

EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: Playing with Technology
Subject: Joe Mangrum
Discipline: Visual Art (Sculpture)

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Still image from SPARK story, 2006

SECTION I - OVERVIEW

EPISODE THEME

Playing with Technology

SUBJECT

Joe Mangrum

GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

OBJECTIVE

Understand the development of personal works of art and their relationship to broader social themes and ideas, abstract concepts, and the history of art.

Develop basic observational drawing and/or painting skills.

Develop visual, written, listening and speaking skills through looking at, creating and talking about visual artworks.

Develop an expressive visual vocabulary with which to address personal and/or social themes and ideas.

Develop observational and representational skills by looking at and reproducing images of people, places and things accurately and thoughtfully.

STORY SYNOPSIS

Since the mid-1990s, Joe Mangrum has been making temporary floor sculptures from found objects.

Spark visits Mangrum as he works on a large scale piece for Red Ink Studios on San Francisco's bustling Market Street.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Group oral discussion, review and analysis, including peer review and aesthetic valuing as a group.

Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance.

Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently.

Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another.

Critical reflection on personal expressions and how they are seen and received by others.

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to temporary installation artwork, mandalas, and the work of Joe Mangrum
- To provide context for the understanding of land and environmental art.
- To inspire students to think beyond typical ideas of art making.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- TV & VCR with SPARK story about Joe Mangrum
- Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sounds card, printer
- Cassette player, CD player, or computer audio program

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
- Pencils, pens, and paper

INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects

Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations

Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems

Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

CONTENT OVERVIEW

Since the mid-1990s, Joe Mangrum has been making temporary installations from found objects. Often exhibiting his designs in public spaces, Mangrum hopes to catch his viewers off guard, inserting something unexpected into their everyday routines. Spark visits Mangrum as he works on a large-scale piece for Red Ink Studios on San Francisco's bustling Market Street.

Mangrum began his career as a painter, but after 15 years, he began to feel frustrated with his reliance on the gallery system. Thinking that he would be able to reach a larger audience by making and showing his work outside of the gallery setting, Mangrum began assembling installations in public spaces like sidewalks and parks. He also he sought other media in which to work and decided on objects that he could find easily and in abundance, such as flower petals and beans. Mangrum breaks the vegetation into its core components, then reassembles the parts into elaborate patterns.

His installations often reiterate metaphysical polarities -- such as man/nature and life/death -- and speak to current world affairs. In 1995, Mangrum had his first gallery exhibition of this type of work at San Francisco State University. The exhibit consisted of five mandalas laid out on the gallery floor: one composed of natural materials, one composed of currency, two composed of computer parts and other industrial symbols, and a fifth, amorphous piece composed of a combination of natural and industrial elements. Mangrum intended this last mandala to suggest that nature and industry could co-exist without monetary exchange.

Spark caught up with Mangrum hard at work on "Birth and Death," a similar design for San Francisco's

Red Ink Studios. The gallery is located in a storefront on Market Street, so Mangrum's attenuated process of planning and installing the piece is exposed to passersby. The large installation is divided into two sections: "Birth," which is composed of natural materials, such as seeds, beans, lentils and sprouts; and "Death," which is composed of computer parts, bullets and bullet casings, cross-sections of engine tailpipes, and bricks covered in gold leaf. As in earlier works, Mangrum places these two sets of objects in opposition, in hopes of starting a dialogue about the use and abuse of industry and wealth. He also aims to encourage viewers to think more deeply about their surrounding environments.

Joe Mangrum earned a B.F.A. in 1991 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 2003, he was selected for the Florence Biennale, where he received the Lorenzo de Medici award for his piece addressing war called "Fragile". Mangrum regularly shows his work in galleries and public spaces around San Francisco.

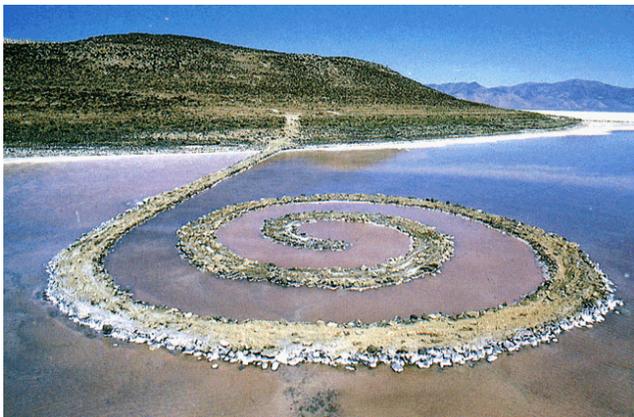
THE BIG PICTURE

Joe Mangrum's work comes out of a tradition of making temporary or semi-permanent works in the outdoors, sometimes called land art or earthworks. Though earthworks have a history that stretches back to ancient times (many regard England's Stonehenge and Peru's Nazca Lines as early examples of earthworks) the term more commonly refers to a movement that gained ground initially in America in the 1960s.

