

Miniature House Sculpture

Lesson plan prepared by Renée Brazeau, Art Education Assistant, for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested Grade/Age Levels

Recommended for ages 5+ with assistance from an adult, parent or guardian.

Subject Areas

- Visual Arts
- Architecture
- Math

Introduction

This activity is inspired by the house of artist Maud Lewis, which now resides at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Maud Lewis lived in the house in Marshalltown, Digby County, with her husband Everett for over 30 years. While living in poverty and dealing with health issues throughout her life, she found joy through art making and painting. She made the most of difficult circumstances by noticing the beauty in her surroundings.



Maud Lewis House
4.4 x 4.1 x 2.8 m
Purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia, 1984

For this activity, we draw inspiration from Maud Lewis' ability to create beautiful, quirky and playful decorations from within her small home. We will create and decorate our own miniature house sculptures out of objects commonly found at home.

Set Up

- Large flat surface area
- Materials nearby

Materials

- Printer Paper
- Cardboard
- Drawing tools: pencil, crayons and/or permanent marker
- Scissors or a utility knife - only to be used by an adult
- Hot glue – only to be used by an adult (White glue or tape can be used as alternatives)
- Decorative materials: popsicle sticks, paint, construction paper, plastic wrap, fabric, ribbon, buttons, pipe cleaners, pompoms, stickers, sequins, found objects, small toys, plasticine, etc.

Process

1. Make the templates.

- To make your template take an 8.5" x 11" sheet of printer paper and fold it in half along the long edge.
- Take the top corners of your paper and fold them inwards toward the middle of the paper. Your paper should resemble a house shape.
- Unfold the paper and cut down the center folded line.
- With your first half, cut out the house shape along folded lines and discard the remaining triangular corner pieces.
- With the second half fold the top corners inward once again. Fold over the top triangular part of the house toward the base of the house to create a square shape. Cut along the roof line to create a square piece. Discard the smaller rectangle.

2. Trace the paper templates onto cardboard.

- Trace the house shape twice to make the 2 sides of the house. Trace the square pieces 4 times to make the floor, the front of the house, and the front and back of the roof.

3. Cut out the cardboard pieces.

- To cut out your cardboard pieces you can use heavy duty scissors or a utility knife. To ensure safety, this step should be done by an adult since cardboard can be difficult to cut.

4. Trace and cut out any windows and doors out of the cardboard wall pieces.

5. Decorate the interior and exterior of the cardboard pieces.

- Add some colour to the walls and roof pieces of your house. You can paint or draw directly onto the cardboard. You can also create a wallpaper effect by drawing on printer paper and gluing it onto the cardboard pieces.

6. Assemble the floor, walls and roof with glue.

- **Hot glue** works best to assemble the pieces together, however hot glue should only be used by an adult, since it can be very hot and potentially burn if in contact with skin.
- If you are using **white glue**, it will take longer to dry and the walls might have more difficulty standing upright at first. To help with this, prop an object at the base of the wall to keep it upright while the glue dries.
- If you are using **masking tape**, the tape will be visible so you might want to consider painting over it or covering it with a coloured piece of paper.

7. Add any final details to the exterior or interior of your house.

- This is your chance to get really creative and imaginative! Consider assembling miniature furniture pieces out of cardboard, making curtains out of fabric, windowpanes out of plastic wrap or tissue paper, door handles with buttons, or even making people out of plasticine to inhabit your house. The possibilities are endless!

Resources

- <https://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/maud-lewis> - For more information about the Maud Lewis Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
- <https://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/virtualtour> - A virtual tour of the Maud Lewis Gallery at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.
- <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/761637443808> - Folk artist Maud Lewis at work in her Nova Scotia home. CBC Telescope looks in on folk artist Maud Lewis and her husband Everett in 1965.