

## THE ART OF NATURE

for elementary students



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## CREATING JOURNEYS THROUGH THE ARTS

Follow your creativity and go beyond where the path leads so you can leave a trail to inspire others to express themselves, too!

#### **Preface**

We are pleased to present the series Creating Journeys Through the Arts to take you on a path to transform everyday materials into art, to explore the intersections of art with nature, literacy, technology, theater, music, mindfulness and STEAM and to learn how to use the arts to express your core values. Throughout this journey, we invite you to reflect on the legacy that can be created through the arts.

#### How to Use Our Online Materials and This Book

Not everyone learns the same way. Some people are more visual, some more musical, some more mathematical<sup>1</sup>. Our lessons include symbols at the top of each page that indicate the different learning styles to be found in each project. By pointing out the different ways that a project can be approached, parents and teachers can guide their children to their individual paths to artistic success and ways to express their unique creative voices. The different learning styles and the symbols used to represent them in this book include:



**Literacy and Verbal-Linguistic** (using words effectively)



Recycling and Naturalistic (responding to nature)



Technology and Logical-Mathematical (reasoning, calculating)



**Health and Intra-personal** (understanding one's own interests, goals)



Theatre and Bodily-Kinesthetic (using the body effectively and creatively)



Musical-Rhythmic (sensitivity to rhythm and sound)



**Multicultural and Interpersonal** (understanding, interacting with others)

<sup>1</sup> These learning styles are based on Howard Gardner's discussion of types of intelligences. For more detail, see: Howard Gardner, Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (New York: Basic Books, 1983).



The lesson plans are more than just making art objects. They incorporate ideas such as compassion, mindfulness, respect for nature, healthy eating, cooperation, and other ideas for living in a way that contributes to a civil society. The pages are laid out as if you and the class are taking a journey:

- Your Destination: summarizes the outcome
- Travel Kit: list of materials you will need to make the object
- On the Path: ideas and directions for each child to make his/her own object, and ideas for exploring the meaning of each object
- Group Tour: how to transform the individual process into an interactive and collaborative aroup experience
- Extend your Journey: vocabulary, helpful references, and links to explore additional ideas

Find ways to express yourself - it's okay to think outside the box.

Knowing that links sometimes become inactive or are changed is beyond our control, and we apologize for the inconvenience. All the referenced links in this book have been checked for accuracy. Please check our blog:

(https://artsphere.org/free-resources/curriculum/) and other social media channels for more suggestions on creative art projects.

The lessons in this book are written by instructor, **Daniela Wittenberg**. The design and illustrations are by **Blair Nakamoto**.





Adapt To adjust to new and different conditions.

**Ant colony** Describes both the "building" where ants live as well as the social order in which they are organized.

**Anther** The part of a stamen where the pollen is contained.

**Beehive** A structure in which bees are kept.

**Carpel** One of the leaflike, seed-bearing structures that makes up the innermost part of a flower.

**Compass rose** A drawing showing different directions on a map. It is usually found somewhere on the edge of a map. It shows the four cardinal directions, which are north, south, east, and west.

**Competition** Interaction between organisms, populations, or species, in which birth, growth and death depend on gaining a share of a limited environmental resource.

**Decomposition** The process in which dead organic material breaks itself down into simpler matter. Rot or decay.

**Deforestation** The clearing of a forest or a wide area of trees.

**Endangered species** A species of animal or plant that is not only at risk of becoming extinct but is likely to become so.

**Expedition** A trip or journey made for a particular purpose by a group of people.

**Filament** The slender part of a stamen that supports the anther.

**Germination** The development of a plant from a seed or spore.

**Hanami** A traditional Japanese custom where people view cherry blossoms when they are in full bloom.

**Hierarchy** A system of ranking and organizing power.

**Horizontal lines** Lines that run from left to right.

**Invasive species** An organism introduced into a new environment. It becomes overpopulated and negatively alters its new environment.

