

Make an Object Useless

Secondary: (ages 11 – 14)

Visual arts

Students use the artwork of contemporary architect Katerina Kamprani as inspiration for redesigning a familiar useful object to make it ironically useless. This creative process supports them to develop understanding of design principles, to critically engage with convention, and to engage in discussions about the nature of art

Time allocation About 2-3 lesson periods

Subject content Explore cultural and artistic context and traditions
Drawing, coloured pencil technique, product design

Creativity and critical thinking This unit has a **creativity** and **critical thinking** focus:

- Identify and question conventional rules about design
- Generate and play with unusual and radical visual arts ideas
- Produce, reflect on, and explain strengths and limitations of personally novel art

Other skills Communication, Collaboration, Persistence/Perseverance

Key words function; design; user-friendliness; Kamprani; drawing; pencil

Products and processes to assess

Students re-design an object to make it useless and take part in a series of discussions about the process. At the highest levels of achievement, their output is imaginative and shows a high level of personal features and risk taking in its formulation, composition, or content. Their work process explores several approaches and challenges ideas and pushes them to their limits before making final choices. The student shows a good awareness of areas of personal novelty and risk and why final choices have been made as well as an openness to the ideas and perspectives of others.

Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	Teacher introduces coloured pencils, techniques for using coloured pencils, and any additional rules for the classroom, as appropriate to context.		
2		<p>Teacher will show students work by Katerina Kamprani. http://www.boredpanda.com/useless-object-design-the-unusable-katerina-kamprani/</p> <p>Teacher leads a class discussion: How do some of these items make you feel? Are they funny? Uncomfortable? How did the artist make you feel that way? Why do you think the artist depicts objects that are unusable?</p>	Discussing the work of artist, Katerina Kamprani	<p>Identifying and questioning assumptions and conventional rules about design</p> <p>Playing with unusual design ideas</p>
3		<p>Teacher describes the assignment—to design a product that could fit into Kamprani’s “the uncomfortable” line.</p> <p>To do this, each student should choose a familiar and functional object. Using coloured pencils, they will draw the object as it normally is (without modifications).</p>	Technical drawing skills	Generating ideas for objects they could re-design
4	Lesson period 2	<p>Students will be prompted with the following questions: What is the main use of this object (think of one verb word)? What characteristics of the object help make it able to do that? What design features make it useful? How is it “user-friendly”? How could you modify that part of the object to render it useless?</p> <p>They will then draft in pencil a sketch of their redesigned object.</p>	<p>Thinking about function and user-friendly design</p> <p>Identifying relevant features of an object</p> <p>Technical drawing skills</p>	<p>Identifying and questioning conventional design features</p> <p>Generating and playing with unusual and radical visual arts ideas</p> <p>Creating personally novel visual art</p>
5	Lesson period 3	Students create final drawings of useless object in coloured pencil.	Creating a final product drawing	Creating personally novel visual art
6		Students take their final drawings and share them with partners (rotate every	Verbally explaining one’s visual	Considering alternative

		<p>couple of minutes). Students should share what they made, what the fundamental purpose of the object is, and how they made it useless. Students can then discuss what are the main strengths and limitations of their own and each other's work? The teacher may challenge them to consider what criteria they are using to make these judgements and how would the judgements change if they used alternative criteria.</p>	art piece	<p>perspectives on their work</p> <p>Explaining both strengths and limitations according to different criteria</p>
7	Lesson period 7	<p>Students complete an exit ticket:</p> <p><i>I think my project was successful because I _____.</i></p> <p><i>Next time, I could improve on _____.</i></p> <p>Alternatively or additionally, the teacher may decide to close the activity with a discussion on why artists sometimes question the usual "rules" in art and represent things differently to how they are usually or to how most people see them</p>	Quality of written reflection	<p>Reflecting on steps taken and chosen expressive choices of a visual arts piece relative to alternatives</p> <p>Identifying and questioning assumptions and conventional rules and discussing the nature of art</p>

Resources and examples for inspiration

Web and print

- Ability to show students the example works <http://www.boredpanda.com/useless-object-design-the-unusable-katerina-kamprani/>

Other

- Draft and final drawing paper for students
- Coloured pencils
- Pre-printed exit tickets

Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- Other activities in this OECD CERI series of creative and critical thinking activities that support students to reflect on the nature of art include *How can everyday objects and living beings become art?*

Creativity and critical thinking rubric for visual arts

• Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	CREATIVITY Coming up with new ideas and solutions	Steps	CRITICAL THINKING Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	Steps
INQUIRING	Make connections to other visual arts concepts and media or to conceptual ideas in other disciplines	2	Identify and question assumptions and conventional rules in a piece of visual art (content, style, technique, colour, composition, etc.)	2,4,6,7
IMAGINING	Play with unusual and radical visual arts ideas when preparing or creating a piece of visual art	2-4	Consider several perspectives on the content, technique or expression of a piece of visual arts	5
DOING	Create visual art that shows expressive qualities or personally novel ways to engage a subject matter	4-6	Explain both strengths and limitations of a piece of visual arts justified by aesthetic, logical and possibly other criteria	5,6
REFLECTING	Reflect on steps taken in creating a piece of visual art and on its novelty compared to conventions	6	Reflect on the chosen expressive choices of a visual arts piece relative to possible alternatives	6