

**Big Idea that drives Lesson/Unit:**

*Art in the Everyday*

Meaningful aesthetic experiences can happen anywhere and anytime. By taking a step back, we can become aware of the potential for these experiences, and this awareness can help to create meaning and engagement with people and things around us.

<b>Title of Lesson:</b>	<b>Becoming Aware of Mundane Daily Activities</b>
<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Suzanne Makol</b>
<b>School:</b>	<b>PVOS</b>
<b>Grade Level[s]:</b>	<b>6th</b>

<b>Week 1</b>
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**Key concepts about Big Idea:**

- Observation and reflection of everyday experiences can shift perspectives, help create connections and meaning, and teach us something about the world and ourselves.
- Everyday experiences can be aesthetic.
- It can be mind numbing to just go through the motions of daily life without reflection.

**Fine Arts Goals Met by the Objectives:**

27B: Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.

**3-4 Essential Questions:**

- What is something that you do everyday without giving it much thought?
- How can we see/imagine everyday experiences or encounters as something more?
- What happens when you recontextualize a mundane experience (through your body)?

**Vocabulary Acquisition:**

- Mundane: lacking interest or excitement; dull, such as many daily tasks.
- Recontextualize: place or consider in a new or different context.
- Aesthetics: concern for the beauty/appearance of a thing.
- Performance art: an art form that combines visual art with dramatic performance.

**Key Artistic Concepts:**

- Writing poetically
- Performing based on a simple, repetitive prompt

**Artmaking Materials Needed:**

- Paper (2 half-sheets per student)
- Writing utensils for each student
- Bodies to perform

**Contemporary/Historical/Multicultural exemplars:**

- Happenings by Allan Kaprow

**Procedures:**

- INTRODUCTIONS: (2 minutes)
  - Schedule:

- SAY: Today we will do a step-by-step performance based on mundane things you do everyday. In a way it will help me learn more about you (and you each other), and will get us thinking about the theme of Art in the Everyday.
- SAY: You may feel like what you do today is a little weird or unusual, and may not even see the point right away, but I hope that you can push through it and participate to see what can happen. Instead of having a longer discussion at the beginning, I thought it would be interesting to perform using our bodies and reflect on what happened at the end of our session today. Hopefully today's activity will make more sense as we go throughout the five weeks.
- DESIGN/WORK SESSION: (20 minutes)
  1. Students will take 2-5 minutes to write down a task that they typically do everyday, with as much detail as they can. This should be about 2-5 sentences.
    - SAY: OK, so let's get into it. First I want you to take this sheet of paper and write down a few sentences (about 2-5) describing a mundane task you do everyday. Does anyone know what mundane means? {Listen to responses and clarify if needed.} Try to be as descriptive as possible, like you are explaining it to someone who has never done it before.
  2. Students will trade what they wrote with another student {pass sheets down 3 people, something like that}.
  3. Now each student will rewrite the task description they received to be more abstract/poetic. To achieve this challenge, students should avoid using words that are too specific to the task. The point is describing the experience aesthetically instead of factually.
    - SAY: Your challenge now is to read what the person has written, and REWRITE it more poetically or imaginatively. Think about writing it so that someone who knows the task might get so caught up in the *way* you wrote it that they might not know what the original idea is. Let's try an example: what could you write instead of "I brush my teeth every morning"? {Listen to a response or two.} You might write something like "I take the plastic stick with short, soft bristles and rub it on my teeth. Tiny chunks of sweet, cinnamon cereal wash down the drain."
  - \*\*IMPORTANT: The writing should not take too long, because I don't want them to overthink it. The point is more to change the context of the mundane thing and to be used as raw material for the performance.
  4. Students will trade descriptions one more time (the original descriptions are not needed, and will be collected first).
  5. Now students will get into groups of 4-5 students (most likely 5 because the class is so big. If we are way ahead of schedule the groups can be of 4 students each). Each student should read their assigned task, and think about how they want to perform it. The groups will work together to decide how they want to do their one-minute performance.
    - SAY: OK, now we're done with the writing portion, and you're going to get into groups to perform based on the imaginative descriptions! Your performance will only be ONE MINUTE LONG! Each person will read the new description they received, and plan out how to perform it. Most likely it will be a short action, so you can repeat it as much as you want in the 60 seconds of your performance.
    - SAY: Here are some questions you will think about as a group: Where will each person physically be during the performance? Is there a sequence, or is everyone repeating his or her task the whole time? Will you interact with each other during the performance?
    - SAY: You will have about [10?] minutes to plan your performance. Remember, your performance will only be 60 seconds long, and you must perform it in the

classroom. Are there any questions before we split into groups? {Split into groups of about 5}

