Turning Paintings into Color Sculptures
6th grade sculpture lesson (Scalable to other levels)

Students explore contemporary art and the everyday-object sculptures of Jessica Stockholder

Objectives
- Students work as a class to examine a piece of contemporary art and learn about American artist, Jessica Stockholder.
- Students work independently to create a Diamante poem that describes a Stockholder sculpture.
- Students work in teams to create a found object sculpture inspired by Stockholder’s themes of color and space.

Vocabulary
- Contemporary Sculpture
- Found Objects
- Henri Matisse, Fauvism
- Art Elements: Space, Color
- Paintings in Space

About the Work
Jessica Stockholder’s untitled work of art is an example of contemporary sculpture (3-dimensional art made during our lifetime). She builds brightly colored works of art by joining found objects together (items that are already created for a non-art related purpose). Her work, , 1994, contains everyday items, such as a bed, plastic leaves, sink legs, clothing scraps, yarn and hardware, but she hopes the creative way she joins them together causes viewers to see these materials in a brand new way. Many of her sculptures are attached to the wall; in this case, the bed is attached to two narrow pieces of wood, bolted to the wall, and draped in fabrics. Stockholder is also inspired by the famous 20th Century artist Henri Matisse (b.1869-d.1954). Matisse was a French Fauvist artist who used bright greens, reds, yellows, and purples in his paintings. The Fauvists (French for “The Wild Beasts”) were a group of painters in the early 1900s known for using bright and bold colors above anything else.

About the Artist
Born in Seattle, Washington, Stockholder studied and worked throughout Canada before settling in New Haven, Connecticut in 1999 as a faculty member at Yale University. With a background in painting and sculpture, Stockholder is known for creating sculptures that are often described as Paintings in Space. Her complicated installations of reclaimed materials create relationships between architectural features - floors, walls, windows, ceilings - and the shared space of the work and viewer.

Stockholder says that her work always has and continues to start with color, followed by an exploration of space. Her love of color is evident in the variety of color fields she uses and intricately arranges within her sculptures. Much of the reason she tends to use plastics and fabrics in her work is because of their inherent ability to hold bright colors over time.
Lesson Materials
- Poster Reproduction of Jessica Stockholder’s work, 1994 or digital image (see Resources for URL)
- Activity Worksheet for Diamante Poem and Color Analysis
- Corcoran Poster Series of 16 works
- Box of various found objects (toys, clothes, household items)
- Cardboard or plywood sheets for sculptures bases
- Fabric samples
- Sketch paper
- Paint swatches or colored pencils
- Copper wire, twisty ties, pipe cleaners (for assembling sculpture)
- Glue
- Paint, paint brushes

Instructions
1) Word Hunt Warm Up: As a class, look at the poster reproduction or projected image of Jessica Stockholder’s sculpture, 1994. Have each student use the Vocabulary Builder worksheet to find Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs that describe Stockholder’s work of art. Share out.
2) Diamante Poem: Using their Vocabulary Builder sheet, students fill in the Diamante Poem worksheet with words from their list. (6.5.2) Share out.
3) Use discussion questions to talk about Stockholder’s piece as a class.
4) As pairs or small groups, have students select a work of art – you can use the Corcoran poster set for this.
5) Have students identify the 3 dominant colors of their chosen work of art and using pencil or color swatches recreate the colors on sketch paper.
6) Using their swatches, students will search the box for found objects that correspond to their color swatches – aim to have students pick out 1-3 objects for each color
7) Students work together to assemble a sculpture of their found objects on a piece of plywood or cardboard base. Use copper wire, twisty ties, or pipe cleaners to attach objects to each other.
8) Have students present their sculpture alongside their selected poster and describe the process using the discussion questions.

Discussion Questions (before studio activity)
1) What does “contemporary” mean? (6.1.4)
2) How does this work of art compare to what you’ve seen before? How? (6.1.5)
3) What do you think the artist is trying to tell us with this sculpture?
4) Where may have the artist have started?

