

LESSON PLAN

ART AND NATURE SITE SPECIFIC SCULPTURE

An Education Resource to support
the MAC Land Art challenge



Explore with us how artists
use the natural environment
to make artworks...

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE:

Supports the delivery of the Visual Arts Years 7–10 Syllabus - Board of Studies NSW outcomes. Teachers can decide how much time and weight is given to each task.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

Students DISCOVER three works from the Lake Macquarie City Council Urban and Public Art Collection that are inspired by nature. The teacher can lead a class discussion about what artists consider when planning their site-specific outdoor sculpture. Students EXPLORE the history of Land Art and Environmental Artists, discovering mediums and concepts used in this movement. They can choose sites and create plans for their own site-specific works. In teams, students create an art installation inspired by nature and the Land Art Movement on school grounds.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Create a proposal to present to potential stakeholders such as an architectural firm or local council. It could be a permanent sculpture or a temporary art installation for a festival.

✓ TASKS:

- Discover:** Three public site-specific sculptures inspired by nature.
- Explore:** The Land Art Movement
- Create:** A land art installation outside and photograph the artwork
- Share:** the photos with us #MACLandArt2022
- Design:** Create a proposal for a site-specific sculpture or installation.
- Pitch:** A short oral prestation of the design and concept of your site-specific artwork.

Image (right): Jamie North. Succession (detail) 2016. cement, steel, steel slag, coal ash, oyster shell, organic matter 450 x 90cm (diam.). On loan, courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney © the Jamie North, licenced by Viscopy

DISCOVER

Succession BY JAMIE NORTH

This monumental sculpture uses concrete forms that evoke the industrial heritage of this region and the artist's family history. You can see it in the sculpture park at MAC, Museum of Art and Sculpture.



“When I first started making the biological sculpture, I was thinking about the way in which our native Port Jackson fig (Ficus rubiginosa) sprouts from the cracks of building mortar... This is part of the ecology of our city that has adapted to the rupture of colonisation, and I wanted to try and interpret this phenomenon in a sculptural form. For me, there is something subversive about the Ficus and how it exploits the built structures of our city.”

North quoted by CHRISTIAN HARIMANOW in GQ 'Biennale Of Sydney Artist Spotlight: Jamie North' 2016



Video link: [Jamie North - Succession 2016 - YouTube](#)



DISCOVER

Ghost by Janet Laurence

This sculpture was inspired by the Eucalyptus Citriodora that stood nearby until 2007. Layered glass imprinted with the tree's image and mirror-like steel induce a memory of the tree and echo the immediate environment. See it at MAC.



"While my practice is based on deeply held convictions about the environment and our relationship to it – and I want the work to have a politically environmental voice – I think it's important that viewers make their own journey and experience it as a space of reflection and interpretation."

Laurence quoted by Felicity Fenner in 'A hospital for plants: the Healing Art of Janet Laurence', Art and Australia, Volume 40, Spring, 2010



DISCOVER

Norfolk by
Kelly-Ann Lees

This sculpture references the seed cones dropped by the Norfolk Island pines growing in the Caves Beach area. These welded steel pine cones are designed to rust and change over time, responding to the surrounding environment. Lees practice is focused on drawing attention to the beauty of nature.



"All my work is strongly influenced by the objects that I find. Their creation is a direct response to form."