**Landscape** All the visible features of an area of land.

**Mycelium** The vegetative part of a fungus, consisting of a network of fine white filaments.

**Ovary** The hollow base of the carpel of a flower that contains one or more ovules.

**Ovule** Plant structure that develops into a seed when fertilized.

**Petal** The segments of the corolla of a flower. They are modified leaves that surround the reproductive parts of a flower.

**Pistil** The female organs of a flower (the stigma, style, and ovary), that consists of one or more carpels.

**Pollen** A fine powder produced by certain plants. During the spring, summer, and fall seasons, it is released into the air and picked up by the wind. The wind carries it to other plants so they can make seeds.

**Recycle** To convert waste (paper, glass, or cans) into something usable in order to regain or reuse materials.

**Reduce** To make less in amount or size.

**Renewal** To make or become new, fresh, or strong again.

**Reuse** Taking old items that one might consider throwing away and finding new uses for them.

Sakura Cherry blossom trees.

**Seedlings** A young plant grown from seed.

**Sepal** A part of a plant, shaped like a leaf, that lies at the base of a flower. Sepals hold and protect developing flower buds.

**Sprouting** To produce or cause to produce new growth.

**Stamen** The part of a flower that produces pollen and is made up of an anther and a filament.

**Stem** The main body that helps to hold the plant up. It also lets water and nutrients flow up to the leaves.

**Stigma** A part of a flower that gets pollen from pollinators such as bees.

**Style** The stalk that supports the stigma and connects it to the ovary.

**Vertical lines** Lines that run from up to down.



It is easy to get caught up in our own lives and forget about the world around us. Sometimes the most fascinating places can be right around the corner, and we may have never known that they were there. Learn about the locations and natural resources near you, and create a real life or imagined map of your neighborhood, including your favorite places and the nature around it.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Find your city or town on Google Earth (<a href="https://earth.google.com/web/">https://earth.google.com/web/</a>). What does it look like? How are the buildings positioned? How do the streets and roads create structure? Is there a lot of nature?

**Step 2** In each box on the first page of the "Map-Making Activity" handout provided below in the "Resources and Visual Aids" section, draw a section of your neighborhood. The bigger boxes should be used for big areas and the smaller boxes should be used for small areas. Make sure to include your home, school, your friends' houses, or any other important places in your neighborhood.

**Step 3** Using scissors, cut out each of the boxes and organize them on the second page of your handout. Place your home in the middle of the page, and then place the rest of the boxes in relation to your home. For example, if your school is to the east of your house, then place your school box to the right of your home. Be sure to leave space between each cutout box for streets and roads.

**Step 4** Glue each of the boxes onto the page. Color in any remaining details like streets, lampposts, trees, crosswalks, and bridges that you might find in your neighborhood.

## **Group Tour:**

Show your parents the map you made, and tell them about your favorite spots. You can also compare maps with your friends to learn how they see the neighborhood.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Use Google Earth to look beyond your neighborhood, and learn about the areas you do not normally get to see or explore. Look for places that are interesting to you, and see if you can plan a day trip to go there. Have fun venturing into the world around you!

**Learn New Vocabulary:** compass rose, horizontal lines, vertical lines

Resources and Visual Aids: Map-Making Activity handout: https://artsphere.org/blog/a-w/

#### **Access Our Instructional Video:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqULq4jHUlc&list=PLN2FL32merRsXMCj8tvjEDyyEsOol3t6x



Ants are unique and fascinating creatures in the animal kingdom. It is an animal most people have interacted with in its natural state in the wild, as opposed to seeing it in books or in the zoo. Despite interacting with ants in your life, there are still plenty of things that you may not know about them. In this lesson, we will learn about ants, their hierarchy and how they build their colonies. Create a drawing of an ant colony to understand the life of ants.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** On the handout, place a long strip of tape down the mouth of the ant hill. For your tunnels, take shorter strips of tape and place them all around the page. Connect them with shorter strips. You can overlay them to make them thicker, or cut them in half to make them thinner.

**Step 2** With the brown crayon, color in the ant hill. After you have colored the entire sheet, remove the tape.

**Step 3** Place a small amount of black or red paint on a paper plate. Use your finger prints to add ants to your colony. Dip your fingers in the paint and press your fingers all over your tunnels. Use your thumb for the queen ant, and use your pinky for the working ants. Let the paint dry.

