

Cookie Tin Decoration

Colourful patterns on household objects inspired by Maud Lewis

Lesson plan prepared by Priya Jasmine Andrade for the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia.

Suggested grade / age levels

Grades Primary – 3 (Ages 5 – 8)

Introduction

Maud Lewis is one of Nova Scotia's best-known folk artists. Her cheerful and unique paintings of simple patterns featuring flowers, birds, animals, and scenes from her local community of Digby County, are a cherished reminder of Maritime life gone by. Maud took great pleasure sharing her paintings with people. Her joy for painting can also be seen inside her tiny home, in which she painted almost every surface, embellishing walls and objects with her own personal touch.



Maud Lewis, *Painted Cookie Tin with Flowers*, c 1960s, Oil on metal, 21.0 x 15.8 x 15.8 cm. Purchased by the Province of Nova Scotia, 1984

In this artwork, Maud began by painting a secondary colour – green for the background. The focus of this design is the bright orange flowers. Maud painted a selection of large, well-defined flowers and some smaller, less detailed flowers to create variation in the overall design. She creates depth by adding dark orange to the petals. Brown lines between each petal help to define the shapes in the larger flowers.

In this activity, we invite you to choose a container from the kitchen or your home that you would like to embellish and reflect on how it can become unique to you. Be inspired by the bold colours, engaging subject matter and painting techniques used by Maud Lewis to create your own work of art.

*We do not recommend using the tin or container for food after decorating it.

Set Up

- Access to a sink
- Desk/table covers, like newsprint or vinyl tablecloths
- Paper towel and containers for water and paint
- Clothing suitable for painting, or aprons.

Materials

- White paint or gesso (leftover white latex interior house paint can also be used)
- Clean and dry cookie tins, jars
- Acrylic paints
- Paint brushes in a variety of sizes
- Paint palettes (such wax paper taped to a sheet of cardboard, Styrofoam trays or plates, plastic lids)

Process

- If you're using a cookie tin, begin by priming it with 1-2 layers of white paint or gesso to cover any existing patterns on the tin. Let paint dry between layers.
- Set up your palette and choose your paint colours. Set up all primary colours (red, yellow and blue) with some black, white and brown paint.

- With a small amount of paint, practice mixing your secondary colours.

- Red + Yellow = Orange
- Blue + Yellow = Green
- Red + Blue = Purple.

Adding slightly more of any one primary colour will make the secondary colour lighter or darker. For example, more blue than yellow paint will make dark green.

- With a small amount of white and black paint, practice mixing tints and shades to your palette. White paint will lighten the colour (tint) and black will darken (shade) but be aware that adding black and white paint can make the colours gray.
- Mix your chosen secondary colour for the background and paint your tin. Let it dry.
- Add your chosen pattern design using your primary colours and your secondary colours. For example: a daisy could start with a yellow circle in the middle, followed by a ring of orange petals around the yellow circle. Enjoy alternating between choosing primary and secondary colours in painting your patterns.
- Outline parts of your pattern with black or brown paint to enhance the contrast of your colours.

Resources

About Maud Lewis - <https://www.artgalleryofnovascotia.ca/maud-lewis>