

BALLOON GONDOLA

CENTERPIECE INSTRUCTIONS

BY ALICIAN PEARCE

The following is my interpretation of the centerpieces for the 2019 NAME Online Houseparty. I hope you take the instructions and make one of your own. And I hope you do your own interpretation of the idea too!



I went to one of my local thrift stores and found a basket. I found one in a size that I liked. It wasn't too big and not really small. Your basket will be a different size, so I am doing general instructions on how to make patterns and such to fit the basket that you picked out. First thing is to get rid of the wooden design and the handle.



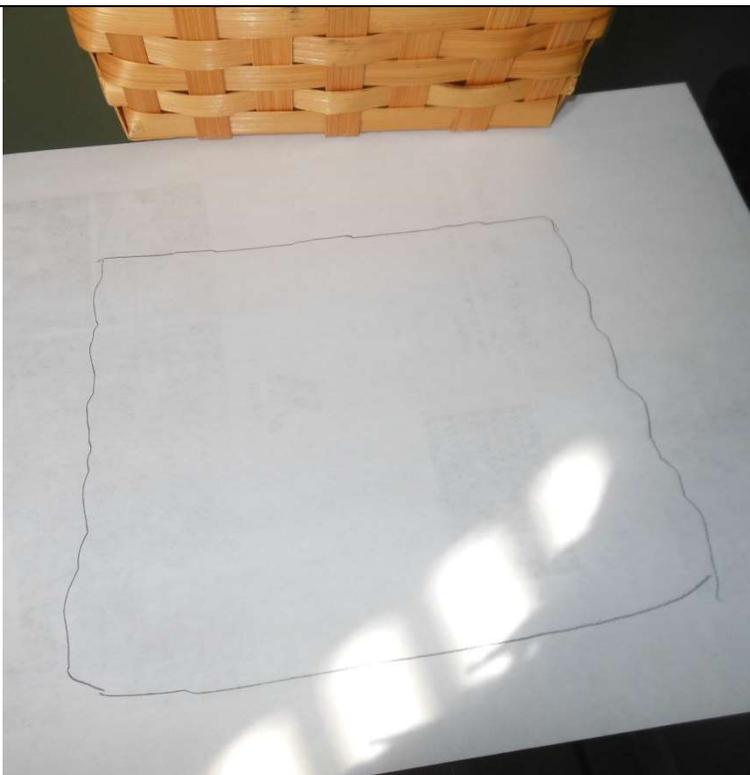
The handle just unscrewed and the wooden design was just stapled onto the basket. A few tools and the both popped right off!



Next, it is time to cut out the window in the front of the basket. I first smeared glue over where I wanted the opening to be to prevent basket weavings from unraveling. Let this dry completely.



When the glue is dry, roughly draw your opening. When you are satisfied, use a craft knife with a fresh blade and cut the opening. Do not try to do it in one pass, you will have to make several passes to get all the way through the basket. You might even want to use a Dremel tool if you have a really thick basket. See photo below. As you can see, I made sure to cut where the glue is.



Next, we are going to make the patterns for the walls and the floor. Start with a plain piece of paper. Trace the outside of the basket to get the general shape. Cut out around the shape that you traced. Then fit it inside the basket on the wall you want.



Make sure the pattern goes all the way to the corners. If it doesn't, take a scrap piece of paper, tape it to the end and trim little by little until you get the fit that you like. When the walls are papered, you don't want any of the basket to show through. Do this for all 4 walls and the floor as well. When you get the fit that you like, glue the pattern pieces to a manilla folder. This will give it a bit of strength, and when you glue the wallpaper to the walls, you won't get the weave pattern coming through. When that is dry, glue the folder pieces to your wallpaper.



Here you can see all the pieces ready to be glue into the basket.



When gluing your paper and flooring in, the best thing to use is silicone. Here is what I used. It will take a bit longer to dry, but the silicone will ooze into the basket weavings and give you a much better hold. Make sure you get clear, and don't use too much! If it does ooze to the outside, just wait until it is completely dry and cut it off with a fresh blade. Dry time will vary, but you might want to walk away for a couple hours or even wait till the next day before finishing.