6. I will give students a warning when they have a few more minutes left and make sure the groups are ready to perform.
- **PERFORMANCE:** (10 minutes)
    - Now the students should be ready to perform. Each group will take turns doing their one-minute performances. We will save comments for the very end. I think there should be 5, at most 6 groups performing. I will be very strict on time.
      - **SAY:** OK, now we're ready for the performances! Remember, I will be strict in keeping each group to one minute, and we will have to quickly move to the next group to finish in time. Then we can talk about it all at the end.
  - **CLOSURE/DISCUSSION:** (8 minutes)
    - What did you notice about the performances?
    - What was the process like for you? (writing, re-writing, planning the performance, doing the performance)
    - Was what we just did "art"?
    - Did it make you think differently about mundane activities?
    - What do you think happened when we *recontextualized* your daily activities?

## Week 2

### Key concepts about Big Idea:

- Building from last week: Observation and reflection of everyday experiences can shift perspectives, help create connections and meaning, and teach us something about the world and ourselves.
- Building from last week: Everyday experiences can be aesthetic.

### Fine Arts Goals Met by the Objectives:

- 27B: Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.

### 3-4 Essential Questions:

- Can you explore an ordinary space and find something extraordinary?
- Can you stretch your imagination to see something more?
- What hidden/small/overlooked treasures/wonders do you notice on a regular basis?
- How would your day be different if you sought out these kinds of experiences?

### Vocabulary Acquisition:

- Wonder (noun): a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable (dictionary definition). The sense/feeling when your curiosity is sparked, causing you to further reflect or investigate something (my own words).

### Key Artistic Concepts:

- Being observant of your surroundings
- Taking a small observed detail and making it into something new/bigger

### Artmaking Materials Needed:

- Pen/pencil and paper

**Contemporary/Historical/Multicultural exemplars:**

- Andy Goldsworthy

**Procedures:**

- DISCUSSION: (5 minutes)
  - SAY: Today we're going to build off of what we started to do last week: trying to find moments of wonder in our everyday lives. We're going to find "secret spaces" nearby, observe/reflect on them, and start to reinterpret them. In the end I hope we can share some of what you make.
  - SAY: Before we begin, I have a question: did anyone notice a small detail today (or recently) that made them curious or surprised? {Listen to and discuss responses.} How do you feel when you encounter these things?
- DESIGN/WORK SESSION: (20 minutes)
  - Steps for the day's activity: (Explanation: 5 minutes or less)
    1. SAY: So, as I was saying, today I want you to look around the room (or in the hall) to find some kind of small detail that is interesting/amazing/beautiful/unexpected that you may not have noticed if you didn't take the time to see it. It's ok if it takes you a few minutes to find a good spot.
    2. SAY: Once you find your spot, take the time to observe the details.
    3. SAY: Next, I want you to sketch out what you see (in the space provided on the handout).
    4. SAY: Next, you'll write about what the spot/item means to you. It could be true or a made up story.
    5. SAY: You'll have about 15 minutes or so to complete the assignment. Since this is an individual activity that requires reflection, let's have COMPLETE SILENCE as we work.
- SMALL GROUP SHARE: (8 minutes)
  - Since the class is so large, I'll have students in small groups of about 3 where they will exchange what they drew/wrote and the original inspiration, and I'll ask the students to share their interpretations of each other's work.
  - Some discussion questions:
    - Does reading/viewing what the other person made make you think differently about the thing that may have seemed insignificant to you?
    - How would *you* interpret the "secret spot" from your perspective?
- CLOSURE: (7 minutes)
  - Discussion questions for the whole class:
    - Where there any surprises in the activity?
    - What were some things you noticed about what your peer's did?
    - How do you think this activity relates to last week (if at all)?

