



Public Art Educational Materials



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Age group: 14+

Qatar Museums brings together museums, public art, and cultural heritage in Qatar, whilst expanding everyone's creative horizons.

Learning and Outreach are dedicated to designing programmes for families, university students and adults. All of our educational programmes provide interactive opportunities. We hope that they create lasting memories and lead to the development of creative, compassionate and engaged individuals.

The Public Art Department is dedicated to bringing art to public spaces with a commitment to reaching wider audiences. With over 30 public artworks across the country, from world-renowned to local artists, we aim to contribute to the diversity of our cultural landscape, spark dialogue, activate spaces and ensure a continuous cultural growth from within.

General Overview: Here are educational materials developed that were inspired from 12 unique public art works found in Qatar.

Learning Objectives: To use art and culture as a form of alternative learning. We wish to encourage students, lifelong learners to always be curious and inquisitive about the world around them.

Outcome: To have a better understanding of the environment in Qatar, as well as the purpose and importance of public art works have on society and community.

We hope you enjoy our educational materials, if you have any questions you can contact us:

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Thank you.

Special Thanks

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César Baldaccini, Le Pouce, 2018 Souq Waqif

César Baldaccini (1921– 1998) was born in France to Italian parents. He studied art at night school and in 1943 won a scholarship to the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. His training there was traditional and included carving and sculpture.

With resources limited during and after the Second World War, César began using scrap materials such as screws, iron and wires to create sculptures of insects, animals and the human form. He continued visiting scrap metal yards to find new materials for his work. Despite his formal art training, he preferred to work with recycled materials and felt comfortable in factory settings.

He also began experimenting with different types of plastics, and in 1965 created a detailed cast* of his thumb, which he exhibited in an art show about hands. The first version of Le Pouce (the French word for thumb) was made of polyester resin but over the years the artist made several copies of varying sizes in different materials. The sculpture in Doha, which is made of bronze with a gold patina and is 6 metres high, was cast after his death.

*Casting is a sculptural process that involves making a mould, which contains the negative impression of the intended shape. Once the mould has hardened, hot liquid metal or plastic is poured into the mould and is left to cool and harden. The mould is removed and the work is revealed in a solid form.



Questions

1. What do you think the artist was trying to communicate with this sculpture?
2. César made this sculpture out of polished metal and not from scrap parts that he usually worked with. How does this affect how you experience the work?
3. Look closely at the surface of the sculpture. What do you think all the lines are? Look at your thumbs and observe all the details on them. Why do you think César chose to show all the lines and details of his thumb on this sculpture?
4. Qatar Museums installed this piece in the Souq at the same time as Qatar's historic win in the 2019 Asian Cup for football. How do you think a prominent event can impact the meaning of a sculpture?
5. Do you think the location is good for this artwork? Why or why not? What are some other works of public art in Doha that are important and have become a landmark of the site that they occupy?

Damien Hirst, The Miraculous Journey, 2018 Sidra Medical Centre

The renowned British artist Damien Hirst (b. 1965) has explored the themes of life and death throughout his career. However, it was not until his first child was born the focus of his work became about life before birth.

He explored this idea in *The Miraculous Journey*, a series of 14 bronze sculptures that record in great detail the various stages of human gestation, from a collection of cells to a newborn baby. It took Hirst almost eight years to create the series of sculptures, which range in height from 5 to 11 metres. They were fabricated in England from 500 cast bronze panels and collectively weighed approximately 216 tons.

With this work, Hirst hoped to instil in the audience a sense of wonder about the dramatic changes that occur in the nine months before birth. To emphasise the magnitude of the drama of new life, a few of the sculptures even feature twins.

Throughout history, the use of bronze statues have commemorated important people and events. Hirst reinforces this tradition by casting *The Miraculous Journey* in bronze, showing that this biological process is extraordinary and not just a commonplace event – immortalised through the combination of scale and materials.

Public art encourages debate and various reactions, and this is especially true for works such as this. However, different reactions are a good thing, as viewers then turn to each other to discuss and debate the meanings behind the work.



