

Performance Masks from South Asia

In South Asia, cultural performances with dancers wearing masks are very popular. Typically, these brightly colored masks are made from wood. The masks and the dance performance are part of important rituals. The masks below are from the South Asian countries Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. Follow our directions on the next page to create your own mask, inspired by these beautiful examples. This activity is brought to you by Krishnapriya, a teaching artist with the [South Asia Center](#) at the University of Pennsylvania.



The [Lakhe](#) performance is a ritual dance performed in Nepal. The mask and the costume worn are brightly colored.



In Bhutan the [Cham](#) dancers use performance masks representing different animals. These masks symbolize saints, sages and protective deities.








In Sri Lanka, there are three different kinds of masked performances. [Kolam](#) is a storytelling performance. [Sanni](#) is a ceremonial performance to heal people from illnesses. [Raksha](#) is a festive performance.

This Sri Lankan mask is from the Penn Museum Collection. Can you see the carved figure and the snakes on either side?



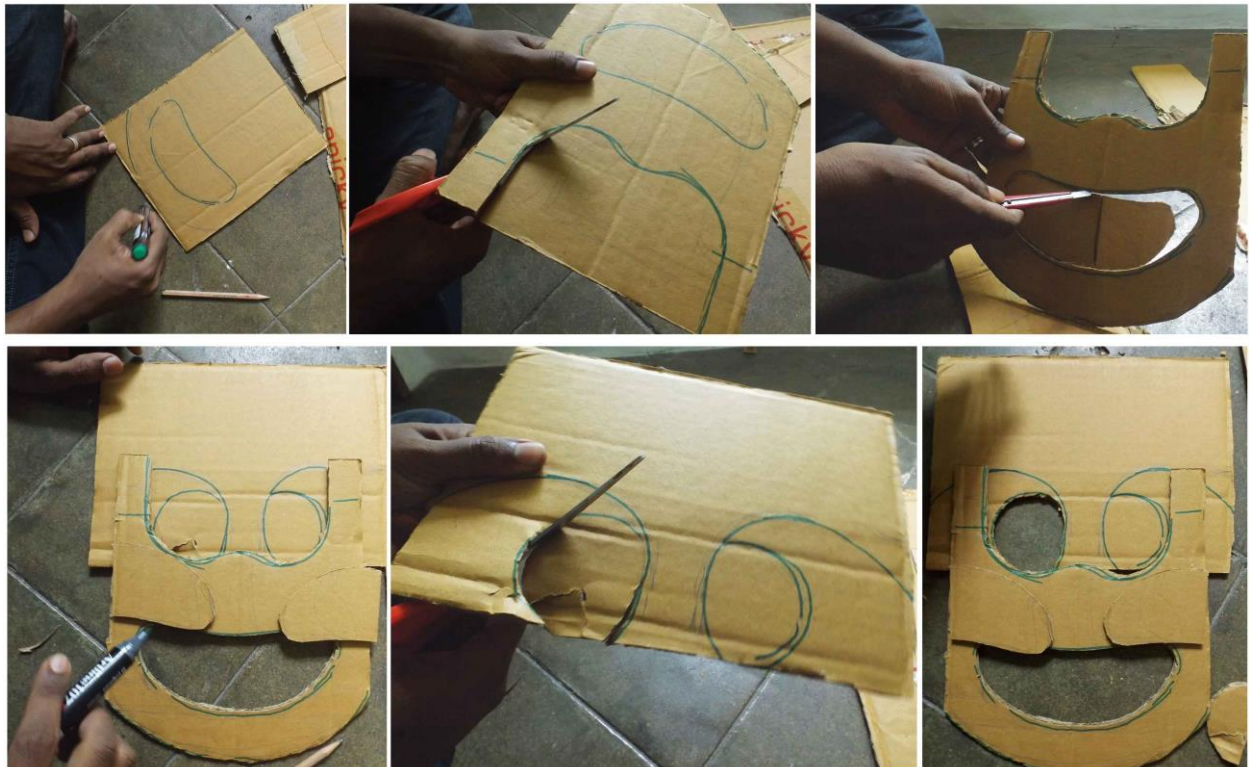
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MATERIALS:

Cardboard 	Pencil or Marker 	Safety Scissors 	Paint and Brushes 	Paper 	Glue 	Elastic or String 
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DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1: Draw the shape of your mask on the cardboard with a pencil or marker. You can use simple shapes for the mouth, eyes, nose and cheeks. Using a pair of safety scissors cut out all the shapes.

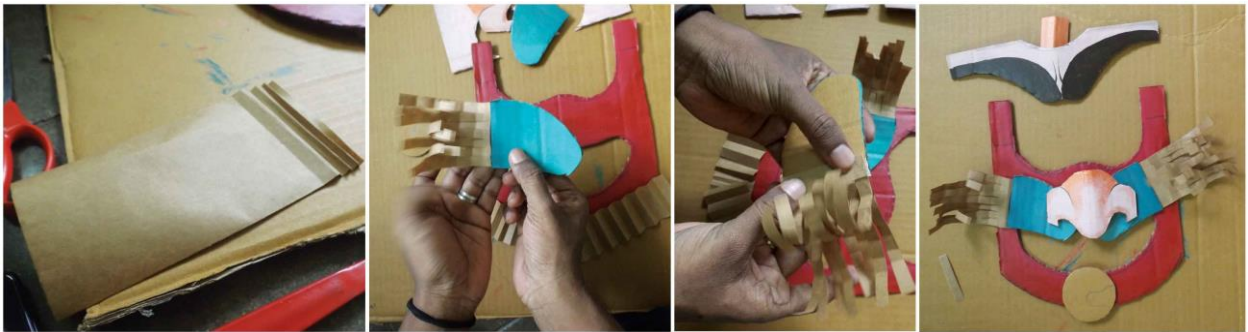


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STEP 2: Paint the shapes in different bright colors.



STEP 3: Using thin paper you can cut out patterns to stick on your mask.



STEP 4: Use glue to attach the shapes to your mask together and add any final details. You can attach a string or elastic to the mask to keep it secure on your head.



Now you are ready to perform with your mask!