

MAKE YOUR OWN

MINI MONSTER

I'D ♥ SOME FRIENDS!

HI! I'M LEXY HO-TAI
(SHE / HER)

I'm an **artist, educator** and **goopey human**. In my work, I often create monsters to explore the question: **What does it mean to be human?**

Every day, we put on our human suits -- but, underneath, we all have so many layers! We have so many emotions, so many facets to our identity... Monsters come in all kinds of forms, and can express different parts of ourselves!



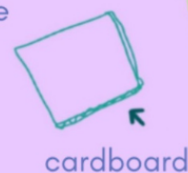
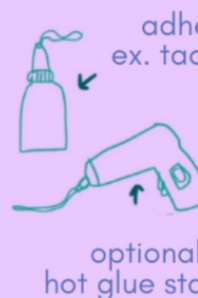
MY MONSTERS TAKE ON A WHOLE RANGE OF FORMS...

...from public art monsters, intended to spread play and joy...

...to creatures I've created to sit with difficult feelings, such as grief and heartbreak.

This will guide you through making **your own mini moldable monster**. To me, monsters are about celebrating self-expression, identity, and giving a face to the difficult-to-name parts of ourselves.

MATERIALS:



+ PLUS !!! ANY OTHER MATERIALS YOU HAVE LYING AROUND! THIS IS THE PERFECT PROJECT TO USE ANY SCRAPS/MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS YOU HAVE LYING AROUND!

FUN FACT:
IN MY WORK,
I MOSTLY USE
FOUND + RECYCLED
MATERIALS!

FOR
EXAMPLE...



+ MORE!

STEP 1 - BRAINSTORM

Come up with lots of ideas, and see what feels right for you! It can be helpful to check in with yourself before starting. How are you doing? What do you want to express today?

A possible prompt:

What part of yourself do others not usually see?

For example:

- an emotion you're feeling
- an insecurity or fear
- a part of yourself you wish to bring into the world.



STEP 2 - FINALIZE SKETCH

Which monster feels right for you? What are some key characteristics of your monster? Create a final sketch of your monster. Look at the materials available to help inspire the design.



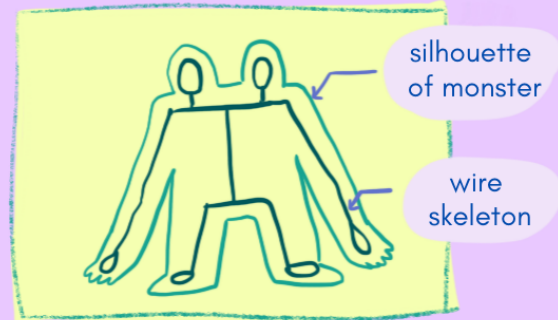
KEY CHARACTERISTICS:
GREEN, NURTURING,
GROWTH

REMEMBER ★

Your final monster may not look like your sketch (in fact, that can be part of the fun!), but start with an intention. Allow for change and play!

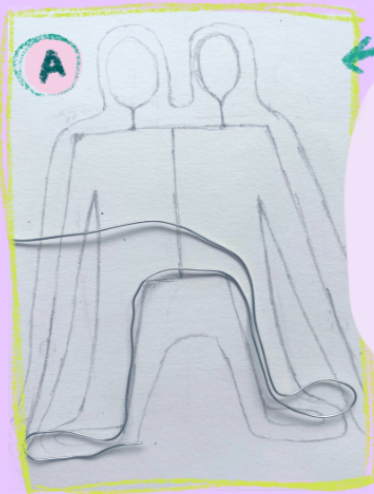
STEP 3: TECHNICAL SKETCH

Draw the outline of your monster to scale. Within the silhouette, draw the wire skeleton. Imagine the different parts of the monster that needs a skeleton: legs, torso, arms, head. This is like a pattern or map for you to work with.

