

# Canal to Creek

WestConnex

Transurban

THE WESTCONNEX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



VADEA  
NSW

VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN  
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

# DEBORAH HALPERN

THE FOUR GRACES | STAGE 4 WORKSHEET



Deborah Halpern  
*The Four Graces*

## CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

**VOCABULARY** - Kinetic, plinth, mosaic, portals, figurative, models, polystyrene, armature

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTWORK

*The Four Graces* are medium-to-large scale **kinetic** figures made from stainless steel **armature**, dense **polystyrene** foam and glass tile **mosaic**. Standing at approximately 5 metres tall, each of the four graces welcomes people to Linear Park in Kingsgrove as part of the [WestConnex Public Art Program - Canal to Creek](#).

While each of the four forms are part of a family group, they do incorporate individual elements. Their names are **Solar, Wind, Cloud & River**. Match the name with the description?

| Name | Description  |
|------|--|
|      | Its hair is blowing in the wind and it's black body is adorned with the stars and moon. It embodies characteristics of the esoteric, mysterious and ancient.                                   |
|      | Its hair waves and flows in both directions and its blue body incorporates waves and references the Cook River. It embodies characteristics of dreams, transition, development and creativity. |
|      | It has cloud shaped hair and halo and its green body is adorned with leaves and flowers, taken from local indigenous plants and is an embodiment of nature.                                    |
|      | It has an electric element and crown. Its small ears are like an owl or a possum and its red body has crossed arms and sand dunes.   |

Visit the [interactive website](#) and go on a tour of the artwork in situ. Take some screen shots to paste into your Visual Arts diary and annotate them with thoughts and reflections on the artwork.





## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTIST

Deborah Halpern is a highly regarded multidisciplinary Visual Artist who is most known for her sculptural practice. She has produced an extraordinary body of work traversing the mediums of sculpture, painting, pottery, glass blowing and printmaking. Halpern has a number of works already installed in public places.

Embodying the artist's characteristic spirit of experimentation, playfulness and imagination, Halpern's whimsical sculptures conjure a dreamscape of animated childhood fantasies and fairy tales. Halpern's hybridity of forms ultimately celebrates the contemporary condition of everything being possible and she achieves her aims and intentions via a studio-based practice and collaboration with fabricators and engineers.

**The artists website is at this [link](#). Do a little research and then, in your own words, describe what type of artist Deborah Halpern is in your Visual Arts diaries?**

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - WORLD

Linear Park is within the urban, inner Sydney area of Kingsgrove. As part of the WestConnex Public Art Program - Canal to Creek this contemporary artwork helps to activate and engage local audiences to an existing but newly connected and rejuvenated space.

***The Four Graces*** depicts imagery that represents the diverse nature of the local population and embodies characteristics derived from the natural world and the world of imagination - both of the artist and audience.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - AUDIENCE

***The Four Graces*** are placed within different locations at Linear Park, therefore creating vibrant site-specific portals to the park. The figurative sculptures are memorable and easily identifiable, thereby functioning as navigational tools for wayfinding, and meeting points for locals and audiences alike. They transition the audience from the road and footpath to an engagement with nature. Standing up to 5 metres high, the brightly coloured playful figures are kinetic as their heads turn in the wind. The figures also allow for audience interaction and connection and community engagement as the plinths act as seating for visitors to the park. This also encourages visitors to the park to experience a sense of place.

Halpern has said that she hopes the artworks inspire welcome, protection, engagement and invites questions from people and ultimately become part of their day to day lives in a positive way.

Do you think Halpern has successfully achieved this and why?

## ARTMAKING TASK

Visit your local park or wander the school playground with your Visual Arts diary, some drawing materials and a bag to collect objects off the ground. Draw the natural textures and features of the park or school as well as the man-made elements. If any objects have fallen from the trees and plants, collect them in your bag.

Have a friend or classmate pose for you and do a series of continuous line drawings of various poses in your Visual Arts diary. Inspired by Halpern's whimsical models, design a companion figure in your Visual Arts diary that incorporates your drawn elements and continuous line drawing. What name would you give your sculpture idea?



### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

#### MATERIALS:

- Bamboo skewers
- Wooden plinth base
- Wire
- Papier mache pulp
- Water

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have a hole drilled into the wooden plinth base and glue your bamboo skewer into the base (you may need an adult to help here and you will want to have the pointy end at the top)
2. Make your wire elements and set aside - you may want to paint them prior to assembly
3. Mix up some papier mache pulp to a thick consistency
4. Start with the bottom shapes first so you can slide them down the skewer.
5. Mould the shapes you have designed and slide them into place on your skewer. While the paper mache is wet, insert the wire elements into place and smooth them into place
6. Place wet sculpture in an airy place to dry (be careful - a damp or airless storeroom may encourage mold growth)
7. Using bright acrylic paints and small brushes, paint patterns and motifs from your Visual Arts diary
8. OPTIONAL: You may like to use clear varnish to make them shiny - use a well ventilated area and follow manufacturer's instructions. An adult might need to do this for you.

If you have done this activity in a class, exhibit all your sculptures together and create a little installation. Document them in the park or school grounds that inspired them.

