

Peter Randall-Page



New Sculpture and Works on Paper

The exhibition is
presented in partnership
between Plymouth City
Museum and Art Gallery,
Plymouth City Council

**1 February
to 10 May 2014**

and Peninsula Arts,
Plymouth University

**1 February
to 29 March 2014**

**RESOURCE
and
ACTIVITY PACK**

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Welcome

Peninsula Arts and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery have a growing commitment to making the best in the arts world accessible to young minds. We welcome all ages, from Primary through to students in Further Education and we hope to see you at Peter Randall-Page: New Sculpture and Works on Paper. One exhibition split across the two city centre sites, it can be viewed in **Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery** from **1 February to 10 May 2014** and the **Peninsula Arts Gallery** from **1 February to 29 March 2014**.



Where can I view the exhibitions?

As the public arts programme of the university, **Peninsula Arts** offers a year round platform for cultural events, including exhibitions, music, film, public lectures, theatre and dance. Situated within a broad-based, multi-discipline university, Peninsula Arts has a particular interest in supporting creative initiatives that explore the relationship between art, science and technology.

Peninsula Arts programming draws direct inspiration from the expertise and specialist knowledge of researchers and practitioners working across a range of art and science subjects. This collaborative approach to stimulating new knowledge ensures that the cultural programme has a currency and a critical edge.

It brings to the South West region an international network of artists and experts recognised for their significant contributions to their field – as well as encouraging emerging voices whose fresh perspectives provoke new insight.

Close to Plymouth's city centre, **Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery** has permanent galleries featuring objects from its World cultures, Ancient Egypt, Archaeology, Maritime and Local History, Natural History, Fine and Decorative Art collections.

These displays are supported by an ambitious temporary exhibition programme, including examples of local, regional, national, and internationally recognised artists and makers, plus a varied and large-scale events programme. We support these collections, exhibitions and events with a successful learning programme for local schools, colleges and universities that is committed to exploration and engagement within a variety of subject areas.



Peninsula Arts Gallery, Plymouth University



Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

About this Resource and Activity Pack

Peninsula Arts Gallery and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery are delighted to host an exhibition by British artist Peter Randall-Page (b.1954), which for the first time brings together new drawings and sculptures by the artist. Peter Randall-Page is internationally acclaimed and held in high regard as a sculptor and draftsman. He has undertaken commissions for the Millennium Seed Bank, the Eden Project (2007) Cardiff University (2006), and Give and Take (2005) in Newcastle, which won the 2006 Marsh Award for Public Sculpture. His work is held in collections such as Tate and the British Museum, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the National Trust Foundation for Art, the British Council and the British Embassy, Dublin.

This Resource and Activity Pack has been designed by Peninsula Arts, Plymouth University and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery to offer a rich resource of information and activities, which complement the exhibition.

Teachers are invited to use the resources within this pack and the information on the exhibition to enhance their pupils' understanding of contemporary art and to provide context by introducing an art critical perspective to the artwork and art practice of the artist Peter Randall-Page. All the activities in this pack can be adapted for use in either Primary or Secondary settings.

About the artist: Peter Randall-Page

During the last 30 years Peter Randall-Page has gained an international reputation for his sculpture, drawings and prints. He is now recognised as one of Britain's foremost sculptors and has undertaken numerous commissions across the world, including Seed (2007) at the Eden Project in Cornwall. His work is represented in many public collections including Tate Britain and the British Museum.

Peter has lived and worked in Dartmoor for more than a quarter of a century and this exhibition will be his first major show in the South West for more than two decades. Peninsula Arts, Plymouth University and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery have come together to acknowledge and celebrate his significant contribution to the visual arts.

Randall-Page's work has always been informed and inspired by the study of natural phenomena, exploring its subjective impact on our emotions, and his interest in mathematics and geometry stem from a desire to understand the underlying principles of growth and metamorphosis that determine form.

Much of Randall-Page's work combines a chaotic element with an ordering principle, for example his use of naturally eroded boulders, rationalised with geometric patterns. "The order must yield to the chaos, and vice versa. Strangely this tension provides space for unselfconscious invention, improvisation and play."

