



# CREATIVE *Inquiry*

.....  
VISUAL ART FOR QUEENSLAND  
SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS  
.....

SECOND EDITION

Jo-Anne Hine  
Christine Larsen  
Andrew Peachey  
Julie Seidel

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



*Jo-Anne Hine* is a passionate advocate for Visual Art education. A dedicated classroom teacher for 40 years, Jo was one of the first in Queensland to earn LEAD teacher certification. Jo has experienced a range of diverse teaching settings including Brisbane Girls Grammar School and 10 years at Cannon Hill Anglican College. Jo has a strong interest in authentic learning experiences in galleries and museums and she has worked extensively in curriculum development and as Teacher in Residence at the State Library of Queensland. She has contributed to leadership of Queensland Art Teachers Association in various ways and was proud and surprised to receive the QATA Life Membership Award in 2021. Jo takes every opportunity for learning, growing, sharing and making connections between artistic practice and the classroom.



*Christine Larsen* has over 25 years of experience in Visual Art education within Public and Independent schools across the Brisbane, Moreton Bay and Ipswich regions. Her role as Curriculum Leader The Arts at Marist College Ashgrove provides ongoing opportunities to work collaboratively alongside passionate Arts educators and students from Years 5 to 12. Christine has had extensive involvement working with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority in the positions of Lead Confirmer, Lead Endorser, Lead External Assessment Marker and has been part of the expert writing teams for the Visual Arts in Practice Syllabus and the Senior External Examinations. In 2019, she presented at the InSEA (International Society for Education through Art) World Congress, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Christine holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Art from Queensland College of Art, a Graduate Diploma of Education in Secondary Visual Art and English from Queensland University of Technology, a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and a Master of Education from Australian Catholic University.



*Andrew Peachey* is a Visual Art teacher and has held a variety of roles, including many years serving as Head of Department. Andrew feels privileged to have worked with so many young creatives over his 37 year career. He has been involved in writing and assessor roles for the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority and has been on numerous arts committees, including the QAGOMA Teacher Advisory Group, Redland Art Gallery and the Regional Arts Development Fund. Andrew has a Bachelor of Education and Master of Visual Art from the Queensland College of Art. He has held numerous exhibitions of his artistic works over the past 25 years.



*Julie Seidel* has worked in secondary art education for over 35 years in Queensland, New Zealand and the International Baccalaureate System. In her role as Curriculum Leader of the Arts at St Peters Lutheran College, Brisbane, she continues to develop innovative strategies and resources to nurture students' personal confidence, creative growth and understanding of the benefits of a problem-solving mindset. Julie has contributed to QCAA resources and workshops. She enjoys mentoring teachers, designing innovative visual art projects and engaging in national and international Arts forums. Julie values collaboration with artists and educators to build rich creative experiences for individuals and communities. Julie has a Master of Education Studies (Art) and advocates for the benefits of lifelong learning through the arts. She considers it a privilege to help develop creative young minds.

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# ABOUT THE COVER



**GLORIA TEH**, 喜鵲飛 (*Magpies in flight*), 2020, hand-cut paper, 96.5 cm x 104.5 cm

## Artist's statement

Within China, two magpies mirroring each other can mean double happiness, harmony and marriage. Using paper and a scalpel, I created an image of two magpies mirroring each other inside a pair of wedding rings, lending to my Australian mother and Chinese father.

Due to my father leaving home to go to school in England at a young age, half of my identity has been hidden from me. Neither my father or I feel connected to our Chinese heritage, creating a feeling of dissonance and loss. I wished to show this through the imperfect mirror of the Australian and Eurasian magpies, as well as the juxtaposition of double happiness and the monotone colour scheme. By displaying my work within a clear frame and projecting a shadow behind it I wanted to convey a sense of uncertainty, and the non-physical; the culture and knowledge lost to me.

## Artist bio

Gloria Teh is a Brisbane-based Australian artist specialising in monochrome illustration, and since graduating from high school in 2020 has been studying animation and life drawing at Griffith University.

Growing up, Gloria was heavily influenced by cartoons and comics. At 16, she discovered the wider world of art through Visual Art classes. A year later, she moved in with her paternal grandmother, who was born and raised in Hong Kong. Her grandmother's house was filled to bursting with beautiful old paintings and figures, each with their own story to tell. Influenced by both her studies in class and this closer connection to her Chinese heritage, Gloria began her work 喜鵲飛 (*Magpies in flight*).



