

# Ghazal Ghazi | Session 1:

## Public Art, Site Specificity & Sculptures

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**List of Required Supplies:** notepad, pen

**Space/Facility Requirements:** table, chair

**Student Time Required:** 60 minutes

**Additional Links:** Short videos for additional information on artists:

- Louise Bourgeois <https://youtu.be/lfn0qwTbgcA>
- Richard Serra *Tilted Arc*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2257kBHggs>
- Yayoi Kusama, <https://youtu.be/iT360GIhb9o>
- Jason deCaires Taylor, <https://youtu.be/t9ccmgkQifM>
- Ai Weiwei, *Good Fences Make Good People*, <https://youtu.be/SCLQc0H3tI4>
- Siah Armajani, *Bridge Over Tree*, <https://www.pbs.org/video/nyc-arts-choice-siah-armajani-bridge-over-tree-4pwf1m/>
- Kehinde Wiley, *Rumors of War*, <https://youtu.be/QGb9AQd0Ib4>

### Step-by-step Instructions

1. Review the images and artist information on the following pages along with the included external media links.
2. Complete the writing assignment at the end of the lesson.

**Public Art:** Art that takes place or is installed in public spaces. It is usually created through a public process that commissions the work for the specific site. Can be funded either privately or publicly. Two important aspects of public art are *accessibility* and *site-specificity*.

### Accessibility

Art in a public place (streets, parks, plazas, etc.) vs. private place (museums, galleries, private collections in institutions)

- Issues of accessibility for art in private realm:
  - Requires you pay for tickets, admissions, etc..
    - Not everyone can afford to pay

- You have to travel to see the artwork
  - Not everyone has transportation or can readily afford transportation. City public transportation may not pass by close to gallery/museum
- You have to go during specific days and hours of operation
  - This can be difficult if you are working class, employed full time, etc..

**Site Specific:** Artwork that was purposefully designed with a specific place in mind.

- Takes into account the unique time and place of the artwork
  - The site’s physical traits (height, length, width, shape, weather, etc.)
  - A site’s sociocultural and historical traits (the history of the site)
- The site is a location that comprises a unique combination of physical elements: depth, length, weight, height, shape, walls, temperature.
- Can be in urban or rural setting
- There is a relationship between the artwork and the place in which it is located.
- “To move the work is to destroy the work.” – Richard Serra, sculptor
  - Site-specific public artwork cannot be moved from its intended location without fundamentally altering the meaning and function of the piece

# Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010)

- French-American artist
- Themes: family, domesticity, the unconscious, body
- <https://youtu.be/Ifn0qwTbgcA>

## *Maman* (1999)



Image via [ART News](#)

# Richard Serra (1938- Present)

- American sculptor
- Used unconventional, industrial materials to make massive monumental sculptures
- Emphasizes space, movement, rhythm, and proportion

## *Sequence* (2011)



Image via [Stanford News](#)



Image via [Sartle](#)

# Richard Serra (1938- Present)

## *Tilted Arc* (1981-1989)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2257kBHggs>



Image via [Widewalls](#)

“To move the work is to destroy the work.”  
– Richard Serra

# Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen

- Claes Oldenburg (1929-Present), American sculptor
- Coosje van Bruggen (1942-2009), Dutch-American sculptor
- Monumental sculptures of everyday objects

## *Spoonbridge and Cherry (1988)*



Image via [Artsy](#)

# Yayoi Kusama (1929-Present)

- Japanese artist most famous for her infinity room installations
- <https://youtu.be/iT360GIhb9o>

## *Yellow Pumpkin* (2016)



Image via [WSJ](#)

# Sir Anish Kapoor (1954-Present)

- British Indian sculptor

*Cloud Gate* (2006) aka “The Bean” Chicago, IL



Image via [CultureTrip](https://www.culturetrip.com)



# Jason deCaires Taylor (1974-Present)

- British sculptor who makes underwater sculptures, some of which touch on historical, social, and political themes
- The sculptures are also functional, overtime becoming artificial coral reefs that support marine wildlife
- <https://youtu.be/t9ccmgkQifM>

## Underwater sculptures



Image via artist's [website](#)

# Ai Weiwei (1957-Present)

- Contemporary Chinese artist and activist

## *Good Fences Make Good Neighbors*, (2017), NYC

- Theme: immigration, detention, borders
- <https://youtu.be/SCLQc0H3tI4>



Image via [The Guardian](#)



Image via [The Guardian](#)

# Ai Weiwei (1957-Present)

## *Forever Bicycles*, (2014) Austin, TX

- Made out of 1,200 bicycles
- Themes: childhood, freedom, movement



Image via [Sight Lines Mag](#)

# Siah Armajani (1957-Present)

- Iranian-American architect and artist

## *Bridge Over Tree* (1970)

- Temporary sculpture in Minneapolis (1970)
- <https://www.pbs.org/video/nyc-arts-choice-siah-armajani-bridge-over-tree-4pwf1m/>
  - 91 ft long bridge, with stairs in the middle section going over a small evergreen tree underneath
  - The sculpture socially engineers interactions
    - It forces people to communicate, cooperate, and interact as they pass each other in the center



Image via [PBS](#)

# Kehinde Wiley (1957-Present)

- American artist best known for his portrait paintings, including the official presidential portrait of President Barack Obama

## *Rumors of War* (2019)

- First installed in New York City, then in Richmond, VA
  - Features a young black man riding on a horse
  - Mimics the style of Confederate statues
  - Honors the young Black men who have been historically oppressed by racism in America
  - An example of the artist's approach for replacing Confederate statues and monuments
  - <https://youtu.be/QGb9AQd0Ib4>



Image via [My Modern Met](#)



Image via [My Modern Met](#)

## Writing Assignment Homework #1

Choose a work of art that was covered in the lesson and do some additional research on the work or artist if needed (check out the included video links for your artist of choice, or do independent research). In a short essay of at least 1,000 words, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the artwork: the name of the artist, the title of the artwork, and the year it was produced. What type of art is it? Describe its physical characteristics (size, materials, imagery, colors, shapes/form, etc).
2. What are the themes that are explored in the work? What social, cultural, environmental, political, or historical concerns is the artist responding to in this work?
3. Where is the artwork located? How does the artwork embody site-specificity? What added meaning does the location contribute to the meaning of the artwork? Would the meaning change if it was in the private space of a museum or gallery? If so, how?
4. What role does the element of time play in the artwork? Is it temporary or permanent? Who is the intended audience and how does the audience access the work?
5. How do you feel about the artwork? Do you like it or dislike it, and why? What thoughts, emotions, and questions does it bring up for you?