Color Collecting Kit

Turn an old book into a travel journal that stores all kinds of fabulous color finds

San Francisco artist Leah Rosenberg is a color scout. In her installation piece, "Everywhere a Color," she created a mural of colors that she collected in her city and recorded in her journal. Colors of fog, palm trees, the Golden Gate Bridge, poppies ... all these she studied, made note of, and worked into a large, striped mural that gives a taste of the city of San Francisco. Along with the artwork, she provided a "key" so that viewers could connect the colors to their own experiences and with the location or objects she recorded.

To stop and look at a color long enough, study it, determine how to record it, capture it, and save it so that it can be shared later ... only the heart of an artist would do such a thing. Or, a developing artist.

The practice of mindfulness — purposefully being fully present in the moment and its experiences — has its roots in ancient Eastern meditation practices. Western psychology has adapted it for patients, and modern culture has had very enthusiastic interest in it in recent years. As an exercise in mindfulness and training young artists to "see" color in their everyday lives, this project takes inspiration from Leah Rosenburg and creates a portable means of collecting colors.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Gather old, unused books from library sales, thrift stores, or yard sales. Look for books in good condition, with strong pages.

2. The process of turning an old book into a portable art studio is open to many choices, a variety of materials, and endless creative ideas. This lesson plan will list a few that will hopefully become starting points for students' own ideas and solutions.

    Many pages will probably be removed. It is recommended to do this slowly, in steps. Pages can be taken out, but it is difficult to add them back in. Students may wish to preserve book pages that have photos or artwork they enjoy. They can either leave the pages intact or cut them out and work them into the design.

Process

1. Begin by creating some pockets to store paper and paper towels in. These can be the front few pages of a book. Here are some ideas for creating pockets (photo examples shown in Step 1 on the next page):

Materials (required)

An old book that can be irretrievably altered

Armada Precision Cost Cutter Scissors, 7" (57609-1007); one pair per student

Elmer's X-Treme School Glue Stick, .88 oz (23894-1025); one per student

Duck Washi Tape, assorted colors and patterns, .75" x 45 ft (34178-)

Materials (optional):

Officemate one-Hole Punch, 1/4" (57349-1001)

Penblade Retractable Craft and Hobby Knife (56445-1010)

Creativity Street Elastic Cord, 25 yd, White (61594-1025)

Velcro Brand Sticky Back Fasteners, package of 15 circles, size 5/8" (57319-1010)

Darice Colorful Plastic Canvas, assorted colors, 10-1/2" x 13-1/2" (63103-)

Twisteez, box of 50, 125 ft (33407-1050)

Officemate Round Head Paper Fasteners, 5/16"Dia x 3/4" length, package of 100 (57348-1034)

Richeson Opaque Watercolor Pan Set, palette shaped set of 12 (00380-0079)

Yupo Watercolor Paper, Mini, 10-sheet pad 2.5" x 3.75", 74 lb (200 gsm), (10149-1003)

Savoir Fair Opaque Watercolor Gouache, set of 10 tubes, (00803-0029)

Process, continued

- To make vertical pockets, fold pages in toward the spine, leaving an inch or two of space to be able to get materials in and out. Use two or more pages to create a sturdy pocket. Tape or glue at the top and bottom to secure.

- To make horizontal pockets, remove pages from the book by tearing or cutting. Fold them in half to make a pocket and then tape along the edges to secure them to a page still in the book.

2. Next, plan a means for taking along tools like pencils, markers, or brushes and keeping them secure. Here are a few ideas:

- Leaving the top open to make a pocket, glue or tape pages along two edges. Design a flap with a piece of fabric or construction paper. The flap can attach to the back side of the pages and fold over the top. It could secure with a Velcro dot, button, or other means of closure.

- Cut a few pages out of the book one to two inches from the spine. Use a punch to create 3-4 holes along the cut pages. Design a pouch using felt or heavy paper, use a heavy envelope or strong zip-close bag. Attach the pouch to the holes with string or wire.

- Cut a piece of plastic mesh to fit inside the book. Weave an elastic cord through the mesh. Prepare the spine with hole punches, as described above. Attach the mesh to the holes with paper brads.

3. Design a way to take along paint and mix colors. A small watercolor or gouache pan set could easily attach with Velcro or an elastic band onto the back cover of the book (after removing the remaining pages). Or, if sending sets out of the classroom isn't a good idea, create a small paint set by squeezing small bits of paint onto Yupo paper or a plastic sheet. Build protection around the palette with a box or cardboard/matboard strips so that the front of the book doesn't touch the paint (or, use a plastic lid to cover). Provide extra sheets of Yupo to use for color mixing.

4. Provide students with Color Hunting forms to keep a record of the colors they find. Use examples on page 3 of this lesson plan, if needed.

Options

- Design a means of closure for the Color Hunting Kit using Velcro, elastic bands, or other means.

- Design a strap for carrying the kit over the shoulder. Some ideas would be to use a fabric strip or ribbon, an old belt, or thick cord.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating
Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

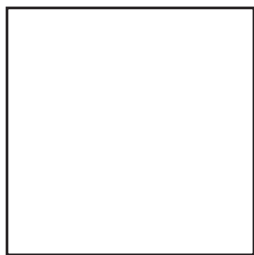**Step 1:** *Create pockets to hold paper towels and paper.*

Step 2: *Design a pouch or holder to secure pencils, marker, and brushes*

Step 3: *Create a means of carrying and mixing paint to keep it in the kit.*

BLICK® art materials

Color Name:
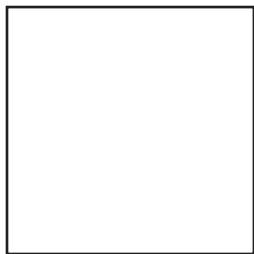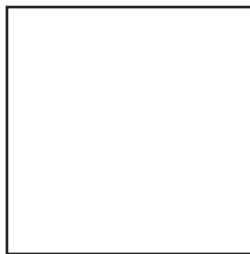
Where color was found:

This color could be used for:

Color Name:

Where color was found:

This color could be used for:

Color Name:

Where color was found:

This color could be used for:

Color Name:

Where color was found:

This color could be used for: