

**Let's
play in the
park!**

JOHN AND MARY PAPPAJOHN

**SCULPTURE
PARK**

Exploration Guide

DES
MOINES
ART
CENTER

**THE PAPPAJOHN SCULPTURE PARK
IS AN EXTENSION OF THE DES MOINES ART CENTER**

We're glad you're here.

Welcome to the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, an extension of the Des Moines Art Center. The sculpture park is a public green space located in the heart of Des Moines and a collaboration of John and Mary Pappajohn, the City of Des Moines and Des Moines Parks and Recreation, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private funders. The park opened in 2009 and features artwork by many of the world's most celebrated artists.

We invite you to enjoy your experience, learn something new, and have fun! This resource is specific to the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, however, learning doesn't just happen in one place. There are many ways to learn: start with a question, create, explore your passions and interests, challenge norms, and learn in a social group. We encourage you to utilize this resource by actively participating and exploring your world in new, entirely unexpected ways.

This interactive guide offers pathways for exploring art. The activities are open ended, don't require materials or expertise, and create ways to personally engage with the sculptures. The following icons represent different learning activities that can be used to support you and your group.



Auditory Creative Emotional Logical Physical Verbal Visual

During your visit, please help us preserve the park for future generations by not touching, climbing, or sitting on the sculptures, with the exception of Scott Burton's *Seating for Eight*.

A guided tour is another great way to experience the sculpture park. Complete the online tour request form found at desmoinesartcenter.org three weeks prior to your desired date or call 515.277.4405.

We hope you have a memorable experience at the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park looking, learning, dreaming, and imagining. **Enjoy your visit!**

Let's begin.

LOOK at the sculptures from different angles and distances.

Crouch or lie down.

Go to the top of a hill and find a new perspective.

SNAP photos from these vantage points.

Focus on details within the sculptures.

Create an inventive sequence of your images and post to social media.

Be sure to tag @PappajohnSculpturePark.

NOTICE the landscape design and the sculptures' placements

within the park. The sculptures by Scott Burton, Mark di Suvero, Jaume Plensa, Tony Smith, and offer viewing perspectives not only from around, but from within and underneath.



Try these activities at sculptures in the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park.

ASK questions to encourage discussion.

- How does a sculpture look and feel differently when you change your position?
- What does the sculpture make you think about?
- What do you like/dislike about it?
- What would you ask the artist about this sculpture?

PLAY charades and see if your companions can guess which sculpture you are imitating.

LISTEN to music inspired by the sculptures.

A cell phone audio tour is available at 515.657.8264. Two symphonies, inspired by the sculptures, were composed by Steve Heitzeg and performed by the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra.

CONTINUE your engagement with the park at home by discussing your visit.

- Which sculptures did you spend the most time with?
- What do you remain curious about?
- What would you add to the park?

Photo © Britiany Brooke Crow



Photo © Brittany Brooke Crow

1

Mark di Suvero

T8 1987

Mark di Suvero composes his sculptures directly in the industrial materials from which they are made, without the use of scale-drawn plans or models. Additionally, he operates all of the construction equipment to create his sculptures. In his words, "Just as poetry can't happen if you don't know how to use words, you have to handle all the methods in order to reach the moment when you can do the dreams."



Shadow Art This sculpture, created from I-beams and set amidst Des Moines' skyscrapers offers different views and shadows. Create shadows with your body, arms, and legs to add to the sculpture's shadows.



Push & Pull While touching your finger to your nose and holding your arm out, balance on one leg. Hold your pose as long as you can. Once you lose your balance, pair up with someone and do the same thing but push your arms towards one another. Once your "duel" poses drop, partner up with another pair to see how many people can balance together.



Slow Down & Look Closer Walk very slowly in a circle around the sculpture and spiral inward. As you approach the sculpture, what changes as you walk closer? What do you notice by slowing down?



Move it! Move it! Strike the same pose as this sculpture. Then stretch your body by pretending you are elastic and create a moving version of your figure. Animate your pose into a dance. Furthermore, engage with one another by interlocking and changing partners.



Dance With Me Discuss and create a list of many different genres of dance (i.e.: square dancing, ballet, break dancing, etc.). Have everyone in your group shout out their ideas as you walk around the sculpture. Pretend the sculpture is your audience and demonstrate these different styles of dance.



Guess the Title Replace the word 'Dancing' with another verb (action word) and strike a pose. Can others guess your new title? Now, imagine the three figures in the sculpture are performing your word.

2

Keith Haring Untitled (Three Dancing Figures, version C)

designed 1989, fabricated 2009

A social activist and artist, Keith Haring created accessible and public art that could be enjoyed and understood universally. He found inspiration in the graffiti, animation, and chaos of New York City. His human figures, reduced to basic lines, shapes, and bright colors, are often portrayed brimming with energy and dancing.





