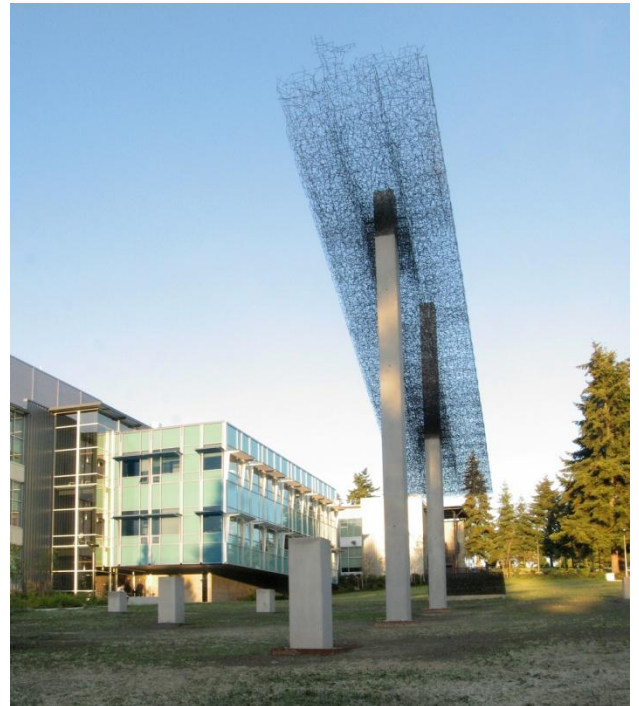




The Big Idea

Making site-specific public art is a multi-step process that is collaborative, technical, and creative.



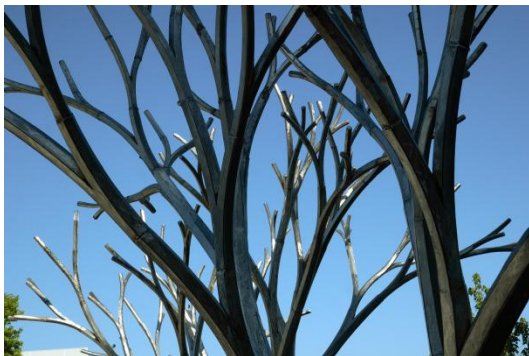
Creating Public Art: The process behind the product

For high school arts or career and technical education classes

In this project, students serve as art selection committees, determining site and design recommendations for public art for their own school campus. The theme for developing recommendations for and designing this art is centered on "Education." In response to design recommendations and site opportunities identified by the student art-selection committees, student artists/design teams create a proposal and design for public art. Proposals include a description of art concept and imagery, scale renderings from multiple perspectives, and a description of materials and construction methods.

There are many ways this project can be expanded across multiple disciplines and classes: math, language arts, science, social studies, photography, architecture, drafting/CAD, welding, woodworking, and technology. Designs proposals may have the potential to become real artworks.

Fractal Tree Archway, 2010, by Paul Sorey
Endless, 2009, Lead Pencil Studios
(Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo)



Introduction: The Process Behind Public Art

- *When you see a work of art at a school or a park or a public building, you might appreciate its forms or enjoy its relationship to the environment it is placed in. As both artists and part of the public who view and enjoy public art, we are exploring the process of how it is made — who decides to put it in a place, who dreams it up, what are the steps in constructing it, how it is installed.*
- *Every new state building and public school in the State of Washington is required to spend ½% of the state funded portion of its construction budget on public art. We are going to look at two works of site-specific public artworks throughout this project: Fractal Tree Archway, 2010, by Paul Sorey; and Endless, 2009, by Lead Pencil Studio (Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo). **Site-specific** means that the art was designed and fabricated for a specific place with a specific audience (viewers) in mind. These public artworks are part of the Washington State Art Collection, managed by ArtsWA.*
- *Fractal Tree Archway was created for Skagit Valley College, and Endless was created for Bellevue College. Both works address math and science concepts and are adjacent to campus science buildings.
That might be where the similarities end — notice how different they are!*

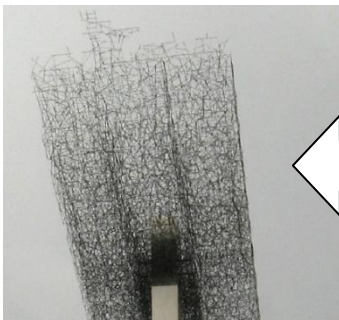
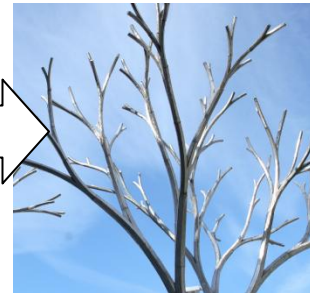
Part I: Art Selection Committees

Students first work collaboratively in groups as **art selection committees**.

