

I need to [work]. That's when I'm an artist.  
I need to touch. I need to feel things,  
to understand them, to engage with them.  
Otherwise, I'm lost. **Andy Goldsworthy**

**British artist Andy Goldsworthy**

has spent nearly three decades exploring the raw materials of nature, shaping them into poetic and mysterious forms that invite us to see our surroundings in new ways.

In January 2003, the National Gallery invited Goldsworthy to create a site-specific installation. Completed in February 2005, *Roof* runs the length of the garden area on the north side of the East Building. It will be on view indefinitely.

British artist Andy Goldsworthy, his assistant, and a team of five British wallers installing *Roof* at the National Gallery of Art's East Building. Photograph: Lee Ewing © 2004, Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art



# 2

## How It All Stacks Up

*Roof* consists of nine hollow, low-profile domes of stacked slate. Each dome rises five-and-a-half feet off of the ground, and together the domes weigh 550 tons.

The dry-stone construction method uses no mortar to bind the stones together; therefore, weight, balance, and symmetry are essential to creating the domes' shape and preventing collapse. To accomplish this, the stones are carefully stacked flat; they diminish in size and are cantilevered inward toward the top. Goldsworthy and his team used hand tools and power machinery to size and shape the individual stones, and small remnants were used as filler.

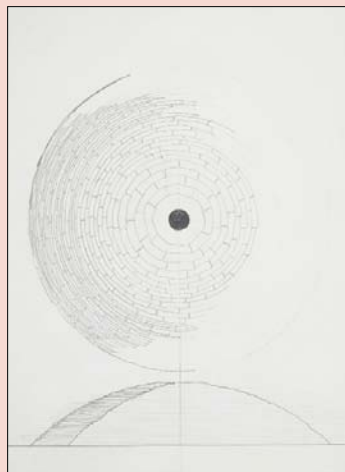
Each dome begins with a circular base, twenty-seven feet in diameter, and culminates on top with a single, final stone. A circular hole, two feet in diameter, was carved in the capstone, creating an opening in each dome called an **oculus**.

# 1

## Stone

For his project at the Gallery, Goldsworthy decided to work with one of his favorite materials: stone. Interested in the history of the environments in which he works, Goldsworthy began by exploring the local geology. He visited Virginia quarries that once produced stone for many of Washington's historic buildings and selected slate, a hard and sharp stone that is often used for roofing.

Goldsworthy, his assistant, and a team of five British dry-stone **wallers**—experts in the craft of building walls—installed *Roof* during a three-month period, working six days a week for eight hours.



Above: Andy Goldsworthy  
Photograph: Jacob Ehrenberg

*"There is life in a stone. Any stone that sits in a field or lies on a beach takes on the memory of that place. You can feel that stones have witnessed so many things."*

Right: Andy Goldsworthy,  
*Working Drawing for Roof*,  
2004, Courtesy of the artist  
and Galerie Lelong

Far right: British artist Andy  
Goldsworthy installing *Roof*  
at the National Gallery of Art's  
East Building. Photograph:  
Lee Ewing © 2004, Board of  
Trustees, National Gallery of Art

*"Looking into a deep hole  
unnerves me and I am aware  
of all the potent energies  
within the earth. The black is  
that energy made visible."*



**Left:** Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Interior of the Pantheon, Rome*, c. 1734, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

**Near left:** Aerial view of the National Gallery of Art with the Capitol dome in the background, 1991 © Dennis Brack/Black Star, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gallery Archives

In addition to designing the West Building, architect John Russell Pope also designed the domed Jefferson Memorial.

# 3 Domes

Domes are architectural forms that function as roofs and ceilings. A feat of engineering, a dome is a curved structure with no angles and no corners. The earliest domes, Neolithic burial chambers and dwellings, were made of stone.

One of the best-known domes is the Pantheon in Rome. Built out of bricks and concrete in the second century, this classical landmark inspired the design of the domed rotunda crowning the National Gallery's West Building. Both domes have an oculus that lets light into the building.

Goldsworthy has worked with the domical form since the late 1970s, creating domes out of ice, snow, branches, and leaves. With *Roof*, he pays homage to the long history of the dome and to the stone that is the origin of many of the city's structures, and he presents an interesting contrast with the East Building's angular, modern architecture.

# 4 A Different View

Look around Washington, D.C., for other domes—the U.S. Capitol and Jefferson Memorial are just a few—and compare them. To examine the domes, you'll have to tilt your head back! Since domes are generally roofs, we are accustomed to gazing up at them, either from the inside or from the outside of a building.

With *Roof*, Goldsworthy returns the dome to the ground. Study the sculpture from different perspectives. From the East Building's ground floor, view the domes at eye level. The sculpture even “breaks” through the glass wall that separates the garden and the museum's interior. From the upper mezzanine floor, peer down into the domes' oculi, which look like dark black holes.

**Does *Roof's* cluster of forms remind you of things other than domes?**

British artist Andy Goldsworthy, his assistant, and a team of five British wallers installing *Roof* at the National Gallery of Art's East Building. Photograph: Lee Ewing © 2004, Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art



## booknook

These books about art and nature can be found at your local library or bookstore.

### I Am an Artist

By Pat Lowery Collins | ages 4 and up

Lyrical text emphasizes the idea that art is a process—a way of living and interacting with the environment.

### Everybody Needs a Rock

By Byrd Baylor, illustrated by Peter Parnall | ages 4 and up

Presenting ten rules for choosing one's special rock, the author advises readers to connect with nature and to act with deliberation.

### Look What I Did with a Leaf!

By Morteza E. Sohi | ages 6 and up

With a combination of science lessons and art projects, this field guide encourages readers to see the artistic possibilities that surround them.

### Nature's Art Box

By Laura C. Martin, illustrated by David Cain | ages 6 and up

Discover sixty-five art projects to make with natural materials.

### Stone

By Andy Goldsworthy | ages 8 and up

One in a series of the artist's books that are filled with stunning photographs of his work

try this!

# activity

## Nature Walk

*I take the opportunities that each day offers... I stop at a place or pick up a material because I feel that there is something to be discovered. Here is where I can learn. —Andy Goldsworthy*

Goldsworthy works only with materials he finds in nature. Here are some of the things he uses to create art:



**Roof is one of Goldsworthy's monumental public works; however, some of the artist's sculptures are never seen! Why?**

Goldsworthy often likes to work in isolation in nature, where he can experiment with different materials and develop his ideas. Many of his works are **ephemeral**, which means they last only a short time—snow melts, leaves are blown away by the wind, sculptures on the beach are engulfed by the rising tide. Goldsworthy embraces the changes time offers. Because these ephemeral sculptures last only a few minutes, hours, or days, Goldsworthy photographs them.

**Get closer to nature: take a walk outdoors! You don't have to go far to discover something new. Don't forget to take an adult companion with you.**

### Tips for a nature walk...

- **Wander** and see what natural materials you find along the way.
- **Look** at the colors and geometry of nature. Study shapes, patterns, and designs.
- **Touch** different materials. Compare their texture, weight, and size.
- **Wonder** how the landscape might look at another time of day, during another season, or during a rainstorm. What parts of the landscape might change over time?
- **Reflect** upon what you learned during your walk. Did you see something that you've never noticed before?

Like Goldsworthy, you might be inspired to make a work of art during your walk. Take a photo to remember it.

**Watch Goldsworthy work with nature! Check out the documentary film *Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy Working with Time* (Thomas Riedelsheimer, 2000), available at your local video store or the Gallery Shops.**