

A Curious Cabinet

Use this worksheet to explore an interactive about a 17th-century “cabinet of curiosities” known as the *Display Cabinet*. Cabinets of curiosity were used to store and display rare and exotic objects, such as gems and shells. The interactive is available online at www.getty.edu and at the Getty Center in the Museum’s North Pavilion, Gallery N102, next to the real cabinet. When using the interactive, click and drag your cursor across the screen to rotate the virtual cabinet.

The Makings of a Cabinet

Many rare and beautiful materials were used to make the *Display Cabinet*. Browse through the numbered sections in the interactive and click on “Show Labels” to learn more about the cabinet’s materials. Choose your favorite material from each of the cabinet’s sides. Then complete the table below.

Location on cabinet	Favorite material	Describe the appearance of the material. Consider its color, texture, and pattern.	How is the material used in the cabinet’s structure or design?
Front			
Back			
Left side			
Right side			




Work with a Partner: After completing the table above, compare the materials used to make the 17th-century cabinet and materials used in cabinets you have seen in a home.

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Materials with Meaning

Artists choose their materials for various reasons. Some of the materials used to make this cabinet were selected for their colors, or because they were believed to have magical powers.

Locate the following details of the cabinet in the interactive. Read about the scene or symbol depicted in each detail listed below and speculate why the cabinet's designer chose the material for each scene or symbol.

Detail	Material	Why do you think the designer chose this material for the detail?
Look for this detail on the front of the cabinet.		
	moss agate	
Look for this detail on the front of the cabinet.		
	bloodstone	
Look for this detail on the cabinet's right side.		
	landscape rock	

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Scenes and Symbols

Drag and rotate the virtual cabinet in the interactive. Read about the scenes and symbols depicted on each side. Sketch or describe some of the symbols and scenes you see.

Front	Back	Left side	Right side

Work with a Partner: After completing the table above, discuss: What similarities can you find among the symbols and scenes? Are similar stories or themes conveyed?



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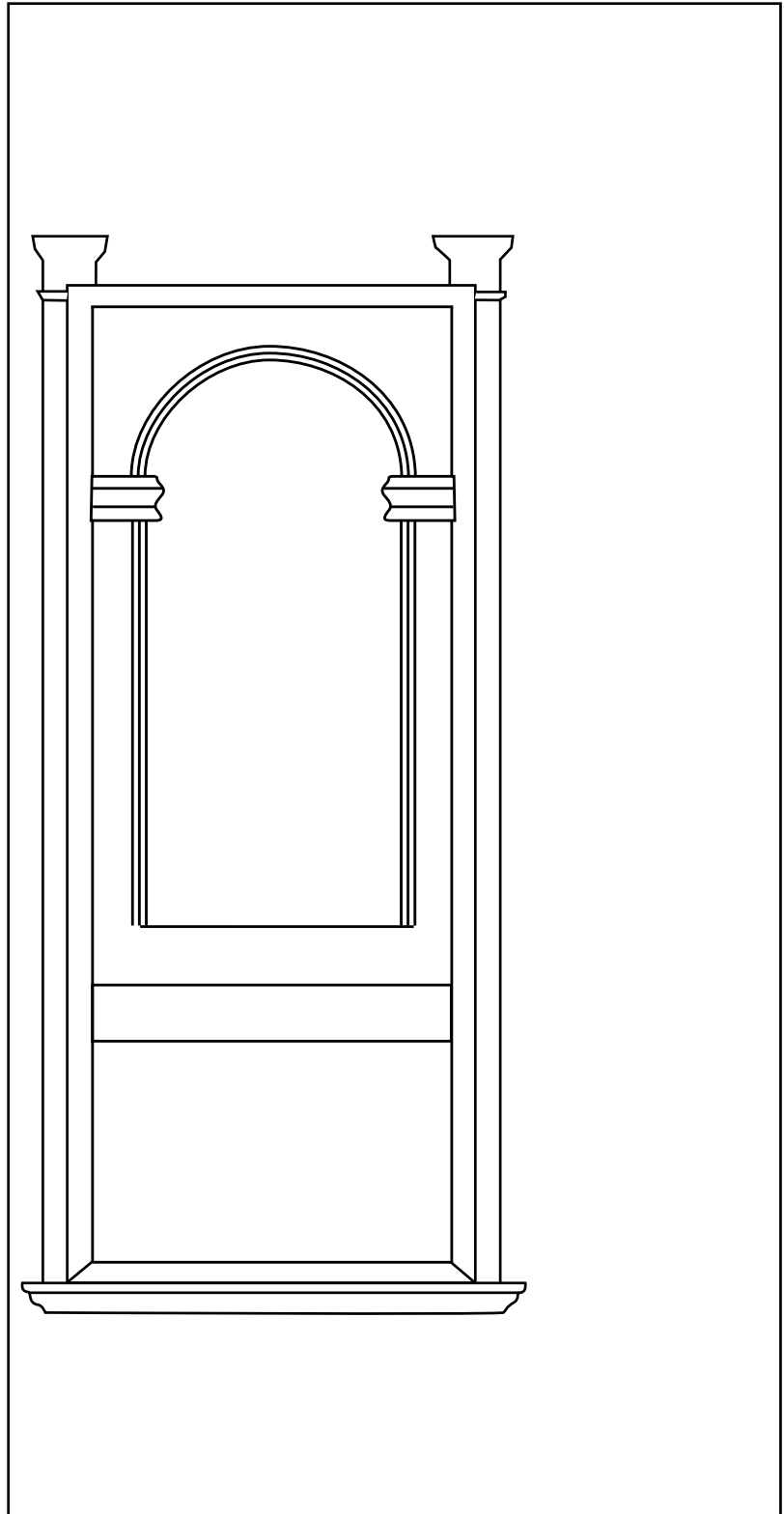
A Design for Your Cabinet

Imagine that you could commission (or hire) a cabinetmaker to design a cabinet for you. How would you want to decorate the outside of your cabinet?

