

Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail

School Visits

Teacher Resource Pack



Activity: Framing Nature

Artworks: Peterborough Arch by Lee Grandjean
and Untitled 1989 (doors) by Miles Davies



Nene
Park
Trust



About this Teacher Resource Pack

This Resource Pack is designed to support teachers in planning a self-guided visit to Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail. Pupils will explore two contemporary sculptures in the Trail, as well as the landscape and nature in the Park. They will create their own responses to the sculptures through sketching, sharing opinions and using different techniques to observe and explore.

For details of the activities please see the accompanying **Schools Visits – Activity Pack**

The suggested activities encourage pupils to engage with contemporary artworks and their outdoor setting, inspiring creativity, observation and discussion and links to the KS2 Art & Design curriculum and researching a local landmark, as well as DT & English.

This Pack contains:

1. KS2 Art & Design Curriculum links & learning objectives
2. About the City, Park & Sculptures Collection
3. About the Artists and the Sculptures
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1. Ks2 Art & Design Curriculum Links & Learning Objectives

Activities outlined in this resource support the KS2 Art & Design curriculum, encouraging pupils to engage with sculpture, develop observation and creative skills, and explore the relationship between the natural and the built environment.

Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail provides a great outdoor environment for children to encounter and explore artworks.

Pupils will fulfil several curriculum-linked learning objectives, including:

- Create sketchbooks to record observations and use them to review and revisit ideas by drawing the sculptures, identifying shapes, materials, and textures on site and reflecting on how the artworks interact with their surroundings.
- Use their sketchbook notes to develop and refine their own creative ideas.
- Improve their mastery of art and design techniques by exploring sculptural materials, comparing wood and metal, and discussing how artists use these materials in their work.
- Learn about great artists and designers by studying sculptor Miles Davies and other artists, examining their artistic techniques, inspirations and how they designed their works for this specific location.
- Develop ideas and understanding of meaning in artworks by discussing how shape, scale, material and location in sculpture communicate themes such as movement, identity and place, and people's relationship with nature.



2. About the City, Park & Sculpture Collection

How an Ancient City Became A New Town

Peterborough was selected to become a 'New Town' in 1967, allowing for expansion of the old cathedral city of Peterborough to provide more housing.

During the 1970s and 80s, The Peterborough Development Corporation built houses, factories, offices, roads and shopping centres. Development was focussed in three new townships at Bretton, Orton and Werrington. Queensgate shopping centre was built in the centre of the city in 1982. To make Peterborough an attractive place to live, 1000's of trees were planted and a collection of contemporary sculptures were placed in public spaces throughout the City.

Building a Park at Thorpe Meadows

Gravel was excavated from nearby sites to create of the roadways of the New Town. Once these sites were emptied of gravel, they were turned into parks, including Ferry Meadows and Thorpe Meadows. Creating large green spaces for nature, leisure and wellbeing. The New Town building project increased the risk of flooding in the City, so careful planning was needed to manage the water cycle. The rectangular lake at Thorpe Meadows was built as part of the Frank Perkins Parkway road project, which required a lake to help control future flooding. Planners designed a long, straight rowing course to hold water that might otherwise flood the City centre. This clever planning created the second purpose-built rowing course in Britain at the time!

The shape of the rectangular rowing lake is reflected in the shapes in the sculpture *Untitled, 1989 (doors)*.

Creating a Sculpture Collection

Peterborough Sculpture Collection was created by The Peterborough Development Corporation, incorporating public art in the city's growth as a New Town. Between 1978 and 1988 - the Corporation bought and commissioned works from some of the important British sculptors working at the time, highlighting different artistic styles.

The sculptures were located around the City and include **Antony Gormley - Places To Be** in Cathedral Square and **Lagoon by Anthony Caro**, sited outside The Key Theatre.

Ask your pupils to look out for Antony Gormley's life size lead figures on the rooftops of Cathedral Square if they visit the City Centre.

3. About the Artist & the Sculpture

Lee Grandjean and Miles Davies are both sculptors. Sculptors shape, carve or form 3D artworks to express ideas. Grandjean and Davies use very different methods to create their artworks - using different materials and techniques to explore space, movement and nature.

