

Carving Out Space

Education Pack – Drawing



Ruthin Craft Centre
12th January – 10th March 2013



Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire



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Carving Out Space: Introduction

12th January – 10th March 2013

Gallery 1, 2 & 3

Carving Out Space brings together five artists and makers who explore intellectual and physical space through the process of carving: all works informed by close working with the materials, and spaces, of particular geographic locations. Works from different formal traditions – sculpture; furniture; lettercarving and jewellery – are linked by a sense of human culture, constantly re-shaped by a relationship to the dynamic processes of the natural world. As well as objects, there will be photographs of site-specific works and drawings.

This pack is designed to support teachers and educators in planning a visit to the exhibition with suggested ideas, workshops and points for discussion. It focuses on drawing as a means of exploring the works and thinking about artists' practice. The activities are suitable for all ages and can be adapted to your needs before, during and following your visit.



Warwick Freeman
A Different Black, 2013
Various materials

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Jim Partridge
and Liz Walmsley
Rocking chair, 2012
Scorched oak
h 1160 x w 370 x d 475mm

Introduction to drawing

Drawing is an activity as old as civilisation itself. The earliest forms of art were made by cave dwellers by making marks in or on stone, using whatever materials available to them. The first drawings were made to convey messages or to record important events, but as techniques and materials became more refined, it was evident that drawing was also a means of self-expression, used for decorating objects, for telling stories and for creating visual images of gods and mythological beings.

Drawings also developed as a way of thinking through ideas, of planning, of designing. It was a means of working out man's relationship to his surroundings through maps, of charting new land and designating boundaries.

For artists, drawing can be the first step in creating a work – making preparatory sketches, creating marks that can be played around with and developed into a painting. Drawings can be used as a pattern, a template or a diagram to work out sculptures and carvings. A drawing can also be a work of art in its own right.

Is drawing a way of recording what we see or expressing how we feel? Do we have to think about what we are sketching or can we doodle subconsciously? Does it involve making lines or can we use blotches? Can a 2D drawing depict 3D space? Do we have to use pencil and paper or can we experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques?

Carving Out Space offers unlimited scope for exploring different approaches to drawing. A sculptor may make us aware of space, through carving into, describing and opening it up. Objects exist in our world – they are real! Drawing on the other hand creates an illusion of space through marks made on a surface.

This pack gives a brief introduction to each of the artists with a number of ideas and suggestions for activities linked to their work. For further information on the exhibition, there is an illustrated catalogue:

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Materials

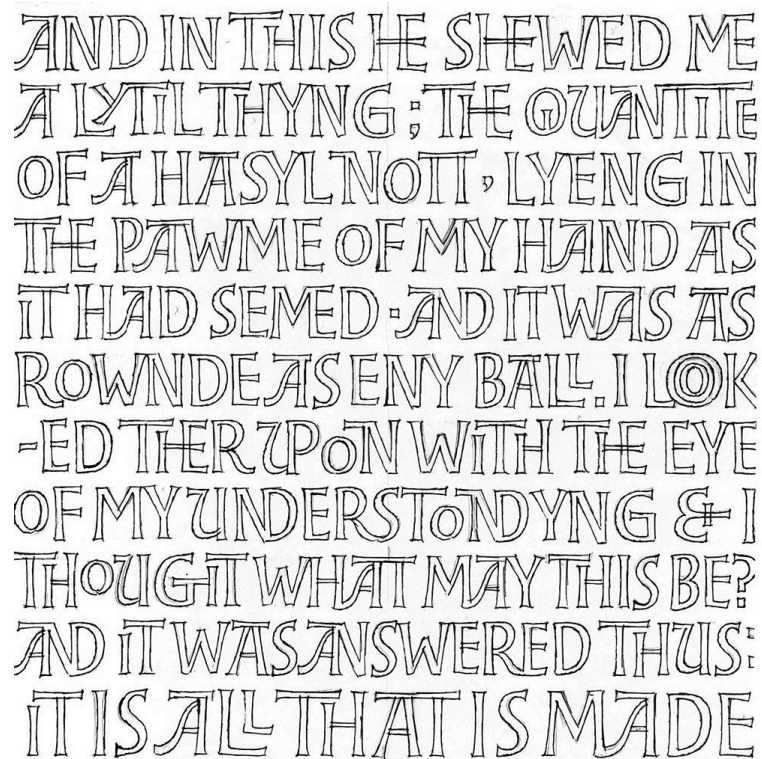
...PencilsChalkPaperPaintInkCardPastelsCrayonPensBrushesMarkersCharcoalFe
ItTipsGraphitePhotoshopWatercoloursStylusThreadPlasticineDyesWireContéFabr
icSilverpointBiroTablet...

