

THE REAPPROPRIATED

Recommended for Grades 9-12

“An ordinary object [could be] elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist.”—Marcel Duchamp

Isaiah Zagar, the creator of Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, was inspired by many artists of the 20th Century. Marcel Duchamp is one of the most referenced artists throughout Zagar’s work. Duchamp was a Dadaist artist who used the viewer as a participant in the creative process. Like Isaiah, he also used “reappropriated” objects, which he called ready-mades. One of Duchamp’s most famous pieces, Fountain is also referenced at PMG. Fountain is a “reappropriated” urinal, and Duchamp placed it so that its functionality disappeared and created a new thought for that object. This is a great example of the type of works that Dada artists were creating and how they challenged the establishment. Toilet bowls have been “reappropriated” at PMG, and this is one of the ways Zagar references Duchamp within the space.



In this lesson students will learn about Dadaism and understand Marcel Duchamp’s role in that art movement.

Students will learn about how Duchamp’s work inspired Zagar, and how recycling objects and using them in nontraditional ways is prevalent in both artists’ work.

Learning Objectives

- Students will reflect on their personal definitions of art.
- Students will understand the concepts behind Dadaist art and practice complex thinking in order to interpret the works.
- Students will brainstorm ideas for their sculptures and reflect on the definition of ready-mades.
- Students will create a readymade sculpture.
- Students will participate in a discussion and critique with their classmates about their work.

Materials

- Computer(s) with access to the Internet
- Projector
- Recycled/ reused objects collected by the students (bottles, boxes, shoes, furniture, cans, food containers, etc.)
- Acrylic Paint
- Paint Brushes
- Tape
- Glue/Adhesive
- Hot glue
- Paper
- Camera (optional)
- Magazines/ Newspapers
- Wire
- Scissors

Discussion Questions

- What is your definition of art?
- Would you consider ready-made sculpture to be art?
- Why is ready-made art controversial?
- What objects could be used to create a Dadaist sculpture?
- How would Dadaist artists assemble or present those objects?
- How do you think Dadaism has inspired Isaiah Zagar? What evidence is present at PMG to support this?
- How does Zagar's placement of objects change the meaning or purpose of those objects?
- What ideas or concepts would you like to address in your own project?

Key Vocabulary

Collage A form of art that combines different materials (photographs, newspaper, etc.) onto paper or fabric.

***Dada** An artistic and literary movement that grew out of dissatisfaction with traditional social values and conventional artistic practices during World War I (1914–18). Dada artists were disillusioned by the social values that led to the war and sought to expose accepted and often repressive conventions of order and logic by shocking people into self-awareness.

Modern Art Artistic works produced from the 1860s to the 1970s, in which the traditional art mediums have been put aside and experimentation is the focus.

***Ready-made/Reappropriated Objects** A term coined by Marcel Duchamp in 1915 to describe prefabricated, often mass-produced objects isolated from their functional context and elevated to the status of art by the mere act of an artist's selection and designation

**Defined on MOMA website*

Activity

1. Introduce this project at least 1 week prior to the first day of construction by presenting Dadaism, Marcel Duchamp, and the key vocabulary. Cover the historical influences of the art movement, as well as the reasoning behind the art. Tell students to begin collecting objects that they will use in order to create 3D Dadaist sculptures. Present the work at PMG, if students have not visited.
2. Once students collect 3-5 objects, instruct them to begin sketching ideas for the use of the objects. Encourage the students to write out their ideas and words that will reflect the intent of their design.
3. Use language in the piece as Dadaists would have, create words and take away any meaning that the objects already have. This will help them decide on text that they might want to use and can help them write their final report.
4. As students begin brainstorming, note what additional resources or materials they might need.
5. Begin construction. Be sure to photograph the process.

6. Students can paint, draw, or collage on their sculptures with any form of media that they wish, but remembering whatever objects they choose reflect a meaning.
7. Once students have constructed and photographed their pieces, have them write a 2-page report about their work and the reasoning behind their decisions.
8. Have the students present their work and ideas in a critique.

Adaptations

This lesson can be adapted for younger students by having them use only one object, and only using one specific type of medium to alter the meaning of the object. This lesson can also include the concept of chance by having students randomly select objects or have others select objects for them. Instead of brainstorming words to associate with their sculptures could also randomly select them from a search engine.

PA Core Academic Standards

Arts & Humanities

Visual Arts 9.1.12.A, B, C, F, J, L

History

World History 8.4.12.A-D

Historical and Cultural Contexts 9.2.12. A, D, E, L

Critical Response 9.3.12. A, B, C, F

Aesthetic Response 9.4.12. A, D

Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening

Types of Writing 1.4.12.A, B

Quality of Writing 1.5.12.A-F

Resources

<http://www.marcel Duchamp.net/index.php>

<http://www.understandingDuchamp.com/>

http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONn_1pLb4oo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqkIJ0odFxA>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oeosT_6vG7g