

# IS IT ART?



Everyone's familiar with traditional forms of art – paint on canvas, pencil on paper and sculptures made out of stone, wood or metal – but today, artists everywhere are pushing the boundaries and art really can be made out of anything.

## Water



Water is a tricky medium for art because it is a liquid. However, **1**. Polish sculptor Malgorzata Chodakowska creates a combination of water and bronze fountains, where the water brings the statues to life. In one piece, a little ballerina suddenly wears a flowing skirt when the water is switched on. In another, a dancer has streaming jets of hair that beautifully suggest her motion.



Water doesn't have to be liquid to make art, though. Ice sculptures are not new (they date back to 17<sup>th</sup> century China), but most are designed to last throughout the winter. However, for Brazilian artist Néle Azevedo the whole point of her work is that it doesn't last. She creates installations of hundreds of human figures made of ice in cities around the world and the fact that the statues melt and slowly disappear is intended to get people thinking about how short life is. The point of this was **2**. However, her work has also been interpreted as a protest against climate change. That her art is seen as a comment on such an important issue is, Azevedo feels, a compliment.



## Recycled art



There are some amazing artists nowadays working with recycled materials. João Parrinha, Luis de Dios and Xandi Kreuzeder, together known as Skeleton Sea, are Portuguese surfers and artists who make incredible art from rubbish they find on beaches and in the sea. The trio started out collecting things to clean up the places they went surfing, but then they decided to create something permanent out of it. Turning lost shoes, old tyres, bits of plastic and scrap metal and old rope into sculptures and installations of beautiful marine creatures was the result. Their creations have gone on show in exhibitions in Portugal, Spain and France. Not only are the pieces fascinating to look at, **3** – we need to clean up our oceans and keep them free of pollution.



Heather Jansch also collects the material **4**. She uses driftwood, wood that has been washed onto land, crafting all the pieces together to make life-size sculptures of horses. Jansch says working like this is like drawing lines with wood and is an extraordinary feeling. The results are powerful, perhaps because the material used is now dead, but seems to have come alive again.



## Living art



French artist Mathilde Roussel also works with plants – but hers are very much alive. Her *Lives of Grass* sculptures are living creations that use grass instead of paint. The works are human shapes, filled with earth and wheat seeds that need daily care and because **5**. And, of course, they are temporary works. Like humans, they begin life, grow and finally they die. However, they have a deeper message too – these human forms made of a food highlight the importance of our bodies, what and how we eat and the global issues of famine and obesity.



Can human bodies be art? DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the complex chemical that carries genetic information and it is found in most of the cells in our bodies. Now, a company called DNA11 is making personalised art from people's DNA. You send a sample of your DNA, for example from inside your cheek, choose the size and colour of picture you want and they create a picture using an image of your DNA. Since **6**. It's like having your portrait done and is certainly a talking point on anyone's wall.

# Exploring art

## READING

Cambridge English

→ Student's Book, pages 70-71

**1** Read the article and decide which three artists produced the work in the photos. Tick the names.

- |                               |                       |                         |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Małgorzata Chodakowska ____ | 3 Skeleton Sea ____   | 5 Mathilde Roussel ____ |
| 2 Néle Azevedo ____           | 4 Heather Jansch ____ | 6 DNA11 ____            |

**2** Read the article again. Choose from sentences A-G the one which fits each gap 1-6. There is one extra sentence you do not need.

- A that she uses to make her incredible sculptures from beaches
- B they are unusual and appealing forms of art because they are so individually produced
- C that's precisely what makes it so interesting to work with
- D it is unique, no two images will ever be the same
- E but they also have a serious environmental message
- F they are made of organic materials, they constantly change and the results are unpredictable.
- G to inspire people to make the most of their lives now

1. The following film posters show natural disaster films. Look at them and discuss these questions.

Have you seen any of these films?

If so, did you enjoy it/them? Why/ why not?

If not, do you think you would enjoy any of them? Why/ Why not?

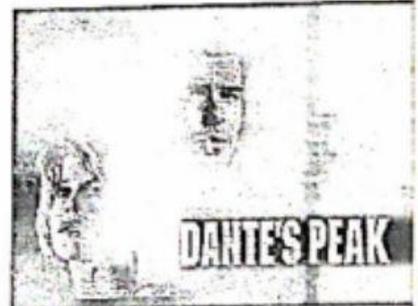
2. You are going to read an article about natural disaster films. For questions 1-10 choose from the films (A-E). The films may be chosen more than once.