- *Fractal Tree Archway and Endless were developed by different artists in response to different art selection committees.*

Committee criteria for Paul Sorey's *Fractal Tree Archway*:

- Addresses environment
- Something tall
- Lyricism; nice play off minimal building
- Community-gathering
- Environmental & natural focus
- Challenging — not provocative, but intellectually engaging
- A signature work
- Nice site lines to other campus buildings



Committee criteria for Lead Pencil Studio's *Endless*:

- Lightens/softens campus hardscape
- Responds to the building design, experiential with space and/or interactive
- More than decorative, causes discourse, visual connections of concept as teaching tool, stimulates curiosity and discussion (brain think / provocative)
- Suggests/echoes science, multiplicity of readings /interpretations

- *You will be part of an **art selection committee** (teacher assigns, or students form, groups of 3 to 5). The broad idea or theme for the art is focused on **education** since it will be installed in a school environment. Please make a list of your ideas as you work through your responsibilities. An artist or design team will be developing a proposal for art based on your committee's recommendations. You will also be working as an artist or be part of a design team, but will be responding to a different*

committee's recommendations. Students must honor all voices in committee and design team groups and develop ideas and recommendations through a democratic, collaborative process.

Art selection committee responsibilities: Record notes

Discuss the role of public art in society

Is public art important? Why or why not?

Imagine public places without art — how does that change things?

What can public art accomplish? What can it give us?

Develop broad recommendations for the future artwork

These recommendations are developed to guide the artist /design team in shaping their ideas.

Think about the concept of "Education" and how a work of art can address this idea within your school environment. Do you want the art to communicate ideas about transformation, transition, or graduation — or perhaps facets of learning in different subjects? Would the art be literal, or would it be symbolic or metaphorical? Also, this is general, so words like "colorful," or "inviting," or "tall," or descriptions of how the art might interact with the site or audience (see criteria for Endless and Fractal Tree Archway) are appropriate. What size or scale do you imagine?

Identify target audiences

Who ideally would be seeing the art: students, administrators, community members, parents?

How do you imagine people interacting with the art?

Would the art spark curiosity or conversation, soothe, entertain, delight, or possibly tell a story?

Identify a site on the school campus for the art

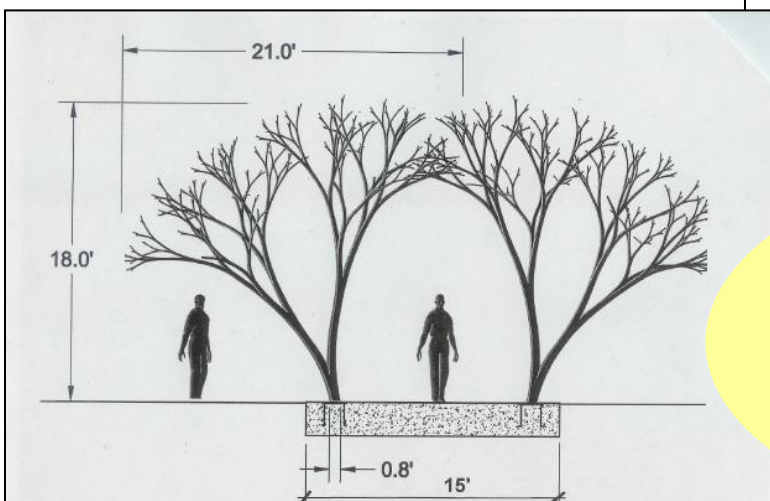
Think about recommendations you have developed for the artwork: What it might be like and who you imagine will see it and interact with it. Identify a site for the art at your school campus with your criteria in mind.

Artist's Statement

Endless represents fragments of an architectural structure characterized by indefinite conclusions within an open matrix. Reflecting on the culture of scientific inquiry driven to continually expand the boundaries of human knowledge, this artwork seeks to act as a template for furthering the open-ended imagination.



