

COFO ORIENTATION ART WORKSHOP NOTES

- I Three ways in which art can be used in the Mississippi Project
 1. Art as a medium of expression: simple arts and crafts projects using readily available materials.
 2. Art as an approach to the community: ways of drawing many people into community center activities through art.
 3. Art as a medium of mass communication: ways in which the objectives of voter registration, political education, and health and library projects can be communicated with art media.

II Simple Arts and Crafts Projects

MATERIALS

1. Basic materials to be purchased as inexpensively as possible.
 - A. Paint: Cement pigment mixed with water soluble white housepaint (both are available in hardware stores.)
 - B. Brushes: Synthetic sponges cut into manageable shapes and strips, small Japanese watercolor brushes sold in bulk, enamel paint brushes available in 5 and 10 or hardware stores.
 - C. Paper: Newsprint is suitable for most projects, except fingerpainting. Paper bags and newspapers may be used like ordinary paper when they are more plentiful.
 - D. Paste: Wallpaper paste (wheat paste) available in hardware store; also paste made from flour and water with small amount of alum added. These are adequate for most uses of white plastic glue.
 - E. Scissors: Some should be around, but it is possible to tear many things instead of cutting them, and to use razor blades for cutting.
 - F. Finger Paint: Prepare powdered starch as directed on package with boiling water; add cement pigment, food coloring, or easier egg dye.
 - G. Clay: To make a doughy clay that can be used for modeling and kept in plastic bags or allowed to harden, mix dry 1/2 cup salt with 1 cup flour. Add water gradually until a thick mixture is formed. Clay can be colored by adding cement pigment to dry mixture or adding food coloring or Easter egg dye to water before it is mixed in.
 - H. Paper Mache: Prepare soupy paste base, using wheat paste or flour and water paste. Newspaper can be torn into small pieces and soaked a short time in paste to use as modeling material; and torn into strips to be dipped in paste and applied in layers.
2. Sources for scrap materials, available in the local community through the efforts of COFO workers or community people who have particular access to them.
 - A. Scrap collecting agencies like Goodwill Industries, Volunteers of America, Saint Vincent de Paul, etc., can be asked to donate clothing, magazines, and newspapers.

- B. Wherever buildings are being erected, scrap wood, nails, wire, pieces of metal, sawdust, etc., can be found.
- C. Printing offices of all kinds can be asked for strips of paper cut off the edges of finished products and usually discarded. Newspapers at home may be asked to donate newsprint.
- D. Grocery stores and clothing stores may accumulate large and small cardboard boxes, respectively.
- E. Children can be sent around the neighborhood collecting household items, such as paper bags, string, potato sacks, etc.

PROJECTS

1. Projects using natural materials found out-of-doors.

A. Leaves

- i. Smoke Painting: Hold a candle below the bottom of a coffee can, allowing soot to gather. Rub soot onto leaf with finger, and press leaf to paper to make print to be used for pictures or stationery.
- ii. Spatter Prints: Place leaves on paper and spatter paint around them.
- iii. Leaf Mobile: Build a mobile of leaves and sticks, beginning by balancing the leaves at the bottom.
- iv. Japanese Leaf Paper: Place leaves and grasses between a piece of heavy paper and very soft paper like kleenex or rice paper. Spread a dilute solution of white plastic glue over the top piece (wheat or flour paste will not work) and allow to dry, weighting down corners. Leaves and grasses can also be ironed between two pieces of waxed paper. They will retain their color if pressed between heavy books before use.

B. Seeds

- i. Burrs: Animals and dolls can be made by sticking together burrs for body and head, and adding other materials for limbs.
- ii. Placemats: Split weeds into 2"-3" strips, soak them, and weave them together crosswise like a checkerboard.
- iii. Sitting mats: Attach a pole horizontally between two trees or stakes, and place three other stakes 1 - 1½ feet apart in the ground parallel to the pole and about 5 feet away. Tie strings to the three stakes, wrap them around the pole from below and tie their other ends to a crossbar held in the hands little closer to the weaver than the three stakes. Lie a bunch of stem weeds over the strings at the pole, and lower the crossbar so that it is below the level of the pole. Add another bunch of weeds and raise the crossbar, and continue raising and lowering it, catching the weeds between the top and bottom half of the strings each time.

