

## Module 4: Additional Teachers Notes: Sculpture and Installation

### **These Teachers' Notes are for use with Tate Tools Module 4 – Sculpture and Installation.**

You can print out these Teachers' Notes to use alongside the PowerPoint. The PowerPoint will include a section with brief bullet points to remind you of the main activities and discussion elements for each slide.

#### **Slide 1: Sculpture and Installation**

Set up the PowerPoint to this title page to start the lesson.

This module will introduce students to the expanded fields of sculpture and installation and develop their confidence in thinking and talking about these media, using a range of skills and strategies for learning, including Tate's 'Ways of Looking', which have been developed through Tate Tools Modules 1-3.

Taking traditional bronze-cast work as a starting point, students will explore the changing role of sculpture through investigation into materials and techniques, the permanence or temporary nature of sculpture, and what makes a work 'site-specific'. Using exciting and challenging works, this module goes on to look at installation art, inviting students to discuss and explore how artists make use of space and unusual materials in order to convey meaning.

#### **Slide 2: What is sculpture?**

##### 1. Discussion: What is sculpture?

Sculpture can be found in many forms and made from a diverse, and often unexpected, range of materials. At the start of the twentieth century, more traditional media and techniques were used, such as bronze casting or stone carving. Today, artists use anything to make sculpture, including everyday found objects and light and sound, and they often use manufacturing processes in making their work.

The traditional definition of sculpture is taken to be 3D work which can be seen 'in the round' or in relief, created using materials shaped primarily by the artist. Sculpture needs to be experienced in the round and therefore demands that we walk around it and view it from different angles: from each side, from above, from below or through the middle. This more physical relationship brings questions to mind as we look.

As sculpture evolved, by the 1970s artists had begun to use sound and light in their work, causing the definition of sculpture to expand beyond physical materials.

Discuss with your group about what they think sculpture is and how it is made. Discussion should develop out of their own experience of using different processes and techniques in creating their own sculptures, as well as from sculptures that they have seen. Ask them to name as many kinds of materials and processes as possible that they think a sculptor might use.

Some questions to ask about sculpture include:

- What do you think sculpture can look like?
- How big or small can it be?
- What kinds of shapes and textures can make up a sculpture?
- What can it be made of?
- How can it be made?
- What can it be about?
- What sculptures can you think of?
- Where can sculpture be found?
- How can it be displayed?
- Who can create a sculpture?

The sculpture shown on this slide is *Pelagos* (1946) by Barbara Hepworth, who used wood and strings to create the piece.

### **Slide 3: Looking at sculpture**

- Discussion: What questions can we ask when looking at sculpture?
- Activity: Class sculptures

#### 1. Discussion: What questions can we ask when looking at sculpture?

Look at the two sculptures pictured here – *The Kiss* (1901-4) by Auguste Rodin and *Your Are Driving a Volvo* (1996) by Julian Opie. What are the similarities and differences? Questions to ask:

- What do you think it might be about?
- What is your first one-word response?
- How does it make you feel?
- How do you think it was made? What materials do you think were used?
- What is it made of? Do you know of any artists who work in this medium today?
- What tools do you think the artist used? What techniques?
- When do you think it was made?
- Is it big or small? Is it the size of something in your house? Make some comparisons with familiar objects.
- What kinds of shapes and textures make up the sculpture?
- How would this sculpture look in a different material, size, or colour?
- Is there a front and a back?
- Are you meant to look at it from different angles?
- Is it on a plinth or on the floor?
- Is it figurative (based on the human figure) or abstract (about colour, shape and form)?

#### 2. Activity: Class sculptures

- As a class, choose a subject or theme and look up some texts, objects and images that relate to that theme.

- Use these as a starting point to create a sculpture or sculptures with whatever materials you like.
- In groups, photograph your work from a variety of different angles, on different surfaces and under different light.
- Where will you create your sculptures? Is the size determined by the space you are working in?
- Play around with the placement of your sculptures. Will you display them on a table, on a shelf or on the floor? Can your sculpture exist on the floor or do you need a level to support it?
- If this sculpture could dance what music would it dance to and how would it move? Make up a movement or dance that expresses your sculpture, or pick a piece of music that might go with it.