Questions

1. Look closely at all the sculptures in this series. What changes are noticeable at the different stages of development from conception to birth?
2. Damien Hirst is interested in concepts of life and death. He chose the development of a fetus to express this. If you were going to make a work of art that explored the theme of life. What and how would you depict it?
3. What are some of the things that you can do now that you could not do when you were two years old? What are some of the things that you will be able to do as an adult that you cannot do now?
4. Why do you think this sculpture is placed in front of Sidra Hospital?
5. The series of sculptures may not appeal to everyone, but they will start conversations and debates. Should art be solely decorative or should it spark debate and questions?

Eduardo Chillida, Buscando la Luz IV, 2001

Qatar University

Eduardo Chillida (1924–2002) was a world-renowned sculptor, born and raised in Basque Country in the north of Spain. His upbringing influenced many of his works, including the sculpture *Buscando la Luz IV* (Searching for the Light). The sculpture has a reddish finish, known as a patina, evoking the earthy tones of the Basque region.

Chillida studied architecture at the University of Madrid, before moving to Paris in 1948 to concentrate on art. He returned to Spain in the 1950s, where he began to work in iron and steel, exploring the relationship between light, space and the sculptural form, and the process of looking and seeing.

Buscando la Luz was created in 2001 and was one of Chillida's last works before he died. Like much of the artist's work, the piece explores the duality of the material and the space, or void, it encloses. When visiting people should enter the interior space to experience the void for themselves. When standing inside, it may seem as if the sculpture is moving but this is just a trick of the light that Chillida considered when making the sculpture.

For the artist, the light was a material itself, and in this work, it is at the centre. The sculpture has a unique angular shape and at 8 metres high, it towers over the surrounding environment. *Buscando la Luz* is made up of three pieces of metal joined together with smaller metal pieces called rivets. The opening at the top resembles the branches of a canopy tree extending into empty space as if it were reaching for the sun. The piece was shown around the world before it found its new home at Qatar University.



Questions

1. Before being displayed in Qatar, this work was displayed in a sculpture park in England. In what ways do you think different environments affect how people experience the sculpture?
2. Stand up straight and raise your arms over your head, spreading them out like the top of the sculpture. How does it feel to imitate the shape of the sculpture? Do you feel strong or weak? Does it make you feel tall or small? What other words would you use to describe the feeling of standing like this?
3. Eduardo Chillida believed that his sculptures asked questions of the viewers, and many of the questions did not have answers. As you look at this sculpture, what are some questions that come to your mind?
4. Walk around this sculpture and go inside it. What is the experience you feel when you are standing inside? How does the light change inside and outside of the sculpture? What is the best angle to view this piece and why?

Louise Bourgeois, Maman, 2012 Qatar National Convention Centre

This sculpture of a spider is one of several created by the French-American artist Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010). She uses the form of a spider as a visual metaphor for her mother and motherhood in general; the title of the piece, Maman, is French for 'Mummy', as a small child would say. When viewers move beneath the spider, they can look up and see her egg sac filled with eggs. The spider is intimidatingly large and potentially a little scary, yet she is protective of her young. Her long thin legs also give a sense of fragility to the sculpture, despite its size and the materials used.

Louise Bourgeois started drawing spiders from about 1947 and repeated this motif throughout her career. At one point, she commented that for an artist, drawing is similar to a spider spinning its web. When asked why she used this motif to depict her mother, Bourgeois wrote, '... because my best friend was my mother and she was deliberate, clever, patient, soothing, reasonable, dainty, subtle, indispensable, neat, and as useful as a spider'. She also made the connection between her mother, who was a weaver, working with old tapestries, and how a spider weaves its web.

This sculpture is over 9 meters high and can only be shown in large indoor or outdoor spaces. Bourgeois' work often relates to universal themes as well as her personal experiences with people or events. Many of her sculptures involve familiar objects, yet in the process of creation, she transforms them, making viewers aware of their strangeness. In the case of Maman, by making the sculpture so large and still, she allows viewers to look carefully at various aspects of the spider's body in a way that they might not usually be able to do. The work particularly emphasises the egg sac, which is usually unnoticeable due to its size.



