cardboard wall and tape the door along one side to form a hinge.



5. When the door is opened it acts as a prop that stops the wall from falling over.

Now it's time for the really fun bit. Page 2 shows you how to make the scenery and figures to go behind your door. Make lots of characters and scenery to play around with.

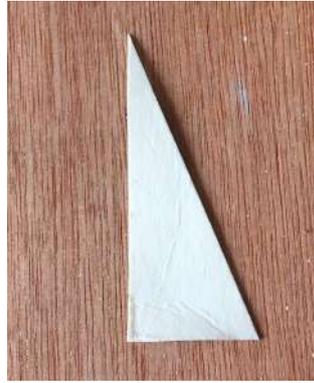




6. Choose a picture of something you want to put behind your door. Cut it out roughly and glue it onto some thin card.



7. Cut round the picture carefully. Cut the bottom of the picture flat (red line), so it will stand firmly on the floor.



8. Cut a small triangle out of card.



9. Tape the triangle to the back of your picture - now it will stand up on its own.

This is a side view showing the set-up behind the open door.



As well as the scenery and figures which stand up behind the open door, we have put some coloured paper on the floor.

If you have a spotlight or torch you can play around with lighting your set-up and photographing it in different ways.



Here are some of the worlds we have created behind our door...