D. Wood

- i. Whittle soft wood with pocket or similar knives.
- ii. Driftwood can be rubbed and polished with a stone or sandpaper.

E. Clay: Natural clay can be found in some areas. It is usually redder than normal soil, feels smooth when wet and is suitable for modeling if it stays together when dry.

F. Natural dyes, used on white fabric

- i. The following materials can be used for dyes: onions (brown), goldenrod leaves (green), and flower (yellow), coffee (brown), carrots (orange), red sumac (red), sage, and spanish moss. Any plant with color can be experimented with.
- ii. Chop, crush, or grind the material used, simmer for one hour. Dampen the fabric, wring it out, dip it in dye, and let it sit for 10-15 minutes or until you like the color. Add salt to fix the color, and remove fabric from water. Do not add salt until dyeing is completed. Alum may be added to fix color, but in any case colors will not last beyond 2 or 3 washings.

3. Projects using scrap materials

A. Paper and related materials: newspaper, magazines, cardboard boxes (all sizes and types), paper bags, egg cartons, other cartons, paper scraps, wood and construction scraps.

- i. Folding: Newspaper and magazines can be folded into hats, boats, airplanes, and all the Japanese Origami animals. Write on hats, add ornamentation with magazine colors, cloth scraps. Make newspaper sitting mat by folding open newspaper pages the long way into strips about 3" wide. Weave together twelve strips to form a square and tuck ends around to other side.
- ii. Collage: Collages can be made of all conceivable materials, pasting scraps to a background piece of paper to form a design. Add cloth, buttons, wire, sponges, all scraps.
- iii. Construction: Toy blocks, cars, houses can be made from wood scraps, milk cartons, egg cartons, adding colors from magazines, papier mache, twigs, cardboard, etc. Dolls can be made from paper bags, drums from cardboard cartons. Faces made of cardboard boxes piled on one another make a totem pole. Animals, usual and fantastic, can be made from all these things. All kinds of sculpture can be made from papier mache over a frame of wire, crumpled newspaper, sticks, and from construction scraps.

B. Cloth and related materials: cloth scraps, buttons, string, thread, yarn, burlap bags, feed sacks, string bags (for shipping potatoes, onions, oranges).

- i. Weaving: Wall hangings can be made by weaving yarn, twigs, string, strips of cloth, straws, by running string the length of the hanging and weaving the materials back and forth by hand. A loom made like a picture frame with nails along the margins can be used, with the original string tied only using two opposite sides of the frame. Pot holders and hot plates can be made with the same or similar techniques. Some small looms for that purpose are often found in kits and may be available from home. Remove some threads from burlap and weave in twigs, yarn, grasses. String bags can be used as a basis for weaving threads in and out.
- ii. Embroidery: All kinds of yarns, strings, and cloth strips can be used for embroidering wall hangings or other things on burlap or plain colored cloth. The yarn itself may be sewn with, or it may be placed on the cloth and attached with usual sewing thread from the other side.

III Projects that can be used as a focal point for community center programs.

1. Knowing your community: As you get to know individuals in the community, draw upon people to give you ideas about the kinds of projects you can do, and to come to the center to help teach something they are good at (hook rugs) or to contribute to a program (teenage combo). Try to plan your projects with the interests and perceptions of the community in mind.
2. Drawing people to the center: Puppet shows and other performances can be put on for parents, friends, and the general public. Some of these may incorporate objectives of other community center programs and voter registration and classroom work of the freedom schools. (Details below.)

