



CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL ARTWORK

Full-Day Early Learning-Kindergarten, Language, Science and Technology, Visual Arts

DESCRIPTION

Using Andy Goldsworthy, a renowned nature-based artist, as an inspiration students will use found outdoor materials to **create** their own works of art. They will explore outdoor spaces and **think critically** about what materials to use and what message their art **communicates**.

CURRICULUM LINKS – THE FULL-DAY EARLY LEARNING – KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

Language

Big Idea: Children are effective communicators.

Overall Expectation 4: communicate in writing, using strategies that are appropriate for beginners

Science and Technology

Big Idea: Children are curious and connect prior knowledge to new contexts in order to understand the world around them.

Overall Expectation 1: demonstrate an awareness of the natural and built environment through hands-on investigations, observations, questions, and representations of their findings;

Overall Expectation 2: conduct simple investigations through free exploration, and guided activity, using inquiry skills (questions, planning, predicting, observing, communicating);

Overall Expectation 3: demonstrate an understanding of the natural world and the need to care for and respect the environment.

Visual Arts

Overall Expectation V3: use problem solving strategies when experimenting with the skills, materials, processes, and techniques used in visual arts both individually and with others;

Overall Expectation V4: express responses to a variety of visual art forms, including those from other cultures.

PLANNING NOTES

Materials

- Examples of Andy Goldsworthy's art (printed or projected)
- An assortment of leaves
- Camera
- Paper frame for artwork (optional)
- Found nature materials
- Brown paper bags (1/student)
- Paper for artist statements

Recommended Class Time

- 2-3 class periods

Things to Think About

When going outside, make sure to have enough adult supervision and select an appropriate outdoor space for exploration and object collection. If possible, take the class out in smaller groups. This can be done over a period of several days.

Thoughtful Questions

- How do you think Andy Goldsworthy creates his artwork?
- What does the artwork make you think about? How does it make you feel?
- What objects do you want to collect for your artwork? Why?
- Where do you think would be another good outdoor place to explore and collect? Why?

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES

Ignite - Indoors

1. Invite students to the carpet and show them one of Andy Goldsworthy's nature photographs using leaves. A Google search will bring up many images to choose from.
2. Ask students to think critically and share how the artwork makes them feel, what it makes them think about, and what it reminds them of.
3. Afterwards, ask them what types of materials the artist used and where he may have found them. Ask students to discuss their ideas with a partner before sharing ideas with the whole class.
4. Place a collection of leaves or other found objects in front of each pair of students. Give them a few minutes to collaborate and manipulate the materials into their own creative design. Then present and discuss the process as a whole class.
5. Explain that they will be creating their own piece of environmental art and that they need to go outside to gather the necessary materials.

Explore - Outdoors

1. Before going outside, remind students that they are only to gather objects that are already on the ground and not to take anything that is growing. Give each student a brown paper bag to collect their objects.
2. Once outside, encourage students to explore the area (school yard, park, etc.) before collecting their objects. They should only pick up what they think they can use in their artwork and make sure to think critically about what they really need. If your school ground does not have a lot of found nature objects, consider visiting a local park or collecting items over the course of a week. You can also ask students to bring nature objects from home if the school environment is not suitable. Optional: You can bring a paper frame for students to work with when creating their artwork or when you take pictures of their creations.
3. Plan to use your outdoor space so that students can assemble their artwork on a flat surface. Photograph the work when it is complete and ask the students to replace their objects where they originally found them. If it is not possible to assemble the artwork outside, take the objects indoors and create there - again be sure to return the objects to their original location after the learning activity to encourage minimal impact on the outdoor environment and reinforce respect for nature.

Reflect - Indoors

1. After all students create their pieces of environmental art, photograph them, and print them for each student.
2. Using the photograph, ask them to describe their artwork, how they made it, and how they feel about it. Does their picture tell a story?
3. Ask each student to write an artist statement describing their picture and include a picture title. For students unable to write their own, scribe for them or make an audio recording of their ideas.
4. Create a gallery to display the class artwork and ask students to present their creation to their classmates.

EXTENSIONS

Seasonal Art - While this activity works best in the spring or fall, outdoor art can also be created in the snow. In this case, all artwork would be photographed outside and students could use the printed photos indoors to write artist statements.

Be a Docent - After establishing a class art gallery, students can give tours to visitors and explain their artistic process. Invite people into the classroom to tour the gallery (administrators, librarians, custodians, parents) and rotate the docent position among the students.