

# **Tzedakah Box Project**

**Grade 11 - 12**

**Found Art and Assemblage Unit Plan**

**by Shayne Train**

## **Overview and Description**

This unit is designed to increase students' awareness of both the act of Tzedakah, the obligation of righteous giving, and to explore creation through found objects and assemblage. The unit will also explore form and function, the use of symbols as a means of communication and present a number of contemporary Judaica and secular artists who use assemblage to create works of art.

This unit is specifically geared towards a Jewish Day School grade 11 or 12 class. The unit could also be presented as a study of the charitable practices of different societies or cultures. In a multi-cultural environment, students could explore the practices of their own religion or culture or choose to learn about another one.

## **Prior Knowledge**

Students should be familiar with the elements and principles of design.

## **Essential Questions:**

1. How do artists draw inspiration from their traditions? (theory)
2. How can I make a visual statement representing the theme of tzedakah? (creation)
3. How does the function of the tzedakah box affect the shape and design? (analysis)

## **Key Concepts**

- Use of assemblage and found objects as a sculptural medium
- Manipulation of different materials and adhesives in a safe and effective manner
- Explore the use of symbolism through found objects
- Understanding form as a design element
- Understanding of the creative process in relation to the chosen theme

# Strands & Curricular Expectations – Grade 11

## University/College Preparation

### Theory

- THV.01 use appropriate visual arts terminology in all areas of visual arts theory;**
- TH1.01 use appropriate terminology to discuss the art materials, techniques, and styles associated with art forms studied in this course;
- TH1.02 explain how the elements and principles of design reflected in a specific work of art support the concepts and ideas expressed through that work;

### Creation

- CRV.01 demonstrate through their studio assignments the ability to solve visual and conceptual problems;**
- CRV.02 produce original art works, using a variety of materials, tools, processes, and technologies appropriately;**
- CR1.03 use research material (including material obtained from the Internet) appropriately and extensively in the preparation stage of studio assignments;
- CR2.02 make assemblages or construction sculpture (using wood, wire, or textiles);
- CR2.03 apply the elements and principles of design to express a particular concept or idea;
- CR2.04 produce fine art, applied design, and craft forms that explore chosen themes or issues and that reflect informed design decisions;
- CR2.06 use equipment and art processes safely for specific fine art, craft, and applied design projects;
- CR3.01 use appropriate specialized terminology when discussing materials and processes;
- CR3.02 evaluate their choice and application of the materials and processes used in their work;
- CR3.03 document their creative process by including in their portfolios evidence of the research and resources they used, as well as their rough sketches, plans, revisions, and final art works;

### Analysis

- ANV.01 evaluate their own art works and those of others, demonstrating an understanding of the process of critical analysis and providing grounds for their aesthetic judgements;**
- AN1.02 use relevant concepts and appropriate terminology when analysing works of art;
- AN1.04 analyse the narrative, symbolic, and conceptual aspects of specific works of art;

# Strands & Curricular Expectations – Grade 12

## University/College Preparation

### Theory

- THV.01 use a wide range of appropriate terminology related to all areas of art theory to describe art works, crafts, and applied design forms;**
- TH1.01 demonstrate an understanding of ways in which formal qualities, visual conventions, concepts, & ideas shape expression in their own & others' art works;
- TH1.02 explain how the technical approaches and the elements and principles of design found in a specific work of art support the expression of ideas in that work and contribute to its function;

### Creation

- CRV.01 identify and develop ideas & concepts to shape and unify their own art works;**
- CRV.02 choose the materials, tools, techniques, themes, and processes best suited to their fine art, applied design, or craft forms, and use materials and tools safely;**
- CRV.03 produce a body of art work, using the stages of the creative process;**
- CR2.02 demonstrate competence in conceptual sculpture(e.g., installations, constructions, environmental sculptures)
- CR2.04 solve a series of artistic problems, showing an awareness of formal qualities, visual conventions, and relevant ideas and concepts;
- CR2.06 use materials, equipment, and processes safely when producing art works.
- CR3.01 use appropriate specialized terminology when discussing materials and processes;

### Analysis

- ANV.01 evaluate, individually and in groups, the effectiveness of their personal research, creative process, and art products;**
- ANV.04 explain the influence of aspects of social, cultural, and political contexts, including arts organizations, on the creation and understanding of fine art, applied design, and craft works;**
- AN1.02 analyse the visual, symbolic, and conceptual aspects of specific fine art, applied design, and craft works;
- AN1.03 explain the visual and conceptual aspects of art works in terms of the context (e.g., historical, social, political, economic) in which the works were created;
- AN2.01 explain how representational elements, the formal organization of visual content, and the expression of moods, feelings, and ideas are used in both the creation and the analysis of art works;
- AN2.05 analyse the relationship between the works of an artist or designer and his or her culture;

