

GRADES 3–5

TIME

Two class periods, 40–50 minutes

FIREWORKS OF GLASS— Collector's Corner



Social
Studies



English/
Language Arts



Visual Arts

FIREWORKS OF GLASS—COLLECTOR'S CORNER

The Children's Museum's lessons are designed to weave creative space experiences and museum education together. All lessons are interdisciplinary and can be used as individual creative space experiences or in combination to create a cohesive unit. Lessons are optimized when used in connection with museum field trips.



The *Fireworks of Glass* tower and ceiling at The Children's Museum is a large art installation made of more than 4,800 blown-glass pieces created by the artist Dale Chihuly. The tower reaches a height of over 43 feet, creating an explosion of color throughout the museum's core. At the base of the tower is the ceiling, filled with Chihuly glass forms varying in size, shape, and color. In this lesson, participants examine the characteristics of objects found in collections, identify elements in objects that distinguish them as individual, and connect objects

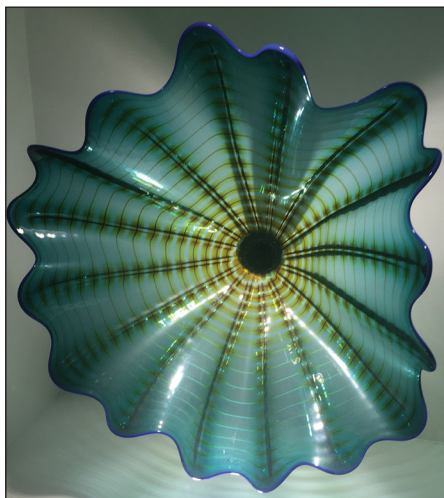
through similarities. Learn more about Chihuly's *Fireworks of Glass* at childrensmuseum.org.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What is a collection and how is it made?
- How do objects fit together to form a collection?
- Why do texture, color, shape, and form affect how items fit into a collection?
- How are item similarities and differences important when creating a collection?

MATERIALS

- Objects from nature, such as seashells, plants, or rocks
- Images or examples of objects made by humans, such as baskets
- Images of Chihuly collections (found on chihuly.com)
- Images of Chihuly Seaforms and Baskets
- Creative space collections of natural and/or constructed objects



INDIANA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Visual Arts: VA:Cr1.1.3a, VA:Cr1.1.4a, VA:Cr1.1.5a, VA:Cr1.2.3a, VA:Cr1.2.4a, VA:Cr1.2.5a; VA:Cr2.1.3a, VA:Cr2.1.4a, VA:Cr2.1.5a, VA:Cr2.2.3a, VA:Cr2.2.4a, VA:Cr2.2.5a, VA:Cr2.3.3a, VA:Cr2.3.4a, VA:Cr2.3.5a; VA:Cr3.1.3a, VA:Cr3.1.4a, VA:Cr3.1.5a; VA:Pr5.1.3a, VA:Pr5.1.4a, VA:Pr5.1.5a; VA:Pr6.1.3a, VA:Pr6.1.4a, VA:Pr6.1.5a; VA:Re.7.2.3a, VA:Re.7.2.4a, VA:Re.7.2.5a; VA:Re8.1.3a, VA:Re8.1.4a, VA:Re8.1.5a; VA:Re9.1.3a, VA:Re9.1.4a, VA:Re9.1.5a; VA:Cn11.1.3a, VA:Cn11.1.4a, VA:Cn11.1.5a

Social Studies: 3.1.6, 3.3.5, 3.3.6, 3.3.9, 5.3.2

English/Language Arts: 3.W.S, 3.SL.1, 3.SL.2.1, 3.SL.2.2, 3.SL.2.3, 3.SL.2.4, 3.SL.2.5; 4.W.S, 4.SL.1, 4.SL.2.1, 4.SL.2.2, 4.SL.2.3, 4.SL.2.4, 4.SL.2.5; 5.W.S, 5.SL.1, 5.SL.2.1, 5.SL.2.2, 5.SL.2.3, 5.SL.2.4, 5.SL.2.5

OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Examine the way that Chihuly's works evolve as he experiments with a form
- Create their own collections of natural or human-made objects
- Discuss how different objects can be collected under a similar subject
- Define and discuss the terms texture, material, color, shape, and form
- Analyze and critique their peers' collections

Discovering Collections

PROCEDURES

Procedure One: Observation

- Introduce participants to artist Dale Chihuly. Famously known for his breathtaking, colorful glass sculptures, Chihuly also paints and is an avid collector of art. Explain to participants that a collector is a person who acquires objects of a specific category or type. Ask participants if any of them or someone they know has a **collection** such as baseball cards, coins, or books. Then ask how items like these can be combined to make a collection.
- Tell participants that Chihuly grew up in the Pacific Northwest. Have participants identify that region and the Pacific Ocean on a map or globe. Ask them what kinds of experiences Chihuly may have had growing up near the ocean and what kinds of objects he may have seen and collected. Ask participants to speculate about how Chihuly's early experiences would have been different if he had grown up away from the ocean.
- Explain that **organic forms** and **shapes** remind us of objects found in nature. **Geometric** shapes (circles, squares, triangles) and forms (spheres, cubes, pyramids) are more regular and precise than most **natural** objects.
- Show participants an image of a series of objects collected by Chihuly. Explain that a collection is a selected group of objects that are similar in one or more ways. Explain that Chihuly collects many different types of objects (see "Everyday Objects" on the back page for more information).

