

Andy Goldsworthy Presentation



SLIDE 1

Photograph: Pebbles around a hole. Kiinagashima-Cho, Japan, 7 December 1987.

Introduction of Andy Goldsworthy

Many artists are inspired by the beauty in nature: the colors, lines, shapes and textures. Today we are going to learn about the artist Andy Goldsworthy. Some artists use paint or clay as their medium to make art. Andy Goldsworthy uses nature itself.

Andy Goldsworthy is many things. He is a sculptor, a land artist, photographer and an environmentalist. Goldsworthy produces artwork using natural materials, including: flowers, mud, ice, leaves, twigs, pebbles, boulders, snow, thorns, bark, grass and pine cones.

- What do you see in this composition?

Before we go on, who can tell me what the following terms mean: (Ask the class to define each of the following terms and, if necessary, provide the definitions.)

- **Sculpture** – A sculpture is a three-dimensional shape that can be representative of another object, such as a person or animal, but can also be an abstract form. Sculptures are usually made out of stone or wood, but can be made out of any hard material.
- **Environmentalist** – A person who actively protects the environment from pollution or destruction.
- **Land Art** - Land art, also known as Earth art, is an art movement in which the landscape and the work of art are linked. Land art is an art form that is created in nature, using natural materials such as soil, rocks, boulders, stones, logs, branches, leaves, and water.
- **Photographer** – A photographer takes photographs to record an event, emotion, place, person, or thing, such as a great sculpture.



SLIDE 2

Photograph: Andy Goldsworthy and boulder.

Andy Goldsworthy's biography

Andy Goldsworthy was born on July 26th, 1956 in Cheshire, England and raised in Yorkshire. Today he lives and works in Scotland in a village called Penpont.

Throughout his childhood Andy enjoyed playing and working in the outdoors. While attending an advanced art school, Goldsworthy spent his free time working on a local farm. These farm experiences provided him with direct encounters and knowledge related to working the land.

It was this early experience on the farm that spurred his fascination with the earth and its riches. Goldsworthy is quoted as saying "Farming itself is a sculptural process. Fields are ploughed, bales of hay are stacked, walls are built. The day is spent shaping and re-creating what is around you."

After high school, Goldsworthy attended Bradford College of Art. Goldsworthy did not enjoy painting indoors and missed the inspiration of the outdoors. Soon, the outdoors became his studio and he discovered he was happier living on a farm than in a college studio.

- Have you ever seen a field of cut and baled hay? Do the hay bales look like sculptures?
- When you create art, is it usually indoors or outdoors?
- What inspires you to make art?



SLIDE 3

Photograph: Over the stone, Scaur Glen, Dumfriesshire, 18 January 1993.

Land Art

- Describe what you see in this photograph.
- Does the sculpture look like it is part of the landscape?

Land art is an art form in which landscape and the work of art are closely linked. Land art is an art form that is created in nature, using natural materials. Sculptures are not placed in the landscape, rather, the landscape is the means of their creation. Landscape art frequently exists in the open, located far away from civilization. The art is left to change, evolve, and, quite often, erode under natural conditions. Land art explores the relationships between art and the environment in which it exists. Land art can be temporary or permanent.

In this photograph, we see a stone arch over a boulder. Goldsworthy gathered rocks from the surrounding area and built this arch that blends in with the landscape. Goldsworthy made several attempts to achieve the balance for the arch before he was successful. And eventually the arch collapsed.

- What is something that you have made outside that could be considered land art?
- Why do you think he chose that location to create an arch?



SLIDE 4

Photograph: Floating Japanese maple leaves supported underneath by a woven briar ring. Ouchiyama-Mura, Japan. 21 – 22 November 1987.

Found objects

- Imagine yourself walking through the forest on a fall day. What do you think you would find? (Colorful leaves, twigs, acorns, pinecones, etc.)
- What objects do you see in this picture?
- What does this picture remind you of?

Landscape artists use found objects in their work. A found object is something that was not originally intended as art but is considered to have aesthetic value and is appealing to the artist. Andy Goldsworthy uses objects that he finds in nature. The materials often include brightly colored flowers, icicles, leaves, mud, pinecones, snow, stone, twigs, and thorns. In this photograph you see a collection of Japanese maple leaves that Andy Goldsworthy collected and placed on the water.

Andy Goldsworthy said: “I enjoy the freedom of just using my hands and ‘found’ tools - a sharp stone, the quill of a feather, thorns. I take the opportunities each day offers: if it is snowing, I work with snow, at leaf-fall it will be with leaves; a blown-over tree becomes a source of twigs and branches. I stop at a place or pick up a material because I feel that there is something to be discovered. Here is where I can learn.”

SLIDE 5



Photograph: “Icicles, thick ends dipped in snow then water, held until frozen together, occasionally using forked sticks as support until stuck, a tense moment when taking them away, breathing on the stick first to release it.”