## Materials

variety of found objects and memorabilia, both natural and man-made  
glue gun, glue sticks (may be coloured), white glue, epoxy, Crazy Glue and/or Goop  
aluminum foil or other surface for hot glue gun  
wire  
armature for tzedakah box – can or box with openings to insert and remove coins  
variety of papers, magazines, pictures  
sketchbook and writing/drawing materials

## Procedure

### Planning Notes

- Two weeks before the hands-on component, introduce the concept of found art and assemblage. Students should keep a list of vocabulary used (see Appendix I) along with their definitions. Hand out assignment so that students have the opportunity to gather found objects.
- Show examples of art created using assemblage, including Tzedakah box images listed in resources. Students can discuss the artists' intentions and the choices in the choice of found objects.
- Choose a few representative works to analyze including the Tzedakah boxes of Dorion Liebgott and Melanie Siegel.
  - Describe the piece and its components (attached objects).
  - Analyze the sensory qualities of the work – texture, pattern, colour. Determine what principles the artist used to organize and unify the work.
  - Interpret the artist's message and ideas. What feeling does the piece convey?
  - Judgement – students give an opinion of the work.
- Discuss definition, purpose and meaning of symbols and how a found object can represent an idea. Students are asked to identify examples of symbols from their own lives, eg. traffic sign, religious symbols. What symbols could one use for the concept of Tzedakah?
- Form and Function – bring in a variety of objects, including Tzedakah boxes, and discuss how each affects the other. What makes an object art versus utilitarian?
- If available, show exemplars demonstrating levels of achievement.
- Take the students through a planning process. Take into consideration the time requirements. A guest artist or web research will show them the possibilities for design.
- Encourage student analysis and critique during the entire process.
- Student choose the objects they wish and start to plan their boxes. Demonstrate the safety procedures for using a glue gun. Smaller items can be glued on with white glue, larger items with a glue gun.

# Teaching / Learning Strategies.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

In this project you will create a Tzedakah box from found materials, combining them in a technique called assemblage. You will transform the surface of your box into a sculptural form. You will also document the process from ideas and design in your sketchbook and write a reflection on your completed work.

Due date for completed Tzedakah box, sketchbook and reflection :

### Getting Ready

1. **Choose a theme for your Tzedakah box.** It may be related to one of Rambam's eight levels of tzedakah, a holiday or event from the calendar, a Jewish value, a charitable organization of your choice or other topic that reflects the concept of Tzedakah. Use books, magazines and the Internet to examine the work of artists using assemblage and found objects as well as research your theme.
2. **Decide on your base.** Do you want to use the box or can armatures provided by the teacher or create your own bases for the Tzedakah box? The box must be functional, meaning you must be able to put in money and then take it out again.
3. **Collect found objects.** Look around your house or a dollar store for objects or materials that you can use to create a three-dimensional assemblage. Objects should be considered for their colour, texture, shape, etc. Try to collect more than one of some items for repetition or pattern.

You should not spend more than \$10.00 maximum on supplies. Please bring in any interesting material that you would be willing to share with classmates. Your material must be brought into the school by: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Creating your Tzedakah Box

4. **Consider designs.** Gather all your materials and move them around before deciding how to start. Play with textures, colours, and patterns, taking into consideration elements and principles of design. Also remember to consider your assemblage from various sides, including the interior of the box, if desired. Consider the function of a tzedakah box. What design do you think would be most successful in attracting people and encouraging them to donate?
5. **How will your finished work be displayed?** Tzedakah boxes can be hung on a wall or be freestanding on a table. What about hanging from the ceiling or from a frame? Take this into consideration when designing your box.

6. **Draw your designs.** Draw a minimum of 3 sketches of possible arrangements for your tzedakah box in your sketchbook. Use one page per drawing and include detail.
7. **Record your observations and ideas.** Include notes on why you have chosen certain objects, which design you feel works the best and why.
8. **Attach your objects** using the most appropriate method – glue, glue gun, wire, etc. Remember to follow the safety rules when using the glue gun and certain glues. Your Tzedakah box will be moved and touched (remember, it is a functional object) so whatever you attach should be fastened securely. Also work neatly, as sloppy workmanship, eg. glue drips, can detract from the overall effect of your box.
9. **Write a Reflection.** Once your Tzedakah box is completed, write a 1 –page (typed, double spaced) reflection on your project. Please include the following:
  - a. What theme did you choose and how does your piece reflect the given theme?
  - b. What is the significance of the found objects you have used?
  - c. What elements and principles of design did you incorporate into your box.
  - d. What problems did you encounter and how did you solve them?
  - e. What successes did you achieve? Analyze the effectiveness of your work.
  - f. What part of your sculpture would you change? Why? How would you change it?

