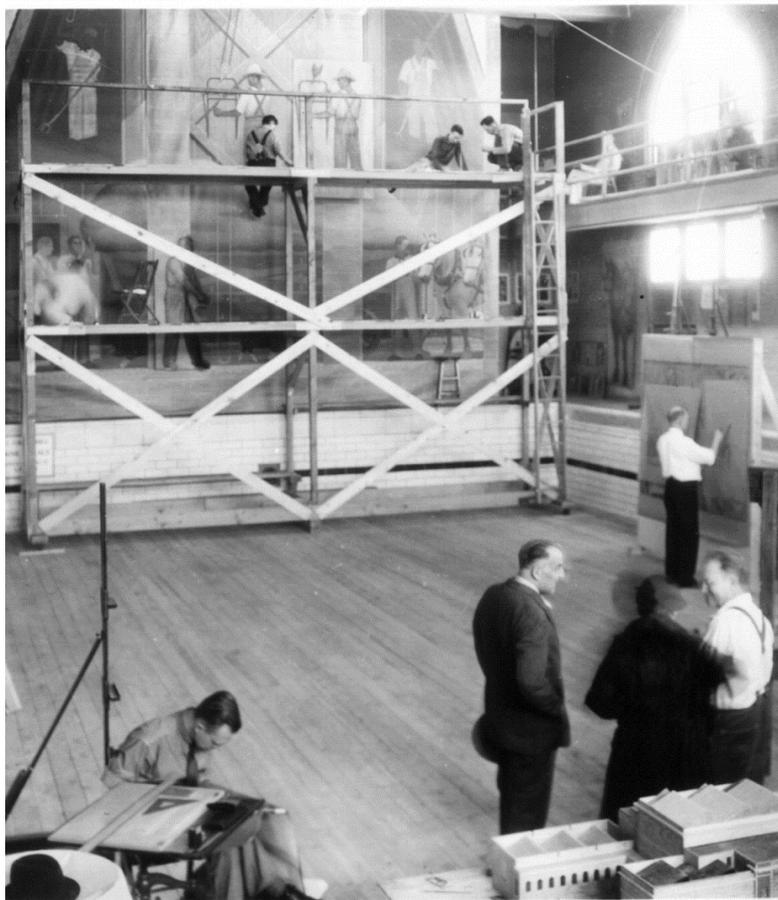




MAKING ART PUBLIC

STATE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS



Educator Guide

Developed in conjunction with the exhibition
Making Art Public at the
State Historical Museum of Iowa

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

IOWA ARTS COUNCIL
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS



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Alignment with Educational Standards

Iowa Core and National Standards for Arts Education

- Grades K-12 Fine Arts Visual Arts, Alignment with Iowa Core Universal Constructs

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/sites/files/ed/documents/Visual%20Arts%20Iowa%20Core%20Companion%202014-01-17.pdf>

This guide was developed by the Iowa Arts Council and State Historical Museum in conjunction with the exhibit *Making Art Public* at the State Historical Museum.

The materials, online resources and activities contained in this guide are intended to supplement and enhance student learning around this exhibition and connect to applicable educational standards.

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Cover photo: A team of artists, working under the direction of Grant Wood, director of the federal Public Works of Art Project for Iowa in 1934, creates the mural series *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follows* in an Iowa City gymnasium swimming pool, converted into a studio for this project. Photo credit: University Museums, Iowa State University.



EXHIBIT OVERVIEW

Take-home messages:

- Public art is a collaborative process.
- The process of creating public art is complex.
- Public art is more than outdoor sculpture.
- Public art draws on science and technology.
- Public art tells stories about history.
- The location of a public artwork is meaningful.
- Now I realize there is public art all around me.

INTRODUCTION

Art became part of Iowa's neighborhoods and towns by design.

The tradition of art in public spaces began with monuments, continued with government's encouragement of the arts and unfolds today in communities large and small. Many Iowans made art public, from ordinary citizens and public officials to visionary leaders and artists.

Visitors to this exhibition will recognize and gain an appreciation for how public art is made and how it developed across Iowa – paying special attention to how public art humanizes our built environment, connects us to our natural and cultural heritage, creates a sense of place, and is part of the fabric of our colleges and communities.

