



Outdoor Art Expert

Get ready to become an outdoor artist as you connect with nature and create something helpful to the environment. You'll learn how to see nature with an artist's eye and find ways to express yourself—from photography and painting to music, jewelry design, and architecture. Go outside to find art—it doesn't just exist within the four walls of a museum.

Steps

1. Explore art outdoors
2. Make something!
3. Create or share music inspired by nature
4. Capture nature digitally
5. Design outdoors

Purpose

When I've earned this badge, I will have learned how to create art outdoors with a focus on the environment.



"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

—Rachel Carson

Tips Before Takeoff

Staying safe will make earning this badge more fun, so before you step outside, check out this list:

- ▶ **Don't go alone.** Before you head out, make sure to let an adult know where you'll be going and for how long. Use the Buddy System and team up with a friend.
- ▶ **Dress the part.** Sunny out? Don't forget the sunscreen! Cold out? Zip up! Wear protective clothing—like a jacket, a hat, and gloves. Hiking a trail? Wear hiking shoes.
- ▶ **Pack for safety.** Bring a backpack with a reusable bottle of water. Optional: a first aid kit with bandages and antibiotic cream, a whistle, a flashlight with batteries, and a camera.
- ▶ **Stay connected.** Bring a cell phone in case you need to contact someone for assistance. Make sure you have good reception.
- ▶ **Be aware of your surroundings.** Pay attention to where you're walking. Keep an eye out for signs, especially if you're hiking a trail that goes in different directions.



STEP 1 Explore art outdoors

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

Creative inspiration can spring from the things you experience, so head outside to take in the sights and sounds of the great outdoors. Take a hike, observe a cloud, lie on a hammock, and write in your journal or draw sketches. The ideas you collect will become your guide as you create for each step.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Find at least three or more public artworks outdoors.** Look outdoors for art that people enjoy—it could be statues, sculptures, murals, plaques, billboards, a fountain, landscaped gardens, or unusually designed buildings. Take a journal and write about or sketch the art and where you found it.

OR

- ☐ **Visit at least one exhibit of outdoor environmental art.** Art can excite and educate others about ways to respect and preserve the natural world. Look for environmental art in a museum, gallery, online, or outside in your community. It might be a garden planted over a landfill, a building with a grass roof, a gravel pit converted into an amphitheater, a sculpture made from recycled materials, a wall mural with an eco theme, a photo exhibit highlighting an environmental issue, or a wildlife statue in a park. Take a video of what you see and share the artist's message with others.

OR

- ☐ **Create with a nature artist.** Seek out an artist who uses nature in her art: She might be an art teacher, family friend, or person you meet at a craft fair, community center, museum, or art gallery. She could be a landscape artist, a jeweler who uses natural objects, a “trash-to-treasure” sculptor, or a wildlife photographer. Spend time with her

while she works, or ask her to come speak to your troop. Find out where she gets materials and inspiration, what her process is for creating, and what impact she hopes her work will make. Ask her to show you her techniques, and make a work of art together.

Leave No Trace

Remember to practice “Leave No Trace” as you create your outdoor art!

Know Before You Go

Stick to Trails

Trash Your Trash

Leave It As You Find It

Keep Wildlife Wild

Respect Others

Eco-Artist

Environmental art can also be known as eco-art, social sculpture, bio-art, recycled art, reclamation art, earth art, nature art, or crop art . . . it's any art that sends an environmental message. In 1982, Agnes Denes, considered one of the pioneers of environmental art, planted a two-acre wheat field in a landfill in lower Manhattan. She cleared the garbage, brought in 100 truckloads of dirt, planted golden wheat seed, and then ended up harvesting more than 1,000 pounds. Visitors carried seeds away from the field to plant in other parts of the world. Talk about a sustainable project!



Junk Raft

For years, marine conservationist Anna Cummins (pictured above), would see plastic bottles, bags, and other garbage scattered in the ocean. Finally, she had to act. In 2008, she helped build the *Junk Raft*, made from 15,000 plastic bottles, salvaged sailboat masts, and a cabin made from the reclaimed fuselage of a Cessna airplane. The 30-foot *Junk Raft* sailed from Long Beach, California, to Hawaii to raise awareness about the plastic trash problem. Not only does plastic release toxins and microscopic particles into the water, but birds and marine life can get caught in it, eat it, and choke on it. Consider this scary fact: After 88 days at sea, *none* of the raft's plastic bottles showed any signs of erosion.

