

David Brody  
*Rental Truck Camera Obscura*

Requires: 3 double-sided sheets

Several years ago, while helping my friend G. relocate his studio, I found myself riding with a load of paintings in the cargo area of a rental truck through the streets of Brooklyn. It would have been absolutely dark inside but for one small gash in the back panel which cast a needle of autumn light into the interior void. It was some time before an anomalous movement in the darkness caught the corner of my eye, prompting me to turn around. To my astonishment, I saw above me a crisp color movie of familiar sights projected upside down and backwards. As the truck moved, so moved the alchemical image, but inversely. The rental truck was acting as an ideal travelling camera obscura.

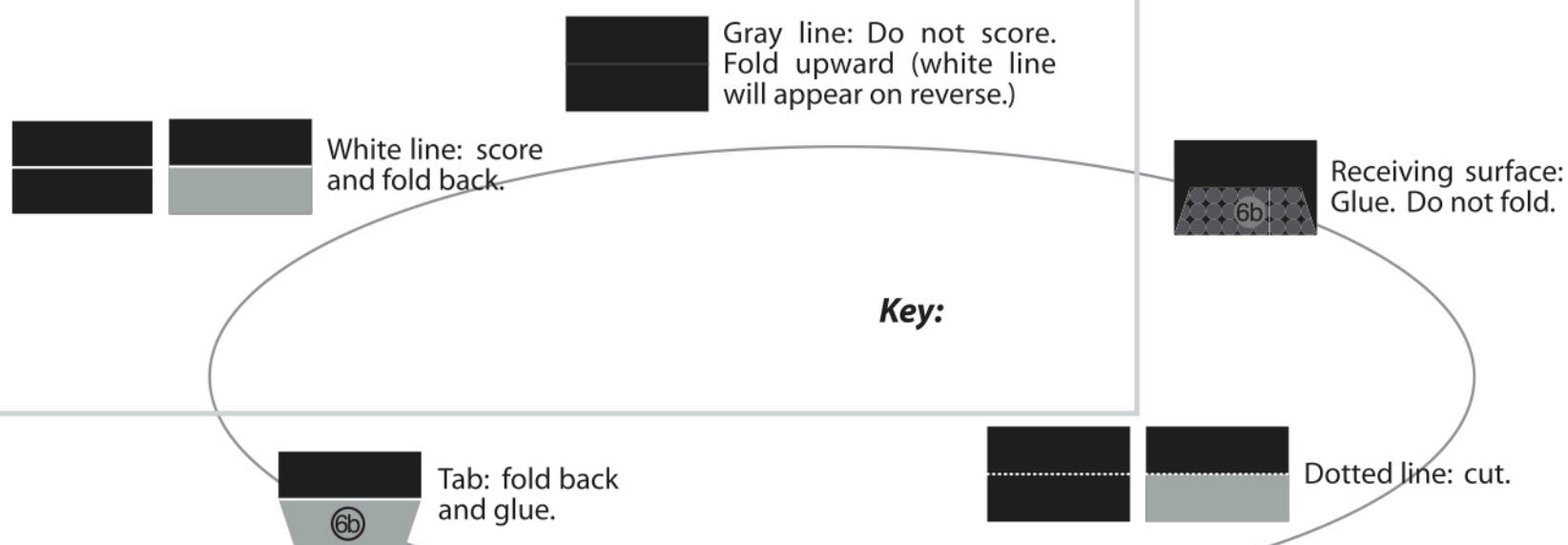
The first optical projections must have seemed part philosopher's stone, part devil's work. As I watched the images flicker and dance, I felt as if I were a witness, long before the invention and proliferation of photography, at the first cleaving of the transitory from the eternal; here were the spirits of buildings I'd walked past a hundred times, distilled from their physical bodies and undeniably living apart as images on the wall. Their ghostly detachment was only aggravated by the projection's double mirror displacement. The whole world of visual habit seemed revealed as an arbitrary hallucination.

On the following pages will be found the means to build a small and imperfect souvenir of this event which enacted for me the common origin of science, magic and art.