**FIGURE 1.1** Yayoi Kusama, *Dots Obsession: Infinity Mirrored Room*, exhibited on 7 June 2008, at the contemporary art centre 'Le Spot' in Le Havre, western France.

## This chapter is available in the digital versions of this textbook.

Chapter 1 contains the essential knowledge and processes for success in Visual Art. This chapter explores the framework of the Visual Art Syllabus. It presents examples of artists and artworks to illustrate the key understandings that shape the syllabus. These include:

- The importance of the inquiry learning model and processes to refer to as you develop and resolve ideas
  - The importance of the interconnectedness of making and responding in Visual Art and that all internal assessment instruments include this interconnection
  - The four contexts: personal, contemporary, cultural and formal and how they are used in the construction of meaning as both artist and audience. The context
- guiding questions are explored through an analysis of Daniel Boyd's work
- Using a reverse chronology approach to historical influences and precedence when investigating concepts, focuses, contemporary artists and media areas. A case study of Joachim Froese's photography practice is presented as an example of this approach
  - 21st-century art practices that include diversity of viewpoints, approaches and ways to construct meaning
  - The importance of audiences to the construction of meaning in 21st-century art practices
  - 21st-century art media, techniques and processes, including digital, cross-media and multimedia.



FIGURE 2.1 Cornelia Parker, *Island*, 2022

## This chapter is available in the digital versions of this textbook.

Artworks can make us laugh and cry by stirring up strong personal emotions. Art can mesmerise us and entertain us. For these things to occur, artists and viewers share an understanding of how we make meaning through art.

Chapter 2 explores how you, the artist, can make meaning and communicate it to your audience. It will also demonstrate how you, as audience, can analyse and interpret meaning from artworks. In this chapter we consider the importance of:

- visual language and expression in the construction of both literal and non-literal meaning
- generating your own original ideas with suggestions for approaches to help get started
- the meaning inherent in art media
- display in the construction and communication of meaning
- communicating to your audience through an artist's statement
- communicating key points in your making process through your choices of documentation of ideas.

This chapter includes a case study that follows Simone Eisler through the processes of the Inquiry Learning Model to illustrate how an artist will authentically follow this non-linear approach in their studio practice.

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FIGURE 3.1 Christian Holstad, *Consider yourself a guest (Cornucopia)*, 2019

## This chapter is available in the digital versions of this textbook.

Responding to art is in the realm of both artist and audience. Chapter 3 explores the approaches you might use to respond to artworks. Responding can occur in an art gallery setting, in the classroom, as written or spoken works or even as creative works. Responding can be formal as in your Visual Art external exam, or it might be through a casual conversation with a friend. When we respond to art, we construct meaning by tapping into the clues artists provide, as well as our own knowledge of visual language and expression.

This chapter considers:

- how you might extend your knowledge of Visual Art by engaging with the world of art outside of the classroom
- the role of the art gallery and how you might investigate artworks at a gallery
- the importance of seeing original artworks
- the genres of writing you will need to know to complete your assessment in both internal and external assessment instruments in Units 3 and 4
- how to write about artworks using PEEL paragraph structure.

# Chapter 4 ASSESSMENT



FIGURE 4.1 Sophia Jorgensen, *Experiment*, mixed media on 42.5 x 20 cm, pastel paper

# This chapter is available in the digital versions of this textbook.

## Unit 3 Assessment

Unit 3 requires you to complete two internal summative assessment instruments that contribute to your body of work. The first instrument, Investigation – inquiry phase 1 (or IA1), leads to the second instrument, Project – inquiry phase 2 (or IA2).

In this section:

- IA1 and IA2 are explored and unpacked through the syllabus assessment descriptions, specifications and conditions
- strengths, limitations and implications are examined and examples provided
- authentic student examples of IA1 and IA2 submissions are examined through inquiry learning and discussion activities
- a comprehensive checklist is provided for IA2 submissions
- annotated illustration examples are examined and strategies for making them are provided.

## Unit 4 assessment

In Unit 4 you will be assessed twice. The first is the summative internal assessment 3, also known as the IA3. This is the third phase of the self-directed inquiry that began with the investigation in the IA1 and was developed in the IA2 project. The IA3 is a project and has specific documentation requirements, which are outlined in this section.