#### **Slide 4: Materials and techniques in sculpture**

- Discussion: What materials and techniques can be used in sculpture?
- Activity: Bring in your own materials

##### 1. Discussion: What materials and techniques can be used in sculpture?

Consider how different materials can give different effects and qualities. Each material has its own individual properties and associative qualities, and artists think carefully when choosing a material to use.

Think of different materials that might be used. What are their qualities? What can you do with these qualities? How can you move or change the material? What tools might you need to use? Think of as many action words as you can to describe how artists might work with material to make sculpture. Write them in a list.

The two works shown on this slide are *Sir Henry Tate* (exh. 1898) by Sir Thomas Brock and *In the House of My Father* (1996-7) by Donald Rodney. *Sir Henry Tate* is a traditional bronze-cast bust, while *In the House of My Father* is a sculpture made of the artist's skin. It is shown in photograph form because the material is very fragile.

##### 2. Activity: Bring in your own materials

- Have the class bring in samples of many different sculptural materials, such as a stone, plaster, china, glass, a piece of metal, plastic or Perspex, feathers, an alabaster egg, pieces of different kinds of wood etc.
- More recent sculptures such as *In the House of My Father* by Donald Rodney have used more unusual materials. Get the group to collect some unusual items like found objects, household objects, chocolate, mirrors, coloured powder etc.
- Explore the materials with your hands as well as your eyes. How do they feel? Are they warm or cold? What is the texture? What do they smell like? Do they have a sound?
- How fragile are the materials? Why do you think that in the gallery you are asked not to touch works of art?

- Make a list of words that you come up with when examining the different materials.
- Compare and draw the patterns of two objects. Think about how you might draw attention to these patterns if you were making a sculpture.
- Use plasticine to take imprints of some of the materials you have brought in. Do they show the material's texture? Can you think of how the imprinting process might relate to the bronze bust of *Sir Henry Tate*?

## **Slide 5: Figurative and abstract sculpture**

- Discussion: Differences between figurative and abstract
- Activity: Making figurative sculpture
- Activity: Making abstract sculpture

### 1. Discussion: Differences between figurative and abstract

The two pieces shown here – *Johanaan* (1936) by Ronald Moody and *Early One Morning* (1962) by Anthony Caro – have very different ways of making meaning. *Johanaan* represents a human form (figurative sculpture), while *Early One Morning* is concerned primarily with the object in its own right, the material it is made from and formal elements such as shape and composition (abstract sculpture).

Discuss with your class what they can see as differences and similarities between figurative and abstract sculpture. Some questions might be:

- What parts of the body can you identify?
- Are the shapes soft or hard?
- Do the shapes remind you of anything other than people?
- Does the whole body have to be represented or only parts?
- How do the materials relate to one another?
- How do the shapes relate to one another?
- How does the artist create pattern and shape out of the materials?
- Does an abstract sculpture sometimes remind you of something?
- Can the colours influence how a piece of abstract sculpture is viewed? Would it make a difference if it were a different colour?
- Do you think a sculpture can be made by a whole team of people?
- Can a sculpture be figurative and abstract at the same time?

### 2. Activity: Making figurative sculpture

- Get into pairs and have one person be the sculptor and one person be the model. Have the model strike a pose. Using plasticine or clay, the sculptor can try to capture the essence of the shape in front of them.
- Build up the form by adding lumps of clay or plasticine. How is the weight distributed? Explore what the model might be feeling and how this is conveyed in their posture, shape, or form.

### 3. Activity: Making abstract sculpture

- Cut some basic shapes out of card or another stiff material. Arrange these objects in different ways. Now change the colour of one of the cards. What difference does this make?
- Create a number of abstract sculptures by using something stiff like card. Create shapes that interest and excite you. Make slots in the card or use glue. Arrange your sculpture so that there is an element of surprise. Put the shapes together until it feels right.
- Why have you chosen these shapes? How do they make you feel? How did you decide what colours your work would be?