With great strength and richness, the work in the current show represents a development of his long-standing preoccupations. The exhibitions in both venues complement one another: Peninsula Arts Gallery will present five new large sculptures, whilst Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery will show the Artist's latest works on paper.

About the works in Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

"...we live in a universe with a strong propensity for symmetry and bilateral symmetry is of particular significance for human beings".

Drawing is an important part of Randall-Page's practice as an artist. He always carries a sketch book to note ideas and often makes observational drawings as a way of analysing and studying form. He uses drawings in many different ways, from technical drawings when working with architects and engineers to drawings which are artworks in their own right.

On display at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery are a series of large new ink drawings, based on branching patterns and mirror image symmetry. Randall-Page has allowed the ink to flow over the paper like tributaries or a river delta. He then inverts the paper, effectively reversing gravity so the ink flows upwards like the branching patterns of trees.

These ink drawings explore Randall-Page's interest in order and chaos. The underlying structures that govern the drawings are derived from simple mathematical rules of subdivision and exponential growth. Although he guides the rivers of ink, there is a strong element of chance inherent in this way of working. *"...What I am fundamentally interested in is the happenstance of how the ink flows, and the interaction of chance events with the initial mathematical order."*

These expansive drawings are then folded to create mirror image symmetry reminiscent of Rorschach ink blots. Randall-Page explores symmetry of various kinds in both his sculpture and two dimensional work. Symmetry is found everywhere in the natural world and Randall-Page believes that mirror image symmetry has a special significance for us. *"Human beings as well as other animals are bilaterally symmetrical. We are therefore psychologically attuned to reading such forms in terms of emotion, making them a rich source of expression."*



Blood Tree I. Photograph by Steve Russell

About the works in Peninsula Arts Gallery

Sculpture can be seen as the least abstract of art forms, literature and music have a temporal existence when read or played whilst two dimensional art is a kind of window into other worlds. Sculpture by contrast exists in our space and time and as such its relationship to the scale of our bodies is critical to how we experience it."

The five large sculptures in Peninsula Arts Gallery are carved from beautiful Rosso Luana marble quarried near Carrara, Italy. These highly figured stones take the form of variations on the five mathematical shapes known as Platonic Solids. Described by Plato in his dialogue Timaeus (ca. 350 BC), he equated the tetrahedron with the element fire, the cube with earth, the icosahedron with water, the octahedron with air, and the dodecahedron with the substance of which the constellations and heavens were made. These five shapes are considered to be the most essential volumetric forms because they are the only regular polyhedra in which all edges, faces and interior angles are equal.

The Platonic Solids are the building blocks of our universe and can be found in atomic, molecular and crystalline structures. These forms have been understood by many different cultures before Plato's time, from India to Ancient Egypt. There is an indication that the Neolithic population of Britain had an understanding of these forms as evidenced by the spherical stones found in Scotland dated at least 3000 years ago. These stones were carved into the geometric spherical versions of the Platonic Solids, small enough to carry in one's hand.

