

PRE-VISIT ART PACK & CURRICULUM GUIDE

SHAPE AND FORM



Paul Vexler, *Blue is Beautiful*, 2015
Boise Art Museum installation (detail)
Courtesy of the Foster/White Gallery

Through the exhibition *Paul Vexler: Ribbons*, students explore the ways in which artists use material to create sculptures or transform spaces. In the studios, students create their own three-dimensional objects with both positive and negative space.

CONNECTS TO

- Geometry
- Shape
- Form
- Elements of art
- Process
- Installation Art

BAM's SCHOOL TOUR PROGRAM GOALS

- Students will actively participate in the experience discussing the artwork, using art vocabulary and making meaningful, personal connections. Discussions will be associated with the information in the Pre-Visit Art Pack.
- Students will experience a studio activity that reinforces the concepts and/or techniques discussed/viewed in the galleries resulting in a tangible, personally meaningful understanding of the artwork.
- Students will leave the museum knowing that it is a fun, enjoyable place to learn. The Docents will help them understand that they do not need an art authority to tell them how to enjoy and what to appreciate about art.

The Boise Art Museum's education philosophy encourages the examination and discussion of the visual arts through a holistic approach to art education. Programs support the development of critical thinking skills, visual analysis, exploration and understanding of art techniques as well as the investigation of cultural contexts, art as a form of communication, and multidisciplinary connections. In its touring program, BAM uses arts-based, student-centered, guided-discovery techniques and inquiry strategies that encourage teaching directly from the object and encompass aspects of many education philosophies.

TOUR CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

Please follow the checklist below in preparation for your tour

BEFORE YOUR TOUR

WITH YOUR STUDENTS:

- DO THE PRE-VISIT ART TALK and review the VOCABULARY words with your students
- SHARE THE MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.
- MAKE LARGE NAMETAGS for students with their first names only.

WITH YOUR CHAPERONS:

- DESIGNATE YOUR ADULT CHAPERONS. A maximum of **four chaperons are admitted with the group for free.** Chaperons have specific responsibilities and are admitted with the students free of charge. Additional adults pay regular admission and are considered regular visitors in the Museum. (The teacher is counted as one of the four chaperons.)
- ASK CHAPERONS not to bring infants, younger children, or other siblings.
- REVIEW THE CHAPERON GUIDELINES with your designated chaperons.
- PRINT THE CHAPERON PASSES and HAVE YOUR PAYMENT PREPARED for any additional adults. Checks can be made payable to the Boise Art Museum or BAM. We are unable to make change, so please have the exact amount prepared if you are paying with cash. (Often teachers split the admission among all adults to cover the cost. Schools or individuals may pay for the additional adults.) **General admission is \$6; admission for seniors (62+) \$4, and full-time college students is \$3.**
- PREVIEW THE EXHIBITION with the *Free Teacher Preview Pass* included with your confirmation letter.

A NOTE TO HELP WITH CHAPERON SELECTION: All students will receive *Free Return Tickets* at the end of the visit. These tickets allow the student and one guest, to return and visit the Museum for free at a later date. Parents who indicate that they would like to be chaperons after you have designated the maximum limit of four (4) should be encouraged to return with their student at a later date using the *Free Return Ticket*.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- ARRIVE AT THE REAR EDUCATION ENTRANCE facing Julia Davis Park and the Rose Garden. Do not enter through the front of the museum. Arrive no more than 5 minutes before your scheduled time, as your docents can only let you into the Museum at your indicated tour time. Do not ring the delivery buzzer.
- DIVIDE YOUR CLASS INTO TWO GROUPS (of approximately 15 students) for their tour.
- IDENTIFY YOUR CHAPERONS for the docent and MAKE THE PAYMENT for additional adults
- LEAVE LARGE FIRST AID KITS AND BAGS at the Education Entrance. First aid kits and bags must be smaller than 11" X 15" and must be worn on the front of your body. BAM has multiple first aid kits on site.
- REMEMBER: The Museum has no indoor or outdoor lunch facilities. Tour groups may bring their lunches and enjoy Julia Davis Park or visit the restaurants at BODO or nearby Boise State University.

AFTER YOUR TOUR

- FILL OUT THE EVALUATION CARD that you receive from your tour guides. Your constructive criticism helps us continue to tailor our programs to suit your needs.
- DO THE MAKE IT! ACTIVITY or use related ideas listed in CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS to connect the tour to your classroom curricula.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS AND CHAPERONS

SHAPE AND FORM

MUSEUM MANNERS FOR STUDENTS

Please share and discuss these MUSEUM MANNERS with your students.

