



sculpture by the sea

10th ANNIVERSARY

A **STUDYGUIDE** BY MARGUERITE O'HARA

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sculpture by the sea

‘... where in the world do you see a setting where the sea, the earth, the sky and art come together in a setting like Sydney’

– Neil Balnaves,
exhibition patron

Introduction

For three weeks in November every year, an extraordinary outdoor sculpture exhibition takes place along a two-kilometre stretch of the Sydney Harbour shoreline between Bondi and Tamarama.

Sculpture By The Sea is a 40-minute documentary film following the journey of curator David Handley and his team over the past decade to show how and why this has become one of the most popular arts events in the world.

Sculpture by the Sea was conceived by David Handley in 1997 as a temporary exhibition showing a marriage of

sculptural works and Australia’s sublime coastal landscape. Since then it has evolved from a humble one-day event organized by volunteers working out of David’s living-room to become a bi-coastal series of annual exhibitions that captures the nation’s imagination. (A similar exhibition takes place on Cottesloe beach in Western Australia in March 2008)

This is a beautiful and lively film, showcasing both the range of artworks and the extraordinary scenery that the works become an integral and living part of each year.





Curriculum Relevance

Sculpture By the Sea is suitable for students from primary through to senior secondary and tertiary level, whether they are studying art and design, creative arts and visual arts or not. At senior level, art and design students, as well as photography students, will find much to both admire and inspire them, while all students will enjoy the sense of possibilities for their own creative processes offered in the film, as well as the energy and enthusiasm of the organizers, artists, filmmakers and the 450,000 annual visitors to the exhibition.

As well as showcasing the works, the film demonstrates both the processes involved in staging a complex art exhibition and gives us insights into the creative processes of the artists. The DVD includes a number of interesting extras; these include an Audio Tour with brief

discussion about several of the featured works as well as a short film *Free For All*, showing children's responses to the sculpture by the sea.

The activities in this guide begin with fairly straightforward questions about sculpture and the works featured in *Sculpture by the Sea* (Activities 1, 2 and 3). Activities 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 then move on to encouraging students to explore more theoretical and complex questions about public art and sculpture, as well as looking in more detail at the work in *Sculpture By The Sea*.

Teachers could select activities from those best suited to the age and interest level of their students. Images of many of the sculptures can be viewed on a number of websites including <<http://www.sculpturebythesea.com/gallery>>. This is the official website for the annual exhibition and if students click on Gallery,

they can look at a range of images from the 1997-2005 shows.

Filmmakers – Cast and Crew

Cast

The works of art
The Bondi to Tamarama coastline
The artists
The organizers of the exhibition, especially the exhibition's founder and curator – David Handley and the site curator – Alex Arnott
The filmmakers
The general public
Students

Crew

Sculpture By the Sea – 10th Anniversary was directed by Rebel Penfold-Russell assisted by the founding Director of the exhibition, David Handley.

Producers – Adam Bayliss and Rebel Penfold-Russell

Others who worked on the film include:

Editor – Karen Goitiandia

Cinematographer – John Brock

Additional cinematography – Rebel Penfold-Russell, Adam Bayliss and Stephan Elliott

Original Music – Abigail Hatherley

Production coordinators – Kate Bennett and Jo Ferris





Glossary

Sculpture – a three-dimensional artwork, man/woman-made.

Materials – sculptural works designed to be outdoors as part of a landscape need to be made of quite durable materials. Traditionally these materials have included bronze and other metals as well as various kinds of stone, including marble, granite, limestone and sandstone. Increasingly artists are using all kinds of materials to create sculpture, including paper and a range of synthetic and plastic materials as well as lighter materials such as titanium and zinc.

Curator – person in charge of organizing an exhibition.

Maquette – a small, generally 'to scale', model of a piece of sculpture to be made on a larger scale. There is an image of the maquette for Robertson Swann's *Vault* in this guide. Most of the sculptures in the *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition would have an accompanying maquette.

Whimsy – odd in a humorous way; a bit unexpected, with a re-focusing or undermining of our expectations.

Student Activity 1

Before watching the film, discuss your answers to some or all of these questions and share your ideas and experiences.

