

FLYING CRANKS

GREAT LAKES FRIGHTFEST 2010

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Thought by some to be the 'Holy Grail' of the Home Haunter, the Flying Cranks have been around for a long time. By some standards you don't have a home haunt unless you have at least one Flying Crank. The Flying Crank was made famous by a special effects enthusiast named, Doug Feguson. His original Flying Crank Ghost was designed for the mechanically inclined, and was labeled at the time, as the most fun project to be added to a haunt in years. You can read about his Flying Crank Ghost at www.phantasmechanics.com This site is no longer running. But from www.OmarsHauntedTrail.com put out a link for a PDF file web link

Before creating your Flying Crank you need to take some things into consideration:

1. Where is it going to be located? Indoor or Outdoor

The reason for this consideration is the elements of nature compared to sitting in the window of your house. One must keep in mind that if it is outside there are things such as wind, rain, sleet or even possibly snow that your Flying Crank must handle.

2. AC or DC powered?

This consideration is not one to take lightly. Depending on your choice of an AC or DC powered Flying Crank, some electronics/electricity knowledge would be a good thing to have. At this point we are mainly talking about the Motor.

3. Frame Material? Wood, Aluminum, Steel, or PVC

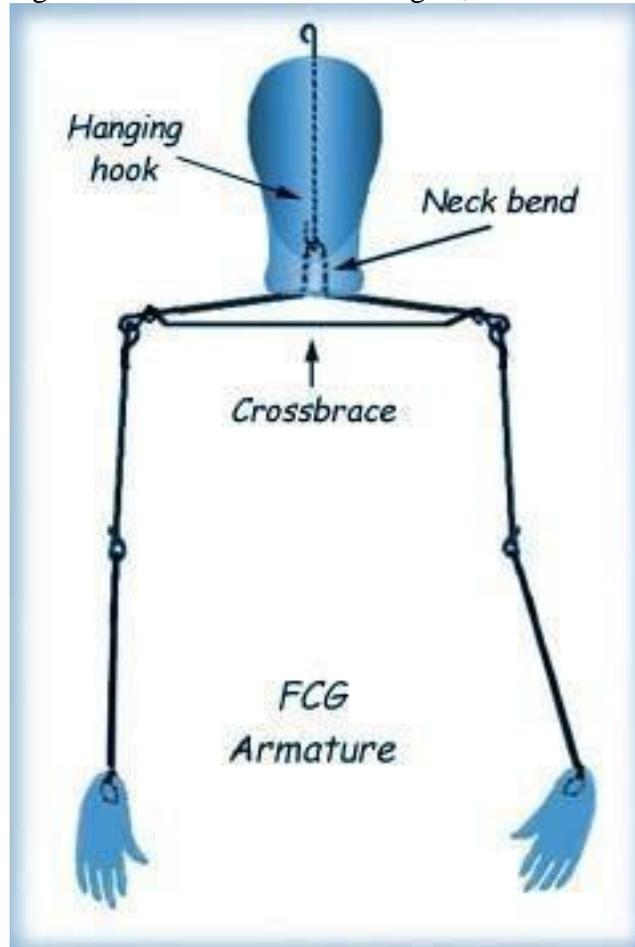
If one looks online at all the various Flying Cranks that are out there, you will see that the vast majority of them are made of either wood or aluminum. Some of the considerations to take into account when choosing your frame is durability, ease of use, weight, and of course cost.

4. Cost \$\$\$

By some standards you will see that this is a bigger consideration than any of the others. If you look online at some of the existing plans, you will see that one could easily spend into the \$100's. Motors themselves can run anywhere up to \$100, depending on your choice. The frame, depending on if you choose wood, which is a rather cheap option, compared to aluminum, which can easily cost into the \$30 - \$50 range.

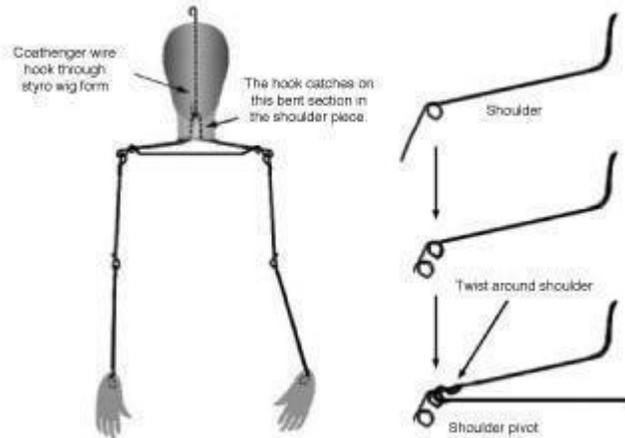
So, how does one start? Indoor or Outdoor?

