

Adopt an Artwork 2025 -2026

Prized Possessions

Spice Chest attributed to Joel Baily

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Maclary Elementary, Christina District

5th

Visual Art

OVERVIEW

Students will be able to create a functional art object that reflects what they have learned after appreciating Joel Baily's 18th century Spice Cabinet. After watching the spice trade, students will discuss the importance of spices in colonial America, and the role the spice cabinet played in early American households.

Students will then compare functional form Joel Baily's spice cabinet to a 17th century Melchior Baumgartner WunderKammer Cabinet of Curiosities.. Reflecting on the need to store, secure, display or hide these precious imports, students will begin to discuss their need for a contemporary version of Baily's spice chest. Inspired by this historical object students will design and construct their own spice chest to hold their most valuable possessions.

TIME REQUIRED

7 45 minute class periods

STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

- VA:Cr1.1.5a Combine ideas to generate an innovative idea for art-making.
- VA:Cr2.3.5a Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.
- VA:Pr5.1.5a Develop a logical argument for safe and effective use of materials and techniques for preparing and presenting artwork
- VA:Re7.1.5a Compare one's own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.
- VA:Cn10.1.5a Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making.

STUDENT "I CAN STATEMENTS"

- I can combine ideas to create an original idea for art-making.
- I can find and use personal objects in a work of art.
- I can explain the necessity of using my art tools safely.
- I can compare my interpretation of a work of art with my classmates' interpretation.
- I can use my art vocabulary to discuss art and how it relates to the surroundings.

MATERIALS

- Cardboard (recycled cafeteria cardboard 1 large box per 2 students)
- Foam core boards
- Hot glue guns and glue sticks (and 2 ice packs)
- Scissors
- Electric scissors
- Small hinges
- Various colored Pony Beads (2 per student)
- Acrylic paint, brushes and paper towels.
- Acrylic paint markers
- Paper mache or brown paper tape (teacher preference)
- Personal objects or drawings
- Gesso
- Straight sewing pins.
- 18" rulers or yardsticks
- Extension cords and power strips
- 1 1" machine bolt and nut per student

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1. Introduction & Discussion: Watch Spice Road video. Discuss the importance of having a cabinet like Bailly's to colonial life. Compare to 17th century Wunderkammer and my personal cabinet of travel treasures. Triple Venn diagram exit ticket will record 2 things about each cabinet that are unique and a list of things they have in common—complete exit ticket.

Lesson 2: Pattern construction: Each table will take apart a variety of recycled food boxes to manipulate how a flat sheet of cardboard can become a 3-d rectangular prism. As a class, we identify the faces of the prisms and potential dimensions. Discussion continues as to how patterns will be made and pieces labeled. Students will select a food box and trace the pattern, making sure all

lines are “ruler straight”. In closing, have students sketch their 3-d cabinet sketchbook with dimensions. In preparation for construction, the teacher cuts out 2 foamcore base pieces for each student to have a sturdy platform and top for construction.

Lesson 3: Have students lay their paper patterns onto a large piece of recycled cardboard, taking any opportunities to have a folded edge from the original cardboard box align with a folded edge in their pattern. Using electric scissors, they begin to cut around the perimeter. Using a box cutter, the teacher then scores the corners, penetrating the outside layer of cardboard so that the cardboard can bend without breaking.

Lesson 4: Once the pieces have been cut, we take a break from construction to review the craftsmanship of each cabinet. We discuss moldings, drawers, hinges, and knobs. Students can use the extra cardboard to add personal details to the cabinets. It is helpful to have a stash of long cardboard strips pre-cut for students to use for shelves and dividers.

Lesson 5: Assembling the cabinets on the prepared foam core bases is next. Arrange the powerstrips and extension cords so that ½ of the room has access at a time. Remind students to put the hot glue on the foam core base, and then add the wall. Secure by hammering a few sewing pins through the base into the foam core. They can continue at their own pace, adding functional shelves, dividers, and drawers based on their needs.

Lesson 6: Cover any gaps in construction with papier-mache or masking tape. When dry, prime all pieces inside and out with gesso.

Lesson 7: Demonstrate how to add hinges with hot glue, and create a knob out of the nuts, bolts, and ponybeads.

Lesson 8: Students are given a choice on how to finish interior and exterior surfaces. A variety of colors of acrylic paint, scrapbook paper, and paint pens are available. Pausing to reflect on their thoughts about the appearance of Baily's spice cabinet, the Wunderkammer and contemporary artist Katherine Morling, students will complete their cabinet, leaving the inside of their cabinet door for a space for a written reflection of their collection

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- Formative: Sketch of cabinet, brain dump of personal collections ideas
- Formative: Pair share review
- Summative: Pattern construction
- Summative: Final presentation of their work

VOCABULARY

- Silk Road: an ancient network of Eurasian trade routes active from the 2nd century BCE until the mid-15th century.
- Spice Cabinet: a dedicated storage space, cupboard, or built-in shelving unit used to hold jars, bottles, or tins of culinary spices and herbs.
- Wunderkammer: German term that translates to "room of wonder" or "chamber of curiosities".

- Rectangular prism: a solid three-dimensional shape with six flat sides
- Base: foundation or support
- Side: an outer surface, edge, or the left and right half of an object, body, or place
- Parallel: two lines or paths that stay the same distance apart and never touch
- Gesso Primer/sealer: a white paint-like mixture used to coat and prepare surfaces—such as raw canvas, wood, or cardboard—before painting

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- PostalPast. "The Spice Trade: How Flavor Changed World History 🌍🍴." YouTube, 8 Sept. 2025, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccNZKX3hXI8. Accessed 11 Nov. 2025.
- Mauney, Anna Claire. "The Cabinet of Curiosities & Colonialism | Art & Object." Art & Object, 27 Apr. 2022, www.artandobject.com/news/cabinet-curiosities-colonialism
- mal. "How to Achieve the Cabinet of Curiosities Aesthetic - Maleesha P." Maleesha P, 21 Nov. 2024, maleeshaperera.com/how-to-achieve-the-cabinet-of-curiosities-aesthetic/. Accessed 11 Nov. 2025.