Discussion Questions (as present)
1) How would your sculpture be assembled or installed into a room? (6.4.5)
2) Could your sculpture look the same if you had picked different colors?
3) Where does your sculpture “start” and “end”?
4) Now go back to your inspiration work and choose objects based on the subject – how does this change what your sculpture looks like? (6.4.5)
Standards (Scalable to other levels)

**DC Visual Arts Standards for 6th Grade:**

6.1.4 Identify and discuss works of art including the subject, theme, genre, style, function, and differences in media. Describe how an artist can use the same theme in a work of art using different media and style resulting in a different effect.

6.1.5 Describe the differences between two and three-dimensional visual fields.

6.2.5 Select specific media and processes to express personal ideas.

6.4.1 Construct and describe interpretations of what is perceived in vocabulary – the subject, the composition, and the content

6.4.4 Develop specific criteria alone or in groups to assess and critique works of art

6.4.5 Articulate reasons for changing, editing, or revising personal works of art after a critique and museum visit

6.5.2 Write a poem or story inspired by original works of art

**Artist Quotes** from Art 21 (2011)

“I think being an artist and choosing to put yourself in a circumstance where you don’t know just how things are going to work out is very exciting and rich and also difficult.”

“I love plastic. I also just love color and plastic is a great vehicle for color. They embody color, they’re colorful all the way through. Plastic is cheap and easy to buy, and my work participates in that really quick and easy and inexpensive material that is part of our culture.”

“Drawings are recipes for action.”

**Additional Resources**

**Images and Information**

- Stockholder’s personal website. [http://www.jessicastockholder.info](http://www.jessicastockholder.info)
- Digital Image ([http://www.corcoran.org/collection/work/untitled-0](http://www.corcoran.org/collection/work/untitled-0))

**Lesson Plans**

- **Everyday Art**, Corcoran Lesson Plan, (6th, 7th, 8th). Students will learn about Stockholder’s style of art, from artists that inspired her (such as Henri Matisse), to the process she undergoes, to how she incorporates humor. Students will utilize materials they have brought from home as well as items in the classroom to create their own sculpture.

- **Where Does Art Come From**, SFMOMA Lesson Plan, (High School). Things made by people surround us. They involve myriad ways of making and are made in many different places. Each thing is charged with a host of references and meanings. All objects are made in response to the circumstances surrounding the maker. The object you make for this activity will be circumscribed by what is available to you wherever you are. Taking part in this activity is an invitation to take note of the very ordinary things that you may not otherwise notice. Ordinary things are full of significance. The art comes from your intersection with what’s around you. ([http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/educators/teacher_resources/openstudio.lesson.stockholder](http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/educators/teacher_resources/openstudio.lesson.stockholder))

**Video and Audio**

Vocabulary Builder

Look at Jessica Stockholder’s work of art, , 1994.

1) What objects do you see? Make a list of 10 nouns describe this work of art.
2) What colors and textures do you see? Make a list of 10 adjectives that describe this work of art.
3) What is this sculpture doing? Make a list of 10 verbs that describe this work of art.

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4) Now circle your 2 favorite nouns. 6 favorite adjectives and 4 favorite verbs.
Diamante Poem Builder

________________________
NOUN

________________________
ADJECTIVE  ADJECTIVE  ADJECTIVE

________________________
VERB  VERB  VERB

________________________
ADJECTIVE  ADJECTIVE  ADJECTIVE

________________________
NOUN
Jessica Stockholder, #291, 1997
Acrylic and oil paints, couch cushions, plastic container lid, shoe laces, hardware, chain, plastic scoop and toilet plunger
Jessica Stockholder, #115, 1989
Mixed Media
Jessica Stockholder, 1994
Corcoran Gallery of Art
Gift of the Women’s Committee of the
Corcoran Gallery of Art.
Henri Matisse, *Open Window, Collioure*, 1905
National Gallery of Art, Washington
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney