



Crafts Around the World Series

Europe: Polish Wycinanki Traditional Cut-Paper

Enjoy learning how to make simple crafts from six of the seven continents: **Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America.**

Purpose:

Introduce youth to some simple cultural traditional crafts from around the world. Journey around the continents, learning how to make simple crafts and having fun creating.

Objectives:

- ◇ Learn the cultural history and origins of the craft.
- ◇ Inspire global exploration.
- ◇ Develop fine motor skills in carving.
- ◇ Increase cultural awareness and creativity.

Education Standards:

- ◇ Understand the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- ◇ Apply geometric methods to solve design problems.

Experiential Learning:

- ◇ Create designs in cutting paper with scissors.

Encourage thought and discussion with these questions: What happened? What's important? So what? Now what?

Audience: Grades K -12



Photos courtesy of Janis Brinn, Artwork created by Michigan 4-H Winterfest participants, 2020

CONTINENT: EUROPE

Home to 44 countries, Europe is the sixth largest of the world's continents. Some areas of the world combine Asia and Europe into one continent called Eurasia .

COUNTRY: POLAND

Poland is located in central Europe. It is bordered by the Baltic Sea to the north, and the Sudetes and Carpathian Mountains to the south.

In 1991, the first Polish 4-H club was started in Leszno Province. 4-H programs continue today and are conducted all over Poland, predominantly in rural areas (Fundacja 4H, n.d.). Michigan 4-H has been working with Poland since 1993 when the first international summer exchange took place. A group of six youth and three adults from Leszno Province came to stay with host families in Michigan. Michigan 4-H also continues the partnership with Poland, providing a variety of educational youth development programs (Applegate, 2012).

LESSON: POLISH WYCIANKI: TRADITIONAL CUT-PAPER

Wycinanki pronounced "Vee-chee-non-kee" is the Polish word for "cut-paper design." *Wycinanki* was traditionally used by Polish peasants to decorate their cottages. They often depicted scenes from daily life, such as weddings or holidays. *Wycinanki* are layered and all the different colors are pieces of paper glued on. Some cutouts were traditionally done with sheep shears instead of scissors.

TRADITIONAL CUT-PAPER

TIME: 30-45 minutes or multiple days depending upon the interest to learn more.

MATERIALS:

- ◇ Colored paper such as construction paper in a variety of colors
- ◇ Scissors
- ◇ Hobby knife (to be safe, only advanced crafter should use)
- ◇ Glue or glue sticks
- ◇ Ruler
- ◇ Pencils with erasers
- ◇ White or yellow pencils for drawing on dark paper
- ◇ Cutting mat (if using a hobby knife)
- ◇ Markers or crayons (optional)
- ◇ Cardstock for background (optional)
- ◇ Samples, templates, patterns, and instructions (optional)

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO LINK:

View this instructional video to guide you in creating your traditional cut-paper :

https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/1_kdjzmvya

PROCEDURE: How to make cut-paper designs

1. Do some research and print out a design that inspires you (especially traditional Wycinanki designs such as a rooster) or create your own.
2. Fold the paper in half. Draw one side of your design on the fold. You will use a regular pencil on light-colored paper and a white or yellow pencil on dark paper.
3. Cut out your design (like cutting a snowflake) following the lines.
4. Unfold. The remaining piece is your Wycinanki.
5. Glue your finished Wycinanki on to colored construction paper or cardstock backing.
6. For more advanced or older participants: use the hobby knife for cutting fine details.
7. Add to your design by gluing on different colored layers and details.

Art and Science – Be creative with your design. Experiment with different types of folds, images, and other traditional techniques. Create a variety of uses for your designs such as decorative snowflakes hanging from the ceiling with string, festive cards, wall hangings, and other ideas. Ask questions and make discoveries!

Research other scissor snipping traditions: German Scherenschnitte, Chinese Hua Yang, Japanese Kirigami, Mexico Otomi Indian cutouts, Papel Picado, and Pennsylvania Dutch cutouts.

Reflection Questions: What surprised you and why? When were you the most creative, and why do you think that is? What made you curious today? What can you do with what you learned today?

REFERENCES:

Applegate, R. (2012, June 29). *The Michigan/Poland 4-H exchange has a long history*. Michigan State University Extension. https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/the_michigan_poland_4-h_exchange_has_a_long_history

Fundacja 4H. (n.d.). About foundation. *Fundacja Edukacyjna 4H w Polsce*. http://projektory.nazwa.pl/4h/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=48&Itemid=37

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