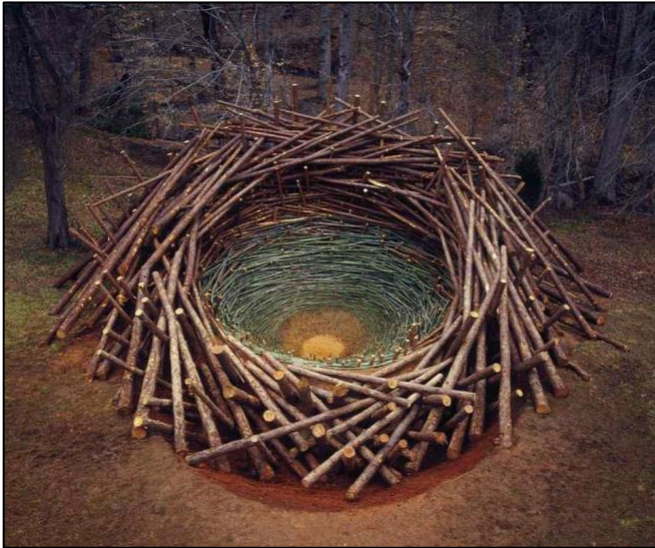




## ENVIRONMENTAL ART

### WHAT IS CONSIDERED ENVIRONMENTAL ART?

This can be a difficult question to answer. Environmental art is broadly defined as an art practice that celebrates the artist's connection to nature, uses natural materials or brings an environmental message about the natural world to our attention. Environmental art can mean picking up a paintbrush and painting something in nature that shows the interaction between humans and their environment. It might include building a nest that's big enough to fit 20 humans inside. It may be political, trying to get our attention to focus on the injustices being done to nature! Here are a few examples of some of my favorite outdoor environmental art installations from around the world. I hope they inspire you too!



by Nils Udo



by Patrick Dougherty



Leaves by Andy Goldsworthy



by Anna & the Willow

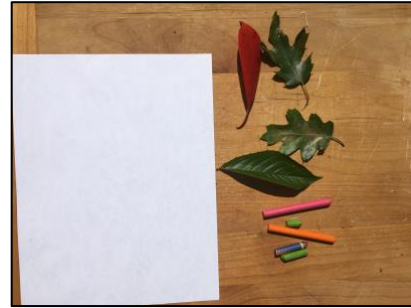


## ART PROJECT 1: Leaf Rubbings

Let's start small with our art installations and learn how to make use of the nature 'lying around' our house. Leaf etching or rubbing is the way that we can trace the shape and leave an imprint of nature in our home. By using different colors, we are creating a new and vibrant version of our environment!

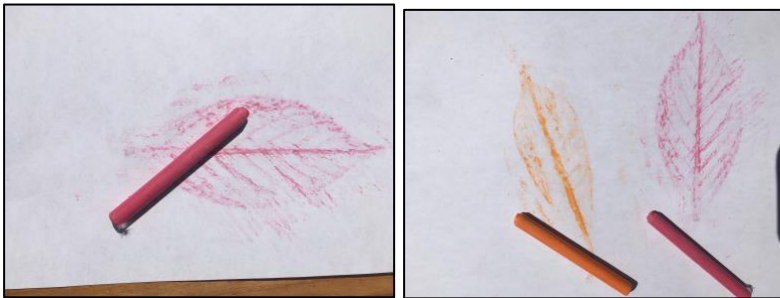
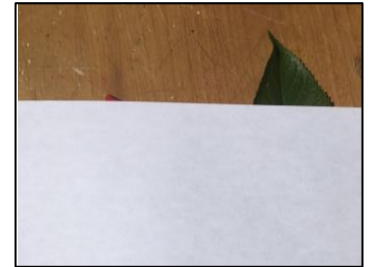
### You will need:

- Fallen leaves on the ground. Try find several types of leaves
- Paper
- Crayons (preferred), colored pencils or chalk

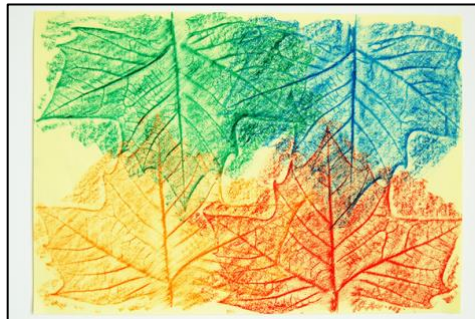


### Instructions:

1. Go outside and collect some leaves. Try and find a variety of leaves from different trees
2. Lay the leaves flat on your table
3. Place a sheet of paper over them. The paper can be any color, but a light color like white or beige will show up better. You could also use black paper with white chalk.
4. Begin to rub your crayon over the leaf and watch the outline start to appear.