Themes

The exhibit is divided into four thematic areas:

- How Did Iowans Make Art Public?
- How Is Public Art Made?
- Where Can I Find Public Art?
- What is Public Art About?



HOW DID IOWANS MAKE ART PUBLIC?



Historical Monuments

Throughout history, societies have built monuments commemorating historical figures and events.

Traditionally monuments have interpreted subjects such as leadership, nobility and war and embodied values including honor, freedom and justice.

Top:

The Soldier and Sailors Monument on the Iowa State Capitol grounds in Des Moines commemorates Iowans who fought during the Civil War. Iowa artist Harriet Ketcham designed the monument but died before its completion in 1896.

Guiding Question

Are monuments public art?

As objects that symbolically represent an individual or collective viewpoint, and are placed in the public sphere, monuments bear a strong relationship to public art.

However, unlike monuments, which generally recognize a specific person, people, event or cause, public art may be purely aesthetic and contain no reference to the past or to actual events.

Can you think of examples of contemporary monuments that blur this distinction?

[Shattering Silence](#)

Iowa State Capitol grounds, Des Moines

This abstract work by Iowa artist James Ellwanger commemorates an 1839 ruling by the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court that granted permanent freedom to a former slave who entered Iowa.





HOW DID IOWANS MAKE ART PUBLIC?

Depression-era public works of art in Iowa

Between 1933 and 1943, it is estimated that 10,000 artists produced more than 100,000 works of art as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Works of art created under the Federal Art Project were loaned to schools, art centers, and libraries in Iowa; another WPA program, called the Public Works of Art project, supported the creation of large-scale murals. WPA-sponsored artwork still exists in federal buildings, post offices and libraries across Iowa.



In-Gallery Questions

- Why did the federal government support artists and the arts during the Great Depression?
- What role did Grant Wood play in the WPA?
- What are some of the more common subjects of WPA artworks?

Post-Visit Questions

- Can you find an artwork made during the WPA art near you?

Right:

Parks Library at Iowa State University is home to a set of murals, called *When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow*, designed by Grant Wood. A team of student artists worked under Wood's supervision in a gymnasium in Iowa City converted into a massive studio for this project (see cover image).



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Public Art Ethics
Grades: 9-12

I. Learning Outcomes

- A. To acquaint students with murals in Iowa and the cultural, social and ethical considerations that affect how they are created, sited and preserved.

2. Learning Objectives

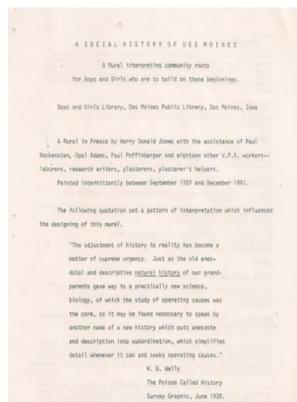
- A. Students will be introduced to two murals overseen by Grant Wood.
- B. Students will be introduced to ethical considerations affecting these murals' preservation.



The Social History of Des Moines

A team of 21 artists, led by Harry Donald Jones and overseen by Grant Wood, created this mural tracing the history of Des Moines from prehistoric times to its founding between 1934 and 1941.

In 1948, after the Des Moines Fine Arts Association moved out of the Library, Library officials proposed erasing the mural, eventually opting to cover it behind bookshelves. The work was restored and returned to view when the World Food Prize Foundation made the former library building its headquarters in 2011.



[View the original proposal for this artwork](#)



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Corn Murals

Still an unknown artist, Grant Wood was commissioned to paint murals for four hotels in Council Bluffs, Cedar Rapids and Sioux City and Waterloo in 1927. The murals were designed to provide the feeling that a visitor was sitting among the corn stalks in an Iowa field.

Wood's murals in Sioux City and Cedar Rapids ended up in the Sioux City Art Center and the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art. But, in 1970, the owners of the hotel in Council Bluffs allowed the public to cut and remove pieces of their Wood mural. Community leaders are still trying to recover many lost pieces and restore the complete mural today.



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Public Art Ethics

Grades: 9-12

RESOURCE LIST:

When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow: Grant Wood and Christian Petersen Murals.

