

# ART IN THE GARDEN

## A Self-guided Program

Explore themes of art and nature, view artworks and practice artistic techniques in the beautiful outdoor setting of VanDusen Botanical Garden.

**When to Visit:** Year-round  
**Grade Level:** 3 - 7

This guide provides background information on several of the artworks in the gardens as well as activities, discussion points, and extension projects to try back in the classroom.

Activities are designed to align with BC's new curriculum competencies.

## WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

- preparing for your visit
- background information on artwork & artists
- recommended activities with step-by-step instructions
- discussion questions: **text written in this font** are sample ways for you to ask students questions, or define passages that are to be read aloud to your group
- extension activities for the classroom

Garden map (separate PDF file)

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Please refer to our website at <http://vandusengarden.org/learn/school-programs/> and go to "Self-Guided Field Trips" for a detailed list of curriculum points covered in this self-guided program.



# PLAN YOUR TRIP

## BOOK YOUR VISIT

Visit our website at <http://vandusengarden.org/register> or call 604-257-8423

## TIMING & ITINERARY

We recommend about 2 hours for this tour. Suggested times below are for the activities only and does not include walking time. Artworks are distributed all around the garden and you can customize your tour depending on what you feel to be most relevant for your class. Refer to the garden map that accompanies this guide for artwork locations to help plan your route.

<b>Introduction &amp; Warm Up</b>	15 mins
<b>Stops &amp; activities</b>	
1. Sketching in 90 seconds or less	20 mins
2. Observing Your Society	5 mins
3. nač̓əətəp 'Transformation Plant'	10 mins
4. Gitsan Totem Poles	15 mins
5. Drawing Nature	20 - 30 mins
6. Elizabethan Maze	5 mins
<b>Conclusion</b>	10 mins

.....  
Total 100 - 110 mins + walking time

## ORGANIZE YOUR GROUP

We suggest an **adult:student ratio of 1:10** and recommend dividing into small groups of 10 students. Smaller groups will make it easier to move through the stops and will allow everyone an opportunity to participate in discussion & activities. Provide activity information to parents so they are confident leading a group.

## VISIT THE GARDEN

We recommend visiting the Garden before bringing your class on the tour to familiarize yourself with the artworks, the Garden, bathroom locations (in the Visitor Centre and in the Garden), and navigating between stops. We provide a **complimentary admission** for teachers to prepare for the tour. Please contact us at [ngray@vandusen.org](mailto:ngray@vandusen.org) to arrange a visit.

## PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS & CHAPERONES

- provide a copy of this guide and Art in the Garden map to each adult who will be leading a group
- each student will need a sketch book for drawing & note taking
- each student will need pencils and optional pencil crayons

**Please discuss Garden guidelines on page 3 with your group before coming to the Garden.**

## GARDEN GUIDELINES

- VanDusen Botanical Garden is a place of beauty, education and conservation with many plants and animals to see. Please do not pick any living plants or plant parts.
- Respect the wildlife in the Garden - this is their home. Spend time observing the wildlife but do not scare or hurt animals in any way (including insects).
- Respect your fellow Garden visitors: please do not run or make lots of noise in areas where other visitors might be enjoying some quiet time or a guided tour.
- Keep to pathways and grassy areas when walking to protect the plants from accidental damage. Look for small defined trails that take you through the garden beds.
- Place all garbage in garbage cans, or appropriate recycling bins. If you can't find a garbage can or recycle bin, carry your waste until you find one.
- When visiting indoor areas of the garden (such as washrooms and the Arrival Hall. Keep noise to a minimum and remember that other visitors and staff use these spaces as well.
- Have fun and enjoy the amazing world of art and nature!

