



Mark's Place

<http://www.markbsplace.net/SubPages/hall-cage.htm>

Hanging Cage Halloween Prop How-To

Actually this came about more as an accident than anything. Always on the lookout for cheap stuff for the garage the wonderful folks in the halloween-I newsgroup turned me on to the Anatomical Supply Company which was selling 1/2 sized skeletons for \$15. Not wanting to pass it up I picked up a couple without even really thinking it through. When they arrived, they were TINY! about the size of a 3-year old. That is the body is the size of a 3-year old, the skull is about the size of a cat's. Still, they were great looking, fully posable....there had to be something interesting I could do with them.

Thinking about the way I plan the garage to look, I realized I wanted some more "attraction" power out front, to get the people walking by interested enough to walk across the street or down the block to my garage. Thinking of the Time Bandits movie (and probably dozens more) I thought of placing the skeleton in a hanging cage, like a locked away child.

Concept

Having the concept in mind, I started playing with ideas that were cheap. Using PVC (plastic sprinkler) pipe as the "bars" seemed obvious at the start, but I also wanted it to come apart or at least fold up for storage. Plus it had to hang correctly.

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Omarshantedtrail.com



Eventually I came up with the plan below. Its not perfect but it is cheap and seems to work ok. Construction details are below as well as a picture. When I have it all dressed up (and the skeleton painted, with legs and in shredded clothes) I'll get another picture.

Construction Details

I purchased a 2x4 foot sheet of 1/8" particle board for \$5, cut it in half and used the pieces for the top and bottom.

Measuring the pipe height (by gut feel) I cut out 12 identical lengths - pipe runs pretty cheap, this is about \$2. Then glued on end-caps and painted them all grey.

I cut 12 holes in the bottom big enough for the pipe but not for the end-cap. That way the bottom (floor) of the cage simply rests on the end-caps as you can see in the picture above.



For the top I really wanted a chain. So I came up with the idea of using pipe T's and running a small chain through them. The chain was the cheapie \$.50/foot at OSH. Then I simply press-fit the pipes into the T's so I can remove them after halloween and it will all collapse. You can see a close up of the chain going through the T's to the left.

To link the chain I just wired 2 links together, same with the 4 pieces that go up to the hook.

My biggest problem was getting the top of the cage to stay. Gravity won't keep it there like the cage bottom. I toyed with the idea of putting spacers in the pipe so the top could rest on them, but in the end, I just drilled the holes a bit bigger

so the T actually went through the hole (instead of the pipe) and glued each T to the wood. Use a dollop of epoxy for the gluing (see Gotcha's below)

Storage is easy, the top piece of wood with chains and glued-in T's is all one piece but the bars pull off the T's and the bottom comes off so I end up with a small pile for the storage area.

Gotcha's

The first go around, I used the cheapest 1/16" particle board but it ended up being too thin and bowed under the weight. I also used the full 2x2 foot square for the top and bottom which made the bars too far apart. The size that seemed right to me was a 5" distance between the centers of the bars.

I used hot-glue to stick the T's to the top but it didn't stick to the PVC pipe T's. Next time I'll use a blob of epoxy on each one to keep it in place.

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Omarshauntedtrail.com