Big Idea
Making art from unexpected materials in unexpected places

Your students will:
- Collaborate to create a classroom installation
- Work in small groups to sketch a design for their mural
- Conduct classroom conversations to delegate tasks to a group of students

Find Art in Unexpected Places with Freddie
As a class, co-view the clip from “Curation & Art in Unexpected Places,” in which Freddie visits the Philadelphia International Airport, which she discovers is like its own art museum. She manages her boredom while waiting for her flight by learning about how the art at the airport is curated and the many different types of art on view. Prompt a discussion about finding art in unexpected places like an airport. Conversations starters might include:

1. Freddie was surprised to find art at the airport. What are some other places where you might find unexpected art?
2. What did you learn about why the airport displays art? Why do you think places like airports are good spaces for exhibiting art?
3. Which airport artwork in the episode was most interesting to you? What would you want to ask the artist who created it?
4. Freddie is bored at the airport, while Uncle Mars is anxious. Think of a time when you felt these feelings. What did you do to cope? What did Freddie and Uncle Mars do to work through their emotions?

Materials
- A pack of colorful sticky note paper, ideally enough for each student to have one stack/color of notes
- A large blank wall, window or mirror
- Clear tape
- Paper and drawing supplies
- Optional: butcher paper
Lesson Activity

Teacher Prep:
1. Consider the best way to set your students up for success. They can collaborate to come up with a design of their own to create, or they can add to and fill in a design that the teacher starts ahead of time. Which form of collaboration is right for your class?
2. Prep an inspiration board for your class showing lots of different ideas for how sticky notes can be used to create a design. Maybe spell a word with the paper squares, create a checkerboard pattern or make a heart shape.
3. Sticky notes might stick better to some surfaces than others, so test yours before you begin. If they aren’t taking well to the selected wall, hang a large piece of butcher paper on the wall to stick them to.

Instructions:

Part One
1. Introduce the idea of creating a large and collaborative art installation out of colorful squares, using the inspiration board to demonstrate the many possibilities of this unexpected, everyday material.
2. Divide students into small groups and invite each group to brainstorm and sketch design options for their class sticky note wall. The design should be simple enough that it can be recreated on a wall and enable many people to contribute to it. Remind students as they sketch that the design will need to be made from squares.

Part Two
3. Have each group share their designs with the class. Help guide them to select components from each group to incorporate into a single design. Consider using one color for the background and many colors for a central shape, or selecting a pattern for the border of the design that many students can work on at a time.
4. Once the class settles on a design, it’s time to start adding the sticky notes. Divvy up the colors and sections of the design so that each group of students can contribute to it.
5. If the papers start to fall as you work, add pieces of clear tape to hold.
6. Ask students to step back periodically to view the work from afar and see how the squares come together to form a larger image.
Tips and Extensions

• Invite students from around the school to add to your sticky note artwork when it’s complete. New shapes and patterns can be added along the edges. You might also put out some pens and add a writing prompt, inviting students to respond to your prompt by writing on the notes.
• The sticky note mural will not last forever, so discuss with your class that this is a temporary installation. The papers will fall overtime, which can be considered part of the creative process. Tape can be used to help secure the paper as you work if needed. Consider documenting the work at different stages in photographs.
• Be sure to reuse the notes when the installation comes down, either using them in more art projects, for writing notes or by recycling them.
• Prompt students to compare the squares to pixels on a digital image. You might even research Pointillism and mosaic art for another point of comparison.

School-to-Home Connection

• Ask students to look around their home and see if they can create art out of unexpected material. Consider discarded items like toilet paper rolls, aluminum foil or bottle caps.
• Where can you find art in unexpected places in your neighborhood? The installation is similar to a mural that you might see on the side of a building. Can you find any murals or artworks in your community?

Vocabulary

Installation: An artwork that occupies a large space and is often only on view temporarily
Mural: A very large painting or artwork on a wall of a building or in a public space
Public art: Art that is on display in a community, city or neighborhood and is accessible to everyone for free
Collaborate: Working together towards a common goal
More about Philadelphia Airport Art
The Philadelphia International Airport started its Exhibitions Program in 1998 and has become an award-winning, nationally-recognized space for displaying art. Dedicated to showcasing the work of Philly artists, PHL Airport Art features more than twenty rotating art exhibitions in a range of media at a time, with the goal of engaging travelers and introducing them to the city's vibrant arts and culture scene.

More Classroom Activities
Visit PBS LearningMedia for more lesson plans like this inspired by The Infinite Art Hunt.

Children's Books with Related Themes
Check out these children's books online or at your local library to continue exploring the concepts in this episode.

Hey Wall: A Story of Art and Community by Susan Verde
A community comes together to transform an empty wall in the neighborhood into a vibrant mural.

A Perfect Square by Michael Hall
A square transforms itself into many different colorful pictures.

Pezzettino by Leo Lionni
Pezzettino is just “a little piece” and tries to find if he's a piece of something bigger. This mosaic-inspired picture book follows Pezzettino on his journey to understand where he belongs.