## **Slide 6: Materials and meanings in sculpture**

- Discussion: Materials and meanings in sculpture
- Activity: Found object sculpture

### 1. Discussion: Meanings and themes in sculpture

This slide shows Tony Cragg's found object piece called *Britain Seen from the North* (1981).

In *Britain Seen from the North*, Tony Cragg has used found objects and arranged them in a certain way to make a relief sculpture on a wall.

Questions for discussion:

- What objects have been used?
- How are they arranged? Can you recognize the shapes?
- What is the relationship of the parts to the whole shape?
- What meanings do you think the objects have?
- What do you think the title means?
- This work of art was made at a time when people in Britain were unhappy about unemployment in factories and mines, mostly in the North. How does this piece show this unhappiness?

### 2. Activity: Found object sculpture

- When creating a sculpture, you can use any materials or any objects. Think about a subject that is important to you and think about some objects that might represent this theme.
- As a class, collect found objects from anywhere to make a sculpture about this theme.
- How do the materials make you feel? What do the materials make you think of? What do you associate with these materials?
- Construct a sculpture using these found objects.
- If you paint your sculpture, what colours will you use? What will you call it?

## **Slide 7: Meanings and themes in sculpture**

- Discussion: Meanings and themes in sculpture
- Activity: Changing meanings

## 1. Discussion: Meanings and themes in sculpture

This slide shows Mona Hatoum's piece *Untitled (Wheelchair)* (1998) it is made of stainless steel and rubber.

Questions for discussion:

- How is it different from most wheelchairs?
- Is it comfortable? Is it warm? Can it be moved?
- Can the person who uses the chair be independent? Can someone help the wheelchair user?
- Why do you think the artist has made it so difficult an object to use? Is it for practical use or is it to make a statement?
- What is the statement or message from the artist about disability, support and power?
- How would you feel sitting in the chair or pushing the chair?

## 2. Activity: Changing meanings

- Think about the chair that you sit in most of the time. Write down the words that you would use to describe it on the left-hand side of a piece of paper. On the right-hand side write the opposite meaning of those words.
- Now try and adapt your chair so that it reflects your new bank of opposite words. For example, if your seat was hard, try and make your seat soft. How did you do it?
- How does the change in your chair affect its use and your feelings towards it? Can anyone else make use of your chair? Can they sit on it too? Can they lean on it? Can they move it?

## **Slide 8: Site-specific sculpture**

- Discussion: Site-specific sculpture
- Activity: Sculptures and environment
- Watch Video: Children in Barbara Hepworth's Garden

## 1. Discussion: Site-specific sculpture

This sculpture, called *Conversation with Magic Stones* (1973), is sited in the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden where the sculptor Barbara Hepworth lived and worked from 1952 to her death in 1975. It is now open to the public where you can view not only finished pieces sited in the garden, like this one, but also small studio pieces, workshops and unfinished carvings.

This is a multi-part sculpture cast in bronze from an original plaster. It has been placed in the garden by the artist with very careful consideration for the relationship between the sculpture and the garden itself.

As a multi-part sculpture the spaces in between are as important as the individual elements. There is a balance and harmony between each of the 'figures' and 'stones' (as Hepworth called them) as well as between them and the environment.

Thoughts for discussion:

- How do you think natural surroundings can influence our interpretation of a sculpture?
- Look at the title of the piece. How does the word 'conversation' give meaning to the piece? What does the phrase 'magic stones' make you think of? Can you think of any other groups of 'magic stones'?
- What are the differences and similarities between the individual elements? How do they interact with each other? How does the spacing of the group balance the sculpture? The three 'figures' are similar but the three 'stones' are the same – just placed on different angles.
- What do the tall 'figures' remind you of? They could be interpreted as people or totems and might remind us of the Easter Island faces. How do you think our own experiences and knowledge influence the interpretation of abstract art works?
- There is more than one version of this sculpture and they are in different locations. Why do you think an artist would produce several copies of a single idea?

