

Katelynn Noel Knick | Session 1:

Yayoi Kusama – Create Your Own Magical Pumpkin

List of Required Supplies:

white model magic clay, acrylic paint, Q-tips, paint set up (water cup, paint brush, paper towel, plate for paints)

Additional Links :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlhaSKCZ8gY> (video lesson for kids)

<https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2018/march/21/why-does-yayoi-kusama-love-pumpkins/> (Why does Yayoi Love Pumpkins - Phaidon)

Space/Facility Requirements: running water, table and chair, time and space to leave project to dry overnight

Student Time Required: 60 minutes - 30 mins day one, 30 mins day two

Information on the Artist:

Yayoi Kusama was born in Matsumoto, Japan, where she began making art as a small child. She studied at the Kyoto School of Arts and Crafts in a traditional Japanese painting style called Nihonga. Her work continued to develop and later she moved to the United States, where she was mentored by artist Georgia O’Keefe. Repetition and colorful dots continued to be a theme in her sculpture and installation art. In 1993, she was chosen to represent Japan at the Venice Biennale with an installation called “Mirror Room,” where she created the iconic mirrored room with pumpkin sculptures covered in dots.





Tips for the Instructor:

- Introduce color and color schemes as concepts to your students. Including monochromatic,
- polychromatic, primary and secondary colors. Discuss Yayoi's color choices and why she gravitated to the colors she chose.
- Introduce repetition as a concept and explain how repetition is used in Yayoi's work to create pattern and spatial effects in her installations.

Example Pre-Lesson Questions:

- What colors do you see in Yayoi's work and why do you think she chose them?
- Where do you see repetition in Yayoi's work? Why do you think she uses repetition?
- Where else do you see repetition and color in the world?
- Close your eyes and imagine you are in one of Yayoi's installations. What does it feel like to be inside one? Calming, joyful, scary? Do you feel open and expansive or closed and restricted?

Activity with Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Using Yayoi's pumpkin shapes as inspiration, use white model magic clay and your hands to create a medium sized pumpkin. Be sure to include all the ridges and stem at the top.
2. Once you're done sculpting your pumpkin, set it in a safe space to dry overnight. Leave it uncovered so it will dry faster.
3. The next day, come back to your pumpkin and decide what color scheme you would like to use. In your sketchbooks or on a piece of paper, experiment with different color combinations and color schemes introduced by the instructor.
4. Set up your paints. Choose one base color and paint the first layer on to your pumpkin.
5. Now begin painting your dots and circles on to the pumpkin to create repetition. Try painting different sized dots and circles by using the Q-tip for the smaller dots and various sized paint brushes for the larger circles.
6. Once the whole pumpkin is covered in colorful dots, let it dry.

After Activity Review:

- What was your favorite part of this activity?
- What was challenging about this activity?
- What colors did you choose and why?
- If you could do this activity again, what would you change?