

<http://www.openartsarchive.org/open-arts-objects>

## Student handout

**Presenter: Gill Perry**

**Cornelia Parker, *Cold Dark Matter*, 1991, wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 4000 x 5000 x 5000 mm, Tate**

<http://www.openartsarchive.org/resource/open-arts-object-cornelia-parker-cold-dark-matter-exploded-view-1991>

Professor Gill Perry explores an installation by the British artist Cornelia Parker, *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View*, 1991, which involved blowing up a garden shed and suspending its charred and broken fragments from the ceiling of an art gallery. Parker supervised the explosion that was managed by the British army, and then suspended the charred and broken fragments of the shed and its contents from the ceiling of the Chisenhale Gallery in East London. Suspended around a 200-watt light bulb, this installation revealed Parker's on-going interest in the transformation and metamorphosis of artistic materials.

### *Before watching the film*

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The work can be found here: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/parker-cold-dark-matter-an-exploded-view-t06949>

1. What do you know about **installation art**?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you think this work represents? Describe what you see on the screen and consider how you might view this work. What forms or objects can you identify?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How are the materials used and displayed in the work?

### *After watching the film*

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1. In what ways does *Cold Dark Matter* belong in the category 'installation art'? To what extent would you identify it as an artwork?
2. What effects (artistic, social) do you think the artist was trying to achieve in this work?
3. What does the choice of title contribute to the meaning of this work?
4. Are you familiar with any other installation works by Cornelia Parker? If so list the work/s and explain any shared concerns that you can identify

### *Online Activity*

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There is information on the sites below about the role of explosions in Cornelia Parker's work. Use these, and your own thoughts and research, to make notes on the significance of explosions and how these could relate to ideas of transformation in Parker's work.

The Tate database includes images and information about the work and useful online resources:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/parker-cold-dark-matter-an-exploded-view-t06949>

Tate resources include a full section on *Cold Dark Matter* with useful information on the shed, the objects, the explosion and other aspects of the work:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/cold-dark-matter/explosion>

Parker's gallery site (Frith Street Gallery) has a full range of images of her works, including her recent work: *The Roof Garden Commission: Cornelia Parker, Transitional Object (PsychoBarn)*, 2016, installed on the roof of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York:

[http://www.frithstreetgallery.com/artists/publications/cornelia\\_parker](http://www.frithstreetgallery.com/artists/publications/cornelia_parker)

*Comparative analysis*

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Choose another example of installation art produced within the last three decades that you are familiar with, and compare the two works:

Example: Mona Hatoum *Light Sentence*, 1992 <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/who-is-mona-hatoum>

or Tracey Emin, *My Bed*, 1998, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/emin-my-bed-l03662>

For another work that involved a shed or hut - Tracey Emin's *Knowing my Enemy*, 2002 <https://artimage.org.uk/5136/tracey-emin/knowing-my-enemy--2002>

You can find a definition of installation art in the Tate's Art Term Glossary here: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/i/installation-art>

You could arrange your thoughts and ideas using the trigger questions below and fill out the following grid:

- How would you list the materials used in each?
- Do they both invite a similar physical engagement from the viewer?
- What kinds of meanings are suggested or evoked by both?
- What associations or references can find in each? Are there any similarities and significant differences?
- These are both works of recent art. Do either have anything to say about contemporary experience or social life?

Works of art	<b>Cornelia Parker, <i>Cold Dark Matter</i>, 1991, wood, metal, plastic, ceramic, paper, textile and wire, 4000 x 5000 x 5000 mm, Tate</b>	