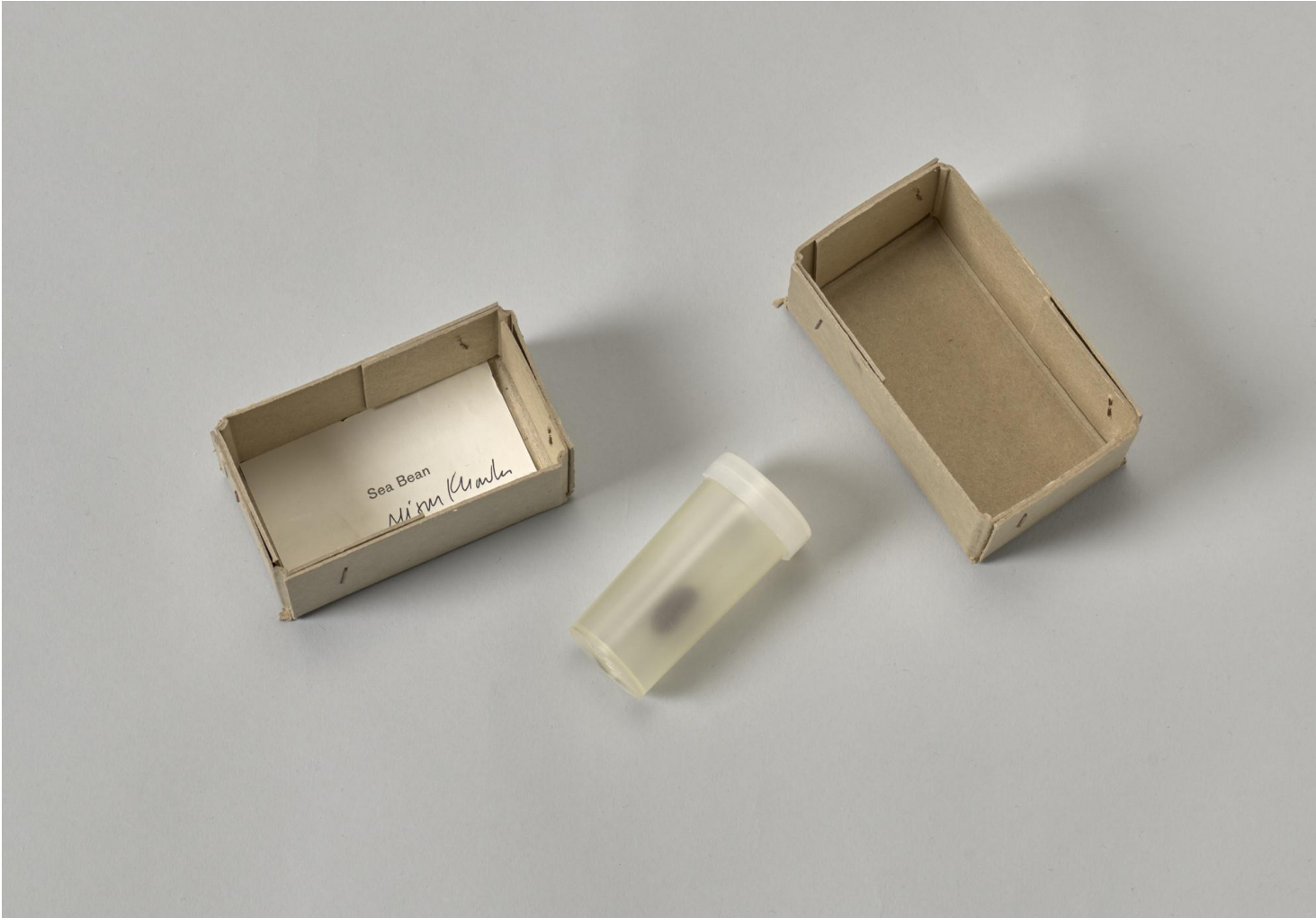


Mondays with MoMA



MoMA



Step 1 Look closely

Questions

1. Look at the image on the first page.
What do you imagine is in the box?
2. Look at the image on the second page
(see more detailed images [here](#)). How
would you describe what you see?

Step 2 Learn more

The artist Alison Knowles used ordinary things such as books, beans, shoes, and strings to engage her audience's senses.

She often used dried beans in her art, putting them in different containers like tea tins, big pipes used as rain sticks, and large boxes where a person could lie down in the beans. She also wrote poetry inspired by the sound of beans. This work, *Sea Bean*, consists of a cardboard box containing a bean in a plastic container and printed instructions that read:

*empty out the bean
put cylinder to the ear
hear the sea.*

Knowles said there was no grand symbolism in beans, "During the war years, especially if one didn't have a lot of money, beans were a staple. I knew how to cook all different types of beans and feed sometimes large groups of people. ... The thing I like, too, is that I can go over the world, and there'd always be beans. There might not be meat, there might not be whiskey, but there'll be beans."



Volkswagen of America is proud to be MoMA's lead partner of education.

Generous support for School and Teacher Programs is provided by the Carroll and Milton Petrie Education Program Endowment, the William Randolph Hearst Endowment Fund, and the Mimi and Peter Haas Endowment Fund for Elementary School Programs.

Additional funding is provided by the Ducommun and Gross Family Foundation and by the Annual Education Fund.

Step 3 Activity: Imagined activity for an everyday object

Materials: found objects, small containers, paper, pencil or pen

1. Find a box or container.
2. Select an everyday object and place it inside the box.
3. On a piece of paper, write a poem or a set of instructions that describes the object and gives ideas about how to engage with it.
4. Either place the paper inside the box with the object or affix it to the outside.

Step 4 Share!

Share your box with a friend or classmate and see how they react to it. Or you can email it to us at MoMA:
schoolprograms@moma.org.

Image: Alison Knowles. *Sea Bean*. 1978. Cardboard box containing a bean in a plastic container and printed instructions. Publisher: Edition Hundertmark. Edition 80. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. © 2022 Alison Knowles