

## AT-HOME ART PROJECT: Painting without a Paintbrush

### INSTRUCTIONS



#### INSPIRATION ARTIST:

**Red Hong Yi (1987, Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia)**

Fun fact: One of Red Hong Yi's best friends gave her the nickname 'Red', because her surname "Hong" sounds like the word 'red' in Chinese.

Red Hong Yi's art career began in 2012 with an unexpected twist- a video of her painting a portrait of NBA basketball star Yao Ming using the basketball as the paintbrush! It went viral! Watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naQPxNyrWc>

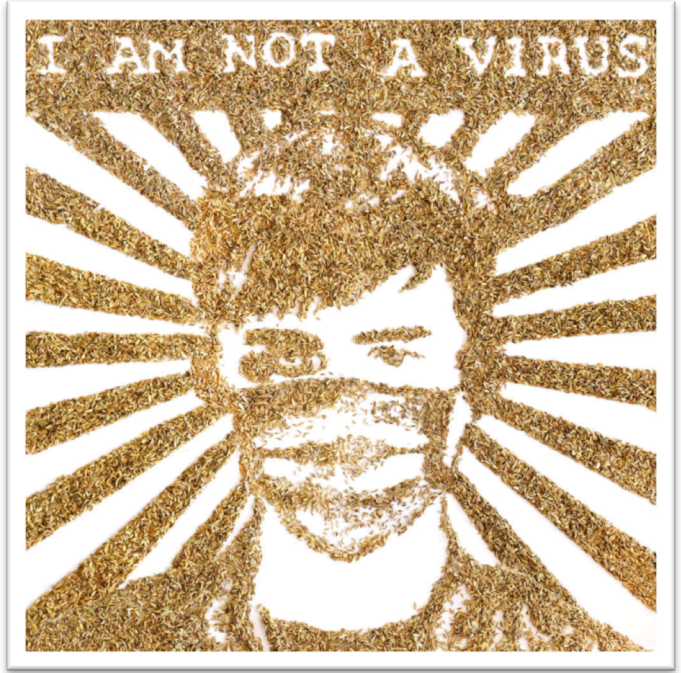
At the time she was working as a professional architect, but after over 1 million viewers watched her video, she was inspired to give the art profession a try. She had always loved art but had studied architecture and thought that would be her career path.

Instead she used what she had learned to forge a new career with a different and innovative approach: "In the past, I used acrylics, watercolors and crayons. But I couldn't go back to traditional methods after studying architecture. Architecture taught me to work around scale and different materials. I just wanted to build and make things and explore what I can do with raw materials."

Since becoming, as Red says, an artist "who paints without a paintbrush", she traverses the globe to do commissions and exhibitions. Some of her world-famous feats include creating action star Jackie Chan's portrait using 64,000 chopsticks, painting Taiwanese singer Jay Chou's face using coffee cup stains and assembling an image of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei using 20,000 sunflower seeds.

Like all of us, Red's life has been touched by the COVID epidemic, and she has created a series of artworks during this time, *#Iamnotavirus*. She says, "*#Iamnotavirus* is a series of 10 artworks featuring portraits of 10 Asian personalities rendered in materials I found in my house during the coronavirus lockdown. I chose portraits of racial-attack victims and of voices that have stood up during this time." Red says, "I hope this series has inspired you to stand up against racial prejudice and intolerant attitudes, and to want to make a difference in combatting racism in your community." The artworks are made using: matcha leaves, cake sprinkles, fennel seeds, purple rice, coffee powder, goji berries, peppercorns, chili flakes, eggshells, and pink Himalayan sea salt.

# LESSON PLAN



*#IAMNOTAVIRUS, 2020*



*SUNFLOWER SEEDS DI ER, A TRIBUTE TO AI WEIWEI*



*UNTITLED (TIGER WITH TEA LEAVES)*

## **MATERIALS NEEDED FROM HOME:**

- Blank Paper (Any color, any size)
- Small Found Materials from your Home (buttons, paper clips, pennies, cake sprinkles, etc.)
- Glue stick or glue bottle (optional)

**ART PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Participants will create a work of art inspired by Red Hong Yi’s artworks using materials from home as the “paint” on their “painting”. Artists will layer found materials from home onto paper creating a work of art representing something that brings them comfort, or makes them happy, as their subject matter.