There is a wide range of useful online resources with advice and information on materials for drawing. Here are a few suggested sites:

http://drawsketch.about.com/od/coloredpencil/qt/cp_materials.htm

<http://learningtodraw.net/>

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/d/drawing-materials-and-media/>



AND IN THIS HE SHEWED ME
A LYTIL THYNG; THE QUANTITE
OF A HASYL NOTT, LYENG IN
THE PAWME OF MY HAND AS
IT HAD SEMED. AND IT WAS AS
ROWNDE AS ENY BALL. I LOOK
-ED THER UPON WITH THE EYE
OF MY UNDERSTONDYNG & I
THOUGHT WHAT MAY THIS BE?
AND IT WAS ANSWERED THUS:
IT IS ALL THAT IS MADE

Gary Breeze
*Drawing for Quantity
of a Hazelnut*, 2010
Pencil on paper
h 400 x w 400mm

Gary Breeze *letter forms*

Breeze was born in Norfolk, 1966 and apart from a brief spell in London where he set up his first workshop he has spent most of his life in East Anglia. Although he exhibits widely and has carried out commissions all over Britain and internationally, his work is deeply rooted in his home county. Much of his art makes reference to the East Anglian landscape, its maritime history and its rich dialect.

Lettering is an art with a long tradition, beginning with carved inscriptions for ancient monuments and buildings. It has retained its association with architecture and wording for sculpture, but was historically considered a craft rather than 'fine art', usually carried out by stonemasons. In the twentieth century, the art of lettering at last received recognition, thanks to artists such as Eric Gill, Tyson Smith and Ian Hamilton Finlay, whose sculptures often incorporated carved words.

Breeze's public works include The New Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh (2004), Bali Bombing Memorial in London (2005) and Christ Church Cloister Fountain, Oxford (2010)

Many of Breeze's works use Norfolk dialect as a means of preserving language. ***Norfolk Ornithology 2004***, lists different species of Norfolk's native birds along with their local names carved into reclaimed slate.

Anne's Diary II 2009, features text that was taken from the unpublished diary of 14 year-old Anne Gathorne-Hardy, 1926. Her journal contains descriptions and drawings of boats and ships, revealing her detailed knowledge of the vessels that she saw in her in Suffolk and during travels in the Mediterranean.

Work in Focus: *Drawing for Quantity of a Hazelnut 2010*

This drawing provides an insight into how the artist approaches a lettering commission. Before carving into stone, he first produces sketches to work out the spacing of the words and how the letter forms will appear on the panel. When he is happy with the drawing, he will use this as a template and trace the design onto the material to be carved.

This particular drawing was made for *The Quantity of a Hazelnut – Vision of the Earth by St Julian*, one of eight carved panels produced for St Julian Hospital, Norwich depicting local images and dialect.

'Julian of Norwich' as she has become known, was the first female writer in English. Her real name is not known but she lived in a dwelling that was attached to the church of St Julian in Norwich during the 14th century.

Activities

Copy the style of lettering from one of Breeze's works and make your own drawing of a poem, song or saying. Alternatively, draw a list of your choice – names for different animals, places, people etc

Find different examples of fonts and write your name in them. You could invent your own personal style of lettering and embellish it with decoration, colours, textures etc.

Make a sculpture from your lettering drawings by modelling or carving words in a slab of clay, plasticine or fimo. Use pin-pricks through the outline of a tracing to transfer the drawing to clay. Roll out thin 'sausages' of clay to model words in relief.

Examine photographs of Breeze's public works. Find out what the inscriptions say. Do you think that the wording and lettering is appropriate for its surroundings?

Discover examples of carved lettering on public monuments, sculptures or buildings. Make sketches or take photographs. Why are the words there?

Follow one of Breeze's works in progress from initial inspiration, to drawing and finished carving at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/43389731@N03/>

Draw around plastic letters (available cheaply online eg at Amazon). Create blocks of text and then colour them with pens, ink or paint.

Further Resources:

Simon Garfield, *Just my Type: a Book about Fonts*, Profile Books, 2011

Tom Perkins, *The Art of Carving Letters in Stone*, The Crowood Press 2007

http://www.garybreeze.co.uk/public_commissions.html

<http://www.emorypresbyterian.org/sermons/Julian2010.pdf>

<http://www.memorialsbyartists.co.uk/commissioning/lettering-tradition/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hathx3QpX8A>

Warwick Freeman *jewellery*

Born in Nelson New Zealand 1953, Freeman was largely self-taught and took up jewellery making after two years of travel in the early 1970s. His work is inspired by a wide range of sources, including the art of other cultures, natural forms and found objects, particularly the latter: 'the found object, the found drawing, the found idea'. Some of the objects that have been incorporated into his designs include: shells, pebbles, bones, nails, keys, animals teeth ...even birds claws and beaks!

Freeman's meticulously fashioned items have been compared to tiny sculptures, but he points out that their forms are always dictated by their function as jewellery; 'they must answer to the demands of weight and wear-ability.'

Freeman has also made comparisons between the combinations of materials that he uses and language, saying 'Materials are my words...it's gathering the words together and I might end up with a sentence that makes some sense.'

Activities

Compile a collection of 'found' objects and make drawings, rubbings and photographs, or you could draw around them. Cut out these images and then paste into a collage or suspend on thread. You could roll out air-drying clay and cut shapes in that and later paint and decorate the forms.

Discuss why people wear jewellery. Is it a form of personal expression? Is it cultural? Is it religious? Do you wear jewellery? If so, what do you wear and why? What does jewellery tell you about the wearer? Make sketches of different types of jewellery and then make up your own designs.

Visit a museum and make sketches of jewellery from history. Objects created for adorning the body are amongst the oldest forms of art. Find out about different types of jewellery from other cultures and civilisations.

List the different materials used in Freeman's jewellery and make a lettering work in the style of Gary Breeze! You could colour the words in the tones and colours of the jewellery.

Further Resources:

Jinks McGrath, *The New Encyclopedia of Jewellery Making Techniques*, Search Press 2010

http://www.fingers.co.nz/exhibitors/warwick_freeman.htm

https://www.thearts.co.nz/artist_page.php?aid=63

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_ed8iv6Snc

Jim Partridge, Liz Walmsley *furniture*

'Designing, experimenting, making; the directness of handling of tools, materials and ideas allows us fluidity...this is how we carve out a space.'

Jim Partridge and Liz Walmsley have been collaborating since 1988 on a variety of projects including furniture and functional sculpture such as bowls, tables, bridges, hillside shelters and making works for both indoor and outdoor settings.

In creating their unique work, they use untreated timber, chisels, chain saws and blow torches. A particular trademark process is the scorching and waxing of wood, which emphasises the texture of the grain, making their objects highly tactile in quality. Often, rich colour is introduced to emphasise the contrast between inside and outside of their forms.

Significant commissions include Grizedale Forest, Forestry Commission, Warwick Art Centre and they have work in several collections including the V&A, London and Manchester Art Gallery. Works in the exhibition include: *The Butterworth Bench*, Warwick University 2012, *Bowl Table* 2012 and *Rocking Chair* 2012

Activities

Discuss aspects of design for furniture and vessels. Make a list of requirements eg shape, materials, properties, scale, colours. Do outdoor objects have different requirements to those you use indoors?

Design your own functional sculpture such as a chair, bowl, table or desk. Make notes on your drawing about the materials you would use to make the object and describe the unique features that your design incorporates.

Make a detailed drawing from one of Partridge and Walmsley's pieces focusing on the different textures. How can you distinguish between polished surfaces and rough grain in your drawing? What materials are best for this purpose – pencil, crayon, charcoal...?

Imagine using one of Partridge and Walmsley's pieces or having one in your home. Which would you choose and why? Draw a picture of the object in a room in your house... with you or your family using it!