1. Name or describe any pieces of sculpture you have seen.
2. Have you ever been to a sculpture exhibition and if so, where was it and what were some of the pieces on display?
3. Have you ever been to a 'sculpture park'?
4. Have you ever made something you could describe as sculpture?
5. What is the main difference between paintings and drawings and sculpture?
6. Does a piece of sculpture always have to be free-standing and 3-dimensional or can it be part of another structure?
7. How big or small can a piece of sculpture be?
8. What do you think would generally be more expensive to create – sculpture or a painting?
9. What would be some of the difficulties sculptors might face in displaying their work?
10. Do you know of any pieces of sculpture on display in your town, suburb or capital city, e.g. statues of soldiers as part of War Memorials or bronze figures and dogs in city centres and local parks?
11. Can a work of art such as a piece of sculpture be funny, or even 'political'?
12. Do you prefer artworks that are recognizable as people or objects or are you happy to consider pieces that have interesting shapes, patterns and textures as artworks?
13. Are tied up shoes hanging over roadways on electrical wires sculpture?
14. Have you been on the Sydney Bondi-Tamarama coastal walk in November or the West Australian Cottesloe Beach in March and seen the sculptures?





1. Activity 2 – watching the film

This film is about the tenth anniversary *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition in New South Wales. It opens with a sampling of images of sculpture that have been exhibited in the ten years from 1997 leading up to 2006. We are then taken through the process of setting up and developing the exhibition over the past ten years from the perspective of artists, curators, patrons and the filmmakers.

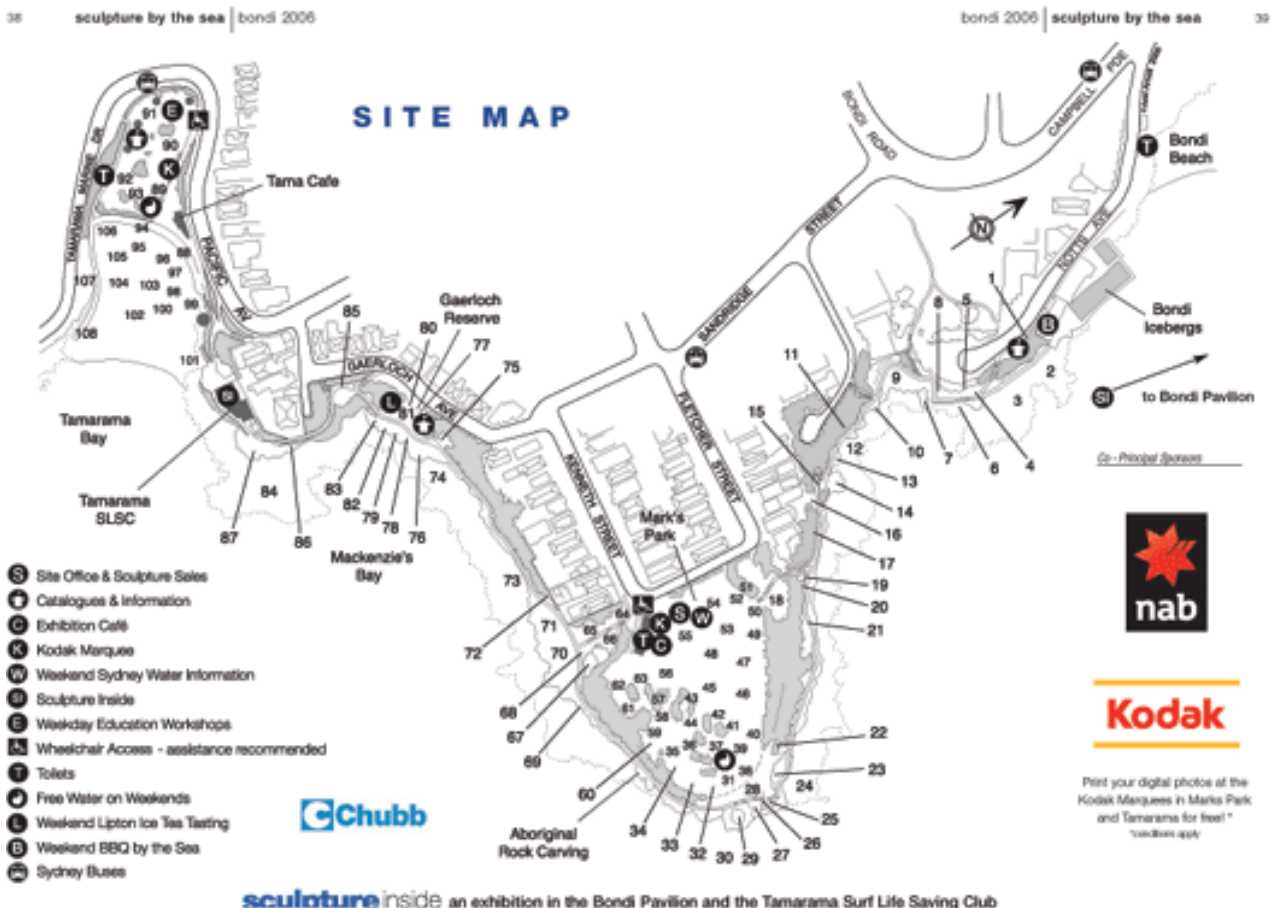
Image below from <<http://www.sculpturebythesea.com/html/images/SiteMap-1Page.jpg>>

