

CURRICULUM THEMES

Community, Social Issues, Digital Media

Grades 2 and 8

CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

CR8.2: Students will learn about and reflect on the work Cat Haines, whose artworks include social commentary on the treatment of transgender people in both the art world and society as a whole. They will be encouraged to think about what changes they would like to see in the world, and how they could express that through the medium of Minecraft.

CR2.1: Students will learn about how Saskatchewan artist Cat Haines artwork comments on the communities she is a part of. Cat's artwork comments on the treatment and inclusion of transgender people in both the art world, and society as a whole. They will also learn about how her artwork makes space for the transgender community.

CAT HAINES—MAKING A BETTER WORLD WITH MINECRAFT

Virtual worlds like Minecraft can make us think about the changes we'd like to see in the real world. Cat Haines' artworks in Minecraft explore a world where transgender people are given more control of their bodies and lives. She explores her identity and experiences as a trans woman and makes us think about how cisgender people often look at and talk about transgender people in harmful ways. Through altered in-game paintings and writing on note blocks in her Minecraft world, Cat shares many very personal stories. One of these is a loving story about her relationship with her wife, and how their relationship both changed and stayed the same as Cat transitioned. While her artwork can teach people a lot about being transgender, it more importantly makes a space where transgender people can feel comfortable, safe, and in control—something that is often missing in the real world.

Cat's Minecraft server for Ender Gallery <https://ender.gallery/> will be on display from May-June 2021. This artwork explores mature themes; like with all artworks, parents/teachers may want to explore the artwork first and think about ways of discussing it with children/students ahead of time.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Cat Haines is an artist from Regina, Saskatchewan, and the first person to take part in the MacKenzie's Ender Gallery, a digital artist residency in Minecraft. Cat's artworks are meant to be part of bigger discourses, or large discussions being had in the art world. She is challenging how the art world explores topics like gender and feminism.

Cat received her Masters of Arts in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Regina in 2021. She is an activist for the rights of 2SLGBTQIA people.

She has also played Minecraft for many years!



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Transgender people are those whose gender identity is different from the one they were given when they were born. Perhaps a doctor said, “it’s a boy!” when someone was born, but as they grow up that person knows inside that they are actually a girl. Or that person may even feel like neither “boy” or “girl” describes them entirely right. On the other hand, **Cisgender people** are those whose gender identity matches the one they were given at birth. Want to learn more about gender? Cat suggests starting with the website [Trans Student Educational Resource-Trans Student Educational Resources -TSER](#).

What changes would you like to see in the world? How would you reflect those changes in a Minecraft setting?

What are other things that we can do to help support safe and loving environments for all people? How do we create space for and care for others?

ACTIVITY

In Minecraft, there are many different types of blocks that represent different materials like rock, sand, dirt, wood, or even water and lava! Artist Cat Haines uses photos to help design her custom block textures. Design your own Minecraft block and consider how it could be used to make the world a safer, more caring place.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper block template
- Markers/pencil crayons/crayons
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Clear tape
- Optionally, a computer to make a digital version

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Think about what material you want to design a block for. Ask yourself questions like:

What is missing from the world of Minecraft?

What materials, designs, and colours would really allow you to show your personality when building things in the game?

If things were built from different materials, could it make the world a better place?

2. Pick out the colours you want to use in your block design.

3. Colour in each little square on your paper to make a new block design. Notice that there are going to be six sides to your block when you fold it up. Some Minecraft blocks are the same on every side, and some are not. Think about if you will repeat your pattern exactly on every side, or if it will change on different sides.

Interesting facts about the design of Minecraft blocks:

Standard blocks are meant to represent one square meter. Some special blocks, like slabs, are different sizes.

The texture on each side of the block is 16 x 16 pixels.

Blocks can have special effects like giving off light or particles. Can you think of a way to represent a special effect in your block design?

4. Cut out your block, and fold along the dark lines. Put glue on the tabs and use them to connect the sides of your block together. You may want to use clear tape to help keep your block together too.

Want to take this even further? There are lots of tools for designing your own blocks and adding them to Minecraft!

Easy designer (all block sides are the same): <https://www.tynker.com/minecraft/creator/blocks/>

Advanced block designer: <https://codecrafted.net/blockdesigner>

