NEWS

Clearly original: Packing tape became the medium for sculptors entering a 3M-sponsored contest.

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Move over, papier-mache.

There's a new three-dimensional artistic medium, used by everyone from school kids to edgy artists, that you probably can find in your kitchen drawer. It's packing tape.

Packing-tape sculptures have been pioneered by Mark Jenkins, a Washington, D.C., artist, who has attracted an international following for making casts of his own body with clear packing tape and then making unauthorized installations of the life-sized figures on the streets of Rio de Janeiro and Washington.

Since he started doing this in 2003, Jenkins estimates he's gone through thousands of rolls of packing tape. His product of choice: Scotch Premium Performance Packaging Tape.

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Most recently, Scotch Brand sponsored the first Off the Roll Tape Sculpture Contest.

The contest drew 136 transparent, sticky entries from around the country, ranging from the whimsical to the surreal, including a packing-tape version of Rodin's "The Thinker," a complete office cubicle including desk, chair, computer, coffee cup, lamp, calculator, mouse and mouse pad all made of tape, a packing-tape Michael Jackson, a packing-tape fetus inside a packing-tape womb, and several monstrous packing-tape creatures like a six-legged human with a deer head, a two-headed boy and a lobster cyborg.

"A lot edgier than you would imagine for Scotch packing tape," said Toby Nelson, a 3M spokesman.

The grand prize winner was Elizabeth Lee, a graphic design student at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, for her depiction of an oversized goldfish inside a clear plastic bag the size of a garbage sack.

"Any kid would get excited about a giant goldfish pet the size of a Christmas ham, right?" said Lee, 21, of Spring Valley, Wis., in her description of the work.

Lee said the goldfish, her first stab at packing-tape sculpture, was modeled after her own pet fish, Jiminy.

"If that's the first thing she tried, it's pretty amazing," said Jenkins, one of the judges in the contest.

Lee said she plans to use the $5,000 prize to pay for college expenses. She also got a case, or 36 rolls, of Scotch Premium Performance Packaging Tape.

"If anyone's moving, I'm pretty sure I'm going to donate tape to them," Lee said.

Another prize-winner was "Surprising Guest," a depiction of a falling angel, by Fu Young Ng of St. Cloud.

Ng, a 24-year-old graphic design major at St. Cloud State, said the angel was cast from the body of a skinny friend.

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To see more packing-tape sculptures, go to www.offtherollcontest.com or www.tapesculpture.org.

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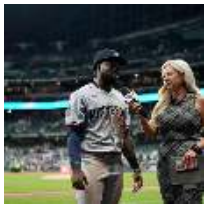
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