Author Lea Rosson DeLong.
University Museums, Iowa State University, 2006.

Murals of Iowa, 1886 - 2006.

Author Gregg R. Narber. Iowan Books Publication, 2010.

Online

Corn Room murals:

[Sioux City Art Center](#)

[Pottawattamie County](#)

A Social History of Des Moines

[Original letters](#)

[Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation](#)

Heritage Preservation

[Rescue Outdoor Murals](#)

College Art Association

[Intellectual Property and the Arts](#)

Procedure

1. Students should select one mural to research and conduct research from multiple sources.
2. Students should consider issues around artist's rights, owners' rights, and the historic preservation of murals.
3. Students should prepare a short presentation based on their research.

Questions for Reflection:

- What are some possible reasons why *A Social History of Des Moines* might have been hidden from view or viewed as controversial?
- Why were the Corn Room murals important to Grant Wood's development as an artist?
- Who does public art belong to? The owner? The artist? The public?
- What rights does the artist have? What rights does the owner have?
- Is the preservation of historic murals important? Why?

Assessment & Evaluation

- Now I have an appreciation of the ethical issues surrounding public art.
- Now I can see the differences among the rights of the public, the artist, and the owner.



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: An Introduction to Public Art in Iowa
Grades: 6-8

I. LEARNING OUTCOMES

- A. Students will be introduced to the concept of public art.
- B. Students will be introduced to a diverse range of public artworks in Iowa
- C. Students will compare artworks with similar subjects, themes, purposes, history and culture.
- D. Students will share ideas, images and objects with others through a variety of ways.

Education Standards

Strategies by 6-8 Grade Bands:

- ✓ Students will make connections between the visual arts, other disciplines and daily life.
- ✓ Identify and compare visual products and processes with similar subjects, themes, purposes, history and culture.”
- ✓ Share ideas, images and objects with others through a variety of ways.



Introduction

Look closely – public art is all around you.

Today nearly a dozen Iowa communities have formal programs supporting the creation, enjoyment and care of public art. In other places, public art originates from the dedication of volunteers and community members. This “grassroots art” involves residents in the creative process and weaves local stories, symbols, and history into the artwork.

What is Public Art?

Public art is not an art “form.” Its size can be huge or small. It can tower fifty feet high or call attention to the paving beneath your feet. Its shape can be abstract or realistic (or both), and it may be cast, carved, built, assembled, or painted. It can be site-specific or stand in contrast to its surroundings.

What distinguishes public art is the unique association of how it is made, where it is, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. ... Public art is a reflection of how we see the world—the artist’s response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are.
 -- From the [Association for Public Art](#)

Above: *The Gathering: Of Time, Of Land, Of Many Hands.*
 Nina Smoot Cain and John Pitman Weber, 2000.



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✓ Share ideas, images and objects with others through a variety of ways.

Procedure

Part One: Independent research

Find several examples of public art, either locally or on a field trip, that represent one or more of the following themes:

- A particular event or person that is important to your community or state
- An artist’s unique interpretation of a broad subject familiar to Iowans (e.g. agriculture)
- An idea or concept based on the artist’s personal history or life experience

Compare and contrast the artworks. For each artwork, consider:

- What story does the artwork tell?
- Why is this story important to your community/state?
- How is the location of the artwork important to the story?
- Is the artwork a popular attraction in your community/state? Why or why not?
- What feelings or opinions do others express about this artwork? Has it been a point of controversy?

Can’t find a public artwork near your community? Try your local library, historical society, arts council or museum.

Additional resources:

- [Public Art Archive](#)



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Procedure

Part Two: In-class presentation

Create a presentation based upon your research to share with the class. Presentations should include photographs and/or video of the artwork.

Option: Presentations can be delivered to local service clubs (Lions, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Kiwanis) as meeting programs.

Assessment & Evaluation

- I understand that public art addresses themes and subjects related to history, culture and daily life.
- I can compare and contrast public artworks that have different meanings, ideas and purposes.



WHAT IS PUBLIC ART ABOUT?

Public art does more than add visual interest to our surroundings. It tells stories about who we are, where we have been and where we are going.