**Step 4** Use your markers to add details to your ants. Add six legs and two antennae to each of your ants. Then, add any other fun details you like. For example, a crown for your queen or fruit around the working ants.

## **Group Tour:**

Work in small groups to make a gigantic ant city. Take several piece of paper and tape them together, and use that to create a large ant civilization. Be creative and come up with unique details (like stolen picnic items) for your ant city.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Go to a park, and examine all of the ants you find there. Can you tell what kind of ant it is? What is it doing? And why?

Learn New Vocabulary: ant colony, hierarchy

Resources and Visual Aids: Making an Ant Colony handout:

https://artsphere.org/blog/making-an-ant-colony/

Access Our Instructional Video: <a href="https://bit.ly/3FXRz0c">https://bit.ly/3FXRz0c</a>



Watch our instructional video below to learn about varieties of mushrooms and their special powers, which include decomposition, acquisition of nutrients, and communication. Create a colorful mushroom using toilet paper rolls and paper to better imagine mushrooms' abilities.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** First, we will build the stem. On your toilet paper roll, design and color in a pattern that you like using crayons or markers.

**Step 2** Using your scissors, make vertical cuts all around one of the ends of the toilet paper roll. Then, fold the cuts outwards.

**Step 3** Now, we are going to build the cap. On a separate piece of paper, place your bowl upside down and trace it. Inside your large circle, make smaller circles scattered around the paper. Color them in with your markers or crayons however you like.

**Step 4** Cut out the big circle. Then, make one cut from the outside edge to the center of your circle. To create a cone shape, place glue next to the cut and pull other side of circle on top. Please refer to the instructions on the handout provided in the "Resources and Visual Aids" section for further clarification.

**Step 5** Put it all together. Place glue onto the folded cuts on the toilet paper roll. Glue the cap on to the stem and hold for ten seconds.

## **Group Tour:**

Work as a class in order to decorate your classroom with your mushrooms while you discuss what you learned.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Build more mushrooms and connect them with strings to understand how the underground roots (mycelium) communicate.

**Learn New Vocabulary:** cap, decomposition, mycelium, stem

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Mushroom Craft handout: https://artsphere.org/blog/mushroom-crafts/

Access Our Instructional Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZpaalr1|Lk



A cherry blossom is a beautiful type of flower that, despite being found in many places over the world, has become synonymous with Japan. While everyone can appreciate the visual beauty of the cherry blossom, it has a special significance for Japanese people. Learn about the historical and cultural significance of *hanami*, the viewing and appreciation of the temporary beauty of flowers in Japanese culture, while making a painting of a tree in bloom.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Fold a piece of paper in half, creating a card.

**Step 2** On a separate piece of construction paper draw the shape of branches with a pencil. Cut out the branches with scissors and glue them to the front of your card. Let the card dry.

**Step 3** While you let the card dry, prepare your pink paint. Pour a spoonful of red paint onto a paper plate. Then add white paint. The amount of white paint added should be a fourth of the amount of red paint. So, if you used four spoonfuls of red paint you would add one spoonful of white. When you mix the proper proportion of paint, you will get pink.

**Step 4** Once your branches are dry, take the bottom of the plastic bottle and dip it in your paint. Then, stamp it onto the page, creating the blossoms for your tree. Do not make any more changes until it is dry. Instead of paint, you can use markers to make pink flowers on your branches.

**Step 5** On the inside of your card, write a letter to spring. Start with, "Dear Spring, ..." and write what you are looking forward to in the spring.

## **Group Tour:**

Create another card but instead of addressing it to Spring, address it to a friend, and write about all of the things you want to do together.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Find cherry blossom trees outside or online. If they are nearby, have a picnic where they are, and celebrate your own *hanami*. If you cannot find any cherry blossom trees near you, find a beautiful place to have a picnic to appreciate nature.