### GENERAL GARDEN FAQ'S

**When does the Garden open?** Garden hours change with the seasons. For more information please visit our website at <http://vandusengarden.org/plan-your-visit/hours-admission>

**Where can we have lunch?** Once inside the garden, you will find a covered picnic area outside the Visitor Centre if you follow the Centre's windows to your left all the way to the end of the paved area. There are recycling and garbage bins here, as well as a wooden chest to stow your bags while you explore the Garden. This box is not secure so please do not leave any valuables. Keep in mind that other visiting groups may also be using this area. If the picnic area is occupied, you are welcome to eat anywhere in the Garden. The Great Lawn or beside the Maze on the amphitheatre seats are popular options. Please **do not** use the tables on the plaza in front of the Visitor Centre.

**Where are the washrooms?** Inside the Visitor Centre as well as at the opposite end of the Garden in the offices building near Gate 5. You will also find portable toilets throughout the Garden. It's best to have your group use the washrooms in the Visitor Centre before beginning your visit.

**How long does it take to walk to the Maze?** Allow up to 20 minutes to walk to the Maze from the Visitor Centre, and another 20 minutes to explore it.

**Questions? Please email us at [ngray@vandusen.org](mailto:ngray@vandusen.org) or call 604-257-8423**

# GET STARTED

## WARM UP: DISCUSSION (5 MINS)

**Objective:** To start thinking about art and nature – the themes you will explore during your visit.

**Location:** Entrance Plaza of the Garden

**Ask your students the following questions:**

1. We have come to VanDusen to look at art in the gardens. Take a look around you, what kinds of art can you see?
  - several sculptural works, landscape design, visitor center building
2. Is the Visitor Centre building a work of art?
  - the visitor center building was inspired by shapes in nature. Nature often inspires art.
3. What about the landscape and the plants - is this art?
  - the shapes and colours of plants can inspire artists
  - the way plants are arranged in a designed space can be beautiful and artistic

## ART + NATURE WORD GAME (10 MINS)

**Objective:** Make new connections and generate ideas about the relationship between art and nature.

**Materials:** (optional) Print or write the words **ART** and **NATURE** on separate sheets for students, and bring blank scrap paper which students could use to write down their third word.

## ACTIVITY

Using three words - **Art**, **Nature** and another word of their choice – students create short phrases and then find examples they can see for their location.

**Step 1:** Working in pairs or small groups, everyone starts with having two nouns: **Art** and **Nature**.

**Step 2:** Students will choose one more word such as: *and, or, in, from, is, changes, needs...*

**Step 3:** Encourage them to play around with the three words and find examples they can see for this location.

**Example:** Phrase: ART *from* NATURE. Subject: Visitor Center - building is inspired by natural shapes.

Continue this activity throughout the tour, always on the look out for examples – e.g. Nature *in* Art, Nature *is* Art, Art *changes* Nature



# SKETCHING IN 90 SECONDS OR LESS

**Objective for this stop:** study form and design, practice sketching

**Materials required:** sketchbook, pencils, timer or stopwatch

..... TRY THIS  
Face north when viewing  
**For the Botanical Garden** by  
Hiromi Akiyama. Does it line up  
with anything in the distance?

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The majority of these pieces on the Great Lawn were part of the International Stone Sculpture Symposium, held in the summer of 1975. Artists were invited to spend the summer in the gardens carving their work. The artists chose their site and their stone. The red steel piece is an exception; it was a gift from the Mexican government in 1978.



**Horizontal Column**  
by Wolfgang Kubach  
and Anna-Maria  
Wilmsen-Kubach



**For the Botanical  
Garden**  
by Hiromi Akiyama



**Meta Morphosis**  
by Olga Jancic



**Between**  
by Adolf Ryszka



**Throne of  
Nezahualcoyotl**  
by Sebastian

## ACTIVITY (15 MINS)

Students will practice sketching methods within short time limits and discuss the artworks' design and relationship to the natural surroundings

1. Divide into smaller groups with one adult per group.
2. Each group will visit each sculpture on the Great Lawn for about 3 minutes each (15 min total)
3. Students will sketch each sculpture a total of four times, each time with a longer time limit (ie: less detail progressing to more detail) Time limits are: 10 seconds, 30 seconds, 60 seconds and 90 seconds.
4. The adult in the group will watch a timer, and stop students at 10 seconds, 30 seconds, 60 seconds and 90 seconds. Students start a new drawing of the sculpture the beginning of each time segment.
5. After the four sketches are complete, quickly move to the next sculpture and repeat the process.