Odyssey by Albert Paley

Prominently sited along Interstate 80 near Council Bluffs, *Odyssey* serves as a gateway to Iowa and symbolizes the transformation of agriculture and the region.



Discussion

“The genius of America is for machinery and technology. This beauty stuff is all bunk.” – unknown

Artist Albert Paley could have been thinking of this saying when he designed *Odyssey*. With their sharp, jagged edges and unusual appearance, these sculptures are not beautiful in a traditional sense, are they?

In-Gallery Questions

- Can you find anything beautiful in or about this sculpture?
- Does public art need to be beautiful?
- What shapes and imagery can you find in *Odyssey* that reflects its subject?
- How does *Odyssey* represent change?
- What similarities or differences can you find between the Model Grain Reaper artifact and the *Odyssey* models?
- How is *Odyssey* specific to this place and region?

Additional Resources

[Iowa West Foundation](#)

Educators: pick-up free poster at museum

Joslyn Art Museum

[Albert Paley’s Process Teaching Poster](#)

[Albert Paley Lesson Plan](#)

Videos

[Albert Paley on Odyssey](#) (01:05)

[Paley Shares His Vision with Students](#)(02:23)



WHAT IS PUBLIC ART ABOUT?

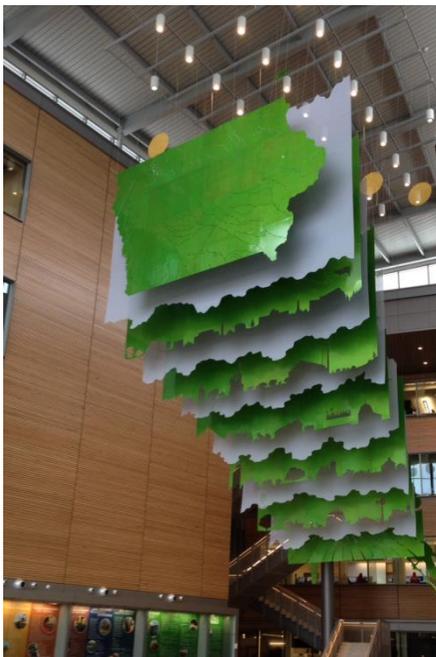
Floating World

By Ralph Helmick

Biorenewables Research Laboratory at Iowa State University (2014)

Inspired by Iowa's rich agricultural history, *Floating World* represents centuries of change, as well as the potential of agricultural research to shape our future.

The sweeping sculptural installation, which rises nearly five stories in height, is made of more than half a dozen suspended steel panels. Each panel depicts imagery relating to the history and development of agriculture.



Discussion

Guiding Questions

- Can you find symbols relating to the modernization and mechanization of agriculture?
- Can you find depictions of farming life and industry?
- How does the artwork relate to technology and scientific innovation in agriculture?

Additional Resources

Download the artwork [fact sheet](#), compiled by University Museums, Iowa State University

Download the [artist proposal](#)

View [images](#) of the artwork

STEM connections:
agricultural and life sciences



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Playing With Size
Grades: K-5

Materials

- Large drawing pad or roll
- Markers, pens, colored crayons or oil pastels
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Learning Outcomes

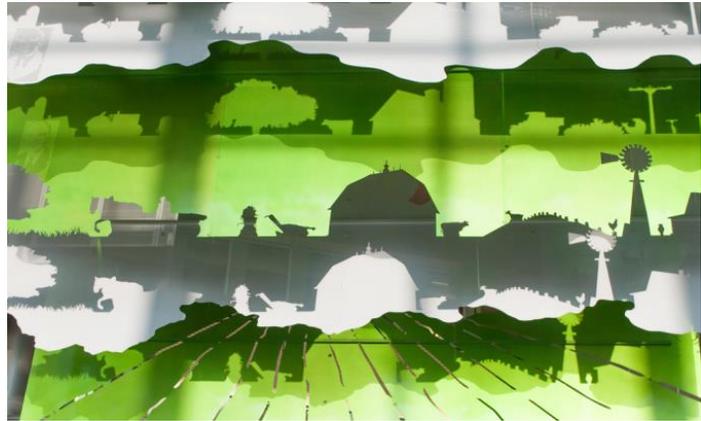
- I can find a story in a work of art.
- I can draw something small big.
- I can draw something big small.
- I can make my picture stand out.
- I can arrange shapes and materials in a composition.