1. The first thing you need to figure out is what are you creating. Are you creating a Flying Crank Ghost or are you using the Flying Crank thought and creating something else, like a spider or bat. Lets assume we are creating a Flying Crank Ghost.
2. Now that you have chosen a ghost, what type of ghost are you wanting to do? There are various online locations that show everything from using clothes hangers, skeletons, foam heads, string, and the list goes on. Below I am showing a basic example from Doug on how he created his ghost. Here he is using a foam head and clothes hangers, cut and bent.

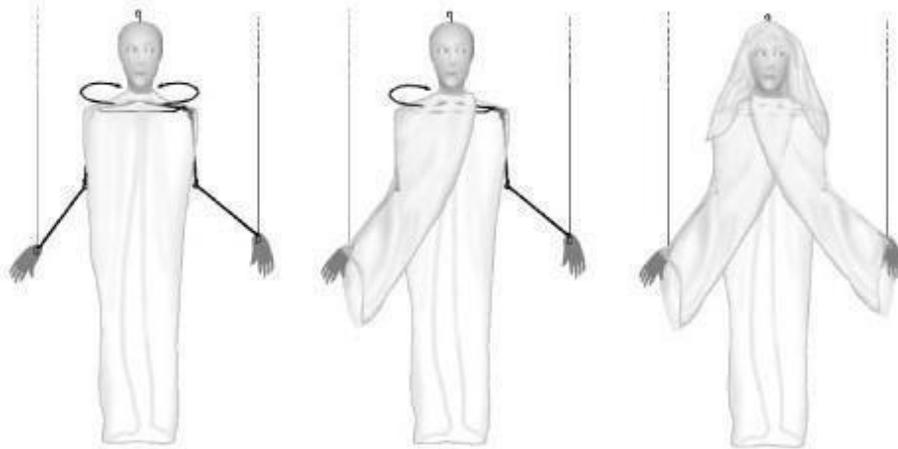


One of the big things to keep in mind is that this is an example. It is your ghost, build it as you wish. Remember you are the creator here. One reason I like to build the ghost first is weight. Just remember that the motor you choose must be able to lift this ghost with or without counter weight.

Here is another picture showing a little more detail into the structure of the ghost.



We must now consider what we are going to put on our ghost in regards to fabric, paint or even chains. In regards to the foam head, some like to add fluorescent colors to areas such as the eyes and lips, others leave the foam head alone since it is white in color like their ghost. Also, you need to consider what your covering your ghost with. Some use cheese cloth, drapery, or even sheets to cover. One thing to keep in mind about this decision is weight, but not only when dry but also when wet if it is outside. Here is a pic on how one may want to drape their ghost.



Another consideration for the cloth is lighting. I like to use fluorescent black lighting around my Flying Crank Ghost, so, the white sheet will show up some, but helping it is also a good choice. With this in mind, and with your draped figure ready to paint in a black lite environ, consider technique. Don't just saturate the surface with the chosen color until it is submerged in paint! If you want subtlety, and you are starting with a non-fluorescent surface, use a very light mist, by spraying from a distance when using aerosol paint, or by using an airbrush with a very low paint-to-air mixture.

Watch under the black light as the effect builds up on the figure or object. Stop when you achieve a mysterious glow. Remember that fluorescent paint is a visible light source, just like a light bulb. If there is too much UV paint, it will produce too much visible light, and may reveal details that you wish to keep hidden, killing the atmosphere you have worked hard to create. When painting with fluorescent paints, remember that adding color is not the same as with ordinary non-fluorescent colors. When you add fluorescent red, blue, and green in the right mixture, you don't get a murky brown - you get *white*.

