Teacher's backgrounder

Preparatory document

Diane Landry
Celestial Mechanics

Who is the artist?

Diane Landry lives and works in Québec City. She originally studied natural science and worked in agriculture. At age 25, she decided to live her dream and become an artist.

She thought her talent was in painting, but her work in her studio, her day-to-day reality and her concern for recycling naturally led her to produce **installations**—that is, works of art that fill a space and that blend sculpture, video, photography, etc. Often, her installations move, produce sounds and give off light, powered by motors and mechanisms. In short, Diane Landry is a tinkerer, a "DIY-er"!

What is a "mouvelle" work?

The artist calls her creations "œuvres mouvelles," a made-up expression that combines the French words "en mouvement" (moving), "matériel" (material) and "temporel" (referring to time). This means we have to **take our time** to experience them, the same way we would to listen to a piece of music or watch a movie. So when you visit an exhibition of "mouvelle" works, you can't be in a hurry! The artist wants us to wander through the gallery space, keep our eyes open, pay attention to anything that moves and, above all, s l o w d o w n .

In talking about art, we also use the term "**kinetic art**." *Kinetic* comes from a Greek word that means "of motion." The same word is the root of the term "cinema," which of course is the art of "moving pictures."

→ In cinema, movement is created by time and light. Diane Landry also works with light, making it interact with different materials.

Want to see for yourself? Take a flashlight (the one in a smartphone, for example) and shine its beam onto a table or another flat surface. What happens when you move your hand in front of the flashlight? Now try other objects: a glass, a water bottle, a basket. . . What do you see?

Now try moving the light source closer to and then away from the object. See how the shape changes?

→ Here is a video that shows the mechanisms behind some of Diane Landry's "mouvelle" works: https://savoir.media/clip/diane-landry-et-linstallation.

Diane Landry. Photo: Emmanuelle Duret. *Knight of Infinite Resignation*, 2009. Photo: Ivan Binet. Courtesy of the artist.

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