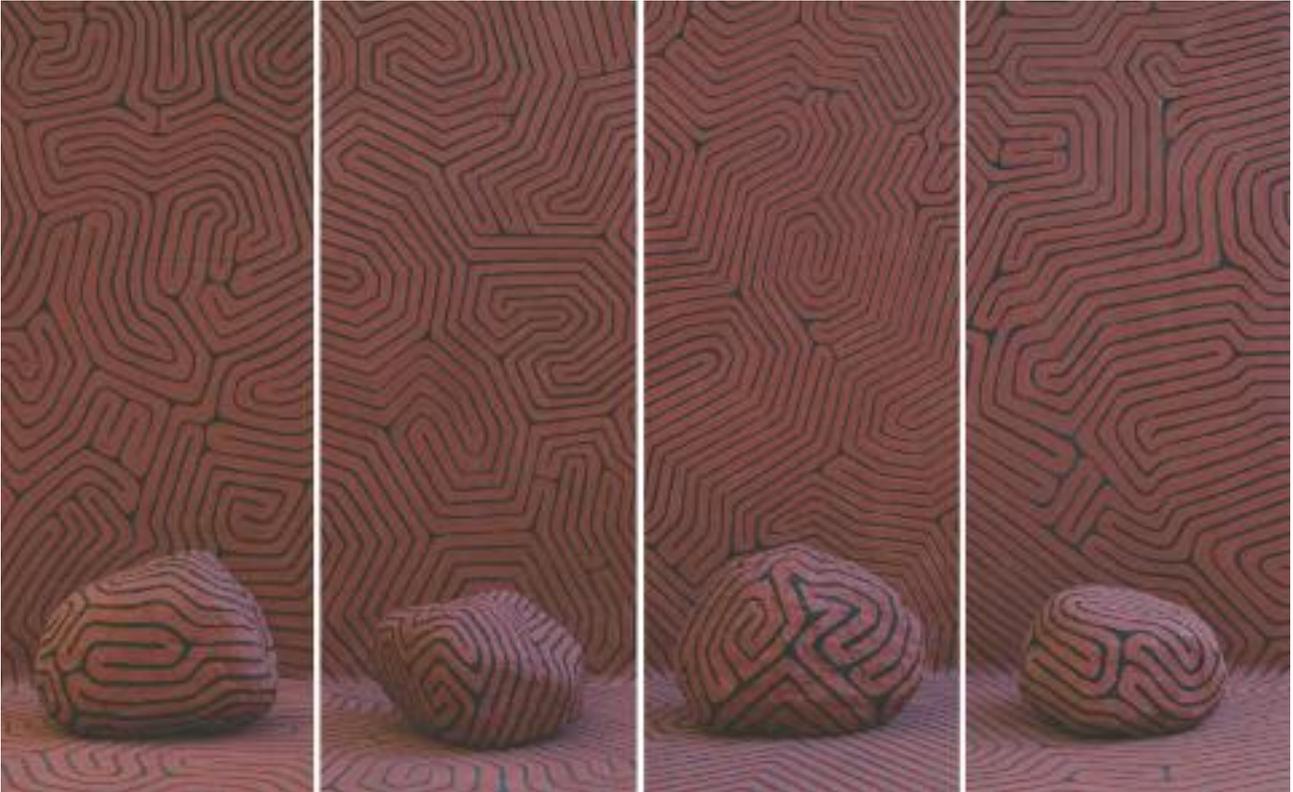
Peter Randall-Page discovered that stacking spheres together systematically produces curved variations of these elemental forms and it is from this method of stacking that these new sculptures developed. Randall-Page is interested in the way in which geometry underpins growth and sensuality. *"The patterning in the marble is like solidified clouds or a planet seen from outer space cutting across the symmetry and regularity of the forms themselves."*



Shapes in the clouds

The Influence of Music

"There is a strong and basic human pleasure in patterns, particularly when they become difficult to discern. In the music of Bach or the improvised jazz of Charlie Parker or Thelonious Monk the inversions of, and departures from, theme echo the variations found in natural phenomena. I often use pattern and geometry as an ordering principle in my own work".



Rocks in My Bed (2005), photographer unknown, www.peterrandall-page.com

Rocks in My Bed (2005)

An element of Randall-Page's practice is informed by theme and variation in music. **Rocks In My Bed (2005)** comprises four painted sculptures, each sitting in front of drawings on canvas strips. This work is like a visual version of jazz music. The title of the work has been taken from a Duke Ellington song, 'Rocks in my Bed'. The patterns in this work relate to a chemical phenomena of two compounds that cannot mix, which forms the basis of the camouflage patterns seen on animals such as zebras and mackerel.

Sculpture: Material and Process

"Sculpture can be seen as the least abstract of art forms, literature and music have a temporal existence when read or played whilst two dimensional art is a kind of window into other worlds. Sculpture by contrast exists in our space and time and as such its relationship to the scale of our bodies is critical to how we experience it."

