

**ANDREA**

**ZITTEL**

**PART ONE**

# ABOUT THE ARTIST

Andrea Zittel was born in Escondido, California, USA in 1965. She graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art degree in Painting and Sculpture from San Diego University in 1988 and a Master of Fine Art degree in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1990. Zittel's work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions throughout Europe and the USA. In the late 1990s Zittel began to create A-Z West, a 35-acre area of land in the Californian desert on the West Coast of America, where she still lives and works.



# ABOUT THE WORK

Andrea Zittel creates a diverse range of work including sculpture, painting, textiles, design and architecture. In 1994 the artist set up *A-Z East*, a house in Brooklyn, New York, where she experimented with the design and use of living spaces. In 1998 Zittel moved back to the West Coast of America and set up *A-Z West* in the Mojave Desert. Starting with five acres of land and one cabin, it has expanded to include a main house, a guest house, wagon stations for visitors to stay in, a camping area, a studio and areas to grow food. Zittel has designed many aspects of her living environment including dining tables, food preparation areas, clocks, sorting trays and even the clothes she wears. In 1991 she began *A-Z Personal Uniform*, wearing dresses that she designs and makes herself. She has made more than 45 so far and sometimes wears them for as long as six months. The artist's practice at *A-Z West* is centred around her own daily life and looks at issues of self-sufficiency, self-awareness and how we are connected to the world around us.



# ABOUT THE WORK

*Lay of My Land* is an exhibition of Andrea Zittel's work at BALTIC which focusses on ideas relating to *A-Z West*. The exhibition includes sculpture, paintings, prints, furniture and seven Wagon Stations. These stations are small living units which were originally located outside in the desert at *A-Z West*. They were used for visitors to stay in and provide a space where they could sleep, cook, eat and socialise. They are designed with a curved roof to provide protection from the desert wind. Each station has been customised by the artist's friends and collaborators who made changes to the original structure and added objects such as pillows, a stove, books, climbing equipment or an iPod. These items reveal what each person considered essential or desirable within their living environment. The exhibition also includes *Lay of My Land*, a large-scale sculpture made from wood, metal, plaster, Styrofoam and sand, which represents the landscape that surrounds *A-Z West*.



# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Find the seven Wagon Stations in the gallery space. Walk around them and look carefully at what you can see.

- What do you think a person needs to survive in a structure where they are going to live?
- What do you think the living conditions in the desert are like?
- What do you think it is like at night?
- What are the similarities and differences between the seven Wagon Stations?

*Sufficient Self* is a digital presentation created in 2004 which shows a diary of life at A-Z West. It is on display in the exhibition and can also be viewed on Zittel's own website ([zittel.org](http://zittel.org)).

- Watch the presentation. What does it tell you about the desert area where Zittel lives and works?
- Does finding out more about the place where the artist lives and works change your feelings about any of the other art works in the exhibition?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to use the title *Sufficient Self*?



# IN MY OPINION

*'Your entire world is contained in your piece of property, in your house and your automobile. Basically those three capsules are everything.'*

Andrea Zittel.

- How important do you think the structures we live in are?
- How many different examples of living structures can you think of?
- How many of your belongings or things in your house do you think you actually need to survive?

The seven Wagon Stations in the exhibition have been removed from their original location in the desert after eight years because they would not survive desert conditions for much longer. They will be replaced by new Wagon Stations.

- What do you think are the differences between seeing a Wagon Station in the desert and seeing it in an art gallery?

Zittel designs and makes many aspects of her living environment at *A-Z West*.

- How many of the things which you use in your life do you think you could make yourself?
- Can you think of any examples of people making their own things?



# HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

Design a model of a structure you could live in.

- Start with a cardboard box.
- Make changes and additions to the box by cutting it, bending it, adding more cardboard and taking sections away.
- Try adding other materials e.g. coloured paper, tracing paper, acetate, wool, string etc.
- Include a door, roof or wall which opens.
- Present your finished structure and say where it could be located.



# HERE'S ONE I MADE EARLIER

Now try working as a group to build a structure which stands up and is large enough for one person to go inside.

- Use corrugated cardboard, old cardboard boxes and rolls of lining paper, with masking tape or parcel tape to join pieces together.
- Start by using lining paper to create strong paper rolls which can be joined together.
- Cut a length of lining paper at least 3 metres long. Roll it up, so it looks like a roll of wrapping paper. Pull out one end of the roll whilst holding on to the other end (this needs two people!) to make a long paper roll. Ask a third person to attach masking paper to hold the roll together.
- Join your paper rolls together to create a rectangle or square for the bottom of your building. Try and find a way of using corrugated cardboard to make strong joints in the corners. Carry on adding vertical paper rolls until you have a standing structure. Tip: You'll need to use lots of tape to join things together!
- Now attach large paper, newspaper or cardboard to create walls and a roof. Decide where your entrance will be and make sure it is large enough to get through.
- If you have problems making the building stand up, see if you can think of ways to use the materials you have to make your structure stronger. Try adding internal supports or attach it to part of the room for added support.



# FURTHER RESEARCH

Atelier Van Lieshout  
Jorge Pardo  
Lucy Orta  
N55  
Nancy Holt  
Rirkrit Tiravanija  
Robert Smithson  
Superflex  
Tobias Rehberger



# LITERACY KEY WORDS

self-awareness

space

architecture

experiment

painting

self-sufficiency

structure

collaboration

design

difference

location

representation

similarity

survival

conditions

desirable

environment

original

sculpture

textiles

customised

essential

**PART TWO**

# NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Contemporary art is incredibly diverse and wide ranging and can be used to support teaching and learning as part of an entire learning experience. It can be used to generate creative thinking in all subject areas and to support learning across curricular dimensions, as well as contribute to personal development and personalised learning.

# CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- Art and Design
- Design Technology
- Geography
- PSHE

# USEFUL LINKS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Andrea Zittel's website  
[www.zittel.org](http://www.zittel.org)

Tova Rudin's blog about living at *A-Z West* and customising a Wagon Station  
<http://enmanadimojave.wordpress.com/>

Information about the *Lay of My Land* exhibition at Magasin 3  
Stockholm Konsthall.  
<http://www.magasin3.com/en/blog/exhibitions/andrea-zittel/?postTabs=0>

BALTIC  
[www.balticmill.com](http://www.balticmill.com)

Quay  
[www.balticmill.com/quay](http://www.balticmill.com/quay)

BALTIC Library and Archive Database  
<http://archive.balticmill.com>

'In my opinion' toolkit to help pupils approach  
artwork, formulate questions and contribute opinions  
[www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource](http://www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource)

Blank presentation template: pupils can use  
this to present their own research and ideas  
[www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource](http://www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource)

BALTIC Secondary Resources Bank: pupils can use this  
to search for and download images and other information  
[www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource](http://www.balticmill.com/secondaryresource)

# IMAGE CREDITS

## **Slide 4**

A-Z Wagon Station customized by Carolyn Castano at *A-Z West* 2005  
Photograph: Andrea Zittel

## **Slide 5**

Andrea Zittel  
*A-Z West* 2004  
Photo: Andrea Zittel  
Wagon Station in situ at *A-Z West*

## **Slide 6**

Andrea Zittel  
*Lay of My Land* 2011  
Installation view from Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall  
Photograph: Christian Saltas

## **Slide 7**

Andrea Zittel  
A-Z Wagon Station at *A-Z West* 2005  
Photograph: Andrea Zittel

## **Slide 8**

Andrea Zittel  
A-Z Wagon Station customized by Jennifer Nocon 2003  
Photograph: Christian Saltas

## **Slide 9**

Andrea Zittel  
Wall Sprawl #2 (Las Vegas between Enterprise and Henderson) 2011  
Photograph: Christian Saltas

## **Slide 10**

Andrea Zittel  
Native Experience and the Three Dynamic Orders of it's Expression #1 2010  
Photograph: Andy Keate