Learn New Vocabulary: hanami, renewal, Sakura

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Letter to Spring handout <a href="https://artsphere.org/blog/letter-to-spring/">https://artsphere.org/blog/letter-to-spring/</a>

Access Our Instructional Video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOh3bAjukFc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOh3bAjukFc</a>



Climate change is a growing concern in today's world. It is important for us to keep our planet happy and healthy so we can lead more peaceful lives. One factor of climate change comes from how we treat trees. Trees give us the air we breathe, and their presence is vital to our way of life. Learn about how important recycling is to saving trees. Create your own masterpiece of a tree using recycled materials.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Collect scraps of any paper material you can find. This includes old newspapers, magazines, old art projects, construction paper, receipts and whatever else you may find.

**Step 2** Use scissors to cut the recycled paper into small pieces. Keep cutting up the paper until you have a little mountain of cut-up pieces.

Step 3 On your full sheet of paper, draw and color in the trunk and branches of your tree.

**Step 4** Place glue around one branch. Then, place some of the cut-out paper pieces around this branch. The cut out piece should stick to the glue. Repeat this for each branch you have made.

**Step 5** Have fun with it! Place some cut-outs in unique spots to make your design truly come to life. Maybe some cut-outs are far from the tree so it looks like leaves blowing in the wind. You can place your cut-outs however you would like.

### **Group Tour:**

Ask your parents to help you find scraps for your tree. Explain to them the importance of reusing and recycling materials.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Check out these videos that explain the importance of saving trees and reusing, reducing, and recycling! Save Our Trees video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6Eexh8fzgl">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6Eexh8fzgl</a>

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle educational video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OasbYWF4 \$8

Learn New Vocabulary: deforestation, recycle, reduce, reuse

Resources and Visual Aids: Scrap Tree handout <a href="https://artsphere.org/blog/scrap-tree-art-project/">https://artsphere.org/blog/scrap-tree-art-project/</a>

Access Our Instructional Video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCYXcu9VIXI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCYXcu9VIXI</a>



Every animal has a role in the food chain. Humans cannot forget that our actions affect countless other species. One such species is the squirrel. Learn about the squirrel's role in the environment and how they have been affected by humans while making your own squirrel.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** For the squirrel belly, turn the cup upside-down. Use a pencil to make an upside-down U-shape starting and ending on the rim of the cup. Leave an inch of space above it for the head. For visual aids, use the link provided in the "Resources and Visual Aids" section. Paint or color outside of the U-shape with brown.

**Step 2** Once your squirrel is painted or colored in, glue some googly eyes on them above the U-shape. If you do not have any googly eyes, you can make eyes out of construction paper, or simply draw the eyes directly onto your cup.

**Step 3** On your brown paper, cut a strip, roughly the width of your paper cup, for the tail. Once it is cut off, curl the strip of tail by rolling it around a pencil.

**Step 4** Cut two triangle shapes for the ears, and four oval shapes for arms and feet. Complete the squirrel by gluing the shapes together. Glue the ears to the top of your inverted paper cup, the feet to the bottom opening, and the tail to the back of the cup (the brown part).

## **Group Tour:**

Compare your squirrel with the squirrels that your friends made. How are they different? How are they similar? If you all could do this activity again, what would you do differently?

## **Extend the Journey:**

In some parts of the world, squirrels are in danger. Learn more about the efforts to save the red squirrel by watching this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aE3x3k QpD4

Learn New Vocabulary: adapt, competition, endangered species, invasive species

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Paper Cup Squirrel handout: https://artsphere.org/blog/paper-cup-squirrel/

Access Our Instructional Video: https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=lfBil2DPo70



Almost all plant life starts from seeds, so it is important to learn about how seeds sprout and plants grow. This will help you grow your own plants and help you understand nature. In this activity, you will make your own ready-to-plant seed paper. We recommend using basil seeds as they are easy to grow, as long as you have a lot of light and warmth in your home, or you can use LED lights and a heating pad.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Tear your construction paper scraps into smaller pieces, making a small pile. With a parent's help, throw the construction paper into the blender with a little bit of water, then blend to a clay consistency, adding more water if necessary.