Lees quoted Home: - Sculpture by the Sea 2008

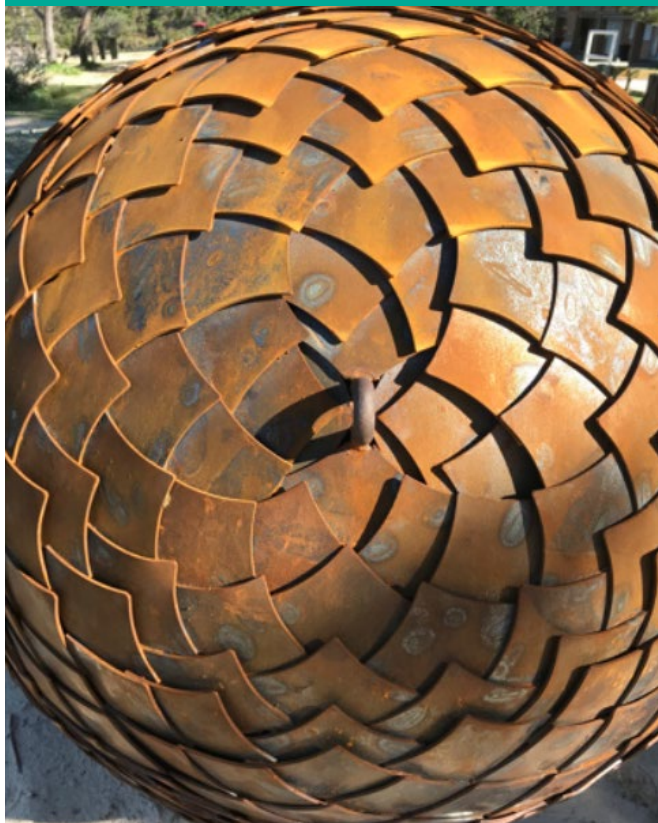
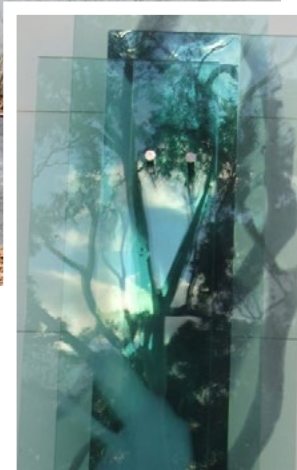


Image (above): Janet Laurence *Ghost*, 2009 glass, stainless steel, concrete approx. 500 x 140 x 80cm collection Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery supported by Arts NSW and Lake Macquarie Art Gallery Society © the artist

LAND ART

Land art or earth art is art that is made directly in the landscape, sculpting the land itself into earthworks or making structures in the landscape using natural materials such as rocks or twigs.

Land art was part of the wider conceptual art movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

Land art, which is also known as earth art, was usually documented in artworks using photographs and maps which the artist could exhibit in a gallery. Land artists also made land art in the gallery by bringing in material from the landscape and using it to create installations. This is a practice that some artist still use today. Here are a few key artist to explore:

Ugo Rondinone's *Seven Magic Mountains* 2016, consists of thirty-three boulders weighing from 20,000 pounds to 25 tons, stacked into seven towers. They form totemic figures 30 feet to 35 feet tall. They are meant to evoke contrast and continuity from nature to culture, hence their bright colours, which are typical of Rondinone's sculptures



[Learn more: Ugo Rondinone's Seven Magic Mountains art installation in Las Vegas.](#)

Jim Denevan is an artist, chef, and founder of Outstanding in the Field. Through his land art, Denevan interacts with the earth's topography to create works of varying scale in sand, earth, and ice. These pieces range from smaller beach compositions to large land works the size of a city. Each is ephemeral in nature, disappearing with the tides, the winds, the seasonal progressions.

[Learn more: 2011 Australia: Jim Denevan](#)

Richard Long is a prominent English sculptor and practitioner of Land Art. His work derives inspiration from personal experience, geographic history, and plant life. Employing natural materials—ranging from water, rocks, and mud.

[Learn more: SCULPTURES GALLERY \(richardlong.org\)](#)

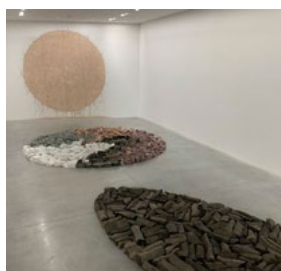


Image (above): Richard Long INSTALLATION AT MUSEUM LEUVEN, BELGIUM 2021

EXTENSION:

Explore the practice of Andy Goldsworthy:



[Andy Goldsworthy: 'We share a connection with stone' – TateShots | Tate](#)

