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## Temporary Sculpture: Activating the Ordinary

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# Temporary Sculpture: Activating the Ordinary

By Julia Mack, Coney Island Prep  
Brooklyn, NY, 2014

**GRADE:** 3<sup>rd</sup>

**TIME:**

One 60-minute art class

**DESCRIPTION:**

Invite students to use everyday objects as art making materials. Through this lesson students will be challenged to consider how everyday objects can be reimagined as art making materials. In this lesson students will research and discuss every day materials from the art room as materials for sculptures. Students will also consider how the ordinary spaces around them could be activated by the addition of a sculpture.

**BIG IDEAS:**

Students will understand that sculpture is a 3D form.

Students will understand that sculptures can be permanent, or temporary works of art and that sculptures can be found in unusual places.

Students will understand that everyday objects can be reimagined as art making materials.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:**

What do we know about sculpture as an art form?

How can everyday objects be used in art making?

How can artists transform a space through sculpture?

**OBJECTIVES :**

- Students will reimagine everyday objects as sculptural components.
- Students will gain an understanding that sculptures can be temporary.
- Students will discover that sculptures can be created without adhesives.
- Students will speak about the sculptural choices they made as artists.
- Students will construct a sculpture that responded to a given prompt.
- Students will consider how they can transform a space through sculpture.
- Students will discuss the concepts/story telling elements behind their sculptures.

**GUIDED LOOKING:**

Students will generate a definition of the word "sculpture."



Students will view images of temporary sculptures on the SmartBoard by Jessica Stockholder, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Sarah Sze. By viewing these images students will gain an understanding that sculptures do not need to use adhesives, and can be temporary.

As a class, students briefly discussed the following ideas:

What objects are in these works of art?

Why do you think the artist used these objects?

Have you used these objects before or do you have them at home?

Do we have any of these objects in the art room?

What makes this work of art a sculpture?

Why would an artist put a sculpture in an unusual place?

How can an artist transform a space by adding a work of art?

Can you tell a story about this sculpture?

### **ACTIVITIES:**

1. As a class, students will generate a definition of sculpture. *(10 minutes)*

a. Students will view images of temporary sculptures by established artists who use everyday objects in their work.

b. Challenge students to begin to think about the objects and space around them. In what ways can these objects be used to create interesting sculptures? Where are some spaces where a temporary sculpture be created?

2. Whole-class activity: Researching our art materials.

Tell students that sometimes when artists look at everyday objects they examine the object and research it's potential. Invite students to investigate their shoes and ask how can our shoes be transformed into a work of art?. *(5-10 minutes)*

a. Invite students to remove their shoes and examine them.

(Suggestion for think-pair-share: tell the person next to you three possible ways your shoes could be used to make a temporary work of art.)

b. Invite students will pile their shoes in the center of the room .

c. Pause and discuss as a class: how can our shoes be used a building materials?

Can you balance them? Flip them? Stack them? Line them up?

Where could we create this sculpture? How would this space change if a shoe sculpture was here?

d. Create a sculpture as a class.

3. Invite students to create temporary sculptures in small groups using found objects from the art room. *(30 minutes, about 3 prompts 10 minutes a piece)*

a. Each group will receive a bin of everyday materials at their tables to utilize for their sculptures. Before creating their art ask students to look at the materials and discuss as a group how they could be used as potential art making supplies.

b. Ask students to examine the area around them. Ask students questions such as: How can the tops of our tables and the areas around us be potential sites for their sculptures? How can you use the floor? The chairs? The corners of the room?

- c. Use prompts in order to activate our students' imaginations. *Make a home for a stuffed animal, make a secret kids' clubhouse, make an underwater city, make the biggest sculpture you can, etc.*
      - d. Provide an opportunity for students to document these collaborative sculptures using a digital camera.
4. Once students complete their temporary works, take a class tour to see each group's sculpture.
  - a. Challenge each group to describe the concepts behind their works of art as well as their art making decisions.
5. Re-group and invite the class to reflect on their experiences creating temporary sculptures (10 minutes)
  - a. Students will revisit their class definition of "sculpture" and add new information based on their experiences.
  - b. Students will revisit the works show by Jessica Stockholder, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Sarah Sze. (It is powerful to have students view these images alongside their own photographs on the SmartBoard and compared and contrasted some of the art making processes used in each work.)

**MATERIALS:**

A collection of everyday items that can be found in the art room: tables, chairs, bookends, baskets, staplers, cardboard boxes, glue bottles, rulers, plastic water bottles, egg cartons, etc.

**VOCABULARY/GLOSSARY/KEY WORDS:**

Sculpture  
Balance  
Found Objects  
Contemporary Art

**ASSESSMENTS:**

Students will be assessed visually and verbally:

- Students participated in a class discussion reimagining everyday objects as sculptural components.
- Students demonstrated an understanding that sculptures can be created without adhesives through balancing and arranging everyday items within their sculptures.
- Students demonstrated thoughtful art making through verbal discussion of the sculptural choices they made as artists
- Students considered how they could transform spaces by constructing their sculptures in unusual spaces in the art room.
- Students described how their sculptures relate to each given prompt.
- Students discussed the concepts/storytelling elements behind their sculptures
- Students demonstrated a growth in their understanding of sculpture through additions made to their class definition.

**ARTWORK & IMAGES:**

Jessica Stockholder : Untitled, 1996

Felix Gonzalez-Torres : "Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in L.A.), 1991

Sarah Sze : Tilting Planet, 2006 (not in Art Institute's collections)

**RESOURCES & BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

\*Art21- Sarah Sze

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/sarah-sze>

\*Art21- Jessica Stockholder

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/jessica-stockholder>

\*Art Institute Collection- <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/>

**SUGGESTION FOR EXTENSION:**

Now that students have considered researching art materials and considering their potential, invite students to bring in a curious item from home. This could be a recyclable, a toy, a tool, etc. Students will examine this material and build a sculpture that features this item and spotlights what is interesting about it. Students will choose a space in the school to display their sculpture.