

WISH WALL MURAL

Day 4: Introducing the Wish Wall

The Connection:

Hello fourth graders. Last time I was with you we talked about secrets and wishing. We talked about different kinds of secrets: secrets to hide something and secrets to protect something. We also talked about different kinds of wishing. There are wishes for you and wishes for someone else. Wishes that you can make come true and wishes that are NOT for to you to make come true.

We have had lots of different discussions by now. Let me go over all the different topics we have learned about because we are going to talk about them all today. So far, we have learned about ideas and how ideas are important in art. We learned about Conceptual Art and how Conceptual Art is all about ideas. We have learned about murals, graffiti, and cover-ups; we thought about what these types of wall painting have in common and what is different about them. And lastly we have thought about secrets and wishing.

The Teaching:

Today I want to start by thinking about the very first example of Conceptual Art that you saw.

Show image of Kosuth's "One and Three Chairs."

Remember this artwork? This is an artwork titled "One and Three Chairs" by Joseph Kosuth. This artwork is about an idea. It is about the idea of a Chair and how one idea can be shown in many different ways. Here the artist has shown us three different ways to picture a chair. We can picture a chair in our heads when we read a dictionary definition of the word chair. We can picture a chair by looking at a real chair that you can actually sit down on, and we can picture a chair by looking at a photograph of a chair. Those are three good ways to picture a chair. This artwork teaches us that there are many different ways to show one idea.

Just like there are many ways to show one idea, there are also many ways to make a mural.

Show example of realistically styled murals.

This is an example of a mural. You should remember it from when I showed it two weeks ago. It was made with the permission of the wall's owner and it started with an idea. There are pictures of Martin Luther King Jr. and of the people who influenced his life, like Gandhi. The idea in this mural is to show how important Martin Luther King Jr. is. The idea in this mural is to honor Martin Luther King Jr.

Show example of mural with community written texts, like after 9-11.

This is ALSO a mural. It was ALSO made with the permission of the wall's owner and ALSO started with an idea. The idea in this mural is to react to the tragedies that happened on September 11, 2001.

Show example of mural with abstract decoration.

This is ALSO a mural. It was ALSO made with the permission of the wall's owner and ALSO started with an idea. The idea in this mural is to present interesting patterns and colors.

These are three different ways to picture a wall mural. This is important. Think to yourself: what are the two things needed to make a wall mural? You need permission and you need an idea. These are the things you need to make a wall mural.

Recently I was thinking a lot about the idea of wishes—just like how we were ALL thinking about the idea of wishes the last time I was with you. I had the idea that I wanted to cover a wall with wishes so that we could show how important I think our wishes are, so that we can honor our wishes. I wanted to honor our wishes like you might honor Martin Luther King Jr. I wanted us to be able to write our wishes on a wall with permanent markers so that they could be honored. I wanted to make a wall of wishes. But I thought to myself: writing on a wall without permission is graffiti! Writing on a wall without permission is mean and can upset the people who own the wall. I don't want to be mean and I definitely don't want to upset anyone. I thought to myself: how can I make this idea without making graffiti? How can I make this wall of wishes without upsetting anyone?

Think about what we know about murals. You need two things to make a wall mural: permission for the wall and an idea. A wall of wishes could be a MURAL! We learned from Joseph Kosuth that there are many ways to

picture a chair and that there are many ways to picture an idea. There are also many ways to picture a mural. Fourth graders, one kind of mural could be a mural made from our wishes.

I decided that my idea could be made into a MURAL. All you need to make a mural is permission from the wall's owner and an idea! I had an idea! My idea was that I wanted to cover a wall with wishes to honor the wishes. I just needed to get permission from a local wall owner. So I found a wall and got permission. I could make a mural ONLY IF I had permission and an idea: I had both! My idea was that I wanted to cover a wall of wishes to show how important I think wishes are.

I was very excited that I had solved my problem of how to make my idea without upsetting anyone but I kept thinking that I had another problem. I wanted the wishes to be private. I wanted to protect the wishes.

Last week we talked about what we do with our wishes on our birthday: we keep them secret. We make a wish on our birthday candles and keep it a secret. We keep our wish a secret to protect it. Last time I asked you why we might want to keep our wishes secret and why we might want to protect them. Do you remember some of the smart things you wrote down last time? Will someone share?

