

GARDEN DIORAMA

Gardens play an important role in East Asian art and culture. Traditionally, they were designed to look like smaller versions of actual landscapes found in nature. Images of such gardens are popular in East Asian art.

For this project, you will be using recyclable and natural materials to create your own mini garden.



The USC Pacific Asia Museum is home to a beautiful Chinese-inspired garden. A traditional Chinese garden features these four (4) elements:

- Water
- Plants
- Rocks
- Architecture

Take a look at the photos of the garden below and see if you can find these four elements. Is there more than one of each? What do you notice about each one?

Now imagine walking into the garden. What do you think it feels like to be there? Do you think you would feel happy or calm or peaceful? How are things arranged in the garden to make you feel that way?



USC Pacific Asia Museum

What is a diorama? A diorama is a display representing a scene or environment using three-dimensional figures. It can be big or small.

Questions to Inspire Your Artwork:

- How do you feel when you are out in nature?
- Is there a garden or park you visited in the past that inspires you? What did you like about it?
- What items do you often throw away that could be transformed into something else?

Materials Needed:

- Cardboard box, as big or as small as you desire
- Scissors
- Glue (white glue preferred for heavier items but glue stick works too!)
- Various paper (wrapping paper, construction paper, newspaper, printer paper, junk mail, etc)
- Dried or fresh flowers
- Leaves and twigs
- Rocks

Additional Supply Ideas:

- Used dryer sheets
- Straws
- String
- Rubber bands
- Cotton balls
- Fabric scraps
- Bottle caps
- Paint

Instructions:

Step 1

Gather your materials and decide on the size of your diorama. The example above was made out of an old tea bag package. If needed, cut the box to a desired size.



Step 2

Decide what you would like your garden scene to look like. You can use a photograph of a garden for reference or draw out your own design on a piece of scratch paper.

Step 3

Next, decide how you want to use the materials to create the different parts of your garden. For example, leaves and twigs can be used to make trees. Cotton balls or old dryer sheets can be gently torn apart to look like clouds. You can draw structures, like a small house or bridge, on paper and cut them out to include in the diorama. Adding layers of paper and materials will make your artwork come to life!

Step 4

Arrange these elements in your box. Play with different arrangements and decide which one you like best.

When you are ready, start gluing the items to your box. Start from the back and make your way forward. You can also paint or decorate the outside of the box with paper. Voila! Your garden diorama is ready to display and share with friends and family!



This project was designed by Kaitlin Lam, Education Assistant, for the USC PAM Education Department