Remembering to follow these manners on your tour at the Boise Art Museum will help keep the artwork safe and make sure everyone has a good experience on the tour.

- **Empty your mouth.** Food, drink, and gum are not allowed in the museum galleries.
 - **Stay at least 12” away** from the artwork and the walls.
 - **Keep your voices down** while discussing the artwork.
 - **Sit on the floor** during group discussions so everyone can see.
 - **Use indoor behavior**, running and jumping should be left for outdoors.
 - **Leave pens, markers and other writing/art materials at school**, in your backpack or on the bus.
 - **Pay attention and be a tour guide later.** At the end of the tour, your docent will give your teacher *Free Return Tickets* for each student. These tickets allow you and one guest to return and visit the Museum for free. When you return, you can take your guests on a tour using what you learned.
 - **Have fun** and enjoy your visit to the Boise Art Museum.
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CHAPERON GUIDELINES

Please share and discuss this information with your chaperons.

Agreeing to be a chaperon for the Boise Art Museum’s School Tour Program means that you understand the following policies and agree to participate when asked by the docent.

- **Chaperons should not bring infants, younger children, or siblings** with them on the tour.
- Keep students with the group and encouraging students to **stay at least 12” away from the artwork and walls.**
- Make sure students **sit (not lay) on the floor, keep their hands and feet to themselves** and stay at least 12” away from the walls and artwork.
- Help students to **pay attention and participate** by staying engaged with the group and the tour.
- **Encourage student participation.** If you feel you have a relevant response to the docent’s questions, please share, but allow your comment to complement the students’ ideas.
- The docent may call on you to **help during the studio project.** Pay attention to the instructions and help all students with the process.
- **Additional adults pay regular admission** and are considered independent visitors apart from the school tour. Additional adults are not required to participate in chaperon responsibilities.
- **Cameras, large purses, backpacks, coats and umbrellas should be left on the bus** or stored by the back exit until the end of the visit.
- **Turn your cell phone off.** The use of cell phones is not permitted in the Museum galleries.

CHAPERON PASSES

BAM offers FREE admission to four (4) adult chaperons with every pre-scheduled tour group. Additional adults must pay regular admission and are considered independent visitors to the Museum. **PLEASE PRINT THIS PAGE BEFORE ARRIVING AT BAM FOR YOUR TOUR.** Designate your four chaperons and have your payment prepared. When you arrive at BAM, please identify your four designated chaperons for the docents. Chaperons must agree to help supervise groups, follow the Museum Manners and participate in the tour activities when asked.

TOUR CHAPERON 1 _____ (TEACHER)

The Boise Art Museum's School Tour Program provides FREE admission to 4 adult chaperons with every group of students. Accepting the responsibilities of being a tour chaperon means that you understand and agree to do the following:

- Accompany their groups at all times while they are touring the Museum.
- Help the docent keep students with the group and at least 12" away from the artwork and walls.
- Assist the students and continue to supervise while in the studios.

Please do not bring infants, siblings or younger children with you as this diverts your attention from the group.

THANK YOU for helping make BAM's School Tour Program safe and enjoyable for everyone.

This chaperon pass is only valid during a pre-scheduled school tour. Duplicates are not accepted. BAM | BOISE ART MUSEUM

TOUR CHAPERON 2 _____ (NAME)

The Boise Art Museum's School Tour Program provides FREE admission to 4 adult chaperons with every group of students. Accepting the responsibilities of being a tour chaperon means that you understand and agree to do the following:

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TOUR CHAPERON 3 _____ (NAME)

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TOUR CHAPERON 4 _____ (NAME)

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VOCABULARY AND OBJECTIVES

SHAPE AND FORM

Installation Art	Art that is created, constructed, or installed on the site where it is exhibited. Often incorporating or transforming the specific space.
Medium	The material that artists use to create their art. One work of art could be made of one medium or several media.
Media	Media is the plural of medium.
Negative Space	Negative space is the background around the subject or area of interest.
Positive Space	Positive space is the area in a work of art that is the subject or area of interest.
Sculpture	Three dimensional artwork created by carving, modeling, welding, casting, shaping. Sculptures can be reliefs (an image that projects in varying degrees from its flatter background) or in the round (meaning you can walk all the way around it).
Three-dimension	Having or appearing to have width, height, and depth.