Further Resources:

<http://www.jplw.co.uk/>

http://www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/images/artists/From_Black_to_Gold_Collect_2012.pdf

David Nash *sculpture*

Nash was born in Esher, Surrey in 1945 but spent most of his childhood holidays in Blaenau Ffestiniog where he now lives. His father owned a forest in North Wales, which he worked on and learned about planting and managing trees and also the different types of wood. His artistic ethos has been one of direct, physical involvement with this organic material and a response to the natural world.

As a sculptor, Nash has worked worldwide, carving wood with chisels, chainsaws and axes and creating land art, often by shaping living trees. A work which draws upon the natural forms found in landscape is *Two Twmps on Block* where the forms carved from palm suggest small mounds or hills. His sculptures are sometimes partially burned with a blowtorch to produce a blackened surface. An example using this technique is *Black River* where the result of chiselling and burning the surface of the wood, produces an effect of rippling water.

Nash has made a number of sculptures with the title *King and Queen* that were possibly inspired by Henry Moore's 'King and Queen' works. In each version, two slender forms have been carved from tree trunks, charred and placed together in order to suggest a relationship between the figures.

Occasionally, Nash is inspired by man-made forms, for example, *Two Falling Spoons*. He was first inspired to make spoons by the refectory of Tournus Abbey, France where he was exhibiting in 1998. He has continued to carve spoon forms over the years, usually when he finds a tree trunk or branches that suggest the shape.

Ash Dome 2005: In 1977 a ring of sapling ash trees was planted in a secret location in Ffestiniog Valley, North Wales with the aim of creating a dome-shaped space for the 21st century. This drawing was made by Nash as a means of visualising how the trees would form this shape. This video documents the project and shows how the work has developed over the years: <http://www.culturecolony.com/videos?id=1126>

Activities

Discuss the drawing of *Ash Dome*. Before you tell the students what it is, ask them what they think it might be and why. Ask them to make a copy for themselves and to turn it into something else using coloured pencils eg a cave, a hut, a face... etc. Then watch the video!

Compare the drawing for *Ash Dome* with photographs of the completed work. How has Nash suggested space in his drawing? How has he imagined the growth of the trees? Using your imagination, make your own sketches for a similar project eg a dome of flowers, a willow tunnel, a grass wall....be inventive! You could make a drawing of how you think the dome will look in fifty years time.

Collect different shaped and sized spoons from your home and make drawings from them using different materials. Use A3 sheets of paper so that your spoons can be BIG!

Make quick sketches in the gallery of Nash's sculpture from different positions. Move around the sculpture and draw as many different outlines as you can on the same sheet. You could go over the same drawing each time using a different coloured pencil.

Draw the outlines of Nash sculptures and transfer to different textured paper – cut out and make a collage or repeated pattern. Experiment with single cut-out figures against different backgrounds or by creating groups or even a 'crowd'.

Discuss what is meant by 'abstract' in art. Would you describe Nash's work as 'abstract'? If so, why? Find examples of abstract forms in the exhibition and make sketches of their shapes.

Watch a video of Nash making one of his King and Queen sculptures:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIAZ81TzFno>

Further Resources:

Norbert Lynton, *David Nash*, Thames and Hudson, 2007

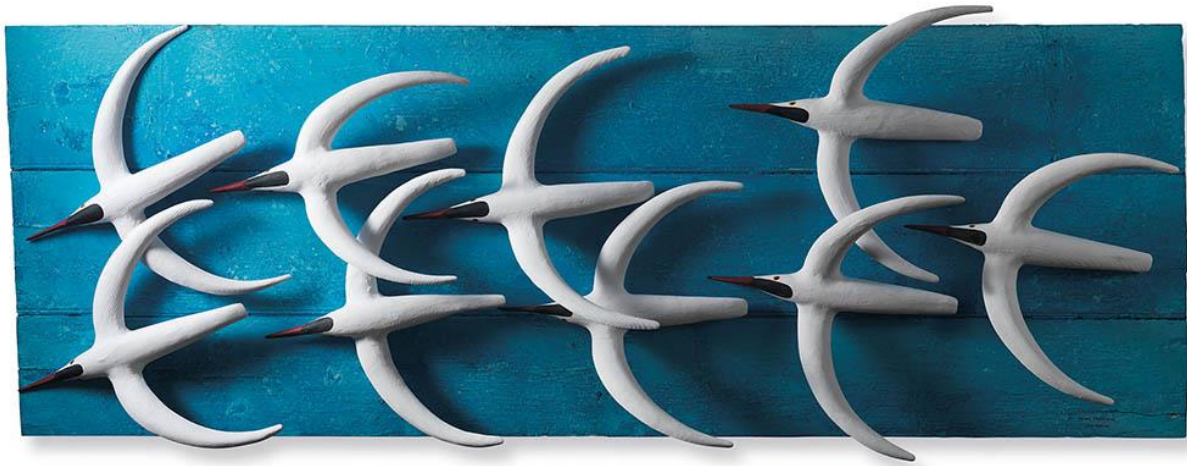
Carolyn Davies and Lynne Bebb, *David Nash: A Place in the Wood*, Gomer Press 2011

http://www.kew.org/web-image/KPPCONT_060535?gallery=Ash-Dome-through-the-seasons



David Nash
Two Falling Spoons, 1994
Carved, charred oak 1900mm

Guy Taplin *carved birds*



Guy Taplin
Nine Seabirds
Carved and painted driftwood
h 680 x w 1780 x d 150mm

Londoner Guy Taplin has been interested in birds since he was a boy. In the 1970s he became head bird-keeper at Regents Park Zoo and began to make carvings of birds from wood. Following a very successful exhibition in London in 1978 where all of his works found buyers, he decided to become a sculptor.

He uses driftwood for his sculptures, mostly collected from the Essex coast near his home, and buys plastic beads for their eyes. His workshop is piled high, from floor to ceiling with found materials for future works. Taplin explains his preference for discarded materials: 'I like remnants.... I want to make something wonderful from the residue of a life lived, of what people have used.'

Taplin's subjects are not exact copies of real-life birds, but the artist's personal response. Sometimes the shape of the wood dictates the form that the work will assume, and individual features are pared down or exaggerated in order to capture the essence or spirit of the creature. His birds have been described as being closer to poetry than ornithological exactitude. He says, 'I cannot be creative if I am restricted to painstaking precision...Art must add to life.'

Activities

Construct a 'drawing in space' with wire by copying the outline from one of Taplin's birds. Push the legs into plasticine to enable your sculpture to be free-standing.

Take a line for a walk! Copy one of Taplin's birds without taking your pencil from the paper – be spontaneous and allow your line to be free-flowing. Try this exercise with a range of materials eg large crayon, marker pen, coloured pencil etc. You could layer these different drawings on top of each other.

Draw sculptures without looking at the page – keep your eyes on the subject until you have finished. No cheating! This will help to develop your eye-brain-hand co-ordination. You could also try drawing wearing a blindfold.

Make a template by drawing one of Taplin's birds on card and use this to make a repeated pattern along the edge or margin of a sheet of paper. You could use fabric paints to transfer this to a plain pillow-case, t-shirt or tea towel.

Carve bird outlines into air-drying clay using your drawings of Taplin's sculptures as a guide or template.

Draw examples of different birds in flight onto cardboard. Keep the shapes simple. Paint, cut them out and suspend them on wires to create a mobile.

Research the birds that are local to your area. Take photographs, make drawings, collect images, make a collage! Make a word drawing in the style of Gary Breeze listing the species.

Further Resources:

Michael Palin , Ian Collins and Andrew Montgomery, *Taplin Bird on a Wire: The Life and Art of Guy Taplin*, David Messum Fine Art, 2007

Ian Collins, *Guy Taplin: Driftwood Sculpture* David Messum Fine Art, 2009

Paul Sterry, *British Birds: a photographic guide to every common species*, Collins, 2008

John Busby and Bill Oddie, *Drawing Birds (RSPB)* Christopher Helm Publishers Ltd 2004

<http://www.courcoux.co.uk/sculptors/taplin/taplin.htm>

http://www.eadt.co.uk/entertainment/the_bird_man_of_wivenhoe_1_795289

<http://www.studiopublications.com/excerpts/BirdOnAWire.pdf>

Julie Robson 2013