



eva
ELEMENTARY VISUAL ARTS
Park City Education Foundation • Kimball Art Center

LESSON

2

Yayoi Kusama
Patterns & Symbolism

Verbal Directions

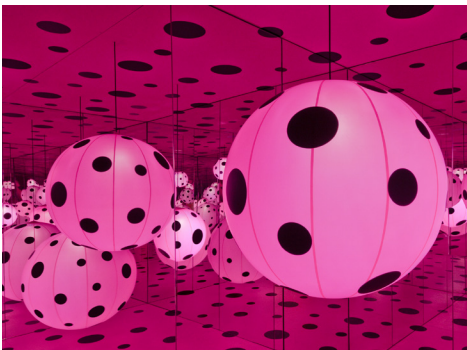
LESSON OVERVIEW

Yayoi Kusama (born 1929) is a Japanese artist who is known for her repetitive use of polka dots and for her infinity mirror art installations. Students will learn about repetition in art and create a pumpkin covered in dots.

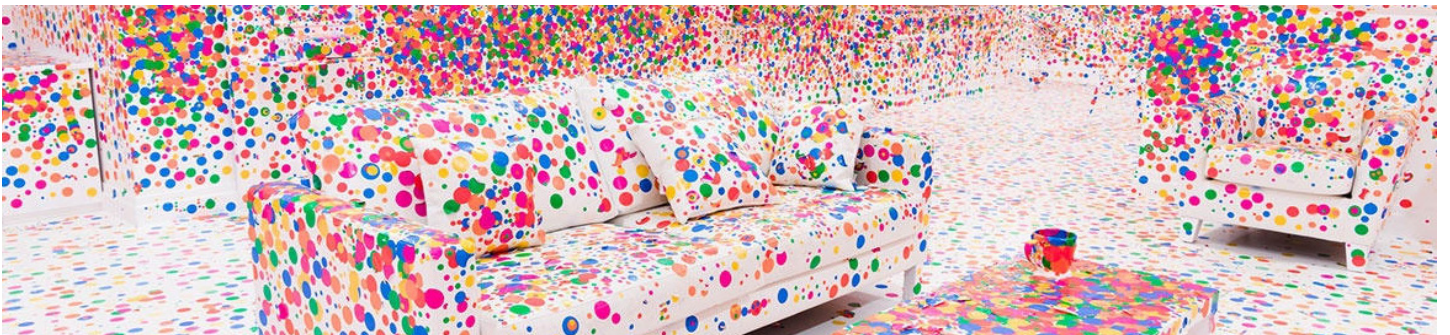
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Learn about Yayoi Kusama and her artwork.
- Discuss the role of repetition and patterns in art.
- Learn about installation art.
- Design a pumpkin.

YAYOI KUSAMA



Yayoi Kusama (born 1929) in Matsumoto, Japan, began painting as a child when she had an inspiring experience. She says: "One day I was looking at the red flower patterns of the tablecloth on a table, and when I looked up I saw the same pattern covering the ceiling, the windows and the walls, and finally all over the room, my body and the universe" The theme of dots became an important part of her art. At 18, she trained at the Kyoto School of Arts and Crafts in a traditional Japanese painting style called Nihonga. She destroyed many of these early paintings before she moved to New York City in 1957. During her time there, repetition and dots continued to be a theme in her sculpture and installation art. Her fame came in 1993, when she represented Japan at the Venice Biennale with an installation called Mirror Room, in which she filled a mirrored room with pumpkin sculptures covered in her signature dots. This work became very popular and is shown all over the world today. [Learn More.](#)



SUPPLIES

- Images and art samples of Yayoi Kusama
- Large Bristol paper (11X17)
- Pencil
- Markers, or paint markers

LESSON PLAN

1. Introduce students to the life and work of Yayoi Kusama. Talk about how her childhood experiences inspired her. Look at the variety of artwork she created from installation to sculpture. Ask students:

- What is the common element in all of Yayoi's Kusama' artwork?
- Do you have a symbol, shape or doodle that you like to use often in your artwork? Why?
- What do you think the pumpkin represents?

2. Share more about Yayoi Kusama's installations.

- What is an installation? How is it different from other art?
- Why do you think she uses mirrors? What happens because she uses mirrors?

3. Teach students how to draw a pumpkin. Talk about the shape, the proportions and details. Have students draw a pumpkin on a large sheet of Bristol paper.

4. Recall the variety of colors in Yayoi's artwork. Choose a color for the pumpkin and another color to paint the background. Add patterns of dots to the pumpkin and the background.

EVA +:

- Create a room or a design for an installation where everything is camouflaged with a pattern.
- Using sidewalk chalk transform an outdoor space into an art installation of colorful dots.
- Design a new pattern using favorite doodles and shapes.





**KEY IDEAS THAT CONNECT TO NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS:
Based on National Core Arts Standards visual Arts Requirements
(fourth grade).**

[VA:Re.7.2.4a :](#)

Analyze components in visual imagery that convey messages.

[VA:Cr2.1.4a :](#)

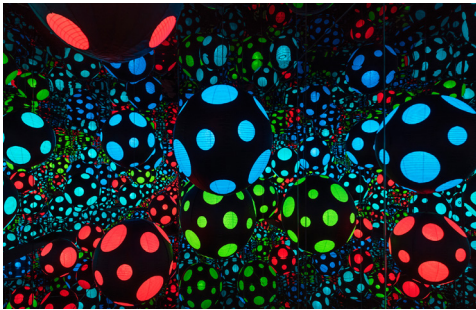
Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.

[VA:Cr2.2.4a:](#)

When making works of art, utilize and care for materials, tools, and equipment in a manner that prevents danger to oneself and others.

[VA:Pr5.1.4a :](#)

Analyze the various considerations for presenting and protecting art in various locations, indoor or outdoor settings, in temporary or permanent forms, and in physical or



ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Click on links to learn more.

- <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2018/march/21/why-does-yayoi-kusama-love-pumpkins/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4OhwL7WyHg>
- <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-yayoi-kusama-childrens-book-tells-story-legendary-polka-dotted-life>
- <https://www.tate.org.uk/kids/explore/who-is/who-yayoi-kusama>
- <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/yayoi-kusama>

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