

BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

Lesson: Monochromatic Assemblage



Artists: Louise Nevelson

Artwork: *Royal Game I*, 1961

Period/Movement: *Abstract Sculpture/Assemblage*

Grade Level: K-8

Enduring Understanding:

Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

Essential Questions:

What conditions, attitudes, and behaviors support creative risk taking and innovative thinking?

How does collaboration expand the creative process?

Louise Nevelson (American, born Kiev, Russia (now Ukraine), 1899-1988). *Royal Game I*, 1961. Wood, painted gold. 69 x 51½ x 8¼ inches (175.3 x 130.8 x 21 cm). Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Gift of Seymour H. Knox, Jr., 1962 (K1962:9). © Estate of Louise Nevelson / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

LESSON

Conceptual Basis

Royal Game I, 1961, is a golden monochromatic assemblage composed of found materials that the artist Louise Nevelson collected around the city. Nevelson transforms these random bits of wooden furniture, scrap materials, and frames into a unified and harmonious sculpture. In this lesson, students will learn about the artist and her compositions, and create their own found-object assemblage sculpture.

Objectives:

- Become familiar with the artist Louise Nevelson and her monochromatic wooden assemblage sculptures
- Increase awareness of composition, shape, and texture to create variety and unity sculptures
- Create a monochromatic assemblage using found materials inspired by Louise Nevelson
- Support the understanding of basic art elements and principles

Activity: *Discussion Exercise*

The following questions can be used when discussing Louise Nevelson's *Royal Game I*:

- What shapes do you see? What shapes repeat?
- Can you identify any materials or objects that are being repurposed in this sculpture?
- If you wanted to re-create this yourself, what would you do first? Second? Third?
- Why do you think that the artist chose *Royal Game I* for the title of this assemblage?

Artmaking Activity

Prior to the artmaking activity, instruct students to search for small objects over a period of time. These found objects can have different textures, materials, purposes, shapes, or sizes. Remind students that Nevelson's assemblages were made from wood that she would find.

Students should arrange found objects in their shoe box. Instruct students to try creating different compositions based on the placement, layering, or overlapping of their objects. Once students have created a preferred composition, they can begin gluing down their found objects. Once the glue has dried, students will paint their entire shoe box and its contents a monochromatic color using acrylic paint. Paint should be applied two to three times over all the materials.

Lesson Tips

- This lesson can be tailored for different age levels and can create various interdisciplinary connections. For a science connection, students can learn about nature and create an assemblage with objects such as twigs, flowers, leaves, shells, or rocks found on a hike.
- Older students can also create assemblages based on themes, such as their interests.

Optional Reflections and Lesson Wrap-Up

1. A short writing assignment or reflection about their artmaking process can give teachers insight for the next time students do this lesson.
2. Students can stack their assemblages together to create a large collaborative sculpture similar to many of Nevelson's three-dimensional works.

Vocabulary:

sculpture: a type of artwork made by adding or abstracting material to create a form that can be seen from multiple sides

composition: a way in which something is put together or arranged

assemblage: a form of sculpture composed of found objects

found object: a natural or manufactured object that is used as an element of an artwork

monochromatic: an artwork that contains one color

unity: principle of art; occurs in an artwork when the elements of art are harmonious

variety: principle of art; when an artwork contains different forms or elements

Materials:

- Found objects
- Shoe box
- Glue (strong or hot glue)
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes

New York State Standards:

Grade	Code	Standard
K	VA:Cr1.1.K	Engage collaboratively in creative artmaking in response to an artistic problem.
1	VA:Cr1.1.1	Use observation and exploration in preparation for making a work of art.
2	VA:Cr1.1.2	Create art of design with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosity.
3	VA:Cr1.1.3	Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies, to investigate personal ideas through the artmaking process.
4	VA:Cr1.1.4	Work individually and collaboratively to set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makings.
5	VA:Cr1.1.5	Identify and demonstrate diverse strategies for artistic investigation to choose an approach for beginning a work of art.

6	VA:Cr1.1.6	Use brainstorming to formulate an artistic investigation of personally relevant content for creating art.
7	VA:Cr1.1.7	Develop criteria to guide making a work of art or design to meet an identified goal.
8	VA:Cr1.1.8	Collaboratively shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life by using a contemporary practice of art and design.

Interdisciplinary Connections:
Teacher Example:



Example of finished artwork based on lesson plan. Artwork and lesson plan by former School Program Coordinator Kelly Macagnone and former Education Intern Ashley Cancel.