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Yorkshire Sculpture Park

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**LEARNING AT YSP**

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**TEACHING RESOURCE**

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Performance, Light Painting & Sculpture

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**YSP**





# Introduction

Ignite is Yorkshire Sculpture Park's (YSP) 'Artists in Schools' programme and is delivered in partnership with schools across the Wakefield area. Ignite has supported children and teachers to develop skills, confidence and imagination through artist-led creative activity in schools.

The Ignite programme responds to the specialist art practice of each year's resident artist. During 2014-15, we worked with artist Hardeep Sahota. Pupils experimented with drawing, light-painting, performance and

sculpture as part of one creative process. Ignite inspired teachers to step back, for children to explore new materials in their own time, to follow their imagination and make their own choices.

In 2014/15 twelve Wakefield schools took part in Ignite, which included a workshop day at YSP, led by Hardeep, followed by a one-day residency in school. Hardeep worked with children from Foundation stage to Year 10; each residency responding to themes and areas of learning particular to that school.

## Schools participating in Ignite 2014/15

Queen Elizabeth Grammar School  
West Bretton Primary School  
South Parade Primary School  
Minsthorpe Community College  
Three Lane Ends Community Primary School  
Crofton Infants School  
Glasshoughton Infant Academy  
Sandal Castle Primary School  
Streethouse Junior, Infants and Nursery School  
All Saints Featherstone Primary School  
Simpsons Lane Academy  
Kettlethorpe High School



# The Artist

Hardeep Sahota uses multimedia technology, sound technology and performance as part of his art practice. Hardeep is an alumni of Bretton Hall College, University of Leeds, which is where Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) began. Hardeep was therefore familiar with the environment and ethos of this unique environment.

Although Hardeep specialised in Fine Art Ceramics as a student, his practice crosses art forms and draws on his own cultural heritage. Hardeep is currently Director of Bhangra Dance Company and has a Masters degree in the History of Bhangra, a folk dance of the Panjab, India.

‘Inspired by the feeling of time ‘slowing down’ and of the natural environment stimulating our creativity, visitors to YSP explore at their own pace, choose their own direction and create their own individual experience of the park. Every turn gives the possibility of a new encounter. The opportunity to explore world-class art using the senses of sight, smell, sound and touch, enables a personal physical connection to understanding the sculpture within the landscape. It was with this freedom of exploration in mind that I approached this year’s Ignite programme.’

Hardeep Sahota



# Day 1

## Exploring Yorkshire Sculpture Park



Schools participating in the Ignite program were invited to YSP for a bespoke tour and workshop. This was an opportunity to experience the benefits of outdoor learning, providing opportunity for hands-on interaction, collaborative working and creative play.



Whilst walking around YSP, pupils were given drawing and sculpting materials to create and record a range of responses. Line drawings were embellished using natural, found materials to add colour and texture. Pupils explored texture by creating rubbings on paper and impressing clay into different surfaces.



Pupils were encouraged to use a range of senses to explore sculpture. They engaged kinaesthetically through touch and movement.

**‘Anyone who wants to explore sculpture should use their own body. With a sculpture you must walk around it, bend towards it, touch it, walk away from it.’**

Barbara Hepworth, Sculptor

‘Being outdoors induces a heightened awareness of ‘self’, of the environment around us and the connection between ourselves and nature. Both children and adults that visit share an experience akin to mindfulness.’

Hardeep Sahota



### Thinking and Talking about Sculpture

When experiencing sculpture, allow time for pupils to walk around, look carefully, use their senses.

Use open-ended questions to stimulate enquiry.

- What can you see, hear, feel?
- Does it remind you of anything?
- How does it make you feel?
- What does it make you think of?
- Does the sculpture have a ‘story’?

Following on from this exchange of ideas, pupils can be given more context or background information on the sculpture or artist that created it. Pupils are adding their own meanings to the art work and developing their own critical and creative thinking skills.

## Outdoor Sculpture Building



Pupils worked in small groups to create their own large-scale sculptures using found objects. Words elicited from the children in response to the artworks were used as starting points for their own sculptures. As pupils started to build, they responded to and were led by the possibilities of the materials.



Allow the materials to stimulate the ideas. Challenge pupils to create a sculpture which:

- Is half-animal, half-machine; is a fantasy building or part of a story
- Expresses an abstract idea such as happiness, friendship, fear, peace
- Describes a strange juxtaposition of animal and verb, such as juggling giraffe, dancing octopus, spinning spider



Reassure pupils not to be afraid of changing their minds if the sculpture begins to look different to what they had set out to create. Encourage them to 'go with the flow', 'listen' to the materials and follow their ideas.

Learning how to work together, how to listen and talk is an important part of the making process. Encourage pupils to talk as they create. Ideas will change, build and develop through collaboration and sharing.



# Day 2. Workshop in School

## Igniting the Process

Ignite was an opportunity to move across art forms and allow ideas to thread through different ways of making. We started by using sculpture as an inspiration for story-telling.



## Storytelling and Re-imagining Sculpture

What you will need:



Marker  
pens



Images to  
'ignite' their  
imaginations



Large sheets  
of paper



Large space  
for pupils  
to move freely



### When looking at the sculptures ask...

What can you see? What is happening in the image? Who are the characters? How are they feeling? What do you think has just happened? What do you think will happen next? How does the image make you feel?

We re-visited the sculptures we had seen at the park, taking images back into school. The sculptures most effective in generating stories were those that were ambiguous and intriguing.

The sculpture was presented as being part of a story which needed to be discovered. We gave pupils permission to be imaginative, reminding them that there were no wrong or right answers. Using large coloured marker pens on big sheets of paper on the floor, pupils scribed their ideas. Pupils talked about their story ideas as they developed. We encouraged them to get all their ideas down – not just the good ones.

### Top Tips

Put one pupil from each group into a new group part way through the exercise. This requires the rest of the group to explain their story to their new group member. Allow the new group member to change the direction of the story.

Give pupils a different coloured marker so that you can easily see their contribution to the group.

## Bringing Stories to Life

Having developed our imaginative storytelling through speaking, listening and writing, we began to introduce movement and performance.

Many pupils instinctively wanted to act out the stories they had created. Some pupils had naturally begun to do this whilst they were writing. Some younger children effortlessly moved from one art form to the next, using movement, drama and dialogue to express their story ideas.

Working in small groups, children were asked to tell their story as a movement sequence. This activity worked better if pupils were given the limitation of not using dialogue or the spoken word, encouraging them to represent the story visually.

Groups presented their movement story to the rest of the class and other groups were asked to interpret what was shown. We used this as an opportunity to consider how the sequence could be improved to emphasise character or key events in the story.





## Drawing with Light

Light drawing is an easy process with the right equipment and is very accessible for pupils of all abilities and ages.

What you will need :



Cameras with a controllable exposure. This will allow you to control the shutter speed.



A range of light sources such as a battery-operated torches, glow sticks or colored LED lights.



Light painting works best in a darkened room. Whether it's a hall or a classroom, just cover the windows with black paper to block out any sunlight.

Light drawing is a photographic technique in which photographs are taken using a long exposure whilst someone moves a hand-held light source. This technique is usually performed at night or

in a darkened area. The 'drawn strokes of light' are similar to the 'retinal blur' that happens when we wave a sparkler on bonfire night. Photography allows us to capture the moving light as a continuous line.

## Experiment with Light Drawing

- Create a darkened space for your light drawing
- Children can work in pairs or small groups depending on how many cameras you have.
- Give one pupil within each group a camera. Give a light source to each remaining pupil.
- Turn down the lights to darken the space.
- Children with the light sources create 'doodles' in the air, moving to create patterns or shapes as the photograph is being taken.
- When taking the picture the shutter is opened and takes a photograph depending on the setting; between 3 to 5 seconds is a good starting point for a long exposure.\*
- Children can experiment with the length of shutter speed. By seeing what effects they create, they will work out which shutter speed creates the image they want.

Moving a torch in the air to create shapes as a type of 'doodling' is a great way to explore what is possible, to play and gain confidence with the medium. Pupils can refine their movements to create basic shapes. They may wish to create longer or shorter lines. They may wish to run, jump and move in different directions. They may wish to create letters in the air. Working collaboratively in a small group, each pupil could write one letter in the air to create a word.

## Telling stories through movement

After experimenting with the possibilities of light painting, pupils were referred back to their earlier stories and movement sequences derived from the sculptures.

Pupils began to re-enact short extracts from their performances, integrating the torches into their movements. Pupils created expressive lines of light which tracked movement in a visual re-telling of their story.

Pupils may have had a clear idea in their minds of their story but the resulting light drawings were



abstract representations of this starting point. We discussed what the image represented and how it could be 'read' as an abstract representation of their stories.

Once pupils had played and explored in an open-ended way with the lights and the cameras, they began to plan for certain effects and manipulate their materials accordingly. Pupils started to develop their photographic skills, spatial sensitivity and choreography to achieve the desired effects of the final photograph. By the end of the morning, pupils had planned and produced a final photographic image of a light painting which they could take into the afternoon session.



### Artists who have painted with light

Gjon Mili was an American-Albanian photographer who pioneered a range of photographic techniques, such as photoflash photography, in the 1930's. Mili used stroboscopic light to capture the motion of dancers, violinists and figure skaters in a single exposure. Mili attached small lights to the boots of an ice skater and then took a photograph with a long exposure. The resulting images would become the inspiration for generations of light painters.

Pablo Picasso was inspired by Mili's photographs of the figure skaters. He experimented with this new medium using a penlight and began to draw in the air, capturing the drawings through long exposure photographs. The body of work created would become known as Pablo Picasso's Light Drawings and were published in an issue of Life magazine in 1949.

### Top Tips

Experiment with a range of different light sources.

Start with simple LED lights, building up to brighter torches, flashing 'light-saber' type light sources, torches that spin, flash, or are multi-coloured. This is part of the learning process as pupils begin

to use different lights as 'brushes' to create a range of marks in the air.

Use gymnastic equipment, such as hula-hoops and gymnast ribbon, which help further exaggerate the movements of the performer

‘I liked making abstract art out of wire because it did not have to be anything specific.’

Year 6 Pupil

## Creating 3D wire drawings

What you will need:



Short pieces of wire to create ‘wire-drawn doodles’



Long pieces of floristry wire that can be easily manipulated by hand.



Wire cutters



Objects, such as pritt sticks, pencils, pebbles to mould wire around



Print-outs of photographs created in the light-drawing session.

Before you start it is important to explain some basic health and safety points, with particular attention to the ends of the wire and protecting your fingers and eyes.

With the proper supervision a child can safely use wire cutters to manipulate and cut the wire. Giving children the opportunity to use real tools alongside you gives them greater confidence in their making and develops their fine motor skills.

As with the light-drawing, pupils were manipulating line in space, creating a 3-dimensional, sculptural drawing.

Hardeep gave a short piece of wire to each pupil. Teachers were asked to refrain from giving any further instructions and to let the pupils ‘doodle’ with the wire.

Pupils often began by bending the wire on one plane to create shapes that lay flat on the table. Hardeep encouraged pupils to manipulate the wire more sculpturally so that the wire ‘lifts-off’ the table and can balance. Pupils wrapped the wire

## Top Tips

Pupils may need support or encouragement to explore. Suggest they start by creating their initials or basic letters and shapes.

It is fun to try to create a face using one piece of continuous wire.