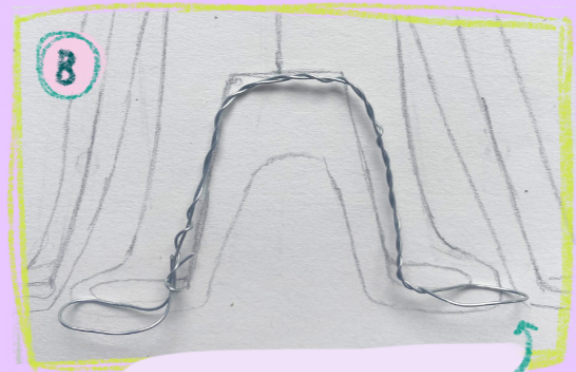


STEP 4: BUILDING THE ARMATURE

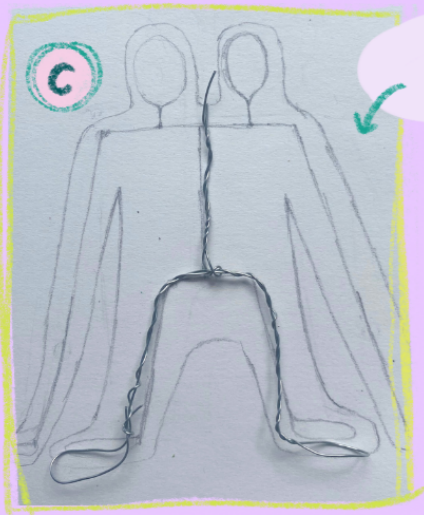
Using your drawing as a guide, build the wire armature. The exact steps will vary based on the shape of your monster. I'm outlining what I did for mine - adjust yours accordingly.



Create the armature in parts. I am starting with the legs, measuring the wire so it's about double the length of the legs and creating loops for the feet.

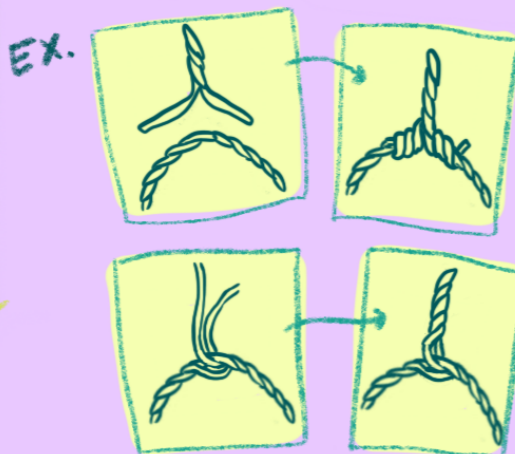


Twist the wire around itself for extra strength.



Build out torso. Use the same idea: measure the wire so it's about double the length of the torso, and then twist it around itself. It's better to have a little extra wire than not enough.

Note: there are different ways to attach the wire parts.



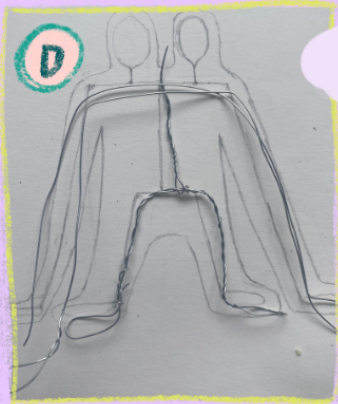
Option 1: Leave extra torso wire at the bottom, and then twist it around the legs.

Option 2: Pull torso wire through the twisted wire of the legs, and then twist it onto itself.

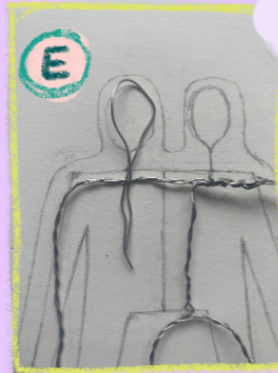
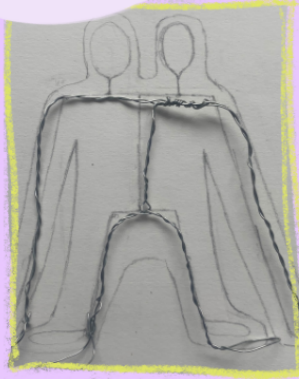
Experiment and see what works best for you!

STEP 4: BUILDING THE ARMATURE. CONT'D

Continue building out the armature for the rest of the body, breaking it down into parts.