The second assessment item in Unit 4 is the summative external assessment (EA), which is an examination. Although the examination occurs during Unit 4, learning in both Units 3 and 4 is relevant in the external assessment.

This chapter contains important and relevant examples and resources to assist your submission of IA3 and preparation for the external assessment, such as:

- description of and comprehensive list of what to include in the IA3 submission
- examples of authentic student IA3 submissions
- examples showing how to document your work and notes on displaying your work
- comprehensive IA3 checklist
- comprehensive suggestions about how to plan for and approach the external exam
- extended response, graphic organiser resources
- examples of introductions, conclusions, analytical and evaluative paragraphs
- examples showing how to understand and use the information given in the artwork context statement.



FIGURE 5.1 Mijilli Pearson, *Bagaa-muugu-warra*, mixed media, acrylic, ink and image transfer on canvas, 250 x 120 cm

Through Unit 1 you will look at your 'material' world through the concept of 'art as lens'. A lens is a viewpoint, and there are many ways of looking at, understanding and responding to the world. You will explore how artists create new ways of thinking, and processes to represent meaning about what they perceive in the world. Beginning with the focus of people, places and objects as inspiration or stimulus, you will produce your own unique figurative and non-figurative artworks.

To develop a better understanding of the way artists work, you will examine their personal and contemporary influences in the context of their time and place in history. You will be exposed to multiple viewpoints or lenses, by examining the artist's value systems that underpin or influence the way they perceive and represent subject matter. Using a range of materials, techniques and processes you will create a folio of experimental work in response to artist research and personal observations.

You will experiment with a range of approaches to improve technical skills, foster curiosity and creative thinking, and inspire innovative art practices. Your teacher will guide you through the inquiry learning process to develop, research, reflect and resolve questions about the making of art and application of key terminology to talk and write about art.

As audience, you will consider your connection to the images and objects artists use, and how artists' viewpoints and representations challenge audience perspectives. As an artist, you will consider how different lenses might filter or distort viewpoints, and through these lenses you will communicate how you look at and respond to the world.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit you will:

- 1 Implement ideas and representations to generate individual solutions for the depiction of the material world
- 2 Apply literacy skills to communicate understanding of visual language, expression and meaning in the work of self and others
- 3 Analyse and interpret art practices through the personal and contemporary contexts
- 4 Evaluate influences to explore diverse figurative and non-figurative representations of the material world
- 5 Justify representation of artists' personal viewpoints
- 6 Experiment in response to artists' contemporary representations of people, place and objects
- 7 Create visual responses using knowledge and understanding of a range of 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional and/or time-based materials, techniques, technologies and art processes
- 8 Realise responses to communicate meaning through multiple viewpoints.

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# A LENS TO EXPLORE THE MATERIAL WORLD

## Chapter 5



**FIGURE 5.2** Millie Bell, *Railway* series, digital photography

This chapter introduces:

- art as lens or viewpoint
- what is a lens?
- reacting to the material world: figurative and non-figurative representations
- art as lens: a conceptual challenge
- research and critical reflection
- focus: people, places, objects
- context: the personal and contemporary
- devising an inquiry question through practice-based research
- how do artists develop personal responses?
- how do artists use visual language to communicate a narrative?
- how do students respond to the work of artists?

# 5.1 Art as lens or viewpoint

It is all in the eye of the beholder!

Through the lens of visual art, we view, understand, and communicate ideas about the world and ourselves. Artists develop an astute capacity to observe, analyse, examine, explore and construct representations of the world. They comprehend and devise meaning in response to personal and contemporary contexts that mirror the culture and society in which they live. Artists identify and develop unique and individual viewpoints or perspectives; that is, the position from which things are judged and represented.

Art as lens explores how *visual literacy*, **critical literacies** and *visual language* underpin the processes that generate responses to the material world.

Through inquiry learning you will be exposed to new ways of thinking and diverse or multiple viewpoints that challenge your perspectives and understanding of visual representations. Approaches such as direct observation, personal experiences of or connections to people, places and objects generate visual responses. The materials and techniques associated with the practices of drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, sculpture assemblage, photography, video and animation, in 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional formats combine with a personal lens to inform visual statements.