5. Once you are done with that leaf you can move it and use a different color, or use other leaves to make a pattern!



*from firstpalette.com*

## ART PROJECT 2: Ecosystem Function

The earth provides a lot of services to use that we may not even notice. For example, trees and forests absorb carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the air and turn it into oxygen for us to breathe. Gee thanks trees! Places like wetlands and marshes filter out bad nutrients and clean the water that we drink. These are all examples of **ecosystem services** or ecosystem functions. These are things that nature provides that directly benefits our quality of life. Many artists have worked to portray this connection between the organs in our body (lungs, heart, stomach...) and the ecosystem services provided by nature.



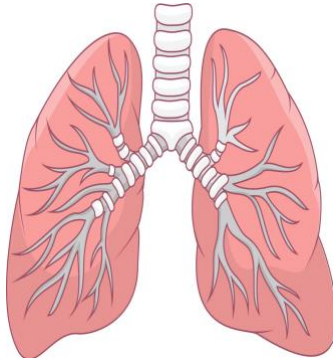
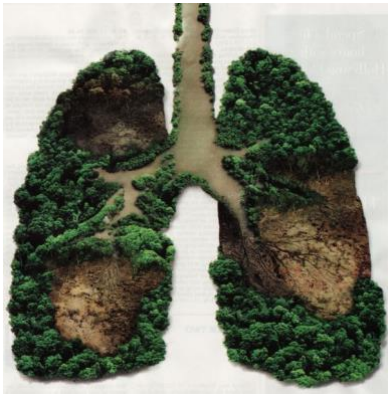


**You will need:**

- Paper
- Pencil
- Colored pencils or crayons

**Instructions:**

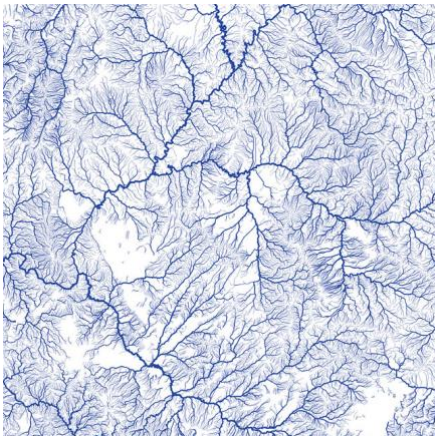
1. Choose one of the human organ-ecosystem service connections below that interests you and learn more about it by reading the paragraph next to each pair of photos.



**Lungs of the Earth**

The Amazon rainforest in South America is the largest forest that absorbs carbon dioxide on our planet. It turns that air into oxygen that we can breathe. Our lungs make it possible for us to breathe in oxygen- and forests are the ecosystem that provide this oxygen - therefore forests are often called the lungs of the earth. Destroying the Amazon rainforest damages that air and makes our planet more polluted. The Amazon, and other forests, are the lungs of our planet. We need these forest to keep our air clean and healthy!

Photos by Conservation International and Vector Stock



**River Veins**

River systems, like this one, can look like the veins running through our body. Rivers are the life of our environment, moving water through the entire watershed to fuel its growth and health. We need water for everything! Learn more about water by completing our Ways of Water activity back on the Home Explorers page. When you were rubbing your leaves above, did you notice how the lines on the leaves also look like veins?



**At the Heart of our Environment**

The roots of plants can be compared to our hearts. They help move nutrients to other parts of the plant, the way our heart pumps blood to other parts of our body. What's interesting, is that some roots, like turmeric, are actually good for the health of our heart. By caring for the soil and the earth where roots grow, we help care for ourselves.



shutterstock.com • 552550477

*Turmeric Root*



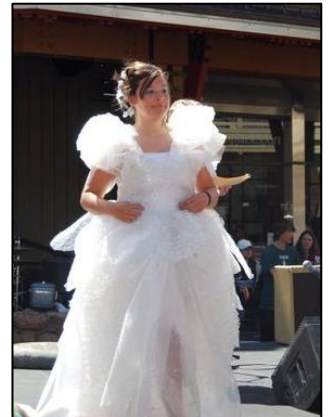
2. Try and draw your own interpretation where  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the organ looks like it is from a human, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  looks like its from nature. Below you can write your own interpretation of why it is important to take care of an ecosystem service and our own bodies! I even tried tracing my veins on one arm and turning them into a river on the other arm.



### ART PROJECT CHALLENGE: Art Installation at home!

See if you can use the fallen sticks and twigs in your own neighborhood to build an outdoor art installation! Try and make a nest or build a dome or a tower! It can be a fun and rewarding engineering challenge that can stay outside in rain or shine!

**Trashion!** When I was in high school, my friends and I used environmental art to share our message about reducing waste and taking care of our environment. We made outfits out of trash, called Trashion, and held trashion shows all over our school district! For example, in this photo, the model is wearing a wedding dress made out of bubble wrap packaging. Our message was that no one should say “I do” to single use plastic packaging!



Thanks for conducting science with me for this Home Explorer activity from Umpqua Watersheds Education Program.  
Join me for new activities posted every week!

- Ms. Robyn