## What a disaster!

*James Borja reviews five natural disaster movies from his DVD collection*

### A *Dante's Peak* (1997)

I read the novel, which is based on the script, before watching the film itself. But it was the positive opinions I'd seen online, rather than the book, that persuaded me to buy the DVD. And I was not disappointed. The plot of *Dante's Peak*, starring Pierce Brosnan and Linda Hamilton, is built around a spectacular volcanic eruption, which brings disaster to a small town in the Cascade Mountains in North America. But what impressed me most about this film was the quality of the lead performances, rather than the volcano and all the visual effects. For once, I really cared about the fate of the main characters. I even wanted their dog to survive!



### B *Twister* (1996)

Helen Hunt and Bill Paxton star as meteorologists who put their lives at risk by chasing tornadoes, or 'twisters', in order to try out a new piece of technology. If you watch this film hoping for a complex storyline, you'll be disappointed. It's obvious from the start who will fall victim to a twister, and there are no surprises in the central love story, either. What makes this movie are the special effects. The tornadoes are frighteningly realistic and, unlike in numerous other films of this genre which slowly build up to a dramatic climax, they appear from the very beginning. Watch out for the flying cow and airborne petrol tanker: if they'd made this film in 3D, cinema audiences would have run for the exit at the sight of them.



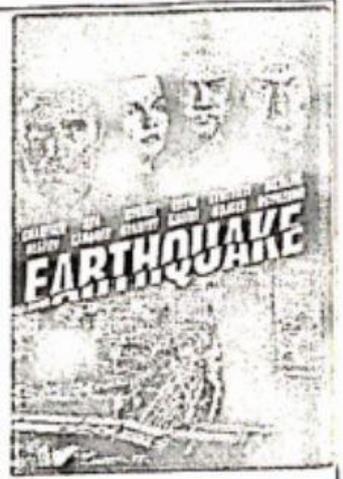
### C *The Perfect Storm* (2000)

I couldn't put the novel down when I was reading it, and the film adaptation gripped me in the same way. First there's the gradual build-up as the film explores the relationships of the crew being put together by Captain Billy Tyne (George Clooney) for one final fishing trip in the season. Then comes the suspense as three storm fronts, including a hurricane, move together while the boat is at sea, eventually colliding to create a 'perfect storm'. The special effects are so well done, my first impression was that I was watching a real storm. And if I hadn't seen the special features on the DVD afterwards, I'd probably still think they hadn't employed any visual tricks.



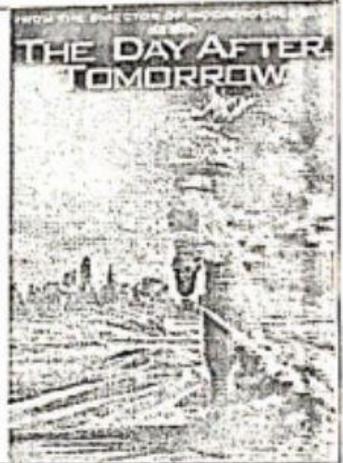
## D *Earthquake* (1974)

If you can put up with the fact that the Sensurround effect, which made cinema seats shake in the seventies, cannot be recreated on the DVD in your lounge, then this all-star classic still has plenty to offer. Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) was yet to be developed, but the special effects are still impressive, creating a number of unforgettable, if slightly disagreeable moments. Deaths are frequent and this is not a cosy family film to put your feet up with on a Sunday afternoon. And the final scene might not be what you're expecting. It certainly didn't turn out the way I thought it would.



## E *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004)

If you combined all the extreme weather scenes of every natural disaster movie ever made, you would end up with something like this film. It has everything: hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, tidal waves, blizzards and even giant hailstones, all caused by global warming. Pure fantasy, of course, but it's all good fun, and as long as you see it as that and don't look for any deeper message, you should enjoy the film. I always find it works better for me if I watch it during a storm or when it's snowing outside. It adds a touch of realism to the experience!



I found the film just as absorbing as the book.

The level of the acting was the main reason I enjoyed this film.

The plot is predictable.

The ending of the film may come as a surprise.

I had read good reviews of the film before I saw it.

I initially thought that no special effects had been used in the film.

I enjoy seeing this film in certain weather conditions

The structure of the film differs from that of many other disaster movies.

The film should not be taken too seriously.

There are several scenes which are both memorable and rather unpleasant.