*David Brody*

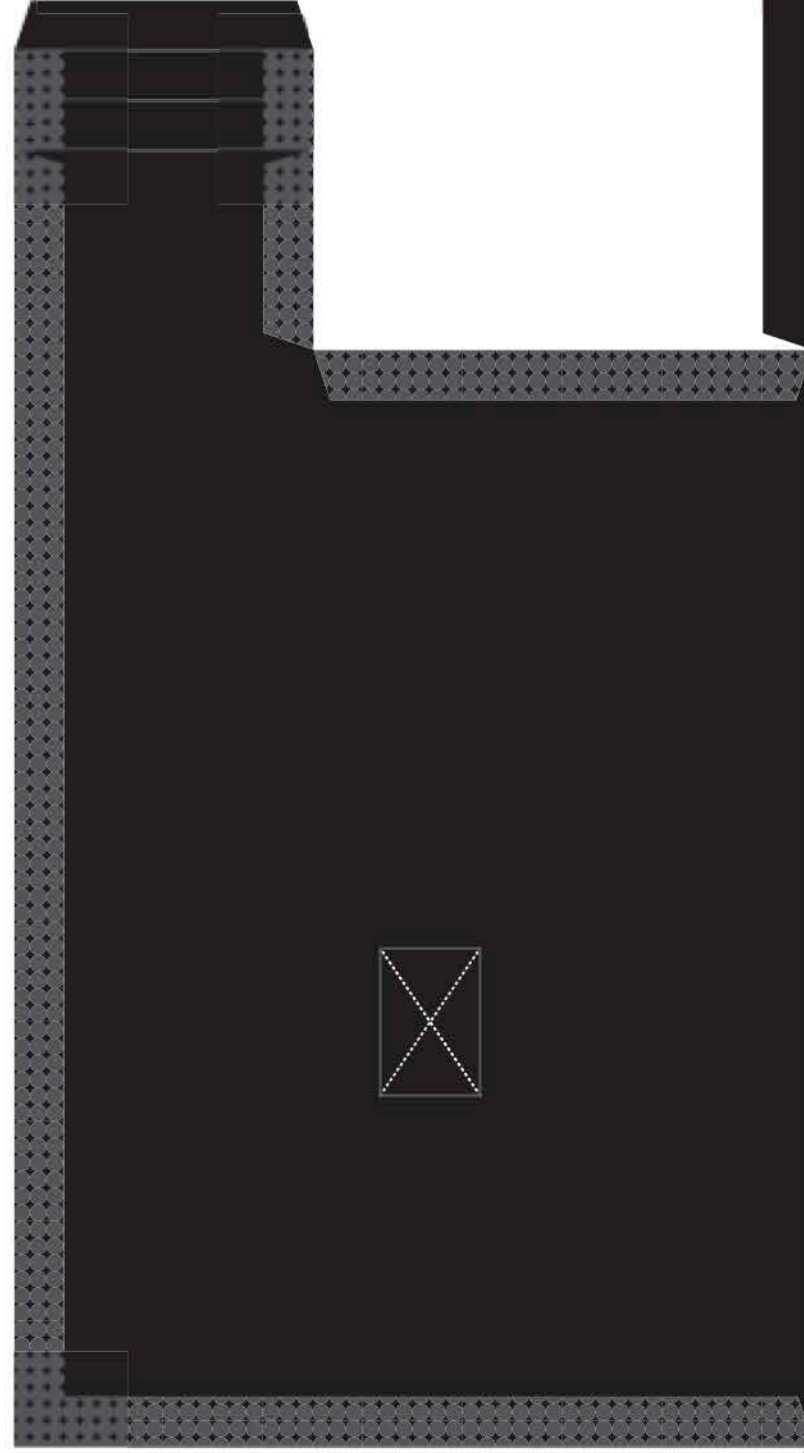