**Week 3****Key concepts about Big Idea:**

- By developing an artistic eye, we can both notice *and* perform/add visual and conceptual connections in the everyday.

**Fine Arts Goals Met by the Objectives:**

- **25.A.2d Visual Arts:** Identify and describe the elements of 2- and 3-dimensional space, figure ground, value and form; the principles of rhythm, size, proportion and composition; and the expressive qualities of symbol and story.

**3-4 Essential Questions:**

- How can two seemingly unrelated things be connected?
- What is the meaning/purpose of patterns in daily life? (For example in nature.)
- How am I (or can I be) part of a pattern?

**Vocabulary Acquisition:**

- Repetition: Something that is repeated, like an element of art (i.e. repeating shapes or colors)
- Pattern: A design of repeated elements in an arranged sequence (could be decorative, musical, machine-based etc.)
- Shape: A two-dimensional figure like a triangle, circle, square, or organic shape.
- Texture: The way something feels or appears to feel. A texture isn't always literal: a pattern may create a texture of bumpiness, even if it's totally abstract.

**Key Artistic Concepts:**

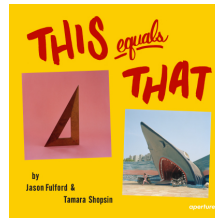
- Making surface physical/visual connections with body and image without too much context to complicate it (i.e. shapes, colors, textures).
- Finding connections (visual and/or content related) between banal things.

**Artmaking Materials Needed:**

- Colored paper (about 25 sheets)
- Scissors

**Contemporary/Historical/Multicultural exemplars:**

- This Equals That”  
by Jason Fulford & Tamara Shoppin

**Procedures:**

- WARMUP ACTIVITY: (8 minutes)
  - Before we start the warmup activity, we will talk about what it means to *communicate*. What is communication? Does it always have to mean talking? What are some ways you communicate without talking?
  - Students will work in pairs to perform a call and response exercise with a sheet of paper. {{BASIC CHALLENGE: To create a shape that fits on a desk, each taking 10 turns without talking to each other (like a puzzle).}} Each student will take turns (10 times each) tearing or cutting a piece of the paper and placing it on their work area. Then the next student will respond to the previous “move in the game” with their piece. I may have to perform an example if that’s easier, but I’d rather the students “just do it.” Here’s a detailed breakdown:
    1. Students will all come up and grab a sheet of colored paper, with a range to choose from.
    2. Students will hold up their sheet of paper and find a partner based on “good” (basically however they want to decide what looks good together) color combos.
    3. The student pairs will find an area (desk or the floor) to work at.
    4. Student 1 tears or cuts their paper and places it on the work surface.

5. Student 2 tears or cuts a piece of paper in response and places it on the work surface (without touching Student 1's piece).
6. Student 1 tears or cuts a piece of paper responding to Student #2.
7. This process continues until each student has contributed 5 pieces of paper, or until the paper runs out.
  - I will go around the room and take pictures to document the process.
- DISCUSSION: (5 minutes)
  - What did you notice in the process?
  - How did you decide what to do next with your paper?
- DESIGN/WORK SESSION: (5 minutes)
  - Basically this activity is the same as the paper, but performed with their bodies instead. Students will work again in pairs, but instead of paper, they will take turns making a pose and response poses, also making sure not to touch. What makes the body piece different is that there is a better opportunity to think about the poses emotionally responding to each other, which may not have been at the forefront of using the paper.
- BOOK DISCUSSION: (20 minutes)
  - We are going to spend some time going through several pages (depending on how much time is spent on each) of the book "This Equals That". (Even though I will have the book on hand I will use the Smart Board because that's the only way everyone will be able to see. I will read the first page (the only page with text), and ask students what they think the book is about. I don't want to just give it away, so the first few pages will probably be just figuring out what's going on. What is the relationship from each page to the next?
  - Once they catch on to what the book is about, we will talk about the specific examples:
    - What specifically is similar between the two images? (Could be visual, like shape, color, texture, or conceptual, like the way you might imagine moving in the space)
    - What is different about the images?
  - Then more general questions:
    - How would you categorize the book? What is its purpose?
    - How (if at all) does this relate to what we did today? What about previous weeks?
- CLOSURE: (2 minute)
  - This book is going to be inspiration for what we do next week: making our own photo-connections.