**Step 2** Pour mixture into a bowl, and add the seeds. Mix everything together.

**Step 3** Place a towel on a table. Spread your seed paper paste onto the strainer or window screen, and pat down to remove excess moisture. If you do not have a screen, fill a cookie cutter (or bracelet) with seed paper paste and pat down. Leave dry in a place with little sunlight so that the seeds do not sprout.

**Step 4** Remove seed paper from surface once it is dry. You are ready to plant. Think about where you want to plant your seed paper, and watch it grow.

## **Group Tour:**

Have your classmates, friends, or family members plant their seed paper in a variety of pots in a warm, sunny area inside of your classroom or home. Place a tray under the plant's pot with water to help the plants stay humid. Watch them grow together!

## **Extend the Journey:**

Grow different types of seeds depending on the conditions of your house and needs. Seed Paper Craft blog: <a href="https://scissorsandglue.ca/rainbow-seed-paper-craft-for-kids-the-tiny-seed-read-aloud/">https://scissorsandglue.ca/rainbow-seed-paper-craft-for-kids-the-tiny-seed-read-aloud/</a>

How to Plant Seed Paper: https://bit.ly/3rOxVyC

**Learn New Vocabulary:** germination, seedlings, sprouting

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Seed Paper Making handout: <a href="https://artsphere.org/blog/seed-paper/">https://artsphere.org/blog/seed-paper/</a>, Growing Basil: <a href="https://getbusygardening.com/grow-basil-from-seed/">https://getbusygardening.com/grow-basil-from-seed/</a>

Access Our Instructional Videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlwB60Yt p4



People have been giving flowers to those they love for centuries. But flowers are more than just tokens of one's affection. Learn about the flower's role in the environment and how they are beneficial for other animals and humans. Make your own set of colorful coffee filter flowers.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Flatten your coffee filters. Lay two on top of each other, and fold them in half. Then fold them in half three more times.

**Step 2** Create the flower petals. Near the open end of your folded coffee filter, cut an arch for petals. Then, cut down the larger, single fold about halfway down towards the point. Do not cut more, or your petals will be loose.

**Step 3** Unfold the coffee filter and trim up any and all flower petals that did not come out right. Once complete, place your coffee filter flat in the plastic container.

**Step 4** Prepare your colors. In the paper cups place a little bit of water. Put one drop of food coloring into each cup. Mix.

**Step 5** Dip your straw into the cup. Cover the top opening with your finger. Lift the straw out of the cup and move it over your coffee filter. Release your finger from the straw, and watch the contents fall into the coffee filter. Repeat with the different colors.

**Step 6** After you color and decorate your flowers, place onto a plastic tray and leave to dry overnight.

## **Group Tour:**

Gift your flowers to someone you care about. If you want you can also write a sweet personal message on the backside of the flower.

## **Extend the Journey:**

We have all seen flowers in nature, but you may not know how they develop. Watch the instructional video, do some internet research, and fill out the parts of a flower in the handout provided in the "Resources and Visual Aids" section.

**Learn New Vocabulary:** anther, filament, ovary, petal, pistil, sepal, stamen, stigma, style

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Coffee Filter Flowers Handout: <a href="https://artsphere.org/blog/coffee-filter-handout/">https://artsphere.org/blog/coffee-filter-handout/</a>

Access Our Instructional Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMiO6Ly-qNQ



Bees are seen by some as nothing more than small insects that hover around flowers, and yet, the bee is one of the biggest contributors to helping and preserving our environment. Learn about bees and their important role in the environment. For this activity, you will make your own bee puppets.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** With your scissors, cut a one inch wide strip of yellow paper. Fold into six squares. The six squares should NOT make up the entire strip as the excess paper will be used for the bee's head.

**Step 2** With your scissors, cut three squares in your black paper. These squares should be the same size as the ones you folded into the yellow paper. Glue them onto your yellow strip in alternating order.

**Step 3** Fold all the squares on top of each other. Using your hole puncher, punch a hole through the middle of the squares.

**Step 4** Cut two connected circles (like a sideways 8) out of the white paper for wings. Cut two long, little rectangles on your black paper for the antennae.

