

SculthorpeStudios

**Tracing Systems - Phase 2: Co-
Authored Torus Sculptures**

Case Study Report

1. Context

Tracing Systems is a site-based participatory sculpture project delivered at Staunton Country Park, Hampshire, UK, between February and March 2026.

The project was developed in collaboration with *Right to Work* (Red Gloves), involving a cohort of 10 adult participants, alongside engagement with park staff and public visitors.

The work took place across four facilitated sessions over a six-week period within a public park environment, with additional stakeholder interaction from arts practitioners and institutional representatives.

2. Approach

The project was structured as a **participatory system**, rather than a workshop series.

Participants operated as **co-authors**, contributing directly to the formation, configuration and interpretation of sculptural outcomes.

The approach was defined by:

- use of **material constraints** (vine, rope, torus structures)
- **iterative configuration** rather than fixed outcomes
- emphasis on **collective decision-making within structure**
- positioning of the artist as **system designer and facilitator**, not sole author

The intention was to test how sculptural systems can be navigated, modified and stabilised through shared participation.

3. Implementation

Materials and Construction

- Seven torus structures were constructed using:
 - vine clippings sourced from Ashling Park Vineyard
 - rope sourced from Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club

Each torus required approximately:

- 6 hours to construct
- multiple iterations to stabilise and scale

Session Structure

The first three sessions focused on:

- land-based experiments
- material handling and form testing
- development of a *Human Mandala* across multiple iterations

- colour, weight and contrast exploration
- “mud hands” as a form of material imprint and participation trace

The fourth session focused on:

- installation of torus structures
- creation of multiple three-dimensional configurations
- documentation of selected sculptural outcomes

A total of 11 configurations were produced and recorded.

4. Outcomes

Sculptural Output

- 11 co-authored sculptural configurations
- one “infinite chain” aligned to the historic footprint of Staunton House
- multiple suspended and ground-based arrangements exploring balance and division

Participant Engagement

Participants:

- engaged consistently across sessions
- contributed to both physical construction and spatial decision-making
- operated within a shared authorship model

The work demonstrated that structured participation can produce:

- coherent sculptural outcomes
- distributed authorship without loss of form integrity

Public Interaction

As a public park project, the work was:

- visible to visitors throughout
- observed in situ during installation and configuration
- responsive to environmental and social conditions
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5. Extension: Six-Month Installation

Following the participatory phase, a solo-authored vertical installation is being developed for placement within the park.

This installation:

- positions torus structures along a vertical axis

- remains in situ for approximately six months
- is subject to:
 - weather
 - gravity
 - human interaction
 - environmental change

The installation extends the project into a **temporal system**, where the work is altered over time beyond initial authorship.

Ongoing documentation (photography and video) is used to track this transformation.

6. Key Insight

Tracing Systems demonstrates that participatory art can operate as a **designed system**, rather than an open-ended activity.

Through structured constraints and shared authorship, participants are able to:

- generate complex sculptural outcomes
- engage in meaningful spatial decision-making
- contribute to a coherent artistic system

The extension into long-term installation introduces a further layer, where authorship is partially transferred to environmental and temporal forces.

7. Project Status

- Participatory phase: complete
- Documentation: ongoing
- Six-month installation: in progress
- Public interpretation (on-site display): in development

8. Credits

Lead Artist: Dawn Sculthorpe-Hayter

Participants: Right to Work (Red Gloves) cohort

Site Partner: Staunton Country Park

Material Partners:

- Ashling Park Vineyard
- Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club

SculthorpeStudios

Participatory, site-responsive sculpture practice

Website: www.SculthorpeStudios

Instagram: [@SculthorpeStudios](https://www.instagram.com/SculthorpeStudios)

YouTube: [SculthorpeStudios](https://www.youtube.com/SculthorpeStudios)

Email: SculthorpeStudios@gmail.com

Project enquiries and collaborations welcome