



POLYGON INSTALLATION

Recommended for Grades 3-6 (can be adapted for younger or older students)

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 children to create their own paper mosaic installation.



Learning Objectives

- Identify geometric shapes
- Utilize geometric shapes to create patterns and/or tessellations

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 child)
- Tape (painters tape or artist tape will come off easily)
- Polygon template

Discussion Questions

- Using the Virtual Tour found on our website, 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 are 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. 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 rubblings; anything with texture will work. Use the side of the crayon rather than the tip to get the boldest rubblings.
2. Trace and cut out polygons from the rubbing papers.
3. Work as individuals or small groups to install a paper mosaic.
 - a. Choose a surface in your home or classroom to install the mosaic. It can be a complicated location, such as around a doorway, or in a corner, or something simpler, like the top of a desk. (If you don’t have the space, you can install their mosaics on cardboard or poster board and then hang them in another location).
 - b. Use tape to adhere the paper pieces onto their chosen surface. Be intentional about the colors and patterns you use. The goal is not to cover the space, but to transform the space.
4. Identify the shapes that you used to create the mosaic installation and any new shapes that were created in the process.

Adaptations

- Younger children can make rubblings of geometric shapes or cut out shapes from construction paper. Glue the shapes onto a piece of heavy paper in simple patterns or make pictures from the shapes.
- Older children should create the polygons instead of tracing them. Require more complex tessellations by designing the 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

Resources

<https://www.phillymagicgardens.org/about-us/virtual-tour/>

<https://www.phillymagicgardens.org/about-us/>

<http://www.historicalsofwoodstock.org/clarence-schmidt>

<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-a-polygon-definition-shapes-angles.html>