

Art Activity

Create your own Guitar!

Take & Make: Guitar

Ages: 6+

Collection:

Culture/Region: American

Subject Area: Fine Arts, Visual Arts

Activity Type: Hands-On Activity

Create your own guitar inspired by guitar legends like B.B King!

The guitar is a stringed instrument that gained popularity throughout the 18th century as the industrial revolution and factory production made guitars more accessible and more affordable.

The Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 gave African Americans some measure of freedom of movement and was a catalyst for Black musical creativity. Black music and singing served as a form of expression throughout the South. Community-made music continued and African American string bands evolved. Within the Black community, the guitar became a prominent instrument in ragtime and jazz. Moreover, in the deep south, the guitar played a critical role in the creation of the blues and legends like B.B King.

By the 1900s, guitars were produced using steel strings and low-cost woods such as birch and oak. As guitar sizes increased and the “cone” style, also known as a resonator guitar where one- three cones amplified the strings, was replaced with a contemporary heel design that we see today. Southerners embraced the use of picks to create new styles of music.

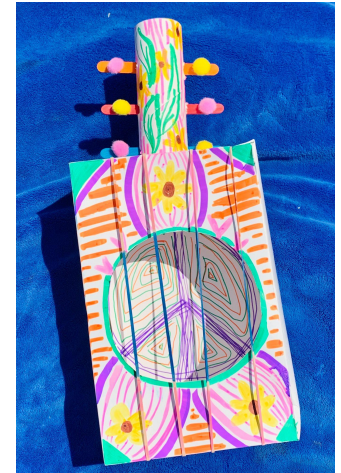
Now it's your turn to create! Follow the directions below to construct your own guitar!

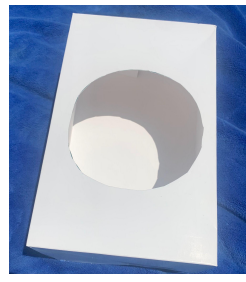
Materials:

- Cardboard tube (paper towel inner tube)
- Rectangular cardboard box (empty cereal box or shoe box)
- Tape
- 5-6 rubber bands
- 3 Popsicle sticks
- 6 pom poms
- Scissors
- Paint, crayons, or markers
- **Optional:** Construction paper, decorative paper

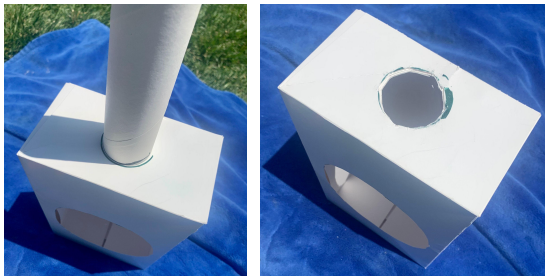
Creating your own Guitar

1. Use an old cereal box or any rectangular shaped box that can be recycled.
2. Trace a circle on the top side in the center, about 2-4inches from the bottom edge. Use the scissors to cut out your circle. Ask an adult for help with this step.





3. Use the tape or glue to seal your box along the open edges.
4. Using a recycled paper towel tube, place the tube on the top end of the box and trace the circle. Use the scissors to cut out this circle. Ask an adult for help with this step.



5. Use the scissors or a pencil to create six holes, three on either side of the cardboard tube, spaced about 2 inches apart. Make sure the holes line up on either side of the tube.



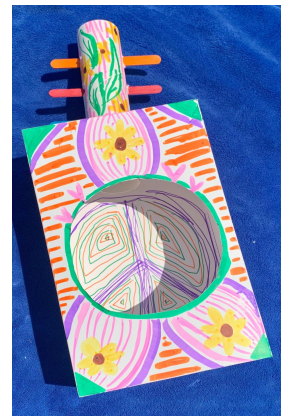
6. Slide a popsicle stick through each set of holes on the cardboard tube.



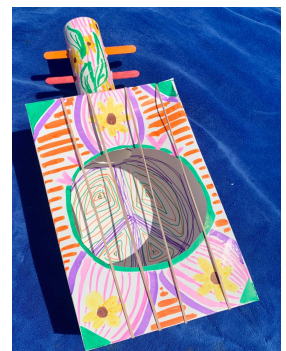
7. Gently slide the cardboard tube through the top circle. Use tape to secure the tube in place.



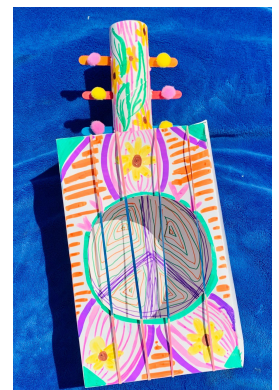
8. Use crayons, paint or markers to color and design your guitar, inside and out.



9. Stretch the five or six rubber bands over the top to the bottom of the box. You can also make small cuts along the top and bottom edge to serve as grooves to hold the rubber bands in place. Consider coloring your rubber bands strings.



10. Glue one pom-pom to either side of the popsicle stick. Once the glue has dried, grab your new guitar and play it like B.B. King!



Explore More at VMFA!



Three Folk Musicians, 1967

[Romare Bearden, American, 1911 - 1988 \(Artist\)](#)

American

Collage of various papers with paint and graphite on canvas

2016.336

<https://www.vmfa.museum/piction/6027262-100554113/>

"Art, it must be remembered, is artifice, or a creative undertaking, the primary function of which is to add to our existing conception of reality." —Romare Bearden

Romare Bearden noted that the work pays homage to a scene he often witnessed at his grandmother's boardinghouse in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: "After supper the boarders would sit in front of the house and talk, or play checkers, or plunk out 'down home music' on their guitars." With hand-painted papers and pieces of magazine

photographs, the artist composed a group portrait of two guitarists and a banjoist, honoring the jazz and blues music that inspired African American artists—and modernists in general—beginning with the Harlem Renaissance half a century earlier.