Setting up the exhibition

- What is the job of the site curator?
- How long does it take to install (put in place) the 110 pieces of sculpture?
- What are some of the challenges for the site curator?
- How does he plan the placement of the pieces?
- What sort of equipment is needed to install some pieces?
- How long does it take to dismantle the show?

David Handley – founding curator

- What was Handley's initial inspiration for setting up *Sculpture by the Sea*?
- Approximately how many applications for inclusion in the exhibition are submitted annually?





- In what form do sculptors submit applications for their work to be selected for display?
- What are some of the criteria for sculptures to be suitable for inclusion in the annual exhibition?
- What were some of the difficulties Handley faced in the first few years of the exhibition?
- How many staff are now involved in setting up and running the exhibition?
- Why does Handley believe that prizes are important for the artists exhibiting at *Sculpture by the Sea*?
- How is increasing sponsorship money able to assist artists exhibiting?

You can read David Handley's account of the history of *Sculpture by the Sea* at <http://sculpturebythesea.com/html/history.htm>.



The artists and their work

- What would be some of the advantages for artists whose works are selected for exhibition on the Bondi to Tamarama cliffs?
- How do we see the natural elements such as wind and water being an active element in the works displayed?
- Describe a piece of sculpture shown that is essentially a soundscape, dependant for its impact on movement and sound.
- Why do some of the artists like to spend time beside their work during the exhibition?
- How many overseas artists' works were included in the 2006 exhibition?
- How is the *Sculpture Inside* exhibition different to the sculpture outside?
- About how much money is now available to each artist to help with their costs?

You can read an interview with Jean-Pierre Rives, one of the invited sculptors at the 2006 exhibition. Rives was a famous French rugby player for France before becoming a sculptor. You can read the interview at <http://www.artinterview.com.au/artist-interviews/jean-pierre-rives-at-sculpture-by-the-sea/>.





The visitors

- Approximately how many people saw the 2006 exhibition of *Sculpture by the Sea*?
- What percentage of these people do you think would be less likely to visit a traditional gallery exhibition to look at sculpture?
- In what ways are the visitors/walkers/viewers able to *interact* with the artworks?
- Why are young visitors important to the continuing development of the exhibition?
- Which sculptures do they seem to connect with most?
- What sort of opportunities for photography are offered by the siting and scale of the sculptures?
- What are the positive benefits for Sydney, and particularly for Bondi businesses, of the exhibition?

Here are some comments from people who visited the exhibition in 2006:

That is the best open gallery in the world, I mean look at the backdrop.

It's great that you can go for a walk and see art.

You're in the most fantastic environment; it's quite phenomenally beautiful and you're getting exercise at the same time.

The pieces that we've seen integrate with the surroundings and so many different materials, the wind and the rock and all the natural background is a terrific setting for all these wonderful pieces of sculpture.

... it's like an amazing treasure hunt, going around and finding extraordinary moments of intimacy in a sodding great environment like this.

Extending the idea

1. Where else in Australia is there now a similar exhibition to the Sydney one?
2. Where is a sculpture park being established in Sydney? How will it work to provide a changing

experience for the public and the sculptors?

3. What sort of historical resonance does the chosen site have?

Activity 3 – Looking closely at specific works.

