

YOUR MOJO SECRETS

Betye Saar, *Nine Mojo Secrets*, 1971. Mixed media assemblage, 49.75" x 23.5" x 1.75".
California African American Museum. Purchased by Foundation from Olga Addlerly in 1989

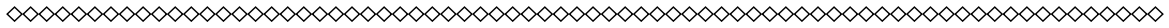


In *Nine Mojo Secrets* (1971), the artist Betye Saar used found objects to explore ancestral veneration, rituals, and symbolism from various traditional spiritual practices. Saar was inspired specifically by African art, utilizing various iconographic images and objects that represent power, healing, and magic. She combined personal symbols such as the lion that represents the artist's astrological sign (Leo) with references to Africa such as a magazine photograph of a traditional religious ceremony, as well as images with broad cultural significance like the all-seeing eye, the moon, and stars.

How might creating your own version of *Nine Mojo Secrets* help you learn more about yourself and your family lineage?

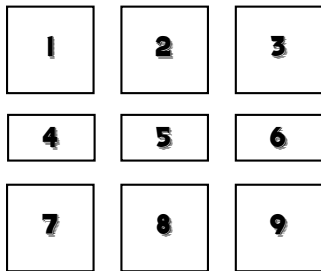
RECOMMENDED FOR AGES 8 AND UP

For this project, you will create an assemblage, which is a form of art made of everyday found objects, arranged in ways that suggest new meanings.



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Find a shoebox or another cardboard box. If using a cardboard box, cut off the flaps so you have a box with four sides and a bottom.
2. Gather materials you would like to include in the assemblage. For example, you may wish to include your favorite pictures, shapes, or forms.
3. Draw squares and rectangles in your box like the diagram below.



4. Trace your hand in the middle of box #5. Color your hand using your favorite color.
5. Apply images cut from a magazine of your choice and add them to boxes #4 and #6.
6. Find out what your astrological sign is by asking a grown-up or searching the internet. Draw your astrological sign in box #8.
7. Use glue to add found objects to boxes #7 and #9.
8. Draw 3 or 4 moons and/or stars using colored pencils or crayons in boxes #1–#3.
9. Using tape, attach a personal amulet—which is an ornament or small piece of jewelry thought to give protection against evil, danger, or disease—to the bottom of the box.

Supplies:

crayons, scissors, glue stick, colored pencils, found objects (things you like at home), family photos, old magazines that you can cut into, tape

REFLECTION

Invite your friends and family at home to view your piece and to discuss the ways in which your work is similar to Saar's. Be sure to discuss how the assemblage reflects your astrological sign and your amulet of protection.