



Make a Mini Art Gallery

Big Idea

Curating and making choices in how we display objects, artworks and images

Your students will:

- Create and curate their own miniature art galleries
- Explore how objects can relate to one another visually or conceptually
- Experiment with symmetry and balance

Visit an Art Museum with Freddie

As a class, co-view the clip from the episode **“Ensemble & The Art Wall”** in which Freddie visits the Barnes Foundation. Prompt a discussion about how objects and artworks can be arranged to tell a story. Conversations starters might include:

1. What did Freddie learn at the Barnes Foundation about how the museum displays its art?
2. What does it mean for an artwork to be “in conversation” with another artwork?
3. Freddie and Nhi make their own **ensembles** and they are totally different! Describe how they give feedback about each other’s work.



Materials

- Paper (option to print the provided template)
- Scissors
- Glue and/or tape
- Drawing supplies like crayons, markers, or colored pencils



Lesson Activity

Teacher Prep:

1. Print the provided templates. Any paper works, but cardstock is best if available. If a printer is unavailable, the project can also be done using a blank, square piece of paper.
2. Depending on the age of the students, consider pre-folding and pre-cutting the templates for the students to easily assemble.
3. Create an example of the miniature gallery beforehand so that students have a visual for their project.

Instructions:

1. Cut on the long dotted line to separate the picture frames from the rest of the template. Set aside.
2. Fold the remaining square into quadrants and unfold.
3. Cut along the shorter dotted line, stopping at the center.
4. Overlap the two bottom quadrants to create the “floor.” The top squares will fold up, creating your two gallery walls. Secure the floor with tape or glue.
5. Go back to the frames and draw an artwork in each. Cut the frames out.
6. Arrange and rearrange your artworks in different ways to decide how to “hang” them in your gallery. Will you group them by color or size? What about by subject (what is shown in the picture)? Will you hang them in the order in which you made them (chronologically)? These are all things to consider when curating your gallery.
7. When you’ve decided on the arrangement, glue the artworks to the gallery walls. Add more art to your walls as you go!
8. Students can present their galleries and exhibitions to the class or to a peer.



Vocabulary

Symmetry: Two sides that are the same and balanced.

Curate: To select and arrange materials in a specific, meaningful way.

Collection: A selection of objects that have something in common.

Gallery: A space for art to be displayed and admired.

Ensemble: A grouping of artworks or performers.



Tips and Extensions

- Some students might find it easier to glue their artworks onto the “walls” while the template is still flat. You can also ask students to draw additional artworks onto the template itself before folding it into its 3-D form.
- Encourage students to print pictures of themselves and their families to personalize their gallery. They can also display small objects like buttons and stickers to create symmetrical ensembles like at the Barnes Foundation.
- Invite students to place a small block onto the gallery’s floor to use as a pedestal for displaying a small treasure in the center of the room.
- Create a class exhibition by displaying all of the mini galleries together. Invite “guests” to the exhibition, using or making small figurines as museum visitors.

More about the Barnes Foundation

All museums display artworks and objects in different ways. Art collections are often curated or arranged by **when** artworks were created, **where** in the world they were made, **who made** them, or even by **who gave** them to the museum.

The Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia is an art museum that is famous for the unique way it was curated by its founder Albert Barnes. Instead of arranging artworks by when or where they were made, Barnes found **visual connections** among different works of art, like similar shapes, lines, or subjects and hung them as groupings. It’s as though Albert Barnes used art to create his own art! The Barnes Foundation uses the word “ensemble” to describe each of these unique arrangements of artworks.



School-to-Home Connection

- Encourage students to ask their grown-ups why their home is arranged the way it is. Why are pictures hung in a certain way? Why did they select those pictures in the first place and how did they choose where to put them?
- The Barnes is a collection of artworks—sculptures, paintings, and decorative objects. Have you ever collected something? Consider asking students to bring in their collections from home to share with the class.
- Have students capture a picture of their bedroom. What clues does their room give about them and their interests or personality? How did they curate the objects in their room?



Related Resources

More Classroom Activities

Visit PBS LearningMedia for more lesson plans like this inspired by *The Infinite Art Hunt*.

Barnes Foundation Educational Resources

In addition to offering live programs for visitors, the Barnes Foundation offers a variety of resources for educators available online.

Children's Books with Related Themes

Check out these children's books online or at your local library to continue exploring the concepts in this episode.

Making a Great Exhibition by Doro Globus

Discover the inner workings of a museum as the staff work together to create a great exhibition.

Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney

Miss Rumphius is on a quest to make the world a more beautiful place.