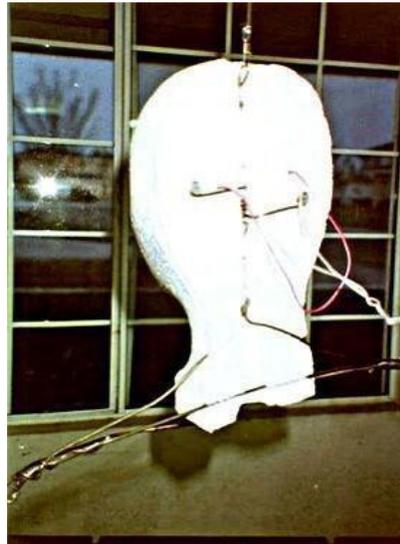
Yes, like a color TV, which uses red, blue and green phosphor dots to get colors, you are ***painting with light*** (not mixing colors.) In short, take a scrap of material and experiment. You will be surprised at what may be done with light mists of fluorescent paint.

I suggest that you use fluorescent blue on the ghost in this example. Green, or yellow (which tends to look slightly green as a fluorescent dye) can produce an equally attractive ghost. This is your call. You can also use flat black to produce the effect of shadows under black light. It can help correct places that are too bright. Be sparing, take your time, and experiment on scraps before painting the ghost.

NOTE: If you cannot locate fluorescent blue spray paint, wash your cheesecloth in detergent containing blueing (most brands do) before covering your marionette. This will most likely do the job for you. If the result is too bright, reduce the lighting level by moving the black light fixture farther from your ghost.

One last thing to consider about your ghost is its eyes. Some just use paint or leave them just white. Others include LEDs into the eyes. Now there are a couple things to keep in mind about doing this. One, is the weight added and two is power to the LEDs. You will see that there are various LED projects out there. Some run on a internal 9-volt battery, others run on AC plug in, which means you need to run wires to your ghost.

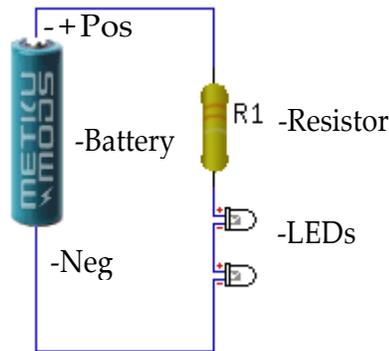
Light House LEDS (www.lighthouseleds.com has a wonderful LED- product line manufactured specifically for props like our FCG. They are available in several varieties and colors - including the NEW ultra-bright blue, which is amazing to see - and can flash or strobe. Check out <http://www.edyeb.com> how to add a hidden led battery pack.



You could also just go to Radio Shack and build a simple eye setup. The wires you see going into the head in the above picture are for the LED eyes. The concept of this design doesn't lend itself to the color-organ driven eyes Doug Ferguson fitted his ghost with in his detail, so we are going for something much less bulky.

In the draft here you can see the way to use one flashing LED and one regular LED to create flashing eyes that pulse together in unison. Solder the two middle legs together as shown and simply run one wire from the first LED to a 9 volt battery, and the other wire that is coming from the other to the other post of the battery. Don't forget to solder a resistor between the battery (+) pos and first LED as shown in the illustration.

The small battery then can be fitted right inside the foam wig form in the back and held in place with a piece of wire bent into a shape to cradle the small amount of battery extending out of the wig form.



For non- flashing or flashing eyes, simply purchase two of the LEDs as shown in this illustration. If you use different LEDs check here for help. [Light Emitting Diodes \(LEDs\)](#)
To check see what resistor to use check here. [Current limiting Resistor calculator for leds](#)

3. The Motor is another big consideration. Most Flying Crank Ghosts you see are running anywhere between 4 & 6 rpm. Depending on the speed you want, here are a few examples I have used.

<https://www.google.com/3m096+motor>

<http://www.monsterguts.com/store>

<http://www.frightprops.com>

The Frame for the ghost is now our next consideration. Keep in mind that there are various materials that can be used for this section. Instead of printing out pages upon pages of various techniques, I have included website links below to various types.

Aluminum Framing:

http://www.kickthefog.com/crank_ghost.htm

<http://www.phantasmechanics/fcghost1.html>

<http://makezine.com/projects/flying-crank-ghost/>

PVC Framing:

<http://www.edyeb.com/fcgframe.htm>

<http://www.spookyblue.com/fcg/fcg-project.htm>

Wood Framing:

<http://www.freewebs.com/steveshauntedyard/flyingcrankghost.htm>

<http://steampunkworkshop.com/microwave-motor-flying-crank-ghost>

<http://roadsidehaunt.com/howtos/ghost.html>