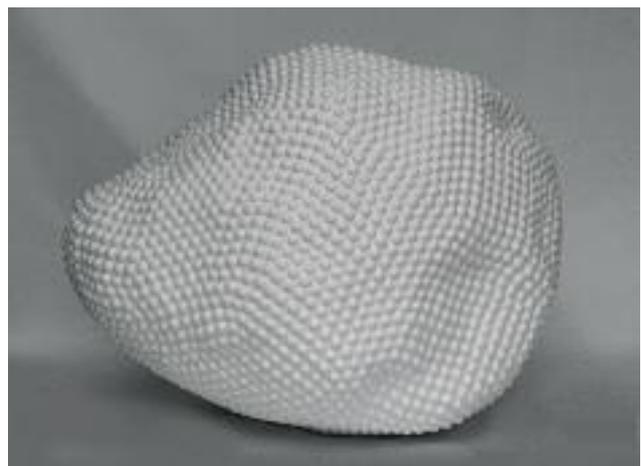


Seed (2007), photograph by Ben Foster

Seed (2007) carved in Cornish granite and commissioned by the Eden Project, sits at the centre of the Core, the education suite at the Eden Project. The architect Jolyon Brewis of Grimshaw Partnership worked with Peter Randall-Page to design the building and incorporate appropriate artwork. Both building and sculpture are based on a plant growth pattern known as spiral phyllotaxis. This pattern relates to the Fibonacci Sequence and is found in many natural forms including the arrangements of seeds in a sunflower head, leaves in plants and the scales of pineapples and pine cones.

The roof structure and the monumental sculpture are both based on these natural patterns and the chamber in which the sculpture sits was designed specifically to house it. The carving is based on the same plant geometry as the roof but in a pattern of raised hemispherical nodes, diminishing in size towards the top of the form.

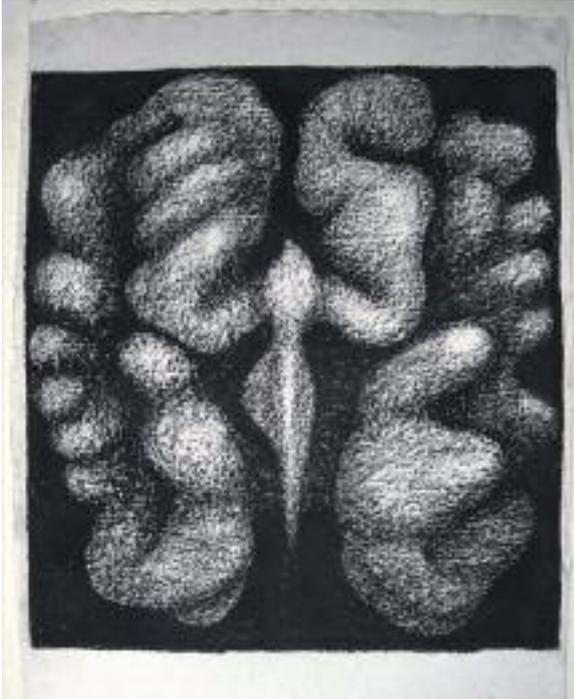
Theme and Variation II (2008), is one of a series of three, which are made from bronze and painted white. The series explores the combination of an ordering principle with random variation. These works have been cast from naturally eroded boulders, where the element of chaos and chance in nature is determined by the manner in which the boulder was eroded. Randall-Page explains: *"The ordering principle in these works... are thousands of small spheres. Placed tightly together on a flat surface, the spheres form a regular and potentially infinite hexagonal packing where each sphere is surrounded by six others. But on an undulating surface this no longer works and the packing of the spheres takes on other geometries and alignments."*



Walnut VII (2000), photograph by Mat Chivers

Drawing: Study and Form

"I always carry a sketchbook and make many different kinds of drawings. Some are working drawings for a specific project... others are objective drawings as an aid to memory and a way to study and analyse form."



Walnut VII (2000), photograph by Mat Chivers

Walnut VII (2000) The process of drawing allows Randall-Page to explore the possibilities of form. These remarkable black and white observational drawings of walnuts kernels resemble organic matter, brain scans, and the roots of trees or perhaps twin foetuses sharing their mother's womb. At first it is not apparent what the object is, as the eye scans the surface of the image, the shape moves and twists on the page. Exploring the idea of bilateral symmetry, Randall-Page plays with the ideas that no two walnut kernels are the same, that within the rules or their organic make-up, they differ greatly, much like humans. The illustration here only presents one from a series of walnut kernel drawings. When presented with a series, one can see the play between forms.



