

Hidden Treasure Art

Description:

Students will conduct a local trash cleanup (school grounds, river, beach, forest, etc.). They will create art pieces showcasing materials collected during the cleanup.

Materials:

Computer with access to internet, gloves, containers or bags to collect trash, sink and soap to wash collected materials, cardstock paper, paint & brushes (optional), cyanotype materials (optional), camera (optional)

Procedure:

Part 1: As a whole class or independently, have students view Kimberly Ritchie's works under the [Invasive](#) section of the [Endangered, Invasive, and Undiscovered \(Species\) exhibition](#) and read her accompanying writings. Ask them how they could create something similar.

Part 2: Find a local area where you can bring your class to conduct a trash cleanup. You might choose to stay on school grounds or go to a river, beach, forest, etcetera. Be sure that everyone wears gloves. Bring containers or bags to collect found trash. After the cleanup, use an outdoor area or large floorspace to lay out the collected trash. Students sort through the trash to find pieces that they would like to use in their artwork. Wash the pieces well.

Part 3 (optional): Watch [this video](#) about how to make cyanotypes. It gives thorough and detailed descriptions of processes and materials. Collect the necessary materials and become familiar with the process of making cyanotypes.

Part 4: On a piece of cardstock paper, students arrange their found materials however they like, then glue them to the paper. If you choose to allow students to make cyanotypes, follow along with the directions in the video. A third option for Part 4 is to have students—individually or as a group—arrange their found materials on the ground or on a large floor. Take photos to preserve the artwork, then recycle and throw away the materials.

Part 5: Students write a reflection piece to accompany their artwork. Some things for them to think about when writing their reflections may include:

- What is the significance of this piece?
- Does the artwork created relate to the cleanup you conducted?
- Are you trying to convey an idea to others through your work?
- Is there beauty to be found in trash?
- What do you want people to know about your experience with this project?