

Artist: Ralph Hicks

## Curriculum Links

Science  
Math  
Visual Art



## Before You Visit:

**Step 1:** Prepare students for dancing shapes by discussing shapes in math, in dance, and everyday living: “This is a lesson that is a dance lesson and a math lesson at the same time! We’ll be making and dancing shapes. In this lesson, we’ll be concentrating on rectangles, squares, triangles, and parallelograms. Where do you see those shapes in the classroom? Tell me what you see that helps you name each of these shapes”; parallelograms, rectangles, squares, and triangles (number of angles, number of sides, right angles? Equal sides? Parallel sides?)

**Step 2:** Have students consider and discuss the shared concept of shape in math, dance, and life. Continue the discussion based on prior knowledge and review of shape attributes. Have students discuss the attributes of these polygons: parallelogram, rectangle, square, and triangle.

**Step 3:** Divide students into groups and have them dance while traveling (locomotor movements) and moving in one spot (non-locomotor movements) and by making polygon shapes with their bodies.

**Step 4:** With stretchy fabric, have them form small groups so that they can make gigantic shapes with stretchy fabric. Have each student hold a corner and create an “Instant Shape Dance” about the four polygons, by moving vertices and changing spots.

**Step 5:** Encourage them to make shapes while standing, sitting, and moving in-between. Wrap-up by drawing and describing the polygons they have made with words. Have them draw where they were positioned with *stick figures*, taking note of elbows, knees, crouching, bending and how they portray two-dimension. Can they create irregular shapes as well? This will help identify the irregular polygon shapes found in Salutation.

## More about the Artist:

Ralph Hicks was born in London, UK in 1941. He moved to Toronto in 1967 and built a studio in Mulmur, Ontario in 1996. He is mostly self-taught with his collections showcased throughout North America and Europe.

## Materials:

- Stretchy fabric
- Paper
- Pencils or pencil crayons



## Development in the Classroom:

**Step 1:** Prepare students for dancing by creating agreements/rules for dance behaviour.

*Teacher Prompts: How can you be creative and safe at the same time?*

**Step 2:** Facilitate a discussion on more complex patterns. Introduce the idea of patterns by showing examples from the classroom that they see every day.

*Teacher Prompts: Look at the calendar. Is there a different kind of pattern? Can you show that same pattern using connecting cubes?* Then show many different examples of AAB, ABC, ABB patterns with connecting cubes.

**Step 3:** Next, we put these patterns into sounds. Example, we will clap, clap, stomp and AAB pattern.

**Step 4:** Explore patterns and sizes in movement. Gives an example of a pattern on the white board and, as a group, decide on movements that show the pattern.

*Teacher Prompts: Big jump, small spin, spin. AAB, ABB.*

**Step 5:** Have students create small group choreography by using the patterns given to them by the teacher. Divide students into small groups and guide students in their choreography.

*Teacher Prompts: What sizes will your movements be? Say your pattern aloud as you are dancing.*

## Development in the Sculpture Park:

**Step 1:** Using Science terminology such as Structure, Strength, and Stability, analyse the material used in the Sculpture and compare it to that of the school, or a house.

### Teacher Prompts:

- *Is it stronger? Will it last longer?*
- *Why do you think the artist chose steel to represent a human figure dancing? Is the figure a man or a woman? Does the form or the shapes used help you to decide? How?*
- *Does the Structure have a base? How does this help Stabilize the Form?*
- *What would happen if the sculpture sat directly on the grass?*

**Step 2:** Using clip boards, pencils, and paper, have students draw as many of the shapes that they can see. Identify regular and irregular polygons. Make sure they move around all sides of the piece. Count how many polygons are used. Draw in where they could add that piece and still create stability.

**Step 3:** Students can present their additions to the class.

## Materials:

- Connecting cubes
- White board
- Erasable markers
- Clip boards
- Pencils
- Paper

## Vocabulary:

- Patterns
- Structure
- Bases
- Stability
- Polygons
- Material
- AAB pattern
- Salutation

## Closure:

**Step 1:** Circle around the sculpture, *Salutation*, in small groups. Notice the shapes the sculptor has used to make the figure. Review the lesson from Development in the Classroom, the polygon *shape* and *pattern* dancing. Have students develop a new dance with an ABB pattern including the sculpture's pose.

**Step 2:** Using the five pictures included below of Ralph Hick's *Series of Salutations*, divide students into five groups. Have students mimic the poses and create new dance moves incorporating other patterns.

**Step 3:** Have students present their created dances, while other classmates guess the pattern.



## Fun Fact!

Originally planned as a huge welcoming installation for major roads leading into Toronto, each of these pieces is an assembly of a few irregular blocks. Yet their simplicity conveys an attitude – salutation and acknowledgement, with perhaps with a trace of subservience.

<http://ralphhicks.ca/galleries/thesalutations.html#salutation1>



**BROKEN LINK?**  
Search the Net:

**Keywords:**

- “Ralph Hicks Sculptures”
- “Ralph Hicks Galleries”
- “The Salutations”



## Extensions: In the Park



Visit **Morning Flight** by Gerald Gladstone  
Plate steel, painted in 5 colours, 19'6" high



Visit **Obelisk** by Sigmund Resztnik  
Painted Steel, 15'7 x 5' x 3'8

**Science: Understanding Structures Mechanisms, Strong and Stable Structures**

**Math: Geometry and Spatial Sense**

**Step 1:** Observe the bases of the above sculptures and compare them to *Salutation*.

**Step 2:** Ask the students to identify the similarities and differences.

### Teacher Prompts:

- *How are they different? Both sculptures are made of steel. Which seems to have more stability? Why?*
- *Does where the structure is placed have anything to do with the differences in base, or is it because of the structure itself? How do they differ in height? Or width?*
- *Does this have anything to do with stability?*
- *Can you find any polygons in the sculpture? How many irregular? How many regular?*