

Hamish Young

Field

Education Information Pack



How to use this pack

This pack is intended for use by educators. It provides background information about Hamish Young and the making of *Field* as well as outlining some themes, discussion prompts and learning activities.

These activities could form part of an existing project. They are suitable for the Key Stage 2 and Key stage 3 curriculum and can also be integrated in delivering the GCSE and A level curriculum.

Introduction

Field (2023) is by artist Hamish Young is a specially commissioned interactive artwork created from 27,000 hand-cast plaster shells, moulded from shells collected from around the south west coastline. In this work, each shell represents a local resident - each of the 27,000 people who currently call Portishead 'home'.

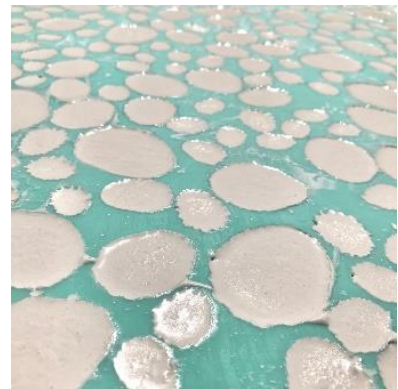
The installation is housed in The Folk Hall, an accessible community space in the heart of Portishead High Street, for the duration of the 2023 Portishead Arts Festival (ArtPort). The audience is invited to come together and be a part of this organic art installation. Whether they are residents of Portishead, or visiting during the festival, there is a shell for them to choose and take away to a different place, a new home. The gradual erosion of the sculpture field will be documented in a time-lapse film and the audience becomes a part of the story, with the opportunity to share the journey of their shell using #portisfield.

Schools are welcome to invite young people and their families to visit *Field* and choose a shell to keep. The first section, **#portisfield**, contains suggestions for what schools might do with collections of shells brought into class and how to share these outcomes using #portisfield.

Making

Field (2023), was made over a period of four months and installed overnight in the Folk Hall before opening to the public.

A silicon rubber mould was made of eighteen limpet shells collected from the South West coastline. Fifteen resin casts of each shell, two hundred and seventy in total, were then arranged on a 60 x 40 cm board and a silicone mould produced. Fine Casting Plus, a hemihydrate plaster ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 1/2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) produced from naturally occurring gypsum minerals and often used for interior decorative plasterwork, was then used to make casts from this mould and the casts allowed to dry on trays ready for installation.



Discussion, themes and exercises

#portisfield

Schools are welcome to invite young people and their families to visit *Field* and choose a shell to keep and bring into class.

We would love people and school communities to use **#portisfield** to share the journey of their shells on social media platforms including Instagram (please ensure that any images or text shared comply with the school safeguarding policy).

Activity 1: Community

A class, year group, or school group of shells that are collected come together to form a new community of shells. Photograph and share using #portisfield People can write their names on the bottom of the shells if they want so that they can find their shell again.

Activity 2: Painted shells

The shells are off-white plaster. Paint patterns and designs on the shells so that they stand out or are camouflaged. Photograph and share using #portisfield

Activity 3: Make prints using the shells

Limpets always return to the same spot on their rock where they have ground a space to fit. The marks they leave on rocks are called home scars. Use the shell and paint to make a class set of home scar prints on paper or a papier mâché rock. Photograph and share using #portisfield

What is Installation Art?

The term installation art is used to describe mixed-media constructions that can usually be walked into or through, often designed for a specific place or for a temporary period of time. Other examples of installations that make use of multiples include Felix Gonzalez-Torres' *Untitled (Placebo)*, 1991; Yayoi Kusama's *Obliteration room*, 2002; Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds*, 2010 and Anthony Gormley's *Field*, 1991.

Discussion prompts:

In what ways does this installation change our experience of the space it is in?

How would the meaning of the work change if the elements were sweets instead of shells?

How do you think the audience might interact with an installation of sweets?

What other multiples could be used instead of shells? How would that change the meaning of the work?

