

The revival of a 1,000 year-old storytelling art: **the Crankie!**

by Vicky Ness

You might never have heard of a crankie (or krankie) before, but you may well have seen one in school when you were a small child. It involves a long, illustrated scroll of paper that is wound around a spool. The end is attached to a second spool. Both are put into a box with a viewing window cut out of the center. As you tell a story, you simply turn (or “crank”) the scrolls so that the paper moves across from one spool to the other, making the illustrations flow across the opening in the box while you tell a story.



Folk artists are reviving the art of creating crankies, some of which are illuminated and use shadow puppets in addition to the art on the scroll. Each one is uniquely charming and totally personal to the storyteller. Are you looking for a family craft project, or would you like to create one yourself? Thanks to the [Walters Art Museum](#), you can learn all about them and find what you'll need to go for it! Or if you prefer a [video](#), check out!