Lee Grandjean works with wood, carving and shaping it by hand as well as with machines. He starts with sketches and 'maquettes' (models), then carefully builds his large-scale sculptures by adding and removing sections of wood. He wants his work to feel alive, as if it is part of nature. In **Peterborough Arch**, one side looks flowing and natural, like a tree, while the other side has strong, angular forms, like roads and buildings. He brings these organic and geometric forms together to highlight the relationship between nature and the urban city. Grandjean chose Iroko wood because it is strong and changes over time, just like the world around it.

Miles Davies uses metal to create his artworks. Designed on computer, his sculptures are then shaped by a laser cutter. His work is precise, with clean, straight lines and repeating shapes.

Untitled 1989 is made of steel and looks like a series of doors that get smaller and smaller. The shape of the 'doors' reflects the shape of the rowing lake which the sculpture overlooks. The metal rusts over time, changing colour and blending into its natural surroundings. The doors create different viewpoints onto the urban environment of the roadways and towards the natural environment of the Park.

Even though Grandjean and Davies use different materials and techniques, they both explore movement and space in their sculptures.

Grandjean's work feels like a person stepping forward - relating to people arriving to live in the growing city of Peterborough. While Davies' work seems to invite people to walk through, almost like stepping into another world.



4. Pre-visit Activities

Prior to your school visit to **Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail**, you may want to introduce the topic of sculpture and public art to your students using the following activities.

Activities duration:

30–50 minutes, but they are adaptable according to ability and lesson duration.

Equipment & resources required:

- Images (See below)
- Sketch books
- Pencils

Activity A: Introduction to Sculpture

Duration: 10–15 minutes

Discuss: What is a sculpture?

- What makes it different from other types of art e.g. a painting or picture?
- What do you think sculptures are made from? Stone, wood, metal, plaster, clay...
- What other materials could you use to make a sculpture? Paper, everyday objects, food, nature...
- Have you seen a sculpture before? Where do you think you might find sculptures?

Explore: What is public art and why do cities have it?

Public art is art that anyone can see because it's placed in a space that anyone can go to. It is often found outdoors in parks, town squares or on streets. The art makes the places more interesting and inspiring, and might celebrate important people or events, helping people feel proud of where they live.

- How does art make you feel?
- How can sculptures change a place? [Prompts – think about gateways, directions and meeting points, colour, or useful art including seating or play]

What is site-specific art?

Site-specific art is art that is made for a particular place. The artist chooses the location carefully because it inspires the art or adds meaning to it. For example, sculptures like Peterborough Arch are designed to perfectly fit in their location and connect to the nature and history around them.

- What difference does the sculpture make to the space around it?
- How does it change the space?

Activity B: Descriptive Vocabulary Activity

Duration: 5 minutes

- Explore: The sculptures in Peterborough Sculpture Collection (Link below)
- Discuss: What words could describe a sculpture?

Introduce simple and advanced vocabulary to describe sculptures.

Examples: large, small, tall, flat, 3D, rough, smooth, strong, balanced, heavy, or delicate. Towering, soaring, elongated, compact, coarse, textured, sleek, sturdy, symmetrical, fragile, geometric, angular

Ask pupils to come up with their own adjectives.

Activity C: Observation & Discussion

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Show images of Peterborough Arch by Lee Grandjean and Untitled 1989 by Miles Davies.

Discuss pupils' observations:

- What do you notice first? [Their shape, size, material or something else?]
- What do the sculptures make you think about?
- How do the sculptures connect to their surroundings?

Pupils (individually, in pairs or groups) make notes of their initial reactions in their sketchbooks, and are encouraged to record adjectives used in the discussion.

<https://www.nenepark.org.uk/peterborough-sculpture-collection>

5. Follow Up Activities – back in the classroom

Activity 1: Observation & Discussion

Duration: 10-15 minutes

Discussion and Creative Thinking:

- What surprised you about the sculpture you saw? Was it different from what you expected?
- How do the materials affect the sculptures? Would they be different if they were made from a different material?
- What name would you give to Untitled 1989? Why?
- If you could design a sculpture for Peterborough, what would it be? What would it represent?

6. Ks2 Sculpture Vocabulary

Sculpture	Shape & Form	Pattern & Texture	Colour
Attaching Combining Cutting Fixing Flimsy Joining Kneading Modelling Pressing Secure	Negative Organic Positive Scale Spherical	Geometric Irregular Motif Symmetric Uniform	Cold Contrasting Luminous Murky Vivid Warm Radiant Vibrant Intense Deep

7. Supplementary Activities

Activity A. Geometric Sculptural Sketch & Model Making

Objective:

Inspired by Untitled 1989, encourage pupils to design their own site-specific sculpture for a park or greenspace they know (it could be Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail, a local playground, the school field or an imaginary place). Consider what is already in the space that might inspire the design.