Scaur Water, Drumfriesshire, 12 January 1987.

(Note: the above description of the photograph is Goldsworthy’s title for the photograph and is written like a poem.)

Ephemeral/Temporary

- Describe what you see. What do you think this is?
- How is it stuck together? How long will it last?

Read the above title of the photograph to the students.

Most of Goldsworthy’s artwork is ephemeral/temporary; lasting only a few days. He leaves his art where he makes it, so that it can return to nature. Ice sculptures are allowed to melt, leaves to fall from their thorny supports, twigs to fall in place as they might have naturally. Most of his work is gradually worn away by wind, rain, and the heat of the sun.

The majority of Goldsworthy’s work is made outside and is allowed to remain in the natural environment and decay at its own rate. Goldsworthy’s intention is not to “make his mark” on the land, but rather to work with it instinctively. By working with the natural materials in their own setting, Goldsworthy hopes to create a new perception and understanding of the land.

- Have you ever put a lot of effort into making something that you knew wouldn’t last?
- If an artist knows that something isn’t going to last, then why do you think they make it?

Slide 6



Photograph: East Coast Cairn. Neuberger Museum of Art, November 2001. New Rochelle, New York, November 2001.

Temporary versus Permanent

- Does anyone know what this is?

Cairns are symbolic stone structures that identify a place.

- Have you ever made a cairn, or a rock sculpture, to mark a trail? Have you made a rock sculpture on the beach?

In the cairns pictured here we see an example of a temporary cairn and a permanent cairn. In November 2001 Andy Goldsworthy built a permanent cairn at the Neuberger Art Museum in Purchase (about 20 miles from Larchmont) and in the same month he also built a temporary cairn at the beach in New Rochelle. The permanent cairn is still standing and you can see it on the grounds of the Neuberger Art Museum. The temporary cairn washed away with the tide.

The cairn built at the Neuberger Art Museum was made out of limestone from Iowa and the cairn on the beach was made out of stones that Goldsworthy collected on site. Goldsworthy had to work on the cairn when the tide was out.

The permanent cairn was part of a set of three cairns that span the United States: one in New York, one in Iowa, and the other in California.

- Have you ever built anything that was destroyed by nature? Snowman? Sand castle?
- What happens after the waves wash away a sand castle or the sun melts a snowman? Can you see that those things were there? Part of Goldsworthy's philosophy is to work within the conditions of nature and to leave the land unharmed.

SLIDE 7



Photograph: Five Men, Seventeen Days, Fifteen Boulders, One Wall, 2010.

Permanent Sculpture

- Have you ever built a stone wall? How about a snow fort? Was it difficult to fit the stones or snowballs together?

Goldsworthy's first significant project in the United States came in 1997 with "The Storm King Wall" at the Storm King Arts Center in Mountainville, NY (about 90 minutes from Larchmont). In this part of the Hudson Valley, stone walls had been commonplace since the first wave of European settlers to the region, but these structures have fallen into disrepair and have been overtaken by trees and forests.

Goldsworthy decided to construct a permanent 2,000-plus-foot wall using the natural rocks from the region that paid tribute to the past and the early European settlers. It is a drystone wall, meaning it was built without mortar in the traditional, centuries-old method.

- Have you ever noticed stone walls in this area? Maybe you have a stone wall in your yard or maybe you have seen one in your neighborhood.



SLIDE 8

Photograph: Early morning calm knotweed stalks pushed into lake bottom made complete by their own reflections. Derwent Water, Cumbria. 20 February & 8 – 9 March 1988.

Role of photography

- Describe what you see in this photograph.
- Can you see where the structure ends and the reflection begins?

Read the title of the photograph to the students.

Imagine standing in a lake to build a sculpture. This is what Goldsworthy did, despite the fact that he may have been cold and wet.

The knotwood stalks sculpture was a temporary sculpture built in a remote area in the Lake District in England. Goldsworthy chose a location where people wouldn't be passing by. To document his work, Goldsworthy photographed it.

The camera is crucial for Goldsworthy as his art is fragile, usually impermanent and often geographically inaccessible. The photograph becomes a means for Goldsworthy to make his work accessible to the public. Also, while documenting with photography over time, Goldsworthy can compare his work in different conditions, throughout the seasons, and at different times of the day.

- Can a photograph of the same item look different if the photo is taken at different times of the day?
- Have you ever documented your artwork with a photograph?

Note to parent volunteer: There are four additional Power Point slides of Goldsworthy's work. Although we did not include Talking Points for these photographs, we would like you to share these photographs with the students so they are able to see many examples of Goldsworthy's style. The last slide contains several examples of Goldsworthy inspired art compositions made out of the same materials the students will use to make their art projects. Thank you!