

Ideas and Resources for Outdoor Art

Ideas for Activities

- Using leaves as paper
- Tracing wildflower shadows
- Andy Goldsworthy-inspired projects
- Make charcoal in a campfire and use it to draw
- Cutting up leaves to use as mosaic tiles
- Flower pressing
- Making ink/dye out of local plants/berries (good for experimentation)
- Making watercolours using lake or pond water
- Making "potions" with tempera paint and pond water (good for learning about colour mixing)
- Sidewalk chalk - draw, trace, shadows
- Paint swatch scavenger hunt
- Texture/pattern scavenger hunt
- Building fairy houses
- Shapes scavenger hunt
- Plein air sketching
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Tips

- It doesn't have to be complicated!
- Make it hands-on!
- Make it accessible for everyone but find ways to make it challenging for those who excel in art
- Consider the time of year
- Give options to work in groups or solo
- Don't set limits except those necessary for safety and respecting nature (e.g. don't unnecessarily kill plants or disturb habitat)
- You don't always need to call it art - just do it without calling it anything to avoid having kids shut down based on preconceived ideas. For example, I have called activities things like "Tower Building"
- Outdoor art can be a great "Buddies" activity
- Discuss real artists who worked in or with the outdoors
- Take photos and share with families

Resources

Activities

<https://www.firefliesandmudpies.com/outdoor-art-ideas/>

<https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/outdoor-art-activities-for-kids/>

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2023/04/apr-7-exciting-outdoor-lessons-you-can-use-to-take-art-out-into-nature/>

<https://www.artsintegration.net/outdoor-art-lessons.html>

<https://kinderart.com/art-lessons/painting/plein-air-drawing-painting/>

Outdoor Artists

<https://theartofeducation.edu/2019/03/10-amazing-artists-to-inspire-nature-related-art-projects/>

- Katerina Apale
- Miranda Lloyd
- Lorenzo M. Duran
- Bryan Nash Gill
- Walter Mason
- Barry Van Dusen
- Richard Long
- Andy Goldsworthy
- Nils Udo

Materials to Have on Hand

- I always get my students to have a sketchbook/art journal to use for small activities
- Sidewalk chalk
- Yogurt cups/mason jars/etc.
- Pencils
- "Messy clothes" (paint shirts can do double duty)
- Sit-upons (making these can be a classroom activity in and of itself)
- Crayons (great for texture rubbings, etc.)
- Paint swatch samples from the paint store