

Activity: Creative Expression Goal: Psychological/Emotional Populations: Youth, Seniors

TH Activity Plan – Flower Punk

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Materials

For details on materials refer to Notes or Other Considerations section

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION: Beauty can be appreciated at all stages of a life cycle, be it human or plant. This session connects participants to nature's flow & to fellow humans, using inspiration by the artistry of floral sculptor, [Azuma Makoto](#).

THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

Cognitive/Intellectual: Learn new information about an unusual art form & an admired artist; follow multi-step directions; apply free-form creativity to visual cues; undertake experimentation with photography

Physical: Enhance range of motion, small & large motor skills & stamina

Psychological/Emotional: Increase self-esteem; build sense of awe through creativity & self-expression; enhance sense of inclusion, potentially entering flow state & lowering rumination/anxiety

Sensory: Stimulate all senses by manipulating a variety of natural materials

Social: Enhance sense of camaraderie through cooperation & sharing of finished products; increase social inclusion; practice altruism

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

- 1. Pre-Session Preparation:** Place any fresh material into buckets of water. Lay out dried material on tables. Have available a variety of can sizes for participants to choose from (smooth any sharp edges ahead of time). Place holding material (floral foam or small stones) in buckets accessible to participants for filling their cans.
2. Facilitator begins session by introducing [Azuma Makoto](#) while showing photographs (found on any digital search) and/or [videos](#) of his floral sculptures.
3. Have participants select a container of their choice. The containers can either be prepared in advance by filling them with the holding material or, if suitable for the group, participants can fill their selected container themselves.
4. Have participants select from the plant or natural material laid out.
5. Invite participants to include an intention as they begin placing material into their container and creating their "botanical sculptures".
6. After participants build their botanical sculptures, encourage them to photograph their designs against different backgrounds, observing how each background affects the appearance or mood of their piece. Suggest that they experiment with the flashlight or camera flash options on their phones to create shadow, contrast, vibrancy, tone, etc.
7. Conclude session by pointing out to participants that their design is a living, evolving work of art. Material may be added at any time. Decayed pieces should be removed, & holding material should dry out or be rehydrated if adding fresh material. Encourage participants to notice & consider adding dried grasses or seed heads as fall & winter transforms plant material into dried "sculptures."

One of the many benefits of having participants photograph their creations is that they can send their photos as gifts of intention (practicing altruism) & connect to the world in true “punk spirit.”

APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS: This activity was originally designed for community college students (though it can be applied to all youth and adults) to mitigate anxiety disorders and depression. Also, elders experiencing social isolation and as a community-building activity.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: **Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.** Edges of tin cans should be smoothed. If any participants tend to put materials in their mouths, consider avoiding floral foam and small stones.

NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Materials:

- Variety of living and dried plant material, including unconventional materials such as seaweed, and altered items (e.g. spray-painted pine branches in silver)
- Discarded tin cans (any sharp edges should be smoothed). This material offers a unique and eco-friendly/recycling vibe to the design
- Material for decorating container if desired (colored paper, newspaper, markers, scissors, tape, etc.)
- Holding material that will support flower stems, such as floral foam or stones
- Two photography “stations”- colored backgrounds (use bed sheets, colored paper, etc. to produce a light background and a dark one), stool or table, flashlight
- Watering can, if using fresh material
- Electronic device(s) to display photographs of Azuma Makoto’s work if desired, and to take photos participants’ creations. A Polaroid camera would be fun as well.

This was particularly popular and creative activity among college students. Breaking it into two separate sessions with the first being a materials-gathering and prepping (eg. spray-painting) event could enhance the creative quality of this activity.

A note on Azuma Makoto that would be beneficial to mention during the session: Makoto is a Japanese botanical sculptor who was particularly moved by Japanese monks that blessed flowers with prayers and intentions, then distributed them to those affected by a disaster. He describes this act of entrusting prayers to the flowers, and “arranging them even in the face of disaster,” as embodying a “punk spirit.” Makoto draws vitality and beauty in something that is always moving towards death and decay. This process of decay is depicted in photographs and [videos](#), including arrangements that have been sent up into space, to the depths of the ocean floor, and encased in ice.

REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Azumamakoto.com. (2025). [News](#). Azumamakoto.com.

Japan House London. (n.d.). [Life and works of Japanese flower artist Azuma Makoto](#). Japanhouselondon.uk.

Klayman, A. (2019). [Flower punk \(2019\) – Trailer](#). [YouTube].

Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.