In this guide there are photos of several sculptures from the exhibitions. Each photo has a number and a name. In Table 1 (on page 8), the numbers and names refer to the photos. Fill out as much of the table as you can either while, or after, watching the film. Some of the details have been filled in for you so you can focus on the last four columns.

If you have the DVD of the film you will find some of these images in either the Audio Tour section or in the Whimsy and Political sections, as well as in the short film about children's responses to the exhibition.





Table 1

No	Artist	Name	Materials	Size & scale	Colour	Abstract or representational	My opinion
1	Glue Society	Hot with a Chance of a Late Storm – (The melting ice-cream van)					
2	Nicole Perkin	Postcard from Bondi	Perspex				
3	Robert Hague	After Athena	Stainless steel, bronze and aluminum				
4	Alexander Seton	Under Development					
5	Lea Ferris	Magic Happens...					
6	Margarita Sampson	Big Mamma and the Kittens	Swimming costume materials such as lycra				
7	Koichi Ishino	Cloud in the Sky	Chrome and granite				
8	Richie Kuhaupt	Layers and Then There's Layers – The 'Little Guys'	Cement bond	600mm tall			
9	Stuart Clipton	Going, Going...Gone					
10	Tom Milner and Adam Proctor	Cultivating Crabs	Rusted metal				
11	Regan Gentry	Recliner Rex					
12	Denise Hume	Refuge					
13	Michael Purdy	Time and Space (Facial Deconstruction) The sandstone masks					
14	Michael Le Grand	Ukiyoe					
15	Lou Lambert	Andali (The Nest)					



1. How do you think the outdoor setting with changing light, wind, sunshine, sea, rocks and trees and other vegetation enhances the sculpture?

2. What part might the elements of discovery and surprise play for a visitor on the coastal walk as something new comes into view or is glimpsed

amongst the rocks or trees?

3. Decisions, decisions

- Do you think money prizes should be awarded to artists whose artworks are part of exhibitions such as *Sculpture by the Sea*?
- How would such prizes help sculptors with their work?
- Who should choose the winners?
- Which of the sculptures shown in the film did you like best?*
- If you could have one exhibit in your yard or garden, which piece would you choose? Explain what the qualities are that led to your choice.
- Would you like to see some of these works on permanent public display?
- What would need to happen for this to be possible?



*At the end of the guide, the prizewinners are identified, but make your own choices first.



Activity 4 – Humour (whimsy) and political comments displayed in some of the exhibits.

A number of the sculptures exhibited in *Sculpture by the Sea*, some of which are shown in the film, intentionally make political statements about human rights issues, while others take a deliberately

humorous approach to their subject matter. Some of the political pieces are included as part of the Extras section on the DVD, while the humorous pieces all appear in the main film. Explain what you think each of

these pieces is commenting on. The number in brackets beside each piece refers to the image on the photos page (page 19), e.g. *Going, Going...Gone* is number 9 on the photo page (page 19).

Humorous pieces include:

1. *Going, Going...Gone* – Stuart Clijtson (9)

Large ice-cream cones melting on the grass.

- Is there humour in this piece, or whimsy?



3. *Postcard from Bondi* – Nicole Perkin (2)

A large transparent postcard sent from Bondi to England, epitomizing the Australian holiday experience for overseas visitors.

- Is there humour in this piece, or whimsy?

2. *Recliner Rex* – Regan Gentry (11)

A giant beach chair with oversized thongs beside it.

- Is there humour in this piece, or whimsy?



4. *Cultivating Crabs* – Tom Milner and Adam Proctor (10)

Rusted metal crabs appear to scuttle over the rock pools.

- Is there humour in this piece, or whimsy?



5. *Hot with a Chance of a Late Storm (The melting Mr. Whippy van)* – The Glue Society (1)

An ice cream van, complete with distorted Greensleaves music, melts on the roadway near the beach.

- Is there humour in this piece, or whimsy?



Political pieces include:

1. *Refuge* – Denise Hume (12)

This work takes the form of closely packed and enclosed timber poles that look like stakes or sharpened pencils. It is a response to the refugee crisis in Australia, exploring notions of confinement and boundaries; crossing the sea with hope, only to find a life worse than that left behind, a life without freedom.



2. *Compassion* – Emma Wise

A large doormat on the sand has GO AWAY written on it.

- What political point is being made here?

3. *Freedom Detained* – Gai Mather

Sculptural cloud forms are confined within cages.

- What political point is being made here?