LESSON PLAN

- 1 Lees, Laurence, and North's works are examples of site-specific art. Ask students where they have seen works of sculpture outside. Based on their observations, discuss what elements they think a location should have in order for it to house a large sculpture.
- 2 Ask students to discuss suitable locations for a sculpture, such as a green corner of the schoolyard or a local beach.
- 3 Divide students into teams. Instruct teams to search for a location that they are already familiar with, and where they can envision a large-scale sculptural installation. Students should keep in mind the discussion at the beginning of class about locations where they have seen such sculptures. Point out that an outdoor space (as with the MAC sculpture park) has environmental and architectural factors that will affect the look and feel of the sculpture project they propose. For example, are the materials weatherproof? Is the work meant to be permanent, ephemeral, or change over time like North and Lees works?
- 4 Once teams have chosen their locations, have each take three photographs of the site from different vantage points. These photographs will allow each team to envision its sculpture from multiple angles—just as the audience would experience the sculpture or installation if it was installed at the site.
- 5 Have each team brainstorm an idea for a sculpture that could be installed in the chosen space. Have students consider some of the following:
 - What do you notice about the chosen site?
 - How is the site used and who uses it? How will this inform what type of sculpture you will create and where it will be placed?
 - Do you want to create a sculpture that compliments or contrasts with the site?
 - Which natural materials are at the site for inspiration?
- 6 After the groups discuss their chosen sites and possibilities for sculptures, have each student sketch his or her own ideas. Have each team decide which of the two-dimensional sketches will transfer best into a three-dimensional object. Groups should discuss the location, materials, and structure of the proposed sculptures/installations as described in each of the sketches to help them choose the most appropriate one.
- 7 Tell students they will use natural found objects to create an ephemeral installation in the schoolyard. Students should collect any material they think they can use to construct their artwork. The finished installation can be photographed and documented.

HOMEWORK TASK:

CREATE a natural land artwork outdoors, using found, natural materials such as sticks and stones, leaves and flowers, sand and seaweed, anything you can find.

It could be your front yard, the lake's edge, a park or the beach.

PHOTOGRAPH your amazing artwork.
SHARE #MACLandArt2022

LEAVE your artwork where it is for others to discover.

 **ART
CHALLENGE**

GLOSSARY OF ART TERMS:

LAND ART is made directly in the landscape, sculpting the land or making structures in the landscape using natural materials such as rocks or twigs.

EARTH ART is the same thing.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART addresses issues relating to the natural and urban environment.

INSTALLATION ART is usually large-scale, mixed media constructions, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period of time.

MIXED MEDIA refers to a variety of materials.

EPHEMERAL ARTWORKS are temporary, lasting a short time. Ephemeral artworks are usually documented using photographs. Sometimes artists bring the materials into the gallery and create an Installation

SITE SPECIFIC SCULPTURE refers to a work of art designed specifically for a particular location and that has an interrelationship with the location

FOUND OBJECT A found object is a natural or man-made object, or fragment of an object, that is found (or sometimes bought) by an artist and kept because of some intrinsic interest the artist sees in it.

LESSON PLAN (CONTINUED...)

- 8 These installations can inspire the students' final plans. Have each student write a proposal, using persuasive language, to an architectural firm, local council, or grant committees. The goal is to win a commission to create the full-sized sculpture in the proposed environment.
- 9 Have each team prepare a presentation for the class. Team members should present their drawn plans and site photographs as if they are convincing a potential patron to fund the project. remind the students to include why the sculpture is specific to that site conceptually.
- 10 Discuss the following questions about each team's project in a class critique:
 - What were the challenges and successes of working with the space that you chose, and with developing a three-dimensional model of your sculpture?
 - What was the deciding point for your group's choice of that location?
 - How were the designs inspired or influenced by the space you picked?
 - How do you think the space would change if your sculpture was completed and installed in that location? How would it be used differently by the visitors to that location?
 - How did your LAND ART installation/sculpture influence your final design?

RESOURCES:

[Edge of the Trees - Janet Laurence](#)

[Edge of the trees | Sydney Living Museums](#)

[Janet Laurence: After Nature — Art Guide Australia](#)

[2014 A case study Janet Laurence](#)

[Jamie North](#)

[Biennale Of Sydney Artist Spotlight: Jamie North - GQ](#)

[Ephemeral Sculptures | Martin Hill - Environmental Artist \(martin-hill.com\)](#)

[The Colossal Land Art of Jim Denevan - TwistedSifter](#)

OUTCOMES:

Stage 4 - A student:

- 4.1 uses a range of strategies to explore different artmaking conventions and procedures to make artworks
- 4.7 explores aspects of practice in critical and historical interpretations of art
- 4.8 explores the function of and relationships between the artist - artwork - world - audience

Stage 5 - A student:

- 5.1 develops range and autonomy in selecting and applying visual arts conventions and procedures to make artworks
- 5.7 applies their understanding of aspects of practice to critical and historical interpretations of art
- 5.8 uses their understanding of the function of and relationships between artist - artwork - world - audience in critical and historical interpretations of art

Life skills outcomes - A student:

- LS.1 experiences a variety of artmaking activities
- LS 3 explores the function of a variety of artists and audiences