

Europeana Learning Scenario

(Museum Educators)

Title

Upgrading your collection

Author(s)

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Abstract

Collecting is a commonly favorite activity. Besides creating our personal collections purposefully, it is also an unconscious part of everyday life and moreover an important cultural strategy. The activities in this learning scenario, which is primarily intended for 14-19 years old participants, will guide you through the main elements of collecting, as choosing the items, categorizing, presenting and further re-arranging and creating new meanings. Discussing this topic also enables participants to express their interests and thus it may help to build relationships in a group. It has also an outreach into the field of contemporary art.

Keywords

Collecting, interests, found objects, museum, contemporary art

Table of summary

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Subject	Aesthetics, Art and Design, Visual Arts, Arts and Culture
Topic	Collecting as a personal, cultural, and artistic strategy
Age of participants	14-19 years
Suitable setting for implementation	online video conference system as Zoom, MS Teams, Google Meet etc.
Activity time	Depending on the number of participants, approximately 90 minutes(considering 15 participants in a group)
Online educational material	Web umenia (Web of art, www.webumenia.sk) Otis Laubert Biography: http://www.artfond.sk/en/artists/artist/show/otis-laubert/
Offline educational material	-
Europeana resources used	Cabinet: https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/91644/SMVK_MM_Egypt_40



[09575.html?q=collected#dclid=1616494378262&p=1](https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/kky5vfrt.html?q=Cabinet+of+curiosities#dclid=1616494378262&p=1) (Medelhavsmuseet)

Materia medica chest:

<https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/kky5vfrt.html?q=Cabinet+of+curiosities#dclid=1616494378262&p=1> (Wellcome Collection)

Bullock's Museum, (Egyptian Hall or London Museum, Piccadilly: the interior):

<https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/yaxveskv.html?q=collection#dclid=1616494378262&p=7> (Wellcome Collection)

The interior of a gallery hung with paintings and with tables laden with sculptures and curiosities:

<https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/gt9smktz.html?q=collection#dclid=1616494378262&p=4> (Wellcome Collection)

Photograph:

https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/2024905/photography_ProvidedCHO_NALIS_Foundation_F13733591080382.html?q=#dclid=1616494378262&p=3 (NALIS Foundation)

Kaffe- och théservis i schatull:

https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/2064105/Museu_ProvidedCHO_Hallwylska_museet_17700.html?q=museum#dclid=1616494378262&p=1 (Hallwylska Museet)

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Integration into the curriculum

The topic of this learning scenario fits into the Slovak school curriculum for the subject Art Education, especially for the educational topic “Discovering features of picture in a gallery collection vs. gallery on the internet” and for the subject Arts and Culture and its topics “How artists work” and “Creative procedures in art”. The learning scenario might also help in building students' relationships and therefore could be used during morning circles, and also the other subjects where atmosphere of interest and understanding of each other is necessary to stimulate.

Aim of the educational activity

The aims of this learning scenario are:

- to provide a possibility to look at everyday life through perspective of collecting
- to provide inspiration for improving the process of creating and presenting one's collection
- to help with considering digital items as objects of collecting too
- to present a collecting as one of the possible strategies in contemporary art
- to create a personal environment among participants (especially during online education)

Outcome of the educational activity

Students will create their common digital photo collection.

21st century skills

Creativity: Through the activities participants are led to find new solutions and rethink their former approach creatively

Communication: The participants present their own experiences and ideas regarding the topic

Social skills: The participants listen to the others' experiences and react to them, while through sharing their smartphone images and commenting on their interests, they might get to know each other better.

Activities

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
Warm up: Collecting or accumulating?	<p>The educator asks participants about their experiences with the collecting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do/Did they collect something? What it is/was? • What was their first impulse for this activity? • Do they collect objects / intangible items? Do they collect digitally? • How do they choose the items? Do they have any criteria specified for it? <p>According to the examples mentioned by the participants, the educator underlines the differences between accumulating and collecting - the collection is a certain kind of system with specific criteria for choosing the things, since accumulating is a more impulsive activity which often leads to a relatively free gathering of things without any system implemented.</p> <p>The educator should subsequently trigger discussion with questions asking about participants' perspective to differences between collecting and accumulating: Are the activities they mentioned before more about collecting or accumulating? Could they elaborate on that, why do they think so?</p>	15 minutes
Gold that doesn't glitter	<p>The educator starts the activity asking following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your reason for collecting? What do you think is the 	25 minutes

most common reason for it in general? Can you mention some examples?

The educator reminds participants the importance of collecting institutions such as museums, galleries, libraries etc. They might also mention other examples. Then the educator leads the participants to look at the following pictures and let them analyze what was the purpose of these collections. S/he also set a time limit 5-7 minutes for browsing the pictures themselves. Participants can choose one or more pictures and their task is to answer the following questions:

- What do they think is the aim of the particular collection? What was it made for?
- What are in their perspective the keys for arranging the collections in a specific space? Why are they placed in space like this?

(The educator provides the links and lets participants go through them on their own or shows the pictures gradually through a shared screen.)