IN THIS TOUR STUDENTS WILL

- Compare and contrast Paul Vexler's wooden sculptures to ceramic artwork and discuss how sculptures can transform their surrounding space.
- Explore the concept of positive and negative space.
- Participate in gallery activities that encourage students to interact with and recognize the dynamic views of three-dimensional art.
- Apply what they have learned in the galleries about sculptures, medium, and space to create their own three-dimensional objects with both positive and negative space.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sculptor Paul Vexler currently lives and works in the Seattle, Washington area. He received his BFA from Penn State University in 1969. In the 1970s, Vexler began a career in teaching high school art, while also running a successful wood products manufacturing and construction business. Currently, Vexler is the co-founder and CEO of a high-end, custom wood door and window company. However, he also spends much of his time sculpting and producing art. Vexler has created site-specific artwork for Everett Community College, Green River Community College, Seattle University and Washington State University.

ABOUT MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS

This exhibition displays ceramic artwork from the exceptional collection of Kay Hardy and Gregory Kaslo. Their collection ranges from traditional to experimental—each piece respectively representing a top vessel or figure from each artist's career. The exhibit features the work of artists like Rudy Autio, Frank Boyden, Helen Frankenthaler, Jun Kaneko, and Lucie Rie.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY: ART TALK

SHAPE AND FORM

Please view the two reproductions (Pre-Tour Images) with your class and lead a discussion using the following questions as guidelines. There are no “right” answers. The questions are meant to guide the group discussion. Students will revisit and discuss the original works at BAM. The vocabulary in this packet will aid discussion.

Research and experience have shown that students feel more comfortable when they can connect with something familiar once they arrive at the Museum. The students are excited to find “their” works of art while they are at BAM. They enjoy sharing their insights from the classroom discussion with the docent and making valuable comparisons between the textbook-like reproductions and the original works of art.

Paul Vexler

Blue is Beautiful, 2015

Wood, plastic laminate, paint, brass

Boise Art Museum installation (detail)

Courtesy of the Foster/White Gallery

- What shapes do you see in this artwork?
- Does the shape of the sculpture remind you of anything? What, if anything, does it remind you of?

This sculpture was made by Paul Vexler, an American sculptor from the state of Washington. Vexler creates sculptures that are sometimes freestanding and sometimes like *Blue is Beautiful*. Paul Vexler uses recycled and reclaimed wood to create his artwork.

- What have you used that is made from wood? If you were to make something from wood, what would it be?
- Why do you think Vexler makes his art out of wood?

Paul Vexler created this artwork especially for the Boise Art Museum’s Sculpture Court. Artwork designed for a specific space is called an installation.

- Why do you think that some artists choose to create installation art?
- What are some things that an artists may need to consider when creating installation art?

Wouter Dam

Red Sculpture, 2009

Glazed Stoneware

9” x 16” x 14”

Collection of the Boise Art Museum, Gift of Anita Kay Hardy and Gregory Kaslo

in Honor of Terry Melton on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Boise Art Museum

- How is this sculpture similar to the sculpture by Paul Vexler? How is it different?
- This sculpture has both positive space (the shapes of the artwork) and negative space (shapes made by the space around the artwork). Can you point out the positive shapes? Where are the negative spaces?
- What shapes can you see in the negative space?

This sculpture was made by Wouter Dam (Voo-ter Dah-m), a Dutch sculptor who makes his artwork out of ceramic (clay). He starts by making a pot or bowl and then cuts it into pieces and reattaches those pieces to make a work of art.

- Why do you think that Wouter Dam first creates something, then deconstructs it and turns it into something else?
- Have you ever taken something apart and used the pieces for something else? What was it?

The two images may also be accessed through our website, www.boiseartmuseum.org under Education – BAM Teachers – Pre-Visit Art Packs – [Shape and Form](#)

PRE-VISIT IMAGE

SHAPE AND FORM



Paul Vexler
Blue is Beautiful, 2015
Boise Art Museum installation (detail)
Wood, plastic, laminate, paint, brass
Courtesy of the Foster/White Gallery

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SHAPE AND FORM



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Glazed stoneware
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CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SHAPE AND FORM

Social Studies / History / Geography:

- Research how specific cultures use or have used sculpture. Have students identify how the creation and use of sculptures represents elements of a specific culture. Then have students interview each other about what kind of sculpture they would create to represent their own culture.
- Have students compare and contrast ceramic objects from different regions of the world. Students can then create a visual aids to show examples from their specific regions. Have students share with the class how ceramic objects have changed over time for that region with specific information about materials, stylistic preferences, and intended uses.

