

Adopt an Artwork 2025 -2026

From Walnut to Cardboard: Exploring Chester County Craft

Spice Chest, attributed to Joel Bailey

Nichola McDermott and Medgan Acevedo

Tatnall School

3rd

Visual Art

OVERVIEW

Third-grade students will explore history, craftsmanship, and personal expression by creating a collaborative cardboard spice chest inspired by an 18th-century Pennsylvania spice chest attributed to Joel Bailey. Students will learn about the role of spices in early American life, the importance of woodworking skills, and how objects can communicate cultural values.

Each student will be responsible for a drawer within the chest that they will build and decorate to represent something they value.

TIME REQUIRED

Seven 45 minute classes

STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

- Standard 1: VA:Cr2.2.3a: Demonstrate an understanding of the safe and proficient use of materials, tools, and equipment for a variety of artistic processes.
- Standard 2: VA:Cn11.1.3a: Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made.
- Standard 3: VA:Cr2.1.3a: Create personally satisfying artwork using a variety of artistic processes and materials.

STUDENT "I CAN STATEMENTS"

- I can...safely and correctly balance experimentation and safety, freedom and responsibility while developing and creating artworks.
- I can...see that reactions to art change depending on time and place.
- I can..create meaningful art. I can use many techniques and materials.

MATERIALS

- Crayola Model Magic White, Modeling Clay Alternative, Reusable Sculpting Material, Air Dry, Kids Arts & Crafts Supplies, 2lb Bucket,
- Copper Sheet Foil Roll 1000MM x 150MM x 0.08MM
- 20 Pieces Antique Decorative Hinges Bronze Engraving Design Box Hinges
- Henoyso 110 Pack 11x 14 Inch Corrugated Cardboard Sheets Flat Cardboard Sheets
- 4 Pairs Kids Cut Resistant Gloves Level 5 Safe Gloves Protection (2 orders)
- Kids Cardboard Cutter Tool
- Cordless Electric Fabric Scissors, Power Rotary Cutter, Cardboard Box Heavy Duty Scissor
- CANARY Corrugated Cardboard Cutter Dan Chan 7.5", Safety Box Cutter Package Opener Knife

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1. Warm Up:

- Discuss the original Spice Chest and what it tells us about craftsmanship, trade, and daily life in the 1700s.
- Group brainstorm: What do we value today that could go inside our own symbolic chest drawer?
- Paint with spices

Lesson 2. Main Activities:

- Sketching & Planning: Each student draws a design for their drawer that represents a personal value or interest.
- Construction: Students cut, fold, and glue their drawer form using cardboard templates.
- Design & Decoration: Students paint or embellish the inside and outside of the drawer.
- Collaboration: Students assemble all drawers together to form a single large "class chest."
- Critique & Reflection: Students share their drawers and explain their chosen symbols/values.

Lesson 3. Exit Ticket (each class):

- "What part of your design best represents you?"
- "What tool or material did you feel most confident using today?"

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

- Formative:
 - Observations during construction and planning
 - Participation in discussions and critiques
 - Exit ticket responses
- Summative:
 - Completed drawer demonstrating craftsmanship, symbolic meaning, and safe tool use
 - Contribution to the collaborative class chest
 - Reflection on artistic choices

VOCABULARY

- Carpentry: The activity or occupation of making or repairing things in wood.
- Craftsmanship: The quality of design and work shown in something made by hand.
- Collaboration: The action of working with someone to produce or create something.
- Structure: How something is built or put together.
- Embellishment: A decorative detail added to make something more interesting.
- Mixed Media: Art created with more than one type of material.
- Template: A pattern used as a guide for cutting or shaping materials.
- Score: To lightly cut or press into cardboard so it folds more easily.
- Stability: How strong and balanced a structure is.

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- "American Furniture, 1620–1730: The Seventeenth-Century and William and Mary Styles." The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 March 2010, <https://www.metmuseum.org/essays/american-furniture-1620-1730-the-seventeenth-century-and-william-and-mary-styles>. Accessed 22 November 2025.
- "Home Artists Joseph Cornell." National Gallery of Art, <https://www.nga.gov/artists/2070-joseph-cornell>. Accessed 22 November 2025.
- Salar Jung Museum's. "A Spice Story." Google Arts & Culture, Google Arts & Culture, 2025, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/a-spice-story-salar-jung-museum/qwWxA75O2ETzLw?hl=en>. Accessed 22 November 2025.
- "Object lesson: Pennsylvania Spice Boxes...or are they Chests?...or Cabinets?" The Magazine Antiques, 8 July 2021, <https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/object-lesson-pennsylvania-spice-boxes-or-are-they-chests-or-cabinets/>. Accessed 22 November 2025.