



Museums are special places. They can take many forms, and one of the most common is as a space to hold and display works of art. The New Mexico Museum of Art is a state museum, which means it belongs to everyone who lives in New Mexico. Staff at the Museum work hard to take care of and share with everyone the treasures that live in the Museum's collection.

Museums are not the only places that show works of art. Many people collect artwork and objects to display in their homes. From handmade coffee mugs, to children's drawings, to precious stones, to paintings and more, people tend to surround themselves with works that are pleasing to look at, or make them think in a new way, or that remind them of an important event or person. There is no one reason why people collect and appreciate art, but it is a very important part of life!

In this activity series, we will help you to pretend that your home is a museum! First, we will show you how to create display labels for the artwork in your home. Next, we will tell you how to curate your own exhibition with the objects in your collection. You can even act as a docent and give tours to your family, pets, and more. Finally, we have an easy craft to share with you that will allow you to make your own object display case.

# New Mexico Museum of Art

## Create your own labels


Inspiration for this activity comes from [luci creative](https://lucicreative.com/future-exhibit-designers-5-fun-at-home-make-a-museum-activities-for-kids/?fbclid=IwAR0H0N6mmBxwn8L1rNUR0mChQDHXkiysnD2N-HOnTsw8nMsx2pfu_rNUzfU), who came up with a lot of excellent ideas for aspiring exhibition designers. If you want more after this activity series, please go online and visit their post: [https://lucicreative.com/future-exhibit-designers-5-fun-at-home-make-a-museum-activities-for-kids/?fbclid=IwAR0H0N6mmBxwn8L1rNUR0mChQDHXkiysnD2N-HOnTsw8nMsx2pfu\\_rNUzfU](https://lucicreative.com/future-exhibit-designers-5-fun-at-home-make-a-museum-activities-for-kids/?fbclid=IwAR0H0N6mmBxwn8L1rNUR0mChQDHXkiysnD2N-HOnTsw8nMsx2pfu_rNUzfU)

Typically, when an object is displayed in a museum, a label goes with it to help viewers learn about it. The information can be different, depending on the museum and/or type of object. At the New Mexico Museum of Art, we include the following information in almost all of our labels:



Image credit: Betty Hahn, *Let Me Explain*, 1998,  
lithograph with photocopy, photo transfer and chine collé,  
19 3/8 x 26 7/8 in.

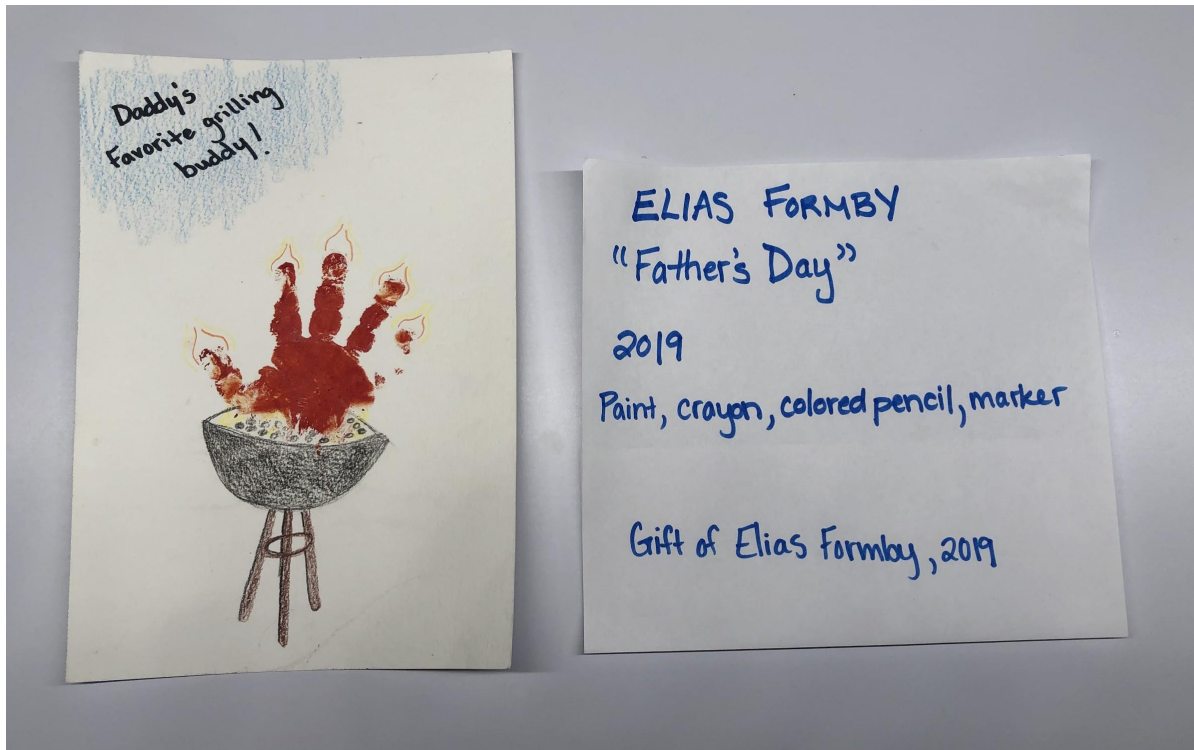
Collection of the New Mexico Museum of Art.  
Gift of Betty Hahn, 2010 (2010.24.1) © Betty Hahn.  
Photo by Cameron Gay.

