CREATIVE CONSTRAINTS: ART RESEARCH & EXPLORATION

After this lesson you will be able to:
- describe, analyze, and interpret the variety of constraints that artists work within
- analyze and reflect on the artwork of contemporary artists
- create an installation artwork that demonstrates a type of constraint

Suggested Materials:
- Pencil
- Found objects

THINK

Constraint: (noun) a limitation or restriction

Artists can have a variety of constraints to work within while creating their art. There are physical constraints such as working with a broken arm, environmental/spatial constraints like working in an extremely small space, material constraints such as a shortage of art supplies, or time constraints like working with a deadline.

What do you know already? Answer the following questions and prompts to begin exploring ideas.
- Have you ever had a constraint to work within while creating art, playing a sport, or playing a musical instrument? If so, what was the constraint?
- How did you work within that constraint?

LEARN

How do artists find opportunities when challenged? Read about the following artist spotlight, study works by the artist, and answer the reflection questions.

Reflection Questions:
- Select one of the artworks below and describe the type of constraint(s) the artist worked within while making their piece.
- Which artwork do you like the most? Describe how the composition is arranged.
**ARTIST SPOTLIGHT:** Michael Johansson

Playfulness and a great sense of humor characterizes the art of Michael Johansson, a photographer and installation artist. **Installation art** is artwork created for a specific place and/or for a temporary period of time. Michael is obsessed with investigating and defining the limits and possibilities of space and objects. He plays with things by arranging them as a puzzle to fill a selected space of any kind or dimension. Just about any space is a spatial canvas for Johansson. Here, everyday life and fantasy become one in a thought-provoking site-specific situation.

“I am intrigued by irregularities in daily life. Not those that appear when something extraordinary occurs, but those that are created by an exaggerated form of regularity.”—Michael Johansson

**ARTWORK:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist: Michael Johansson</th>
<th>Title: Self-Contained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media: Containers, caravan, tractor, Volvo, pallets, refrigerators, etc.</td>
<td>Date: 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Spatial constraint</td>
<td>Additional artworks from Michael Johansson: <a href="https://www.michaeljohansson.com/works.html">https://www.michaeljohansson.com/works.html</a></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist: Dan Keplinger</th>
<th>Title: Untitled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media: Pastel</td>
<td>Date: 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Physical constraint</td>
<td>Additional artworks from Dan Keplinger: <a href="http://www.kinggimp.com/hiswork.html">http://www.kinggimp.com/hiswork.html</a></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist: Yuken Teruya</th>
<th>Title: Corner Forest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media: Toilet paper rolls, magnets, metal rods</td>
<td>Date: 2003-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description: Material constraint</td>
<td>Additional artworks from Yuken Teruya: <a href="https://www.yukenteruyastudio.com/projects.html">https://www.yukenteruyastudio.com/projects.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRY
Complete the following activities to explore media and techniques
- First, observe your environment (in your home or outside) to find objects to use for an installation. Consider how the objects you select relate to one another. Try to find objects that could demonstrate unity when put together (similar colors, shapes, sizes, textures, etc.).
- Next, continue to walk around the rooms in your home or outside and look for a unique space where you could create an installation artwork inspired by Michael Johansson, that has space constraints (under a table, on a bookshelf, on window sill, etc.).

SHOW
Complete the following creative challenge to demonstrate what you have learned
- Now that you’ve gathered your objects, begin arranging the objects. You might need to turn the objects in a variety of directions in order to fit your objects within the space! Consider the message that you are trying to send with the group of objects (how do they relate to one another?).
- Document your process by taking photographs or sketching.

Sources
https://www.gsa.se/artists/michael-johansson/
https://www.yukenteruyastudio.com/projects-1/corner-forest.html