

# Hardboard Frame Ornaments

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It's quite a few years since I spotted this hand-painted ornament on line. I fell in love with it, and since at the time I was making ornaments for our newly-established Looney Tunes tree, I just had to try making my own version.

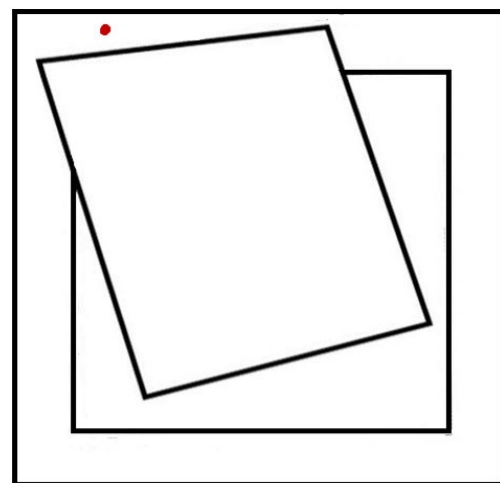


I did, and -- Wow! -- I was hooked. I really like the quirky vibe of the crooked frame, and immediately made eight for the LT tree, plus a whole bunch more. Now I'm back at it!



My Daffy version is made from hardboard, cut out on the scroll saw. To make it, I used the template below, sized to about 3" and printed on paper. I cut it out, then used a pencil to trace the shape onto a piece of hardboard.

I cut out the square frame using my bandsaw, then made the interior cut on the scrollsaw (I had to drill a hole for the blade before I cut out the middle). I was kind of out of practice on the scroll saw when I made the first ones, so my cuts weren't perfect, but fortunately the imperfections don't show too much when the ornament is painted, and it will still be attractive on the tree. (As in everything, practice makes perfect; my technique improved somewhat after I cut the first half dozen).



Naturally I couldn't stop with just these: since I completed the first few, I've made dozens more, with a host of themes and variations.

Once the ornament shape had been cut and lightly sanded around the edges, I drilled a small hole to accommodate a hook or string for hanging (at about 3/4" from the edge, or at the position indicated by the red dot on the template). Then I wiped the ornament with a tack cloth to remove any sawdust residue.

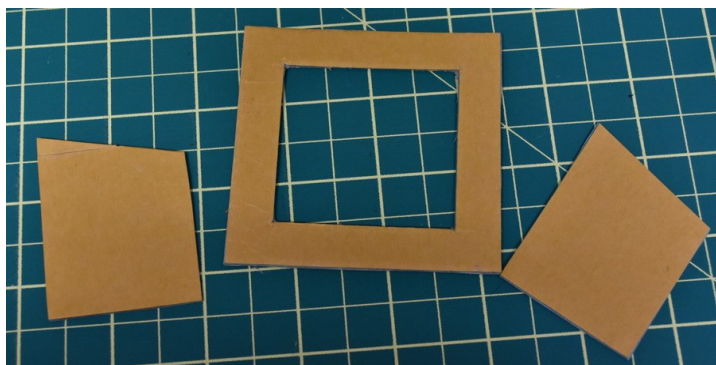
With acrylic paints, I painted the frame section one colour and the image panel a different colour, choosing them to coordinate with colours in the image. After painting, I set the ornament aside to dry for a half hour or so.



I used decoupage images, which I printed to approximately 1 5/8" wide (about 1.63") and trimmed to fit nicely into the image panel of the ornament. I used podgy to glue the images in position on back and front, and then finished the entire surface with a coat of podgy to seal the image and to provide a little bit of shine. Then I set it aside overnight to cure.

Once the ornament was thoroughly dry, I applied a bit of glitter glue to the frame portion, coordinating the colour of the glitter with the colour of the paint on the frame. I love the extra glitz it adds to the ornament.

Although my first versions of the frame ornaments were made on the scroll saw, I have since made these ornaments using laminated layers of lightweight cardboard instead. (I cut out all the pieces before gluing them together.)



The cardboard ones are a bit easier to make since all you need is scrap card plus a good craft knife or pair of scissors. They are painted and finished exactly the same way as the hardboard versions.



Making the frames from cardboard has another advantage, as well: Since the frame and the two image boards are cut as separate pieces, they are more defined and easier to paint, and because the boards are glued on top of the frame, they lend a bit more dimension and visual interest.

I experimented a bit with the frame shapes as well: these rectangular ones featuring family badges and crests look great on the tree! And the separation of the image boards means I can easily alter the size and positioning of the image or the thickness of the frame.



Once the paint and glue have dried fully, these cardboard ornaments are just as sturdy as the hardboard versions. They are also light enough to hang on any tree branch.

I kind of like the idea of making these from cardboard since it's so easy to work with and since it gives me a chance to recycle some of the waste cardboard we seem to have around.

The frames lend themselves to just about any theme, from cartoon characters to children's books to favourite bands.



I even made this one using an image of one of my mum's paintings.



I've been toying with the idea of making some Cape Breton themed ones for the shop where Gwen volunteers.



It looks as though there are lots of themes still to be explored, and lots of fun still to be had in the local chapter of Santa's Workshop.