<b>Week 4</b>
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**Key concepts about Big Idea:**

- By exercising our artist eyes and brains, we can find and create connections between seemingly unrelated things.

**Fine Arts Goals Met by the Objectives:**

- **25.A.2d Visual Arts:** Identify and describe the elements of 2- and 3-dimensional space, figure ground, value and form; the principles of rhythm, size, proportion and composition; and the expressive qualities of symbol and story.

**3-4 Essential Questions:**

- How can two seemingly unrelated things be connected?
- What happens when we juxtapose these things and begin to make connections?
- How am I (or can I be) part of a pattern?
- Why are we able to perceive patterns?

**Vocabulary Acquisition:**

- Repetition: Something that is repeated, like an element of art (i.e. repeating shapes or colors)
- Pattern: A design of repeated elements in an arranged sequence (could be decorative, musical, machine-based etc.)
- Shape: A two-dimensional figure like a triangle, circle, square, or organic shape.
- Texture: The way something feels or appears to feel. A texture isn't always literal: a pattern may create a texture of bumpiness, even if it's totally abstract.
- Connection: a relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else (dictionary definition).
- Composition: the way elements within a picture are placed.

**Key Artistic Concepts:**

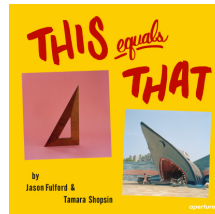
- Making surface physical/visual connections with body and image without too much context to complicate it (i.e. shapes, colors, textures).
- Finding connections (visual and/or content related) between banal things.
- Using an iPad to take pictures.

**Artmaking Materials Needed:**

- 15 iPads (ideally they wouldn't have to share, but I don't think there are enough so that's OK. I'll just bring them all in case we have less people)

**Contemporary/Historical/Multicultural exemplars:**

- "This Equals That"  
by Jason Fulford & Tamara Shoppin

**Procedures:**

- DISCUSSION: (5 minutes)
  - Since we spent significant time last week viewing and discussing the "This Equals That," we will only briefly review what we talked about. Depending on how well students understand/remember the concept, we may go over one image pairing to refresh their memories.
  - Some possible questions:
    - What do you remember about "This Equals That" from last week?
    - What are some possible ways that images can "talk to each other"? {Some possible responses could be about visual elements like shape, color, texture, or line, or more conceptual elements like motion or other cultural associations.}
    - Comment: What's interesting to me about this process of making associations is that we do it all the time, even when we are not paying attention to it. For example, the word "bass" could be talking about a type of fish, a specific instrument, or a low frequency sound.
- DEMONSTRATIONS: (5 minutes)
  - Using the iPads to take photos
    - Using the iPads is pretty easy, and I'm guessing many of the students have used iPads or similar technology. Either way, I'll go over how to use the camera app. Since we are mainly focusing on the composition, all the students really need to know how to do is take the time to point the lens (which can go unnoticed because of how small it is compared to the iPad), towards what you are shooting, go closer or change your angle if necessary, and then press the shutter button (or the side buttons on the iPad).

- I want to emphasize taking your time with each shot, because we are not trying to take a BUNCH of pictures, but rather make solid connections between photos.
- DESIGN/WORK SESSION: (26 minutes)
  - Once students have an understanding of how to use the iPads, I will explain their assignment: students will take pictures step-by step so that each picture connects IN SOME WAY to the previous photo. I'll guide students in the first couple photos so they get the hang of it. It's really important to only take one picture per step. It's not that I expect perfection, but since it's a sequential piece, taking care is vital. In the end we want a step-by-step group of photos.
  - Here is a breakdown of the steps:
    1. Students break into groups of two. Students will most likely work in groups of two per iPad, since I don't think there are enough.
    2. Students write their names on a sheet of paper and take a photo of it. This is a vital first step because that is how I will know whose is whose and when their photo stream starts.
    3. Student 1 takes a photo. Think about the first image being a bit simple so it's easy to build a connection off of it.
    4. Student 2 views the first photo and considers the visual elements they see. Now they will take a photo that relates to AT LEAST ONE VISUAL ELEMENT that connects to the first photo.
    5. Student 1 views the second photo, and in the same process takes a third photo that also relates to AT LEAST ONE VISUAL ELEMENT, this time a DIFFERENT visual element.
    6. Student 2 views previous photo, and this time comes up with a CONTENT-RELATED CONNECTION. This may be a little trickier and could take a few minutes. The point is not speed.
    7. Student 1 does the same as the previous step.
    8. Now the students will continue the process, but I will not specify what type of connection it has to be. Students will work until it is close to the end of class, so it doesn't really matter *how many* photos they take. If they want an extra challenge, they can try to make the last photo lead back to the first photo! (If they do that, they should indicate it with a note they take a picture of at the end so I know to print the first image at the end.
- CLOSURE: (4 minutes)
  - Once students finish taking pictures, I'll do a *brief* check-in, asking what they thought of the process. Since we will have time to reflect next week with the printed images, and I want the bulk of the time to be work time today, we'll keep this short.
  - iPads will be collected and counted.

