



*Discovering the Story:  
A City and Its Culture*

*Create Your Own  
Sculptural Headboard*

An Art Enrichment Activity  
for Grades 9-12

Based on *Bedstead*  
by Benn Pitman, Adelaide Nourse  
Pitman and Elizabeth Nourse

Benn Pitman (1822-1910), designer; Adelaide Nourse Pitman (1859-93), carver; and Elizabeth Nourse (1859-1938), painter  
*Bedstead*. c. 1882-83

Gift of Mary Jane Hamilton in memory of her mother Mary Luella Hamilton, made possible through Rita S. Hudepohl, Guardian, 1994.61

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## OBJECTIVES

- Students will create a relief sculpture “Headboard” that takes inspiration from the form and concept of the Pitman *Bedstead*.
- Students will have the opportunity to share their project with members of the Cincinnati Art Museum staff during the videoconference.

## TEACHER PREPARATION

### MATERIALS

- Cardboard of varying sizes and thicknesses
  - A piece of larger corrugated cardboard at least 2’x1’ for each student for the structure of the “Headboard”
  - Other scraps of corrugated and thinner cardboard for creating the relief decoration (may be gathered from packing boxes, cereal boxes, paper towel and toilet paper tubes, etc.)
  - Larger scraps of thicker cardboard to protect tabletops from blade cuts
- Glue
- Other attachment devices such as tape and twist ties
- Scissors
- Utility knife and extra blades
- Paint (optional)

### BRAINSTORMING

- Take a few minutes to ask questions to help students generate ideas. Write their answers on a chalkboard or large piece of paper. Sample questions: What helps make the Pitman *Bedstead* interesting? What are some of your favorite details on it? What are some of the symbols contained in it? What additional symbols would be interesting to add to it?
- Stress the mixture of high and low relief in the Pitman *Bedstead*, and that their challenge is to capture similar variety with cardboard in their projects. Their goals should be to create a piece that is not only interesting from the front, but is interesting from the side as well. They should also seek to make interesting forms with the material. Put students into small groups of 3-5. Give them cutting materials and cardboard scraps. Give them fifteen minutes to make as many different kinds of sculptural forms as they can from the flat scraps. After the fifteen minutes are up, have students tack them along the wall and discuss the different methods and results. How were forms created? By fringing the cardboard? Curling sections of it? Making slotted forms? Stacking numerous sections? Leave the samples up for reference as they are working on the project.

## PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Distribute the larger pieces of cardboard. Students can shape the exterior of the larger pieces with scissors if they wish.
- Cut and create sculptural forms of designs or recognizable objects.
- Attach the sculptural elements to the “Headboard” structure. Consider how the “Headboard” relates back to the subject area lesson.

Teachers can reference a photo of a sculptured headboard on the Website:

- [Front view](#)
- [Detail view](#)
- [Side view](#)

## DISCUSSION/PREPARATION FOR VIDEOCONFERENCE

Find a place in the room to display the “Headboards.” Take a look at them from the front and the sides. If possible, shine a light source on them to emphasize interesting shadows. Ask students which ones are most effective and why. Ask students to talk about how they made choices on their project in terms of manipulating materials, making forms, and exploring symbols. Do they think about the Pitman *Bedstead* differently now? If so, how? Ask them to come up with questions they would like to ask someone at the Cincinnati Art Museum about the *Bedstead* during the [videoconference](#).

*“How important are the visual arts in our society? I feel strongly that the visual arts are of vast and incalculable importance. Of course I could be prejudiced. I am a visual art.”*

Kermit the Frog, muppet

# ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

## NATIONAL STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

### Level IV Grades 9-12

**Standard 1:** Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

**Benchmark 1:** Applies media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that one's intentions are carried out in artworks.

**Benchmark 2:** Understands how the communication of ideas relates to the media, techniques, and processes one uses.

**Standard 2:** Knows how to use structures (e.g., sensory qualities, organizational principles, expressive features) and functions of art.

**Benchmark 1:** Understands how the characteristics and structures of art are used to accomplish commercial, persona, communal, or other artistic intentions.

**Benchmark 2:** Understands the effectiveness of various artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions.

**Benchmark 3:** Knows how organizational principles and functions can be used to solve specific visual arts problems.

**Standard 3:** Knows a range of subject matter, symbols, and potential ideas in the visual arts.

**Benchmark 1:** Understands how visual, spatial, temporal, and functional values of artworks are tempered by culture and history.

**Benchmark 2:** Applies various subjects, symbols, and ideas in one's artworks.

**Standard 4:** Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

**Benchmark 1:** Knows a variety of historical and cultural contexts regarding characteristics and purposes of works of art.

**Benchmark 2:** Knows the function and meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.

**Benchmark 3:** Understands relationships among works of art in terms of history, aesthetics, and culture.

**Standard 5:** Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others.

**Benchmark 1:** Identifies intentions of those creating artworks.

**Benchmark 2:** Understands some of the implications of intention and purpose in particular works of art.

**Benchmark 3:** Knows how specific works are created and relate to historical and cultural contexts.

**Benchmark 4:** Understands how various interpretations can be used to understand and evaluate works of visual art.

## OHIO STANDARDS: VISUAL ARTS

### Grades 9-12

**Creative Expression and Communication:** Students create artworks that demonstrate understanding of materials, processes, tools, media, techniques, and available technology. They understand how to use art elements, principles, and images to communicate their ideas in a variety of visual forms.

**Benchmark A:** Demonstrates mastery of materials, concepts, and personal concentration when creating original artworks.

**Benchmark B:** Creates expressive artworks that demonstrate a sense of purpose and understanding of the relationship between materials, techniques, and ideas.

**Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts:** Students understand the impact of visual art on the history, culture, and society from which it emanates. They understand the cultural, social, and political forces that, in turn, shape visual art communication and expression. Students identify the significant contributions of visual artists to cultural heritage. They analyze the historical, cultural, social, and political contexts that influence the function and role of visual art in the lives of people.

**Benchmark A:** Explains how and why visual art forms develop in the contexts in which they were made (e.g., social, historical, and political).

**Benchmark B:** Compares works of art to one another in terms of the historical, cultural, social, and political influences evident in the works.

**Benchmark C:** Explains the characteristics and content of culturally and historically representative artworks to demonstrate understanding of how visual art reflects historical issues, events, and cultural traditions.

**Connections, Relationships and Applications:** Students connect and apply their learning of visual art to the study of other art areas and disciplines outside the arts. They understand relationships between and among concepts and ideas that are common across subjects in the curriculum. Students recognize the importance of lifelong learning and experience in visual art.

**Benchmark B:** Formulates and solves a visual art problem using strategies and perspectives from other disciplines.

**Analyzing and Responding:** Students identify and discriminate themes, media, subject matter, and formal technical and expressive aspects in works of art. They understand and use the vocabulary of art criticism to describe visual features, analyze relationships, and interpret meanings in works of art. Students make judgment about the quality of works of art using the appropriate criteria.

**Benchmark A:** Applies the knowledge and skills of art criticism to conduct in-depth analyses of works of art.

**Benchmark C:** Critiques their own work and the works of peers and other artist on the basis of the formal, technical, and expressive aspects in the works.