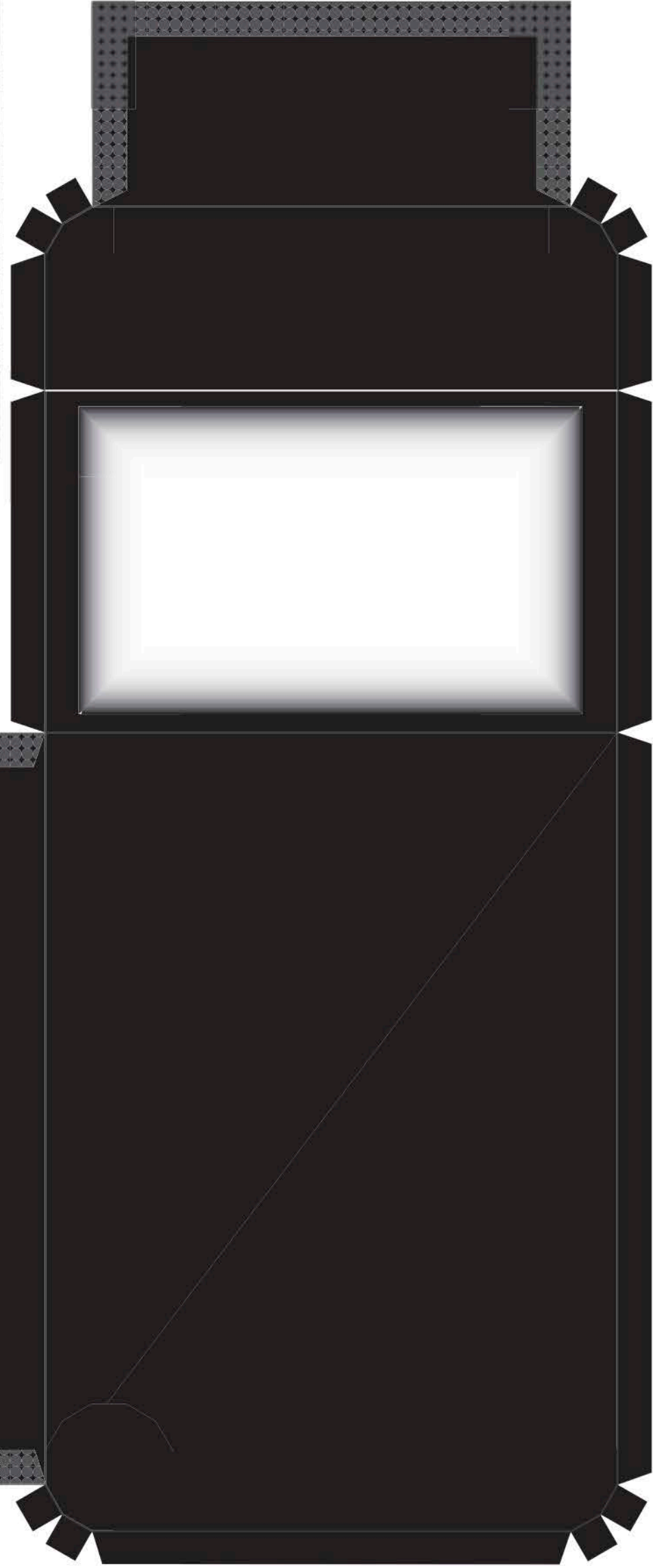
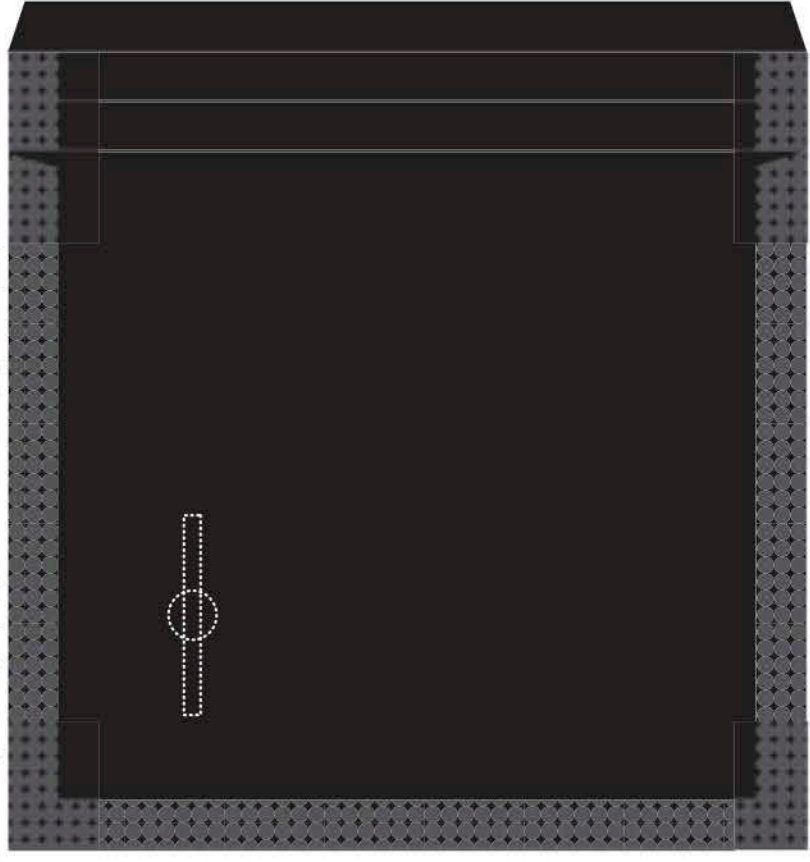
## Directions for rental truck camera obscura:

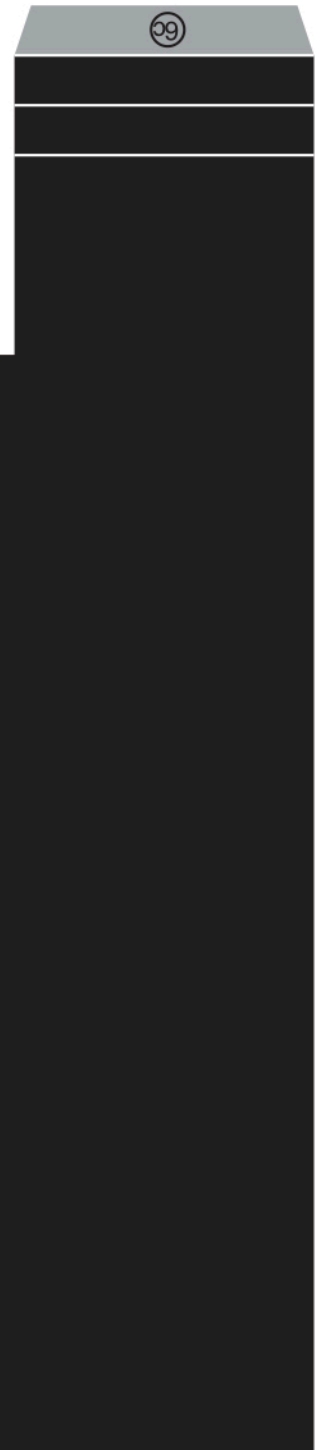
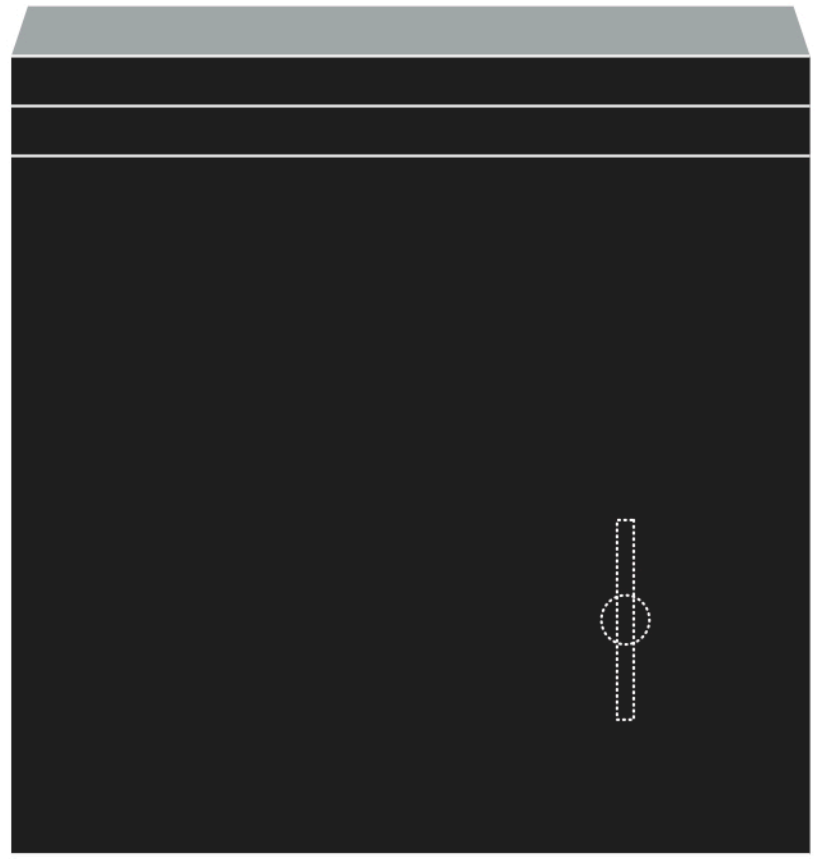
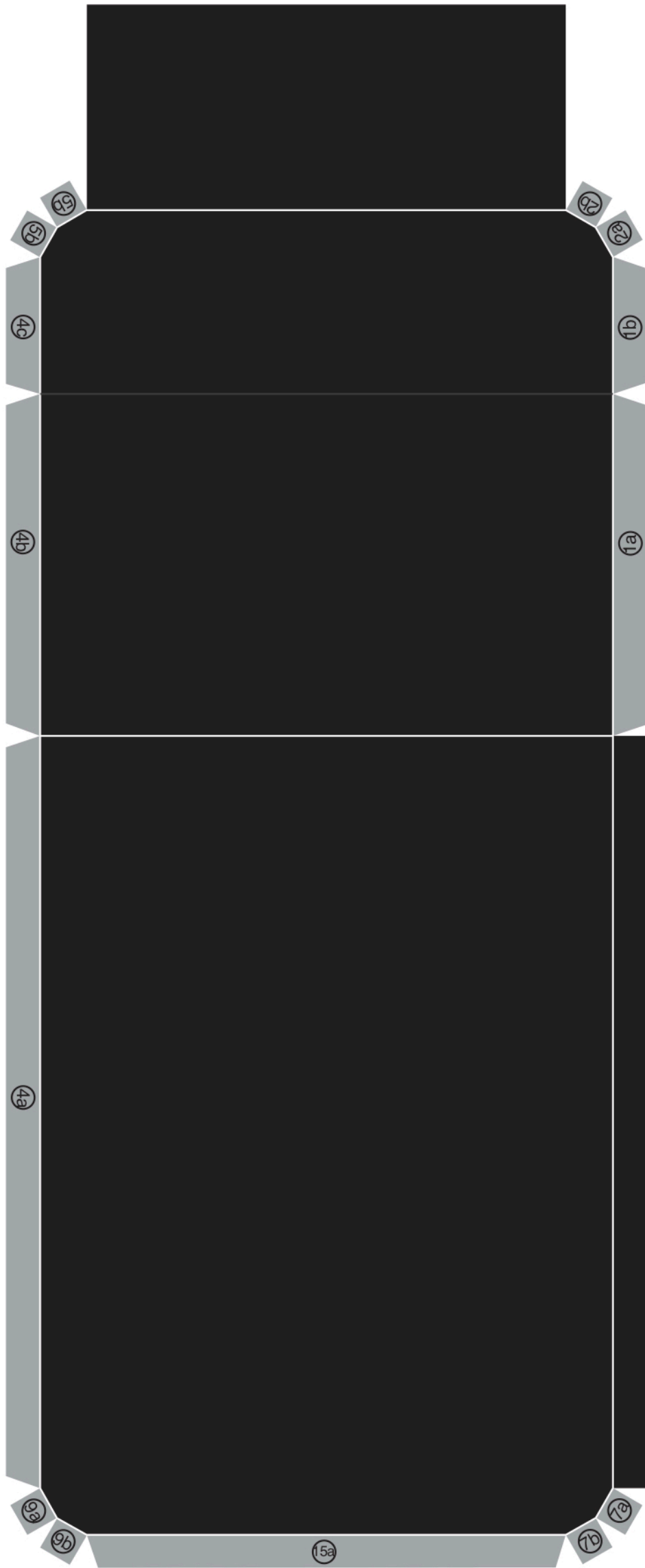
1. Using scissors, or knife with straight edge, cut all forms from the white background. NOTE: Only four of the six corner pieces (the small butterfly shapes) need to be cut out. Two extras of these (unnumbered) are provided in case of mistakes.
2. Score white lines with one blade of scissors and metal straight edge. NOTE: Careful scoring is essential to the success of the project. Test how much pressure to apply on a piece of scrap. Too lightly and the fold will be rough. Too deeply and the fold may tear. NOTE: Check both sides of each piece to locate all white lines.
3. Make internal cuts, indicated by dotted white lines, on corner pieces and for eyepiece insertion on first assembly. You must use knife and straight edge for the latter. Also, cut lines for light slit on back door UNLESS a looseleaf hole punch is provided, in which case, punch the hole where indicated.
4. Fold back all scored white lines. Using rubber cement if available, attach tabs 1a and 1b, then 2a and 2b of first large assembly to their corresponding receiving surfaces. The pillowed white viewing plane should now be on the interior. NOTE: Cement both surfaces to be joined and let dry until tacky — about a minute. It is difficult to adjust the position of the tacky surfaces once they have come in contact, so proceed with deliberation.
5. Attach tab 3 from second large assembly to receiving surface 3 of first assembly.
6. Making certain that tab 3 is secure, flip second assembly over to attach tabs 4a, 4b, and 4c, then 5a and 5b. The box is now well underway. Attach 6a, 6b, and 6c by flipping the front panel into place.
7. Attach tabs 7a and 7b near the back door. Begin to attach the separate back door panel itself with tab 8, then tabs 9a and 9b. Leave door open for now.