Courtesy of Anna Cummins

STEP 2 Make something!

When you use nature as inspiration to create something, it's not just aesthetically pleasing but also sends a positive message. What you make allows others to appreciate—and explore—their relationship to nature.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Design a piece of jewelry inspired by nature.** Go outside and find something in nature that moves you—maybe a sunset, ocean view, wildlife, or flowers—and then reproduce it by making something you can wear or give to a friend. Your nature inspiration might show up as a color you choose for a glass-beaded necklace, or in materials you pick for a braided bracelet.

OR

- ☐ **Find five things that do not belong in nature and create a collage or eco-art sculpture.** Take a hike on a trail, by a lake, or around your neighborhood to pick up trash—from candy wrappers and soda cans to discarded tires and plastic toys—and then create something. (Safety note: Always wear gloves when collecting items, and avoid anything sharp, like needles, or toxic, like paint cans.) You can plaster your findings into a sculpture, or glue them to canvas with pictures, drawings, and writing for a multimedia project. Name your art piece and include a brief description for what you want to say about preserving the environment, then display it for others at school, in a park office, or a community center.

OR

- ☐ **Make a print using a natural object or one inspired by nature.** You can use wood you have at your house or from a home-supply store to create a woodcut relief print by carving a design inspired by nature in a piece of wood, adding printer's ink to the wood and then pressing the paper onto the wood to make a print. You can make a screen print on a T-shirt or paper with the design you created. (See the next page for instructions.)



Embroidery Hoop Screen Printing

YOU WILL NEED

- 12" wooden embroidery hoop
- Sheer woven fabric (like organza or voile)*
- Your design (printed or drawn)
- Scissors
- Pencil
- Acrylic paint
- Paper plate
- Paint brushes
- Screen printing ink made for fabric
- Plastic spoon
- Stiff piece of plastic (a used or expired gift card works well)
- Fabric items to print on (T-shirts, dish towels, aprons, tote bags)
- Heavy paper or cardboard

*Sheer curtain panels work well—see if you can find them used at a thrift store or yard sale.



1. DESIGN AND TRANSFER:

Design the image to fit comfortably within the hoop.

- Secure the fabric between the embroidery hoops so the screen is taut. Trim the edges.
- Place your design under the hoop and trace onto the screen with pencil.

2. MAKE A MASK:

Keep ink from going through the screen except where you have your design.

- Squeeze paint onto a paper plate. Flip the screen over and paint all around your design. Let dry. Repeat on the other side.
- Hold the screen up to the light and look for light shining through the mask. Cover unwanted pinholes or gaps with paint, and allow to dry.



3. TEST PRINT:

Use a piece of scrap paper.

- Use a plastic spoon to spread printing ink across the top of the screen.
- Use a plastic card to squeegee the ink over the design, top to bottom. Scrape off excess ink and carefully lift the screen to see the print.

4. TOUCH UP:

Fill any unwanted holes in mask where ink leaked through.

- Clean the screen, allow it to dry, and fill the holes with paint.



5. PRINT RUN:

You're ready to go!

- To print on fabric, place a piece of cardboard under the item being printed (or inside, if it's a shirt or bag) to keep ink from bleeding through.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for heat setting the ink.





STEP 3 Create or share music inspired by nature

Throughout history, nature has played an important role in music—it influences the sounds and lyrics that artists create. Some artists also use music to communicate their desire to protect nature. Let the sounds of nature be your tool to compile—or make—your own music.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