Extension:

Use only shapes present in the greenspace to design the work, i.e. the boating lake shape mirrored in Davies' Untitled 1989 OR use only geometric shapes.

Activity:

- Pupils draw their own sculpture design, thinking about shape and form, materials and how it fits into their selected environment.
- Using simple materials like cardboard, paper, foil or modelling clay, they create a 3D model of their sculpture design.

Discussion Prompts:

- How does your sculpture connect with the space where it would be installed?
- How would changing the scale of the sculpture affect how people interact with it?
- How does using only shapes from the location affect your sculpture or its relationship with its site?



Activity B. Painting or drawing an imaginary landscape through the doors

Objective:

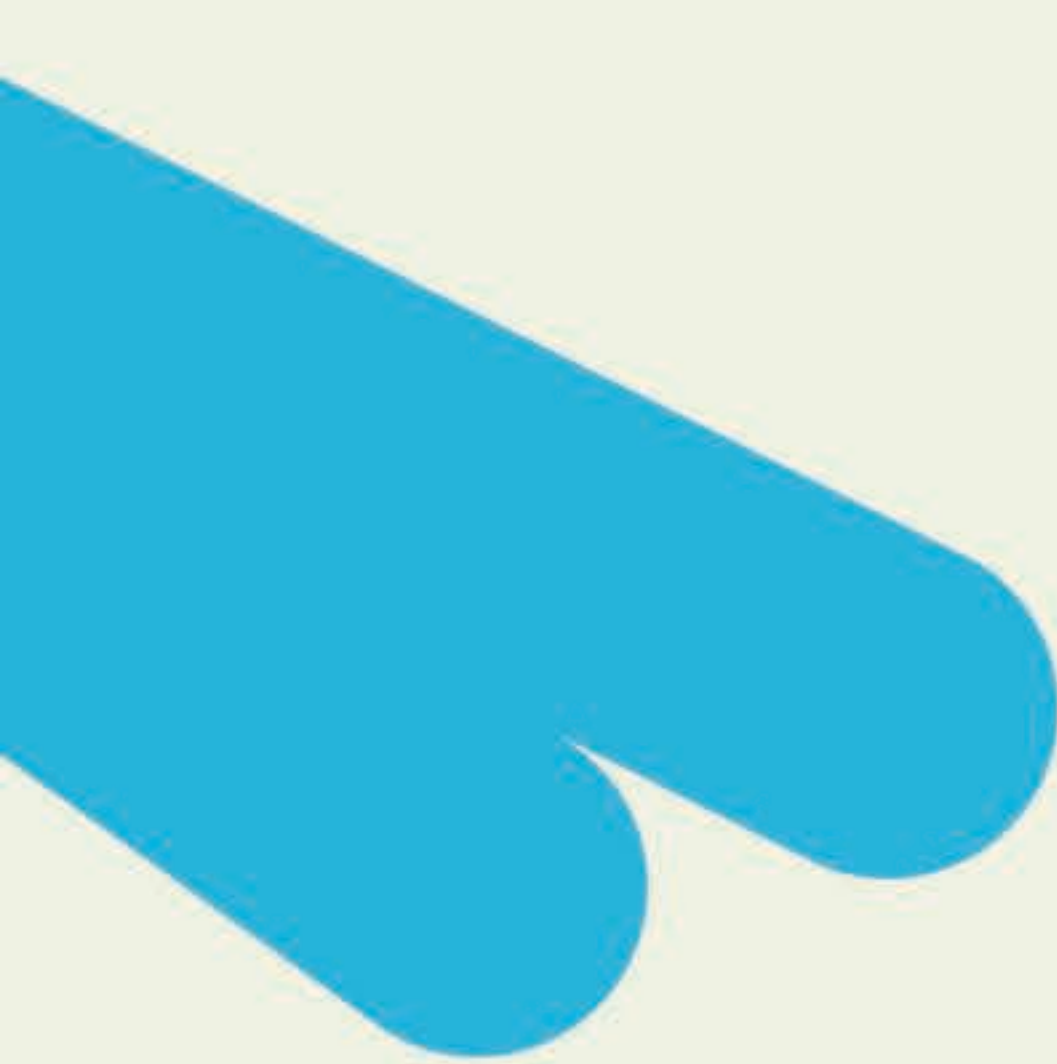
Encourage pupils to develop creative responses inspired by Untitled 1989, imagining a world beyond its 'doorways'.