- The artist(s)' name(s) → **Betty Hahn**
- The title of the work → ***Let Me Explain***
- The date when the work was created → 1998
- Materials, or what the work is made of → Lithograph, with photocopy, photo transfer and chine collé
- Gift acknowledgement, or did a person or museum give this work to the Museum as a gift →  GIFT OF BETTY HAHN, 2010  
MUSEUM NUMBER 2010.24.1
- Who owns the work (Sometimes the Museum borrows work from other museums or people who have collections in their homes.)

Though we don't typically include this information at NMMoA, some museums provide the dimensions (sizes) of the artwork.

Sometimes, but not always, labels will include a few paragraphs that give information about a work of art and why it was selected to go with the other artwork in the room.

## Let's get started creating labels for your artwork!



1. Pick out one work of art you find in your home. Remember, this could be a drawing you made; a photograph of a family member; clay sculpture or mug. Art can take many forms!
2. Who is the artist? If you don't know, you can list them as "unknown" or "anonymous."
3. What is the title? If you don't know, or the work does not have a title, make it up! If you are writing by hand, put the title in quotation marks (" "); on the computer, you can put the title in *italics*.
4. Date: when was this work created? As before, ask around if you don't know, but you can leave it blank if necessary.
5. What is the artwork made of? Clay? Paint? Pencil? Is it a photograph? A video? Do your best to figure it out. Ask a parent or family member. Look it up online, if you have access. If you can't determine what it is, leave that line empty. It's also okay to be general; for example, you can say "paint" if you don't know the specific type (oil, acrylic, watercolor, etc.)



6. Finally, was the artwork a gift to your family? If so, give them credit by writing “Gift of \_\_\_\_\_,” and including the date it was gifted. In the example above, Elias Formby gifted this artwork to his Dad on Father’s Day of 2019.
7. Optional: What are the dimensions of the work? Dimensions let us know the size, or how big or small the work is. To figure this out, you can use a ruler or tape measure. For 2D works (such as drawings, paintings, or photographs), you will need to measure the length and width. For example, if the length (vertical) is eight inches and the width (horizontal) is ten inches, you will write it out as 8” x 10” or 8 x 10 inches. Either way is fine, just be sure to do it the same way for all of your labels! If your work is three dimensional (such as a sculpture), you will also need to measure how deep the work is. If your label is for a video, instead of inches you will need to write down how many minutes and seconds the video lasts.
8. Optional: Write a few sentences (or more) about this work and why it is in your collection. In a future activity, you will be curating an exhibition, and you can add more text to this label explaining why you selected the work to be included in your show!

Keep these labels in a safe place. With your parent/guardian’s permission, you could hang them next to the work of art they describe, or just put them in a folder for now. Next week we will do a second activity all about curating from your collection to put together an exhibition!



Image by Cameron Gay

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