Students share ideas.

Those are all really good examples of why we might want to keep our wishes secret and protect them.

I decided that the wishes written on the wall need to be protected. They need to be secret. I decided that we could protect our wishes and keep them secret by painting over them just like cover-ups. Cover-ups are painted over graffiti to hide the graffiti. We can cover up our wishes the same way that cover-ups cover up graffiti.

We can write our wish on the wall with permanent marker, then cover up our wish with a layer of paint like cover-ups covering graffiti. And because we have permission and we have an idea, we will be making a mural! It will probably look very very different from a lot of other murals but that just shows that it is original. Remember Mr. R's artwork: "Erased de Kooning Drawing"? One thing you said was interesting about Mr. R's artwork is that it was original. Our wall of wishes will be original too. The wall of wishes will be an ORIGINAL mural.

Modeling and Active Engagement:

This week we are going to prepare to make our Wish Wall Mural. In two weeks, we will go to the wall where I got permission and we will make our Wish Wall Mural. Before we start preparing for this project, I was wondering if you have any questions?

Students share briefly.

Let's keep something else in mind: because this is a Conceptual Art project, the most important part of the project is the idea. The IDEA is that there will be wishes covering a wall. Because the idea is the most important part, the wishes we write on the wall are VERY important. We all need to think about what wish we want to put on the wall and we'll do that today. We will make a list of possible wishes we might want to put on the wall. Then, we will each choose one wish to write on the wall. You can share your wishes or keep them private. It is up to you. Let me show you what I mean.

Teacher should show an example of a list of brainstormed wishes, titled, "possible wishes for the Wish Wall Mural."

Fourth graders, do you see how I made a list of possible wishes for the Wish Wall Mural? This is what you'll do today, too. Open to the first page of your Writers' Notebook and write this title: Possible Wishes for the Wish Wall Mural. Then, start writing possible wishes. When you are done with your list, choose one wish that you want to put on the Wish Wall Mural. Put a star next to the wish that you have chosen for the wall. I'll know you are finished writing when your pencils are down.

Students write wishes in their writers' notebooks.

Does anyone want to share a wish they might want to put on the wall?

Students share.

The Link:

Today we've talked about what you need to make a wall mural. You need permission to use a wall and you need to have an idea. We've talked about an idea for a Wish Wall Mural that we will make together and how this will be an ORIGINAL wall mural. We've also talked about how the most important part of this Wish Wall mural is the IDEA: the idea of wishes. Because the most important part of the Wish Wall Mural is the idea, it is a Conceptual Art mural.

Feel free to add any wishes to your lists over the next two weeks until we see each other again. Your wishes will stay in your writer's notebook. On the day that we go to the wall, you will write down one wish that you want to put on our Wish Wall Mural. Remember, you do not need to share your wishes with anyone if you don't want to, even when you write your wish on the wall.

WISH WALL MURAL

Day 5: Titles & Preparing for the Wish Wall

The Connection:

Hello fourth graders. Last time I was with you we talked about what you need to make a wall mural. You need permission to use a wall and you need to have an idea. We've talked about an idea for a Wish Wall Mural that we will make together and how this will be an ORIGINAL wall mural. We also talked about how the most important part of this Wish Wall mural is the IDEA: the idea of wishes. Because the most important part of the Wish Wall Mural is the idea, it is a Conceptual Art mural.

We ended the class with you writing your wishes in your Writing Journals. On the day that we go to the wall, you will have one wish to put on our Wish Wall Mural. Remember, you do not need to share your wishes with anyone if you don't want to, even when you write your wish on the wall.

The Teaching:

Today I want to talk more about the Wish Wall idea and mural, and also prepare for actually going to the wall.

If you remember, last time I explained how I had two problems that I was able to solve. My first problem was that I wanted to cover a wall with wishes but I didn't want to make graffiti or make anyone upset. I solved this problem by deciding to make a mural. All you need to make a mural is permission from the wall's owner and an idea! My idea was that I wanted to cover a wall of wishes to show how important I think wishes are. I was able to get permission from a local wall owner. That solved my first problem. My wall of wishes could be a MURAL and that wouldn't make anyone upset.

