

Recycled landscapes

Curriculum links

NC: Art and design 1b–c;
2a–c; 3a; 4a, c; 5c; ICT
1a; 2a

QCA: Art & design Units
3C – Can we change
places?; Unit 6C – A sense
of place



DOWNLOAD A FULL LIST OF UK
CURRICULUM LINKS FROM
WWW.SCHOLASTIC.CO.UK

Create cityscapes and collages from rubbish
and natural material that's close to hand

A fascinating aspect of art is that the simplest of processes can produce the most striking work. An artist can take an idea that could happily feature in a creative activity in a Reception class – perhaps arranging a collection of natural materials, or assembling a sculpture from discarded junk – and use it to construct a work of art that is both complex and beautiful.

Tony Cragg's sculptures made from brightly coloured found objects, such as *Britain Seen from the North*, are hugely popular with young visitors to Tate Britain, while Andy Goldsworthy's assemblages of leaves, sticks, stones and found materials have inspired many successful classroom projects (see the **A1 poster** for an example of his latest work). Tim Noble and Sue Webster are two British artists who collaborate on striking sculptures that often take as their starting point huge quantities of waste – deliberately tempting the response that 'modern art is rubbish'. Their work has inspired the sculpture activities on these pages. See **Photocopiable 1**, 'Tim Noble and Sue Webster' for more background information.



Getting started

- Before they embark on designing and building their sculptures, children will enjoy carrying out a collage activity. The basis of this activity will help the age-related activities opposite. It will provide children with opportunities not only to develop their observational drawing skills, but also to explore details of buildings – what makes one building distinct from another?
- Collect a range of images of buildings with interesting architectural features. Encourage children to provide examples of buildings that they have visited or seen, and to talk about the similarities and differences between the buildings. Draw children's attention to the outlines of the buildings and ask them to make drawings in their sketchbooks of silhouettes of three or more examples. Challenge children to select examples that contrast with each other – the steeple of a church compared to the dome of a mosque, the minimalism of a skyscraper compared with the complexity of a cathedral.
- Children should then work in groups to select some of the more distinctive drawings and transfer them onto black paper, using grey pencil. Encourage children to work on a fairly large scale; they should then cut carefully around their silhouettes.
- Provide some large sheets of paper and a selection of ready-mixed paints so that the children can create a warm, striped sunset as a backdrop for the silhouettes. Children can then place their silhouetted buildings against the sunset: they should think carefully about the positioning of the buildings – overlapping them can be very effective.
- Finally, a few yellow lit windows can be added to the buildings before they are pasted into place. (See the 'Silhouettes and sunsets' activity opposite, for details of how to create city sculptures using computer software.)



Ages
7–9

Cardboard cityscapes

Learning objective: to work as a group to create a panorama of buildings using a collection of recycled objects.

You will need: plastic bottles; card boxes; card tubes; paper cups; cotton reels; yogurt pots and so on; parcel tape.

- Before the lesson, ask the children to bring into school a collection of items that they will need to construct their cityscapes (see 'You will need', above).
- Show children a selection of images of a range of modern urban buildings; try to ensure that there are examples of buildings with organic forms as well as cuboid forms (see London's Swiss Re Tower, or the Eden Project, for example).
- Explain to children that they are going to work in groups to make their own cityscape using the materials they have brought into school. Show children examples of sculptures by Tim Noble and Sue Webster (see ICT link below), and encourage them to talk about the way that large numbers of recycled objects have been combined to create specific effects.
- Begin by setting a quick task. Provide children with parcel tape and challenge them to find ways to make their 'buildings' stable when placed on the floor.
- If necessary, demonstrate that taping the bottles, boxes and so on together into groups will increase their stability and enable more storeys to be constructed.
- Direct children's attention to the range of architectural styles



in the photographs of buildings. Children will be keen to see their city built quickly, and some will settle for making generic cuboid shapes rather than more individual designs. Designing triangular roofs, inserting columns and cutting windows will add variety to the landscape.

- Encourage each group to experiment with different combinations of buildings. Take digital photographs of the completed cityscapes and finally combine them to make a whole-class artwork.

Differentiation

Support: Children who experience difficulties constructing stable structures could make a sequence of photographs of a selection of objects, arranging them in a different combination for each image.

Extension: Once objects have been joined using parcel tape, some children could make their structures more permanent by applying papi r m ch . Adding a top layer of tissue paper is a practical alternative to painting the models.

Ages
9–11

Silhouettes and sunsets

Learning objective: to use art and design software to create a digital collage of a skyline and sunset.

You will need: cityscape sculptures; computer with Adobe Photoshop (or similar software) installed; **Photocopiable 2**, 'Using software'.

- Having assembled their materials into sculptures, artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster photograph their work in such a way that the materials appear to form perfect silhouettes of their heads or bodies. In this activity, children will use art and design software to make their sculptures appear silhouetted against a dramatic sky.

- Save some images of sunsets onto the computer.

- Photograph the children's cityscape sculptures (see activity above) against a plain backdrop and open the image in Photoshop (you will need a file with a transparent



ICT link

To view work by Tim Noble and Sue Webster, visit www.modernartinc.com/timnoble. We recommend that teachers view this site before showing their class to check which images are suitable.

background layer – see **Photocopiable 2**, 'Using software').

- Use a selection tool (the *Magnetic lasso* tool is ideal) to carefully trace around the buildings on the horizon, and then remove the background of the image.
- Copy all of the picture and paste it onto the sunset – the buildings should appear silhouetted against the sky.
- Use the *Burn* tool to darken the image of the sculpture.
- Finally, add a few yellow squares to the buildings to create windows.



Differentiation

Support: Sculptures of buildings could be covered in black paper (add some yellow squares for lit windows), and displayed on large sheets of paper streaked with tones of warm reds and oranges.

Extension: Some children will want to use the computer to experiment with further ways of changing the appearance of their photographed cityscapes. Challenge them to create a city in bright sunshine and shadows, or a city in the middle of a storm.

Robert Watts is Programme Convener for MA Art, Craft and Design at Roehampton University