Questions

1. This is the largest spider sculpture that Bourgeois made. Why do you think she chose to make such a giant sculpture of something that is usually so small?
2. If you were to choose something small to make into a large sculpture, what would it be and why would that be your choice?
3. Bourgeois used the spider as a visual metaphor (where one object stands for another) to represent her mother. If you were to use an animal to represent a member of your family, what animal would you choose? Why would you choose this animal? Where would you want your sculpture placed?

Richard Serra, 7, 2011 Museum of Islamic Art

Richard Serra (b. 1938) is an artist, who grew up on the west coast of the United States, the second son of immigrant parents. His father worked in steel mills when Serra was young, exposing him to metal production at an early age. He graduated with an MFA from Yale University in 1964, and in 1966 began working on sculptures from non-traditional materials.

In 1969 Serra started to focus on work designed to be displayed outdoors and continues today to be a fierce advocate for art in public parks, removed from the formality of a museum environment. Serra's outdoor works are designed for a specific site and a particular environment. The surfaces of his sculptures are supposed to change over time as the metal reacts with the local conditions, including rain, harsh heat and oxidation.

The sculpture at MIA Park is made from seven large pieces of weathering steel, welded to form a seven-sided shape called a heptagon. The material is a particular type of steel that over time develops its finish or patina. At 24 metres high, these works are the tallest sculptures Serra has made.

Serra's inspiration for this piece comes from his exploration of Islamic architecture, particularly minarets, which he studied in different countries, from Spain to Yemen. Another source of inspiration was the work of Abu Sahl al-Quhi, a 10th-century Persian astronomer and mathematician who developed the idea of a seven-sided structure.



Questions

1. Why is number 7 important in Islam? You may need to do some research when you get home to answer this question.
2. This sculpture is non-representational, which means that it is not supposed to look like anything in particular. It is up to the viewer to experience it, either emotionally or intellectually. How would you describe your experience of the work?
3. As you look at this sculpture, notice the contemporary buildings in the background as well as the water around it and the traditional dhows passing by. What do you think about the contrast between the new buildings and the old harbour? How do you think 7 plays a part in this environment?
4. Look closely at the surface of this sculpture. What do you notice? Can you find where the pieces were welded together? How do you think the surface of the sculpture helps us understand what the artist was trying to communicate through this work?
5. If you stand at a distance from the sculpture, at specific points the work can seem to be floating on the water. This sculpture is heavy and made of steel; why do you think something so large and heavy can also seem light enough to float? How do you think the artist achieved this?

Richard Serra, East-West/West-East, 2014 Borouq Nature Reserve

Richard Serra (b. 1938) is an artist who grew up on the west coast of the United States, the second son of immigrant parents. His father worked in steel mills while Serra was young, exposing him to metal production at an early age. He graduated with an MFA from Yale University in 1964, and in 1966 began working on sculptures from non-traditional materials.

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In 2014, Richard Serra created a monumental metal sculpture named East-West/West-East for the Brouq Nature Preserve on the west coast of Qatar. This work comprises a series of four large steel monoliths, with each piece standing between 14.5 to 16.7 metres high. The plates are spaced at irregular distances and run exactly east to west, covering a distance of 1 kilometre in total.

Serra found the Qatari desert mysterious and hoped the sculpture would become a landmark there, acting as a sort of navigation star. In such a remote area, visitors experience the piece in a solitary way, giving them time to respond fully to the work: the steel plates rising out of the desert-like monuments are completely still compared to the hustle and bustle of the city of Doha. This contrast helps intensify the stillness of the sculpture in such a remote location.



Questions

1. This artwork is not meant to represent anything specifically but rather inspire strong emotions and discussion. Walk around the four monoliths with a friend and share your experience of viewing them with each other.
2. Take a moment to look around the desert landscape. What do you see and hear? How would this artwork be similar or different if it were located in Doha by the Corniche or at Souq Waqif or the Mall of Qatar? What impact do you think the landscape has on your experience of this sculpture?
3. Write down the name of a location that is important to you. What type of sculpture would you create for this location to help other people experience it?
4. Many sculptures represent people or things. What are your thoughts about artworks like East/ West that do not do this? How can you judge the skill of an artist like Richard Serra when they choose to make non-representational art?
5. Do you think viewers experience this piece in the way Serra hoped?

