



Bonnie Bird, Merce Cunningham, Syvilla Fort, and Dorothy Herrmann, in *Three Inventories of Casey Jones*, photo by Phyllis Dearborn, Cornish College of the Arts Archives.

## Art That Is Inspired

The Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle is a visual and performing arts school founded in 1914 by Nellie Cornish, a pianist and music teacher. In the 1920s and 30s, Cornish became known nation-wide as a center for innovation in music and dance. Then and now, students at Cornish are exposed to arts outside of their main area of study to encourage experimentation and imaginative thinking.

Syvilla Fort was a dance student at Cornish in the 1930s. As a student, she learned different styles of

dance, performed in troupes led by her teachers, and even modeled for fellow students' paintings. In her own work, she experimented with combining movements from different dance traditions and collaborated with musicians to create original compositions. After graduation, Fort continued to push the boundaries of what dance could look like by combining modern dance and ballet techniques with styles from different cultural traditions from across the African diaspora. She also brought the multi-disciplinary approach to learning from Cornish to her own teaching practice.

After all, expression via dance is not only about the movements but their relationship with sound, and visuals like sets and costumes. Similarly, visual art is not only about the way a piece looks, but the way a viewer experiences and interacts with the work. Kinetic sculptures are a great example of this!

## Art That Moves

**Kinetic art** is art that depends on motion for its effects.

Seattle has a wealth of public sculptures, including some that move and some that make sound! For example:

*Hammering Man* by Jonathan Borofsky: 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and University St. This sculpture has an electric motor that continuously moves the worker's hammer up and down.



*Sonic Bloom* by Dan Corson: Seattle Center. This sculpture relies on the motion of its viewer. Each of the flowers "sings" as they are approached.



*Schubert Sonata* by Mark Di Suvero: Olympic Sculpture Park. This sculpture dedicated to a composer spins slowly in the wind.



**Experiment with sound and movement by making a kinetic sculpture inspired by music!**

## Kinetic Sculptures



*Make a work of art that moves, inspired by music! Watch the video introduction on the MOHAI YouTube Channel (@mohaiprograms).*



### What you'll need:

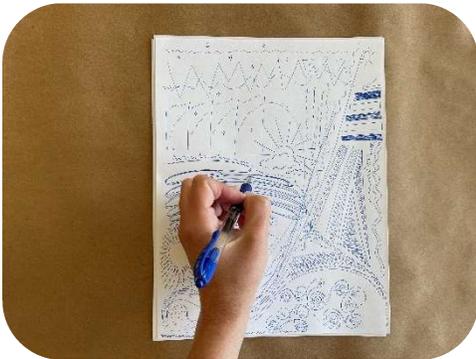
- A way to listen to music
- Optional: drawing supplies
- A variety of craft supplies and found objects – see instructions below

## What you'll do:



### 1. Pick a piece of music to be your inspiration

- Find music online, or pick music that you already have access to at home.
- Pick music that you are familiar with, like your favorite song, or pick something totally new to you!



### 2. Listen to the music and visualize it

- Draw and/or dance while you listen.
- How do you *feel* while listening?
- What kinds of motion, shapes, and lines are you making?
- What kinds of images or colors come to mind?



### 3. Go on a materials treasure hunt

- Establish some ground rules with your grown-ups like what spaces can be used & explored and kinds of materials you are allowed to collect.
- Look for:
  - Tools you can use (ruler, scissors, drawing supplies, glue, tape, etc.)
  - Things you can alter, draw on, rip, cut etc. (paper, cardboard, etc.)
  - Fasteners (string, brads, paper clips, wire, buttons, etc.)
  - An assortment of random objects

## 4. How will your sculpture will move?

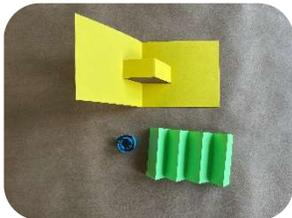
There are lots of ways you can incorporate movement into a sculpture.



- Use everyday objects that spin, bounce, or open & close.