Work with a Partner:

Brainstorm ideas for images that could decorate the outside of your cabinet. What central theme would you want to convey? What symbols or images could convey your theme?

Here is one of the doors of your cabinet. Draw symbols or scenes in the panel.

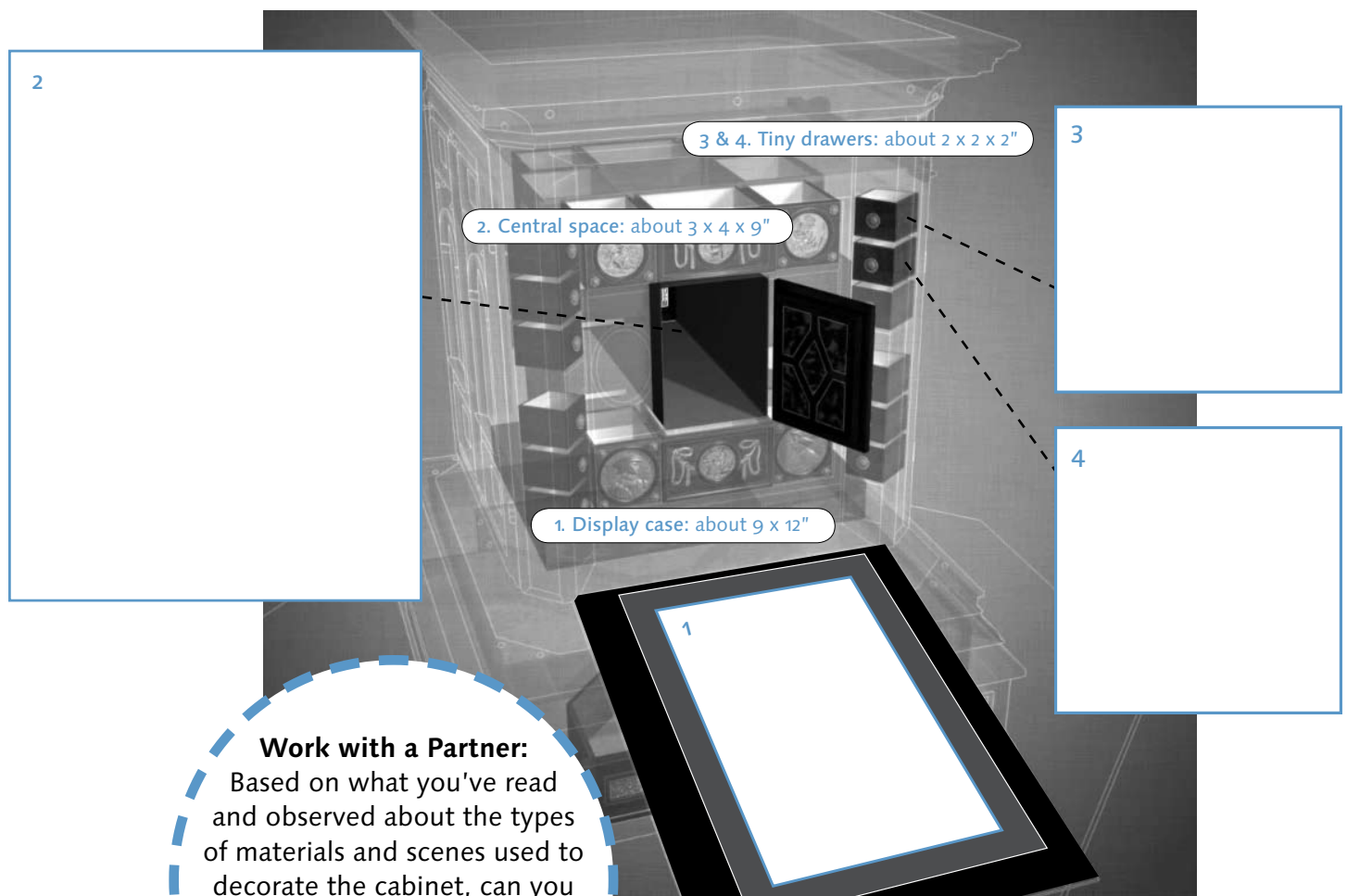


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Collecting in the Past

This cabinet was designed to store rare and exotic objects collected by the cabinet's owner. Some of the symbols depicted on the cabinet may relate to the objects that would have been stored inside its drawers. For example, the medallions on the left side reference the cabinet's function of storing and presenting collectibles.

Consider the theme of nature depicted on the left side of the cabinet. Look closely at the size and shape of the compartments highlighted below. Based on the theme depicted and/or the structure of the compartments, what rare and exotic objects do you think would have been stored in these spaces? Draw those items in the four blank spaces below.



Work with a Partner:
Based on what you've read and observed about the types of materials and scenes used to decorate the cabinet, can you guess what kind of person the owner of the cabinet was? How would you describe his or her interests?