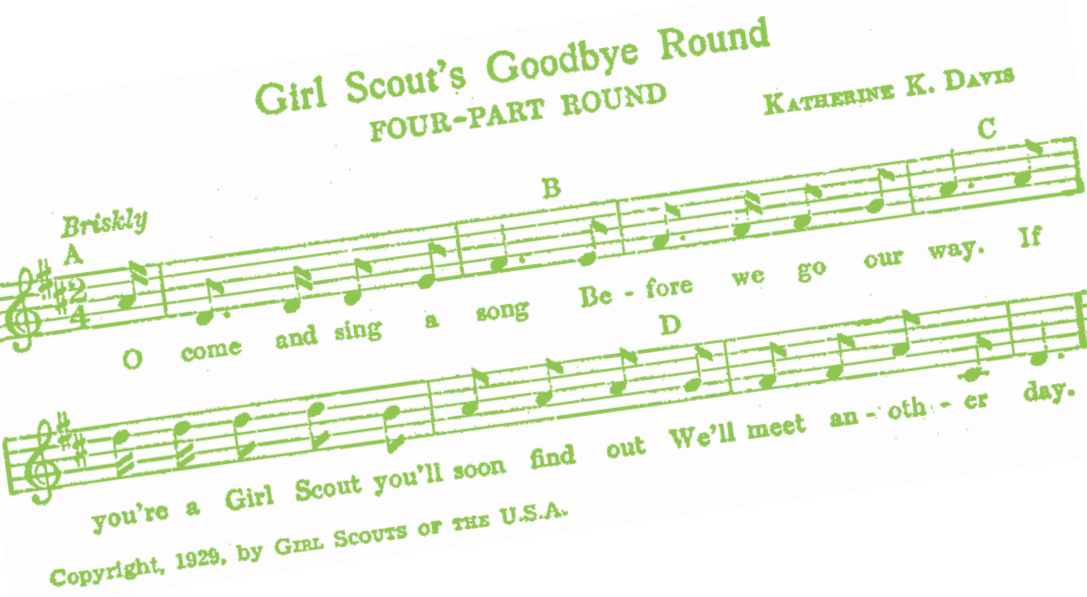
- ☐ **Produce a nature recording.** Record natural sounds (ocean waves, wind rustling through trees, insects buzzing), and human-made ones (a car honking, a jet flying overhead, an off-road vehicle, a person yelling, or the engine of a lawnmower or snowmobile) together. Then share with friends and family to see if they can detect the human-made sounds and the natural sounds.

OR

- ☐ **Create a DIY band for an outdoor performance.** Look inside and outside for objects that make sounds. Play percussion on a garbage can. Put coins in a covered can for a shaker. Fill drinking glasses with different levels of water and clink with a spoon. Take a soda bottle and blow inside it. Come up with your own ideas! Invite friends, family members, or younger girls to play the instruments outdoors. Record the sounds they make.

OR

- ☐ **Learn three camp songs about nature and teach them to younger girls.** Help keep the Girl Scout singing tradition alive for younger girls by teaching them three nature songs. You can find a song about nature or take a traditional Girl Scout song and change the lyrics to reflect nature. Make sure to include movements and animal sounds when you share the songs—it makes it easier to remember the lyrics, and who doesn't like to move to music? Take the girls outdoors to sing!



Best Filters for Nature Photos

Polarizer: Reduces glare in sky, water, trees and leaves

Neutral density (ND): Extends exposure time; good for waterfalls, rivers, and oceans

Graduated Neutral Density (GND): Controls strong lights in landscapes (like the sun)

UV/Haze: Improves clarity and protects lens

Warming/Cooling: Changes white balance (restores color) in landscapes or underwater



No Filter



Circular Polarizer Filter

STEP 4 Capture nature digitally

When nature photographers take pictures of plants, wildlife, and landscapes, it might mean sitting for hours to snap a blue jay taking flight or being on high alert during a storm in order to capture the instant lightning strikes.

Nature photographers may experience daring adventure and exotic travel, but it starts with technical skills and an eye to shoot nature's subjects. Try out a different technique for taking pictures outdoors.



CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Create a time-lapse project of a scene outdoors.** Take pictures of an object outdoors in a single frame at a time over a period of time—a day, week, or month. It might be clouds in the sky or plants and flowers growing. Then load the images on a computer or use an app to make a time-lapse video. Or print out three of your images and put them together side-by-side to create a triptych.


FOR MORE FUN: Print out your time-lapse photos and make them into a flipbook.

OR

- ☐ **Experiment with perspective in nature photography.** Camera filters are pieces of glass that go over the lens to help you take great pictures outdoors by reducing the glare or adding color and depth to an image. With a regular camera, filters assist in taking nature shots. (See Best Filters for Nature Photos on this page.) If you have a smartphone camera, experiment by using different filters offered, such as noir, process, chrome, or black and white. Play around with different modes like flash or high dynamic range (HDR). Or find an app that can help you shoot panoramic, make your photos look vintage, or assemble them into a collage. How does it change the look and feel of what you shot?

OR

- ☐ **Create an outdoor music video using a song that reminds you of nature.** Find a song you like with a nature theme or lyrics about the outdoors—what images do you see when you listen to it? Jot down ideas, then head outdoors to film scenes to go with your song. Go online to find out how to edit your video footage and add your song as the soundtrack. When it's ready, share it with friends and family.



