

Memories in a Box

An activity of “Preserving dead animals helps us tell their story”.

Read the article, “Preserving dead animals helps us tell their story” (page 17, *What’s Up* August 2025) about the work of taxidermist Sita van Hoorn. Then, appreciate the work of a local taxidermist. Not all of us have the skills (or space) to preserve things in this way. And so, in Part 2, you can make a precious memory box instead.

Part A: A Local Taxidermist

1a) Watch the following video about a local taxidermist.

How I Reanimate the Dead with Taxidermy>>

➤ https://youtu.be/8Kkp0ceU_0I?si=28oRE6cuLLgpWV1A (OGS, Sep 1 2021)

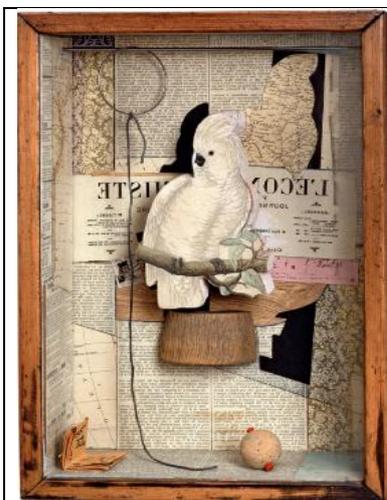
1b) Reflect on these questions.

- What does Vivian preserve and why?
- How is her work creative yet respectful?

Towards the end of the video, we can see Vivian’s beautiful, finished works displayed in boxes and frames. Each animal is carefully arranged and surrounded by meaningful details that tell its story. This attention to arrangement, using objects with symbolic meaning, and storytelling in a physical space, is also something that artists like Joseph Cornell are famous for.

Part B: Make a Memory Box

Joseph Cornell was a pioneer in a style of art known as **assemblage**. Like Vivian, Cornell tried to capture memories, dreams, and ideas inside boxes. Here are three examples of his work:



A Parrot for Juan Gris, (1953-54)



Pharmacy, (1943)



Habitat Group for a Shooting Gallery, (1943)

2a) Watch this video to learn how to make a Memory Senses Box inspired by Joseph Cornell's boxes.

Joseph Cornell-Inspired Box - Project #177

➤ https://youtu.be/IJR2I9pzpZw?si=XmFF1NJqNPA3EF_4

(UnitedArtAndEd, 8 Feb 2014)

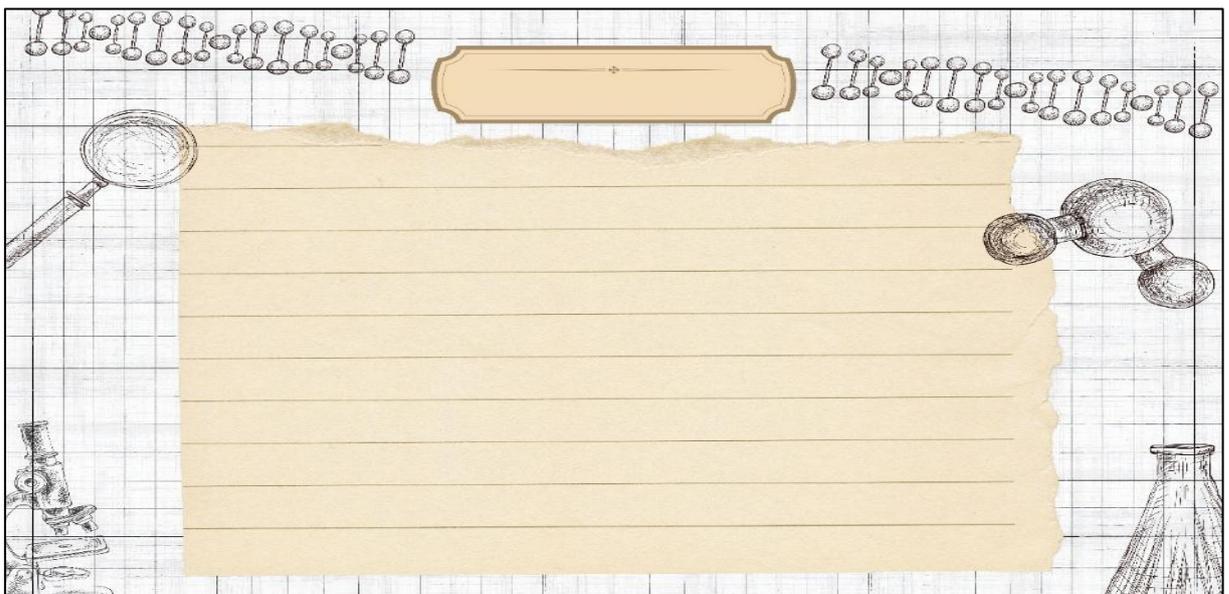
2b) Think of a memory you want to preserve. It could be of a pet, a favourite place, a special moment, or any other objects, themes, or ideas significant to you. Jot down your ideas about this memory here:



2c) Plan the assemblage by sketching objects here ↓.



2d) Give it a title and a short description ↓.



3. Construct your Memory Box assemblage. You can use a wooden frame meant for an assemblage, a small tray, or even cardboard box's cover as your base.