Ahmed Al Bahrani, The Challenge, 2015 Lusail Multipurpose Hall

Ahmed Al Bahrani (b. 1965) is one of Iraq's most famous sculptors. His earliest childhood memories are of playing on the bank of the Euphrates River sculpting clay into various objects. He left Iraq in 1994, and now spends his time between Qatar and Sweden. Many of his works relate to themes of war and peace, using his sculptures to raise essential questions about human conflict and how people treat one another.

His artworks often represent a plea for world peace, an idea very important to Al Bahrani. Hands and arms are a reoccurring motif in his art, serving as metaphors that can be read at multiple levels, including the importance of his hands as a sculptor, as well as evoking expressions of emotion and humanity.

In honour of the 24th Men's Handball World Championship held in Doha in 2015, Qatar Museums commissioned Al Bahrani to create an artwork for the Lusail Multipurpose Hall, which was one of the main championship venues. This was the first time that the championship was held in the Gulf.

The sculpture is named *The Challenge* and consists of several large hands and arms sculpted in bronze. According to Al Bahrani, each hand represents a continent on Earth. This sculpture shows the power and team aspects of handball, but the hands can be interpreted in multiple ways: reaching for the ball, reaching to the sky for help, or reaching for a dream.



Questions

1. What sport do you play? If you were to make a sculpture that represents your chosen sport, what details would you include? Notice how Ahmed Al Bahrani chose to show just the hands and the ball but did not include other details.
2. Notice how large this sculpture is in comparison to the actual size of people's hands. What effect do you think the scale of this sculpture has on viewers?
3. The artist intentionally shows the hands in this sculpture reaching for the ball. What are some things that you think are worth striving to achieve?
4. Handball is a team sport that requires players to rely on each other to succeed. Many artists work with a team of people on creating large-scale sculptures, such as this one. What are some aspects of your life that require you to rely on and work with other people? How would you design a sculpture to show that interdependence?

el Seed, Salwa Road Tunnels, 2013

In 2013 Qatar Museums commissioned the French-Tunisian artist eL Seed (b. 1981) to paint a series of 52 murals along Salwa Road. eL Seed's work merges both graffiti and calligraphy in a unique art form called 'Calligraffiti', which is believed to have originated in North Africa.

Growing up in France, eL Seed spoke Tunisian Arabic only at home and did not study Arabic writing until he was 19. He mentions how people questioned his French nationality because of his immigrant background, which encouraged him to learn more about his heritage. His dual identity as both Tunisian and French is reflected in his work.

He studied business at college and eventually moved to New York City in 2005 to work for a large firm. His job was stressful, and in search of relief, he began painting on the weekends. A self-taught artist who experimented with various techniques and styles, he started to show his work on social media and quickly gained a large following.

When eL Seed began working in Doha, he surrounded himself with the local community. He taught students, held workshops, and engaged with as many people as he could. His goal was to immerse himself in the city so the murals would reflect local culture and customs. This is very different from most artists who choose to work alone in their studios, hidden from the world.

eL Seed incorporates parts of poems, phrases from the Quran and other significant texts into his work. The text is often site specific and situated in busy areas to be seen by many people. The next time you drive through Salwa Road, see if you can recognize his famous art style.



Questions

1. Research eL Seed's work online. He often creates murals, what aspects of life do you think they depict?
2. Look carefully at the text in each work. What can you read? What do you think it means?
3. Think about your favourite sayings, poems, songs, and religious texts. If you were going to paint a mural in Doha, what words would you include?
4. Salwa Road is very busy with traffic all day and night. Why do you think eL Seed painted his series of murals along this highway? If you were going to paint a mural in Doha, where would you want it to be?

