

How was that made?

Explore the materials and methods used by sculptors to form sturdy structures

One of the intriguing things about looking at sculptors' work is figuring out exactly which materials and methods have been used to create them. Sometimes these materials are instantly recognisable, while at other times they may be unfamiliar. Some materials will be too precious, or difficult to manipulate, to use in the classroom, but there is usually a suitable alternative that children can use to engage with the ideas of particular sculptors.

Henry Moore's *Reclining Figure* (on the **A1 poster**) and the Sri Lankan mask from the Horniman Museum (on the **A3 poster**) were made centuries apart, although each was inspired by the

human form. The projects on these pages take these sculptures as their inspiration and offer children opportunities to engage in both individual and group projects. Children will enjoy exploring the ways in which the human form can be represented in a realistic or exaggerated way through sculpture, and they should begin to appreciate that artists need not be concerned with constructing a perfect likeness of a person.

Before embarking on their sculptures, however, children will need some time to explore the main material that they will be working with – newspaper.

Curriculum links

NC: Art and design 1b–c; 2a–c; 3a; 4a; 5c;
D&T 2d; 3c; 4a

QCA: Art and design Unit
3c – Can we change places?



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ICT link

The Horniman Museum has a wide range of collections and gardens, which uniquely illustrate the breadth of the world's natural and cultural diversity. The education section offers a range of learning opportunities for all visitors to choose from. School groups can also design their own learning experiences using the museum's learning packs and trails for each of the galleries. Visit www.horniman.ac.uk/education or email schools@horniman.ac.uk for details.

Getting started

- Newspaper is such a familiar everyday item that its potential as a material for sculpture can be easily overlooked. One way of helping children to recognise its potential is to set aside some time at the beginning of the project for them to explore ways of manipulating it, without having to worry about constructing something specific or recognisable.
- Provide children with sheets of newspaper and challenge them to explore the range of ways that they can change a single sheet – for example, tearing it, scrunching it, shredding it, taping it together, folding pieces or rolling it.
- Give the children time with this activity to explore the different ways in which they can manipulate it. Groups could each be assigned a different area to investigate. The children may not have made anything that they want to keep, but they will have gained valuable experience of working with the materials.
- Encourage children to share their investigations with each other, as these experiments may influence the techniques that they use to make their masks and sculptures in the activities detailed opposite.



Ages
7–9

Papiér mâché masks

Learning objectives: to understand the importance of making strong frameworks (armatures) to support sculptures; to explore the potential of forming material into specific shapes, designs and textures.

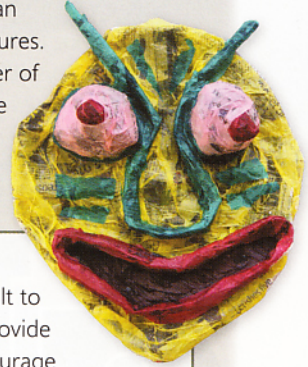
You will need: newspaper; tissue paper; masking tape; paste for papiér mâché; bamboo; **Photocopiable** 'Papiér mâché masks' on the back of the **A3 poster** for figures 1–6 (referred to in the text below).



- Show the children the image of the mask sculpture from Sri Lanka and talk about how the practice of representing the human face and form is one that has preoccupied artists for many centuries.
- Explain to the children that they will be making masks from paper, using papiér mâché, and that they will need to begin by exploring some of the qualities of paper as a material for sculpture.
- Some will have succeeded in rolling pieces tightly enough to make them fairly solid. Ask each child to roll a sheet of newspaper as tightly as possible and to seal it with small pieces of masking tape. (If children struggle to make the rolls tight, show them how to fold the roll of paper in half, lengthways, for greater strength.)
- Ask the children to make a collection of these rolled strips and to tape several together into a circle. They then need to

tape a straight piece across the diameter of the circle and a second at right angles to the first to create a cross shape; tape the pieces together at the centre. (See **Photocopiable**, figures 1 and 2.)

- The children must ensure that all the joints are secure before stretching a large sheet of newspaper across the structure, wrapping it under the frame and taping it into place. For the features of the mask, they can scrunch or roll pieces of paper up and tape into place. (See figures 3 and 4.)
- Ask the children to cover strips of paper in paste and layer them over the features of the mask. They can again scrunch paper to add shapes and textures. Coloured tissue paper can form the top layer of the structure – or it can be left to dry before being painted. Finally, a bamboo stick can be attached as a hand-held support for the mask. (See figures 5 and 6.)



Differentiation

Support: Some children will find it difficult to build strong structures on a large scale. Provide cardboard tubes and newspaper and encourage children to create small-scale individual sculptures of animals.

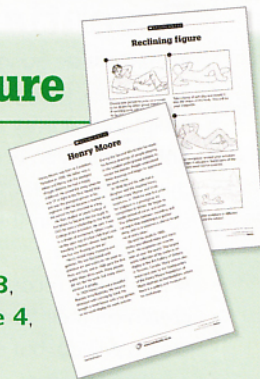
Extension: The emphasis of the activity could be altered to develop children's learning in D&T by setting them a specific challenge: for example, can they use a limited amount of newspaper to build a structure that is strong enough to support the weight of a plastic ball?

Ages
9–11

Reclining figure

Learning objective: to combine different materials to create a life-size self-supporting figure.

You will need: clay; newspaper; ModRoc; bamboo; **Photocopiable 3**, 'Reclining figure' and **Photocopiable 4**, 'Henry Moore'.



- Show children images of Moore's reclining figures, including the *Reclining Figure* on the **A1 poster**. (See **Photocopiable 4** for a biography). Point out that many of his sculptures were displayed outside and their forms often echo those of the landscape around them.
- Explain to the class that their task is to work in groups and make a large sculpture of a single human figure. What specific problems does this challenge pose? Children should be aware that one of the key questions faced by sculptors is 'Will it stand up?'
- Divide the class into groups and ask one member to pose as a model. Hand out **Photocopiable 3**, 'Reclining figure'. Provide children with a small amount of clay each and ask them to spend a maximum of 15 minutes making a sculpture of their model. Explain that they should not worry about

including any details – the key aim is to recreate the pose.

- Each group should then choose one of the clay figures as a *maquette* upon which to base their large sculpture. Children should understand that they will need to create an armature – a structure to support the sculpture as it is being made – of bamboo sticks (see **Photocopiable 3**). They will then need to wrap and tape scrunched newspaper around the sticks to provide the sculpture with a 'body'. This is the trickiest part of the process and should be done thoroughly before moving on.
- Finally, children will apply a layer of ModRoc to strengthen the sculpture. ModRoc is a bandage-like material covered in plaster. Strips of it should be submerged in water for a few seconds before being layered over the figure. This isn't tricky but it can be messy, the floor may need to be protected.

Differentiation

Support: Some children will prefer to work on a smaller scale. Small wire sculptures can be covered in tissue paper to create beautiful effects.

Extension: Take photographs of the finished sculptures and make a digital collage of a sculpture park by tracing the images and pasting them onto new backgrounds.

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