

Exploring Function and Making a Working Lamp

Inspired by the exhibition *Electrifying Design: A Century of Lighting*

Time: 1.5 hours

Difficulty level: High

Messy level: Medium



The exhibition *Electrifying Design: A Century of Lighting* (on view through May 16, 2021) celebrates lighting devices—innovative, practical, delightful, and fun. Over the past 100 years, the field of lighting design has been a catalyst for technological and artistic expression. Inspired by Martine Bedin's *Super Lamp*, this activity will guide you in exploring how to design and create a colorful and functioning 3-D lamp using very simple materials.

Above: Martine Bedin, manufactured by Memphis Milano, *Super Lamp*, designed c. 1978, made c. 1980s, fiberglass, enamel, steel, rubber, and 40-watt incandescent bulbs, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, museum purchase funded by the Design Council, 2020, 2020.71, © 1978 Martine Bedin

The exhibition *Electrifying Design: A Century of Lighting* is organized by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

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To view a hi-res image of the work, visit the [MFAH Collection online database](#).

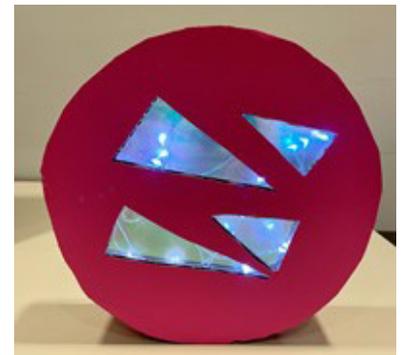
Investigate the Work of Art!

1. What makes Martine Bedin's *Super Lamp* innovative?
2. What features of the lamp are similar to lamps that you have at home?
3. Would you consider this lamp to be decorative or functional? Why?

Gather These Materials

- Cardboard sheets
- Battery-powered LED fairy light string
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes
- Water cup
- Plates for paint
- Wax paper, tissue paper, cellophane
- Hot glue gun
- Stapler
- Box cutter
- Cutting board
- Scissors
- Glue stick (optional)

To purchase some of the recommended art materials, visit [dickblick.com](#).



Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

1. Find a clear spot at home with a hard surface to work on.
2. Gather supplies.
3. Think about the design of your lamp. What shape, color, and size do you want it to be?
4. Next, using scissors or a box cutter, cut your cardboard into two matching shapes to make the front and back of your lamp.
5. Cut shapes or slits into your front piece to allow light to shine through.
6. Cut 2-inch strips of cardboard to act as the border or walls of your lamp.
7. Paint the front, back, and sides of cardboard.
8. Glue cellophane to the back of your front piece.
9. Once the paint and glue are dry, assemble your lamp by completing the following steps.
 - a. Lay the back piece of cardboard flat on the table. Staple your fairy lights to the interior of the back piece, remembering to allow the on/off switch to extend out of the lamp.
 - b. Hot glue your border to the back piece of cardboard, leaving a tiny gap for your on/off switch to extend out of the lamp.
 - c. Hot glue the front piece of cardboard onto the border.
 - d. Hot glue the on/off switch to the back of the lamp, making sure to leave the screws accessible for replacing batteries.
10. Add any finishing touches to the lamp such as colorful details.