

ACTIVITY GUIDE

- MIXED MEDIA MEANDER MEMORY BOX



Connecting creatively to the
landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean

MIXED MEDIA MEANDER MEMORY BOX



Many artists have used the 'curiosity box' format to display their work. It has a pleasing formal appearance that shows off objects which you have chosen to display. Have a go at making a box structure with simple compartments using small pieces of plywood and wooden dowling to create compartments. You can then go for a walk in your favourite spot and pick up small pieces of interest to display such as a seed head, an old piece of china, pine cone, dried flower or maybe an old photograph or written note.

Activity rating

Some participants would need help to measure the dowling to the length required and then to cut it. A simple small hack saw can be used and any competent staff member could cut the dowling on-site as the thickness is minimal. Also the glue gun would best be used by staff. It is a popular activity and well worth the effort as the final piece can be kept and displayed elsewhere.

Preparation time

About 15 minutes to prepare the table with all the resources. A short walk outside may be incorporated into this to enable participants to find and select their own objects to place inside the boxes.

Time required for activity

1 hour to 1 hour 20 minutes.

Shopping list

- o Some thin pieces of plywood or similar cut to a manageable size such as A4 – you could use pre cut cardboard if it is stiff enough to create the back of the box structure.
- o Glue gun.
- o Pencils.
- o Ruler (optional).
- o Brushes.
- o Strong tea/coffee mix to stain the wood (could use a light wash of poster paint or similar).
- o Hairdryer.
- o A variety of small natural/man made objects from a walk or a roam.

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Step by step instructions

1. Lay out a table cloth to protect the table.

2. By using the plywood backboards as a guide, measure the height and width in cm so you can then transfer this to the dowling.

Remember that if you have two lengths of dowling for the sides (height) then the space in between (width) will be slightly shorter as it fits inside these.

3. Transfer these measurements to the dowling and cut the four sides for the outside frame for your box and then place them into position on the backboard. You don't need to stick this down yet as you have the chance to move things around at first to find the best composition.

4. Next select about 5-6 objects that you wish to display. Some may be slightly larger than others and also heavier. If you intend to use a heavier object, it may be best to use a glue gun later to ensure it adheres to the backboard.

5. Now place them inside the frame and move them around until you find a composition that you find pleasing. The intention is to separate these items with more dowling to section them off into small compartments.

6. When you are satisfied with the look, draw a light pencil line separating the objects to act as a guide for your next dowling lengths.

7. Now offer the dowling up to your frame and mark off the required lengths with the pencil and cut them. It's best to do this piece by piece so you don't forget where each one goes or you could add a simple a,b,c,d code if your prefer.

8. At this stage you have the choice to colour/stain the backboard and wood. A simple wash of strong tea or a white wash of poster paint can look effective, is pretty easy to do and can be dried quickly with a hairdryer before the next stage.

9. Using the glue gun or PVA glue, stick all of the dowling onto the backboard.

10. Being careful not to nudge your frame and compartments, carefully glue the objects into place and allow to dry thoroughly.

Top Tip!

- When your mixed media meander box is dry, you could screw in some eyelets to hang it on a wall!