Cabinet:

https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/91644/SMVK_MM_Egypt_4009575.html?q=collected#dclid=1616494378262&p=1

(Medelhavsmuseet)

Materia medica chest:

<https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/kky5vfrt.html?q=Cabinet+of+curiosities#dclid=1616494378262&p=1> (Wellcome Collection)

Bullock's Museum, (Egyptian Hall or London Museum, Piccadilly: the interior):

<https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/9200579/yaxveskv.html?q=collection#dclid=1616494378262&p=7> (Wellcome Collection)

The interior of a gallery hung with paintings and with tables laden with sculptures and curiosities:

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Photograph:

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Kaffe- och théservis I schatull:

https://classic.europeana.eu/portal/sk/record/2064105/Museu_Provide

	<p>dCHO Hallwylska museet 17700.html?q=museum#dclid=1616494378262&p=1 (Hallwylska Museet)</p> <p>The educator can briefly add context of the pictures from text below them. Then s/he discuss with the participants the given questions.</p> <p>As reasons for creating collections, they might mention f. e. gaining and ordering knowledge by researching and displaying objects for visitors, need to show a property in case of personal collections, collecting curiosities for fun and enjoyment, etc. The educator may mention some of them as first to trigger the discussion. They also talk about the criteria for arranging the collections which are f. e. scientific order (in case of the chest for medical preparations), size and shape of items (in case of the Egyptian cabinet), character of objects and whether they are more suitable to hang on a wall or put in space, need to evoke natural environment (both in case of the natural exhibition in the Bullock's Museum), etc. The educator facilitates the discussion and helps participants draw conclusions.</p>	
<p>Share your collection!</p>	<p>The activity has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will choose one photo from their smartphone gallery and share it with the others. The task is to look at the gathered images in the smartphone gallery through the perspective of collection - the photo should be a part of wider collection of similar shoots of things they are or were attracted by. The participants will also comment on them with a few sentences – tell the others why they have chosen the image and why they are attracted by these kinds of objects/situations/phenomena. The educator would go through them gradually. <p>(Participants might share the photos in a chat section or upload them into a created common online folder.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Afterwards, the educator leads participants to order the whole group's images collection, each of them implementing their own criteria. They might take inspiration from the pictures shown in the previous activity or invent their own, f. e. colour, character/features of the captured objects, mood etc. The educator will go through them briefly and emphasize the variety of approaches in categorizing the collection. 	<p>30 minutes</p>
<p>Tips sharing (artwork interpretation)</p>	<p>The educator introduces the activity as following: Almost every collector deals with questions about where to place the gradually increasing amount of collecting objects. It might be painful to get rid of some, but on the other hand, there is often no chance to keep them all at our</p>	<p>20 minutes</p>

place. There are several possibilities to solve this situation. Sharing some tips could be useful for the whole group.

Then the educator asks participants following questions:

- What do you do when there is no more space for increasing number of objects in your collection? Has it happened to you yet?
- Do you have any tips about how to overcome the lack of space for it?
- How do you feel when you need to get rid of some objects?

The educator might also add some tips if necessary: f. e. displaying only the most precious items from the collection while storing the others, photographing the objects with a camera and saving them only as digital files, creating something new from them, etc.

After summing-up briefly the tips from participants, the educator shows two artworks by Otis Laubert through a shared screen:

- The Fireman (Hasič):
https://www.webumenia.sk/en/dielo/SVK:NGN.F_42
- The Outsider (Aucájder):
https://www.webumenia.sk/en/dielo/SVK:SNG.IM_200

In the meantime s/he provides participants with a short context of Otis Laubert's (*1946) life and work. Further information about him can be found here: <http://www.artfond.sk/en/artists/artist/show/otis-laubert/>

The tasks for participants are:

- to look at both of his works closely and identify the variety of collected objects which he has included into his artworks (matches and pieces found on streets),
- to analyze a relationship between the artwork and its name, to try to formulate the connection between them and to describe emotions that this connection evokes (why they think the artist named the artwork involving matches on a blazer 'The Firemen' and unnecessary pieces hung on threads in a specially designed room 'The Outsider' and what kind of emotion it evokes),
- to sum up Otis Laubert's artistic strategy through which he enriches the collecting, while the educator lets the group discuss the possible inspiration from it. The educator asks questions like: What did the artist do with collected objects? How did he change them to the object with a new meaning? Could they imagine doing something similar with their collection?

At the end of the lesson, the educator shortly summarizes the main points of the topic and underlines that the discussed artworks and Laubert's approach might be inspiring in overcoming the increasing

number of objects with the playful and funny activity of putting them into new contexts.

Participants' feedback

Participants were asked to provide a brief feedback directly after the lesson in a short interview.

Educator's remarks

The participants worked very actively throughout the testing lesson. The implementation was executed with a group of six participants of the first year within the subject Photographic Practice at the secondary school of Scenic Arts. The participants had only a few occasions to see each other since the beginning of the school year due to the pandemic so they also appreciated the possibility to get to know each other better. At the end, they expressed interest and enjoyment even verbally. They also approved they did not see the collecting images in smartphones through the perspective of collecting. Originally, I had more examples of collections from Europeana prepared, but after the testing lesson I limited them to the final amount of 6 considering the time working with more participants than I had on the lesson.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](#) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.

Annex