3

Jaume Plensa

Nomade 2007

Jaume Plensa describes individual letters as components that have little meaning on their own, but blossom into words, thoughts, and language when combined with other letters. Plensa's letters offer a metaphor for human culture, in which a person alone has limited potential, but when formed into groups or societies, becomes stronger.



American Sign Language Alphabet



Make a Word In small groups, determine a word to sign inspired by the sculpture.

Each person signs one letter to create this word and together spell your word using American Sign Language. If the chart isn't easily accessible, form a letter with your body.



Scramble Yourself

Re-arrange your sign language letters (from the above activity) so the words are jumbled, similar to the web of letters in the sculpture. Snap a photo.





Photo © Brittany Brooke Crow

4

Ai Weiwei

Iron Tree Trunk 2015

This is a life-sized cast of a tree from the artist's native China. In a period called The Great Leap Forward (1958–1962) the landscape in China was stripped of trees as they were burned to fuel furnaces for the melting of steel for China's modernization. This sculpture represents a push and pull between nature and industrialization.



Share a Story or Memory What story about the moon from your life or a book is most memorable to you? Find a friend to describe your moon narrative.



Photo Bomb Look at the faces of each sculpture. These are just two expressions from a series of twelve sculptures. Position your body after the 'second' moon, create a third expression, and snap a photo. Which month would you choose for your expression and why?



Express Yourself Have your group stand in a circle and identify someone as January. Go around the circle and have each person represent the next month. Every person creates a unique expression and posture that interprets their month.

5

Ugo Rondinone

MOONRISE. east. january 2005

MOONRISE. east. august 2006

These sculptures are part of a series of twelve, representing each month of the year. These works represent the changing relationship between humans and the moon. Historically, humans have been more dependent on the moon for guidance, but as times change, our reliance on the moon has changed as well. Rondinone is interested in the moon because everyone in the world has equal access to the moon.

Photo © Brittany Brooke Crow



Listen to the Trees Imagine you are in a lush forest under a canopy with trees all around you. What do you hear or not hear? Now, visualize a treeless landscape with stumps peppering the ground. What do you hear or not hear?



Thank a Tree Now re-envision the wilderness with many trees. "Paint" every tree a different color with your mind. Let the colors of the trees in the forest remind you of how many trees there are in this world. Name at least five ways that trees positively impact planet Earth.



Talk With the Trees Trees are often said to be wise. What has this tree witnessed? Create and tell a story from the tree's perspective.





Play With Personalities Break into small groups and pair people with one of the sculptures in this area or 'gallery' of the park to create a short play. Imagine these sculptures are alive and animate the characters into a cohesive performance. You have five minutes. Go! Feel free to record the play.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| bathing woman | Anthony Caro / <i>In the Morning</i> |
| robe (coat) | Judith Shea / <i>Post Balzac</i> |
| mama spider | Louise Bourgeois / <i>Spider</i> |
| little horse | Deborah Butterfield / <i>Juno</i> |
| big horse | Deborah Butterfield / <i>Ancient Forest</i> |
| hare (rabbit) | Barry Flanagan / <i>Thinker on a Rock</i> |



Talk About the Play Who are the characters in your story? How do they interact with each other? How do you carry the sculptures' personalities into your performance? Where do they go? What trouble do they start? What problems could they solve?



Set it to Music What music do you think of when you see these characters? Does it evoke a feeling? Sing, whistle, or hum the tune that comes to mind.



6

Judith Shea Post Balzac 1990

Judith Shea's Balzac robe stands like an ancient column, static and empty. Shea said "At the end of the last [19th] century, there was both romance and optimism for the next century. 'Where are we a century later?' The coat is hollow — a metaphor for the condition of the spirit, for emptiness."



7

Louise Bourgeois Spider 1997

Louise Bourgeois thought of spiders as symbolic of her mother who was a weaver and her best friend. "I want them to be strong and monumental like my mother. But my mother was also ill. They reflect her strength as well as her fragility, since they balance on tiny points."



Weave a Web All hold hands and create a web tangle with your group. You have 30 seconds to unravel your web while your hands are still held together.



Make it Matter Think of someone close to you. What positive qualities do they possess? If this beloved person were an animal, what animal would you select for them? Honor that person by acting out an animal and providing a gesture that reflects your special person.



Express Events Visualize three important events that have occurred in your life. How did each of these events make you feel? Create an expression on your face for each event. Make a "slideshow" of the three expressions by using your hand to swipe in front of your face as you make each transition between the expressions.



Photo © Brittany Brodke Crow

8

Yayoi Kusama
Pumpkin (L) 2014,
 fabricated 2018

Yayoi Kusama sees pumpkins as representing growth, comfort, familiarity, protectiveness, nourishment, and whimsy. Dots, often seen in the artist's work, suggest the notion of infinity, repetition, and obsession. For the artist, pumpkins also represent a source of radiant energy. "Pumpkins bring about poetic peace in my mind. Pumpkins talk to me."