## Assessment Plan

A variety of assessment techniques will be used throughout this unit. Formative assessment (feedback throughout the process) will be used in order to enhance and improve learning.

Process work will be assessed through anecdotal comments from the teacher .

The final product, the Tzedakah box, will be assessed through a rubric which will judge planning, complexity of composition, meaningful choices of imagery, technical skill in use of medium, use of elements of design, and an analysis of the artistic process used to complete the box.

## Cross-Curricular Connections

This unit could be presented together with a discussion of Tzedakah in other classes. The unit could also be used as part of a school special activity on Tzedakah or charity.

**Social Studies:** Students could explore the history of charity, or how other cultures view charity, compared to the Jewish view of Tzedakah.

**Jewish History, Ethics, Rabbis and Tanach:** Tzedakah could be explored from a historical viewpoint (the rise in various organizations) or from the point of view of Jewish obligation.

## Accommodations

Students who perceive symbolism in a literal way, may have difficulty in identifying symbols and creating their own. These students may be given a chart of symbols, which will assist them in making choices. Students may also be given choices listed in Appendix III – Themes.

A variety of materials can be made available for students with organizational difficulties who forget to bring in their own found materials. Students who have trouble making decisions may be paired with stronger students for brainstorming and feedback. Students who may have difficulty with certain tools and safety rules may use paper products and white glue to create their Tzedakah boxes.

## Unit Extension

Students could work together as a whole or in small groups to create communal Tzedakah boxes. They would discuss the various organizations to which they could contribute and choose an organization, which would then receive their work. They would design a box through discussion of appropriate symbols, aesthetics and function, using assemblage or other techniques.

# Resources

PowerPoint presentation on Tzedakah boxes at [www.bjetoronto.org/Ppt/tzedakahbox.ppt](http://www.bjetoronto.org/Ppt/tzedakahbox.ppt)

Examples of Tzedakah boxes or images of Tzedakah boxes with various materials from different time periods including attached images of work by Dorion Liebgott, Melanie Siegel and artist biographies.

## Books

Comins, Jeremy. *Art from Found Objects*. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1974.

Electa.Trash. *From Junk to Art*. Gingko Press, 1997.

Grenville, Bruce, Curator. *Toward a History of the Found Object*. Mendel Art Gallery, c1990.

Hume, Helen D. *Survival Kit for the Secondary School Art Teacher*. The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1990. (pages 36-38)

Lancaster, John. *Art with Found Materials*. F. Watts, 1992.

Rasmusen, Henry N. *Sculpture from Junk*. Reinhold, 1967

Spencer, Dorothy. *Found Object Art and the Artists*. B. Schiffer, 2001.

Stribling, Mary Lou. *Art from Found Materials, Discarded And Natural*. Crown, 1971.

Waldman, Diane. *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object*. H.N. Abrams, [1992]

## Web-Sites on Found Object Art / Assemblage

Note: As the Internet is constantly changing, all sites should be pre-checked by the teacher for appropriateness of content before allowing students to access these sites.

<http://collagemuseum.com/>

<http://outsider.art.org/lesson-plans/discarded-treasures.htm>

[http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Visual\\_Arts/Assemblage\\_Art/Artists/](http://www.dmoz.org/Arts/Visual_Arts/Assemblage_Art/Artists/)

[http://www.artsconnected.org/artsnetmn/inner/onofrio\\_lesson/index.html](http://www.artsconnected.org/artsnetmn/inner/onofrio_lesson/index.html)

## Jewish Symbols and Alphabet

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism\\_of\\_Judaism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_of_Judaism)

<http://www.jewfaq.org/signs.htm>

[http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/expand\\_subject.asp?id=23](http://www.wzo.org.il/en/resources/expand_subject.asp?id=23)

<http://www.ritualwell.org/Glossary/index.html>

<http://www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm>

## **Assemblage Artists**

Note: As the Internet is constantly changing, all sites should be pre-checked by the teacher for appropriateness of content before allowing students to access these sites.

