**Title/Description of Lesson**  
Andy Goldsworthy - Environmental Art

**Grade Level:**  
7th – 12th

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**Lesson Links**  
- Objectives/Outcomes  
- Materials and Resources  
- Vocabulary  
- Procedures  
- Criteria for Assessing Student Learning  
- California Standards in Visual & Performing Arts  
- Other Resources

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**Objectives/Outcomes**  
(Return toLinks)

- To introduce students to Environmental Art.  
- To introduce students to the Environmental Artist Andy Goldsworthy.  
- Students will create their own Environmental Art Sculpture using found natural objects and the Elements of Art.  
- Students will evaluate their own sculpture by writing a brief paper about their artwork. The students will have an art critique.

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**Materials and Resources**  
(Return to Links)

- Natural materials such as grass, twigs, leaves, flowers, etc.  
- Student Handouts  
- Photographs and books of Andy Goldsworthy’s art and other examples of Environmental Art  
- Camera for documenting student artworks
Vocabulary  (Return to Links)
*Definitions taken from the Green Museum web site @ www.greenmuseum.org

Environmental Art: Art that helps improve our relationship with the natural world. It is an umbrella term which encompasses eco-art, land art, ecoventions, earth art, earthworks, and art in nature.

Ecological Art (Eco-art): A contemporary art movement which addresses environmental issues and often involves collaboration, restoration, and usually has a more activist agenda.

Art in Nature: Art in nature projects are usually beautiful forms created in nature, using materials such as twigs, leaves, stones, flower petals, icicles, etc. They are usually small-scale projects which often involve an overt spiritual dimension and are seen by artists as healing rituals for the earth.

Land Art: Refers to art made outdoors, in the land. They are usually large-scale projects which may be visible from the air.

Restoration Art: Refers to art which “restores” polluted or damaged ecosystems and landscapes. This would be a form of eco-art. Restoration Art would qualify as an ecovention.

Earth Art and Earthworks: These are older terms which refer primarily to large outdoor sculptures carved into the earth or made from cement or other construction materials and essentially use the earth itself as material and canvas. Earth Art and Earthworks are often considered a subset of Land Art.

Ecoventions: This term was coined in 1999 and is a combination of the words ecology and invention. An ecovention is an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology. Ecovention is part of eco-art.

Procedures  (Return to Links)
Lesson Content:

Day 1
• Introduce students to Environmental Art and related terms. Give the students background information and rationale behind this art movement.

• Introduce students to the terms Environmental Art, Ecological Art, Art in Nature, Land Art, Restoration Art, Earth Art and Earthworks, and Ecoventions. The definitions will be written on an overhead transparency and the students will be responsible for copying them down in their sketchbooks.

• Show transparencies of different examples of Environmental Art, including the
works of Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Goldsworthy, and Smithson. Ask the students key questions about the artwork. Discuss each piece of art and how it effects or relates to the environment.

**Key Questions:**
- What are some differences between these pieces of Environmental Art?
- Which artworks seem the most "in-tune" with nature? (Art is in harmony with nature.)
- Which artworks seem more intrusive and interruptive to the earth and land?
- Why do you think this art was made?
- How long do you think these artworks last in the environment? Were they meant to be permanent?
- How does the viewer get to see these artworks? How are they documented? Would you be able to see environmental art in a gallery or museum?

**Intro Activity (Aesthetic Valuing):**
Have the students read the handout "What is Environmental Art?" They will be responsible for answering questions about their reading. When they are finished reading the handout and answering the questions, the students will be given pictures of artworks which represent different types of environmental art (Land Art, Art in Nature, Restoration Art...). The students will do a think pair-share activity in which they discuss the different pieces and decide which category the pieces fit into. The students will need to be able to defend their answers and explain why they chose to categorize the pieces in this particular way. This is an exercise in Aesthetic Valuing.

**Day 2**
- Introduce Andy Goldsworthy
- Introduce students to the artist Andy Goldsworthy. The teacher will read a brief biography about Goldsworthy while the students take notes in their sketchbooks. After the bio is read, the students will need to write down five facts they learned from the biography and hand them in.
- Show: The teacher will show different examples of Goldsworthy's artwork. While looking at the artwork, the teacher will ask the student key questions.

**Key Questions:**
- What elements of art does Andy Goldsworthy incorporate into his work?
- Point out the elements of art in the pieces and discuss how they help the aesthetics of the piece.

**Introduce the Studio Art Project**
The students will assemble found natural objects into an arrangement emphasizing one or more of the five elements of art and decide upon the best view of their artwork to be photographed. At this point, the students should start thinking about project ideas, the materials they want to use, and the composition of these objects. The students can start making preliminary sketches of their ideas. They may bring natural objects from home to
incorporate into their sculptures.

Day 3
• During class, we will walk to a local park or around the school grounds to gather materials to create our environmental art sculptures. These materials include twigs, stones, grass, flowers, leaves, etc. They do not include any man-made materials such as candy wrappers, paper, plastic, or soda cans. Students may bring in materials from home such as shells, bones, or favorite stones to add to this project.

• Students will begin assemblage of art in a location outside the classroom. They should experiment with the natural materials they have gathered, arrange the items, and make sketches of their most successful compositions. The elements of art should be used in the creation of the sculptures. To protect the sculptures overnight, a drop cloth or tarp, secured with stakes, can be put over the area where the students are working.

Day 4
• Students will refine their ideas, complete the construction of their environmental art sculptures, and decide upon the best view of their work to be photographed.

• After the completion and photography of the sculptures, the students will reflect upon their artwork. They will create a brief paragraph about their artwork which addresses the following points:

  • Students will identify the significance of the five art elements in their work.
  • Students will describe at least one relationship between the environment and their art.
  • Students will explain why they chose the materials they used to create their sculpture.

