Made in America: Exploring American History Through Art Outreach Suitcase

“The American Art Outreach Suitcase was so appropriate to the fifth and sixth grade Social Studies curriculum; I don’t know how it could have been any better.”
—Elementary Educator

ABOUT THE SUITCASE

This suitcase explores how American fine and decorative arts illustrate the United States’ history and identity in the eighteenth through the twenty-first centuries. The items in this suitcase are reproductions or originals intended to help students more closely examine features of American art and culture. Using these objects, students will be able to discuss the variety and interaction of cultural traditions in the United States that created American society.


LOOKING QUESTIONS

Encourage your students to look closely at the objects in the suitcase and images from SAM’s Collection with questions like:

• How do art and artifacts help define culture?
• Who is part of American culture?
• How would you define American art?
• How does American art reflect our nation’s past?
WHAT'S IN THE AMERICAN ART OUTREACH SUITCASE?

Educator Resource Guide
• A list of relevant objects in the suitcase
• A list of images on the CD and prints that relate to these objects
• Background information on the object
• Questions to consider
• Activity ideas
• Related resources and glossary
• Washington State, Common Core, and National Core Arts Standards

Objects in the Suitcase (Pictured on Front)
• Waistcoat and wig
• Magnetic frames
• Shaker chair miniature
• Model canoe
• Columbian Exposition print and spoon
• Mammoth Carleton Watkins prints
• Stereographs and lorgnettes
• Abraham Lincoln bust
• DVDs

Supplemental Images from SAM's Collection (on CD and 11 X 17” Prints)

Objects: Waistcoat, Wigs and Frame
• Dr. Silvester Gardiner, John Singleton Copley, Gift of Ann and Tom Barwick, Barney A. Ebbsworth, Maggie and Douglas Walker, Virginia and Bagley Wright, and Ann P. Wyckoff; and gift, by exchange, of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Gerber; Mr. and Mrs. Louis Brechemin; Mrs. Reginald H Parsons Memorial; Anne Parsons Frame, in memory of Lieutenant Colonel Jasper Ewing Brady, Jr., and Maud B. Parsons; Estate of Louise Raymond Owens; Anonymous donors; and Eugene Fuller Memorial Collection; with additional funds from the American Art Support Fund and the American Art Acquisition Fund, in honor of the 75th Anniversary of the Seattle Art Museum, 2006.125, Photo: Susan Cole

• Anthony of Padua, 2013, Kehinde Wiley, Gift of the Contemporary Collectors Forum, 2013.8, © Kehinde Wiley

Object: Shaker Chair
• Shaker Chair, ca. 1830, Decorative Arts Acquisition Fund, 2000.47

• Chest Over Three Drawers, ca. 1810–30, Acquired in honor of John T. Kirk, Purchased with the American furniture fund, Decorative Arts Acquisition Fund and the Margaret E. Fuller Purchase fund, 99.49

SAMPLE ACTIVITY: DESIGNING INSTRUMENTS
• Have students look closely at the shapes used in the designs on the drum. Then have students practice drawing basic ovals and U shapes. Have students create a design using only these shapes.
• Extension: Explore how other cultures create musical instruments. How are the natural resources of other areas (Asia, Europe, Africa, or South America) used for different musical instruments? Have students create their own musical instruments out of things they can find in their own backyards.