

# Cardboard Robot

Inspired by Nam June Paik's *Untitled [Bakelite Robot]*, 2002

## Key Concepts

- Materials and process
- Repetition
- Sculpture

## Materials

- Nine cardboard boxes of similar size
- Images of TV sets cut out from magazines, or draw your own so they fit on your cardboard boxes
- Pen or pencil
- Glue dots, glue, or tape

## Introduction

- What was the first thing you noticed about this artwork? Why do you think you noticed that first?
- What things do you recognize in this work? What things seem new to you?
- Does anything you have noticed in this work of art remind you of something in your own life? If so, what are you reminded of?
- This work is made out of vintage radios. How many radios did the artist use? Are the radios exactly alike? How are they similar or different?
- Describe any challenges the artist might have faced when making this work. What do you see that makes you say that?

## Instructions

1. Gather nine cardboard boxes of similar size. Make sure they are all taped shut.
2. Cut out images of TVs from magazines, printed off the internet, or drawn by hand. Glue one image to each box.
3. Draw an image on each screen—they can all be the same image, as in Paik's work, or different ones. (Another option: cut a hole in each box where the "screen" would be, then affix a drawing inside the opening, OR place a smart phone, iPad, or other electronic device inside.)

4. Stack your boxes into a humanoid form—pose it in any way you'd like.

5. Use glue dots, glue, or tape to attach the boxes to one another.

## Relevant Information

Nam June Paik was born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1932, and died in 2006 in Miami Beach, Florida. He is known as the “father of video art,” which brought together art, music, performance, and technology in new and playful ways. His influence is still felt in art, pop culture, music, and film today.

In 1963, Paik began visiting Tokyo regularly to study color television and robotics. This was the beginning of his interest in the connection between technology and the human body, an interest that would last the rest of his life.

*Bakelite Robot*, a sculpture constructed from nine vintage Bakelite radios, is one of the last pieces Paik made. The radios are joined together in a humanoid shape that includes a head, torso, arms, and legs. The dials on four of the radios have been removed, creating hollow circular spaces into which LCD television monitors have been inserted.

## Discussion

- What pose is your robot taking? Why did you pose your robot in this way?
- What image or images did you include on your robot's TV screens? Why did you decide to draw what you did?
- If your robot could speak, what would it say?
- What did you title your work? How did you decide on that title?