Morecambe Mini Illuminations

Welcome to the Morecambe Mini Illuminations. In our workshop you'll be conceiving, designing, constructing and wiring your own Blackpool-style illumination. You can optionally animate your design, programming an illumination sequence using the python language.

Conceiving your idea

Your personal design can depict anything you want, but take account that your piece will be presented alongside work from previous years, in a family-oriented show.

Successful designs in past years have often been very simple, for example;
- ***animals and plants*** : flower, mushroom, fish, frog, duck, elephant, heron catching a fish
- ***iconic objects*** : rainbow, sun, heart, guitar, sugar skull, rocket, umbrella with falling rain
- ***cultural references***: 'Route 66' sign, Pink Floyd album, *Bazinga* from Big Bang Theory
- ***words:*** 'Love', 'West End Best End'
- ***animations:*** balloon blowing up then popping, clown juggling balls

Having a lot of identical designs can make it hard to compose the exhibition, and will minimise the chance of your design being selected as a feature-piece in future years. *Please come up with something we haven't already got in our collection*, unless you have a new spin on the design you want to explore. Speak to the organisers if you want to check your idea doesn't duplicate one of our 50-plus existing community illuminations.

Designing: How to build

Our illuminations are crafted by glueing card baffles to a board, creating separated areas which you will paint different colours. We drill holes and put matching coloured LED lights through the board to correspond with your painted colours.

Illuminations are fundamentally **line-art** made from simple illuminated shapes. _You can only illuminate light colours_ - brown and midnight blue won't work. Your design has to work against a black background (the night time). You will normally paint a black background to match.

If you are skilled at sketching, you can draw line art 'freehand'. However, this guide proposes two other ways to get your line art.
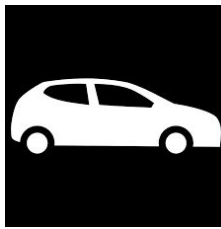
- _Googling for Images_
- _Colour Cutouts (recommended)_

See later in this document how artwork produced by Googling or Cutouts can be digitally projected, so you can trace the lines for the walls in pencil.

Designing: Googling for Images

If you are looking on google for example imagery, use the word 'icon' and choose the simplest possible shapes.

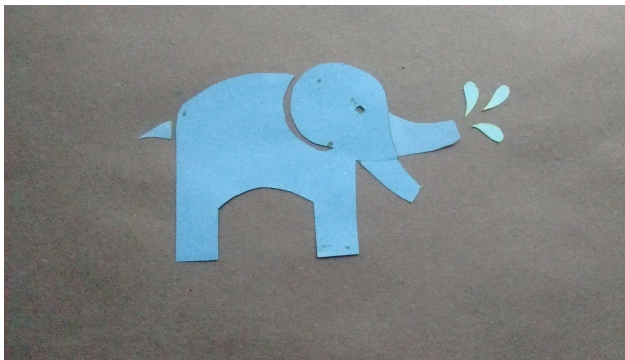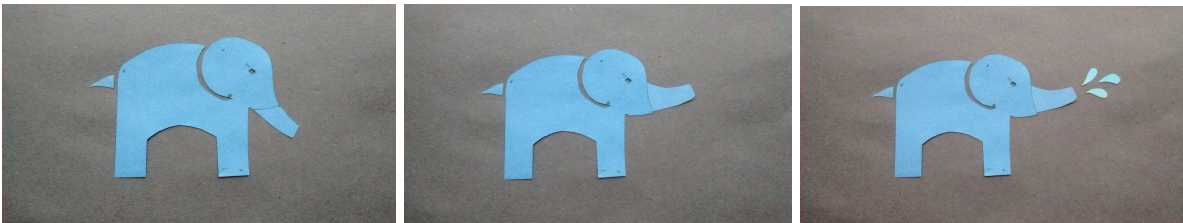|	
Here are some results from searches for *car vector* and *car icon* which are suitable.	
The designs below have elements which would be too detailed to transfer directly, or have black lines on the outside but you could use them as inspiration or rework them.	
The designs below are impossible to use and it's hard to see how they could be reduced into simple shapes which would still be recognisable.	

Designing: Colour Cutouts

A recommended technique is to use scissors to cut shapes from coloured paper and place them on a black background, like the elephant below. This does three things…

- ***Restricts you to the limited colour palette available***
  - 6 colours: Red, Green, Blue, Yellow, Purple, Pink, Cool White, Warm White
- ***Proves your shapes are simple enough***
  - If cutting out with scissors would be hard, change your design!
- ***Supports animation experiments***
  - Create stop-motion animations by taking pictures, moving or removing cutouts. At the end, place all the pieces back to figure out where walls are needed

Digital Projection

Images downloaded from the web, or photo-animations of your cutouts can be digitally projected onto the wooden board, and you can draw around them with pencil to create trace lines to glue the baffles.