



Walk with Artist's Eyes: ARTIST'S EYES Wearable Art

Art Education Project by Brenda A. Andrews



Norton Simon Museum of Art

Project: Artist's Eyes - Wearable Art for Seeing Differently

The project introduces participants to the idea that artists develop particular ways of seeing through observation, curiosity, experimentation, imagination, and attention. Rather than simply making an object to look at, participants create a piece of wearable art that changes their experience of looking.



Grade Level: Grade 3–Adult

Short Description of Lesson Plan

Participants will explore the idea that artists do not simply look at the world—they practice seeing, thinking, questioning, and making meaning. Using clear safety goggles, participants will create highly personal works of wearable art, transforming the goggles with painted patterns, lines, shapes, and a kaleidoscope of color. They will embellish their designs with feathers, flowers, pipe cleaners, gems, ribbons, buttons, and other mixed-media materials. A central sightline will be taped off and kept clear, allowing the wearer to look directly ahead while experiencing the colors, patterns, and textures of their artwork within their peripheral vision. The finished goggles become both an artwork and a way of experiencing the world. By wearing their Artist's Eyes, participants are invited to consider how changing the way they look can change what they notice, how they think, and the meanings they make from what they see.



The Big Idea

Artists learn to see differently. They slow down, look closely, notice details, question what they see, and discover possibilities in the ordinary. Artist's Eyes makes this practice physical, transforming clear goggles into wearable art that changes the way we experience what is around us. Through color, pattern, and texture, we shift our attention and perspective, changing what we notice. **The world itself has not changed. The way the world is experienced has changed.**

Essential Question

How can changing the way we look change what we notice, how we think, and what we understand? Can sharing our Artist's Eyes with one another give us new perspectives and different ways of seeing?

Additional questions:

- What is the difference between looking and seeing?
- What do we notice when we slow down and look closely?
- What do we notice at the edges of our vision?
- How can color, pattern, and texture change our experience?
- What happens when we look through someone else's Artist's Eyes?
- Can an artwork change the way we see or think about something?
- How might an artist see something differently than we do?
- What might we discover by looking through another person's Artist's Eyes?

Class Time Required 60 – 90 minutes The lesson is designed as a single 60-90 minute classroom, museum, or community art experience. Because the project emphasizes experimentation and individual expression, participants should not be expected to create highly finished or technically perfect objects. The primary goals are **creative decision-making, visual experimentation, perception, and experience.**

Learning Objectives

Participants will:

1. Explore the difference between looking and seeing.
2. Learn how artists use observation, attention, imagination, and perspective.
3. Explore the relationship between artwork and perception.
4. Experiment with color, pattern, line, shape, texture, and mixed media.
5. Create an original piece of wearable art.
6. Explore direct and peripheral vision.
7. Experience how an artwork can affect the way we see and experience a familiar environment.
8. Develop visual awareness and curiosity.
9. Recognize that different people may experience the same environment in different ways.
10. Consider how changing perspective can help us become more thoughtful observers.

Possible Materials Provided for Each Class:

- Clear safety goggles or protective glasses; ½-inch painter's or masking tape
- Acrylic paint, paint markers, brushes
- Feathers, artificial flowers, pipe cleaners, ribbons, gems, buttons, sequins, beads, yarn, fabric scraps
- Lightweight recycled materials; craft adhesive; scissors
- Paper towels, table coverings, and a drying area



Prepare several completed examples to show the range of possibilities. Examples may be colorful, feathered, jeweled, nature-inspired, patterned, character/creature-inspired, simple, or elaborate. Use examples to inspire—not to be copied.

Lesson Structure

1. Introduction and Exploration

- Begin with: "What is the difference between looking and seeing?" Ask what participants notice first in a room, what they overlook, and whether two people can look at the same thing and see something different. Introduce the idea that artists practice seeing and pay attention to color, line, shape, texture, pattern, light, shadow, movement, scale, detail, space, and relationships.
- Introduce peripheral vision. Have participants look directly ahead without moving their heads and ask: "What can you see at the edges of your vision?" Explain that we often focus on what is directly in front of us while overlooking what is happening around the edges.
- Ask: "How do you want your world to look when you wear your Artist's Eyes?" Possibilities include a garden, dream, celebration, fantasy, storm, jungle, galaxy, calm place, world of patterns, or something completely imaginary. There is no single correct answer.

