

## Dancing Houses

Bendable Paper Sculpture  
in the style of James Rizzi

Part cartoonist and part Picasso, the art of Brooklyn-born James Rizzi (1950-2011) is highly recognizable. His playful, brilliant images — in a style he described as “Urban Primitive” not only produced 3-dimensional sculpture, prints, and paintings, They also adorned postage stamps, a shopping mall dome, a line of popular German automobiles, and a jet. In the United States, Rizzi is most widely known as being the official artist of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

In Europe, the “Happy Rizzi House” of Braunschweig, Germany, is a block of offices designed to bring to full-scale the Rizzi style of painting buildings. Wild angles, expressive faces, and pop-art hearts, stars, and flowers bring life and personality to an inanimate structure.

Students will enjoy making a classroom cityscape of fun and fabulous construction paper buildings. An extremely simple wire armature beneath allows the structure to be playfully positioned — almost as if it were dancing. This project provides a lesson in movement as design principle.

**GRADES K-8** Note: instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.



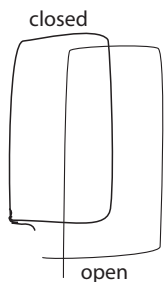
### Grades 5-8 Preparation

1. Cut wire into 36" pieces. Need four pieces for each student — 12-ft total.
2. Cut construction paper into 6" x 16" pieces.

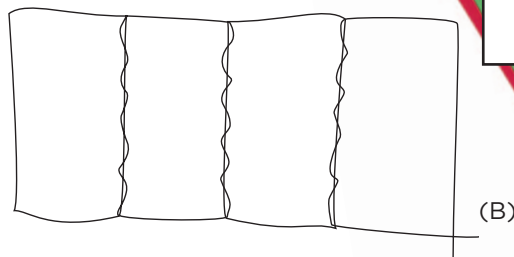
### Grades 5-8 - Process using wire

1. On a piece of newsprint, draw a rectangle 12" high x 5" wide. Using this as an outline guide, make four wire rectangles, closing only one of the shapes by wrapping the ends at the corner, see (A).
2. Lay another wire rectangle at the side of the closed one and connect them by wrapping the open long side around the long side of the closed rectangle.

Continue until all four rectangles are joined and only one is left open, see (B).



(A)



(B)

### Materials

**Blick<sup>®</sup> Sculpture Wire**, 14-gauge, 350-ft spool (33400-1435); share one among class

**Pacon<sup>®</sup> Tru-Ray<sup>®</sup> Construction Paper**, assorted colors, package of 50, 18" x 24" sheets (11406-0099); need one sheet per student

**Aleene's<sup>®</sup> Quick-Dry Tacky Glue**, 4-oz (23884-1104); share among 3-4 students

**Blick<sup>®</sup> Premium Grade Tempera**, pint; share at least four colors; recommend:

Black (00011-2006)  
White (00011-1006)  
Fluorescent Color 6-pack (00011-0049)

**Blick<sup>®</sup> Studio<sup>®</sup> Newsprint**, 9" x 12", 50-sheet pad (10311-1043); need one sheet per student

**Blick<sup>®</sup> Economy Camel Brush Cannister**, 120 assorted (06220-1120); share one among class

**Holbein<sup>®</sup> Watercolor Atomizer Bottle**, 2-oz (02912-1003); share 4-5 among class

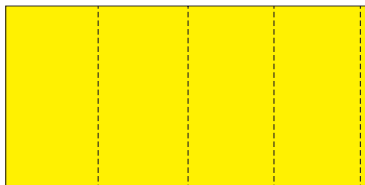
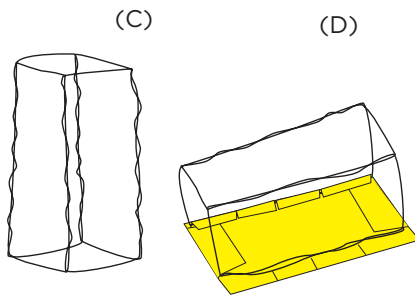
### Optional Materials

**Crayola<sup>®</sup> GelFX Markers** (21257-0089)

**Scotch<sup>®</sup> #810 Magic Transparent Tape**, 1/2" 36-yd roll (23012-0050)

## Process, continued

- Bend rectangles at 90° angles to form a box shape, see (C), and close it by wrapping the last open wire.
- Lay the wire box on a piece of 6" x 16" construction paper. Beginning with the top and bottom (short sides), cut paper up to the wire and fold around it. Secure with tape or glue. On the long sides, make four small cuts up to the wire on each side, fold each over the wire, and secure with tape or glue, see (D). Repeat on opposite side.
- Glue remaining construction paper sides onto the wire at top and bottom, then onto the first two sides.
- Allow the glue to dry, then use a spray bottle to wet the inside and outside of the paper box. Use enough water to cover the paper, but do not saturate so that it runs off and forms puddles. Allow to dry. The paper will shrink slightly and make a tighter fit on the wire.
- Using fluorescent tempera, paint "Rizzi-style" imagery. Give the house plenty of personality!
- Bend the wires to give the house movement.



## Grades K-4 Preparation

- Give each student a full 12" x 18" sheet of construction paper.

## Grades K-4 Process

- Fold the paper in half. On one of the short ends, fold a small piece over (about 1/2") and make a crease. Fold each side in to the middle fold and crease again, see (E).
- Paint designs or use gel markers while the paper is lying flat.
- Make sharp creases on the folds. Fold or tape edges together to make box/building.



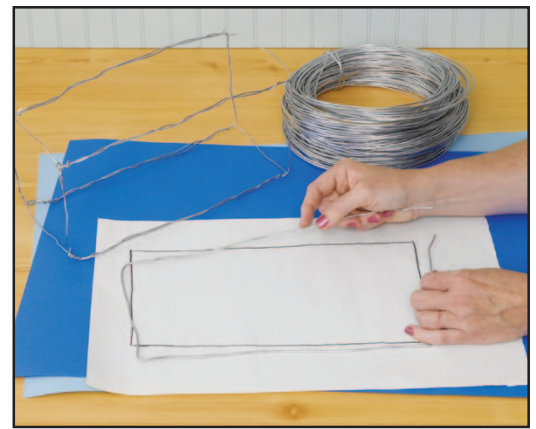
## National Standards for Visual Arts Education

**Content Standard #3** — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter

- K-4** Students explore and understand prospective content for works of art.
- 5-8** Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks.

**Content Standard #5** — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- K-4** Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art.
- 5-8** Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry.



**Step 1:** Bend wire into rectangles for walls. Join walls together to create a house frame.



**Step 2:** Glue paper to wire. Spritz with water to make the paper shrink slightly and provide a tight fit.



**Step 3:** Paint designs using tempera colors. Bend the wires to give the house movement.