

Tara Donovan
Visual Surprises
Sculpture

Created by Karen Saunders, Lakota East High School Art Educator



Post-Visit Lesson Plan
Grades 3rd-12th
Age adaptable
Visual Arts

About the Artist and Her Work:

What is more fun than exploring the art work of Tara Donovan? Her large scale organic installations will draw in your students. On closer inspection students will discover these sculptures are made out of straws, cups, and buttons. It is this act of transforming everyday objects through reconstruction of massive quantities of a single material that will make students fans of her work.

Donovan starts the process of each installation by walking into a store and picking an object like a straw. Then she studies the straw and makes discoveries altering the straw until it is no longer recognizable as its former self. To begin her process she starts with a small scale sculpture. When she is happy with the form the objects take, she and her team repeats it countless times to create an organic shape that looks topographic or biomorphic. Her work is a visual surprise that students will delight in.

Objectives:

Students will...

- discover Tara Donovan's work thru visiting her exhibit at the CAC
- learn how to create and installation
- analyze what makes their sculptures effective or not effective through communication of transforming an object "Tara Donovan style"

Materials:

15"x15" square of cardboard
Assorted glue and tape
Bottle caps
Clothes pins
Tooth picks
Paper tubes
Buttons
Paper clips
Coffee filters
Corks
Paper muffin liners

Vocabulary:

installations
topographies
biomorphic
organic
mass-produced

Anticipatory set:

Show students the work of Tara Donovan.

Talk about how Donovan picks her objects first then explores the object and transforms it into something entirely different. She often gives the objects the shape of a topographies or biomorphic forms.

Pass around different objects like a clothes pin or coffee filter.

What happens if the object is stacked bent, twisted, folded, or stretched?

Have students brainstorm possible ideas.

Procedure:

1. Gather up piles of mundane objects like coffee filters, clothes pins, etc.
2. Break up class into small groups. Each group will get a 15"x15" piece of cardboard to use as a base and will also pick one of the objects like coffee filters.
3. Student will explore the object and experiment until they come up with a sculpture idea.
4. Once the sculpture is created it will be photographed both from a distance as well as close up.
5. The class could then chose one sculpture idea they feel is successful at transforming the object the way Tara Donovan does.
6. Then every group will then create a small sculpture in the style of the chosen one.
7. Place all small sculptures together to create an installation.

Assessment:

Looking at all the sculptures, discuss what was successful at transforming the object.

Ohio Stare Standard:**Visual Arts**

Creative Expression and Communication

Students create artworks that demonstrate understanding of materials, processes, tools, media, techniques, and available technology. They understand how to use art elements, principles and images to communicate their ideas in a variety of visual forms.

Valuing the Arts/Aesthetic Reflection

Students understand why people value visual art. They present their beliefs about the nature and significance of selected artworks and the reasons for holding these beliefs. Students reflect on and respect diverse points of view about artworks and artifacts.

Project examples from Karen Saunders' students at Lakota East High School.



