

# Design Your Own Sculptural Survey

**Inspiration:** [\*Maya Lin: A River Is a Drawing\*](#)

**Ages:** 5+ (Pre-K–Grade 12)

**Duration:** 30 minutes

**Materials needed:**

- Mixed media of your choice! This can be as simple as a pile of clothes, a collection of crayons or markers, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, sticks you have gathered outside, etc. Be creative and experiment. What objects or materials will provide three-dimensionality to your experimental map? What objects or materials might provide different textures or colors?
- Paper and pencil for sketching different versions of your work
- Space or a surface for laying out your medium (this is your site)

*When choosing your materials, keep in mind that your map does not need to be permanent.*

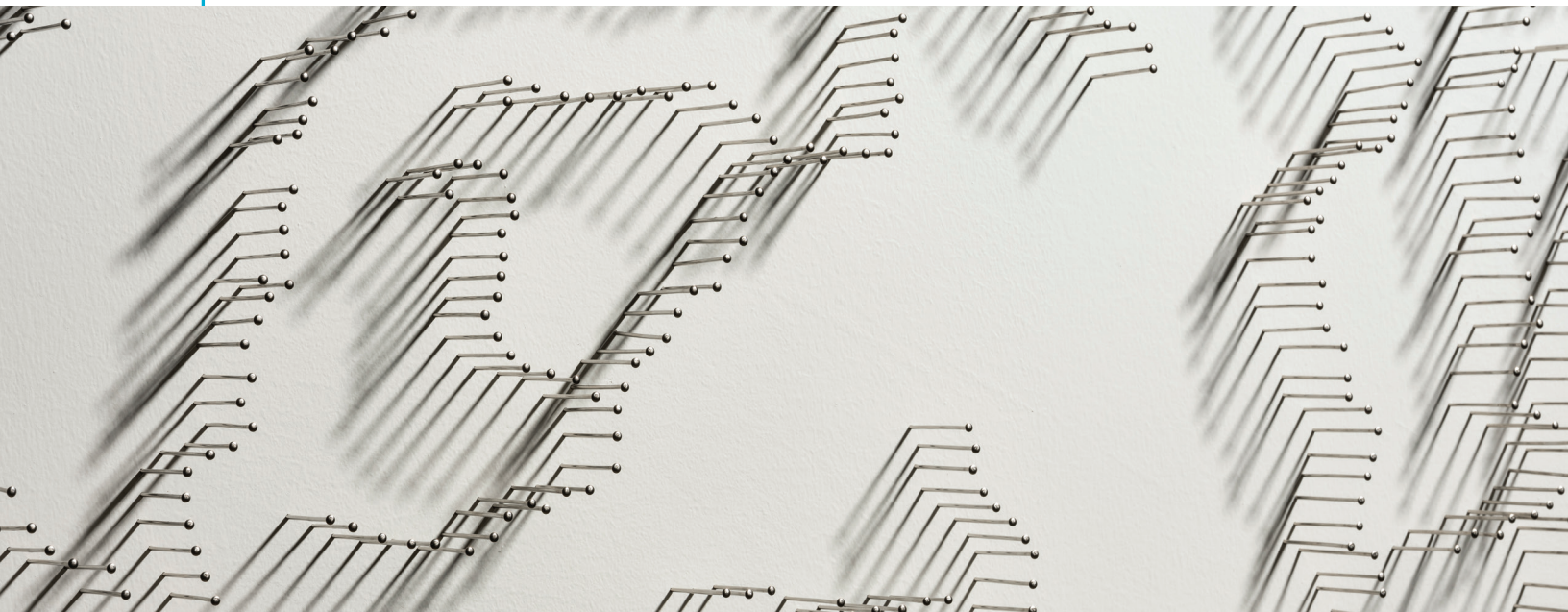


Image: Maya Lin (American, b. 1959). *Pin River—Hudson Watershed*, 2018. Stainless steel pins. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Kris Graves.

## Introduction:

The works Maya Lin developed for her exhibition *A River Is a Drawing* were all focused on the same subject—the Hudson River—but were created using a range of mixed media. Lin used bamboo, grass seeds, metal pins, paint, encaustic, wire, and even marbles to create map-based works of art that highlight the course of the River (both the parts we can see and the geographic features that are underwater and extend far into the Atlantic Ocean). She made use of spaces in the Museum galleries and courtyard for her works, and the limits imposed by those spaces also influenced her choice of materials. For example, she could suspend the [Hudson Bight](#) from the ceiling into lower Museum galleries due to the open design of that area of the building, and the artwork itself is huge. Her [Concrete River](#) is much smaller in size and takes advantage of existing cracks in the concrete surface of the Museum's overlook. Some of the pieces, like *Concrete River* or *Bamboo River*, are meant to be **ephemeral art** and will eventually change or fade away completely.

**Site-specific** works like Maya Lin's are a fun challenge for artists to work through when creating an installation. Her map works also bring attention to threats to the environment due to climate change and human impact by creating similar maps or sets of data that show change over time. In this activity, be inspired by Lin's creative use of materials in mapping the Hudson and choose an unexpected medium and work surface of your own to create a survey, or record, of land features and details of a region of your choice.

## Procedure:

1. Begin by brainstorming a location you want to feature. Maybe this is your local park, your backyard or building courtyard, or a place to which you have traveled.
2. What details do you recall about this location?
3. Gather materials and begin to experiment with reconstructing this landscape. Choose a space on the floor or a table top to work. This site will determine the eventual shape and size of your work.
4. When you feel you have one version of a region or landscape you like, take a photo or make a sketch before you take it apart and do another version.
5. Repeat this process as often as you like.

## Share your work:

Take a photo of your work and post it to Instagram using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #MapArt, and tag @HudsonRiverMuseum.





Vermont by Bridget McCormick