## DISCUSSION (5-10 MINS)

Do you prefer the very quick sketches or the longer ones? How did your sketches change with each time limit? Did you focus on different parts of the sculpture each time or start each sketch the same way? Do you think there was value in not being able to think much before you drew something?

Choose your favourite piece: What attracts you to it and why?

Do you feel these artworks blend with the landscape or stand out?

Discuss organic vs. geometric forms. Identify which pieces use organic form, or geometric form, or possibly a blend of both.

## OBSERVING YOUR SOCIETY BY (PIQTOKUN) DAVID RUBEN

**Objective:** the role of the artist statement

**Materials required:** none

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This piece is made of marble and was created by Canadian Inuit artist David Ruben during the 1975 International Stone Sculpture Symposium at VanDusen. The work is a comment on the future of Canada.



### DISCUSSION (10 MINS)

Discuss this piece before and after telling your group the artist statement.

- What do you think this work may represent? Why are there three heads?
- Read out the artist statement:  
The subject of my work is that of my northern outlook upon the way of life of our southern counterpart. The faces are looking in three directions, one towards the sky and the others, east and west. The faces tend to watch the directions of growth and progress of your society. The eyes are constantly observing.
- Ask your group: Does knowing the artist statement change the way you see the work? Do you feel the work conveys the message it intended to?

# nač̓θətəɫp

## TRANSFORMATION PLANT BY CHRIS BOOTH

**Objective:** natural art, change over time

**Materials required:** sketchbook, pencils



### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Created as part of the 2012 Earth Art exhibition at the Garden, nač̓θətəɫp is the Musqueam name for this piece. The artist consulted with the Musqueam community in creation of this work and upon completion, the work was named and blessed by the community.

Components of this piece:

- 14 large slabs of stone up to 2 meters high, propped up in two circles
- tightly stacked wood pieces from pruned tree limbs, fallen trees, branches and beached boom logs
- 35 blocks of stone placed in a 6 meter diameter retaining wall around the wood
- a western redcedar tree (*Thuja plicata*) planted in the centre

As the stacked wood decomposes over the years, the nutrients are recycled into rich soil that feeds the western redcedar tree. Fungi and other decomposers play a key part in the dynamic nature of this artwork. As they break down the wood, the stone slabs will slowly fall open like flower petals to reveal the redcedar. The tree will grow over the years into a large tree, much like a young tree would flourish on a nurse log in a forest.

### DISCUSSION

Ask students, This work is designed to be a living sculpture. Fungi play a significant role in transforming the artwork's appearance over time. What other elements will cause this work to change over time?

- Answer: Insects, microbes, bacteria, weather (wind, rain), as the tree grows its root will shift the artwork

Look closely at the artwork; can you see any signs of this taking place?

### ACTIVITY (10 MINS)

This work is designed to change slowly over time; draw what you think this sculpture will look like in 30 years.

**Post-trip Extension:** As a class, make your own piece of earth art. Back at school have your group create a piece of ephemeral or natural art. This type of art work uses found materials (rocks, leaves, twigs etc.) arranged in artistic patterns and shapes. This type of art is meant to be temporary and will change over time. See page 11 of this guide for more ideas & information.

### FUN FACT .....

The stone slabs used in Transformation Plant were left over from the construction of the Vancouver Seawall.

# GITSAN TOTEM POLES

**Mosquito** (left) by Earl Muldoe

**Al of the Gispuwada** (right) by Arthur Sterritt

**Objective:** investigation of totem poles and of the Gitsan art style and symbols

**Materials required:** none



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These totem poles are made from western redcedar. Both artists are members of the Gitsan (also spelled Gitxan or Gitksan) First Nation from K'san. This village is located near the ancient village of Gitanmaax in the community of Hazelton, British Columbia.

**Mosquito (left)** – This pole tells the origin of mosquitoes, coming from the ashes of the funeral pyre of Baboudina, Chief of the blood sucking mosquito peoples (top). Below him is the young woman (middle) who killed the chief and saved her husband (bottom) and baby.