2. Construction

- Step 1 — Create the sightline. Begin with clear goggles. Use painter's tape to establish a central viewing area. Explain: "This is the part of the world you will see directly." Keep the center clear; the surrounding area becomes the canvas.
- Step 2 — Paint the frame. Experiment with lines, dots, spirals, waves, geometric and organic shapes, repetition, symmetry/asymmetry, contrasting or layered colors. Remind participants: "You are designing a way of seeing—not simply decorating glasses."
- Step 3 — Add color and pattern. Ask what colors or patterns they want surrounding their vision and what colors remind them of a place, person, memory, feeling, or idea. Encourage each participant to develop a personal visual language.
- Step 4 — Add texture. Use lightweight materials such as feathers, pipe cleaners, flowers, gems, ribbons, buttons, and fabric. Materials may suggest movement, nature, light, stars, pathways, repetition, texture, or memory—or simply contribute to the visual experience. Participants may invent their own meanings.
- Step 5 — Add meaning. Ask: "What do you want your Artist's Eyes to help you see?" Possible ideas include wonder, joy, friendship, nature, possibility, imagination, courage, calm, adventure, love, or curiosity. Emphasize that artists communicate through visual language.
- Step 6 — Remove the tape. Carefully remove the tape so the finished goggles have a clear center surrounded by the participant's "kaleidoscope" of color, pattern, and texture.

3. Reflection and Completion

- LOOK:** What do you notice first? What colors, patterns, and materials did you use? What happens at the edges of the goggles?



- b. **THINK:** Why did you choose these colors and materials? What do your patterns communicate? How do you want your Artist's Eyes to make you feel? What do you want to notice when you wear them?
- c. **EXPERIENCE:** While stationary and in a safe environment, have participants put on their goggles and look straight ahead, toward the floor and ceiling, and toward the edges of the room. Notice something close and something farther away. Ask: "Did the world change—or did the way you experienced the world change?"

WEAR YOUR ART

Explain that wearable art can become part of everyday experience.

The Artist's Eyes can be worn whenever participants want to: slow down, notice something new, imagine, play, become curious, look at a familiar place differently

The goggles become a reminder. The artwork becomes a portable visual experience.

Look again. Look closer. Look differently.

FROM ONE PAIR OF EYES TO MANY WAYS OF SEEING Place the finished goggles side by side and notice how different they are. One participant may create flowers, another a creature, geometric patterns, a storm of color, or something quiet and simple. Ask: "How can all of these be Artist's Eyes?" Explain that there is no single way to see. Each pair represents one person's way of imagining, noticing, and interpreting the world. Together they become a visual portrait of many ways of seeing.

Teacher Tips Including Preparation

- **BEFORE THE LESSON** Prepare one or more completed Artist's Eyes examples. Set out materials so participants can easily see the variety of possibilities. Prepare painter's tape for the central sightline. Protect tables and prepare a drying area.
Student Resources to Accompany Materials are Artist's Eyes Visual Examples Goggles can be **passed around the group** so participants can look through different pairs and experience the variety of ways to frame their vision. Examples can include: Colorful painted goggles, Feathered goggles, Jeweled goggles, Nature-inspired goggles, Pattern-based goggles, Character or creature-inspired goggles, Simple and highly elaborate designs. The examples demonstrate the wide range of possibilities without requiring participants to reproduce a particular design.
- **IMPORTANT TEACHING NOTE** The project should be presented as **wearable art**, not simply as a craft activity. Continue returning participants to the central question:
How are you changing the way you see? Encourage experimentation and individual expression. Avoid having participants copy the teacher's example. The variety of finished goggles is part of the lesson.
- **MATERIALS AS VISUAL LANGUAGE** Teacher is encouraged to ask:
Why did you choose this material? A student might say: "The feathers make me think of flying.", "The blue makes me feel calm.", "The gems look like stars.", "The pipe cleaners look like waves.", "The flowers make everything feel happy.", "I used black because I wanted it to feel mysterious." The material choices become part of the storytelling.

