

WYCINANKI: A MATH/ART LESSON IN SYMMETRY

Wycinanki, Polish cut-paper designs, are symmetrical.

MATERIALS:

- construction paper 12x18
- scissors
- glue
- pencils
- authentic examples or reproductions of Wycinanki

METHOD:

1. Share with the students the following historical reference: Farming families in Poland in the early 19th century used brightly colored Wycinanki to decorate their homes before Easter. They show that intricate details can be created using basic materials. Wycinanki are cut with sheep shears with no preliminary sketching. Cut from folded paper, they are always symmetrical. Their subject matter reflects the Polish countryside and includes trees, flowers, roosters, birds, and sometimes men and women. There are many styles of Wycinanki found in the different regions of Poland.
 2. Activity: After students have looked at examples and discussed the characteristics of Wycinanki, they will create their own paper cut designs. Each student will use a sheet of 12x18 paper. It should be folded in half lengthwise, and students will draw their designs first with pencil. They will then carefully cut out their designs. Completed pictures should be mounted on black paper (12x18).
 3. Questions to ask during the lesson:
 - What things in our world are symmetrical?
 - What are some different methods you can use to be sure that your picture will be symmetrical (besides folding the paper in half)?
 - How is your Wycinanki symmetrical?
 - Can you name any other artists or cultures that show symmetry regularly in their work?
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You can learn more about Wycinanki at the following websites.

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/world/mwycinanki.html> or
<http://www.polskiinternet.com/english/info/artpaper.html>