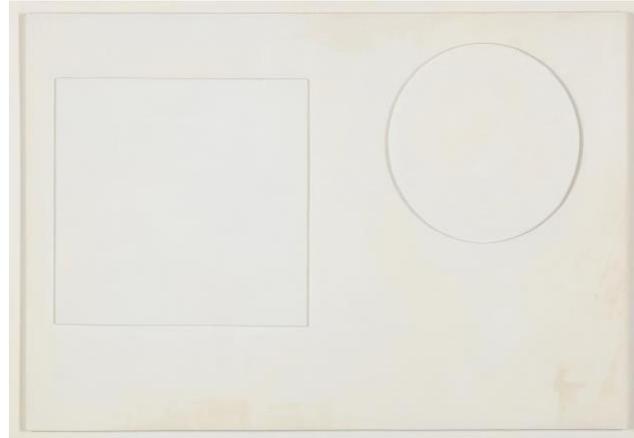


Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture



Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture

Welcome to this learning resource

This has been designed for Key Stages 3 and 4.

This is part of a series of resources designed to be used in your classroom or as a virtual resource for home learning.

Each resource provides a set of learning materials to invite your students to critically examine (*Close Encounter*), think and discuss ideas (*Discuss*), develop their own artwork through artist-led virtual workshops or ideas (*Create*), and conclude with an opportunity to reflect and evaluate their work (*Reflect*). There are hyperlinks for students to research in greater depth.

This session is designed to meet these learning objectives:

- How to interpret the ideas of artists.
- Taking creative risks.
- Investigating, exploring and testing expressively.
- Visually exploiting the differences between art and design.
- Expressive knowledge of properties of materials and processes for students to select techniques and control their outcomes.

Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture

Key artworks

Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975), *'Minoan Head'* (1972), marble on wooden base (right)

Henry Moore (1898-1986), *'Helmet Head no 3'* (1960), bronze

Ben Nicholson (1894-1982), *'1936 (White Relief), Second Version'* (1957), oil on carved board

Merete Rasmussen (b. 1974) *'Blue Twisted Form'* (2012), hand-built stoneware sculpture coated in blue slip

You might like to use this resource alongside the Abstraction video on the Fitzwilliam Museum schools website.



Barbara Hepworth © Bowness;
image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture

Close encounter

Looking at negative and positive spaces

These are created by seeing 'gaps' in the areas around the solid sculpture. You can experiment by collecting together some objects and placing them closer together and further apart – this compresses and plays with the negative space. Try using objects of different textures, weights or surfaces – one might be strong and solid; the other fragile such as a balloon, or even a bubble.

Materials and processes

Reductive or subtractive: when you **take material away** to create a form (carving and some clay processes).

Addition: when you add materials. Clay and wax modelling.

Assemblage: when you add materials (often ready-made or repurposed) together.

Casting: when you create a mould of an original sculpture to make a copy. This is often the process used in bronze casting where a sculptor models their work in clay or wax. A cast is made in plaster and filled with molten bronze. Some artists also cast everyday objects.

Explore abstraction in sculpture

Here is a selection of abstract sculptures. Earlier we discussed the techniques and materials that sculptors use. Look carefully at these and see if you can work out what each of these are made from and which process the sculptor has used.

Just to help, here are some of the materials: plaster, marble, bronze, wood.

And some of the techniques: reductive or subtractive, addition, assemblage, casting.

Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975)

'Minoan Head' (1972)

Marble on wooden base, height 71 cm



Barbara Hepworth © Bowness;
image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Find out more here:

<https://beta.fitz.ms/learning/look-think-do/minoan-head>.

Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture



Henry Moore (1898-1986)
'Helmet Head no. 3' (1960)
Bronze, height 35.5 cm

© The Henry Moore Foundation 2020. All rights reserved

Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

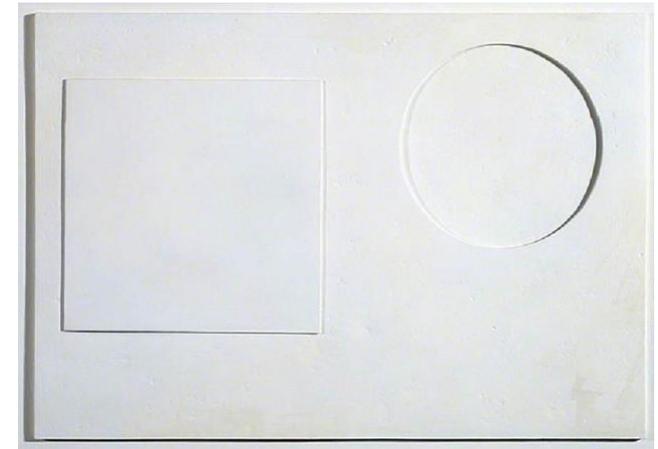
Compare this Henry Moore sculpture with the ancient Greek helmet.