- Use string to hang objects from each other to make them sway & float, or to play with balancing weights.



- Fold, curl, and cut paper to create doors, hinges, and springy features.



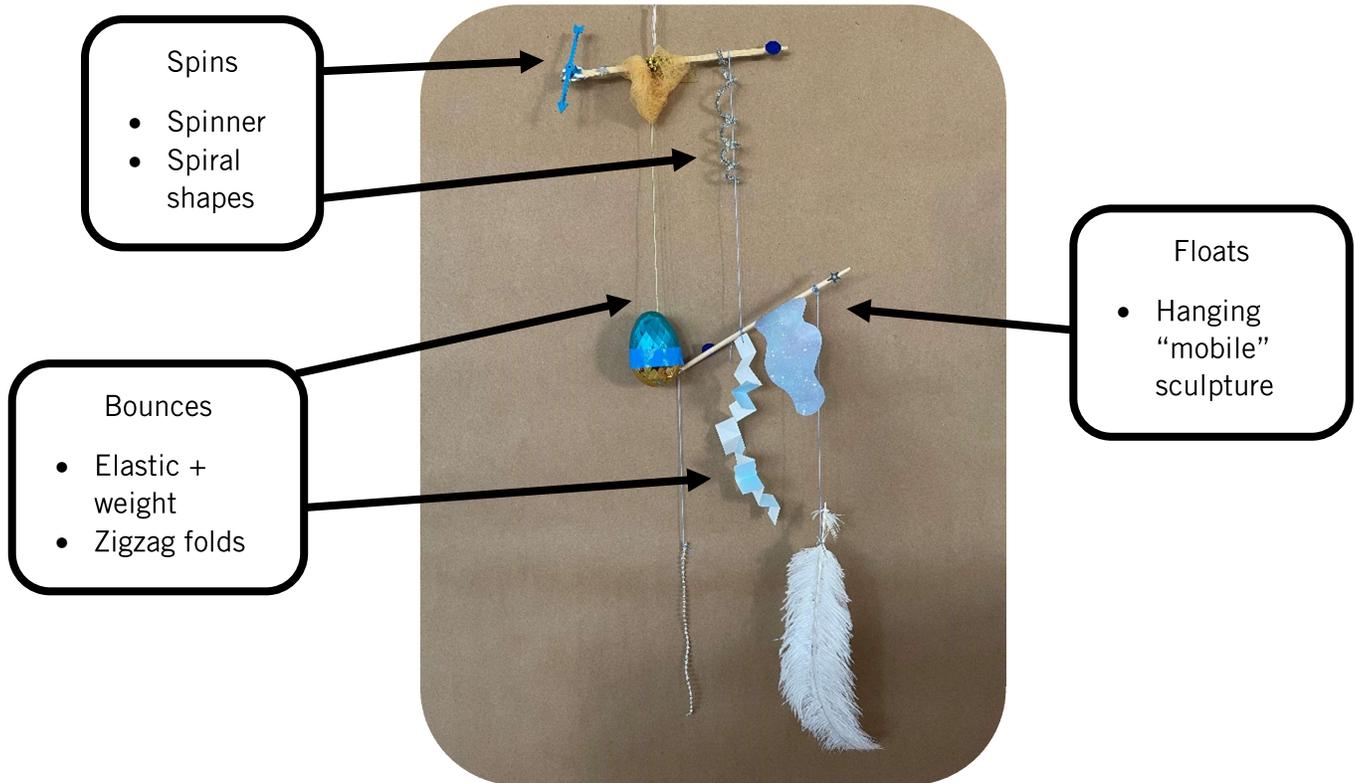
- Build simple machines like wheels, levers, or pulleys to make parts move.



## 5. Build your sculpture

- Play with different materials to see what effects you can make.
- You may need to go on another materials hunt!

## This sculpture...



*Watch the introductory video on the MOHAI YouTube channel (@mohaiprograms) to see how music inspired this sculpture!*

**Share your sculpture on social media with us (and let us know what music inspired it)!**

 @mohaiseattle  @mohai  @seattlehistory