ART-i-play 8: Papier-Mache head

**You’ll need:**

* Paper-bags, newspapers, magazines, scrap-paper, tissue papers
* Wallpaper-paste or PVA glue
* Masking tape
* Scissors or craft-knife
* Old brush
* Small tub or jar.
* Paints
* Materials

**Method:**

1. Scrunch up torn-down papers.
2. A bigger sheet can be used to make the outside shape, a round shape for the head with the open end twisted to make a neck.
3. Use masking-tape, or sticky clear tape to tie the shape in more solid form.
4. Protect your table with party-plastic sheet, or an open black bag. To make up wallpaper paste follow the instructions about pouring the powder into a pot of water, stirring a lot. For PVA, you can get big pots in hardware shops. Pour some in a jam jar and thin to milky/ creamy liquid.
5. Newspapers can be torn into strips which are best torn still smaller. Brush glue on the surface of the head. Put it in a pot or jar to keep it still. Brush on the small pieces, always overlapping, changing direction.
6. Get an idea where eyes, and nose will be… You can press in where eyes will be, and pinch out for the nose. At least three layers will make the shape solid when dry. Eyes are started with a cut into the pressed areas, and noses are built with added laters of paper pressed onto the raised area. Eyeballs are strips of paper folded over until they make a ball-shape. They are pressed into the cut for each eye. Lids can be formed, and smoothed into the surrounding area, the dark pupil round can be bored with a brush- handle when the paper is dry.
7. For the nose, strips are stuck together, folded at the bridge, and folded down for the nostril area. A paintbrush handle can bore the nostrils when paper is dry. For the mouth, the bag covered with three layers become the teeth. Lips are paper strips that are folded several times from one side, to make little snakes, placed around the teeth. These are then build with small strips into the face. When dry, the scissors or craft-knife can shape the lips, tucking them in over the teeth.
8. Layers of newsprint, covered with unprinted paper, including tissue to facilitate painting.
9. Last tissue overlays are good for lips, lids and wrinkles.
10. Paint with acrylic colours, or poster, gouache with good covering strength. Old scourer is torn and cut to shape for top hair and facial hair.
11. Wrap the head in papier-mâché, bore a hole in the neck-base, with liberal amounts of glue poured in find a suitable mount - a wooden rod, metal screw, plastic tube. The mount is driven into this hole, and further papier-mâché wrapped around. This takes an hour or two to harden fully.
12. Another view of the head.
13. With this last picture, the head on its metal spindle has been joined to its plinth. Younger artists should seek adult assistance with this stage. I drilled a deep hole using first a bit smaller than the screw, then rebored with a large diameter bit, less deep. The head is very stable.