Ancient Greek 'Corinthian style' helmet (600-500 BC)
Bronze (copper alloy).

Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Henry Moore would have seen helmets in museums, like the example here from ancient Greece, and they may well have inspired his thinking and artistic ideas. Think about this ancient helmet...what is missing? Aside from any perishable parts of the helmet, the ancient Greek soldier who wore this is long since gone and we are left with this metal reminder of his life as a warrior. How has Henry Moore filled his sculptural 'helmet'? Looking closely, what can we learn about his imagined person inside this helmet?



Ben Nicholson (1894-1982)
'1936 (White Relief), Second Version' (1957)
Oil on carved board, 64.4 x 87.6 cm

© Angela Verren Taunt. All rights reserved, DACS 2021
Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Explore 'low relief' (shallow modelling or carving) in this artwork by artist Ben Nicholson.

Compare this Nicholson relief to the 'low relief' carving in the ancient Roman 'Lansdowne Relief' on the next page.

Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture



Detail from the ancient Roman Lansdowne Relief (AD 120-138)
Dark grey limestone.

Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

This carving technique illustrates a **low-relief** carving. Many of these artefacts from ancient Greece and Rome were cleaned to their bare stone but evidence shows that many of these 'white' objects were painted, often in bright colours. The light and shadow 'create' the depth in these. How has Ben Nicholson used this idea in his artwork '*1936 (White Relief), Second Version*'?



Merete Rasmussen (b. 1974)
'Blue Twisted Form' (2012)
hand-built stoneware sculpture coated in blue slip, height 40 cm

© Merete Rasmussen
Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The spaces created by the twists in Rasmussen's sculpture invite us to move around her artwork to see how it changes. Do you think this piece is decorative or functional?

Making ceramics (working in clay) is a very ancient technique and here the artist has literally 'stretched' her clay material to its limits.

Compare '*Blue Twisted Form*' to the Delftware flower vase or perhaps a Wedgwood vase.



Delftware flower vase with spouts (c.1700)
Tin-glazed earthenware

Image © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Dutch Delftware was at its most popular between 1640 and 1740. It was manufactured to satisfy the European market which had become familiar with Chinese porcelain ware. Since it was both expensive and difficult to acquire, they enjoyed Dutch ceramics in a Chinese style instead. The odd 'tubes' at the top of the pot are for individual flower stems to show off expensive and rare flowers, such as tulips. This would not have been thought of as an abstract work of art when it was made, but rather a functional decorative object. However, the maker still combined shapes, forms, lines and colours to create an overall visual impact.

Abstraction Part 2: Sculpture

Discuss

What is the difference between a sculpture and a painting or drawing?

Dimensionality, but how much volume, or how many different planes (directions), make an object 3D? Experiment: try making a collage from corrugated card – you can find this in most brown cardboard boxes. Think about scale and line, form and volume and as an additional challenge, the collage should be no thicker than 3 cm when assembled.

Discuss which materials and techniques you would use to create your own sculptures.

Create

In this video, artist Susie Olczak shows you how to make your own sculptural assemblage using recycled materials: <https://beta.fitz.ms/learning/young-people/sculpture-workshop-for-young-people-by-artist-susie-olczak>.

Scale: try taking photographs of your sculptures made as part of Susie Olczak's virtual workshop and put them in different locations to photograph. You could experiment with your work in a design app to put your work in front of the

Fitzwilliam Museum to create a sculpture exhibition.

Permanence: sculpture doesn't have to be permanent. It could be made for a limited time, then taken to pieces. It could be made from materials that disintegrate or change over time. Try making a sculpture from food, such as sweets (see Jeff Koons), or materials found in the garden, such as leaves and flowers (see Andy Goldsworthy). It could be an installation of work in an existing space or it could be to change an existing work, for instance by cloaking it in different cloth, plastics, or even lights.

Reflect

Reflect on the successes of your chosen art materials, of the techniques you used and of the creative content of your own artwork. You could create a set of diagrams – think about where these materials come from and how they are transformed into sculpture.

Materials have 'properties' and beyond these property capabilities the structural strengths may be weakened. How could you 'stretch' a material to its limits? How could you perhaps change the nature of an

object by choosing to represent it in an 'opposite' material?

Create a sculptural 3D timeline and place your chosen sculptures from the Fitzwilliam Museum in time order. You might like to think about the art genres these are grouped into.

This resource has been designed for teaching within your classroom and not to be used for any other purposes without the express permission of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Some of the artists featured are in copyright and have been included with the permission of the relevant rights holders. The copyright in all the images remains the property of The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.