Language Arts:

- Create a shape poem by having students sketch a simple outline of one of Vexler's sculptures. Writing alongside or within that outline, have students practice using only adjectives to describe how the sculpture looks or makes them feel. Have students outline their words with pen, and erase their initial sketch to reveal only their finished shape poem. Students can repeat the process using only verbs or nouns.
- Have students write the biography of a tree that was eventually used by Paul Vexler in one of his sculptures. Have students explain where the tree grew up, what it hoped it would become, how it ended up in Vexler's studio. Keep in mind Vexler only uses recycled/reclaimed wood. How might this add to the tree's biography?
- People have used vessels to tell stories through out history. Have students draw their own story on a vessel and then share that story, using their vessel as a visual aid. Another variation is to provide students images of vessels decorated with images and symbols. Students can write their own story based on how they interpret the decorations.

Math:

- Bring different ceramic vessels into the classroom and have students use different tools, like rulers, graduated cylinders, and measuring cups, to identify the volume of each.
- Give students several examples of different sculptures. Make sure images of the sculptures show the artwork from all vantage points. Then have students identify whether the examples exhibit asymmetry, bilateral symmetry, or even radial symmetry. They could also determine the number of lines of symmetry of their shapes. Finally, give students math problems in which they can solve the angles, circumferences, and diameters by implementing principles of symmetry.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

SHAPE AND FORM

Science:

- Vexler talks about how tension, compression, and shear (or the force acting in a direction parallel to a surface or to a planar cross section of a body) are all key parts of his sculptures. Talk with students about how each of these principles can be identified in his artwork. Encourage students to use problem solving skills to determine which principles created specific parts of Vexler's sculptures.
- Talk about the chemical changes that occur during clay's firing process. Explore the different temperature, steps, and phases that clay goes through to become ceramic. Have students research and report if different kinds of clay require different kinds of kilns/firing temperatures in order to become ceramic without lasting damage. Visit <http://www.rsc.org/education/eic/issues/2012July/chemistry-pottery-clay-glaze.asp>.

Technology:

- Paul Vexler transported his sculpture *Blue is Beautiful* on a giant spool. When the sculpture was removed it acted as a giant spring, retaining a circular, curvy shape. Springs are used in many aspects of technology. First, have students try to find and identify springs in the classroom. Next, have students research different types of springs—how they work, and what they are used for. Lastly, have students go around and identify other things in the classroom that utilize springs that may have originally been overlooked.
- Pottery in some form has been created for thousands of years. Using the kiln as an example, illustrate how technology changes based on needs and advances. Track the different forms of the kiln and what kind of products they could create. Have students then project what they think kilns will look like in the coming years. Have them sketch and explain what they want their future kiln to look like and the features it will have.

Arts:

- Do a web search and look at the patterns and color schemes utilized in ceramic art. Have students sketch all the different shapes and patterns they can see. Ask students where else they have seen some of these same patterns and shapes. Have students create their own pot, making sure to add their favorite patterns as embellishment.
- Wood is an integral part of all of Paul Vexler's artwork. Give students wooden toothpicks, tongue depressors, coffee sticks, and paint stirrers. Have students paint one side of the wood if they choose and then assemble the wooden pieces into a 3-D sculpture.

WEBSITES

SHAPE AND FORM

For Teachers

<http://www.paulvexler.com/> — Paul Vexler's website

http://www.fosterwhite.com/dynamic/pdfs/Vexler2012_Catalog.pdf — A catalogue of Vexlers' sculptures that are free standing and mechanical

http://fosterwhite.com/dynamic/pdfs/Vexler_2011_Catalog_Update.pdf — A catalogue of Vexlers' sculptures that are suspended

<http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/sculpture-history.htm#introduction> — A history of sculpture with links to specific eras and cultures

<http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/ceramics.htm> — A brief overview of ceramics/pottery and different types of clay and glazes

For Teachers and Students

<http://thevirtualinstructor.com/positive-and-negative-space.html> — Explanation of positive and negative space

<http://www.theschoolrun.com/what-are-the-names-of-2d-and-3d-shapes> — Information about 2-D and 3-D shapes and forms

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3753866> — A brief history of sculpture

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpG_rkIvldc — An instructional video about throwing a pot

<http://moca.org/pc/viewArtTerm.php?id=18> — Information about installation art

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SHAPE AND FORM

Teachers

The 20th Century Art Book. Phaidon Press (March 25, 1999). ISBN-13: 978-0714838502

Francoise Barbe-Gell. ***How to Talk to Children About Modern Art.*** Frances Lincoln (May 29, 2012). ISBN-13: 978-0711232891

