

Sculptor

Spotlight

Three-dimensional (3D) art captures the imagination in entirely different ways than 2D art. Such famous works as David by Michaelangelo create lasting impressions that continue to inspire today's artists. But sculpting has expanded its reach and sought out new mediums in recent years, incorporating new techniques and gadgets fit for modern sculptures.

Personal Connection

A sculptor joins or molds materials to bring them to life in 3D form. It takes a unique eye for detail to be able to see the hidden wonder inside a plain piece of wood, stone, clay, or other material. Sculpting is all about taking ordinary materials and making something extraordinary.

- Can you look at a block of wood or clay and see its potential?
- Do you like to work with clay or other shaping materials?
- Are you passionate about art in its various forms?
- Do you have a knack for taking something bland or simple and turning it into art? Do you enjoy experimenting with different art materials and tools?

Other Connections

Artists are needed in many different fields, so if sculpting doesn't call to you but you still want to work with art, here are some other artistic careers:

- Painters create two-dimensional art rather than three-dimensional art and work with different tools and types of paint to make unique paintings
- Art historians study paintings, sculptures, and other art forms to learn more about historical art, artists, and gain a different perspective of past events through the lens of creative works
- Ceramic artists focus more on small sculpted items like pots, bowls, figurines, and other household items
- Woodworkers make things like canes, yard figurines, intricate tables, chairs, and other large designs

Fun Facts/"Did You Know?..."

Some interesting facts about sculptures:

Ancient Roots: The world's oldest discovered sculpture is made from ivory and was found in Germany. It dates back to about 30,000 BC.

[Read more here.](#)

Old and New: 3D printing might seem like it's only been around for a few years, but the first 3D printer was, in fact, made in 1983!

[Read more here.](#)

Front Facing: We think of sculptures as 3D pieces of art that can be viewed from any angle, but some sculptures, such as relief sculptures, are only carved on one side and stand out from the surface.

[Read more here.](#)

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STEM Connection

Technology and art have seen incredible crossovers in recent years that have revolutionized both fields. Here are some ways technology is incorporated into sculpting:

- Laser-cut sculpting: How do you create an amazingly intricate sculpture with fine details in something like paper or wood? Lasers. Several artists have experimented with precision laser cutting. [Read more.](#)
- 3D printers change the name of the game: 3D printing has made its way into dozens of industries since its inception, and sculpting is no exception. Using 3D rendering software, artists can design everything on their computer. Then, using 3D printers, they print out their creations. The results are truly incredible. [Read more.](#)
- Virtual sculpting mimics real-world sculpting: Digital sculpting brings the entire process to the computer. Have you ever wonder how characters for video games and animated shows are made? Digital sculpting software takes every aspect of clay sculpting and replicates it on the computer. From shaping tools to using pinching and pulling techniques to manipulate virtual clay, the software allows entire sculptures to be made without the need for large amounts of space or materials. [Read more.](#)
- Metal sculpting made easy(er): Similar to laser-cutting, some sculptors who work primarily with metal have made the process simpler by using plasma cutters, which take data from a computer to cut out shapes and designs, which sculptors then weld together to create a finished piece. [Read more.](#)

Articles, Videos, and Podcasts of Interest

The Art Career Project website provides step-by-step advice on how to become a sculptor and what schools to consider if you want to pursue an art degree. [Learn more.](#)

The Sculptor's Funeral is a podcast hosted by a sculptor in Italy that discusses art history as well as modern-day art techniques. [Learn more.](#)

Every aspiring sculptor has to start somewhere. Try your hand at basic sculpting with the help of a tutorial. [Learn more.](#)

Here's another beginner's tutorial that covers clay sculpting. [Learn more.](#)

If digital sculpting piqued your interest, this sculptor walks through the process of practicing sculpting with digital software. [Learn more.](#)

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Journeys to Becoming a Sculptor

The path to becoming a sculptor may seem like a faraway dream, but did you know you can get started on that path even in high school?

Read about one artist's journey into her future as a sculptor:

There's no one set path to becoming a sculptor. You might know right away that you love art—or not. No matter what path you take, the skills you learn can be applied to sculpting. Take Cristina Cordova, for example. She never considered a career as an artist and started off studying engineering. When she added a few creative courses to her schedule, however, she quickly realized that art was where her interests truly lay. Her engineering knowledge comes in handy when she's trying to figure out the logistics of creating a large piece, and technology certainly plays a large role in the creative process. In order to have a frame of reference to work with, she incorporates photography and computer modeling.

"...most of my rendering starts with a set of photographs that takes views of the model in the round, and then I will pick from that. I will print out the front and the sides of the model in sections and then tape them together at scale. So if I'm working on something that's six feet tall, I'll have the six-foot print outs on the wall next to me, and then the rest of the views I just survey on my computer. So I keep turning them and turning the sculpture as I work."

Read more about Cristina and her sculpting process [here](#).

Read about one sculptor's advice to students:

Another sculptor, Bruce Gray, advises aspiring artists to explore a variety of courses in both high school and college that can help you succeed in art, both in the creative aspects and on the business side. "You should try to learn things that will help your art career, such as taking a course in marketing, advertising, photography, accounting, website design, wood shop, metal shop, drafting, art class, etc., that will make running your own business much cheaper and easier. If you are thinking of going to college for art, you will be expected to have a decent portfolio, so try to take as many art-related courses as you can."

Read more about Bruce's career and background [here](#).