4. *Star-spangled spanner* – Peter Adams

A giant spanner is covered with the design on the American flag.

- What political point is being made here?





• **Activity 5 – What’s in a name?**

Many of the pieces on display have names which may tell us something about the artists’ intentions. Here are a few of the titles from some of the pieces exhibited.



<i>After Athena</i>	<i>Going, Going...Gone</i>	<i>Lover</i>	<i>The Great Aussie Surf</i>
<i>Baywatch</i>	<i>Hollow Man</i>	<i>Magic Happens</i>	<i>The Sunset</i>
<i>Big Mamma and the Kittens</i>	<i>Hot with a Chance of a Late Storm</i>	<i>Postcard from Bondi</i>	<i>Trip</i>
<i>B(l)eached Cows</i>	<i>Hurdle</i>	<i>Refuge</i>	<i>Tunnel Vision</i>
<i>Cloud in the Sky</i>	<i>Isadora’s Children</i>	<i>Sea Monsters</i>	<i>Under Development</i>
<i>Clydebuilt</i>	<i>Layers and then There’s Layers</i>	<i>Spirit of the Albatross</i>	<i>Vortex</i>
<i>Cypher</i>	<i>Like a Flower in the Wind</i>	<i>Structural Wave</i>	<i>Wind Spiral 11</i>
<i>Forest</i>		<i>Swish</i>	<i>Windy</i>
<i>Globall</i>		<i>The Chapel</i>	<i>Zaide</i>



Look through this list and decide which of the names

- Tell us something about the work and/or
- Make some reference to the coastal environment in which they are placed
- Give no hint of subject matter

Place (a) and/or (b) or (c) beside those where you think the name does any of these things.



Activity 6 – Public art in public places

Throughout history, artists have created sculptures, often made to be situated in public places. As many people don't visit art galleries, sometimes because they are too far away or because they feel intimidated by public galleries, their experience of art is often derived from works in public spaces such as cities and parks, and outside public buildings like town halls or civic centres or places of worship.

You will find sculptural works in almost every town and city; some will be statues of historical figures such as explorers and prime ministers, others war memorials of various styles while more contemporary pieces may be there to puzzle and intrigue people, dependent for their impact on materials, size, shapes and conjunction or disjunction with the existing landscape.

In the past, and today, sculptors have been commissioned by governments, wealthy individuals and religious organizations to create statues and war memorials to represent and commemorate both individuals and significant historical events. Some of the better known pieces include the great bronze equestrian statue of *Marcus Aurelius* in Rome, the Michelangelo *Pietà* in St Peter's Rome and his *David* in Florence,

Rodin's *The Thinker* as well as the 1981 *Vietnam Veteran's Memorial* in Washington DC. Respond to the following questions about public art, individually and then in groups.

- What are some of the purposes of pieces of public art?
- What might be some of the intentions of the artists creating the works?
- Who commissions and pays for public sculpture?
- Should sculpture in public places have representational aspects i.e. look like a person or a tree or a recognizable object?
- How do people connect with public art works?
- Should public art works have a connection to the

area in which they are placed or provide some kind of commentary on the space they occupy, e.g. the half-buried fallen columns and stone capitals outside Melbourne's State Library?

Two examples of contemporary public art.

1. *Vault* – Ron Robertson Swann, Melbourne, installed in 1980.

One of the perceived problems with having sculptural works in public places is a fear of vandalism. In Melbourne there is a piece of sculpture by Ron Robertson-Swann called *Vault* (more popularly known as *The Yellow Peril*), a large construction of steel planes painted yellow. When it was first displayed in Melbourne in 1980 in the then city square it was



