Art & Nature
The Goldsworthy Perspective
Teacher Resource

Grade Level **9-12**

Objectives

1. The student will examine questions about the nature of art.
2. The student will observe Impermanent Earth Art by becoming familiar with contemporary artists such as Andy Goldsworthy and Robert Smithson.
3. The student will construct their own personal Impermanent Earth Art.
4. The student will employ simple equipment and tools to gather data.
5. The student will demonstrate the use of 21st century technology with a document camera.

National Standards

NA-VA.9-12.1	Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.
NA-VA.9-12.2	Using knowledge of structures and functions.
NA-VA.9-12.3	Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.
IIB-2.2	Sensation and Perception
IIC-7.1	Describe differences in perception between individuals differing in motivation.
NT.K-12.1	Basic Operations and Concepts
NT.K-12.3	Technology Productivity Tools
NT.K-12.6	Technology Problem-Solving & Decision-Making Tools

Teacher Background Information

In this experiment, students will be engaged in a guided discussion about what is defined as art especially regarding Earth art and temporary art. Andy Goldsworthy's artwork reinforces the relationship of human existence within nature. His work shows us that we as humans have some ability of controlling nature, but in the end, nature controls us. His

transient sculptures contradict the permanence of art in its historical pretense. The materials used in his work are found in nature such as leaves, grasses, stones, wood, sand, clay, ice, and snow. He has no preconceived ideas about his work. He uses only what nature gives him in the specific season and area he is in. The resultant is referred to as *Impermanent Earth Art,* because of its transient period of existence.

MATERIALS

Document Camera

Personal Computer

Interactive White Board /Projector

Food dye (3 or 4 colors)

Large Clear Bowl

PROCEDURE

Activity 1 *Introduce the Idea of Impermanent Art*

This can be done as a teacher demonstration or the students can do it themselves.

1. Connect a document camera to a computer and an interactive white board.
2. Focus the document camera into the side of the bowl of water so that students may readily see changes in the water on the projection screen, as the food coloring is added.
3. Fill a translucent bowl about 2/3 full of water and have the food dye ready for putting drops into the water.
4. Release a drop of food dye into the bowl, allowing it to make swirls in the water.
5. As the food coloring diffuses throughout the water, ask students questions such as:
   - Have you ever wanted to stop time?
   - Would you like to capture the swirls at a certain point before they disappear completely?
   - Have you ever seen a perfect moment in a cloud, or rain or other natural phenomena and wish you could save it as a picture?

6. Capture a picture with the document camera when the students tell you to. You could also record a video of the swirling dye and play it back again to find the most interesting point in the swirling.

QUESTIONS *Display Image 1 on the interactive white board*

1. Would the photograph of the swirls be considered art?
2. What elements and principles of art do you see in the photograph?

Now project examples of Smithson's and Goldsworthy's work on the interactive white board with the document camera and answer the following questions:

3. Does art have to be beautiful?
4. Is this photograph beautiful?
5. What elements and principles of art can be seen in this work?
6. Which elements and principles have been emphasized?
7. How would you feel about making something beautiful that would eventually disappear?
8. Why would an artist make a sculpture that would eventually melt away?
9. Have you ever seen, owned, or made anything beautiful that faded away?
10. What changes do you predict will happen over time?
11. Does the artist control the changes?
12. Is the natural occurring changes part of the artwork?
13. Since the original art disappears, is the photograph of the piece the actual artwork?

Activity 2 Try It Yourself!

1. Students go outside to find natural materials to make their own impermanent sculpture.

2. Have them either work as a team to make one sculpture or work individually to make many different sculptures.
3. If many sculptures are made the teacher may choose one or more to film.
4. Capture the changes occurring in the impermanent sculpture using the document camera set on time lapse photography.
5. Be sure to set the time short enough to capture significant changes in impermanent art work.
6. As the impermanent sculpture changes you will have a recording.
7. Students may now watch in real time, and then later with the recording, their ice sculpture melt, their woven grass basket change colors, their mud sculpture dissolve in water, or their flower arrangement wilt away.

QUESTIONS

1. Many of the questions asked at the end of Activity 1 may now be re-asked about the student's own project.
2. Does the personalization change student answers and perspective on what is art and what is not?

PRESENTATION

Have students prepare a lab report including the data, images, and video to give a presentation on the interactive white board or projector for the class.

EXTENSION

- Gobstoppers (also known as Jawbreakers) are a hard candy ball that readily dissolve in water, may be just as interesting to see as drops of dye in water. We would suggest using the time lapse feature with your document camera.
- Place four gobstoppers equidistant apart in a deep Petri dish, refrigerator the dish or deep pie plate, preferably a translucent dish for photography. Half fill with water and submerge them in the water. They will all dissolve at approximately the same rate. In a circular dish they will generally perfect pie slices of color in the dish. The colors will change as more layers dissolve. The dissolving process takes about ten minutes, so set the time lapse for something like one frame every 15 seconds.