ANNA ATKINS was born in England in 1799. She was given the opportunity to learn more about science than most women of that time because her father was a scientist. In her early 20s, she made engravings of shells to illustrate a book of her father's. As she grew older, she pursued a career in botany, also known as plant science. She became interested in early forms of photography as a time-saving way to capture botanical specimens. She was best known for her cyanotype prints—using the sun to make photograms by laying objects directly on light-sensitized paper. Her book *Photographs of British Algae*, published in 1843, was the first book to be photographically printed and illustrated.

Cystoseira fibrosa.



For More FUN:

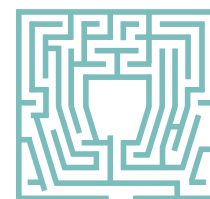
Talk to local artists and community members about creating a mural in an outdoor public area, like a park, garden, community center, or school. Remember—you'll need to get permission from the property owner before creating your mural.

STEP 5 Design outdoors

In step 3, you learned how environmental art helps educate people about the natural world. Now think of this same idea on a grander scale. Architects and engineers often take cues from nature for their designs. For example, one of the world's largest buildings in Taiwan is shaped like tall bamboo. A stadium in China looks like a bird's nest. An Iranian architect designed a temple that resembles a lotus flower. In Dubai, a group of human-made islands form the shape of a palm tree. Try your hand at designing something transformative outdoors.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- ☐ **Design an outdoor maze or labyrinth.** A puzzle **maze** has multiple paths, including wrong turns and dead ends, but only one way to get from entrance to goal. No matter how complicated, a **labyrinth** has a single winding path without choices. Pick one to design, and draw up your sketch. Then use pieces of rope or stones to replicate your design outdoors—maybe in your backyard or at a park. If you're near a beach, use a stick to draw your design in the sand. Invite others to walk through it.



MAZE



LABYRINTH

OR

- ☐ **Create lighting for an outdoor space.** Find a temporary space in your backyard, a park, or a playground to create a light show for friends and family. Make more than one lighting treatment—for example, paint Mason jars with glow-in-the-dark paint. Hang holiday lights on trees or in the shape of a peace sign, heart, or trefoil.* Drop switch-on candles (battery-operated or LED lights) in bottles or hurricane lamps—or hang them from trees with ribbons. Tape colored cellophane over flashlights and position them to shine on trees. Landscape artists often use lighting to showcase beautiful plants, flowers, and trees. Can you think of ways your lighting can do the same?

FOR MORE FUN: Add music to your light show.

*You will need permission from the municipal parks department or other relevant agency to create your outdoor space in a park or playground. Please also refer to Girl Scouts Safety Activity Checkpoints on recreational tree climbing.

OR

- ☐ **Design a nature-based art mural for the outdoors.** Murals are human-made images on walls or other flat surfaces. Take a walk outside to get inspired, then sketch a design or go on your computer to create a mural that focuses on something in nature. It could be the night sky, a forest, or a message about the environment. If you can, sketch your mural image on a chalkboard, whiteboard, plywood, or a large canvas to see how it would look.

Wild Walk is an elevated walkway built into the canopy of trees in New York's Adirondack Mountains so that visitors can see the forest at a bird's-eye view. The trail of bridges and platforms begins at ground level and climbs as high as 40 feet. Along the way, the designers put a four-story twig tree house, a spider's web, and an over-sized bald eagle's nest at the highest point. The tallest tree in the Adirondacks is the white pine, measuring 160 feet—taller than the Statue of Liberty. What can you design to help transform our experiences with nature?

Sketch of the Spider's Web at Wild Walk



Model of the Spider's Web



The Spider's Web in Action!



Going on a Journey? Do some badge work along the way.

On the *GIRLtopia* Journey, you earn a Visionary Award by turning your vision for a better future into art using a medium you choose and creating a project with a message. In this badge, you find out what it takes to be an eco-artist and make something to help others appreciate and explore their relationship to nature. Combine the skills and inspiration from this badge to make your *GIRLtopia* experience even more meaningful.

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Coming up with an art project inspired by the outdoors and holding a workshop to show younger girls how to do it
- Creating a presentation about how environmental art can help make a difference, and sharing it with others
- Working on an eco-art project in my school or community

I'm inspired to:

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