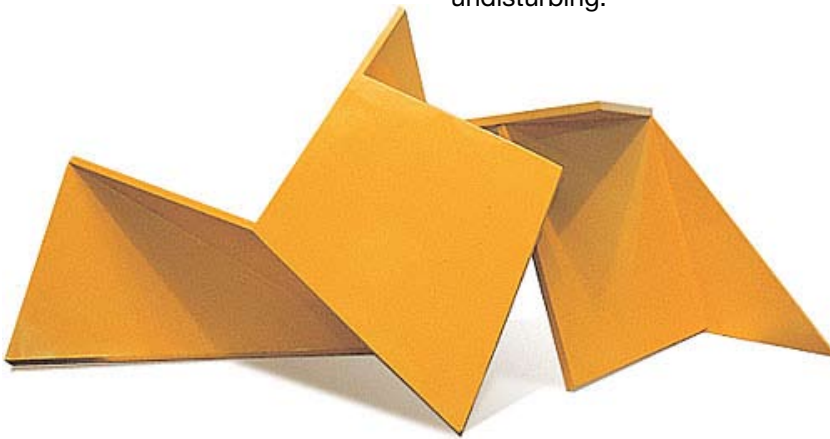
Vault outside ACCA

Image from ACCA website at <<http://www.accaonline.org.au/Vault>>



graffitied and often derided by citizens as 'ugly'. It was moved to a different less public part of the city at Batman Park, by the Yarra River where it could be seen by motorists and tram and bus commuters going into the city. Here it became a

shelter for homeless people and something to climb on. Finally in 2002, it found a home outside the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) in Sturt Street, Southbank, where it is both visible and undisturbed, and perhaps undisturbing.



Ron ROBERTSON-SWANN – Maquette for Vault 1978

Image from <<http://www.nga.gov.au/federation/Detail.cfm?WorkID=27284&ZoomID=3>>



The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC

Image from ArtToday.com <<http://architecture.about.com/od/greatbuildings/ig/Monuments-and-Memorials/The-Vietnam-Veterans-Memorial.htm>>

2. *The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall* in Washington DC, Maya Lin, United States of America, 1981.

In 1981, Maya Ling Lin won a competition to design a permanent memorial to the 58,000 Americans killed during the Vietnam War. This curved wall is more than eighty metres long and three metres tall at its highest point. The wall is made of polished black granite and contains the names of every American killed in that long war. You can see your own reflection in the wall as you read the names of the dead. Some people believed the wall was too abstract and modern to be a fitting memorial, so more conventional groups of statues of men and women are also part of the Washington site. The memorial wall is one of the most visited sites in the world, but this may be because it is a war memorial and has a purpose within a particular context. Its popularity may have little to do with its sculptural qualities and the striking simplicity and beauty of its design.



Activity 7 – What is it and what does it mean?

Many people do not like art that they consider to be abstract and not something they can recognize and relate to. They see some public art in public spaces as weird, ugly, confronting and challenging to their own beliefs that art should be beautiful and beyond politics. Pieces such as *Vault* are regarded by some as nothing more than an assemblage of yellow metal pieces.

While some of the sculptural works in *Sculpture by the Sea* are both representative of recognizable aspects of the human and natural world, others may look like twisted masses of metal and wood. The melting Mr. Whippy ice-cream van (*Hot with a Chance of a Late Storm*) won both the People's Choice and the Kids' Choice Award in 2006. While it can be seen as making reference to global warming as the van melts across the roadway on to the beach, it is also a humorous approach to a familiar image on Australian beaches. The major Prize, awarded by the judges in 2006 went to an abstract piece called *And with a Name to Come* by Orest Keywan. It is constructed with steel, stainless steel, sandstone and limestone and evokes memories of shifting landscapes.



- Is it human nature to expect art to be familiar and comforting, or should contemporary art challenge and confront us?
- What are the qualities we look for in artworks in public spaces?
- Look at the images in this guide of a number of pieces from sculpture by the sea and take a class vote on those you like best.
- Decide which ones you like least and try to work out why.



Activity 8 – Taking it Further

1. Has watching this film and answering these questions about the artworks changed the way you think about contemporary art works, particularly those using more abstract forms?
2. One of the key questions about contemporary artworks is whether art should have ‘meaning’ and not just beauty.
 - Where should ‘meaning’ originate – with the artist, the viewer, or a meeting between the two?
 - What sort of effort should people be expected to
3. If you live in a state other than New South Wales or Western Australia, where would you like to see an outdoor sculpture exhibition similar in style to Bondi and Cottesloe’s *Sculpture by the Sea* installed? It does not have to be a coastal location and could be in the lanes of a big city or in a public park, or at a local sports centre.
 - Is it the artist’s role to confront and challenge us to re-think our ideas about what constitutes art?
4. Some of the works at the 2006 exhibition reference (take their main inspiration from) works on show at earlier exhibitions, e.g. *Time and Space* (The sandstone masks) by Michael Purdy (13) in the 2006 exhibition were inspired by large masks by Alex Seton in an earlier exhibition. Conceptual/representational/abstract? Select a piece of sculpture you particularly admired that is shown in the film or the images you have viewed on a website and create your own design for a work that employs similar elements, but reflects your conception in your own style.