## Week 5

### Key concepts about Big Idea:

- In reflecting on the various activities we did over the five weeks, especially the photos from last week, we can start to see the connections better, and think of ways that art can be experienced in everyday life.

### Fine Arts Goals Met by the Objectives:

- 27B: Understand how the arts shape and reflect history, society and everyday life.
- 25A.I.3: Express a judgment of a work of art based on description, analysis, and interpretation.
- 25A.J.2: Debate the intent of a series of works by one artist.



**3-4 Essential Questions:**

- What does it all mean???
- What happens when we make connections between seemingly insignificant things in our lives?
- How can you help other people experience these “moments of wonder”?

**Vocabulary Acquisition:**

- Connection: a relationship in which a person, thing, or idea is linked or associated with something else (dictionary definition).
- Repetition: Something that is repeated, like an element of art (i.e. repeating shapes or colors).
- Pattern: A design of repeated elements in an arranged sequence (could be decorative, musical, machine-based etc.).
- Composition: the way elements within a picture are placed.
- Sequence: a particular order in which related events, movements, or things follow each other (as in the photo sequences they will share).

**Key Artistic Concepts:**

- Life as Art /// Art as Life

**Artmaking Materials Needed:**

- Pen and paper

**Contemporary/Historical/Multicultural exemplars:**

- Miranda July & Harrell Fletcher, “Learning to Love You More”  
<http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com/index.php>

Example of an assignment:

**Assignment #69****Climb to the top of a tree and take a picture of the view.**

"Federica on a tree from a tree. This tree is an apricot-tree located in my yard in Baldissero (Torino), Italy."

Elena Pizzetti  
Torino, ITALY



- Happenings a la Allan Kaprow

**Procedures:**

- AGENDA: (3 minutes)
  - Today we are going to do a lot of reflecting on what we did over the five weeks. First we'll get in groups to discuss the photos you took last week. Then we'll talk about how the different projects connect to each other, and share our favorite moments. Then we'll do one short activity at the end.
- SMALL GROUP REFLECTION: (12 minutes)
  - Students will all get their printed photos back. Then they will get in groups of 2-3 to look at and discuss each other's work.
  - Discussion questions (put on the board):
    - Do you think each picture connects to the one before and after it in the sequence?

- What are some visual connections you see (i.e. shape, color, texture)?
- What are some other connections you see (i.e. sense of movement/action, or content associations)?
- Do you think the sequence tells a story?
- What are some similarities and differences between your sequence and someone else's?
- LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION: (18 minutes)
  - About the "This Equals That" photo sequences:
    - Who would like to share some memorable parts of your small group discussion about the photo sequences?
    - Do you think you learned anything from that project?
  - About the art unit overall:
    - What was your favorite thing we did and why?
    - Do you have a different view on what art could be?
    - Do you think you will notice some things you would have previously overlooked?
- HAPPENINGS: (5 minutes)
  - I will briefly talk about how Allan Kaprow came up with the idea of happenings, and give a few examples of some that he did. We will then discuss why we think he made happenings, or what he was trying to say.
- CLOSURE: (2 minutes)
  - I will show some examples of happenings that students of mine made, as inspiration for a happening that the students will write and leave somewhere (like in a book, or in a secret spot).
  - Thank you for participating throughout the weeks, and I hope you had a good time and have some new perspectives on art!