THE WEARING EXPERIENCE

- The central sightline must remain clear.
- Participants should only wear the goggles while stationary in a safe environment.



- Because the artwork intentionally changes peripheral vision, participants should not walk, run, climb stairs, or participate in activities requiring unrestricted vision while wearing them.
- Participants who do not wish to wear their goggles can hold them in front of their eyes, view them as artwork, or participate through observation and discussion.

INCLUSIVE FACILITATION

Seeing and perception are personal experiences. Participants should never be required to describe a personal memory or experience. Invite participants to use imagination: **“Imagine a way of seeing that makes you curious.”** This allows participants to participate through creativity, experimentation, observation, or fantasy.

CA CONTENT STANDARDS

Visual Arts — Creating

VA.1

Generate and develop artistic ideas and work.

VA.1

Experiment with various materials and artistic processes.

VA.3

Use materials and processes to create artwork.

Presenting

VA.1

Prepare and present artwork for display.

VA.1

Present artwork in a way that communicates meaning.

Responding

VA.1

Perceive and describe visual characteristics of artwork.

VA.1

Interpret art by analyzing how visual elements and materials communicate meaning.

Connecting

VA.1

Create artwork about personal experiences and ideas.

VA.1

Recognize how art connects to history, culture, community, and personal experience.

STEAM CONNECTIONS

Science

Students explore observation, perception, and peripheral vision, considering how the eye receives visual information and how attention influences what we notice.

Technology

Students can photograph or document their Artist's Eyes and experiment with images that explore framing, perspective, color, and visual perception.

Engineering

Students design and construct a wearable object that must balance **form, function, structure, comfort, and creativity**. They make decisions about how materials can be attached and how the goggles can be worn while maintaining a clear sightline.



Art: Students use color, pattern, line, shape, texture, and mixed media to create an artwork that changes their visual experience.

Mathematics: Students explore pattern, repetition, symmetry, asymmetry, shape, scale, proportion, and spatial relationships in their designs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / WEBOGRAPHY

- San Diego Visual Arts Network (SDVAN)
- San Diego Art Prize Education Program
- Oceanside Museum of Art Education Resources
- California Arts Framework
- California Visual Arts Standards
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
- *Walk with Artist's Eyes* educational initiative, developed by Brenda A. Andrews

CLOSING STATEMENT FOR THE LESSON

Artist's Eyes is an invitation to look again.

We move through the world every day surrounded by color, pattern, texture, movement, light, and possibility. Much of it becomes familiar. We stop noticing. Artists practice noticing. They slow down. They look closely. They question what they see. They look at the edges. They change their perspective. In Artist's Eyes, participants create something they can wear that reminds them of this practice. The goggles do not change the world. They change the way we experience it. Each pair is different because each person sees differently. And that is the point.

There is no single way to see the world.

There are countless ways to look, interpret, imagine, and understand. So whenever life begins to feel ordinary, put on your Artist's Eyes. **Look again. Look closer. Look differently. What do you see now?**

Trauma-Informed Facilitation Notes

Create a classroom environment where all student's ideas and experiences are valued. Encourage open-ended responses and avoid evaluating artwork as "right" or "wrong." Offer multiple ways for students to participate, including speaking, writing, drawing, or simply observing. Use inclusive language that welcomes diverse identities, cultures, and experiences, and recognize that wearable artwork may represent deeply personal memories or imaginative ideas. Emphasize that the goal is exploration, creativity, and self-expression rather than perfection.

Brenda A. Andrews is a multimedia artist, educator, curator, and arts advocate whose work connects art, education, and community engagement. Through interdisciplinary projects and educational programs, she creates accessible opportunities for people to experience and participate in the arts, encouraging curiosity, critical thinking, experimentation, and new ways of seeing and making meaning.

About Walk with Artist's Eyes

Walk with Artist's Eyes is an educational initiative developed by artist, Brenda Andrews for the San Diego Visual Arts Network in partnership with the San Diego Art Prize and Oceanside Museum of Art. Through artist-inspired lessons, students develop creative thinking, visual literacy, and interdisciplinary connections while exploring the work of contemporary artists.

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