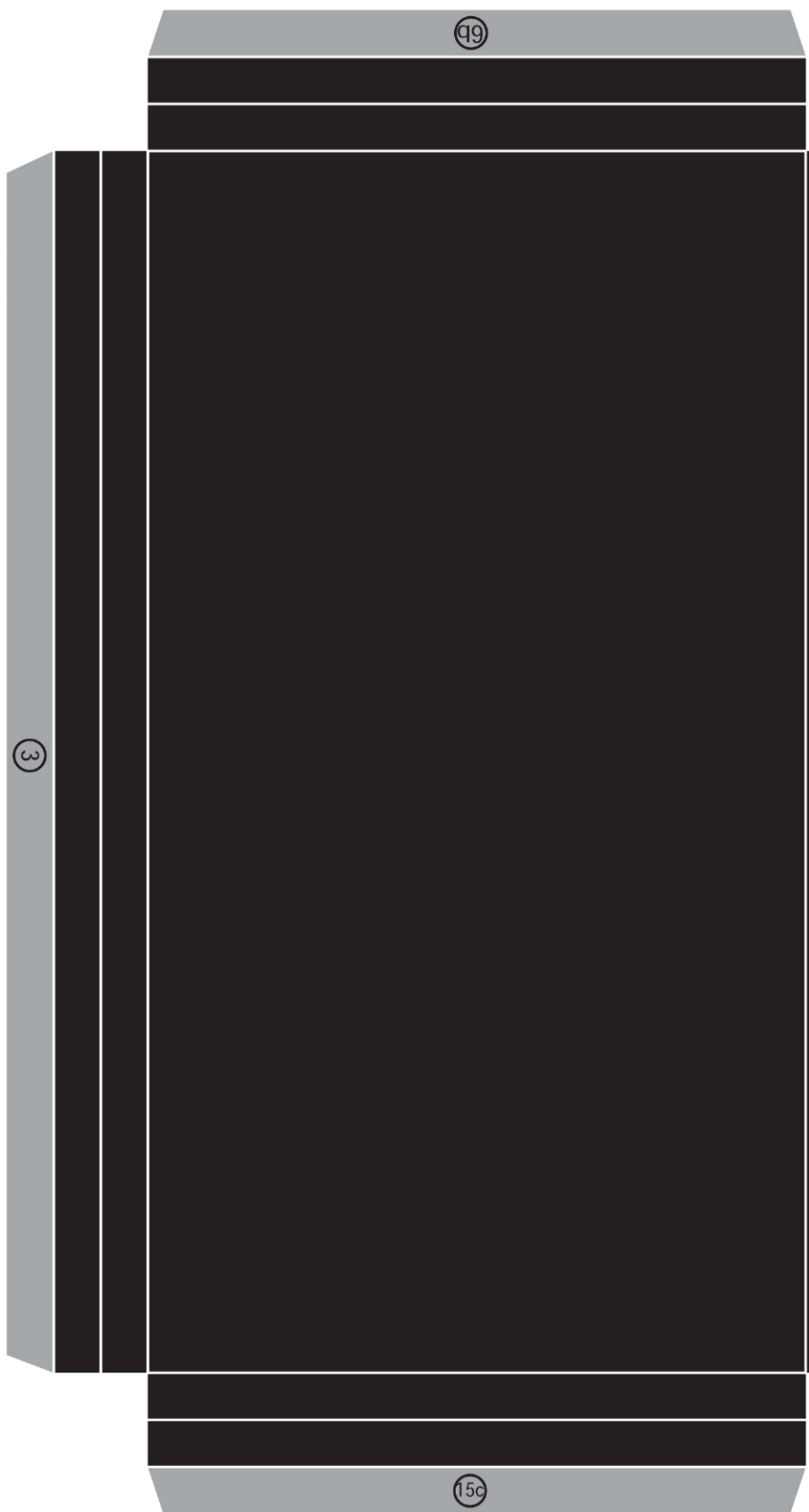
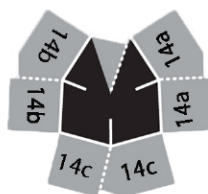
8. Familiarize yourself with tab 10 on the four corner pieces. This tab slides along the back of the same piece so that the flat butterfly shape becomes a three dimensional teepee shape with six equal sides. Got it? Now apply glue and let dry for firm bond, then create the four separate teepee shapes.
9. Take corner piece 11 and, before gluing, locate its position inside the front right corner. Note how no gray shows inside or out when the piece is properly seated. Now apply glue to 11a, b, and c and do not let the glue dry this time since you will need to adjust the corner. Locate position again and hold for 30 seconds until fixed. Repeat for corner pieces 12, 13 and 14.
10. Check to see if all joints are properly attached. If so, close off rental truck by attaching tabs 15a, b and c.
11. Assemble viewing tube by attaching tab 16. Carefully slide tube through rectangular hole on left side of truck. The hole is elongated sideways to allow tube to angle toward viewing panel. Do not glue tube in place. You will want to move it around.

Congratulations. You should now have a working rental truck camera obscura. If light is leaking through any joints, black masking tape, if available, may be used to seal off leaks. Do not expect perfect clarity, as the size of the hole required for sharp focus at this small scale would admit too little light for an image to be visible. With strong light, however, preferably dazzling autumn light, you *will* get an image. Try waving your hand in front of the lighthole. Is it upside down and backwards?









3

9

9a

15c

16

15b