How might the meaning of the work change if the shells were placed in a different location? In a Cathedral? In an art gallery? On a beach? In a carpark?

How might the meaning of the work change if the shells were made from a different material? Bronze? Paper? Estuary mud? Or real?

What if the audience was not permitted to interact with the installation? How might the audience feel? What if the audience were told they could take a shell and then told they couldn't? Is the artist allowed to change their mind?

When people take the shell away, who owns the artwork? Does the artist still own it? Does the individual own it? Does the community own it?

What do you think people might do with their shell? What would be ok for people to do with their shell? Would it be ok to draw on their shell, paint it, leave it somewhere, give it to someone else, destroy their shell?

A shell is a protective case for an animal. What do humans use as shells? Describe what an installation would look like consisting of thousands of human shells?

Climate (erosion, change, natural world)

Over the duration of the installation visitors are invited to choose a shell and remove it, eroding the installation. Inviting visitor participation introduces an element of chance in how the work develops. Which shells are visitors more likely to remove? The large ones or the small ones? Where will visitors remove the shells from? The edge or as far in as they can reach?

Small, seemingly insignificant acts from individuals repeated multiple times leads to a larger overall impact. Whether recycling a plastic bottle, taking a pebble from a beach or dropping litter, if the same act is repeated by many people the impact on the environment is significant. The installation models and visualises the impact of multiple small interventions by visitors.

Exercise 1: Create an erosion drawing using a pencil, eraser, paper and a die.

Draw a hundred or more repeated circles on a piece of paper. These can overlap and vary in size. Roll a die and then erase that number of circles. Repeat until all the circles are erased. Photograph the drawing between each die roll.

Exercise 2: Create an erosion drawing using a pencil, eraser, paper and a die.

Scribble over a piece of paper using the side of the pencil lead. Try to coat as much of the paper as possible in pencil. Roll the die and then draw that number of lines with the eraser on the pencil. Repeat until the pencil has been erased. Photograph the drawing between each die roll.

Exercise 3: Post-It wall erosion using post-its and a die.

Cover a wall in multicoloured Post-Its. Roll a die and remove that number of Post-Its of a single colour. Repeat until all the Post-Its have been removed. Photograph the wall between each die roll.

Exercise 4: Image redaction using a black felt pen, gridded image and a die.

Print out an image and create a grid or use a map. Roll a die and redact that number of squares using the black felt tip. Repeat until all the squares have been redacted. Photograph the image between each die roll.

People (memories, migration, displacement, home, connection, community)

Family visits to the beach often include finding shells or pebbles. But what makes us choose a particular shell? Is it a symbol of a moment? A memory or a souvenir? Visitors to the installation are invited to choose a shell to keep and take away with them. The act of something or someone being moved from one place to another is something that is familiar to many people, whether moving school, moving house, being fostered, an adoptee or a refugee.

Shells are themselves homes. The shells in this installation are cast in plaster, a similar material to that which coats the walls of our own homes. Limpets return to the same spot at each low tide, an indent they create in the rock by rubbing to fit their shell. The resulting circular like indent is called a 'home scar'.

The installation connects people. As well as bringing people together in a space, the art work becomes dispersed in the community, continuing to exist in a different form. Wherever the shells end up, whether just around the corner or the other side of the world, they remain part of 'Field' and connected, much like families, friends and communities who may have been separated but have a shared a history.

Exercise 1: Building a community drawing using a pencil and paper.

Draw a house on the piece of paper (1 minute). Pass the paper to the next person. Draw a house on the paper near to the other house (1 minute). Repeat until everyone has drawn on every piece of paper.

Exercise 2: Relocating the square using squared paper a pencil and two dice.

Shade in one square. Roll the dice. The first dice indicates the number of squares to move left or right. The second dice shows the number of squares up or down. Use this to locate the next square and shade it in. Draw a line between the two squares. Repeat this process.

