

Patterns

MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

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Patterns Preschool
In Partnership with the Marian Goodman Gallery

Giuseppe Penone: Nature and The Body

Background

“The fascination and the fear stirred by the continual mutation of nature makes me think of humanity’s interference with the living things of the world and how it is ignorant of the fact that it is itself part of nature.” – Giuseppe Penone

Giuseppe Penone’s show at Marian Goodman entitled ‘Leaves of Grass’ centers around the emphasis on the contact between nature and human body. In particular Penone urges the viewer to envision themselves as part of nature through the inclusion of fingerprints as leaves and his use of the human body as both the subject and object of creation. The goal of this lesson will be to introduce children not just to Penone’s works but his ideas and let the children engage in authentic, active, and meaningful activities and discussions relating to these works.

Learning Goals

1. Humans are part of nature and our own physicality can both make prints of other elements of the natural world and be the basis for imprints.
2. Encourage students to come up with connections between our relationship to the natural world and our treatment of the environment as a species.

Lesson Plan

Materials

1. Large roll of kraft paper.
2. Individual sheets of paper.
3. Tempera paint/ Ink for stamping.
4. Clay
5. Natural materials (rocks, bark, grass, leaves, flowers, stones)

Pre-Activity

Presentation on Penone and his work to the children. Engage in discussion questions and record/document the conversation.

Resources

1. Exhibition page and video of the artist speaking about the exhibition:
<https://www.mariangoodman.com/exhibitions/giuseppe-penone-new-york-leaves-of-grass/>
2. Giuseppe Penone's short publication '*Leaves of Grass*' published by MGG is available for the students upon request

Step 1: Specific Challenges/ Warm Up.

Children each sit down with a sheet of paper in front of them. Together the teacher and the students collaborate on a list of natural features of the environment. The teacher then asks students to pick one feature to work on individually on their paper for two minutes. At the end of this time period children guess which feature they have drawn, going around in a circle.

Step 2: Collaboration

Children now are invited to work on a collective landscape. They are seated either at a large table or on the floor and all given the same color to use to create fingerprint landscapes on. They are reminded of the elements of nature that they can include. They could also be shown images of natural landscapes. As they begin to work the teacher goes around and asks each student to identify their own fingerprint. They are also asked to recognize that each fingerprint is different and that if they do too many fingerprints on top of each other it becomes opaque.

Step 3: Clay Mark-Making

Children are given clay and a selection of natural materials that they have sourced from nature. They are asked to make prints using the natural materials in the clay.

Children are then asked to squeeze the clay and make marks using their own hands into the clay.

Children are asked to put the two separately made materials side by side and collectively we will brainstorm a list of ways that these imprints are similar and different.

These imprints can get bisque-fired in the kiln and on the day of the exhibition children can place these objects on top of their landscape.

Step 4: Exhibition

The exhibition can take place in a park and include a table that encourages participation for children or people visiting the exhibition. Teachers will facilitate this participation.

The notes and artefacts from previous discussions can be placed around the exhibition, as well as photographs which reflect how these exhibits were made.

This lesson plan can be downloaded and used by all for the purposes of education, teaching, virtual learning, private study and/or research.

Please feel free to contact the gallery at education@mariangoodman.com if you need further information or resources.