2006 Prizewinners at Sculpture by the Sea



Orest Keywan

And with a Name to Come

Winner of the major Prize of \$30,000 for 2006



The Glue Society

*Hot with a Chance of a
Late Storm*

**Winner of the
People's Choice
and Kids' Choice
Award in 2006**





And what about next year

...

A final comment from Neil Balnaves, one of the original patrons of *Sculpture by the Sea* about the future of the exhibition:

... it will keep going forever because it can be re-invented every year. David can have wind, he can have rain, he can have blue skies, he can have clouds; the setting is always going to be different. And your view of whether you do it in the morning ... the middle of the day ... or at lunchtime.

Web sites

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

The official website of the organization with many images and information about both the Bondi and Cottesloe events. Go to the Gallery section and click on each year to see a range of pieces. There is also an education link with information about how students can become directly involved in *Sculpture by the Sea*.

(Accessed 12 April 2007)

<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/sculpture/>

Article describing the historical development and range of styles employed by Australian sculptors.

(Accessed 12 April 2007)

<http://www.abc.net.au/perth/stories/s1870532.htm>

Story and images of artworks which were included in the Cottesloe Beach *Sculpture by the Sea* exhibition in Western Australia in March, 2007

(Accessed 12 April 2007)

<http://www.photo.net.au/gallery/sculpturebythesea/>

Take a virtual on-line tour of the exhibitions from 2003-2006 at your own pace.

(Accessed 11 April 2007)

<http://www.philosophyblog.com.au/review-of-sculpture-by->

[the-sea-2006-with-photos/](http://www.whitehat.com.au/Melbourne/Galleries/PublicArt.asp)

An extended review with images and comments from an interested visitor to the 2006 exhibition.

(Accessed 14 April 2007)

<http://www.whitehat.com.au/Melbourne/Galleries/PublicArt.asp>

A guide to public art in Melbourne with a good range of images.

(Accessed 15 April 2007)

Web sites for younger students

<http://www.childrensmuseum.org/artsworkshop/sculpture/index.html>

Site designed especially for younger students from The Children's Museum of Indianapolis Arts Workshop. It includes a number of simple fun ways to introduce children to what sculpture can be.

(Accessed 13 April 2007)

<http://hirshhorn.si.edu/education/interactive/flash.html>

An interactive activity where students can play around with shapes and colours and sizes to design their own sculpture which they can then submit to the museum site or print out to create their own work from the imaged design.

(Accessed 12 April 2007)

Marguerite O'Hara is a freelance writer from Melbourne



Images with titles and numbers referring to those in the guide.

1. *Hot with a Chance of a Late Storm*
2. *Postcard from Bondi*
3. *After Athena*
4. *Under Development*
5. *Magic Happens...*

6. *Big Mamma and the Kittens*
7. *Cloud in the Sky*
8. *Layers and then There's Layers*
9. *Going, Going...Gone*

10. *Cultivating Crabs*
11. *Recliner Rex*
12. *Refuge*
13. *Time and Space*
14. *Ukiyoe*
15. *Andali*



1



2



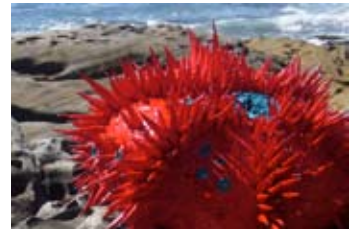
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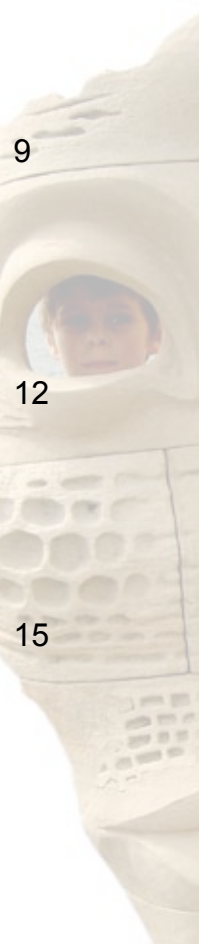
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