Project
Create your own miniature art gallery with paintings from Reynolda’s collection.

Samples

Mini gallery made from a cereal box

Mini gallery made from a shoebox

Inspiration
In 2017, Reynolda House held an exhibition that showed a huge painting made by artist and inventor Samuel F. B. Morse. In his painting The Gallery of the Louvre (1831-33), Morse painted a room from the Louvre museum in Paris and, on the walls, he painted his favorite works of art from that museum. In this activity, you can be like Morse and create your own museum gallery and fill it with images of art from Reynolda or your own recreations of favorite works of art.

Vocabulary

Curator: A curator is the person who takes care of a museum or collection of objects. In an art museum, one of the curator’s jobs is to think about where different works of art are displayed and how works of art might be combined in a room or exhibition.

Exhibition: An exhibition is a public display of artworks. In an art museum, an exhibition will have a certain big idea that the works of art connect to in some way—maybe it’s an exhibition of works all by one particular artist or an exhibition of paintings of the American landscape during a time period. The curator would think about this big idea and find works of art that connect to it.

Wall label: In an exhibition, each work of art will have a label letting people know what it is. This will include the person or group who made the object, the object’s title or name, the year in which the object was made, the material(s) used to make the object, and any information about who owns the object or how it came to be part of the Museum’s collection. Sometimes a wall label will also have information a curator wrote, telling visitors more about it.
For inspiration of how a curator might put together works of art that related to the same big idea, see our Online Galleries, like this one about Animals in Art and Architecture.

Materials

- Printed sheets of miniature Reynolda House artworks or paper and drawing supplies to create your own copies of art from the Reynolda House collection of American art
- Scissors
- Tape or glue
- A small-to-medium sized cardboard box. For example, a shoebox or a cereal box will work well
- Optional: gesso, tempera, or acrylic paint and a brush to paint the “walls” of your cardboard room or wrapping paper or other paper to cover the walls and/or floor

Process

For video instructions, find this episode on Reynolda’s YouTube page.

Preparing the Gallery

1. Prepare your gallery room by either setting a shoebox on its side or building a corner of a room out of a cereal box.
   a. To make a room out of a cereal box, cut out one of the narrow side flaps by carefully cutting along the corner fold at its right and left edges. Hold on to this piece to use later. Cut off the top flaps to make for a clean top of your “room.”
   b. Stand up the remaining three sides of the cereal box, making the two long sides your main walls and the narrow side a decorative corner. Take the thin side of the box that you cut out and lay it across the bottom tabs of the cereal box to make a triangle in the “floor” section. You may need to trim the ends to help it fit best. Tape or glue it in place.
   c. You can add a piece of construction paper or cardboard to make a floor.
2. If you want to paint or add “wallpaper” to the walls of your gallery, you can cut wrapping paper or other paper to fit. Tape or glue in place.

Creating an Exhibition

3. Select the works of art that you would like to put in your gallery. If you have access to a color printer, print out the mini artwork PDF pages. Draw a frame around any images that don’t have one, then cut out the pieces you are interested in displaying in your mini exhibition. Think about how you might arrange these different works of art.
   a. What groups can you make? Are there connections between works of art? Works of art that all have animals in them? Or pictures of people? Places you’d like to visit?
   b. Do you want this to be an exhibition of all of your favorite works of art?

4. *If you do not have access to a printer*, go to Reynolda’s website and look at our art collection. Draw your own miniature version of the ones you like.
   b. Click “Collections” then “Browse the Collections.”
   c. Click “Results from American Art” (the green box under “Collections Search Results”)
   d. You can scroll through the pages and click on the artworks that interest you. If you prefer to see only images first, select the “Thumbnail” view in the upper right corner, just above the images.
   e. Draw a small version of the artwork you like using colored pencils or other supplies you have.

5. Use tape or glue to place your chosen artworks on the walls of your gallery.

*Continue this activity:* Write a paragraph about why you chose the works you did. You might even choose one work and write something about it. Consider: Why did you choose this work of art? What is happening in the artwork? Did you learn anything about it from reading the entry on Reynolda’s website?

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