Exercise 3: Inside/Outside drawing of a limpet shell using pencil and paper

Either draw from life or a photograph. Draw the outside of the limpet shell viewed directly from above. Draw the inside view of the shell over this drawing.

Exercise 4: Screwed up paper drawing using pencil and paper

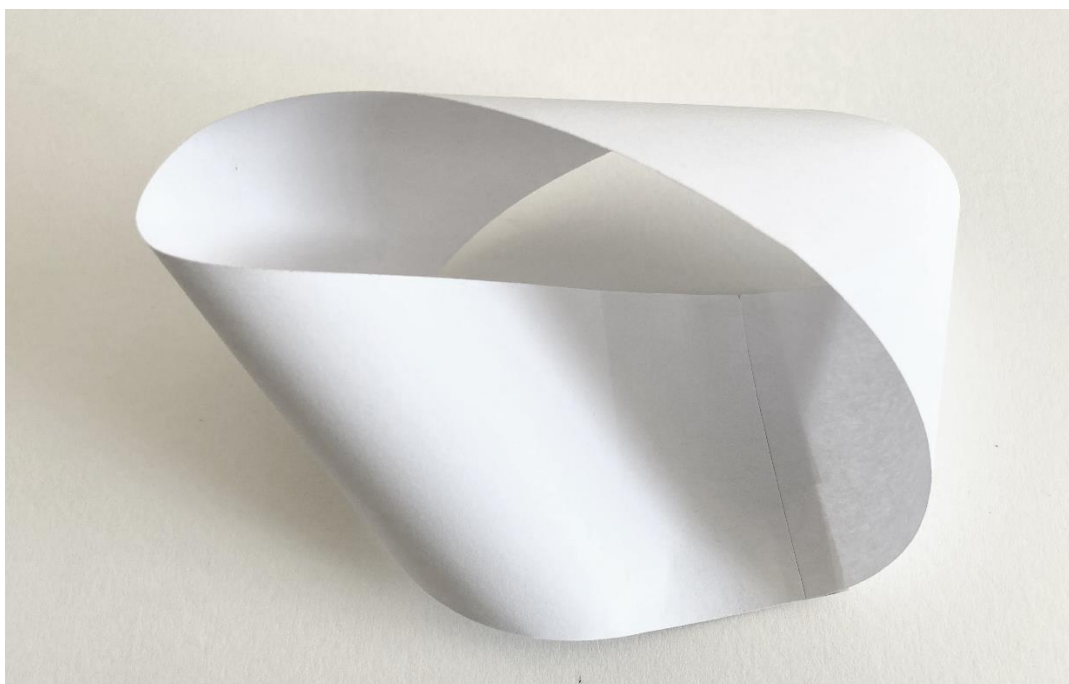
Screw a piece of paper into a ball and then flatten out. Draw a limpet shell using only those lines created by the folds on the screwed up paper.

A Place for Art (sculpture, installation, location, place, boundaries)

The term 'sculpture' is generally used to describe an art work that can be walked around or seen from many angles, whereas the term 'installation' is usually used to describe an art work that can be walked through, or into. *Field* begins as a sculpture, a work that can be walked around and becomes an installation as visitors interact with it, picking up shells and removing them. As the art work is dispersed into the community it becomes installed in visitor's homes. Rather than people walking through or into the art work, the art work itself goes through and into the community. *Field* plays with blurring boundaries in other ways too. The edge or boundary of *Field* changes as visitors interact with it, the art work exists in both a public space and private spaces, it is both separated and whole, as well as being owned privately and collectively. How do boundaries define works of art or sense of place? What is the role of a frame? A fence? A wall? At what point does the inside become the outside? What boundaries exist that are not tangible?

Exercise 1: Where does the inside become the outside? Mobius band construction using paper, scissors, tape and pencil (see image below).

