



Collaborative Transformations

Transformation is a part of life. For example, cities and towns change as more people move there, seeds grow into a large garden by the end of summer, and as people age they might change their hairstyle or the clothes they like to wear.

Many artists who create artist-built environments are compelled to transform everyday objects. In this lesson, students will learn about artists who alter the ordinary into the extraordinary. Then, they will collaboratively create a transformed space or object. Through their exploration, students will consider: *How can I use my imagination to share my ideas?*

Essential Question

How can I use my imagination to share my ideas?

K-3 Adaptation

- How do I use my imagination in my art?

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the idea of transformation as it applies to art and everyday life.
- Students will analyze and discuss one or more of the inspiration artists, considering specifically how they transform everyday objects.
- Students will work collaboratively to design and create a transformed object.
- Students will reflect individually and collaboratively on the challenges and success of object transformation.

National Core Art Standard Connection

Visual Arts/Creating#VA:Cr1.2

Anchor Standard: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Enduring Understanding: Artists and designers shape artistic investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art-making goals.

Essential Questions: How does knowing the contexts, histories, and traditions of art forms help us create works of art and design? Why do artists follow or break from established traditions? How do artists determine what resources are needed to formulate artistic investigations?

This lesson was developed with feedback from Wisconsin art educators Ben Jerry and Kate Arvold.



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K-12

John Michael Kohler Arts Center

1 Stella Waitzkin, untitled (individual library elements), c. 1969-2003; resin, paint, wood and mixed media. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection, gift of Waitzkin Memorial Library Trust and Kohler Foundation Inc.

2 Eugene Von Bruenchenhein, untitled (bone chair), c. 1965-70; fowl bones, paint, glue, varnish; (left to right) 6 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 4 3/4, 8 1/2 x 4 x 3 1/2, 9 3/4 x 6 1/2 x 4 1/4, 9 1/4 x 4 x 4 1/4, 6 1/2 x 3 x 2 7/8 in. John Michael Kohler Arts Center Collection. Photo: Rich Maciejewski.

Overview

Discuss

As a class, collaboratively define “transformation.”

- What are examples of transformation?
- Have you experienced transformation?
- How can you transform an object or place?

Present information about one or more of the inspiration artists. Then have your students individually reflect, discuss in pairs or groups, or discuss as a class:

- What objects and materials do you recognize in these artworks? How have they been transformed?
- Why do you think the artist(s) selected these objects?
- How did the meaning or purpose of the objects change?
- Which of the elements and principles of art and design are important to consider when creating an artwork using transformed materials?

Create

Choose one or more art media, based on your curricular goals, to have students complete the objective: Students will work collaboratively to design and create a transformed object.

See suggested ideas below for possible projects or starting points for a project.

Suggested Projects

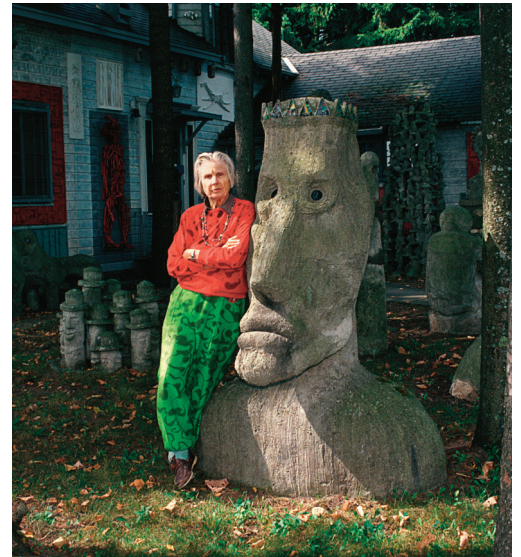
- Students work in groups or pairs to collect recycled materials and transform them into an object to be displayed or used in school.
- Give students in groups or pairs a similar object (or objects), such as a box, a torn piece of clothing, or a broken object that is no longer functional, to transform into an artwork or an object with a new function.
- Students work in groups or pairs to create a figure or figures using upcycled materials.

Artists

- Emery Blagdon
- Loy Bowlin
- David Butler
- Nek Chand
- Nick Engelbert
- Tom Every
- Ernest Hüpeden
- Mary Nohl
- Frank Oebser
- Dr. Charles Smith
- Eugene Von Bruenchenhein
- Stella Waitzkin

Vocabulary

- Upcycle
- Transform/transformation
- Imagination
- Sculpture
- Painting
- Utilitarian
- Decorative



1 Mary Nohl at her lake cottage (Fox Point, WI), 1994. Photo: Ron Byers.

2 Nek Chand's Rock Garden of Chandigarh (site detail, Chandigarh, India), 1958–present. Photo: Iain Jackson, c. 2003–06.