



Cornelia Parker *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991
Tate London 2004 © the artist

Cornelia Parker

INSTALLATIONS



Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View 1991

by Cornelia Parker (b.1956)

Mixed media 400 x 500 x 500cm

Tate London 2004 © the artist

Cornelia Parker

INSTALLATIONS

22 November 2004
to 27 February 2005

Norwich Castle

A Tate Partnership Exhibition

TATE

Classroom activities

About the artist

Cornelia Parker was born in Cheshire in 1956. She is one of Britain's leading contemporary artists and was nominated for the prestigious Turner Prize in 1997. Parker works in a wide range of media but is perhaps most widely known for her sculptures and installations that involve the transformation of everyday objects. This process of transformation is often violent – shooting, exploding or crushing – and leads to a radical change in the appearance of the objects. *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* is an important example of this way of working.

About the work

Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View began life as an ordinary garden shed. The artist scoured car boot sales and filled the shed with a wide range of everyday objects including bicycles, tools, shoes, books and children's toys. She then asked the British Army to blow up the shed and its contents. Parker collected the charred and distorted fragments and suspended them around a single light bulb in a gallery.

The light at the centre of the installation casts dramatic shadows against the walls of the gallery as it passes through the suspended objects. These shadows envelop the viewer in the installation – they almost become part of the work. The shed appears to be a snapshot of the original explosion. It could also be a view of the universe at the point of creation. The title supports this interpretation – dark matter is the part of the universe which, by its very nature, is invisible. Parker has transformed the humble garden shed into an extraordinary installation that deals with the meaning and value we assign to objects, yet at the same time connects with broad universal themes in a poetic and unforgettable way.

Investigating the installation: some questions

- What objects can you see in the shed?
- The objects are made of many different materials. What materials can you see?
- The shed and its contents were exploded by the artist. What evidence can you see of this explosion?
- What effect does the light bulb create?
- *Cold Dark Matter*, like sculpture, is three dimensional. Think of a sculpture you have seen. How is the shed different from a more traditional sculpture?

Activities across the curriculum

Creating an Installation

Cornelia Parker's installation *Cold Dark Matter* uses the following processes as part of their creation: the transformation of materials (the shed has been exploded) and the suspension of materials.

Children can collectively create their own work in that way. Select a theme, eg, the kitchen or the bathroom, and collect objects. Transform them, eg, by stamping on them to crush them or throw them against a wall. Then work as a group to suspend them to create a visually stunning work.

Drama activities

After making their own installations children can do some drama.

- What mood does your installation create? Move in a way which reflects this mood.
- Ask children to imagine that they are one of the suspended objects which have come to life. Create a short improvisation around that living object.

Cartoons and Creative Writing

Cartoons can be a creative way of exploring art. Ask the children to think about Parker's work and then create their own cartoon. Add a caption.

Writing activities

Use the process of creating an installation for working on different forms of writing such as creative writing - poem or prose; reporting - outline of how the work was created.



Courtesy Fred Lee