## **PROMPT QUESTIONS:**

1. What materials will you collect at home to use in your artwork? Have you ever seen art made from these materials before?
2. How have you been creative during the pandemic? Have you had to do things differently, think about things with new approaches or problem solve in a new way?
3. Do you think art has to be permanent to be considered art? What do you think of art that only lasts for a few minutes, a few hours, or a few days?

## **ART MAKING PROCESS:**

### **Step 1:**

Look around your home and gather small items that you can use to create your artwork. Some examples are: buttons, paper clips, pennies, cake sprinkles, nails or screws, whatever you have plenty of and that you can experiment with. Set up the paper that you will be using as the surface for your artwork on a flat table or countertop so that your objects will not roll around when you are setting them in place.

Take a moment to think about what has brought you comfort or joy during the time of the pandemic. It could be something in your home, it could be a place where you feel happiest, it could be your pet snuggling you, something that has become important to you. Once you have an idea, think about an image that goes with it, or represents it.

### **Step 2:**

Beginning the visual art process: Use your small found objects and arrange them onto your paper to create lines, shapes and areas of color. Move them around in different ways to try to represent the image that best represents your idea. Lay as many or as few objects as you choose onto the paper. Don’t worry about trying to make something look detailed or realistic- you are creating an “impression”, an idea of an image. Experiment with different images using the variety of found materials that you have.

Options: Use all the same material but sort some of it into specific colors (FIG.1). Use different materials to represent different parts of your image, filling in some areas and leaving others showing the paper (FIG.2). Use materials of different colors to create larger areas of color within your artwork (FIG.3). The possibilities are endless, be creative!

### **Step 3:**

Once you have created an image that you like, you have several options:

1. You can choose to take a photo of it, to have a keepsake and share.
2. If you have glue you can use it to glue the objects onto your paper, to make your artwork more permanent.

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3. You can leave it out for a while for other family members to see and then you can put away the found materials and use your paper for another art project. (Many artists, including Red Hong Yi create “temporary” artworks. They exist for a short time only per the artist’s choice.)

### EXTRA FUN:

- Come up with a “themed” series of images you create out of different found objects. For example: “My favorite things”, “My pets”, “My favorite foods”, etc.
- Take photos of all your works of art, print them out and hang them up as though they are a series of prints in an art gallery.
- If you have large posterboard you can create art with larger found materials- have fun experimenting!

### POST PROMPT QUESTIONS:

1. How did you like “painting” without “paint”?
2. What other objects could you use in the future to create art in this style? How can you connect materials to images? (Example: using pumpkin seeds to create an image of a pumpkin.)
3. What did you learn from creating this work of art?

### EXAMPLES:



FIG. 1

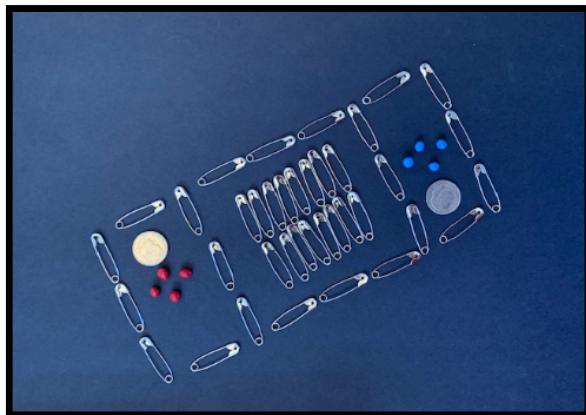


FIG. 2



FIG. 3

### SOURCES:

- <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/yao-ming-painting-catapulted-her-to-fame>  
<http://redhongyi.com/about/#bio>