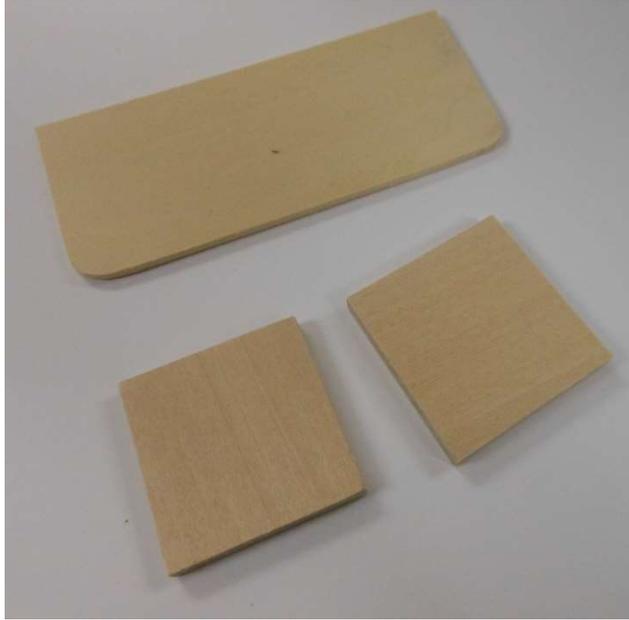
When the silicone is dry, cut out the front opening with a fresh blade.



Now you have a nice inside. The walls are smooth and so is the floor



I didn't like the raw edge of the opening, so I found some trim that I liked and lined the opening. I think it gives a better finished edge.



Next we are going to working on the bed. Again, your basket will be different size than mine, but measure how wide your basket it. That is how long you want to make the bed. Also determine how wide of a bed you want. When you have the main piece sized, you will want to sand round one long side, like I have done here. This is the side that will fit up against the wall. It will fit closer to the wall that way. You will have to sand and fit many times before you get the fit that you like. Next you will cut the “legs” of the bed. These can be made out of anything, as they won’t show.



After you have glued the legs on and they have dried, find some nice fabric. Measure how long your bed is, and cut a piece about half that length. Fold under one edge for a hem, and glue the hem. You will want to do one short edge also. You will then gather the top edge . I made mine a little too long, but it doesn’t matter as the mattress will cover it. Glue it in place.



Make another piece slightly longer. Again glue the hem, and the short end that will be closest to the opening in our basket. Also gather the top edge on it. Glue this piece in place also.



Now for the mattress. I used foamcore. Make a piece like you did the base of the bed. This is the time to make sure it goes all the way to the wall. I cut two pieces, as I wanted it a little thicker. Glue the two pieces together, and when dry, sand and fit the side against the walls. When you are happy with the fit, you can cover the mattress with fabric.



Here is my mattress covered and ready to install... I am not the best upholsterer, but all I did was put glue on the under side of the mattress and pulled the top fabric over the edges and held it in place until it held, trying not to get too many folds on the edges.



Here is the top view of the bed. Now we can move on to the desk....



Again, measure the width of your basket. I wanted it as long as the sides. But for the desk, I didn't want it as wide as the bed, so I trimmed it down a bit. But again, I rounded the back edge to fit the curve of the basket better.



For the desk, I also slightly rounded the edges off to give it a more finished look. I went into my stash, and found some fancy legs to use for the desk. I stained all the pieces before gluing them together.



Here is the desk with the legs glued on and stained.



I decided that I wanted to hide the side of the bed, so I glued some trims along the edges. I will also make some pillows to stack on the bed.



Here is the other side of the basket showing the desk. Now to fill the scene up with all the accessories and other goodies!!



I cheated when I made the pillow. I took the orange end off of a Nerf dart. Instant round pillow base!!



I took my fabric and glued one end down, then wrapped the fabric all the way around the dart and glued the other end down. It was a little too long, so I trimmed the salvage edge off.



I put a generous amount of glue inside the dart tube, and tucked the overhanging fabric into the hole of the dart. Ta-Da!! Instant tufted end!! Do this to the other end. I then put some trim on the ends. Now you are ready to accessorize your centerpiece. Look in your stash first. Everything you see in my centerpiece came from my stash!!





I hope you have enjoyed this project. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at Ubfaep@yahoo.com. And please post your photos when you get yours done!