A. Puppets

- i. Stick Puppets: A drawing of an animal or figure may be attached to a stick or piece of heavy cardboard, and held from below. Make arms and legs movable by using strips of paper.
- ii. Paper bag Puppets: Stuff the bottom of a paper bag as a head, tie it at the neck, make holes for fingers to serve as arms, paste on features, hair, feet with magazine paper or other scraps.
- iii. Sock Puppets: Use large plain colored socks. Sock may be used alone with fingers at the tip, moving to form the mouth and eyes and hair sewn just above the tip. A slit may be made in the foot and cloth sewn in to form the mouth, with other features added in the same way. Paper may be stuffed into the tip to form a head, and a dress made of cloth to be sewn to the head with or without the rest of the sock.
- iv. Paper Patche Heads: Puppet head may be made out of

papier mache over a clay mould or a wad of newspaper, and cut in half when dry for removal - then put right back together again. Papier mache may also be moulded right around a toilet paper roll. Then the dress is attached by sewing or a rubber band. (If the latter is used, costumes can be changed.)

→ V. Stage: Cover three sides of a card table with cloth or paper extending to the floor. Children kneel behind table and work puppets along back edge. A cardboard stage may be placed on the table top.

B. Masks: Masks may be made of paper bags, papier mache (over crumpled newspaper or a clay mould), and cardboard boxes. All kinds of materials are possible for features.

3. Coordinating art projects with other community center and freedom school activities.

→ A. Programs: puppets and masks can be used in programs that focus on the use of the library, public health, voter registration, political education, etc.

B. Classroom: Many of these art projects can be done in the freedom schools in conjunction with classroom studies, particularly murals can be painted and displayed around the room.

IV Posters and Mass Communication

1. Uses of the following techniques: Art people may be used as resources for poster making by other workers in the same community center or classroom group. Some of the following techniques may be incorporated into arts and crafts projects.

2. Poster techniques

A. Lettering: This is the usual way of making posters - magic markers, crayons, pastels, spongers with flat-edged brush are good.

→ B. Collage: Words and letters printed in magazines may be assembled, and letters cut or torn out of magazine pictures and colored paper. Use pictures, cloth scraps, textures, etc., along with words.

C. Printmaking: for making large numbers of identical or similar posters. In some cases letters and designs or symbols may be saved and used for other posters in other arrangements. In all cases, several colors may be printed by repeating the same technique with a different stencil or block. All printmaking involves the distribution of black (or color) and white in space. The following discussions indicate whether black or white results from the central operation.

1. Stencils: areas can be cut out of stencil paper or fairly heavy cardboard which will print black by placing the stencil on paper and sponging or painting through the open area.

11. Block Prints BE SURE TO CUT ALL LETTERS BACKWARDS

a. Wood and linoleum can be carved into with cutting tools made for that purpose. The lines or areas cut out print white when the block is inked and paper placed on top of it and rubbed. (You

need a brayer or very small paint roller and printers ink or tempera. These and the tools are available in art stores. Roll the ink or paint out on a piece of glass or other flat, non-absorbent surface, and then roll on block. For printing with tempera, try wetting the paper.)

- b. Fairly thick grey cardboard (called chipboard or pressboard) can be used in the same way by cutting with a razor blade. Cut the outlines of a narrow area or line, make a slit inside the area to be removed, and peel off several layers of cardboard.
- c. Any kind of cardboard can be used as a base for printing raised letters or lines which will print black when inked. Cut the letters out of thick cardboard or sponge and glue them to the base.
- d. Small pieces of wood, cardboard, and potato or other flat, carvable material may all be used as above but as a single word, letter, or design printed after inking by placing it upside down on the paper. Cut a potato in half, and leaving surface flat, carve away areas to print white.

3. Use of visual symbols instead of and as a supplement to words: It would be possible to develop symbols for voting, community center, school, library, integration, etc., which could be repeated on different posters seen by the same people throughout the summer. This might well prove more effective communication with people unaccustomed to the word as a visual symbol. Children in art classes might help develop the symbols (older children considering it as a project related to literacy.)

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