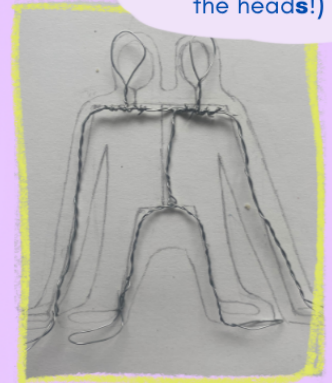


... the arms



... the head

(or in my case, the heads!)

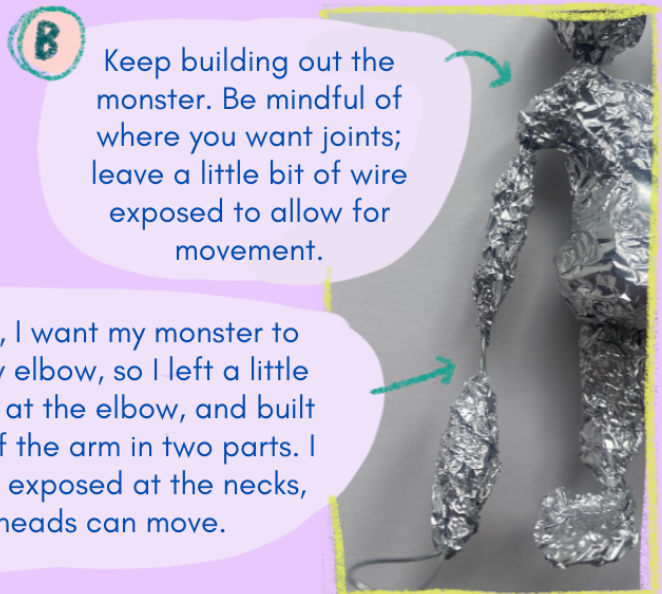


STEP 5: CREATE THE FORM

Time to add form to the skeleton. Use tin foil to sculpt out the monster, building in layers.



Begin by reinforcing wire attachments with tin foil.



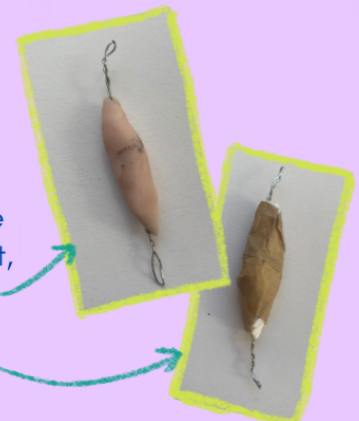
Keep building out the monster. Be mindful of where you want joints; leave a little bit of wire exposed to allow for movement.

For example, I want my monster to have a bendy elbow, so I left a little wire exposed at the elbow, and built out the rest of the arm in two parts. I also left wire exposed at the necks, so the heads can move.



Ta-Da! The form is complete after many layers of tin foil.

Note: You can also use other materials to sculpt, such as air dry clay or crumbled paper + masking tape.



STEP 6: MAKE YOUR MONSTER STAND



Pay attention to how your monster stands.

This is particularly helpful if you're planning to do stop motion. Glue wide, cardboard feet onto the bottom of your puppet. Optional: I've also glued on small rocks for extra weight.

Wide cardboard feet + rocks for extra weight

STEP 7: ADD SKIN



Cover the tin foil with a base layer.

This can be done in a few ways, such as wrapping fabric or gluing paper onto the monster. Be mindful that the joints can still bend.

STEP 8: DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS ♥



My favourite part! Time to really bring your monster to life by adding on the details – the more, the better! Experiment with different materials and characteristics. Who is your monster?



Chocolate Wrapper

Sticks + Leaves



Soda Can,
Paper, Bead,
Fabric

CONGRATULATIONS! ♥

YOU'VE BIRTHED A MONSTER!

Get to know your being: *Who are they?*
Where do they live? How are they feeling?
What do they love to do?



OPTIONAL: STOP MOTION ANIMATION

Stop Motion Animation is an animation technique where objects (like mini monster puppets!) are moved in small increments and photographed at every step. When played back, they appear to move. This is a fun way to *really* bring your monster to life! Here's a brief overview to get started with stop motion.