Cut a strip of paper approximately 30 x 5 cm. Create a loop then turn one end over to create a loop with a half twist. Tape the ends together. Prove that the band has only one side by drawing a pencil line in the centre of the paper around the loop until it joins up. Consider where the inside of the loop becomes the outside.



Exercise 2: Draw a Mobius band using charcoal and A2 paper

Make a paper mobius band (Exercise 1) and undertake an observational drawing using the charcoal on paper. Look carefully at the edges of the loop and the change in tones on the loop. While shading consider at what point the outside becomes the inside of the shape.

Exercise 3: Moving boundaries. Blending charcoal and white chalk on paper

Block half of the paper with charcoal and the other half with chalk. Using the charcoal then move the edge of the block of charcoal into the chalk block. Blend the join with the charcoal to blur the boundary. Consider where the edge of the charcoal and chalk is. Repeat the process using the chalk instead of the charcoal to blur the boundary. What is the same and different about each drawing?

Exercise 4: Discuss what might be involved in creating art works for outdoor or public places, including scale, visibility, durability of materials, health and safety and security. Consider 'Field'. What changes might need to be made if the installation was to be moved outside?

Rhythm (music, melody, pattern, repetition)

There are eighteen different shells that are cast to create the installation. This is in reference to Steve Reich's Music for 18 Musicians. Although the shells are randomly placed the viewer's eye may start to pick up patterns that emerge and recede, in much the same way that the instruments and rhythms rise and fall in Steve Reich's musical landscape. What examples of pattern and repetition are there in the home environment?

Exercise 1: Create a series of large group A2 home scar monoprints using limpet shells and paint.

Participants dip the base of the limpet shell in paint and print onto A2 paper. They then move to the next piece of paper, repeating until each piece of paper is full of. Consider how each print varies. Repeat the exercise with a range of colours and consider the differences.

Exercise 2: Create a drawing to Steve Reich's Music for 18 Musicians using pencil on paper.

Listen to Music for 18 Musicians. Make marks and shapes on the paper in response to the music. Repeat the process and consider what is the same and different about the drawings.

