Haunt Warehouse

http://www.virtualplacebo.com/halloween/props/ghost.htm

The Animated Ghost

I built my first flying crank ghost in 1999 using a ceiling fan, a bicycle wheel, and some ridiculously complicated looking wood construction.

It ran for 2 Halloweens in a row before I decided that it was just too big and temperamental to work with anymore.

I got the original idea from a link on the Halloween-L archives. I have made some fairly minor modifications and I think the instructions on the other website cover everything very well.

I found the original website - Phantasmechanics.

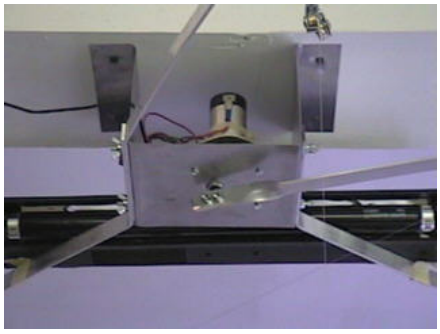
The ghost for Halloween 2002...

In 2002 I built the switch, power, motor, and arm assembly into one small unit that I could take apart and put away in a standard size storage box. The head, body and arms of the ghost already folded away nicely and didn't take up much room, so there was no need for me to change them.

The crank assembly is basically a 12V DC gear motor that turns at something like 5-7 RPM, a crank arm attached to the output shaft, 3 support arms with pulleys, a lighted power switch, and a crank arm link to keep things from getting all tangled up.

Crank assembly front view

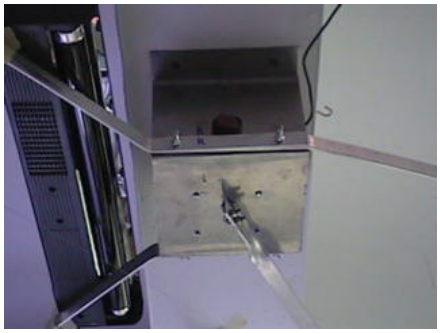
I will not go into the details (measurements, etc.) since you can find that on the website link I provided above.



Crank assembly back view

You can get a pretty good idea how I constructed the crank assembly by comparing all of the photos I've posted here.

The black thing sitting on top of the support arms is a 15W black light. My ghost is fairly large - basically human size, so I use 2 black lights. One small one above and a 30W black light below.



Crank assembly side (switch) view

The link is a flat washer with 3 holes drilled in it. I put 3 "S" hooks through the washer to connect the strings to. The whole thing is put together so that the washer spins freely as the crank goes around. That way the strings do not get tangled or wrapped around the link shaft.

Crank arm link view

Here's a shot of the ghost in the light.

I've found that rolling the mesh material and tying it to the wire arms makes the arms look more like bones and keeps the material moving with the wire arm assembly. The mesh material is so light that it doesn't really hang well enough to just drape over the wires.

Ghost testing

Ghost testing with the lights out

Here's a shot of the ghost from the right side of the garage entrance.

I've hooked up an oscillating fan off in the corner (aiming at the ghost from the front) which gives the thin mesh material a more flowing and eerie look.

I also built up the center of the body with a slightly less transparent white sheer fabric to give the ghost a little more three dimensional look.

Here's a shot of the ghost with my back against the garage door.

Ghost front view

2002 the ghost was haunting the room above the garage. Too many people went into the garage the previous year to check out the ghost up close (ruining the effect of course) and eventually someone stepped on the large black light on the ground. In one case I asked someone to leave the garage and they told me that they would after they finished checking out the ghost - that made me feel quite uncomfortable, from now on the garage door stays closed for Halloween for everyone's safety and my sanity.