

## Museum In A Box - Identity Box

Gina Dodge, Student Intern, Southern Museum of Art

Appropriate for Middle School & High School, Estimated Duration: One Fifty-Minute Art Period

**Enduring Idea:** Preservation **Art Medium/Discipline:** Mixed Media, and Papier Maché Box  
(drawing and paper collage)

**Rationale:** Dioramas are small scenes created of layers of materials, all depicting a similar theme. The word diorama means "through that which is seen", from the Greek di- "through" + orama "that which is seen, a sight". The current, popular understanding of the term "diorama" denotes a partially three-dimensional, full-size replica or scale model of a landscape typically showing historical events, nature scenes or cityscapes, for purposes of education or entertainment. Hobbyists often use dioramas to display their collections.

**Artists:** Joseph Cornell

**Key Concept:** Through selective drawings and design, we can construct a small diorama with drawings, words, decorative paper, and colored paper in our box. Identity is who or what a person is.

**Essential ?s:** What do you collect? What does a curator do? How can you express your personal identity in your museum-in-a-box. Do you believe that a diorama is art?

**Standards:** We will incorporate all four of the 2014 Revised National Visual Arts Standards as Student Learning Objectives:

### **Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work**

Anchor Standard – Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

*Enduring Understanding* – Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media, and art making approaches.

### **Presenting: Interpreting and sharing artistic work**

Anchor Standard – Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

*Enduring Understanding* – Objects, artifacts, and artworks collected, preserved, or presented either by artists, museums, or other venues communicate meaning and a record of social, cultural, and political experiences resulting in the cultivating of appreciation and understanding

### **Responding: Understanding and evaluating how the arts convey meaning**

Anchor Standard – Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work

*Enduring Understanding* – People evaluate art based on various criteria

**Connecting: Relating artistic ideas and work with personal meaning and external context**

Anchor Standard – Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

*Enduring Understanding* – Through art making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experience.

**Objectives:**

Students will:

1. Construct (Creating/Bloom's) an original collaged diorama of drawings, pictures, and paper to represent themselves within a box.
2. Employ (Applying/Bloom's) appropriate use of scissors and adhesives in the completion of their artwork.
3. Experiment (Applying/Bloom's) with the curation and design of the items within the confined space by rearranging elements until aesthetically pleasing.
4. Analyze (Analyzing/Bloom's ) their choices of colors, and symbolism within their own personal preferences and decisions to represent themselves.

**Student's Self- Assessment Rubric:**

Please evaluate your success in the following areas, with "5" being your best effort, and "1" indicating that you did not make any attempt in that area:

I constructed various drawings, pictures, and collage elements to represent my identity

5      4      3      2      1

I was able to use scissors to edit and create collaged pieces, as well as use glue to secure the arrangement

5      4      3      2      1

I was able to experiment with various arrangements to assemble my diorama in a pleasing display

5      4      3      2      1

I analyzed my selections for my own representation

5      4      3      2      1

Overall, I believe that I have earned the following grade of this project (averaged from the above assessments.)

5/A    4/B    3/C    2/D    1/F

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Comments from Teacher:

**Materials:** Individual Boxes  
Markers  
Decorative Paper  
Construction Paper  
Glue Sticks  
Scissors  
Color pencils/Crayons

**Resources:** <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/artists/cornell/activity.shtml>  
[http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-6-8/Identity\\_Boxes](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-6-8/Identity_Boxes)  
[http://www.learntoquestion.com/class/archives/2000-2001/currlesson/text/2000/september/identity\\_boxes.html](http://www.learntoquestion.com/class/archives/2000-2001/currlesson/text/2000/september/identity_boxes.html)

**Procedure:**

Introduction:

1. Review prior skills with tools and knowledge of the elements of art and principles of design that will be necessary for success in this project.
2. Ask students if they have heard the term “diorama” and ask if they collect anything. Talk about their collections, then discuss how one would preserve their collections, or elements about them. Show examples Joseph Cornell’s collections, and how he composed his boxed artworks.
3. Show and discuss example “identity boxes” or “museum in a box.” Explain there are unlimited ways to approach one’s box, and show various examples.
4. Discuss the scoring rubric (on the prior page) and timeline for this project.

Demonstration:

1. Show examples of how different the construction of these identity boxes can be.
2. Show students their choices with provided materials. They may wish to continue working on their dioramas at home or in the classroom, following the museum tours at SUU.
3. Show examples of how different components make the items in the box more diverse.

Work Period:

1. One session to design, assemble, and complete the project. Optional: later completion on student’s own time or teacher has option to supply later class time for students to continue project.

Closure:

1. During “Display & Discuss,” dialogue as a class on the merits of each work. Looking at the students’ work, discuss the number of students who chose 4, 5, 6 or 8 diverse components. Who used pastel colors as opposed to bright colors? Who used warm or cool

colors? Who used biodiversity to compose and represent individuality? Students may volunteer to speak about their choices of their approach to this project.

2. Optional: Students turn in self-assessment rubrics upon teacher's request.

**Vocabulary:** Preservation, identity, diversity, personalization, diorama, adhesive, collage, aesthetics, balance, color, communication, cool colors, elements of art, emphasis, glue stick, line, pattern, personalization, principles of design, ruler, scissors, shape, value, warm colors.

**Elements of Art and Principles of Design:** Line, shape, color, value, texture/pattern; Balance, overlapping, unity, emphasis

**Community Involvement:** SUMA and the Garth and Jerri Frehner Museum of Natural History will give presentations to educate the students on the importance of preservation.

Docents/Teachers will consist of students of Southern Utah University and adult volunteers.

**Art Sample Created by You:** One's own identity box.

**Art Integrations with Other Subjects:** Science (Biodiversity), Math (Counting) and Literacy (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)

**Accommodations for Students with Special Needs:**

1. For special needs students, I will provide adaptive tools, and I will assign in-class "buddies" to assist students who need more time. For students with hearing difficulties, I will make sure that I speak with adequate projection or use a microphone system; I will also face them when speaking. For students with visual difficulties, I will seat them closer to the source of the information and provide larger fonts with written materials.
2. Was I able to effectively communicate with students whose native language is not English by offering key vocabulary and concepts in other languages on a worksheet or in classroom signage?

**Reflective Questions:**

1. Did I forget any materials, resources, or steps that would have better contributed to the success of my students during this lesson?
2. What made this lesson memorable for my students? Why did I choose to teach it?
3. How can I improve any aspect of this lesson next time?
4. Note to Self: Photograph completed artwork of students for future use in a PowerPoint presentation.
5. Note to Self: Find a venue in my school for display of these artworks; accompany the art with information about the Visual Arts Standards and Integrations with Other Subjects.