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Visiting American Artist Holds Workshop in Nanyuki

The second of five Mixed Media and Environmental Painting Workshops given by visiting American artist Jason Corder was held at Kalalu Primary School, near Nanyuki. The workshop had a total of twenty participants, aged 12-18, both boys and girls. They worked on chip boards, first covering them with a layer of either wood ash or red earth. They then added collage elements. Many of the students had brought in items from home to glue onto their paintings and in this case, these items included dried beans, peas and corn kernels.

Prior to the painting process, the students did drawing exercises in sketchbooks. In these exercises Jason challenged the children to do 5-second drawings and to do drawings with their eyes closed or with their opposite hand. Jason asks the students to do this to free them up and to get them to explore their "sixth sense," a vital part of the creative process.

Other collage elements included items literally found on the ground around the school, such as plant fibre, bits of old clothes, paper detritus etc. Along with the wood ash and earth, these "environmental" materials are used to show the students the availability of free and found materials and to emphasize the importance of protecting the environment.

By participating in this workshop, the student artists gained a deeper understanding of an American-Kenyan connection, of protecting the environment, and of their own creative abilities.