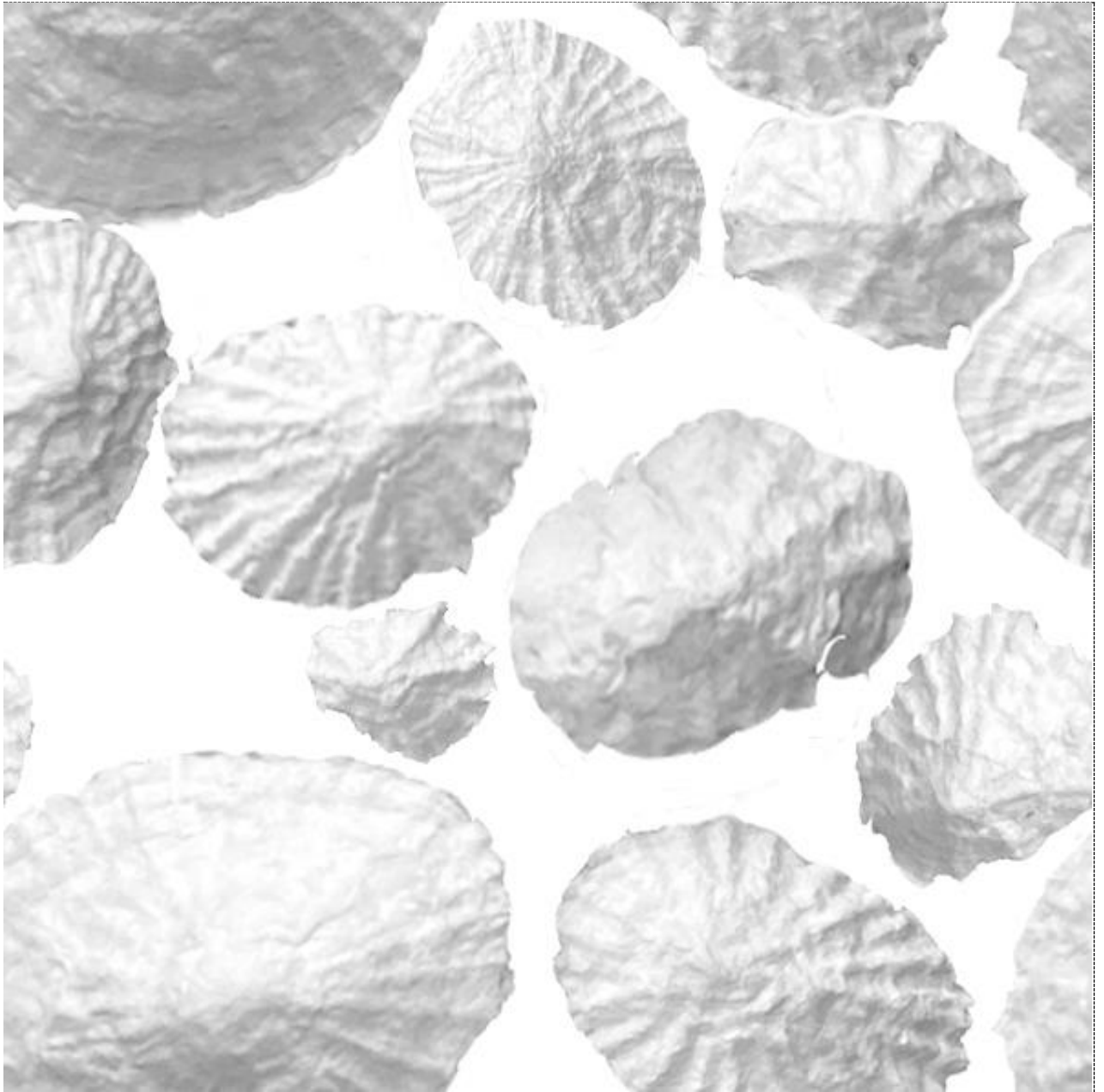
Exercise 3: Drawing with two hands using pencil on paper.

Hold a pencil in each hand and draw a circle or ellipse on the paper with each pencil at the same time. Repeat the process until the paper is full. Consider overlapping or trying to avoid overlapping shapes. Play Steve Reich's Music for 18 Musicians and repeat the exercise. Consider what is the same and different about the drawings with and without the music.

Exercise 4: Repeat pattern using colour pencils and printed image of shells.

Print multiples of the image below to produce a repeat pattern to and create wall or floor tiles for a space. The resulting tiled pattern will look like this:





Biography

HAMISH YOUNG RWA MRSS Hamish Young (b. 1972 Rotherham, UK) studied sculpture at the Royal College of Art. He became a Royal West of England Academician in 2021 and a member of the Royal Society of Sculptors in 2022.

His work is held in the Victoria & Albert Museum, Royal West of England Academy and private collections. He is an artist, author and educator.

Young's work has been exhibited at Royal West of England Academy, Royal Academy of Arts, Saatchi Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum. His work is regularly selected in prize exhibitions including the Wells Art Contemporary Installations, New Light Prize, ING Discerning Eye, Trinity Wharf Drawing Prize. He was the winner of the Visual Arts Open in 2019, awarded first prize for three dimensional work at Wales Contemporary in 2022 and the Bath Society of Artists Drawing Prize in 2023.

Young's work is autoethnographic, concerned with formalising 'in between' spaces that manifest in various ways including crossing the boundary of sculpture and drawing, objects or materials being removed from one place and placed in another, and subject matter of physical spaces that are between states. Through allusions his work triggers metaphors and personal associations.

Other works by Hamish Young



Seal. Cast Paper.
2023. 12 x 16 cm



Adoption #28 (Nest). Pencil leads.
2021. 10 x 15 x 15 cm.



Adoption #8 (Shell). Pencil leads, paper and limpet shell.
2019. 3 x 3 x 10 cm