Memory of Rain (2006), photograph by Jonty Wilde

Memory of Rain (2006) is made up of almost five thousand small terracotta discs, where the initial pattern was a series of overlapping circles. These overlapping circles were then filled in at random, spacing the discs as evenly as possible. From close up the work takes on no form at all, however from afar one can see the circular patterns like *"...rain drops making ripples on a still pond."*



In Praise of Trees (2012), photograph by Take A Part CIC

In Praise of Trees (2012) is carved from local Dartmoor granite and surrounded by an archway of salvaged slate. Embedded within the sculpture is an oak seat on which the public are invited to sit. The sculpture takes its inspiration from a fallen tree which left a cavity in the ancient stone wall of Ham Woods, providing Randall-Page with the ideal location to build and design this work.

Randall-Page was invited to work with the local community Ham woods, a twenty-four hectare woodland in the North West of the City of Plymouth as part of a project to engage people with their local green-space. 'Stepping Stones to Nature' (Plymouth City Council) and 'Take A Part', a socially-engaged contemporary arts organisation, worked along with the 'Friends of Ham Woods', local schools, community and youth groups to co-commission the artwork. The work forms part of Stepping Stones to Nature's wider work, encouraging more people to enjoy the outdoors. The sculpture and the designed image of the oak tree that sits within it has become a symbol of Friends of Ham Woods and has attracted visitors from across the city and region to the woodlands.