Educational Standards:

Strategies by K-5 Grade Bands:

1: Students will understand and apply media, techniques and processes.

2: Students will understand and apply elements and principles of design and other art structures.



Introduction

In this art lesson, students look closely at the scenes and living objects portrayed in *Floating World*, a suspended installation created by artist Ralph Helmick to represent changes in agriculture over many centuries in Iowa.

Objective

Changing the size or scale of something compared to the world around it can engage the imagination and tell a story.

Procedure:

1. View the images of the artwork. In response to the artwork's realistic subject matter and monumental scale, ask each student to identify an object depicted in the artwork either as larger or smaller than in real life (example: larger=dragonfly; smaller=truck).

Example imagery/symbols in artwork:

- A red-winged blackbird, a dragonfly and a cattail are legacies of a pre-agrarian Iowa
- Dolly, a genetically reproduced sheep, symbolizes advances in genetics
- 1930 Model A Ford
- Windmills and modern wind turbines



ACTIVITY GUIDE

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Grades: K-5

Materials

- Large drawing pad or roll
- Markers, pens, colored crayons or oil pastels
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Learning Outcomes

- I can find a story in a work of art.
- I can draw something small big.
- I can draw something big small.
- I can make my picture stand out.
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Educational Standards:

Strategies by K-5 Grade Bands:
1: Students will understand and apply media, techniques and processes.

2: Students will understand and apply elements and principles of design and other art structures.

2. Ask students to find a sheet of construction paper. Have students cut the construction paper into a shape that they remember observing in *Floating World*.
3. Assign students to groups. Using the construction paper cutouts, ask groups to create their own artwork. Ask students to layer different colored cutouts to create their own floating worlds, reminding them that they can overlap and combine shapes and reduce or enlarge scale for effect.
4. Once the cutouts are glued down on a paper roll or sheet, students may further explore line, color and shape by working directly on the paper roll or sheet in colored markers, crayons, or oil pastels.

Discuss the principles of art and design (definitions provided in Exhibit Vocabulary in back). Have students locate and list examples of the following elements of visual art in *Floating World* and their artwork.

- Form
- Line
- Shape
- Space
- Texture
- Value

Then have student(s) decide if these elements are working to create any of the following design principles:

- Balance
- Contrast
- Emphasis
- Proportion
- Pattern
- Rhythm
- Unity
- Variety



HOW IS PUBLIC ART MADE?

Public art is a creative and collaborative process that includes professionals in many fields, including design, architecture, urban planning, engineering, management and construction.

Project Phases:

Artist Selection

A committee is formed to review potential artists. Ultimately, artists are selected based on their past work, experience and on the strength of a proposal.

Conceptual Design

An artist develops ideas by conducting research, visiting with community members and drawing.

Design Development

Design concepts are refined by making more polished drawings and scale models, known as maquettes, of the proposed artwork.

Fabrication

The final artwork may be built in stages or in different locations.

Installation

Installing public art is exciting and nerve wracking. After months or years of hard work, many details must fall into place when the big moment arrives.

In-Gallery Questions

- *Imagine that you are on the committee to select an artist. What would YOU look for?*
- *Why do you think it's important for an artist to visit with members of the building or community where the artwork will be located?*

Additional Resources

- View Ralph Helmick's [artist proposal](#) for *Floating World*
- Compare sculptor [Albert Paley's maquettes](#) to his finished artworks
- [Methods and Materials](#)
Read about the considerations that go into installing public art.



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Site-specific art

Grades: 9-12

In-gallery or in classroom

Artwork reference;

e+l+e+m+e+n+t+a+l

Norie Sato

Hach Chemistry Building

Iowa State University

Learn more at [Public Art Archive](#)

Video

[Behind the Work](#)



Introduction

Increasingly, artworks placed in public settings consider the physical environment, history, culture and meaning associated with their site. This is a concept referred to “site-specific” art.

Site-specific art is intended to become a permanent part of its setting, and its meaning is understood to be changed if moved.

e+l+e+m+e+n+t+a+l

Artist Norie Sato created this multi-part public artwork, centered around the building entrance and lobby, which incorporates chemical patterns and elements. The backlit aluminum panels feature Penrose patterns found in molecular and other chemical structures.

STEM connections: chemistry and mathematics



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Site-specific art

Grades: 9-12

In-gallery or in classroom

Materials

Paper

Pen or pencil

Time

60 – 75 minutes

Education Standards

9-12 Grade Band

3: Students will consider, select, apply and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas.

5: Students will reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their own and other's work.

6: Students will make connections between the visual arts, other disciplines and daily life.

Instructions

You will be part of an art selection committee determining the placement and selection of an artwork for your school. An artist or design team will be developing a public art proposal based on your committee's recommendations.

Procedure

1. Divide students into selection committees of 3-5 members. One student should be the recorder.
2. Assign a different budget to each group (e.g. \$10,000 – 100,000). One student should act as the committee treasurer and estimate costs against the budget.
3. Ask each selection committee to consider potential sites at school for public artwork. The sites can be interior or exterior but should be publicly accessible and highly visible. Sites should be narrowed to 2-3.
4. Develop broad recommendations to guide the selected artist/design team. Think about how art can be incorporated into your site. What size or scale do you imagine for this artwork?
5. How will the artwork relate to its educational setting? Are there any particular themes that you want the artist/design team to address? Who is the audience?
6. Consider the type of artwork/design. Should the art be literal, symbolic, or metaphorical? (Teacher: discuss those terms.)
7. Next, students should re-group (or be reassigned to) a different committee's recommendations and work individually as artists or divide into pairs as design teams to create a proposal.
8. Students should imagine a site-specific artwork that relates to the selected place, theme and project criteria. Ask students to think of visual imagery and symbols that relate to the theme and to describe what the artwork will be made out of. Ask them to consider what knowledge and skills will be needed to create and install it.



ACTIVITY GUIDE

Topic: Site-specific art
Grades: 9-12
In-gallery or in classroom

Materials

Paper
Pen or pencil

Time

60 – 75 minutes

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9-12 Grade Band

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6: Students will make connections between the visual arts, other disciplines and daily life.

Procedure (continued)

9. Students (artists or design teams) should present their proposal to the corresponding selection committee:

- Share the recommendations that you responded to
- Share any sketches,
- Describe your creative brainstorming process. How did you meet the requirements?
- Describe how your art would be made.

10. Selection committee members should respond to student artist or design team proposal in turn.

- Is the art responsive to the site and intended audience?
- Did the artist/design team meet the project criteria?
- Do you have confidence the artwork can be made?

Discussion & Reflection Questions

- What challenges did you have as a selection committee?
- What was the most challenging aspect of creating a proposal?
- Do you feel your site-specific public art proposal is successful? Why?

Assessment & Evaluation

- I understand the public art is creative as well as technical.
- I understand that public artwork can be made for a specific place and audience



EXHIBIT VOCABULARY

Balance: A principle of art and design concerned with the arrangement of one or more elements in a work of art so that they appear symmetrical (identical compositional units on either side of an axis) or asymmetrical (not identical) in design and proportion.

Contrast: Use of opposites near or beside one another (light and dark, rough and smooth).

Emphasis: Principle of design concerned that stresses one element or area in a work of art to make it attract the viewer's attention first.

Fabrication: A term referring to the construction, manufacture, or creation of an object.

Form: An artist uses form as a vehicle for rendering a particular type of subject matter. The formal elements of a work consist of the groupings and combinations of shapes.

Maquette: A French word for scale model that refers to an early, generally smaller version of an uncompleted sculpture.

Proportion: Principle of design concerned with the size relationships of one part to the whole and one part to another.

Public art: Any form of art that is accessible to the public and was created with the intent to be seen by the public. Public art can include but is not limited to murals, earthworks, architecture and sculpture.

Rhythm: A principal of design that repeats elements to create the illusion of movement. Visual rhythm is perceived through the eyes. Different forms of rhythm may be created through the repetition of design motifs and by repeating or alternating the use of positive space and negative space.