The first modern American earthworks were built by a German artist, Herbert Bayer, a former faculty member at the renowned Bauhaus design school. In 1938 Bayer immigrated to the United States, eventually moving to Aspen, CO to act as a civic planning consultant on the development of Aspen,

and later worked as an architect for the newly forming Aspen Institute For Humanistic Studies. There he began making earthworks for the city of Aspen and the Institute, including *Grass Mound* (1955), *Marble Garden* (1955), and *Anderson Park* (1973-74).

In the late-1960s, earthworks saw a resurgence, as a number of artists began thinking outside the limitations of museum and gallery walls, hoping to find new venues and possibilities for their work. Artists like Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, and Nancy Holt looked to deserts and industrial landscapes outside of the urban cultural centers where they had habitually exhibited their art. Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* of 1970 became the most famous work of this period--a 1,500 foot long jetty located at Rozel Point, on the North Shore of Utah's Great Salt Lake. For much of its existence, the sculpture has been submerged in the lake's waters, though from time to time the water level drops and the jetty re-emerges. When Smithson died unexpectedly in a small airplane accident in 1973, he left many more plans for earthworks, including proposals to work with the mining industry in reclaiming abandoned quarries for parks.



Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970

Another example of this kind of work is Michael Heizer's *Double Negative* of 1969-70. Constructed outside the town of Overton in the Southern Nevada desert, *Double Negative* is a sculpture made by removal rather than addition. On the top of a mesa, Heizer cut two trenches that align across a wide gap in the mesa's contour. To make the sculpture, which is roughly 1,500 feet long, 50 feet deep, and 30 feet wide, Heizer had to move over 240,000 tons of rock, , creating a dramatic experience for the visitor.



Michael Heizer, *Double Negative*, 1969-70

<http://doublenegative.tarasen.net>

In the 1970s and 80s, a different kind of earthworks movement began to emerge, closer to that of Mangrum. This second wave of earthworks artists was composed primarily of British sculptors like Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long. Where American artists were largely concerned with industrial and barren landscapes, the British manifestation of earthworks continues themes of the Romantic movement of the 19th century, valuing pristine natural landscapes over those touched by industry. These artists make works that are more fragile, often lasting for little more than a few hours, and rely on photography as documentation of their existence. Works such as Goldsworthy's *Rowan Leaves with Hole* underscore the lyrical beauty of the landscape and the impermanence of all things in the wild.



Andy Goldsworthy, *Rowan Leaves with Hole*, n.d.

RESOURCES – TEXTS

Beardsley, John. Earthworks and Beyond: Contemporary Art in the Landscape. New York: Abbeville Press, 1998.

Drury, Chris. Chris Drury: Found Moments in Time and Space. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998.

Flam, Jack, ed. Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings. Berkeley: UC Press, 1996.

Goldsworthy, Andy. Passages. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2004.

Kastner, Jeffery and Brian Wallis, eds. Land and Environmental Art. London: Phaidon Press, 1998.

Ronte, Dieter, Christo and Jeanne-Claude: International Projects. New York: Phillip Wilson Publishers, 2005.

Sonfist, Alan, ed. Art in the Land: A Critical Anthology of Environmental Art. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983.

RESOURCES – WEB SITES

www.joemangrum.com

Joe Mangrum's personal website, with examples of his work, and photographs available for sale.

<http://doublenegative.tarasen.net/index.html>

Website dedicated to the work of Michael Heizer, with information on visiting *Double Negative*.

<http://www.robertsmithson.com/>

Robert Smithson's website

<http://www.sculpture.org.uk/artists/AndyGoldsworthy>

Information on Andy Goldsworthy from the 21st Century British Sculpture Web site.

<http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/index.html.en>

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's official website.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/collections/glossary/definition.jsp?entryId=151>

Land art on the Tate Gallery Web site.

<http://www.the-artists.org/MovementView.cfm?id=3E8DA10D-FCCE-4975-A80DA11B65BC4257>

More information on land and environmental art.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Andy Goldsworthy's Rivers and Tides. Color, 90 mins. New Video Group, 2004.

5 Films About Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Color, 282 mins. Plexifilm, 2004.

BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS

Red Ink Studios
1035 Market Street
San Francisco
Open Wed-Sat, 12-4 and Thu 2-8
415.861.3402

deYoung Museum
Golden Gate Park
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive
San Francisco, CA 94118
415.863.3330

SECTION III – VOCABULARY

DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND CONCEPTS IN THE SPARK STORY

Amoebic

An animal composed of only one cell that has no fixed shape. It is the best known of the single-celled animals, or protozoa. The term *amoeba* or *amoebic* is used to refer to something with an indefinite, changeable shape.