**Al of the Gispuwada (right)** - This pole describes the origin of the black bear crest that is used by the Orca clan. (Note: full story is told in the discussion on page 7)

### Traditional Totem Pole Creation (Coastal First Nations)

1. Several trees could have been inspected before one was chosen for its beauty and character. A ceremony of gratitude and respect was performed in honour of the tree before cutting it down and bringing it to the village.
2. Carvers (historically only male) began at the top and worked down, taking up to a year to carve depending on the size of the pole.
3. Handmade tools were used to carve: a hammer made of stone with a wooden handle, an adz (like an axe) made with a sharp, flat, stone blade, and chisels made from stone or animal horn.
4. Totem poles were sometimes painted after they were carved using brushes made of animal fur. The pigments were made from natural materials such as bark, clay, berries and shells mixed with crushed salmon eggs. Black, red, blue, green and white were the most common colors.

**Note:** Contemporary totem pole creation may practice traditional methods combined with modern techniques. Read more about totem poles at <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/culture/totem-poles.html>

### What is purpose of totem poles?

- Totem poles are a means of communication. They may tell the story of a family or individual, an important event, or lesson learned.

Over time these totem poles will decompose – this is part of their design. Totem poles are sacred and symbolic objects that decompose over time and return to the earth from where they came. The *Transformation Plant* artwork (by Chris Booth) found nearby was also designed with this in mind.

DISCUSSION & MORE >>

## GITSAN TOTEM POLES DISCUSSION

**Gather your group together and read aloud the following:**

A totem pole is like a book; it tells a story and is a way of passing that story from one generation to another. The story is read from the top to the bottom. The figures on totem poles are symbols (often animals & birds) and they may represent tribes, families or individual people. Turn students' attention to the pole on the right, *Al of the Gispuwada*, and read the following aloud:

This pole tells the story of how the Orca clan adopted the black bear as their crest symbol.

A long time ago, a man went into the mountains to hunt mountain goats and was captured by a black bear that carried him back to his den. Instead of killing the hunter, the bear taught him many things, including how to catch salmon.

Two years later, the man was allowed to return home, but by then he looked like a black bear and his fellow villagers feared him. Luckily, a wise old shaman recognized the man and took him in. The shaman rubbed medicine on the bear-man until he returned to his human form.

The man and the black bear remained friends, and the bear helped the man if he was in trouble. The man shared his knowledge learned from the bear with his clan, such as how to catch salmon - a skill the people have excelled at ever since. Because of this unique relationship with the bear, the clan took the bear as their crest symbol.

.....  
**Look at the totem pole:** At the top of the pole is the man who went to hunt mountain goats; the face is the wise old shaman who helped him when he returned to the village, beneath is the hunter in the form of the bear, the man's head between the paws represents the human side of the bear-man.

## ACTIVITY (10 - 15 MINS)

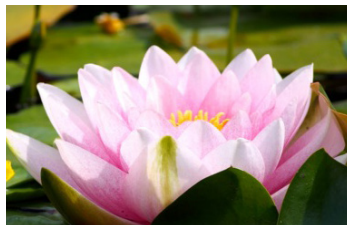
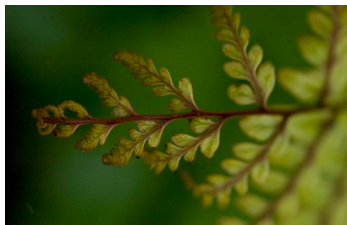
Students create their own story or poem using the **Mosquito** totem pole, reading imagery from top to bottom.

1. Divide into pairs or small groups
2. Each group will look closely at the Mosquito pole, and create their own short story. Remember to read the pole from top to bottom.
3. One member from each group will present their story

**Post-trip Extension:** Totem poles tell a story; back at school have your students design their own totem pole recounting an event in their own life.