## 2. Activity: Sculptures and environment

- As a class, plan a multi-part sculpture within its own environment, using a group of abstract shapes that balance together as a whole. Why did you choose these shapes? Did you take inspiration from the environment you live in, like Hepworth did, or did you choose your shapes for a different reason?
- Create the environment first. Using a cardboard box with a base and three sides, paint the interior to create a context for your sculpture. Use first-hand experiences or knowledge so your piece is personal to you. What colours will you use for your environment? Why?
- Now create a grouping of three-dimensional forms using a garden-wire and paper-tape armature and covering with ModRoc. When the forms are dried paint them to create the patina that relates to the environment you have produced.
- Consider the sculpture as a whole. How will the individual parts sit together? How will they relate to each other without any of them being more or less important than the others?
- Often Hepworth's titles were open to many different readings. As a class, give your work a title. Why did you use that title?

## 3. Watch video of the Barbara Hepworth Garden

With the class, watch the video of Kerry Rice, Education Officer at Tate St Ives, talking about some of the sculptures in the Barbara Hepworth Garden. In the first video clip, she introduces us to the Museum garden and Barbara Hepworth's workshop; In the second clip we are invited to explore the garden; The third clip focuses on two of the sculptures in the garden, *Four Square Walk Through* (1966) and *River Form* (1965).

- Can you see how Hepworth carefully considered the relationship between the sculptures and the garden?

## **Slide 9:**

Video: A tour through the Barbara Hepworth Museum garden

## **Slide 10:**

Video: A tour through the Barbara Hepworth Museum garden

## **Slide 11:**

Video: A tour through the Barbara Hepworth Museum garden

## **Slide 12: What is installation art?**

- Discussion: What is installation art?
- Discussion: What questions can we ask when looking at installations?

### 1. Discussion: What is installation art?

With the class, discuss what they think the term 'installation' means. How do they think installation art might differ from sculpture?

### 2. Discussion: What questions can we ask when looking at installations?

Installation art depends on the presence of the spectator and is created for a specific space. Art works of this kind, more often indoors than outdoors, use the particular qualities of that space in order to evoke associations, feelings and thoughts.

Questions to ask about installation:

- What materials have been used by the artist?
- Can you see what it has been made from, and the processes involved?
- What has the artist done to the materials?
- How many parts is it made of?
- How do the materials affect its meaning or your response to it?
- How is the installation arranged?
- How does the installation use the space (light, sound, architecture, human interaction)?
- What is your relationship to it?
- How is our relationship to it affected by its presence in our space?
- How is it displayed?
- How does it make us feel about how we move in relation to it?

The work shown on this slide is *Scrapheap Services* (1995) by Michael Landy.

## **Slide 13: Looking at installations**

- Discussion: Pharmacy
- Activity: Class installation

### 1. Discussion: Pharmacy

This slide shows the work *Pharmacy* (1992) by Damien Hirst. Hirst has created a room-size 'pharmacy' with bottles, boxes and other items that might be found in a real

pharmacy. You can use the 360-degree view to look at the work as if you are in the room.

- What questions does this work make you ask?
- Look at the details. What can you see?
- How does the work make you feel?
- What subjects do you think Hirst is trying to make us think about? Why?
- How do you think the piece was made?

## 2. Activity: Class installation

- As a class, collect objects that are similar either in appearance, use, or theme.
- Find or create a location for your work and make an installation using these objects, putting them into some kind of order or pattern. How do you want people to view your work? Do you want them to pass through it? Touch it?
- Draw, photograph or film the installation from a number of different angles. You could make a panoramic recording.
- When you are done, write a caption to accompany your work.