Amorphic

Shapeless, having no definite shape

Chi

The vital force believed in Taoism and other Chinese thought to be inherent in all things
Source of energy

Co-exist

Exist side by side

Commodified

Made into a thing or commodity

Deconstruct

To take apart, to analyze

Detonation

Explosion, blow up

Dialogue

Talk, discussion, discourse, exchange of ideas

Grid

Network, framework, lattice

Mandala

A generic term for a circular plan or sphere often with a geometric pattern which carries universal and symbolic meaning As an art form, it merges art with eastern and western philosophy and spirituality, and with psychology and science.

Morphs

Relating to form and shape

Toxins

Poisons

SECTION IV – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION POINTS



<http://www.joemangrum.com/911justinhermanjoemangrum.html> Joe Mangrum's website - Installations

Researching Mandalas

As an art form, the mandala is based on a sacred circle that merges art with eastern and western philosophy and spirituality, and with psychology and science. In the West it can also refer to the "personal world" in which one lives, offering **through art a journey of creative expression - spiritual, psychological and artistic**. Mandalas are also used as symbols for meditation.

Invite students to work in small groups to trace the origin of the term in:

- Hindu philosophy
- Buddhist thinking
- Muslim sacred art
- Tibetan sand painting
- Psychology

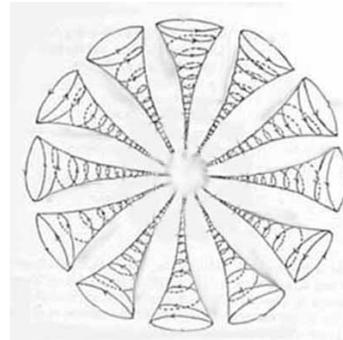
As a resource for this research, visit

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandala#Other_meanings_of_mandala

Invite students to share their findings in the larger group. Conclude by projecting images of mandalas from different cultures onto a screen in the classroom

Examples can be found at

<http://www.crystalinks.com/mandala.html>



For example: Sacred Geometry

Alchemy Wheel of Time - Karma - Synchronicity - Creation - Geometry

Joe Mangrum's Mandalas

Screen the SPARK story on Joe Mangrum and ask students to note the way Mangrum describes what he is trying to do through his artwork? What words does he use? Then ask students for an initial response to the work.

Mute the sound and replay the story, freezing the frame on one image of a mandala. Invite students to look closely at the image and respond to the following questions. Encourage them write down their ideas.

- Describe what you see in as much detail as you can (*give students at least 15 minutes for this exercise*)
- What interests you in this piece?
- What is unique?
- What ideas or associations does it inspire?
- Is there a theme or central idea in this work?
- Does it impact you emotionally/ intellectually or psychologically?
- Does this work express symbolic ideas or universal meanings?
- How important is balance in the work?

Share students' notes and thoughts in the larger group.

Move on to talk about location. Does location matter?

Does "place" affect how a work of art is seen? Does it make a difference if this piece or artwork in general is displayed outside the gallery system? Is it important to Joe Mangrum? Why?

Making Mandalas

Suggest that students bring in natural materials such as seeds, beans, lentils, and sprouts (materials that Mangrum uses) or other food such as fruit or an array of vegetables. Students can also choose found objects such as twigs, pencils, flowers, leaves, stones, beads etc.

Allow students the time and space to assemble their own floor sculpture bearing in mind that they are seeking to create patterns which are balanced and symmetrical - important in the design of the mandala.

If they choose to create an amorphous design, this will be building in oppositional elements and suggesting conflict and discord.

To express symbolic meanings and concepts through their design, they should reflect on issues that are important to them and attempt to represent these deeper meanings in their work.

When students are ready, invite them to talk about their artwork to the group as a whole, and explain their thinking and process.

As an alternative method, students can create their mandala design using a compass, ruler and protractor, pencils, fine point Sharpies, Micron Pens, and erasers to perfect the geometric effect. They should construct their design on heavy drawing paper and use line, pattern and texture to emphasize contrast and opposition or alignment and harmony.

SPARKLER:

* For students who are interested in making a digital mandala, visit http://raysweb.net/making_mandalas/

Landscape as Inspiration

Artists have used the landscape as both a source of inspiration as well as a material for creating artwork. Landscape has also served as a site of installation.