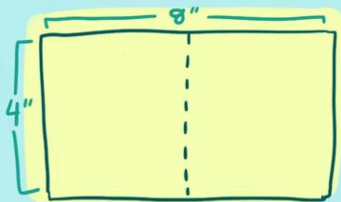
Film stills

I recently created my first film with stop motion animation components, "Home is a Ghost." It's a slow process, but very rewarding to see the beings come to life!

STEP 1: MAKE A PHONE STAND

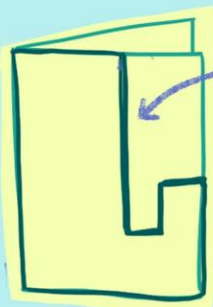
There are many ways to make a DIY phone stand, or you may already have one. This is a simple one with just cardboard!

- A** Cut a rectangle out of cardboard. Approx 8" x 4". Fold in half.



Fold here

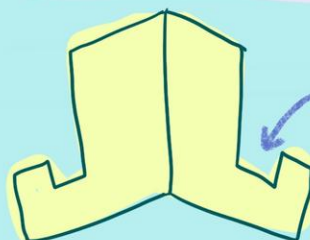
- B** Draw shape similar to this on one side.



This line will determine the angle the phone sits at. I find having it pretty straight is best for stop motion - but see what works best for you.



- C** Cut the shape out on both sides and test it out! Make adjustments as necessary.



Phone sits here

STEP 2: SET UP YOUR SHOOT



A simple, white backdrop.

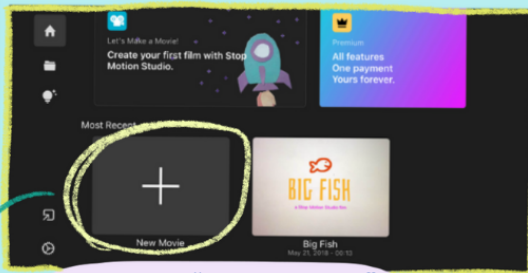
Create a space for your animation. When getting started, a simple background may be easiest. But you can build a whole world around your monster! Think about the set, environment, props, etc. Set up the camera to see how it looks in the frame.

For my film, I created tiny chairs and a table as props. I added fabrics to the background for more texture.

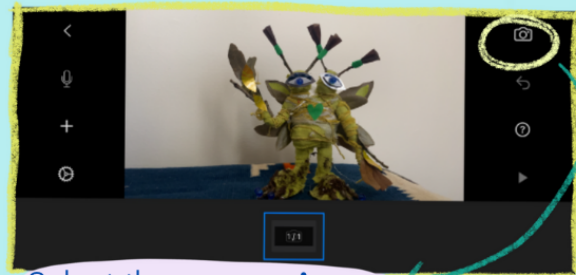


STEP 3: PLAY + ANIMATE!

There are many stop motion animation apps for phones. I'd recommend **Stop Motion Studios**, which is a free and simple app. There are many tutorials online that will give you a more in depth look at how to use it, but here's an overview to get started.



Create a "**New Movie**"



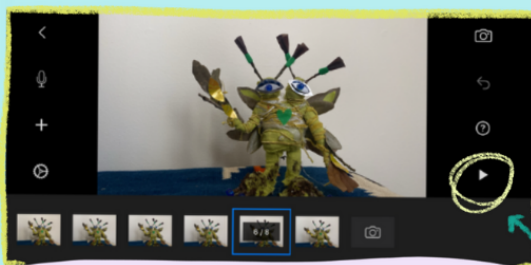
Select the **camera icon**



Take a **photo!**



Adjust your **transparency**. This will give you an "onion skin" (a faint ghost of the previous image) to help guide your movements.



Move your monster slightly, and take another photo. Keep doing this! Press **play** to see how it's looking.

Yay! That's the basics of animating! You can play with other features of the app, such as adjusting the frame rate (faster or slower), adding captions, adding music/ sound, etc.

Play and have fun!

THANK
YOU ♥
SO MUCH FOR
YOUR INTEREST!

If you make a mini monster, please send me photos - this would make my day!
for more, I'm on the internet: lexyhotai@gmail.com | lexymakesthings.com | [@lexymakesthings](https://twitter.com/lexymakesthings)