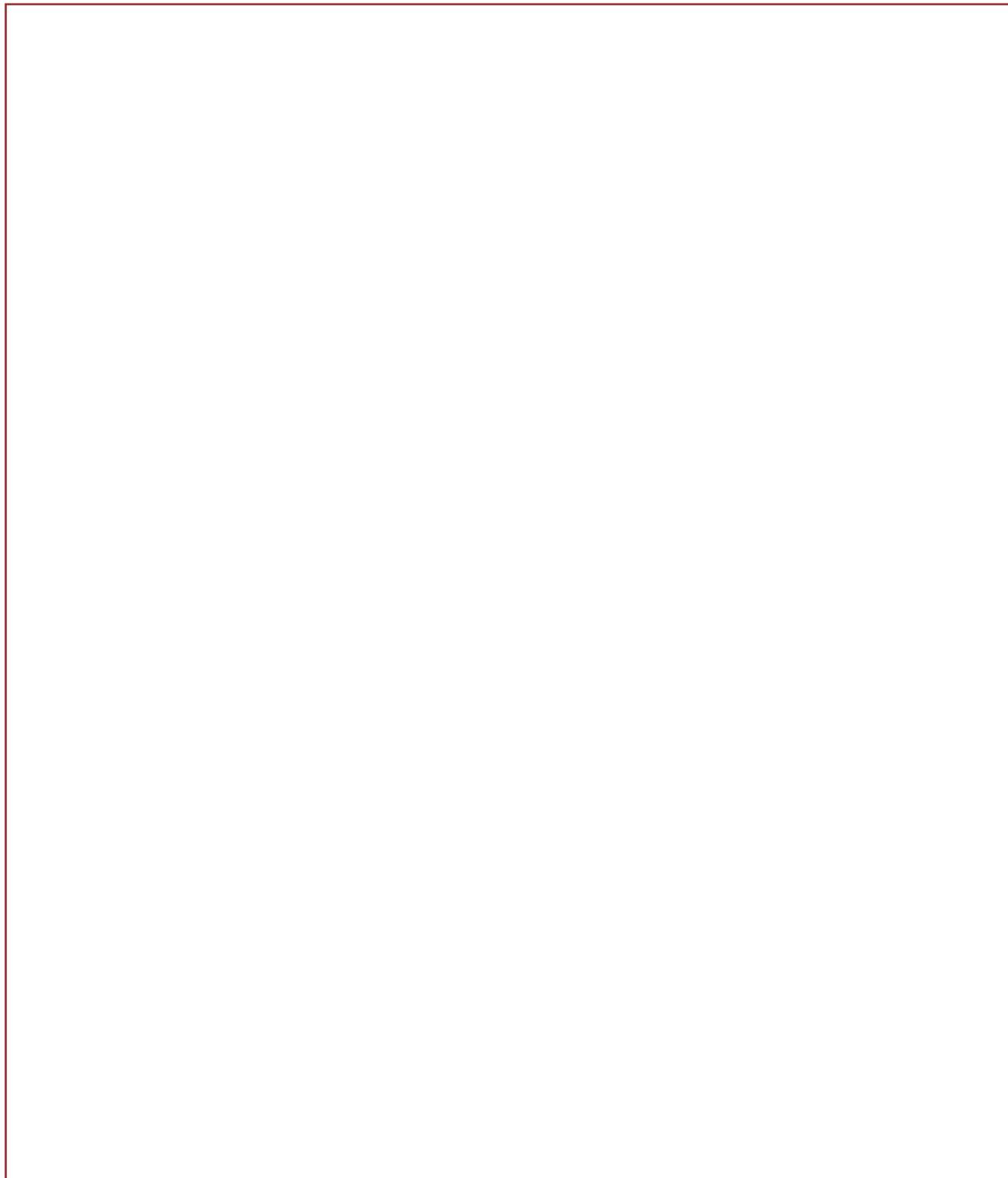
Ideas for activities in the galleries

What do you see?

The following activities can be adapted for use in either Primary or Secondary settings.

Select a drawing or sculpture and draw what you see in the box below.

Look carefully at the texture of the marble or ink drawings, can you capture all the same effect?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin red border, intended for a student to draw their interpretation of a texture or effect.

Describe what you see?

The words below can be used to describe the sculpture and drawings of Randall-Page, can you think of some more? Write your answers on the lines below.

Mineral

Rock

Strong

Organic

Flowing

Fluid

Liquefied

Solid

Poetic

Monumental

Huge

Striated

Ideas for activities back in school

Poetry and Nature

Throughout history individuals in the Arts have used nature as a subject to write, paint, sculpt and philosophise upon. In this way Randall-Page creates beautiful visual sculptures and drawings using nature as his subject. Read this poem by John Keats, can you highlight the words used to describe nature?

'To Autumn' by John Keats

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease,
 For summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
 Steady thy laden head across a brook;
 Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
 Thou watchest the last oozy hours by hours.

Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?
 Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
 While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
 And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
 Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
 Among the river shallows, borne aloft
 Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
 And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
 Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
 The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
 And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

How symmetrical are you?

Our features make us unique. As humans we are designed as symmetrical, however it is our asymmetrical features that make us special, distinctive and exceptional.

Using a mirror carefully hold the mirror up vertically to the centre of your face (along your nose and mouth) - is your face symmetrical? In pairs, and using the instructions below, try and draw your partner's portrait: Is their face symmetrical?

Drawing a Face

There are some basic rules you can follow to help you draw a face. Follow these simple steps to draw the front view of a face (the measurements can be easily adjusted to create your individual portrait or to draw an angled face).

- 1 There are many different facial shapes, but the basic shape is an oval. You can adjust the oval to make it more square, round or heart-shaped according to your sitter (the person that you are drawing). Start by drawing this shape.
- 2 Divide the face into two vertical halves, this will help you position the nose and the other features.
- 3 Then divide the oval into two horizontal halves, this creates the eye line.
- 4 Draw another horizontal line halfway between the eye line and the bottom of the chin, this is where the bottom of the nose will be and shows you where to position the ears.
- 5 If you draw another line in the centre of the bottom quarter, the mouth will sit a little above this line.

Finer details:

- 1 To position the eyes, divide the width of the face, along the eye line, into five. There is usually one eye width between the eyes.
- 2 The base of the nose is often as wide as the space between the inside corners of the eyes.
- 3 If the sitter is not showing any particular expression, the corners of their mouth will line up with their pupils.
- 4 Ears sit from the eye line to the bottom of the nose, so make sure they are big enough!

Impressions on nature in salt dough

Make your own hanging decoration using salt dough. Using the instructions below take a walk around your school to collect leaves, twigs and seeds to press into pieces of flattened salt dough. Make sure you make a hole at the top to hang your creation before you put it in the oven or microwave to bake. Always ask an adult to help with this activity or alternatively, why not try this activity with air-drying clay?

