

Press Release support info on Pete Codling - Artist

If he had a Wikipedia Article this kind of what it would say.

If you are a Wikipedia editor or know how to do this, please ask for the digital Word doc. to copy and paste/edit.

Feel free to use this for Journalism or research on the artist.

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## Who is Pete Codling



**Pete Codling** (born 1969) is a British visual artist known for his large-scale public art installations, sculptures, and drawings. His work frequently addresses themes of history, community, and human experience, often incorporating elements of storytelling, symbolism, and social commentary.

## Early Life and Education

Pete Codling was born in 1969 in Zambia, Africa to an English father and Irish mother, he is one of five children. He lived in Cornwall and Scotland before settling from childhood in Hampshire, England. He developed an interest in drawing and art from a young age. In 1986, he began his studies at Portsmouth College of Art and Design, where he completed a foundation course and a Higher National Diploma (HND) in 3D Design. In 1991, Codling moved to East London Polytechnic, where he studied Fine Art Sculpture and Drawing, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts with Honors. He furthered his studies in Site Specific Sculpture at Wimbledon School of Art under the tutelage of Kier Smith and Vincent Woropay from 1992 to 1993. Codling completed a Master of Arts at the University of Portsmouth, whilst Artist in Residence with the Hampshire Sculpture Trust.

## Career

Codling began his career as a sculptor and public artist, gaining recognition for his innovative approach to materials and his focus on community-based projects. He is known for using reclaimed and natural materials, reflecting his interest in sustainability and environmental issues. He has worked “outside the white cubes” for most of his career but now is establishing a gallery presence across the UK and Europe.

## Major Works and Projects

**One Million Pebbles:** One of Codling's notable early projects, "One Million Pebbles," was a mass participation public art initiative in Portsmouth. The project involved creating handmade ceramic pebbles, each individually number-stamped and thrown onto the beach in Southsea. From 1994 to 2011, Codling worked with 26 tons of clay, distributing wet clay balls for participants to make into their own stones, which were then left on the beach. This project explored themes of context, value, and authorship and highlighted the transient nature of public art. The pebbles can still be found on the beach, and a dedicated Facebook page serves as an archive where people share the pebbles they have discovered.

**Dust to Dust:** This large-scale charcoal drawing was created in 2011 on the walls of Codling's old art school studio, covering 300 square meters. The artwork took six months to complete and served as a farewell to the building, which was set to be demolished. "Dust to Dust" reflected on the transition of traditional art education to digital mediums, addressing the perceived loss of emphasis on drawing and studio practice. The entire process, from creation to destruction, was documented in a limited-edition artist book titled *Dust to Dust*.

**Soup of Souls:** During his residency at Saint Thomas Cathedral in Old Portsmouth, Codling produced a series of eight large trapezoid drawings called "Soup of Souls." These monochrome, sail-like drawings each depicted a different local maritime story of loss at sea. The dramatic works were installed in the nave of the cathedral and remained on public display for nine months. They are currently exhibited at the Minghella Studio in the New Theatre Royal in Portsmouth. The project is documented on a dedicated Instagram page and in a limited-edition book.

**Naivety Drawings:** This series of thirteen life-size drawings depicts the main characters from the Christmas Nativity Scene. Codling utilized a mix of classical, modern, and contemporary references to create a contemporary interpretation of the Nativity. The drawings were first exhibited at the North Wall Gallery in Oxford in 2018 and have since been displayed at The Jack House Gallery and Portsmouth Cathedral each Christmas. The series was initially intended to feature new characters annually, but this plan was interrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown. Some of the drawings in this series have won prizes, including the Chaiya Art Award in 2019 and a prize at The London Art Biennale in 2021.

**Treadgoldfish Sculpture:** Created in 2019 for the Portsmouth Seafood Festival, the Treadgoldfish sculpture is a steel artwork designed to raise awareness of plastic pollution in oceans and the environment. The hollow, rusty steel fish sculpture can hold up to twelve thousand plastic bottles, which are periodically collected and recycled. The abstract figurative sculpture, inspired by Portsmouth's star and crescent motif, has been displayed in various locations around the city, promoting environmental consciousness. It has a dedicated Facebook page tracking its travels and community engagement.

**Kinship:** This drawing, created in 2023 in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery of London and Southampton City Gallery, is a contemporary interpretation of Pablo Picasso's Guernica. "Kinship" echoes the composition and main characters of the original while incorporating Codling's distinctive socio-political commentary on current global events, such as the conflict in Ukraine, the Middle East, and the migrant crisis. The work won the Taylor Prix at Art Capital in Paris in 2024 and was the centrepiece of a solo exhibition in Venice Saint Marco, during the 60th Venice Biennale. The artwork is archived on a dedicated Instagram page.

**CROWD:** Since 2021, Codling has been an Artist in Residence at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, funded by Arts Council England and Portsmouth City Council. During this residency, he produced a set of replica sails from HMS Victory and the Tudor battleship Mary Rose. The first drawing, measuring 17 meters by 10 meters, was unveiled at Fratton Park Football Stadium and later displayed on HMS Warrior in Portsmouth Harbour. It is currently installed in Boat House 4 at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. The residency is hosted by Portsmouth Historic Quarter.

## Recent Works

In recent years, Codling has continued to create public artworks and installations, focusing on charcoal drawings in his studio practice. His recent works reflect on themes of humanity and the role of the artist in an age dominated by digital technology and artificial intelligence. New works and pieces for sale are available on his website, and updates on his studio practice and commissions can be followed through his social media channels.

## **Style and Influences**

Codling's work is characterized by a strong narrative quality, frequently drawing on historical and cultural references to create complex, multi-layered pieces. His style blends contemporary sculpture, street art, and traditional drawing techniques. Codling's influences range from cave art and folk art to Renaissance masters and modern artists like Francisco Goya, Pablo Picasso, Otto Dix, Käthe Kollwitz, Diego Rivera, and Frida Kahlo.

Contemporary influences include the Chapman Brothers, Grayson Perry, William Kentridge and Matthew Collings. A recurring theme in Codling's work is the human figure and its narrative engagement with the audience, often prioritizing storytelling over abstraction and conceptual art. But his intention is not to illustrate another's text but to create autonomous imagery that instigates rather than to conclude a story.

However, Codling is well-versed in late 20thC conceptual art, his early student works and first public works such as "No Fixed Abode," "Washing Line," and "One Million Pebbles" often integrated conceptual ideas into the physical context of the art's location.

Codling's emphasis on process, value, and anti-consumerist, anti-capitalist themes is evident throughout his career, from performance pieces like "La Rue De Barb" in Tunis (2013) to the ephemeral nature of "Dust to Dust" and the subtle presence of the massive "One Million Pebbles." This approach has allowed him to balance the impermanence of his earlier works with the durability of his later pieces.

## **Exhibitions and Recognition**

Codling's work has been exhibited in galleries and public spaces across the UK and Europe. He has received several awards and significant grants for his contributions to public art and his innovative use of materials.

Many of his projects have been supported by arts organizations and community groups through public funding, reflecting his commitment to collaborative, socially engaged, and critically reflective art practice. See Curriculum Vitae on website bio page.

## **Personal Life**

Codling resides in Portsmouth, England, where he remains actively involved in the local community. He frequently collaborates with schools, charities, and community groups on various art projects and workshops. Additional information about his work and artistic philosophy can be found on his official website and through several documentaries and films that explore his background, creative practice and perspectives on art.

## **External Links**

- [Official Website]( <https://www.petecodling.com/>)

- [Instagram](<https://www.instagram.com/petecodling>)