

shaping connections to

art & nature

Students Will:

- **Respond** and connect to public art and natural landscapes as reflections of cultural values and historical narratives.
- **Analyze** how community spaces and art influence civic identity and engagement.
- **Interpret** how the park reflects local and regional history, culture, and social issues.
- **Create** and present a cultural map connecting observation, research, and analysis.
- **Connect** how public spaces and art shape society and community.

Kentucky Academic Standards

- **Social Studies:** HS.C.KGO.3, HS.G.HI.3, HS.G.HE.1, HS.G.KGE.1-2, HS.UH.KH.1
- **Science:** HS-LS2-7, HS-LS4-6, HS-ESS-3-3
- **Visual & Performing Arts:** VA:Cr2.1-3, VA: Pr4.1, VA:Pr6.1, VA:Re7.1, VA:Re7.2, VA:Re8.1, VA:Cn11.1

Before You Visit: [Watch this video](#) (c. 2024) and engage students' reactions and questions. Reflect: Why might communities create sculpture parks or exhibit public art? Review how to explore the park at www.josephinesculpturepark.org/visit.

Supplies Clipboard & paper or notebook, writing & drawing utensils, paint pens/permanent markers/spray paint



Art in the Landscape Walk – 25 minutes Gather around the map kiosk beside the Art Barn or in the amphitheatre. Introduce Josephine Sculpture Park as a place where public art and shared space tells stories about community, culture, and civic life. The park was founded by artist Melanie VanHouten in 2009 on reclaimed family farmland with the mission to connect people to each other and the land through the arts.

Ask the group: Why might communities create sculpture parks or exhibit public art? What stories can outdoor public art tell about local history or values? Explain that you will explore the artworks and landscape – the park – as cultural and historical texts.

Lead a short walk to up to 3 of the following artworks and landscape features:



Peyton Scott Russell's *GRAPHOLOGYHENGE*



Guiding Questions: Explore all of the walls and notice the words and images visitors choose to paint. What does this public artmaking space suggest about community priorities, concerns and identities? Are there perspectives missing, marginalized, or celebrated here? What statement would you want to make on this public sculpture?

Artist Peyton Scott Russell found belonging and healing in Minneapolis' hip hop culture as a young break dancer and graffiti artist. As Peyton grew, he took his artistry to a professional level, exhibiting his graffiti art and sculptures in galleries and sculpture parks across the U.S. He founded SPRAYFINGER, a graffiti education youth program, which Peyton has hosted twice at JSP as an artist-in-residence in 2019 and 2025. He completed *GRAPHOLOGYHENGE* as an artist-in-residence in 2018, creating a sanctuary and safe space for graffiti art that invites people to leave evidence that they were there.



Move: Find a spot on a wall, and using paint pens, permanent markers or spray paint, make your mark!

After You Visit: [Watch this video](#) to witness *GRAPHOLOGYHENGE* in construction and hear JSP Founder & Executive Director share why this sculpture is important.



Linda Bruckheimer's *Lost and Found Farmscapes*



Guiding Questions: Do you have any personal connections to the images or Kentucky counties represented in these photographs? How do these photographs – and the tobacco barn they're exhibition on – reflect Kentucky history or cultural traditions? Explore the signs for details.

Photographer and author Linda Bruckheimer has documented Kentucky farmsteads to capture the cultural, physical, and historical significance of the disappearing rural landscape and ways of life that shape our regional heritage. Linda sees these images as a testament to rural Kentucky's enduring beauty and perseverance. The exhibition is mounted on a former tobacco barn, built in the 1960s, abandoned in the 1990s, and restored in 2021 to host park educational programs and events.



Move: Walk around the barn to view all 10 photographs. Pause at the front of the barn and face the park entrance and observe the 2-acre meadow.



Fox Meadow

JSP is committed to conserving the beauty of Kentucky's rural landscape by using responsible land stewardship practices. Over several years, JSP converted what was once a corn and then cut-hay field into a thriving meadow that features 20 species of native wildflower and grasses that create habitat for an abundance of wildlife, like butterflies, birds, and foxes.



Guiding Questions: What values are communicated through this landscape? In other words, why would the organization invest the time and resources to establish and maintain this meadow?

After You Visit:

Learn more about JSP's conservation efforts and how you can get involved on our website.



Grandmother Tree



Guiding Questions: What do you notice about the Grandmother Tree and her surroundings? What does she make you wonder, or remind you of? If you could add an artwork here, what story would it tell and why?

JSP endearingly highlights the “Grandmother Tree” on the park’s map for her majestic branches and bark texture, and grand, awe-inspiring presence. This is a chinkapin oak, one of around 20 oak species native to Kentucky. Chinkapin oaks are adaptable and can thrive in rocky, limestone soils like this hillside. JSP staff assume that the Grandmother Tree is the largest and oldest tree in the park. JSP is committed to reforesting the sections on the map labeled Firefly Forest and Walnut Grove.



Move:

Look around the trail edges. Do you see any saplings that may have grown from the Grandmother Tree’s acorns? Tip: Match the leaf shape to be sure.



Céline Browning's *Fly Away*



Guiding Questions: How does the artist represent both her personal history and the history of thisland into her sculpture?

As a JSP artist-in-residence in 2022, Céline Browning created *Fly Away* to connect visitors to the landscape, celebrate plants and birds native to Kentucky, and honor her mother's memory and artistry. Céline was pregnant while building this piece, which made its creation more poignant, as the design of the structure was inspired by her late mother's work, particularly her final piece of public art, which remained unfinished at the time of her death in 2017.



Move:

After You Visit: Hear Céline describe the process of creating this sculpture and her reflections on the residency experience in [this video interview](#).

Cultural Mapping - 30 Minutes

Determine a central meeting point to return to in 20 minutes. Divide students into small groups to explore a new section of the park and sketch a cultural map of the area. Include the following key features in the map:

- **1 sculpture and its interpreted meaning**
- **1 natural feature and how humans interact with it/them**
- **1 artwork or landscape feature that connects to Kentucky history, culture, or civic engagement**
- **1 artwork or landscape feature that represents something in common among your group members**

Annotate the map with drawings of the key features, labels, symbols, and/or brief narratives. Use up the whole page! Add color! Get creative! (Bonus: Draw or label other sensory experiences, like sound, warm sunlight/cool shade, and smell.)

Invite each group to share their favorite map feature with everyone.

As groups share, reflect on questions such as: Which stories or values did your group identify? How does the park connect people to the land, history, culture, or community? How can public art influence civic engagement or social understanding? How does Josephine Sculpture Park differ from other parks or museums you've visited?

Closing Circle - 5 Minutes

Clean up any trash or supplies to keep the park great for future visitors. Reflect as a group: What story does Josephine Sculpture Park tell?

After You Visit

Josephine Sculpture Park believes that the exhibition and program help promote community well-being and environmental stewardship, helping make the world a better place for generations to come.

Engage high school students in [**KET PBS Learning Media's "Create a Nature Space"**](#) lesson series to solve real-world problems (community health, economics, and environmental issues) through social studies concepts and planning and designing.