

Art in the Environment
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The following piece of environmental art was created by Samantha Kerr, Gillian Corbett and Laura Oliver on Friday 28th April 2006 at Ardmore Point. The art was created as part of an elective class and this involved Community Artists, Sport students and Outdoor Education students. The piece was inspired by the surroundings at Ardmore Point and was developed using natural materials. The end result is shown below. The Project was entitled ‘Vision of Peace’. ‘Vision of Peace’



Art in the Environment was a module effective in providing a look into interesting works of art within the environment. The initial thought was that it would be hard to develop a piece of art with limited materials available, outside in the typical Scottish weather. This was completely the wrong perception as the week was filled with glorious weather and all of the students produced unique pieces of art at the site at Ardmore Point.

Through a visit to the Museum of Modern Art in Edinburgh, workshops and visits

to the site at Ardmore point, the ideas could start to flow and the inspiration to create a piece of work was looking very promising. The excellent part about the module was its intense nature, allowing all students to bond and to surround themselves in the environment for the week. This resulted in everyone developing unique ideas and perceptions of the location and the artistic ideas to which they wished to develop.

Located at the eastern end of Ardmore Bay, Ardmore Point forms a headland on the northern coast of Mull, within Argyll and Bute Council Area. Overlooking the Sound of Mull and the mainland peninsula of Ardnamurchan, Ardmore Point lies 3 miles (5 km) north of the settlement of Tobermory. (www.geo.ed.ac.uk, 1995, page.1)

The location of Ardmore Point is between Cardross and Helensburgh in the area of Argyll and Bute. The area is popular with Bird watchers, dog walkers and picnickers who wish to go for a walk around the peninsula. The site is different in texture and growth at each point, with the initial part at the water being damp and bare, the middle being grassy and slightly more floral and the last part being slightly muddy into woods, further leading into grass and fields. The area has views across the water to Port Glasgow and Greenock and also across the bay past Helensburgh. The area is popular with dog walkers and the wildlife is prominent in this area, with the seals making regular appearances out of the water to say hello.

Through visiting Ardmore Point and observing the area closely it was evident that a piece of art, undamaging to the surroundings and something that would cause a pause for thought for the users would be the most beneficial. The area provokes a feeling of peace and calm in comparison to that of the usual City buzz, and this was something that was believed necessary to be perceived within the proposed art.

The idea was to develop a piece of art that would be pleasing to the eye, whilst capturing the atmosphere of the area and not damaging it in any way. The materials to be used were discovered on site and they would be a combination of natural and man made materials, those that were washed up on the beach.



Through using a combination of natural materials from the peninsula as well as the man made materials, the piece could achieve an effect, showing the natural beauty of the site, as well as the materials that get dumped and cause an unsightly effect on the site.

The idea for the piece came from the inspiration that the site provoked. The location of the art was to be in front of the horses fields at a grassy patch, just five minutes walk from the centre of the peninsula. At this location, the viewer can enjoy 180 degree full views of the surrounding landscape and the water, allowing a definite feeling of calmness and peace. So therefore the ideas of vision, peace and the rubbish destroying the area all combined into the one idea – ‘Vision of Peace’.

**The water that flows,
The beauty is un-spoilt
The rubbish destroys (student 200325027, 2006)**

Stones of various sizes were collected from near the water, as well as thin twigs found close to the embankment. A tyre was collected from the beach, where it had been washed up; this was where small blue shells were collected to develop the colour of the Iris. Finally seaweed was taken from the beach and used to form eyelashes. All the materials were of colours that fitted into the backdrop of the area as they were all materials collected from the site. When the piece was viewed in the surroundings it stood out, but not in an un-natural way as the colours were all fitting within the environment. The combination of creating art from both natural and man made materials shows the damage that the man made materials can have on the environment, as when the Art fades away, and if the stones and shells are washed back onto the shore, the tyre will remain.

- The tyre was collected and so where the rest of the materials from the different

- locations on site.
- Then the small blue shells were placed around the inside of the tyre to create the shape and colour of the Iris.
- The yellow flowers were collected from the nearby trees and then made into shapes to form the peace sign across the front of the tyre.
- Dandelions were collected from various points on the grass to allow a yellow circle to form the shape of the outer circle of the peace sign around the outside of the tyre.
- The stones were then laid out in an appropriate eye shape to later fill in with the rest of the stones.
- Sticks were used to line the bottom of the eye, to define the shape more and to add interest to the design.

After Lunch

- The rest of the eye shape is filled in with the remaining stones, all in similar light colours.
- The seaweed is collected and shaped appropriately above the eye to form the eyelashes.

The piece is therefore complete and situated in an eye catching spot for all dogs and their walkers to view on their way past.



As you can see, from the early points of production, the piece was proving popular to the animals in the area! It is hoped that the piece would be aesthetically pleasing, whilst fitting in relevantly to the surrounding area, admittedly being slightly eye catching. This represents the eye of the environment, looking peacefully out across the water at Ardmore Point.