Liam Gillick, Folded Extracted Personified, 2019 Museum of Islamic Art (park)

Liam Gillick is a British artist (b. 1964), who was part of the Young British Artists (YBA) group, many of whom were his classmates at Goldsmiths College in London. The YBA was known for pushing traditional boundaries, using a wide variety of materials and creating artworks with shock value in mind.

Gillick works in many different mediums, including sculpture, film and writing. Generally, his art is considered to be from the broader genre known as relational aesthetics, a type of art made with a certain environment in mind, where the work interacts with both its surroundings and the audience. Like many other contemporary artists, Gillick's work challenges traditional expectations about art and can be difficult to categorise.

In 2019, when he was commissioned to create public art for Doha, Gillick chose to make a series of works for the outdoor park at the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA). The series consists of ten irregularly shaped white aluminium panels, each about 2.5 metres tall, folded into zigzag forms. They are decorated with images of objects that can be found in the collections of MIA and the new National Museum of Qatar and invite interaction with a 'face in the hole' design.

MIA Park offers Gillick's work the opportunity to be seen in the way he intended, with the area a favourite among families and visitors of many different backgrounds, reflecting Doha's multicultural community. The 'face in the hole' format is familiar to many people, encouraging playfulness from viewers of all ages, making it all the more likely that they will interact with the pieces, photograph them and show them off to their family and friends.



Questions

1. Look around the different pieces in the series. How are they similar or different from other works of art that you have seen?

2. Have you ever been to a carnival or festival where you could put your 'face in a hole' and take a photo like this? Why do you think these works are considered public art works, while carnival 'face in the hole board' structures are not?

3. One of the goals of this work and the public art program in Qatar is to inspire local talent and to foster an appreciation of arts and crafts. If you were going to create a work of public art that would help further this goal, which location in Qatar would you choose and why?

4. Liam Gillick is interested in how people relate to the environment and each other through art. What did you notice about your interactions with other people and the environment as you looked around the park? How have visitors used the sculptures other than its intended use?

Sarah Lucas, Perceval, 2006 Aspire Park

Sarah Lucas (b. 1962) is a contemporary artist from London, England. She grew up in a working-class family as one of four children, immersed in a creative environment throughout her childhood. Her father was a milkman who also made cabinets. Her mother was a gardener who sewed and ran an arts program.

By 1992, Lucas was part of the Young British Artists (YBA) group, who became known for using non-traditional materials and for making radically different art that questioned expectations and ideas.

Many of her works try to evoke a sense of humour or show her perspective on something she finds funny. She does this by creating visual contradictions that seem simple on the surface but on closer inspection make a clever commentary about society.

From the beginning of her career, she has often incorporated furniture and household items into her art in unusual ways. She has taken inspiration from her British roots in creating this piece of art, a small horse and cart ornaments are a feature on many mantelpieces in UK homes. While the horse is realistically painted, the marrows are made from cast concrete and are grey.

The sculpture Perceval shows a life-size Shire horse, one of the largest and strongest in the world, pulling a cart containing two marrows. Lucas plays with size here to create an intriguing sculpture as the vegetables in the cart are big compared to their actual size. In an interview, she stated that she had a small horse and cart sculpture in her studio, which her sister had given her. One day Lucas picked up a few small cast marrows and put them in the cart to be funny. An artist friend saw the small sculpture and suggested that she make it larger.

The name of this piece, Perceval, comes from the story of King Arthur, a legendary British leader. King Arthur had a round table of fierce and noble knights, with the strongest being Perceval.



Questions

1. Lucas has played around with scale in her sculpture. How does scale impact the way you experience the work? If parts of the sculpture were bigger or smaller, would you experience the sculpture differently?
2. Is there something in your home that you would like to recreate at a very large scale? Why would that object be interesting to look at if it were large?
3. How do you think artists can collaborate with others to work on something together? Do you have an idea for something that you would like to work on with a classmate or family member?
4. Sometimes works of public art are made for a specific location. If you were to make an artwork for Aspire Park, what would it look like? How could you capture the sense of place and community that characterizes this park?

