

Grades 3 – 5

Art

Armory Center for the Arts

Sculptural Landscapes

Time: 1 hour

Grade 3 - 5

California VAPA Content Standards

Visual Art

Grade 3

Artistic Perception 1.5 Identify and describe elements of art in works of art, emphasizing line, color, shape/form, texture, space, and value.

Creative Expression 2.5 Create an imaginative clay sculpture based on an organic form.

Aesthetic Valuing 4.2 Identify successful and less successful compositional and expressive qualities of their own works of art and describe what might be done to improve them.

Grade 5

Artistic Perception 1.3 Use their knowledge of all the elements of art to describe similarities and differences in works of art and in the environment.

Creative Expression 2.5 Assemble a found object sculpture that reflects unity and harmony and communicates a theme.

Aesthetic Valuing 4.4 Assess their own works of art, using specific criteria, and describe what changes they would make for improvement.

Connections, Relationships, Applications 5.3 Research and report on what various types of artists produce and how their works play a role in our everyday environment.

Grade 4

1.1 Artistic Perception Perceive and describe contrast and emphasis in works of art and in the environment.

2.3 Creative Expression Use additive and subtractive processes in making simple sculptural forms.

4.3 Aesthetic Valuing Discuss how the subject and selection of media relate to the meaning or purpose of a work of art.

4.5 Aesthetic Valuing Describe how the individual experiences of an artist may influence the development of specific works of art.

Indicators of achievement:

- Students appreciate the concept of Ecological Art (Eco-Art) and understand the relationship between art and nature.
- Students view an artwork and identify the different ways artists have re-imagined an urban landscape.
- Students understand how to create a sculpture using natural found objects in order to communicate their ideas about the environment.
- Students reflect on their own artwork and articulate how they might improve it if they had more time.

Materials needed:

Found objects (pods, branches, sticks, leaves, pine cones, bottle caps, straws, toothpicks, popsicle sticks, twist ties, toilet paper rolls, wire); clay or Styrofoam, wire (to attach objects to Styrofoam), glue, glue containers, and glue brushes, colored tissue paper

Preparation/Background Discussion:

Artists in the 1970's began an art movement known as environmental installation or earthworks. Nature is the focus of their work. Ecological art or eco art is not just art about the environment; it is by, for, with and often in the environment as well. It is art that reconnects people with their surroundings and tries to reverse negative environmental impacts with positive solutions for healthy survival. Eco art is usually functional and, above all, ethical. It acknowledges the wrongs we humans have committed against nature and tries to right them. This movement continues to thrive today because eco art is having an impact on the environmental problems of today. In the Tender Land exhibit, several works will transform over time and use natural materials to change or influence how we see nature. Several artists included in this exhibition explore how the construction of an art object and the placement of it in the environment can influence how we think about nature. An example of this can be seen in the work *Urban Oldfield: Diagram of a Vacant Lot* created by artist Stacy Levy where she constructs a field as it would appear if the Armory building did not exist and was instead a vacant lot. She uses natural and unnatural materials and creates a field that calls to mind the history of the urban landscape. Her "field" assembled from a variety of materials illustrates both the fragility and resilience of nature.

Vocabulary

Ecological Art/Eco-Art, installation, landscape, site-specific art, earthworks, environmental art, ephemeral art

Activity

Many artists are inspired by the forms found in nature or by the natural materials found in the environment. The activity below will allow your students to experiment with these two ways of working and to create a sculpture using found natural materials inspired by nature.

Discussion

Ask your class to take a look at the overhead image title image entitled *Urban Oldfield: Diagram of a Vacant Lot* by artist Stacy Levy and ask the following questions:

- What are some organic forms found in nature?
- What is a landscape? What is an urban landscape?
- Where do we usually find art?
- What do you think ecological art might be?
- Describe some landscapes that you see everyday?
- What types of plants and living things do we see in landscapes?
- What types of non-living things do we see in landscapes?
- How is this artist using space to create her landscape?
- What materials do you think she used to create her work?
- What do you think the landscape around your school would look like if the building didn't exist?

Steps

1. Ask the class to collect a variety of objects found around their homes or in the park.
2. Instruct them to bring these materials to school for their projects. (Encourage them to use the objects that have already fallen on the ground and you may need to bring in additional materials for this project.)
3. Cover the tables or desks with butcher paper.
4. Begin by cutting blocks of clay into 12" x 12" slabs to be handed out to each student. These could then be attached to a cardboard base.
5. Next, ask the students to imagine a landscape that they would like to reconstruct by replacing urban materials (plastic, steel, glass, wire) with "natural" materials (branches, pods, sand, leaves).
6. Using kabob sticks instruct students to attach smaller pieces of clay at the top of their sticks and implant the sticks into their base.
7. Finally, instruct the students to glue their natural and unnatural objects into their base form and into the clay ball at the tops of their skewers. Use glue as necessary to secure objects.
8. The end result should resemble an imaginary garden or forest sculptural landscape.

Assessment

Students assess their own works of art and describe what changes they would make for improvement.

Culmination

Ask students to configure their landscapes into one large landscape to make an installation in their classroom.

Extensions

Research and report on what various types of artists produce and how their works play a role in our everyday environment.

Contact and Field Trip Information

Jennifer Hayes Silver, Field Trip Coordinator (call for information/brochure)
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