Ingredients

1/2 cup of salt
 1/2 cup of water
 1 cup of flour

How to make the salt dough

- 1 Add the 1/2 cup of salt and 1 cup of flour to a bowl stir in the water adding it slowly – you may not need all of the water. You want the dough to be dry – if it gets sticky add more flour. Knead the dough and then roll out and use as you want.
- 2 Once you have made the shapes you want then you need to dry them so you can paint. Traditionally salt dough is dried in the oven which takes around 3 hours at a low heat so they don't burn. But instead swap your oven for a microwave and zap for 3 minutes. If when the time is up they are still a little wet then just put back in for another 20 seconds at a time until done. Leave to cool down and then paint.

Extra Activities

Build a collage of surfaces

Using different coloured wax crayons, take rubbings of natural objects such as leaves and bark to build a collage of surface patterns.

Seeds

Using a magnify-glass choose a selection of seeds and nuts and draw what you see. Look carefully at the folds and bends or grooved lines along the surface. When you have finished the drawing, do you think the shapes and lines in your drawing look like anatomical drawings?

Build your own Platonic Solids

Can you name all the Platonic Solids? How many sides does each shape have? Now build your own Platonic Solid using straws, bind the corners with sticky tape to keep the joins together.

Nature Walk

Explore a woodland area, a park, or maybe your garden to collect objects that relate to Peter Randall-Page's sculptures and drawings. Think about your found natural objects, can you see any shapes and patterns?

Create your own artwork at the beach

Arrange coloured stones, drift wood and shells at the seaside. What colours can you find? Try to arrange your objects creatively, thinking about colour and texture.

Booking a joint venue visit to Peninsula Arts and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

Joint Venue Visits

During the exhibition, local schools will have the opportunity to visit both Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery and Peninsula Arts Gallery on
 Wednesday 12, 19 and 26 February 2014
 Wednesday 5 and 12 March 2014

Workshops will run from 10am to 1.00pm, meeting at Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery at 10am, pupils will have the opportunity to explore the drawings of Peter Randall-Page with a member of staff. Afterwards, you will visit the Peninsula Arts Gallery to look at the sculpture on display, followed by a Plymouth University student-led workshop, related to the works on display and ideas around Peter Randall-Page's work.

Please remember to bring along sketchbooks and pencils, plus necessary clothing for an art workshop. Bookings will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis for the joint venue workshops.

Facilitated and Self-Directed Visits

Facilitated and self-directed visits can be booked for other days and times during the exhibition. These visits will be sketchbook focused - looking at, drawing from and discussing the works on display. These visits can be combined with exploration of other galleries in Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery (such as the Natural History gallery).

Visits to Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery can either be facilitated by a member of staff or self-directed by a teacher.

Visits to Peninsula Arts Gallery are self-directed, with a short introduction to the exhibition by the Exhibitions Co-ordinator.

To book a self-directed visit, please contact Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery on museumvisits@plymouth.gov.uk

To book a workshop outside of this programme, please contact the venues individually:

Peninsula Arts: artsoutreach@plymouth.ac.uk

For more information on the arts outreach opportunities with Plymouth University in addition to those provided by Peninsula Arts please visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/artsoutreach

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery: museumvisits@plymouth.gov.uk

For more information on the schools engagement opportunities with Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery please visit www.plymouth.gov.uk/museumeducation

How to find us

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AJ
Web: www.plymouthmuseum.gov.uk e: museum@plymouth.gov.uk
t: 01752 304774

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am to 5.30pm / Saturday 10am to 5pm
(closed Sunday and Monday). Disabled access available.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery is situated on North Hill, next to Plymouth's Central Library and opposite the Plymouth University.
The main entrance door is situated on North Hill.

Peninsula Arts, Plymouth University, Roland Levinsky Building,
Drake Circus, Plymouth PL4 8AA

Web: www.peninsula-arts.co.uk t: 01752 585050

Visiting Hours (during exhibition period):

Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm / Saturday 11am to 4pm
(closed Bank Holidays and Sundays)

The Peninsula Arts Gallery and office are situated in the Roland Levinsky Building on site of Plymouth University campus; opposite the Drake's Circus shopping centre and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery on North Hill.



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