Judith Collins. ***Sculpture Today.*** Phaidon (March 24, 2014). ISBN-13: 978-0714857633

Adriano Pedrosa, Laura Hoptman, and Jens Hoffmann. ***Vitamin 3-D New Perspectives in Sculpture and Installation.*** (September 29, 2014). ISBN-13: 978-0714868578

Pre-K to 3rd

Bob Raczka. ***No One Saw.*** Millbrook Press (January 1, 2001). ISBN-13: 978-0761316480

Jessica Noelani Wright. ***Exploring Modern Art (Come Look with Me).*** Charlesbridge (January 1, 2003). ISBN-13: 978-890674106

Peter H. Reynolds. ***Ish.*** Walker Books Ltd. (September 5, 2005). ISBN-13: 978-1844282968

James Diza. ***Making Shapes: A Pop-Up Book.*** (April 1, 2013). ISBN-13 978-1857078275

Henry Arthur Pluckrose. ***Pattern.*** Children's Pr; Reissue edition (September 1995). ISBN-13: 978-0516454559

4th-6th

Susie Hodge. ***How to Survive Modern Art.*** Tate (March 1, 2010). ISBN-13: 978-1854377494

Mary-Jane Opie. ***Sculpture (Eyewitness Art).*** (September 15, 1994). ISBN-13: 978-1564584953

Young Adult / Adult

Carter, David A. ***You call that Art?!: Learn about Modern Sculpture and Make Your Own.*** (October 7, 2014). ISBN-13: 978-1419713071

Edmund de Waal. ***The Pot Book.*** (October 10, 2011). ISBN-13: 978-0714847993

MAKE-IT ACTIVITY

SHAPE AND FORM

To extend the museum experience and connect the tour to your curriculum, consider using or adapting this lesson plan suggestion

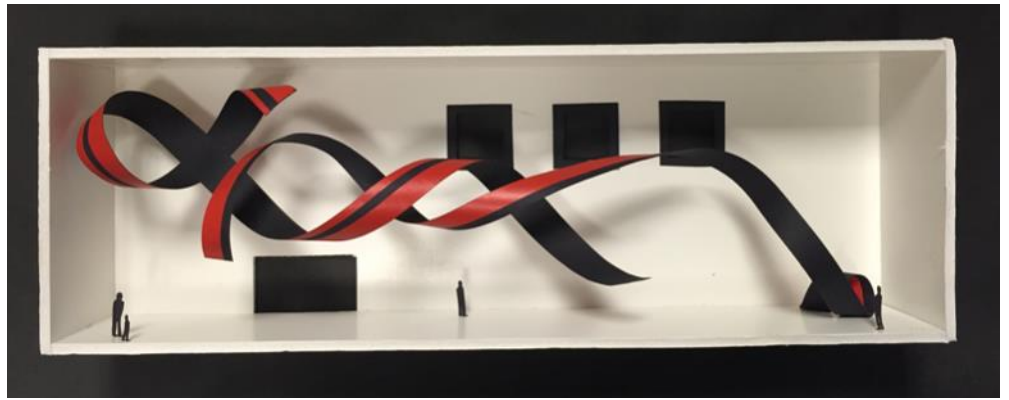
MODEL INSTALLATION

Introduction

In this Make-It! Activity, students will extend what they have learned about sculptural elements, positive and negative shapes, and installation art by making a model of a space and a work of art.

Materials

- Cardboard/foam core
- Scissors
- Colored Contact paper
- Construction paper
- Wire
- Glue
- Masking tape



Instructions

- Have students discuss attributes of sculptures and how the sculpture interacts with the space around it.
- Have students think about their school, house, or a building they are familiar with. Next have them pick a specific room from that building.
- Have students construct a miniature model of that room.
- Then, have students create and decorate a miniature sculpture out of wire, cardboard, contact paper, or wood. Reiterate that the sculpture should proportionally fit in their model room. The sculptures could hang from the ceiling or be free standing.
- Finally, have the students install their sculpture in their model room. Students can each make their own room, or work in groups and add multiple individual sculptures to a shared model.

EXTENSION:

Writing about Art

Have students practice writing artist statements about the works of art they have created. Students can include what they were hoping to create, how they created it, why they made the artwork they did, what influenced and inspired them, etc.

Projecting Costs

Have students think about the materials they would use if they were to make a true-to-size version of their sculpture. Have them project the amount of materials they would need to complete the sculpture, and research how much those materials would cost. Then have students complete a projected budget of what it would cost to carry out sculpting and constructing the real version of their artwork.