

Art and Recycling

5th Grade

Instead of going to a cabinet, shelf or drawer to retrieve supplies to create art, lets go to the street, the playground and yes the trash to retrieve some of the things that others (including our own-selves) deemed worthless and lets create a story of discovery. In time if we do not collect this trash it will contribute to this ever-growing problem of waste that is affecting the world that we live in.

Pollution is a global problem and art is a global language that can be spoken. ~Aurora Robson

Trash Menagerie

Overarching Understanding:

- Art can be used as political statements
 - There is a lot that you can learn from your trash
 - The average American creates 4.5 pounds of waster per day
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Overarching Essential Question:

- What different materials can be used to make art from?
 - What does recycling look like in art?
 - How can you creatively express an idea?
 - How can artist have an impact on the environment?
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Students will Understand:

- Students will understand that art, all types of art can tell of story?
 - Found materials are just as art worthy as those that are purchased
 - Students will understand the necessity of recycling
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The core questions guiding this unit are:

- What makes art, art?
- How can re-used materials tell a story
- Why do some people recycle and some do not?
- Why don't people recycle more?

PROJECT 1: Animals as Products of our Environment



A.



B.



C.

A. **Diedhiou** is an artist from Senegal that creates birds out of recycled materials (mainly old discarded cellphones) from the markets and street from Senegal. He likes to think that he is recuperating materials in order to clean up the environment.

B. **Robert Bradford** an English sculptor that began creating sculptures from his children broken and lost toys. In his creations the viewer sometimes sees the entire piece as one piece of art and others look at the individual objects that make up the entire work. Creating art out of waste was not his original intention but he does recognize that it is a great positive outcome.

C. **John Unger** is an American artist from Michigan, that creates fish out of recycled materials and says creative re-use has the potential to spark new ways of looking at the world... if one thing can be turned into another, what else can we change? Successful recycled art encourages creativity in others— it's alchemical, magical, subversive, and transformative by nature.

Discussion Questions:

- How can you become responsible for your own environment?
- What statements can be made by creating artworks from found items?

Activity(ies):

- Students will collect everyday objects from their environment that are: broken, lost, just lying around of all shapes, sizes and colors.
- Students will study the works of Diedhiou, Bradford and Unger as artist that take everyday objects and turn them into animals.
- Students will construct an animal from these environmental objects. The exterior surface, should be 75% of found objects.

Assessment

- Students will display their works and discuss they process in choosing and collecting the items; was there a process of which to choose or was it very random (which is a process too)?
- Does the exterior meet the requirements of being 75% of found objects.

PROJECT 2: Used to Useful



A.



B.



C.

A. **Nick Sayers**: a livable igloo created from estate agent boards and poles.

B. **Rachael**: Cocktail Dress out f cereal boxes and Candy wrappers

C. **Women's Health Initiative**: The Women's Health Initiative (WHI) is a long-term national health study that has focused on strategies for preventing heart disease, breast and colorectal cancer, and osteoporotic fractures in postmenopausal women. Women from all over the country contributed block sto create multiple quilts. Quilts are primarily made from materials not intended to be bed coverings.

Discussion Questions:

- How many uses can one object have in its life time?
- What does the phrase use, reuse and recycle really mean in the art world?

Activity(ies):

- Students will collect objects that no longer serve their original intent
- Students will study the work of various artists that have transformed their work from one use to another
- Students will create a functional piece of artwork.

Assessment

- Does the newly created artwork have a useful function that deviates from the initial use of the original manufacturer?

PROJECT 3: Humans effect our landfills



A. B.



C.

A. **GLEAN** is an environmental arts program in Portland, Oregon that promotes people to think about their consumption habits and that they have an impact on what goes in landfills. Each year they select six individuals to rummage through the landfills to gather materials to create 10 pieces of art. This year there were 2 women and 4 men selected from all over the country to participate in this project.

http://recologyportland.com/shared_oregon/oregon_art.php

B. **Michelle Reader** is an artist from England that collected the trash from one family for an entire month and for each individual she created a sculpture of that individual.

C. **Aura Robson** is a Canadian artist currently living in New York City that works with transformative work intercepting the waste stream. She began her career with paintings of nightmares of her childhood but used transformation to change her mindset from nightmares to awakening. She began working with plastics and learning more about them as a polluting material.

Discussion Questions:

- How much trash do you make in a day, in a week... is there anything that you can do to limit what you waste?
- What objects that you throw away define who you are and how do you depict that in art?

Activity(ies)

- Student will visit an area landfill, in order to see what 4.5 pounds of trash per day a person creates is multiplied by thousands upon thousands of people of their community.
- Students will watch the video on GLEAN and study the work of Reader and Robson.
- Students will begin collecting their own trash for one month
- Students will create a self portrait of themselves from the trash that they collect.

Assessment

- Students will have an open dialogue on their trip to the landfill and express their feelings on what they saw
- Students will have an exhibition of their artwork and have a review on the object used and how they define each other.

Student Self-Assessments

- Describe how your artwork is affected by your awareness of the environment. How has your experiences of landfills and pollution affect the way you will live life going forward? How [if at all] will the environment alter the way that you do your artwork?
- What does your artwork say about you?
- Do you think other people will be able to look at your artwork and see what you are trying to say?

Students will need to know:

- How to define themselves with objects?

Students will need to be able to:

- Think critically about how they have a direct impact o the environment
- Classify and arrange materials to create artwork
- Be environmentally sound when coming in contact with waste material

What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate the targeted understandings and skills?

- Be able to focus on art works that tell a story or make a statement
- Projects that incorporate found and collected material