**Step 5** Put the straw through the holes of your strip. Take the extra yellow strip and fold it over the straw. Glue it onto the top of the first square.

**Step 6** Glue the wings to the back of your bee's body and the antennae to the back of your bee's head. On the front of the bee's head, draw eyes and a mouth. If these steps are unclear, please use the handout provided in the "Resources and Visual Aids" section for a clearer description with visual aids.

## **Group Tour:**

Make a bee for each member of your family, and put on a bee puppet show.

## **Extend the Journey:**

Learn more about the amazing world of bees by watching this video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3oMN1a">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3oMN1a</a> pdg

Learn New Vocabulary: beehive, pollen

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Making Bee Puppets handout: https://artsphere.org/blog/bee-puppets-handout/

#### **Access Our Instructional Video:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE-bQ-0Uipg&feature=youtu.be



Throughout this book we have talked about nature in many ways, and it is time for us to go and appreciate its beauty. In this lesson, we will learn about Fairmount Park's resources and create a painting of your favorite view. If you do not live in the Philadelphia area, and therefore cannot realistically go to Fairmount Park, go to a different park in your own neighborhood.

#### On the Path:

**Step 1** Find or take a picture of a view in Fairmount Park, or a park near you, that you would like to paint. Try to capture as few man-made objects as possible, and focus on the natural environment.

**Step 2** Prepare a wide variety of colors that you will need such as shades of green, yellow, blue and any other color you want in your painting.

**Step 3** Lastly, recreate the environment or photo you took, and paint your favorite view of Fairmount Park, or your nearby park.

## **Group Tour:**

Go with your friends and family to stroll around Fairmount Park, or your local park, on a weekend afternoon.

## **Extend the Journey:**

A painter explains his process and how he paints nature. This is a good resource for you to develop your skills as a painter:

https://www.outdoorpainter.com/how-to-paint-a-4-canvas-outdoors-in-one-session/

Learn New Vocabulary: expedition, landscape

**Resources and Visual Aids:** Handout on painting your own landscape: https://artsphere.org/blog/park-expedition-design-a-landscape/



## APPENDIX

1 Walk Around Your Neighborhood



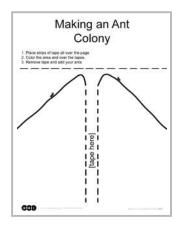
3 Colorful Mushroom Toilet Paper Roll



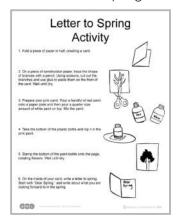
**5** Scraps Collage Tree Project



2 Making an Ant Colony



4 Blooming Like Cherry Blossoms: A Letter to Spring



6 Paper Cup Squirrel



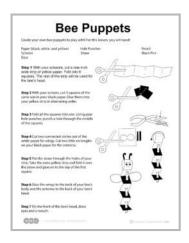


## APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

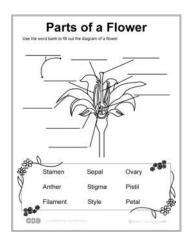
7 Colorful Seed Paper Making



**9** A Bee's Life



8 Coffee Filter Flowers



10 Finger Painting Your Favorite Landscape



General playlist link to all videos:

https://bit.ly/3gAUKjZ

Learn more:

https://artsphere.org/interactive-programs/classes/elementary/



Art Sphere Inc. (ASI), founded in 1998, provides meaningful free arts programs for underserved populations in an effort to engage the creativity in communities, empower neighborhoods, explore the positives in peoples' lives, and heal the mind, body, and spirit through the arts.

Working with hundreds of volunteers every year and partnering with numerous civic, academic and governmental organizations, our grassroots events help support inner-city neighborhoods. ASI's in-school, after-school, in-person and online workshops lay the framework for the arts to nourish the character and development of youth, open up a new world of social engagement and reinforce the school curriculum.

We appreciate the generous support of Penn Treaty Special Services District and other foundations and institutions who among our other supporters have paved the way for Art Sphere Inc. to continue to serve the public through on-site and online education programs.





























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