**‘The eye will watch over,
Eye of the environment
It brings us all peace’ (student 200325027, 2006)**

One meaning of peace refers to inner peace; a state of mind, body and soul, which is said to take place within ourselves. People that experience inner peace say that the feeling is not dependent on time, people or place, asserting that an individual may experience inner peace even in the midst of war. (Measuroo, 2005, para. 8)

Art for enhancing outdoor experiences

Art in the environment is something that is pleasing to the eye whilst enhancing the environment in which it is situated. The art should not be destructive in any way, as this is when it stops being something that enhances the environment and it is now something that damages the environment. Environmental art should work with the elements available within the environment and it may rely on natural processes such as lightning etc to work. It can interpret or enhance nature whilst also possibly educating individuals about the area, history or development of it.

Art is something completely unique to the individual themselves and something that cannot be judged by another, as one piece of art that may have significant value to one person, wont necessarily have the same value to someone else. A piece of art is always inspired by something, whether that is a situation, a setting, a landscape or a person. All art is stemmed from something else, and what would be more beautiful an inspiration than a unique environment to which you can devise something truly fitting to the area.

The building of shelters in more primitive times and making things out of what is available in the environment around you is environmental art. If we think that throughout time, art has always served the purpose to be aesthetically pleasing. What better way to have your work on display than to situate it in a remote area, complimenting its landscape?

Albert Flynn DeSilver is an environmental artist who is also a poet. His use of language and words is used to convey pictures and drawings in water, on sand and the land. His work is simple, yet compelling and it reflects an individuals interest by being so simple and beautiful in design.

Albert DeSilver's artwork calls attention to the simple elegance and genius of the natural world if we only took time to look. His photographs are driven by a desire to

tread lightly and to see how things are "drawn organically in the landscape".

(Weigel.K, 2006, para.3)

Planning and creating a work of art in the environment

The intense nature of the elective Art in the environment does cause the student to panic slightly at the beginning. 'Will I be able to do this?', 'what will I create?', and 'help!' were the initial thoughts of the students at the start of the week. It was amazing that on the last day of the course all the students created completely different works of art, all individual and completely unique from one another. It was amazing that through a few days of looking at art within the environment we all had learnt a great deal, this certainly influenced our final designs.

Over the week I learnt that some Art can damage the environment, even though it looks pleasing to the eye. Before the start of the elective this was something I had never really thought about before, what is environmental art? I have learned that even the simplest of things, revolving around nature, water or other natural elements is art within the environment. Through planning a piece of work within the environment you have to be sure that what you are creating is environmentally friendly and not harmful in any way. The art created should not damage the environment, but enhance what is already there, possibly educating those who will visit.

The feelings that are experienced when creating a piece of art in the environment are calmness, you feel at one with nature, you can get caught up in the environment around you and it is very relaxing and worthwhile. It is very relaxing in comparison to working in a studio or small space and you can really get a feeling for the area in which you are working in. It is truly a unique experience, planning a piece of art that you know will compliment the surroundings of the environment and not damage it in anyway. There is no better feeling than when you have spent the time carefully planning and implementing your design, to see it take pride of place within the environment in which it is surrounded.

Art within the environment

Art within the environment can fulfill many purposes, such as wanting to leave your mark on a place, to enhance the surrounding area and to become one with nature, as well as developing your artistic skills in a rewarding way whilst complimenting the surroundings in which you are in. Hill walkers take stones to the top of a Ben to leave at the top, providing a piece of evidence that they have been there. Art in the Environment should provide a piece that shows the artists identification and that they have left their mark, although the mark that they leave in an environment should not spoil or damage the surroundings, just enhance them.

Through developing a piece of art within the environment it is there for all to see, for all to question, view and enjoy. This surely should be the benefit that art offers, as it is not hidden away in a gallery, where people do not visit often. It is part of a place, an identity and it is public yet personal. All individuals can benefit from art within the environment as it can enhance the users experience as well as educate us all about the natural environment and its habitants. Through developing a piece of art within the outdoor environment, everyone can benefit from the qualities, and after all that is the purpose of the arts, to be inclusive for all.

I can draw the conclusion that through creating a piece of work inspired by an environment or setting, and developed using materials that compliment and harmonise the area, everyone can benefit from the complex qualities of the art, whilst taking their own perceptions with them. It can add to the outdoor experience of others, having some art work to observe and enjoy whilst walking, running or simply observing a landscape.

Art in the environment enhances outdoor experiences for all, although we need to be careful that we are enhancing and not destroying the environment, as why do we need art to look aesthetically pleasing if it is killing the environment all around? Art and the environment should be a partnership as the environment can enhance the art and vice versa. They should not be used to destroy one another, so artists have to be careful with the media and styles that they use, as to not affect the area. It is through this unique relationship that the outdoors can really be experienced and enhanced and bettered for future generations.

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