But I had a second problem. I wanted the wishes to be private. I wanted to protect the wishes and keep them secret. I solved this problem by deciding that we could protect our wishes and keep them secret by painting over them just like cover-ups. Cover-ups are painted over graffiti to hide the graffiti. We can cover up our wishes the same way that cover-ups cover up graffiti. We will write our wish on the wall with permanent marker, then cover up our wish with a layer of paint like cover-ups covering graffiti. This plan solved my second problem.

Now the most important part of this Wish Wall is the IDEA, the wishes. The most important part of this Wish Wall mural is that it is a wall covered in wishes and that these wishes have been painted-over to be kept private and protected.

I realized that I had another problem. We know that the idea is the most important part of this Wish Wall mural but if the wishes are hidden, how will people walking by learn about the idea? I wanted to make this mural different from other murals, unique and original. I didn't want to put anything on top of the wishes that would distract from the most important part of this Wish Wall: the idea, the idea that there are wishes written on a wall and that they are covered up for protection. I wondered how I going to let people know about this idea, if they couldn't see it when walking by the wall.

I was able to solve my problem by thinking about Mr. R's artwork: "Erased de Kooning Drawing."

Show image of Robert Rauschenburg's "Erased de Kooning Drawing"

Just like the Wish Wall, the most important thing about this artwork is the idea. How did Mr. R. let us know what his idea was without drawing pictures that might distract us from the idea? He gave us a TITLE to read: "Erased de Kooning Drawing." This title lets us know just enough about how the artwork was made to understand the idea. Also, Mr. R put the title right on the artwork to let us know how important it is.

We will do the same thing. Right on the wall we are going to write the title for the mural, the name of the school, and a brief description that will let people know just enough about how the artwork was made to understand the idea. "Wish Wall Mural, a mural made from personal wishes that have been covered in paint by 4th graders from Graham & Parks Alternative Public School." This title lets the people walking by know who made the artwork and how the artwork was made, but it doesn't distract from the idea of the Wish Wall.

By writing a thoughtful title, I was able to solve my final problem. Even though the wishes will be hidden and only colored paint will decorate the wall, people walking by will still be able to understand the IDEA behind the mural. The idea is the most important part of the Wish Wall and so I was relieved to have solved this problem.

Just like Mr. R's artwork, the Wish Wall Mural title will give just enough information about how the artwork was made for people to understand the idea.

Active Engagement:

Now that all the problems around this mural have been solved, we need to prepare for actually making this mural. But before we start preparing, I was wondering if you have any questions?

Students share briefly.

So now we need to gather up all our energy and all our attention to the most important part of the mural. The idea. The WISHES! Remember that this is what the Wish Wall will be all about. This is what will make the Wish Wall interesting and important and what will make it art. These wishes should be special and important to you. They should be thought about seriously and chosen carefully. They could be on this wall for a very long time.

With this in mind we will work on our wish lists so that we have as many wishes as possible to choose from. When we have written down all the important wishes we can think of, you will then choose ONE wish for the wall and write it on a card. You can share your wish or keep it private. It is up to you. Any questions?

Students share briefly.

Please take out your Writing Journal and open to the page titled: Possible Wishes for the Wish Wall Mural. When you feel that you are done with your list, choose ONE wish that you want to put on the Wish Wall Mural. Put a star next to the wish that you have chosen for the wall. I'll know you are ready when your pencils are down.

Students write wishes in their writers' notebooks.

Does anyone want to share a wish from his or her list?

Students share. Pass out cards.

Now write the most important wish from your list onto the card. This card will stay in your Writing Journals until next week. At that time you will take your card with you when we go to make the Wish Wall. I'll know you are ready when you have put your card inside your Journal and have put your Journal away.

Students write wishes in their writing journal.

OK, now we will be ready for next week.

The Link:

Today we've talked about the all the problems that came up when I had an idea to make a Wish Wall. We talked in particular about writing the title directly on the wall: "Wish Wall Mural, a mural made from personal wishes that have been covered in paint by 4th graders from Graham & Parks Alternative Public School." This title lets the people walking by know how the artwork was made but it doesn't distract from the idea of the Wish Wall.

Because the most important part of the Wish Wall Mural is the idea, we have also prepared our ideas by writing possible wishes for the wall. We have all chosen our MOST important wish for the Wish Wall. This is the one wish that we will write on the wall. Remember, you do not need to share your wish with anyone if you don't want to, even when you write your wish on the wall.