

## Andy Goldsworthy

Cheshire-born British artist Andy Goldsworthy takes his inspiration from the beauty of his surroundings. His artistic endeavours mostly take place outdoors and capture the beauty and frailty of nature – and like all natural things, his art eventually decays and returns to the land.

Born in 1956, Andy Goldsworthy worked as a farm-hand as a boy during the school holidays, and this inspired him to see the structure and non-permanent nature of natural objects around him. Between 1974 and 1978, he formally studied art at the Bradford School of Art in West Yorkshire and in Lancashire at Preston Polytechnic.



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Having gained his Bachelor of the Arts (B.A.), he started experimenting with creating art in the outdoors. This meant that the things he created and carefully placed in a natural environment, became part of that place. In order to see his art works, you would not always go to a formal art gallery, you would travel to the site itself. For many fans of Goldsworthy's works of art, it means travelling long distances, visiting specific places (and just in time) to see his art before nature and the environment takes it back. Consequently, many of his works only exist in photographs – his delicate box cubes made from leaves, for example, were held together by thorns and his own saliva and were never meant to last. These beautiful and entirely natural sculptures are now dust!

Goldsworthy enjoyed experimenting with different materials to create his artistic endeavours. He would create installations of sculptures all made from natural materials found in the local environment. His art makes use of repeating patterns in nature and often involves natural objects spiralling around dark holes. His sculptures are held together by a delicate balance of stacked objects, woven branches or tied leaves. Every part of his work would be fixed together by natural materials. In doing this, Andy Goldsworthy changed the way people see art in the environment – and everything he takes eventually returns to the place it came from. Andy Goldsworthy says that his works collaborate with nature. Many of Andy Goldsworthy's artistic expressions in the 1980s and 90s were experimental, for example, involving him lying down in a rainstorm to cast a dry shadow, or throwing sticks in the air and capturing their patterns on photographs. In one of his works, he encouraged farm animals to walk on a canvas in the middle of a field and lick parts of it clean to create a perfectly white hole at the centre of their many footprints.

At the turn of the last century, Andy Goldsworthy captured the public's interest with a series of gigantic snowballs. He had woven into them long twigs, different kinds of stones and chalk and many other natural objects – a kind of natural piñata! He placed these on a canvas made from blotting paper and left the snowballs to melt in the sun. As the snowballs melted and collapsed, the sticks and objects dramatically whipped out of the structure, in the end leaving behind a random painting made by the forces of nature.



One of Andy Goldsworthy's chalk balls, cc-by-sa/2.0 -  
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Many of Andy Goldsworthy's more permanent sculptures can be found all over the world – from boulders with trees growing out of them in New York, to the spectacular underground gallery at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Now, after 40 years as a professional artist, he lives in rural Scotland and is still creating new art works to this day.