## **Slide 14: Materials and meanings in installation art**

- Discussion: Michael Landy: Semi-Detached
- Video: The making of Semi-Detached
- Activity: Inside/Outside

### 1. Discussion: Michael Landy: Semi-Detached

*Semi-Detached* (2004) was installed at Tate Britain between May and December 2004. It was a new work constructed over an intensive three-week period in the gallery itself. It includes bricks, tiles, pipes, windows, video and sound. It is the same size as a normal semi-detached house and filled the gallery space.

The work is based on the artist's father's house. His father suffered an injury as a miner and was unable to return to work. He therefore spent a lot of time at home.

The house was split in two with two large video screens projecting images of the interior of the house and garden shed on one screen and images from DIY manuals on the other. The sound of Landy's father whistling familiar tunes echoed within the space. You could not enter into the house but could walk around it and between the two halves.

### 2. Video: The making of *Semi-Detached*

With your class, watch some clips from the video of the installation of Michael Landy's *Semi-Detached*. Listen to two young people talking about their initial impressions of the house whilst it was being built and the sequence of construction from Mike Smith, whose Studio built the house with Tate staff.

### 3. Activity: Inside/Outside

- Think about a building that means a lot to you or that you spend a lot of time in. Make a list of everything that it is made of from the outside.

- What goes on inside and outside that building? Who uses it? How often? When?
- Imagine that you couldn't enter it or see inside but could only walk around it.
- How would you show an outsider who has never entered your building what goes on inside?
- How would you document the activity? How would you record the space?
- Draw, photograph or film the interior. Describe either by words or by video some sounds to complement your images. If you have chosen your classroom during the summer you may record silence or perhaps the sound of workmen.

### **Slide 15:**

Video: The making of *Semi-detached*

### **Slide 16:**

Video: The making of *Semi-detached*

### **Slide 17: Meanings and themes in installation art**

- Discussion: meanings and themes
- Activity: What do you mean?

#### 1. Discussion: meanings and themes

The artist Rebecca Horn has worked with many different media, including film, installation, objects, literature and performance. In this piece, called *Concert for Anarchy* (1990), she installs a grand piano upside down in the gallery.

The inverted piano periodically performs an explosive high wire act. The piano drops slightly, the lid crashes open and the piano's keys spill out. While the piano moves the strings are disturbed and it makes an eerie jangling sound. Once the movement and the sound have stopped the piece slowly pulls itself back together and prepares itself for another surprise performance.

Often when an artist creates an installation they have a meaning or theme that they want to communicate to the viewer. In this case, Rebecca Horn uses an object that has been mechanically altered to give an independent chaotic performance. This piano does not follow any of the normal 'rules' set out for a piano. It is uncontrollable and cannot be used to play written music; it surprises the viewer with its chaotic visual and audio outburst.

Questions to discuss:

- Is the object immediately recognisable as something you know?
- What things does the object remind you of, or make you think about?
- What do you know about this type of object? What kind of person would use this kind of object? What would they use it for?
- Would you categorise this piece of art as performance, installation or sculpture?

- Why do you think it is displayed upside down? What do you think the artist means by this?
- How does looking at this piece make you feel? Are you shocked or does it make you laugh?
- How do the surprising actions and sounds of the object change the way you think about it?
- What does the word 'anarchy' mean? What do you think the artist wanted you to think about when she chose the title for this piece?
- Is this piece chaotic/anarchic or does someone control the work? If so, who and how?

## 2. Activity: What do you mean?

- Think of an idea or subject that interests you. In the classroom and at home find a collection of images objects and text that represent your meaning/theme.
- In class, lay all of the objects out in front of you.
- What will each item say to the viewer? How will that be understood when the objects are all together?
- Do you need all of the items you have or could you communicate your meaning/theme clearly with less?
- Arrange the selected objects in a way that you think represents your meaning/theme. Give your collection a title, but don't tell anyone the title yet.
- Now look at other people's collections and write down what you think the meanings/themes are for each collection.
- In groups, discuss what you think the meanings and themes are for each person's collection. Then have the person explain their ideas behind the collection and reveal the title they have given it. Does this change your perceptions of the work?
- Did you prefer to look at the collection with more information or with less information about the theme and meaning? Why?
- Can an artist control what someone else thinks about when they look at their work?