Activity:

- Pupils look at their sketches of Untitled 1989 and imagine stepping through one of its 'doorways'.
- They create a drawing or painting of an imaginary landscape or environment that could exist beyond the sculpture.
- Pupils consider mood, colour and scale – relating to the mood inspired by Untitled 1989 –does the landscape feel futuristic, natural, or surreal?

Discussion Prompt:

- What name would you give to Untitled 1989? How does this inspire the world you imagine on the other side of the sculpture?
- What colours or shapes relating to the Untitled 1989 sculpture have inspired your world?



8. Related Works

Maya Lin's 'Wave Field'

For a further extension activity consider exploring Maya Lin's 'Wave Field' as a contrast.

Maya Lin's 'Wave Field' is an example of site-specific art that, like Untitled 1989, interacts deeply with its surroundings and invites engagement with the landscape using form and space. It is also greatly influenced by Lin's study of architecture. Created as a sculpted landscape of rolling earth forms, 'Wave Field' explores movement, flow and the relationship between the natural and built environment—ideas also reflected at the Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail.



Key Connections to Untitled 1989 (Doors):

Interaction with the Landscape: Wave Field shapes the ground itself, much like Peterborough Arch and Untitled 1989 were designed to integrate with the landscape.

Movement: The curvatures of Lin's work echo the undulating motion of water, movement is also a key consideration in Peterborough Arch.

Material and Form: Compare the use of metal in Untitled 1989 to create structured forms, with Lin's use of the earth.

Discussion Prompts for Pupils:

- How does 'Wave Field' compare to the sculptures at Thorpe Meadows in the way they change the landscape?
- What feelings do you think 'Wave Field' creates for visitors walking through it?
- If you could sculpt the land itself like Maya Lin, what shapes would you create and why?

Maya Lin's Use of Recycled Materials

Maya Lin often incorporates recycled materials in other areas of her work to highlight environmental themes. Research some of her works that use reclaimed wood, glass, or metal and discuss:

- Why do you think artists choose recycled materials to make their sculptures?
- How does using recycled materials change the meaning of a sculpture?
- Could 'Untitled 1989' have been made from recycled materials? How might that have changed the artwork?

Watch this video on Maya Lin's practice: Maya Lin's 'Wave Field':

<https://americanart.si.edu/blog/eye-level/2007/06/1191/wave-field>

Other artists that could be researched include:

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|--------------------|--|
| • Nancy Holt | <u>Dark Star Park</u> |
| • Barbara Hepworth | <u>Squares With Two Circles</u> |
| • Antony Gormley | <u>Places to Be</u> , <u>Another Place</u> |
| • Anthea Tacha | <u>Green Acres</u> |
| • Chila Burman | <u>Remembering A Brave New World</u> |
| | <u>Remembering A Brave New World Film</u> |



9. Ks2 English & DT Curriculum Links

English

National Curriculum Objectives and suggested topics:

Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.

- Take part in structured discussions about the sculptures, considering different viewpoints on public art and its impact on the environment and community.

Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions.

- Through group discussions, express and explain personal responses to the sculptures, using descriptive vocabulary and reasoning.

Compose and rehearse sentences orally before writing, progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary.

- Engage in activities to describe and analyse the sculptures verbally before recording ideas incorporating relevant, expressive vocabulary.

Write for a range of purposes, including narratives, reports and explanations.

- Produce creative writing inspired by the sculptures as gateways, such as a short story or poem; or non-fiction texts like a visitor guide or a descriptive report of their visit to Thorpe Meadows Sculpture Trail.

Design and Technology

National Curriculum Objectives and suggested topics:

Make - select from and use a wider range of materials and components, including construction materials, textiles and ingredients, according to their functional properties and aesthetic qualities

- Discuss how the selection of materials for sculpture is a practical decision as well as an artistic one. Consider what might have happened to the sculptures if they had been made from different materials, what problems might this cause?
- Make sculptures using a wide range of materials and construction techniques.