Subodh Gupta, **Gandhi's Three Monkeys, 2008** Katara Cultural Village

Subodh Gupta (b. 1964) is an artist from India. After finishing school he initially pursued a career as an actor, designing posters to support himself. He then went on to study at the College of Arts and Crafts at Patna University. His style of work changed greatly during his first artist's residency in 1996 when he began experimenting with different materials and explored a variety of ways to create sculptures. It was during this time that he started to question how the materials used by an artist can change the meaning of the work.

He began to incorporate everyday objects, such as tiffins, bicycles and kitchen utensils in his sculptures. In this way, he elevated the status of the people who used the humble items and showed respect for those who can be invisible to many parts of society. His work also highlights the tension in India between the battle to preserve tradition and the rapid change caused by globalization.

Gupta's work explores many recurring themes, such as war, peace, family, wealth and poverty. His piece *Gandhi's Three Monkeys* is made up of three large heads, each around 2 meters in height representing soldiers: one wearing sunglasses, one with a gas mask and the other with a face mask. The name of this piece references the ancient proverb of the three wise monkeys 'see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil', which is associated with Gandhi because he had a small statue of the three monkeys acting out the saying.

Gupta's series of sculptures encourage the audience to think about the consequences of war for ordinary people. Each sculpture has been created from antique steel, copper kitchen utensils, and glass bowls. This piece was shown in galleries and parks around the world before finding a permanent home at Katara Cultural Village.



Questions

1. Look closely at the objects that are incorporated into these sculptures. What things do you recognize? Where in your home are you most likely to find these objects?
2. These sculptures are spaced apart from one another. How do you think the experience of this piece would be different if the heads were in different areas of Katara?
3. This piece relates to a common theme in Subodh Gupta's work: the impact of war and the need for peace. How do you see these themes represented in these sculptures? What are the specific details you notice that are related to the themes of war and peace?
4. If you were to make a sculpture about peace, what would it look like? What materials would you choose to use? Where would you want the sculpture to be placed?

Tony Smith, Smoke, 2005

Doha Exhibition and Convention Centre

Tony Smith (1912-1980) was an American artist, born in New Jersey, who is recognised as a pioneering figure in minimalist sculpture. *Smoke* is one of his most famous works which was originally made from wood in a smaller version. It was exhibited in 1967 but was destroyed by Smith shortly after. His family decided to recreate the concept in metal in 2005, 25 years after the artist's death. The sculpture in Doha is one of three made at the time.

Smoke features a unique geometric design, made using 43 aluminium modules. Each module is created in the shape of an octahedron – with eight faces, twelve edges, and six vertices. To install this work, the pieces were first bolted together and then welded; the surface of the sculpture was then sanded and prepared for painting. If you look closely at the surface, you will see there are no brushstrokes. This is a technique Smith used in much of his work to remove any evidence of how the sculpture was created. He aimed to evoke mystery to his work.

Smith often used patterns from nature in his art, which he then moulded into abstract forms. The eight-sided figures in *Smoke* are reminiscent of the structure of crystals. Smith often referred to his work as a 'presence' rather than a 'sculpture'. There is no specific angle from which you should look at the piece. He encouraged viewers to move through the artwork to get different impressions of the sculpture.

Smoke was an influential piece when it was first created. During this era, most sculptures were solid and allowed for very little movement or fluidity; this piece was different as it allowed people to experience the work from many different perspectives, an idea that later revolutionised the art scene.



Questions

1. Why do you think the artist chose to name this sculpture *Smoke*? Do you see anything in the sculpture that looks like smoke?
2. Some art critics note that they see objects or animals in this piece. A few examples include a sleeping cat or an animal rising on its hind legs. What do you see when you look at the sculpture?
3. Tony Smith died in 1980, and this work was made in 2005, enlarging an earlier work and changing the material from wood to aluminium. Artists often work with various people in different sectors like studios and fabricators. They are often not credited for their work, with the credit solely going to the artist. What do you think about this?
4. Think of a pattern that you have seen in nature, for example, on leaves, rocks, trees, fish, etc. Draw the pattern below. Now, look at the pattern. If you were going to make a sculpture using that pattern, what would it look like?