### **Slide 18: Explore an installation**

- Discussion: Explore Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter*
- Activity: Changing and reinventing materials and objects

#### 1. Discussion: Explore Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter*

This slide shows the work of art *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* (1991) by Cornelia Parker.

To create this work, Parker took a wooden shed and filled it with everyday objects. She then invited the British Army to blow up the shed and its contents. The installation consists of the fragments retrieved after the explosion, which she then suspended from the ceiling.

The space between objects is an important part of the work and boundaries between the work and the viewer are blurred. The objects cast dramatic shadows on the gallery walls, adding another dimension to the piece and another level of meaning.

The artist says, 'Cold dark matter is the material within the universe that we cannot see and we cannot quantify. We know it exists but we can't measure it. It's immeasurable, unfathomable.' What do you think the work says about creation and destruction?

The class can discuss the following questions:

- What are your first reactions to the work?
- Why do you think or feel this way?
- What objects can you see? What are their associations?
- Have they been arranged in any particular order?
- Have they been found or bought? What kind of world do they belong to?
- What might have happened to them?
- What point are we at in the story? What happened immediately before this moment? What will happen next?
- Do you think the process has changed the objects?
- Why do you think they have been suspended in mid-air? How else could the artist have displayed them?
- Where do you think the light source is? If it were lit differently, how would the work change?
- When you look at the work, what does it remind you of?

## 2. Activity: Changing and reinventing materials and objects

- Start with pieces of paper. What can we do to paper to change its shape? Write down as many process words you can think of (e.g. tear, fold, twist etc). Then experiment with the paper and carry out all the processes.
- Take a sample model kit with component parts. Instead of following the instructions, reinvent the model, assembling the parts to create your own entirely new object.
- Use a paper or plastic cup. Challenge your classmates to see who can alter the dimensions of this simple object most effectively to make one long strip of card or plastic. How might you change the dimensions of other, more complex objects?

## **Slide 19: How does it make you feel?**

- Discussion: How does it make you feel?
- Activity: Sensory installation

### 1. Discussion: How does it make you feel?

This slide shows Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project* (2003), which was commissioned as the fourth Unilever installation for the Tate Modern Turbine Hall. The artist attached mirror panels to the ceiling of the Turbine Hall to double the perceived height of this vast space. A semi-circle of lights, reflected to make a 'sun' at the east end of the space, flooded the hall with orange light. Mist created by dry-ice machines further added to the sense of disorientation.

During its period of installation at Tate Modern, *The Weather Project* delighted visitors. The mirrored ceiling and misty atmosphere encouraged people to relax. People lay on the floor, creating shapes and words with their bodies which were reflected in the

mirrored ceiling; other people danced around the Turbine Hall space while others had picnics.

How do you think this piece would make you feel? How do you think it would make you feel if it was raining outside?

## 2. Activity: Sensory installation

- In groups, imagine and plan out an installation which is all about evoking a particular atmosphere. The focus should be on sensory experience: what will visitors feel, touch, taste, smell (as well as see)?
- How will you create these effects? Be as adventurous as possible with your ideas.

Start by creating a 'mood' board using different materials and mind-mapping associative words, including, if possible, examples of other art works for inspiration.

### **Slide 20: Now what do you think?**

- Discussion: What is sculpture? What is installation?

### **1. Discussion: What is sculpture? What is installation?**

Discuss with the class how their understanding of sculpture and installation has changed.

Discussion questions:

- Review some of the previous slides and remember what you said when answering some of the questions. Have your ideas changed?
- Look at some of the works of art pictured. What did you think when you first looked at them? Has your understanding changed now?
- What have you learned about materials that can be used?
- What have you learned about techniques? Did it help to try some out yourself?
- What have you learned about meanings and themes that artists might want to express?
- What have you learned about the way sculpture and installation can affect your mood or create feelings?
- What do you think sculpture is now? What about installation?