



Artist Maya Lin Title A Shift in the Streams

Introduction

At the beginning of 1995, nationally renowned artist, sculptor and architect Maya Lin was invited by the Principal Financial Group to create a work of art in conjunction with the construction of a new building on its corporate campus. Maya Lin is best known for her design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The title of the work, A Shift in the Stream, literally refers to the streams introduced into the building (both the many small, seemingly random streams of water located on the second and third floors and the single stream of water embedded into the first floor wall. The title also suggests a shift from a work environment to a reflective, personal space.

This piece, is installed inside of the building and introduces trickles of water down the two-story-high glass walls of the building's lobby. The water is then collected at the bottom and routed along the lobby wall through a trough behind a long, jagged opening, like a running crack.

Revised Overview from York: The Century History Company, 1903), Volume IV, pp. 153-154.

Discussion Questions

- What ideas do you think this piece expresses?
- The artist has shared that this piece suggests a shift from the work environment and a space personal reflection. What “shift” in your own life does this connect with? Explain your connection to this piece.
- How does this monument make you feel? Does this remind you of something in your own life?
- Maya Lin is both an architect and an artist. How do you think her knowledge of architecture influenced her creation of a Shift in the Stream?
- This artist is most famous for designing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Take a look at an image of this work, how does this compare with Shift in the Stream? Explain your connections of these very different pieces.
- Why do you think Maya Lin has placed the important components of this work where she has placed them?

Literature

Boundaries Maya Ying Lin
 This book, best for high school readers, provides the exploration of this artist/architecture aims for balance in life.

Maya Lin Amy Stone
 This book presents an overview of the life of Maya Linn and is appropriate for preschool through middle school audiences

Maya Lin: Architect and Artist Mary Malone
 Elementary through middle school audiences will gather new understandings from this introduction to Maya Lin.

The Wall Eve Bunting
 Elementary through middle school audiences will marvel at the watercolor illustrations of The Wall, designed by Maya Linn in this book. The author tells a moving story as a father and son visit this Memorial together. .

Artist Maya Lin
 American, born 1959

Status On View

Location [General Downtown](#)
 Located at Principal Corporate 4 Lobby.
Please note that pre-scheduled access is available upon request and security screening is required.

Credit Principal Financial Group

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The educational resources are designed to deepen and enhance the experiences and understanding of public art in Greater Des Moines. These resources are intended for families and educators to adapt to the needs of their individual children and/or classes.

Internet Resources

Interview with Maya Lin

This video, offered by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, offers an interview with Maya Lin about her process, how she names her pieces and what kind of music she listens to when she works.

elementary-high school

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l38Ea10sNBI>

Art21 Artist Overview

This site provides activities, multiple videos and images of a variety of Maya Lin's work for students from elementary-high school.

elementary-high school

<http://www.art21.org/artists/maya-lin>

Art & Architecture

The Art & Architecture curriculum is designed for teachers and students, by The J. Paul Getty Museum. This curriculum is designed for elementary-high school students to explore architecture-inspired art. Lesson plans, images and vocabulary are provided to support this curriculum.

elementary-high school

http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/art_architecture/aa_index.html

Maya Lin Video

This video segment from *New York Voices*, features Maya Lin sharing about her work and identity as an American of Chinese descent. The focus of this video is breaking down stereotypes. This Teachers' Domain resource offers transcripts, teaching tips, connections and standards connection.

middle-high school

<http://www.oercommons.org/courses/maya-lin/view>

Seeing the World Differently

This site offers an interview with artist and architect Maya Lin along with a biography and photographs of the artist and her work. The interview shows a close look at life growing up in Ohio, influences on her work, and how her work is influenced by her experiences.

upper elementary-high school

<http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/lin0int-1>

Art Activities

Architecture and Sculpture

Crayola offers families a sculptural activity with links between architecture and sculpture connected to artist Maya Lin.

preschool-elementary school

<http://www2.crayola.com/lesson-plans/detail/maya-lin--architect--sculptor-lesson-plan/>

Symmetry and Balance

EDSITEment offers a series of art activities titled Symmetry and Balance that connects well with the concept of "balance" alluded to in *Shift in a Stream* by Maya Lin. These activities pay a heavy focus on symmetry and balance.

elementary-middle school

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/launchpad-symmetry-and-balance-student>

Discover Maya Lin's Website

Visit Maya Lin's website to view and compare art as well as the architecture work of this artist.

preschool-high school

<http://www.mavalin.com/>