Encourage pupils to re-use the wire so that whatever they make is valued as an experiment, something to learn from and not as a finished art work

around an object such as a glue stick, pencil or ruler to create a cylinder or other three-dimensional form. As more wire was given out, pupils naturally started to join pieces of wire together to create more complex forms.

Pupils were then given a length of brightly coloured floristry wire. Brightly coloured metallic colours are visually attractive and the wires’ malleability made it easy to use. We used the photographic print outs of pupils’ light-paintings as starting points for the wire sculptures.



#### Using a Pixelstick™

A Pixelstick™ is a lightweight aluminum stick which houses two hundred full color LEDs that can be programmed to create images. Your chosen image should be saved as a BMP file and then loaded onto the Pixelstick™. As you walk with Pixlestick™, the image is illuminated in the space and can only be seen properly once a long exposure photograph is taken. We experimented with school logos as well as the original images of sculptures from YSP, uploading them onto the Pixelstick™ for pupils to interact with virtually.

Pupils tried to recreate some of the shapes and lines, 'tracing' the shapes from the print-out with the coloured wire then developing the abstract shapes into sculptural form.

This process connected their learning from the initial stories they had created, into movement work, light paintings and now into wire sculpture. Pupils began to see how one art form could inspire another.

At this point there was opportunity to discuss the differences between representational and abstract art, as pupils' ideas had moved from literal representation through storytelling and movement into abstract line-drawing and sculpture. Pupils were beginning to make decisions based on formal qualities such as shape, colour, line and composition.

# Teachers as Creative Learners

Light drawing offered as much of a learning opportunity for teachers as for pupils. Watching teachers play, try things out, see things not work, have fun and create something collaboratively with pupils was exciting and created an environment which fostered great learning and creativity. Teachers lost themselves in the creative process as much as the children; giving children implicit permission to explore and not be fixed on a particular outcome.

## Take your classroom outside!

We took advantage of any available opportunity to work outdoors. Children working at a table-top within a classroom will always work on a small scale. Once outdoors, children took the opportunity to create much larger and more adventurous work. Pupils also used the outdoor environment to frame and respond to their pieces, incorporating found objects or creating organic shapes growing from the ground or sprouting from trees!

## Creating the final image

Pupils selected their favourite wire creation produced during the afternoon session. This didn't necessarily have to be the latest or final sculpture but could be one of their 'doodles' or wire experiments. We wanted to emphasise that each stage of the process had its own value.

We then photographed each pupil's wire sculpture using coloured LED lights to create interesting background shadow effects. Pupils played with the lights to cast

**'Thank you for a brilliant day! I loved how light is such an effective and easy medium. I would never have thought to try light drawing before but feel inspired to carry on experimenting both in and out of school! The staff and children have enjoyed a unique experience and it has helped us realise how you can stretch the boundaries of art.'**

Year 6 Teacher

longer or shorter shadows on a plain or coloured background by moving the light closer or further away from their wire sculpture. Two or more different coloured lights were used to create unusual shadows. The captured images blurred the sense of scale, making small sculptural shapes seem much larger and more dramatic. The final photographic image was a culmination of the whole process, stretching back to our first day at the park.

### Top Tip

Use visualizers in classrooms to explore wire work. Zoom into the piece to distort perceptions of size or use the 'negative' setting to create new interesting shapes.



# The Art of Going Wrong



An understanding that there was no 'right or wrong way' was implicit throughout each stage of Ignite. Moreover, pupils were encouraged not to be fearful of mistakes but to embrace them as learning opportunities. This approach reinforces that of the 'growth mind-set'.

'Studies have shown that the brain has the ability to continually rewire itself, change and grow to meet new challenges; this process is referred to as 'brain plasticity'. Often people feel that they aren't artistic. This 'fixed' mind-set is usually placed on them from an early age where education looks for measured outcomes. A fixed mindset avoids challenges whereas a growth mindset sees difficult tasks as opportunities for growth. If pupils are given the opportunity to undertake creative exploration without time-pressured tasks and tests, they will be less inclined to feel they have 'failed'.'