**Anderson, Lois**

<http://www.artnetwork.com/sculpture/loisanderson/index.html>

**Brady, David**

<http://www.bradyart.com>

**Dewey Blocksma**

<http://www.degraaffineart.com/degraaf3/blocksma.html>

**Joseph Cornell**

<http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/cornell.htm>

**Chris Carman**

<http://christophercarman.homestead.com/>

**Marisol Escobar**

<http://www.the-artists.org/>

**Gail Kinniburgh Hanni (Canadian)**

<http://www.geocities.com/canadiancollage/>

**Wendy Heers:**

<http://www.degraaffineart.com/degraaf3/heers.html>

**Roger Hines**

<http://www.mindspring.com/~rogerhines/>

**Bonnie Meltzer**

<http://www.bonniemeltzer.com/>

**Jason Messier**

<http://www.jasonmecier.com/title.html>

**Judy Onofrio**

<http://www.judyonofrio.com>

**Kurt Schwitters**

[http://collagegallery.com/schwitters\\_retro.htm](http://collagegallery.com/schwitters_retro.htm)

**Ron Smith**

<http://www.degraaffineart.com/degraaf3/smith.html>

**Robert Rauschenberg**

[http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/education/lesson5\\_procedures.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/education/lesson5_procedures.html)  
(includes lesson plan)

# Appendix I

## Unit Terminology

<b>armature</b>	framework providing skeletal structure to a sculpture
<b>assemblage</b>	a sculptural art form in which natural or pre-made objects (including found objects) are assembled to create a work of art
<b>collage</b>	artistic composition made by applying a variety of papers or materials to a base surface.
<b>deconstruct</b>	to investigate and pull apart, for example find meaning in symbols
<b>embellishment</b>	additional ornamental or decorative features added to an object
<b>form</b>	an enclosed area that has or suggests volume; three-dimensional
<b>found object</b>	a natural or manmade object that is found (rather than constructed) and used in a work of art, although it was originally intended for other purposes
<b>kitsch</b>	cheap decorative objects or souvenirs.
<b>memoryware</b>	objects created using bits of personal memorabilia as surface decoration
<b>narrative</b>	the telling of a story
<b>relief</b>	a three-dimensional work of art (height, width and depth) that is not free standing and is often attached to a wall.
<b>sculpture</b>	a piece of art that has three dimensions (height, width, depth), free standing, meant to be viewed from all sides
<b>symbol</b>	a form or object representing something beyond its obvious meaning, for an example, an idea or concept
<b>texture</b>	the feel of the surface of something or the illusion of its touch

## Appendix II

### **I'm Stuck on You!**

#### ***Safety Instructions for Glue Gun and Glue***

You will be using a variety of glues to fasten your found art to the Tzedakah box surface. Your choice of glue has to do with the type of material you are gluing, the surface to which it is being glued and the weight of the object.

★ **Rule One:** Don't stick your fingers together if using a superglue. But if you do, soak your fingers in warm, soapy water and then roll or peel them apart (don't pull!). You can also use nail polish remover with acetone on a q-tip to get yourself unstuck.

★ **Rule Two:** Some glues such as Goop have noxious fumes and need to be used in a well-ventilated area, i.e. outside or beside an open window. Read the labels on any glue before using.

### **Glue Gun - Hot! Hot! Hot!**

Use for metals, wood and hard plastic and larger objects. The heat of a glue gun may melt Styrofoam or plastic film.

- Do not touch the heated nozzle of the glue gun or the melted glue.
  - Unplug the glue gun immediately after you are finished using it.
  - Never leave a plugged in glue gun unattended.
  - Only use the glue gun in a tidy and absolutely dry area – never by the sink!
  - Never rest glue gun on its side when plugged in. Use wire stand or tin foil.
1. Plug in glue gun.
  2. Insert glue stick into gun.
  3. Wait 3 minutes for gun to heat up.
  4. Squeeze trigger of gun with continuous pressure to release glue. Control the amount of glue with pressure.
  5. Glue from the glue gun is not invisible. Use only a small amount so the glue doesn't squish out underneath your object and ruin the effect.
  6. Unused portion of glue stick should remain in gun. Don't try to take it out.

## Appendix III: THEMES

Students may want to consider some of the following theme ideas when designing their Tzedakah boxes. A theme can be used by the whole class or for individual inspiration.

- box in the style of a famous artist – if an artist designed a tzedakah box, what would it look like. Can use Gordon's survey of the most influential artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- depict a holiday or event from the Jewish calendar
- choose a Jewish value to depict
- contemporary Israeli artists and identity
- Rambam's eight levels of charity
- cross curricular – social action/tikun olam
- history of embellishments in synagogues through the ages
- symbols
- choose a charitable organization and design box for their particular work, eg. JNF would have a tree theme
- related to time – eg. futuristic