

Teacher Programs

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

Title of Lesson: Found Object Constructions (Objets Trouvés)	Grade/Age Level: Middle School
Teachers: English/Art/History/World Language	Time Required: 1-2 class periods, plus homework assignment to gather objects
Concept/Overview: This lesson plan offers teachers a way of incorporating cultural history, observation skills, and art into a lesson about environmentalism.	
Objective(s): The student will:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Use objects, such as recyclable, discarded, or “found” materials, to create an original work of art; ◆ Investigate how and why Picasso utilized found objects in his works; and ◆ Practice finding interesting shapes, forms, patterns, and compositions in the everyday world. 	

Standards of Learning Correlations:

Visual Arts: 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6, 6.9, 6.12, 6.14, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.24, 7.3, 7.9, 7.10, 7.14, 7.16, 7.19, 7.20, 7.26, 7.28, 8.2, 8.6, 8.13, 8.17, 8.19, 8.21, 8.227.10, 7.16

English: 6.1, 6.2, 6.6, 6.7, 7.1, 7.3, 7.8, 7.9, 8.2, 8.3, 8.7

History/Social Science:

Mathematics:

Science:

World Language: (This activity may be used to introduce and emphasize target language vocabulary words. It also relates to both French and Spanish culture.)

<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ found/recyclable objects (plastic bottles, newspapers, etc.) ◆ glue ◆ markers ◆ string ◆ scissors ◆ tape 	<p>Resources:</p> <p>Picasso's <i>Monkey with Young</i>, 1951 Picasso's <i>Bull Head</i>, 1943</p> <p>Picture books:</p> <p>Lowery, Linda. <i>Pablo Picasso</i>. Carolrhoda Books, Inc., 1999. (The reading level of this book is lower than Middle School, but it provides excellent and succinct background information for this activity.)</p> <p>Reference Books:</p> <p>Warnecke, Carsten-Peter. <i>Pablo Picasso: 1881-1973</i>. Taschen, 1998</p> <p>Websites:</p> <p>This on-line <i>Picasso Project</i> is a treasure trove of Picasso information edited by Dr. Enrique Mallen, Professor. Sam Houston State University: http://picasso.shsu.edu/</p>	<p>Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ recycling ◆ objets trouvés ◆ surrealism
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Background/Discussion:

Pablo Picasso created thousands of works of art using many different methods and styles. He worked with paint, clay, pencil, photography, and even with “trash”!

Unlike many of his friends and acquaintances, Picasso stayed in Paris during the German occupation of World War II. Because of his political beliefs and his avant garde artwork, he often had difficulties with the German military command. Since France was an occupied country, Picasso was not allowed to leave—and art supplies were scarce. Undaunted, he scoured the streets to find materials for creating art.

Many of his paintings from this time reveal the anxiety created by the war years. One example is the menacing *Still Life with Steer’s Skull* (1942, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany). Other works, however, such as his sculpture *Head of a Bull* (1943, Musée National Picasso, Paris), are more playful and inventive. In this sculpture, Picasso combined a bicycle seat and handlebars to represent the bull’s head.

Lesson Procedure:

Begin by talking about whether or not the students recycle. Ask, where do you recycle? (at home, school, etc.) What do you recycle? Why do you recycle? Did you know that you can create art and recycle at the same time?

Then, discuss how artists find inspiration. Ask, how do you develop ideas for the things you draw? Talk about finding interesting patterns and compositions everywhere.

Read the children’s book *Pablo Picasso* by Linda Lowery. List some of the objects that Picasso found in the story. Ask the student’s the following questions:

- ◆ Why do you think Picasso called the objects that he found on the streets ‘treasures’?
- ◆ Why did he go through the trash to find things from which to make art?

Look at online images of Picasso’s studio. Ask the student to describe what they see. Is it messy, organized, junky, etc.?

Using found objects, scissors, tape, and glue, ask students to create their own Found Object Sculptures. Each student should also write an explanation of the process through which they chose and used found objects to create their final works of art.

Closure/Extensions:

Have a class art exhibit and let the students explain their creations to the class. They should explain why they chose the objects that they did. Did they imagine the final product before beginning their creation?