**Create Your Own Nature Art**

**Duration:** 20 minutes – 1 hour  
**Grade Level:** All ages, recommended 3 & up  
**Location:** Any yard, park, or sidewalk where you can collect rocks, sticks, leaves, flowers, and other naturally occurring objects  
**Resources:** Watch this video for inspiration: Andy Goldsworthy: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP_-_P7cZU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LP_-_P7cZU)  
**Materials:** Outdoor space and naturally occurring items found outside

**Theme:**  
Create something extraordinary: Nature provides all the tools and objects you need to create art, all you have to do is bring the ideas and creativity!

**Goals:**  
- Explore your yard or sidewalk looking for natural objects to be used as art.  
- Participate in a hands-on, imaginative activity building models and nature art outdoors.  
- Post your art on social media and tag Oxbow – see what others are creating too!

**Introduction (5 min):**  
The world we see and experience through nature is important. A wonderful way to explore our own perceptions of nature can be through enjoying creative free-time outside; it’s both relaxing and stimulating! For a hands-on, imaginative activity, you can build models and art with found natural objects like sticks, rocks and leaves. Check out the peaceful leaf patterns some Oxbow students created!
**Activity (10 min - 1 hour):**

Take a walk around your house, yard, or even a short distance down your street. Observe what exists in the natural spaces, and perhaps start to notice **different** patterns and shapes, or **similar** patterns and shapes of things like leaves, flowers, twigs, and pebbles. Look for a variety of shapes, colors, and sizes of natural items. Collect objects to create a nature model or art. We recommend collecting items that are no longer living, like fallen leaves or flowers (please don’t pick a from a living plant, unless it’s a plant you’re ready to harvest!)

Some fun ideas include:

- **Design a pattern such as a nature mandala.** A mandala, which is Sanskrit for “circle” or “discoid object,” is a geometric design that holds a great deal of symbolism in Hindu and Buddhist practices. Create your own and explore a repeating pattern, or replicate a pattern that speaks to you!

- **Create a portrait of yourself or a loved one.**

- **Create one of your favorite shapes.**

- **Build a creature!** Stack natural items atop each other.

- **Build a nest or a home for fairies or other yard creatures.**

- **Spell out a word that could be a wish (like “peace”) or someone’s name.**

- **To inspire even more creativity, make free-form art using what you find in nature without a prompt and see what develops!**

Andy Goldsworthy creates gorgeous, sometimes other-worldly examples of nature art like these:


Source Right: [https://media.architecturaldigest.com/](https://media.architecturaldigest.com/)
An Oxbow Farmer creates nature art. All leaves and flowers were collected from the sidewalk of her neighborhood.

**Conclusion (5 min):**

It’s so neat to be able to create art for free, while enjoying fresh air and exploring the natural spaces that surround us! Discuss what this process was like, or perhaps write about it! Consider…

- Did you have a vision when you first started your art, or did it develop over time?
- Did you experience any challenges?
- How did you feel while you were making the art?
- What kinds of natural objects drew you in and why?
- Does your art tell a story, if so, what is it?

**Take photos of your art, or of yourself with your art, and share your story with us on Facebook** ([https://www.facebook.com/OxbowCenter/](https://www.facebook.com/OxbowCenter/)) and **Instagram** (@oxbowcenter)!
**Enrichment/Expansion:**

Build a model! Using items you find on the sidewalk in your neighborhood or in your yard, create a model. **What is a scientific model?** Models are creative ways that scientists explain patterns they observe in the world. It’s a representation of something that exists using any number or tools or parts to explain it. For example, if you were designing a model of your family using nature art, you could gather a handful of leaves to represent all the unique people in your family. Consider how to make the different leaves represent specific people.

For this activity, decide what you are going to model, and collect your natural items. Define the key pieces of the subject of your model, and determine what the different pieces you have collected represent.

**Inquiry Questions:**

- What would a model of a healthy ecosystem look like? Try to build it as nature art!
- Can you make a model of what you want your future community to look like?
- Can you build a model of a particular animal’s habitat?
- Think of something else you’d like to design a model for, and build it!

**Examples of Ecosystem Art:**

*Pieces of my model of an ecosystem include: the sun and its’ rays, plants and animals, and water.*