Procedure Two: A Deeper Understanding

- Ask participants if they have any collections of their own. Discuss the reasons they are interested in the objects they collect. Tell participants that they will have the opportunity to assemble a collection to share with the class.
- Have participants bring multiples of one type of object to the creative space in a container. These objects should be safe, clean, and easy to find, transport, and handle. Participants should select either objects found in nature, such as shells, pebbles, leaves, or seeds, or common manufactured objects, such as bottle caps or small toys. Some participants may want to create collections of geometric forms.
- Have participants examine their objects from different angles and discuss the most interesting characteristics of these collections. Discuss how the objects in a collection may be different from each other but will still have some important characteristics in common. For example, the leaves in a collection may be different from each other in a number of ways, including shape, form, **pattern, texture, material,** and color.
- Have participants showcase their collections and encourage them to walk around the room and observe their peers' collections.

ADULT TIPS



Object-Based Inquiry

If participants need extra help when observing an object, use some of the following questions based on object-based inquiry strategies:

- Do you recognize the object?
- What do you call the object?
- What is the object used for or where does it come from?
- What does the object look like if someone asked you to describe it?
- Is the object similar to any other objects you have seen?

Then, begin to ask more specific questions once the participants go deeper into what the object is. Ask questions about its purpose, its colors, and its meaning to them personally.



EVERYDAY OBJECTS

Dale Chihuly saw everything in the world as beautiful and unique. He has always been fascinated by collections and became an avid collector throughout his life. He even acquired collections from other collectors to observe what people find interesting. Chihuly said, "When I start to collect something, I often don't start with a single object. Sometimes I start with ten or twenty or a hundred. It is like creating my own little museum." Chihuly collects many fascinating things, including old cameras, radios, Native American baskets, trade blankets, accordions, vintage Christmas tree ornaments, old shaving brushes, bottle openers, pocketknives, and even vintage string holders. When asked about his collections, Chihuly said, "I love to find the beauty in everyday objects."

FORM AND FUNCTION

In addition to Baskets, Seaforms, and Macchia, Chihuly has created other forms in series that repeat and evolve. Chihuly often names these forms after he designs them in order to explain the effect that he wants to his team. For example, his forms Persians and Venetians were named after the glassblowing traditions in these areas of the world. Persians are flower-like spiral forms with fluted edges. Their intense colors are intersected with wavy ribs and veins. The Venetians are reminiscent of Art Deco decorative vessels created in Venice in the 1920s and '30s and characterized by brightly colored and wildly entwined vines, leaves and flowers. Putti, from the Italian word *putto*, meaning "little boy," also refers to an earlier artistic tradition. Putti, or cupids, were used in Renaissance and Baroque art and were also used in the Venetians series. Chihuly uses them as playful figures that interact with other forms. Introduce participants to various types of materials and art media, such as clay, cardboard, paper, papier-mâché, foil, fiber, foam, found objects, plastic, wood, and wire. Ask participants: How are forms selected based on the type of material an artist uses? What would be the best mediums for forms that have specific functions, such as resembling a river? How can color change the way a form is viewed (e.g., ombre effects or extreme contrasts)?

VOCABULARY

- collection
- form
- geometric
- material
- natural
- organic
- pattern
- shape
- texture

EXTENDING EXPERIENCE

Research

Many participants may know Dale Chihuly for his blown-glass sculpture *Fireworks of Glass* at The Children's Museum. However, Chihuly is a gifted artist who also creates art in other mediums and styles. Instruct participants to look at his website, chihuly.com, to see his other amazing creations and learn about how he became interested in glassblowing. They can also see the kaleidoscope of his other works, including some of his rare paintings!



Photo Credits: Chihuly Glass (cover), chihuly.com; Chihuly Glass Tower (left inside page), The Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Chihuly Starfish (left inside page), chihuly.com; Chihuly Glass (left inside page), Lexi Klein; Lightbulb (right inside page), mochipet / Adobe Stock; Collection Shelves (right inside page), The Children's Museum of Indianapolis; Chihuly Glass Ceiling Detail (back cover), Lexi Klein