



You Are My Valentine: Valentines at Sea



Sailor's Valentine, © Mystic Seaport, 1996.87.2

Author: Laurie Sweet, Regional 6: Warren, James Morris, and Goshen Center Elementary Schools

Subject: Art

Grade Levels: 5 or multiage 5/6

Timeframe: 4 – 45 minute sessions

Introduction: *In the 19th Century sailors often visited islands often for trading of goods, restocking ships, or touring islands. Peddlers were eager to sell keepsakes such as a shell mosaic or “sailor’s valentines.” A sailor’s valentine is made in a shallow box displaying seashells arranged in a radial design incorporating geometric patterns. Valentines were occasionally made by sailors at sea who were homesick for their loved ones. More often than not, local peddlers would make the elaborate shell art to sell for profit.*

Content Standards:

- CTSS.INQ 3–5.7 Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources in response to compelling questions.
- VA.Cr2.3.5a Identify, describe, and visually document places and/or objects of personal significance.
- VA.Re7.1.5a Compare one’s own interpretation of a work of art with the interpretation of others.

Compelling Questions:

- How do objects, places, and design shape lives and communities?
- How did Sailor’s Valentines show what sailors cherished or valued?

Supporting Question #1

How does knowing the context history and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design?

Supporting Question #2

How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? What can we learn from our responses to art?

Objectives for Inquiry: Students will...

- Generate and create a modern day Sailor’s Valentine using materials of their choice incorporating radial design.
- Students will give their valentine to a loved one or to a member of the community, such as a senior at a local senior center.
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Materials/Resources needed for students:

Source #1: Sailors’ Valentines, Johnson, Jennifer Sheperd, Log of Mystic Seaport, Vol. 43, no. 4. (Winter, 1992): 106-107. (This is in the supplements.)

Source #2 (optional): Sailor’s Valentine Welcoming the *Morgan* to Provincetown (photos)

<https://www.mysticseaport.org/voyage/provincetown/sailors-valentine/>

Inquiry Activity

- [Object Observation Worksheet](#) using Sources #1 and #2.
- Post-It Note Brainstorming Session: Collaborate with a partner. What materials could you use to make a Sailor's Valentine (recycled, organic, etc.)? Post your list/note on a grid taped to the wall.
- Class dialogue and share.
- Make a plan/sketch of your design.
- Bring in a collection of materials. These may be commonly found materials, even recycled items.

Communicating Conclusions/Taking Informed Action

Communication/Action #1: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

- [Object Observation Worksheet](#)
- Post-It Note Brainstorming Session: Collaborate with a partner. What materials could you use (recycled, organic, etc)? Post your note on a grid taped to the wall.
- Pair Share/Group Share (Dialogue)
- Sketch a plan

Communication/Action #2: SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

- Collaborative Contemporary Sailors' Valentine incorporating radial design and innovative materials. (Rubric)
- Gallery Walk and Talk
- Meet and greet a senior for presentation of Valentines.

Source Materials

Websites:

- [Jane Austin's How to Make a Sailor's Valentine](#)
- [A Contemporary Artist of Today Making a Sailors' Valentines](#)
- [Mystic Seaport Library](#)
- [Mystic Seaport for Educators](#)

Mystic Seaport: The Morgan Sets Sail 2014

<http://www.mysticseaport.org/voyage/>

The Sailor's Valentine History

<http://www.thesailorsvalentine.com/history.html>

Sanibel artist Pamela Boynton makes Sailor's Valentines

<http://www.news-press.com/videos/life/2016/06/08/85616262/>

Books/Articles: Sailors' Valentines, Johnson, Jennifer Sheperd, *Log of Mystic Seaport*, Vol. 43, no. 4. (Winter, 1992): 106-107.

<http://library.mysticseaport.org/initiative/ImText.cfm?BibID=43045&ChapterId=1>

Things to do/Places to visit: Mystic Seaport, Stonington, CT