Joe Mangrum's work comes out of this tradition of making temporary or semi-permanent works in the outdoors, sometimes called Land Art or Earthworks. (See **The Big Picture** section in this guide)

Introduce the terms 'Earth Art,' 'Earthworks,' 'Land Art,' and 'Environmental Art' and explain these art forms and how they were connected to the natural environment. For definitions and information, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_art

Suggest that students work in groups to research how contemporary artists have approached the landscape to create art. Ask them to choose one artist from the following list to research and ensure that each group selects a different artist so that the class can share information. The group should choose from Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long, and Chris Drury, Jim Denevan, Olivier Arnoux, Hamish Fulton, Ana Mendieta. Ask them to find examples of the work of each artist to share with the group as a whole using illustrations where possible.

For example, Andy Goldsworthy draws on nature for inspiration using natural materials such as leaves, grasses, stones, wood, sand, clay, ice, and snow.

Ask students to think about:

- Why and how did these artists choose to work outside the gallery and museum system to create their work?

- How is their work similar to or different from art you see inside museums or galleries?
- How is their work similar to or different from the work of Joe Mangrum?

Invite each group to share their findings of the 1970s and 80s Earthworks from the artists studied.

Mandalas, Meditation & Symbolism

Invite students to brainstorm their understanding of symbolism in artwork. Explain that symbols denote literal and conventional meanings as well as allude to or connote abstract and hidden meanings. For example, a rose can denote a flower or it can symbolize love, an emotion.

Mandalas are universal symbols. As a circle the mandala symbolizes wholeness; it expresses the self and the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and nature, and indeed the universe.

Mandalas are used all over the world as an aid to meditative practices, especially in Indian and Tibetan cultures. Engage students in an exploration of such practices through symbolic observation and contemplation using the mandala as a focal point.

Using the SPARK story, mute the sound and freeze the frame on Joe Mangrum's Flower Sculpture at the beginning of the segment. It would be helpful to project the image onto a screen in the classroom so that it is clearly visible. Pause the DVD on three or four frames and then capture one frame of the mandala.

Ask students to focus on the image. They should concentrate on the image and follow their thoughts and associations wherever they lead. The intention is to bring subconscious thoughts to consciousness if possible. Make clear that this activity is not about tapping into the artist's meaning or purpose, but to

focus on a more personal journey, on the meanings and realizations inside of each individual.

After at least 10 -15 minutes, move on to symbolic observation. Ask students to contemplate the image and look for symbols and specific points in the design to contemplate. What is the symbolic importance of the materials? How are they positioned? Juxtaposed? How do they work together to represent an idea?

Assure students that they should not worry if they get distracted or cannot concentrate. They should keep coming back to the mandala each time and follow their thoughts for at least 15 - 20minutes .

To conclude suggest that students write about this exercise, both in terms of the experience of contemplation and symbolic observation, and also by reflecting on the thoughts and realizations that occurred.

SPARKLER:

(9 -12th grades)

* Carl Jung was interested in the symbolism of the mandala as a representation of the unconscious self. "I saw that everything, all paths I had been following, all steps I had taken, were leading back to a single point -- namely, to the mid-point. It became increasingly plain to me that the mandala is the centre. It is the exponent of all paths. It is the path to the centre, to individuation. ... I knew that in finding the mandala as an expression of the self I had attained what was for me the ultimate."

C. G. Jung. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* at <http://www.netreach.net/~nhojem/jung.htm>

For further discussion of Jung, visit <http://www.crystalinks.com/mandala.html>

Discuss Carl Jung's interpretations of the symbolism of the mandala with students.

RELATED STANDARDS -VISUAL ARTS

Grade 4 – Artistic Perception

Analyze Art Elements and Principles of Design

1.5 Describe and analyze the elements of art (color, shape/form, line, texture, space and value), emphasizing form, as they are used in works of art and found in the environment.

Grade 7 – 1.0 Artistic Perception

1.1 Describe the environment and selected works of art, using the elements of art and the principles of design.

RELATED STANDARDS -VISUAL ARTS

Grade 8

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Develop a theory about the artist's intent in a series of works of art, using reasoned statements to support personal opinions.

Grades 9-12, Advanced

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

4.2 Identify the intentions of artists creating contemporary works of art and explore the implications of those intentions.

5.0 Connection, Relations & Applications

5.2 Compare and contrast works of art, probing beyond the obvious and identifying psychological content found in the symbols and images.

RELATED STANDARDS - VISUAL ARTS

Grades 9-12, Proficient

1.0 Artistic Perception Impact of Media Choice

1.5 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

1.0 Artistic Perception

Analyze Art Elements and Principles of Design

1.3 Research and analyze the work of an artist and write about the artist's distinctive style and its contribution to the meaning of the work.

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.



For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/index.asp>.