# DRAWING NATURE

For these activities you are looking for plants with interesting shapes, patterns and textures. There is something in every season:



**Objective: PART 1** - observe the form of a plant and explore through drawing; practice illustrating accurately.  
**PART 2** - finding inspiration in shapes and patterns in nature, practicing expressionist artistic style.

**Materials required:** sketchbook, pencils, optional pencil crayons

**Location:** Find a place where your students will each be able to select a plant and sit down to sketch it quietly by themselves (such as a grassy area surrounded by plant beds)

## PART 1: BOTANICALLY ILLUSTRATED

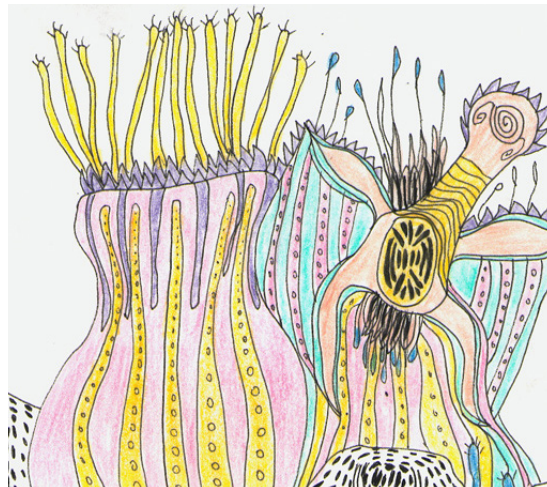
### ACTIVITY (10-15 MINS)

1. Students will find a quiet spot on their own and take a few moments to observe the natural surroundings.
2. Students will begin to narrow down their focus and choose something in their immediate area to look at in greater detail. It could be an entire plant, a leaf, an interesting branch, a patch of moss, etc...
3. Encourage students to take their time as they observe the plant or natural item of their choice and begin to draw it, starting with the basic outer shape and moving on to details like leaf patterns and flowers.

## PART 2: INSPIRED BY SHAPE & PATTERN

### ACTIVITY (10-15 MINS)

1. Now ask students to focus on the patterns, shapes, textures, colours or shades in their plant of choice
2. Students will draw something inspired by their observations: thinking beyond the natural object in front of them and creating something more abstract - a collection of shapes, patterns, textures, etc... inspired by what they see
3. Optional follow up time to share work and discuss.



**Post-trip extension:** Design a functional item using the shapes and patterns you found in the garden. For example, leaf veins may inspire a design for artwork on an iPhone case, a t-shirt, snowboard, etc...and the shape of a tree may inspire a concept for a unique building. Email us photos of your garden inspired creations for a chance to win a one-time family admission pass for use at VanDusen Botanical Garden or Bloedel Conservatory. Send artwork to [ngray@vandusen.org](mailto:ngray@vandusen.org)

# ELIZABETHAN MAZE

**Objective for this stop:** observing living sculpture, exploring a piece of functional art

**Materials required:** none



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The maze was planted with 2,000 cedar plants (*Thuja occidentalis* 'Pyramidales') and is 100 ft. in diameter. At its center is a monkey puzzle tree (*Araucaria araucana*). It was designed by Alan Brown, former headmaster at St. George's School. The outline of the maze was painted on the ground, a quarter at a time before being planted with trees.

### MAZE vs. LABYRINTH — is there a difference?

A labyrinth usually has a single route with twists and turns. Some labyrinths have spiritual significance and are used for personal, psychological and spiritual transformation.

- a maze is a purposely confusing puzzle with branching paths and dead ends and may have many entry and exit points
- historically, the names have been used interchangeably, and there is a rich and detailed history behind the creation and use of mazes and labyrinths. See additional information below for a few examples:

The maze or labyrinth is an ancient concept, with examples found in ancient Egypt, the Minoan civilization the Stone Age of Northern Europe, and in Native American regions. European maze designs were based on the Cretan legend of King Minos who kept a Minotaur, a half-man, half-bull monster, in the center of a maze. This monster required humans for sustenance. King Minos blamed the Athenians for the death of one of his sons and he demanded that Athens send seven young men and seven maidens every nine years to feed the Minotaur. Theseus heroically volunteered to go, and the royal princess Ariadne, daughter of King Minos, fell in love with him. To help him, she gave Theseus a ball of string. Theseus attached it to the outside of the maze and was able to retrace his steps, outwit the Minotaur and slay him.

