

POLYGON INSTALLATION

Isaiah Zagar was 19 years old when he met one of his greatest influences, Clarence Schmidt. Clarence was an untrained, outsider artist who inherited a house in Woodstock, NY, that he completely transformed. Creating thoughtful installations of dolls, wood, mirror, glass, tar, and other objects, Clarence covered every square inch of his house and garden. When Isaiah saw Clarence's work, he wanted to make his own multi-sensory, transformative environment.

This lesson uses rubbings and geometric mosaic shapes to encourage students to create their own paper mosaic installation. The activities are designed for grades 3-6, but include suggestions for teachers to adapt the lesson for younger and older students.



Learning Objectives

- Students will utilize geometric shapes to create patterns and/or tessellations
- Students will identify geometric shapes
- Students will apply knowledge of installation in the classroom

Materials

- Paper (copy paper or notebook paper will work)
- Crayons or oil pastels (peeling off the paper makes easier for rubbings)
- Scissors (one pair for each student)
- Tape (painters tape or artist tape will come off easily)

Discussion Questions

- What would Philadelphia's Magic Gardens look like without mosaics?
- What are some differences between Philadelphia's Magic Gardens' mosaics and the polygon mosaics you are making?
- What are some differences between the art at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens and a more traditional art museum? What are some similarities?
- What kinds of art have you seen that is temporary? Is it important to make art that is temporary as well as art that will last a long time?

Key Vocabulary

Pattern regularities in situations, events, shapes, designs, and sets of numbers.

Tessellation a repetitive pattern of polygons that covers an area with no holes and no overlaps.

Polygon a union of segments connected end to end, such that each segment intersects exactly two others at its endpoints.

Installation Art art that is site-specific and designed so that it transforms the perception of a space. These artworks are often temporary.

Site-Specific Art art that is created for a particular place.

Activity

1. Students will create “rubblings” by placing objects underneath a sheet of paper, and rubbing a wax crayon across the paper. Coins, leaves, cardboard, crumples paper, and the bottoms of shoes all make great rubbings; anything with texture will work. Explain that they must use the side of the crayon rather than the tip to get the boldest rubbings.
2. Students will trace and cut out polygons from their rubbing papers.
3. Students will work in small groups to install a paper mosaic.
 - a. Students should choose a surface in the classroom to install their mosaic. It can be a complicated location, such as around the doorway, or in a corner, or something simpler, like the top of a desk. (If you don’t have the classroom space, students can install their mosaics on cardboard or poster board and then hang them in another location).
 - b. Students will use tape to adhere the paper pieces onto their chosen surface. They should be intentional about the colors and patterns they use. The goal is not to cover the space, but to transform the space.
4. Have students identify the shapes that they used to create the mosaic installation and any new shapes that were created in the process.

Adaptations

- Younger students can make rubbings of geometric shapes or cut out shapes from construction paper. Have students glue the shapes onto a piece of heavy paper in simple patterns or make pictures from the shapes.
- Older students should create the polygons instead of tracing them. Require more complex tessellations by asking students to design their pattern before installing it.

PA Academic Standards

Mathematics

Geometry 2.9.3 A, 2.9.3 B, 2.9.3 C

Geometry 2.9.5 A, 2.9.5 D, 2.9.5 G

Geometry 2.9.8 A, 2.9.8 K

Arts & Humanities

Production, Performance, and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts 9.1. C

Historical and Cultural Context 9.2