Relief sculpture: a type of sculpture that has forms that extend into space from a single plane

Site-specific:

Shade: The dark values of a color (adding black).

Space: (or negative space): is the element of sculpture, which refers to emptiness or areas between, around, above, below or within objects.

Texture: refers to the way things feel or look as though they might feel if they were touched.

Unity: The arrangement of one or more of the elements used to create a feeling of completeness. Everything in the work seems to belong and contribute to the overall picture.

Value: Light or dark; the variations of light and dark on the surface of an object. The lightness or darkness of a color.



VISITOR INFORMATION

CHAPERONES

One chaperone (adult) is recommended per ten students. Chaperones are expected to stay with their groups and maintain appropriate behavior, including walking slowly up and down the stairs and not running in the exhibits. Food, drink, gum, and candy are not allowed in the exhibits. Photographs may be taken. Lunches can be eaten inside the atrium depending on the weather or outside on the Grand Terrace if prior arrangements have been made.

ARRIVAL

- ✓ Check in at the Information Desk so we know your group has arrived and to get an accurate count of your visitors.
- ✓ Restrooms and water fountains are located east of the front entrance and behind the stairs on every floor. Please accompany your group to check appropriate behavior.
- ✓ The coatroom is located on the northeast corner of the first floor. Wheelchairs and strollers are available for use. There are offices, meeting rooms and the restaurant on the 3rd floor and groups generally do not go up there.
- ✓ Groups sit on the main stairs for an orientation before they go into the exhibits. If arrangements had been made, they will receive Discovery questions, Bingo sheets or Treasure Hunts to use in the exhibits or just go around them accompanied by their chaperones.

Location

The exhibit is located in the Resource Room on the first floor of the museum.

School Tours

For tour information and scheduling, contact Millie Frese at (515) 281-6860 or Millie.Frese@iowa.gov.

Museum Hours:

Monday through Saturday,
9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Sunday, Noon - 4:30 p.m.
Closed official state holidays.
Admission is free.

Directions

State of Iowa Historical Building (Des Moines)
600 East Locust
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-5111

Take the E. 6th Street exit off Interstate 235. Buses unload and load under the portico at the Locust Street entrance. After unloading, buses must move immediately out of the portico area. The best location for bus parking is on Finkbine Drive, west of the Capitol steps. Free parking for cars is available in the parking garage north of the building on Grand Avenue. There is metered parking on Locust Ave. and Grand Ave.



PLAN YOUR VISIT

Public Art in Greater Des Moines

Iowa State Capitol Complex

The Capitol Complex grounds are graced with a number of monuments, statues and memorials. Some are works of art that add beauty. Some recognize Iowans' contributions and historical events. Others mark important occasions, people or places. Together they help tell the story of Iowa's rich history and culture.

[Monuments List, Map and Interpretative Information](#)

[Parking Information](#)

[Iowa Capitol Complex Map](#)

John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, Des Moines

Guided tours of the park with a Des Moines Art Center [docent](#) are available April 1 through October 31.

[Des Moines Register Pappajohn Sculpture Park Online Resources](#)

Video, interactive photos, artist interviews, and audio tours

[Des Moines Art Center Educator Guide to the Pappajohn Sculpture Park](#)

[Des Moines Art Center Drawing Guide to the Pappajohn Sculpture Park](#)

World Food Prize Foundation WPA Mural

The lower level of this Beaux Arts building, formerly the home of the Des Moines Fine Arts Association and Des Moines Public Library, features a panoramic, vibrantly-colored WPA era mural by artist Harry Donald Jones and a team of researchers, artists and artisans entitled "A Social History of Des Moines."

World Food Prize Foundation docents are available to talk with groups about the mural. The mural is complemented by an interactive kiosk.

Website: https://www.worldfoodprize.org/en/hall_of_laureates/explore/mural_room/

Greater Des Moines Public Art Foundation

Find works of public art across Greater Des Moines and plan a tour using the Public Art Foundation's free online catalogue and interactive map.

<http://dsmpublicartfoundation.org/public-art/>

Download the GDMPAF's free [Public Art App](#) from the Apple App Store.