



# **5 SIMPLE** props for making eye-catching Instagram photos

and no, these are not books and cups

Instagram has become our go-to place for showing our photography work. At the same time, many of us realize that often simple baby portraits are not enough to catch the attention of people who are scrolling through their feeds. Photographer moms like **@allthatisshe** and **@lauraiz** have found their unique ways to grab their audience's attention and get more followers.

So can you! You'll need your camera, a willing subject (your kids might be the best option), a little imagination and a few easy-to-get props that can be found in every home, backyard or convenience store. Let's take a look at 5 of them. Note that the use of these props in most cases will involve thinking through your shot in advance, as they imply rather staged than candid portraits





# 1. Colored paper (and/or cardboard) gives you endless possibilities to create!

- **BACKDROPS:** Paper can be used for creating unusual backgrounds at home. For backdrops, you can use wallpaper, gift wrap paper or plain design solid color paper that can be found in DIY shops or shops for artists. What you need to keep in mind is that paper with patterns will be hard to stretch in Photoshop, if you want to make your photos larger.

So it's important to think through the whole frame of your future photo and the position of your subject in it. In the left photo below I used 4 sheets of gift wrap paper and stuck them to the wall. Backdrop on the right photo was made with the cheapest craft wrap paper from a supermarket again stuck to the wall.



- **MAKE PAPER PROPS:** the easiest thing that came to my mind, when I was thinking about coming up with new props, is making origami! They take 3-5 min to fold, they are cheap, and usually colored paper can be found in any hypermarket. You don't even need to go to a special store for artists.

If you don't know how to fold a paper crane, head on to Youtube: there are at least a dozen videos on that topic. But origamis are not the only thing that can be made from paper! Paper flowers look incredible in photos!







- **CUT IT:** Paper cuts can be “windows into new worlds”. They will add layers in your image and play an important role in creating an unusual atmosphere.



## 2. Plastic film: when used creatively looks amazing in photos!

Might be surprising, but when used creatively, film will turn your photos into unusual works of art. The best way to use it is when dancing or running, when it “flows” in the air and catches reflections.

It's often lighter than fabric and will stay in the air longer, allowing you to make numerous interesting shots with it. You can use a film of different kinds for different effects. Btw, you can also use colored film as a filter for natural light coming from your window.



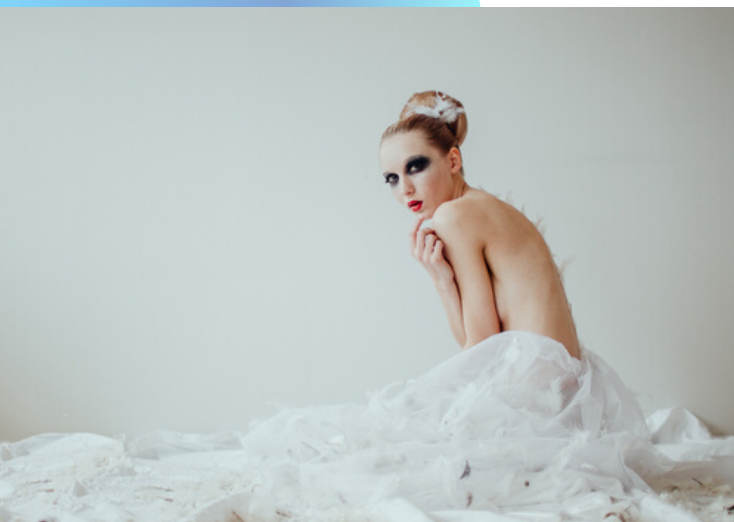


### 3. Fabric Can be used:

- as a backdrop
- instead of clothes
- as a prop

The only catch here is that you will usually need a lot of fabric for a better look. The good news is that you can totally go with sheets and curtains. If you don't have anything at home, I advise taking a look at your local second-hand shop. The lighter the fabric is, the better it will fly if you are up for a floating fabric effect.

Many photographers would agree that the best fabric for photos is the one tutu-skirts are made from. But other types can be used just as successfully. Cotton sheets, for example, are better for backdrops and wrapping your models.



## 4. Petals and leaves

They are lightweight and can fly easily, and also be used in a flatlay to create interesting compositions.

I like creating photos with atmosphere, so I often use the levitating objects effect, which usually makes a photo a winner of peoples hearts.

**⚡ Remember:** to shoot levitating objects as shown in the images below you'll need a tripod, an assistant or a remote/timer of your camera so that the shot is made while you're throwing the stuff in the air. You'll need to do that lots of times to get a good shot! The more lightweight your prop is, the longer it will stay in the air and the longer you can shoot it. However, it will also be the most painful for cleaning up after the shoot. Flatlays with leaves and flowers don't have to be plain and boring.





You can always color your props to give your shot a surreal twist! Any type of spray paint or acrylic paint will do for this. Spray paint is faster and it will stick better and stay for longer, however, the smell can be the tricky part for your model. Using acrylic paint is a bit longer, as you need a brush, but then it's much easier in handling for your model.



## 5. Holofiber

Yes, the material used for making pillows and stuffed toys. It can usually be found in sewing shops. It's the best material for making artificial clouds and in my opinion beats cotton, which is often used for that purpose. Why? It's fluffier, its shape is easier to change and it looks more cloud-like in photos.

**Bonus tip:** you can also get a colored hairspray to add color to your clouds or dye your holofiber with fabric dye for a deeper color effect.







Winter is the shooting indoors time. Use it for fun shooting experiments!



**Bonus:** your kids will LOVE taking pictures with props, as well as making them! Work on your shooting project together! And you won't have to come up with ideas of new things to occupy your dear ones indoors during the cold winter days.