Adjust Aperture Using your hands as a telescope, find a polka dot on this sculpture. As you walk closer to the polka dot, what happens to the size of your dot?



Remember Growth Close your eyes and recall an early memory. Where are you? What were you doing? Fast forward and re-imagine another view of your life when you were a bit older. Besides physically growing, what changes happened? Open your eyes and see where you are now. What area of your life grew the most?

We hope you
 had a wonderful
 experience.

**Thank you for engaging with
 the artwork in the John and Mary
 Pappajohn Sculpture Park.**

Extend your visit to the Des Moines Art Center,
 4700 Grand Avenue, just three miles to the west of the Pappajohn Sculpture Park.

For more child-centered learning and family engagement, try one of the following ideas:

- Play **BINGO** in the galleries
- Use the child-friendly labels in the museum for conversation starters
- Eat lunch in the **café** overlooking the reflecting pool
- Find a memento in the **Shop at the Art Center**
- **Schedule a free guided tour** with a docent
- See more sculptures on the grounds of the Des Moines Art Center

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday & Wednesday 10 am – 4 pm

Thursday & Friday 10 am – 7 pm

Saturday & Sunday 10 am – 5 pm

Closed Monday

FREE ADMISSION

VISIT desmoinesartcenter.org
and use these online guides
to learn more about the
Des Moines Art Center.

Des Moines Art Center Visitor Guide

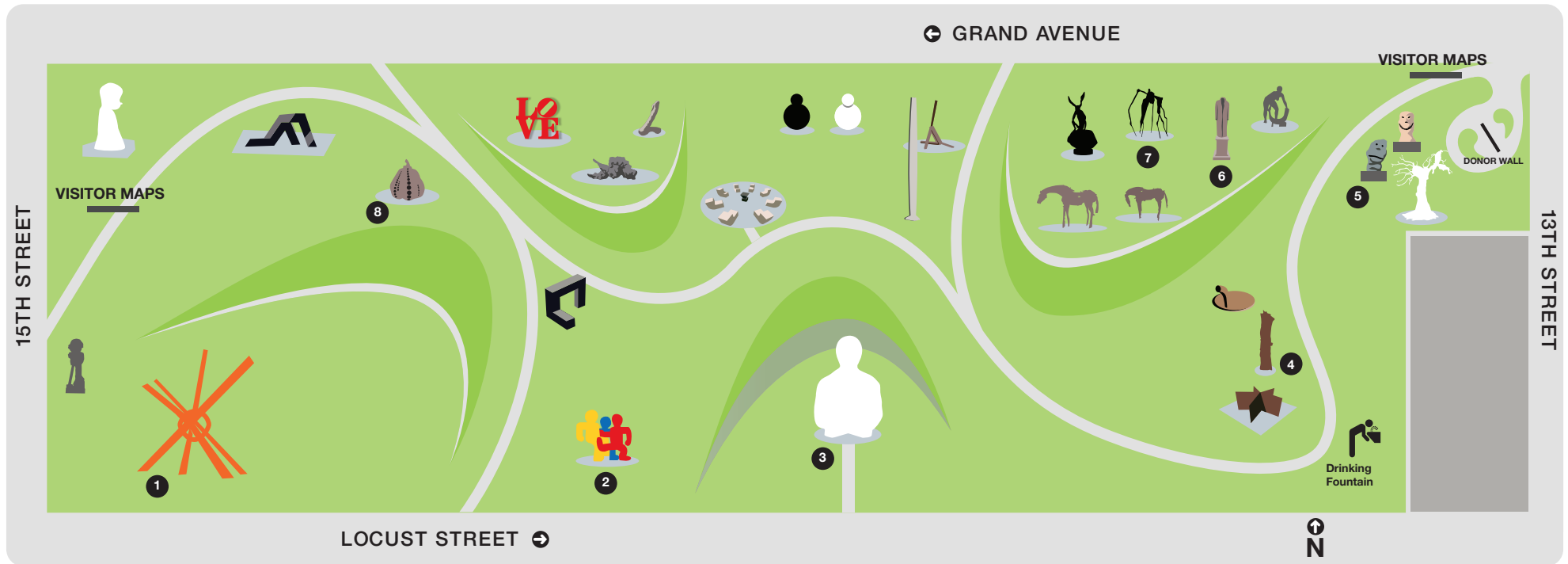
Des Moines Art Center Architecture Guide

Photo © Rich Sanders, Des Moines



Welcome to the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park
An extension of the Des Moines Art Center

? Look for the black circled numbers next to the names of the sculptures on the pages in this book for more activities and information about the sculptures in the park.



Use these online guides to learn more about the Pappajohn Sculpture Park

[Sculpture Park Visitor Guide](#)
[Sculpture Park Interactive Map](#)
[Sculpture Park Audio Tour](#)



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