

Outdoor Explorations

presentation by: Rosemary Melton

"No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did, he would cease to be an artist" Oscar Wilde

Outdoor Advocacy/Mission

During this presentation I hope to emphasize the importance of exploratory learning in visual arts classrooms as well as impart a number of ideas for the implementation of outdoor-based lesson plans in your own classroom.

- After working at Laumeier Sculpture Park this summer as a 4-6 year camp counselor I began to analyze my own use of outdoor spaces in lesson plans implemented in Riverview Gardens K-5 curriculum. I realized that allowing my students more freedom to explore the world around them could help them to more deeply grasp the concepts we discuss in the classroom.
- "A nature walk is a great way to enhance children's appreciation of the natural environment. Ask them to tell you what they're seeing, hearing, and smelling," (Rae Pica, *Take it Outside!*, found online: http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=275)
- Creating art outside and allowing students to take a major role in the process of discovering, discussing and creating art; which can be crucial to their understanding. Instead of simply presenting information about art and/or art history students are creating their own meaning. This method of exploratory learning helps the student to take control of their learning in order to achieve deep learning through engagement.

Possible Lesson Plans

If you are interested in knowing any more information about the following lesson plans please write your name/e mail on the sign in sheet for further conversation (not all are included in presentation information but can be sent on request).

* Denotes a lesson plan included in more detail via the online resources

- Installations:
 - Dale Chihuly*
 - Artwork of Dale Chihuly can be found at the Missouri Botanical Garden (St. Louis, MO) <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/>
 - Focus Points: Form and Color
 - Mark DiSuvero
 - Artwork of Mark DiSuvero can be found at Laumeier Sculpture Park
 - Focus Points: Movement, Balance, Rhythm
 - Alexander Liberman*
 - Artwork of Alexander Liberman can be found at Laumeier Sculpture Park
 - Focus Points: Form/Shape, Balance, and Recycling
 - Andy Goldsworthy*
 - Artwork of Andy Goldsworthy can be found at the St. Louis Art Museum
 - Focus Points: Natural Materials, Organic Shapes, and Nature
 - Claus Oldenberg
 - Artwork of Claus Oldenberg can be found at the Nelson-Atkins Art Museum
 - Focus Points: Proportion and Balance

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- Sketch Book:
 - Pleine Aire Drawing
 - Focus Points: Impressionism, Explorers, Observation
 - Rubbings
 - Texture and Organic Shapes
 - Still Lives & Fur Trading Cards
 - Focus Points: Texture, Missouri History, Impressionism
 - **On-Going Observation***
 - **Focus Points: Seasons, Weather, Form, Realism**
- Garden-Based:
 - Birdhouses and Garden/Plot Design
 - Scientific Inquiry, Measurement and Charting
 - Pleine Aire Drawing/Writing
 - Focus Points: Realism, Poetry, etc.
- Nature-Based
 - Sun Prints
 - Mud Drawing/Painting
 - Tree-Faces
 - Snow Paintings

Missouri Sculpture Parks:

Fieldtrips can reinforce classroom concepts, provide common reference points, and allow students to learn through alternative kinesthetic methods.

- Laumeier Sculpture Park (St. Louis, MO)
 - <http://laumeiersculpturepark.org/>
 - "A Living Laboratory where artists and audiences explore the relationship between contemporary art and the natural environment"
- City Garden (St. Louis, MO)
 - <http://www.visitmo.com/st-louis-citygarden.aspx>
 - "Combines sculpture, plans, fountains and architecture into one location"
- Henry Lay Sculpture Park (Louisiana, MO)
 - <http://www.greatriverroad.com/hannibal/laypark.htm>
 - "A well-maintained path takes visitors on a 40 minute walk ... past a number of sculpture pieces by nationally and internationally known artists"
- Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (Kansas City, MO)
 - <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/>
 - "Dedicated to the enjoyment and understanding of the visual arts and the varied cultures they represent"

Thanks To Collaborators/Inspirations:

- Ashley May (Art Educator at Nerinx High School) for her work on/in the Community Garden at Ray Miller Elementary in Kirksville, MO in the Spring of 2011
- Jessica Bayer (Independent Graphic Artist) for her work on lesson planning and implementation during the 2013 summer sessions at Laumeier Sculpture Park

Returning Clay/Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture

Time Period: 45-60 minutes

Grades: K-3

Essential Question:

- Is impermanent artwork legitimate?
- What is the importance and reasoning of nature-based artwork?

Lesson Target:

- I will create a time-based earth piece using clay and natural materials in the style of Andy Goldsworthy.

GLEs:

- PP1D3 (Other Media: Additive Process)
- PP2AK-5 (Ceramics: Modeling with clay)
- PP3CK, 2, 4 (Theme: Nature and the Outdoors)
- EP1C3, 4 (Form: Sculpture in the Round and Organic Form)
- AP2AK-5 (Identifying elements and principles of art)

DOK Levels:

- 2: Predict what will happen to the artwork over time
- 3: Hypothesize the reason for the effect on student artwork
- 4: Prove your hypothesis by research and observation

Materials:

- Natural items, clay, paper/sketchbooks, pencils

Introduction

To begin the lesson students should view examples of artwork by Andy Goldsworthy and other Earth Works artists. Discuss (before/after) they differences and similarities between artwork in a gallery and artwork in a landscape. What about art that is meant to degrade over time (is there a message/purpose in it's creation)? Is there a difference between art created for product (beauty) and art created for process (cathartic/meditative)?

Each student will be given a piece of clay. They will create their own sculpture by forming a base shape and then arranging natural items (sticks, leaves, stones, gumballs, seeds, etc.) in and on the base. Students may search and find their own items (which creates more ownership in the piece) or they may choose items from a "store" set up in the front of the room.

Once their piece is created the student will take it outside to be placed in the open air. Students will take their sketch books to record the placement and design of their piece at the beginning of the experiment. Our goal is to record how the artwork changes over time. Sketches may take multiple forms depending on your focus. They may be used to scientifically label and describe the item, to mathematically record the scale and proportion of the item, to artistically describe the overall form/shape of the item, etc.

Every day afterwards for a week students will visit the sculptures (either with a classroom teacher or yourself) to examine, record, and sketch their findings. Possible discussion questions can help students to reach a DOK level of 2-4 depending on the differentiation you need. Some possible questions/prompts could be: Predict what will happen to sculpture if left in the heat, rain, etc. Hypothesize the reason for the change in appearance of your artwork Use examples and evidence to prove your hypothesis. While outside with the sketch books students may also want to find other things to draw or do texture rubbings with.

Assessment should be altered to the directive of your lesson execution.