Bellevue Community College LPS 2007



Artist's Statement

I am fascinated by the branching structure of trees found throughout nature, by the many roles of trees in ecosystems, and by their symbolic, psychological, and space-creating significance to humans. The form of these trees resulted from experimenting with fractal branching patterns.

Part II: Artist Design Teams: Creating a Proposal

Students work independently as artist designers or teams to create a public art proposal

- You will work independently, in pairs, or small groups to create a **proposal** in response to the recommendations of an art selection committee. (Committee and artist/design teams are matched to avoid overlapping members.)

Artist/design team

Brainstorm design proposal ideas

Think about the recommendations from committee that you have been assigned. Visit the site on your school campus the committee has identified. Sketch, take photographs, talk, write, think.

Measure and record site specifications

Measure and record designated public art site information: dimensions, surfaces, lighting. Also consider the site's existent environmental features — such as trees, electrical components, and irrigation.

Create a design for a site-specific work of art

Decide what the artwork will be in terms of **form**, materials, and how it communicates the idea of “education,” as broadly stated in committee recommendations. Create three **scale renderings**. These renderings can be drawings or **plans**, made by hand or on a CAD program, that reflect the location of the artwork in the site, dimensions of the site, the scale of the artwork (size relative to the environment it will be placed), and how it will look from three different **points of view**. The **design** could show top and sides. It could show close-ups. It needs to show as much information as possible to communicate what it will look like.

Write about how the art would be fabricated

Imagine how this art would be built and who would build it. What sort of technical support and knowledge would be required? Would you need mechanics, welders, carpenters, masons, crane operators to **fabricate** and **install** the work?

Write a description of art concept, imagery, and materials

Describe how the art reflects the theme of “education,” what it will look like, and what it will be made out of.

Design Options

Proposals can be based on an artistic medium or process that is within the scope of class context and student knowledge, whether painting, sculpture, mosaic, ceramics, glass fusing, or other.

Vocabulary

Two-dimensional
Three-dimensional
CAD design
Commission
Design
Engineering
Environment
Fabrication
Form
Installation
Proposal
Plan
Point of view
Scale renderings
Site-specific

Part III: Real World Requirements

- Artist proposals for public art also require timelines, budgets, and detailed technical information about how the art is constructed and who constructs it.
- **Engineers** must be contracted by artists to evaluate safety and stability of design and installation. Environmental stability in different climate and weather conditions is also evaluated.
- In some cases, artists fabricate the art themselves, or hire technicians who specialize in working with specific materials such as glass, metal, or stone.
- The life expectancy and type of maintenance required for caring for the art are also requirements of proposals.

A look at the making of *Fractal Tree Archway* and *Endless ...*

- Review slide show with in-depth background information on artists' concepts, proposals, timelines, budgets, technical drawings, and fabrication process.

Part IV: Artist Design Team Presentations

Students present design proposals to class guided by the following questions:

- Share the committee recommendations that shaped your design proposal.
- Describe your creative brainstorming design process in response to committee recommendations and site requirements.
- Show your scale rendering/designs and read your description of art concept, imagery, and materials.
- Describe how the art would be fabricated.

Individual Student Reflection Questions:

What were some of the challenges and successes of collaborating as an art selection committee or artist/design team?

When you see a work of public art in a library, or school, or courthouse building, will you think about it differently now that you have completed this project? Describe.

Is public art important? Why or why not?

Washington State EALRS

Visual Art

2.3 Applies a creative process to the arts.

- Identifies audience and purpose.
- Explores, gathers and interprets information from diverse sources.
- Uses ideas, foundations, skills and techniques of the arts in a creative work.
- Implements choices of elements, principles, foundations, skills and techniques of the arts in a creative work

4.5 Understands how arts knowledge and skills are used in the world of work, including careers in the arts.

Research and project expansion ideas to explore across disciplines ...

Physics: How safe?

Loads, Limits, Stability...

Chemistry: How long?

Materials, Maintenance, Compatibility

Math: How much?

Amounts, Measurements, Costs, Budgets...

Language Arts: What will it look like?

Descriptions, Statements, Proposals...

Social Studies: Who does it reflect?

Time, Place, Community, Culture...



This lesson was developed and written by Meredith Essex, with thanks to Tom Tampa (South Kitsap High School, South Kitsap School District) for development support. The project was funded by ArtsWA, the Washington State Arts Commission.