Hardeep Sahota



# Extension Projects

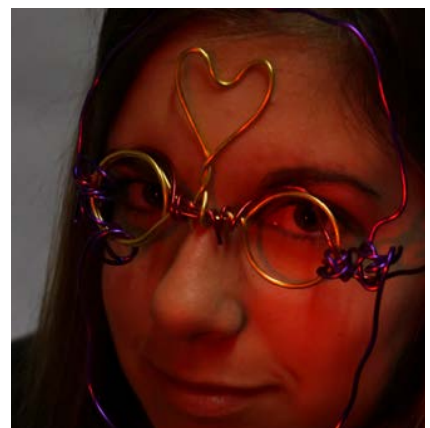
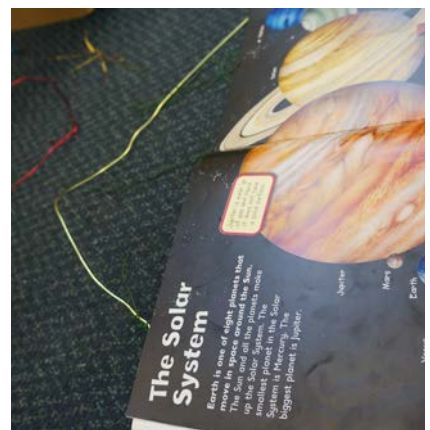


Some of the ideas and processes modelled in Ignite can support cross-curricular themes.

Year 8 pupils at Kettlethorpe High School explored the Mexican festival of the 'Day-of-the-Dead' as part of their Ignite project. The room was then darkened to explore their creations and their bodies used as 'light sources' for some fascinating light painting.



For many pupils it seemed very natural to extend their wire sculptures into body adornments such as headwear, spectacles and bracelets. An interesting observation was that pupils re-introduced the element of performance as wire sculptures became part of a costume or new identity. We had excited aliens and magical princesses by the end of some afternoon sessions!



## Acknowledgements

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Text by Kathryn Welford, Formal Learning Coordinator, Hardeep Sahota and Janette Robinson, Head of Learning.

Photography by: Hardeep Sahota, Jonathan Turner and teachers from Ignite schools.

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## Materials and Suppliers

Pixelstick - [www.thepixelstick.com](http://www.thepixelstick.com)  
Wire - [www.thebaggery.co.uk](http://www.thebaggery.co.uk)  
LED Lights - [www.mr-led.co.uk](http://www.mr-led.co.uk)  
Digital Camera - [www.sony.co.uk](http://www.sony.co.uk)



## YSP Learning

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), is an international centre for modern and contemporary art set in 500 acres of historic parkland, with five indoor galleries and open air displays. Over 500,000 people visit each year.

YSP is a centre for learning excellence, with modern and contemporary sculpture, the landscape, and unique outdoor features improving the lives of adults, children, young people and their families. The artistic programme and estate are generators for learning programmes that support creativity, social engagement and personal aspiration. YSP's unique assets are a powerful stimulus, promoting wellbeing and engagement in a way that is not possible in a traditional classroom or care setting. All programmes build on acquired knowledge from action-research projects and inspire engagement in the arts and landscape.

YSP's vibrant learning programmes provide opportunities for learners

of all ages and YSP's pioneering work is highly acknowledged. YSP has established Formal, Family and Wellbeing Learning programmes, with over 50,000 people participating each year. YSP has an outstanding record of engaging groups often excluded from arts and culture. This includes projects with children, families and schools from socio-economically disadvantaged communities, those with dementia, asylum seekers and refugees, young victims of crime and vulnerable people with mental health needs.

With our distinctive focus on art, landscape, ecology and heritage, YSP provides new opportunities to further develop innovative learning and outreach provision, and reaches less engaged communities through a series of thoughtful interventions and activities.

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