The Romans incorporated maze designs into their mosaic walls and floors. Mazes became a popular garden feature in European gardens in the late middle Ages and the Renaissance. They were constructed with mathematical precision and connected to the sun's changing position. Mazes and labyrinths may symbolize the cosmos and the cycle of life; the trials, temptations, triumphs and failures we encounter in life.

## DISCUSSION (5 MIN)

Ask students, Do you think this is art? (wait for answers) This is a living sculpture.

## ACTIVITY: GO THROUGH THE MAZE! (10 MINS)

Students who finish early may wish to sit on the amphitheater steps and try drawing the maze.

**Post-trip extension:** There are many accounts of Theseus and the Minotaur — consider asking your students to research the legend and compare versions of the story. Have your group make a labyrinth of their very own once they get back to school. See "Back in the Classroom" extension section on page 12 of this guide for some ideas.

## FUN FACT .....

There is a sculpture of a Minotaur near the entrance to our Rhododendron Walk.

# BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

## EPHEMERAL ART

Ephemeral art is temporary and will only last for a short period of time. They are made with natural materials that will break down and return to the environment. Because the artwork itself is not collectable, photographs are used to capture the essence of the works.

### Suggestions:

- **Bug Houses:** students collect natural materials and use them to create small shelters, or 'houses' for insects. These are good individual projects as students are encouraged to create small individual works.
- **Collaborative pieces:** students collect natural material and use them to create one large piece they must work as a group to create their artwork
- **Ideas:** create a pathway composed of leaves/ sticks/ interesting stones wandering through a green space, or mark out a large shape (a circle or square) and have the students create different patterns or textures within the shape

**Note:** While the emphasis is on creating these pieces outdoors and leaving them exposed to the element - in extremely miserable weather - natural items may be collected and brought indoors for a classroom creation such as a nature collage. Natural items may be returned to the outdoors after a temporary indoor display.

**Want to see more? Have a look at the work of the following artists for inspiration:**

Chris Booth - [www.chrisbooth.co.nz](http://www.chrisbooth.co.nz)

Andy Goldsworthy - [www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk](http://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk)

Nicole Dextras - [www.nicoledextras.com](http://www.nicoledextras.com)



# BACK IN THE CLASSROOM

## LABYRINTHS

The following is a short list of ideas for creating labyrinths inside and outside the classroom. For detailed instructions on techniques on how to draw labyrinths see the websites listed below.

### Suggestions for indoors:

- Fill shallow dishes with sand and encourage students to draw a labyrinth in the sand with their fingers.
- On stiff pieces of cardboard, sketch out a labyrinth in pencil, follow the pencil outline, glue on decorative materials (seeds / string / beads / paperclips) onto the paper to outline the labyrinth pattern. Once it has dried, challenge their classmates can to use their fingers to 'walk' through the labyrinth they have created
- Use masking tape to draw large and small labyrinths on the floor

### Suggestions for outdoors:

- Use chalk to draw large and small labyrinths on sidewalk, or playground
- Create a temporary labyrinth on the ground using bird seed. Once you have finished, wait quietly and watch as the birds eat their way through the labyrinth
- Create a labyrinth using found natural materials (leaves, stones, sticks) and lay them out on green space or school yard.

### Learn more about Labyrinths:

- The Labyrinth Society has a variety of activity ideas and resources, including a number of downloadable labyrinth patterns. [www.labyrinthsociety.org](http://www.labyrinthsociety.org)
- Labyrinthos provides information and images of how to draw a labyrinth using a 'seed pattern' [www.labyrinthos.net](http://www.labyrinthos.net)
- This video shows you how to use 'seed patterns' to draw a variety of labyrinths <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DI49m3iobYU>



Source: [www.labyrinthsociety.org](http://www.labyrinthsociety.org)