Day 5
• After the sculptures have been photographed with a digital camera, they will be made into a Power Point presentation. Because the artwork is transient, the only documentation of the artwork will be the digital photographs of the pieces. We will use a projector to show the Environmental Art Sculptures to the class. There will be a critique and discussion about each student's sculpture.

Criteria for Assessing Student Learning  (Return to Links)
The students will be graded on their environmental art sculptures, the paragraph they wrote about their sculptures, the reading questions, and the five written facts about Andy Goldsworthy.
California Standards in Visual & Performing Arts

CA- California K-12 Academic Content Standards

- Subject: Visual Arts
- Grade: Grades Nine Through Twelve — Proficient

- Area: ARTISTIC PERCEPTION
  - Sub-Strand 1.0: Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to the Visual Arts
  Students perceive and respond to works of art, objects in nature, events, and the environment. They also use the vocabulary of the visual arts to express their observations.
  - Concept: Impact of Media Choice

**Standard 1.5:** Analyze the materials used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

- Area: CREATIVE EXPRESSION
  - Sub-Strand 2.0: Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Visual Arts
  Students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art.
  - Concept: Skills, Processes, Materials, and Tools

**Standard 2.1:** Solve a visual arts problem that involves the effective use of the elements of art and principles of design.

- Concept: Communication and Expression Through Original Works of Art

**Standard 2.6:** Create a two- or three-dimensional work of art that addresses a social issue.

- Area: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT
  - Sub-Strand 3.0: Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of the Visual Arts
  Students analyze the role and development of the visual arts in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to the visual arts and artists.
  - Concept: Diversity of the Visual Arts

**Standard 3.4:** Discuss the purposes of art in selected contemporary cultures.

- Area: AESTHETIC VALUING
  - Sub-Strand 4.0: Responding to, Analyzing, and Making Judgments About Works in the Visual Arts
  Students analyze, assess, and derive meaning from works of art, including their own, according to the elements of art, principles of design, and aesthetic qualities.
  - Concept: Make Informed Judgments

**Standard 4.3:** Formulate and support a position regarding the aesthetic value of a specific work of art and change or defend that position after considering the views of others.
What is Environmental Art?

Student Handout

During the political and social upheavals of the 1960s, a group of artists in the United States and Europe increasingly questioned the restriction of painting and experimented with radical new ways of responding to the environment and its ecology. Rather than paint the landscape, their experiences were realized by sculpting the land itself, by photographic sequences and in sculpture made from natural materials.

Since the turn of the millennium, world concern over environmental issues such as pollution and global warming, species depletion, new genetic technologies, AIDS, and other epidemics have increased. Artists in turn, are responding by answering collective cultural needs and developing active and practical roles in environmental and social issues.

What is Environmental Art? In a general sense, it is art that helps improve our relationship with the natural world. There is no definition set in stone. This living worldwide movement is growing and changing as you read this. Much Environmental Art is ephemeral, designed for a particular place (site-specific), and involves collaboration between artists and others such as scientists, educators, and community groups. Some Environmental Art…

1. Interprets nature, creating artworks that inform us about nature and its processes, or about environmental problems we face.

2. Is concerned with environmental forces and materials, creating artworks affected or powered by water, wind, lightening, and even earthquakes.

3. Re-envisions our relationship with nature, proposing through their work new ways for us to coexist with our environment.

4. Reclaims and remediates damaged environments, restoring ecosystems in artistic and often aesthetic ways.

Environmental Art is used as an umbrella term which encompasses ecological art (eco-art), ecoventions, land art, earth art, earthworks, and art in nature. Many people today use the term “eco-art” interchangeably with “environmental art.”

*This information was taken from the Green Museum @www.greenmuseum.org
What is Environmental Art?
Reading Questions

1. When did the Environmental Art movement begin?

2. Who began the Environmental Art movement?

3. What is the general purpose of Environmental Art?

4. What social and environmental issues sparked the beginnings of the Environmental Art movement?

5. List four main concerns that Environmental Art addresses.

6. Environmental Art is an “Umbrella term” which encompasses which terms? List six terms that Environmental Art encompasses.
Andy Goldsworthy Biography

Andy Goldsworthy makes ephemeral sculptures in the landscape which he then captures in color photographs. Goldsworthy’s sculptures are made of natural materials such as twigs, leaves, feathers, and stones. Change in season and weather as well as growth and decay are an integral part of the work, as the artist responds to nature in the state of flux. The photograph does not replace, but comes out of the working process, and can be as much a part of an artist’s vocabulary as recorded sound is of a musician’s. (Land and Environmental Art, edited by Jeffrey Kastner and surveyed by Brian Wallis, 1998)

-Goldsworthy was born in Cheshire in 1956.

-He creates work in remote, open-air locations such as the Yorkshire Dales, the Lake District, Grize Fiord in the Northern Territories of Canada, the North Pole, Japan, and the Australian Outback.

-Most of his works are ephemeral and are all in harmony with nature. It is not destructive to the environment in any way.

-Goldsworthy’s artworks have a playful, fun, and interactive quality to them. They are also simple, beautiful, and elegant.

-Most of his sculptural pieces would be experienced by walking around them, or in some cases, even through them.

-His work is reminiscent of Prehistoric Art left on the earth such as the pyramids and Stonehenge.

-Goldsworthy uses all natural materials and his pieces are held together by mud and other natural adhesives, derived from the surrounding environment.

-His art seems like a way for him to communicate with nature and getting back to the original elements.

-His work is a way of renewing links with the earth.
Examples of Environmental Artworks

Spiral Jetty, Robert Smithson

Andy Goldsworthy

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, The Umbrellas

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Surrounded Islands and Valley Curtain