VISIONARY ACTIVITIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Brackman’s Botanical Bonanza! by Wendy Brackman, Courtesy of the artist
OUT OF THIS WORLD:
GRADES 3–8

Inspired by Bernard Stiegler and Edward Woltemate Jr.

Artists Edward Woltemate and Bernard Stiegler like to envision what alien creatures would eat on other planets. Edward Woltemate is inspired by alien creatures living on an imaginary Planet Normarsamosy, that spend their days enjoying large, exotic fruits. Bernard Stiegler’s animation Food Pyramid raises the question, “What is food like on other planets?”

In this activity, students will think about food production on planet Earth, then research another planet in the solar system. Students will use the information gathered to envision what life would be like on another planet.

Objectives:
Students will consider what natural resources and production methods are used to make the food they eat.
Students will investigate and analyze how natural resources and environmental factors might affect food production on a different planet.
Students will create a three-dimensional sculptural representation of a meal on a different planet based on their research about that planet’s environment, atmosphere, and natural resources.

Critical Questions:
What natural resources are used for food production on earth?
What do you think life could be like on other planets? Why?
What planet would you want to live on?
How would someone survive on that planet based on your research?
What resources would be used on that planet to make food?

Activity:
1. Ask students what they had for breakfast and discuss where they think their breakfast came from.
2. Have students choose their favorite planet (other than Earth) and research its environment and atmosphere.
3. Using the information from research, have students brainstorm and answer the following questions: If you lived on this planet, how would you survive? What would you eat for lunch on this planet? What would your home look like and what would it be made from?
4. Have students create a 3D depiction of what their intergalactic lunch tray would look like. Students will present and describe their lunch tray to the class and discuss what their lunch would be made from.
5. After presentations and discussion, students will also write an essay and describe “a day in the life of” inhabiting another planet.

Materials:
Lunch tray (can be plastic or styrofoam), paper mache, colored paper, magazines, random fun: pom-poms, astroturf, faux flowers, pipe cleaners etc, glue sticks, hot glue, markers & pencils.

Standards:
Science: Natural Resources and Human Needs, Astronomy, Earth / Space Science
Visual Arts: Creative Expression and Production
TRASH OR TREASURE:
GRADERS 3–8

Inspired by Richard Lang and Judith Selby Lang and their project One Plastic Beach

Richard Lang and Judith Selby Lang collect and “curate” plastic bits of detritus collected from Kehoe Beach, located in the Point Reyes National Seashore in California.

In this activity, students will create an assemblage using found plastic from their neighborhood, school and / or surrounding areas.

Objectives:
Students will define the words “decompose” and “biodegrade.”
Students will recognize the importance of recycling and repurposing items we throw away.
Students will create a collaborative artwork.

Critical Questions:
What do you consider trash and why?
What happens to trash after it’s thrown away?
What type of trash will decompose / biodegrade quickly?
What type of trash will hang around longer?

Vocabulary:
Decompose - to cause something organic (such as dead plants and the bodies of dead animals) to be slowly destroyed and broken down by natural processes, chemicals, etc. To cause something (such as a chemical) to be separated into smaller or simpler part.
Biodegrade - to be broken down into safe, harmless products by the action of living things (such as microorganisms)

Activity:
1. Have students collect “colorful trash” from their neighborhood (soda bottle caps, plastic bags, bottles, toys) for several weeks, or even months. Be sure to use caution when picking up trash and don’t forget to clean all collected items!
2. Discuss the idea of trash using the critical questions above and define the words “decompose” or “biodegrade.” Have a more thorough discussion on plastic and it’s inability to break down and decompose over time - share with students “How Long ‘Til It’s Gone” visual, or another similar timeline.
4. Have students sort the trash by color and size (small, medium, large).
5. Using the “trash” collected, have students create assemblages on large letters to spell the word “TRASH or TREASURE.” Offer students tips on collaging the items on the letters in one color family, or in a gradient, or just random.
**Materials:**
Collected plastics and trash (soda bottle caps, plastic bags, bottles, toys, combs, zip ties, miscellaneous plastics), sturdy board to be used as backing (upcycled mat board or cardboard) pre-cut to the shape of letters to spell the word “TRASH” or “TREASURE,” hot glue or silicone.

**Above and Beyond:**
Students can also work together on a larger, collaborative trash mosaic to be displayed in the school or outside. A large design can be drawn out, similar to a paint-by-number, and students can fill in the sections with the appropriate colored pieces.

**Standards:**
Science: Natural Resources and Human Needs, Environmental Issues
MD State Science Curriculum: Standard 6.0
Visual Arts: Creative Expression and Production, Aesthetics and Criticism

**Resources:**
Plastic Forever blog http://plasticforever.blogspot.com/
One Plastic Beach project http://beachplastic.com/About-One-Beach-Plastic
Plastic Pollution Coalition http://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/
“Trashures: The Beauty of Useless Stuff” by Tineke Meirink and Anja Brunt
WHO’S COMING TO DINNER?: GRADES 6–12

Inspired by Women of York: Shared Dining

Women of York: Shared Dining, was created in 2013 by a group of 10 incarcerated women. The artwork consists of 10 place settings on a triangular shaped dinner table. Each place setting is dedicated to a woman of personal significance to the artist.

In this activity, students will research their “heroes” or historical figures, and imagine a conversation they would have with them over dinner.

Objectives:
Students will understand the historical and biographical context of their dinner meeting.
Students will apply both research and imagination to a short, historical fiction narrative.
Students will use proper punctuation in their writing.

Critical Questions:
Why would you choose to have dinner with this person?
What would you serve at dinner?
What would you ask this person and how would they respond?

Activity:
1. Have students research their hero or historical figure and collect biographical information, quotes and a photograph of the individual.
2. Review proper dialogue punctuation with students.
3. Using their research, have students write a short story recounting their dinner conversation with their hero/historical figure.

Standards:
History/Social Studies: Writing
CC. 6-8.W.2
CC. 9-12.W.4

Resources:
Women of York: Shared Dining http://www.3gf.org/shared-dining-1/