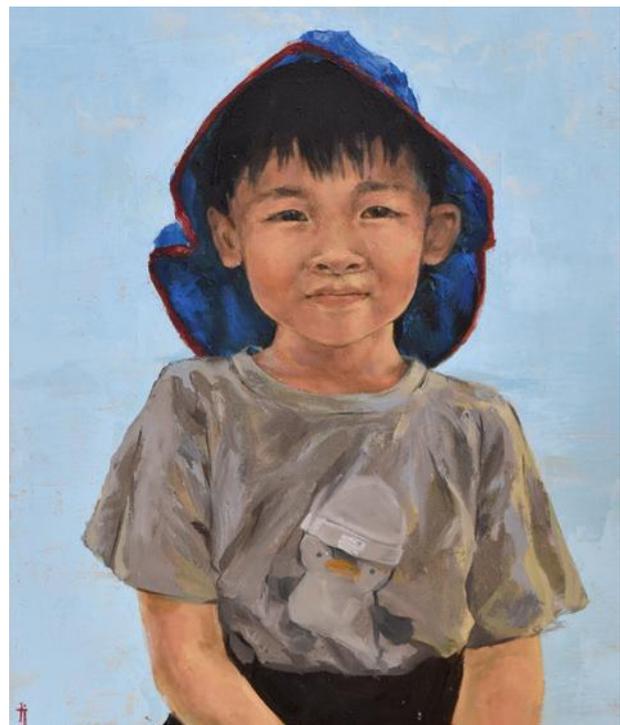
## People

The student responses to the portrait as shown in Figures 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 are examples of different and personal approaches to the focus of people.

*Through the eyes of my family* was painted for the Little Darlings Portrait Prize, in response to the theme Me and My Place. This work was selected and exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra in 2023. The full-face portrait of the artist's brother engages the viewer through the simple composition. A playful red contour line on the soft hat and the cute penguin on the shirt offers an honest interpretation of childhood innocence. The composition and colour palette are considered traditional, while the brush marks are loose and energetic conveying a sense of family connection.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 5.1

Refer to the definition of *critical literacy* and write a personal checklist, identifying how you might explore this set of ideas when developing your experimental folio. To develop the list, research how artists have applied traditional and contemporary methods and techniques when responding to the focus of people, places and objects. Themes such as the portrait, **still life**, and the **scape** are established responses to people, place and object *and* will assist in linking your ideas to modes of expression exploited by artists in a contemporary context.



**FIGURE 5.3** Ting Jiang, *Through the eyes of my family*, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 cm

**critical literacy** the active analysis and interpretation of codes and conventions of aural, digital, kinaesthetic, oral, visual and written texts

**scape** a view or picture of a scene, usually used as a suffix to the describe the setting

**still life** one of the principal genres (subject types) of Western art – essentially, the subject matter of a still life painting or sculpture is anything that does not move or is dead



**FIGURE 5.4** Lucinda Yee, *Beyond*, light drawing, digital photography, 84 x 84 cm

Embracing a contemporary approach to portraiture, in *Beyond* (Figure 5.4) this student explored light painting using a digital camera and torch light in a dark room to convey a moody sense of the introspection. The dark space invites the viewer into what feels like an impenetrable or personal space. The tonal density of the dark space contrasts with the coloured light. The significant scale of the image is powerful as a visual language device.

“*Beyond* allows viewers to create their own narrative as they view the work – the circles of light mimic religious iconography, the subject’s gaze is directed away from the audience, beyond the frame. The shifting light captures moments in time, a metaphor for the uncertainty of our future and my shifting identity at a pivotal point in my life.

LUCINDA YEE

*Ngulunhdhul* (Figure 5.5) is a personal intimate study of the artist’s brother captured using digital painting yet successfully communicating a sense of nostalgia or memories from a treasured time in the past. There is a storybook aesthetic as



**FIGURE 5.5** Mijili Pearson, *Ngulunhdhul*, digital painting. Mijili Pearson is a Guugu Yalandji and Guugu Yimidhurr woman from Cape York.

the child conveys a curious joy and playfulness reminiscent of childhood that people remember through a personal lens.

## Places

The student responses to places as shown in Figures 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 examine the simplicity of place and consider the endless possibilities when linked with the design principle of space. Personal and contemporary approaches to the focus of place tap the audience’s experience and understanding of both physical and imagined spaces and places.

The monochromatic image in Figure 5.6 draws heavily on a literal interpretation of loneliness and melancholy in urban settings. Scale is manipulated to create a large, exaggerated figure that seems alone, despite the smaller repeated figures with faces turned away from the camera and the viewer. The composition and stark environment isolate the viewer.

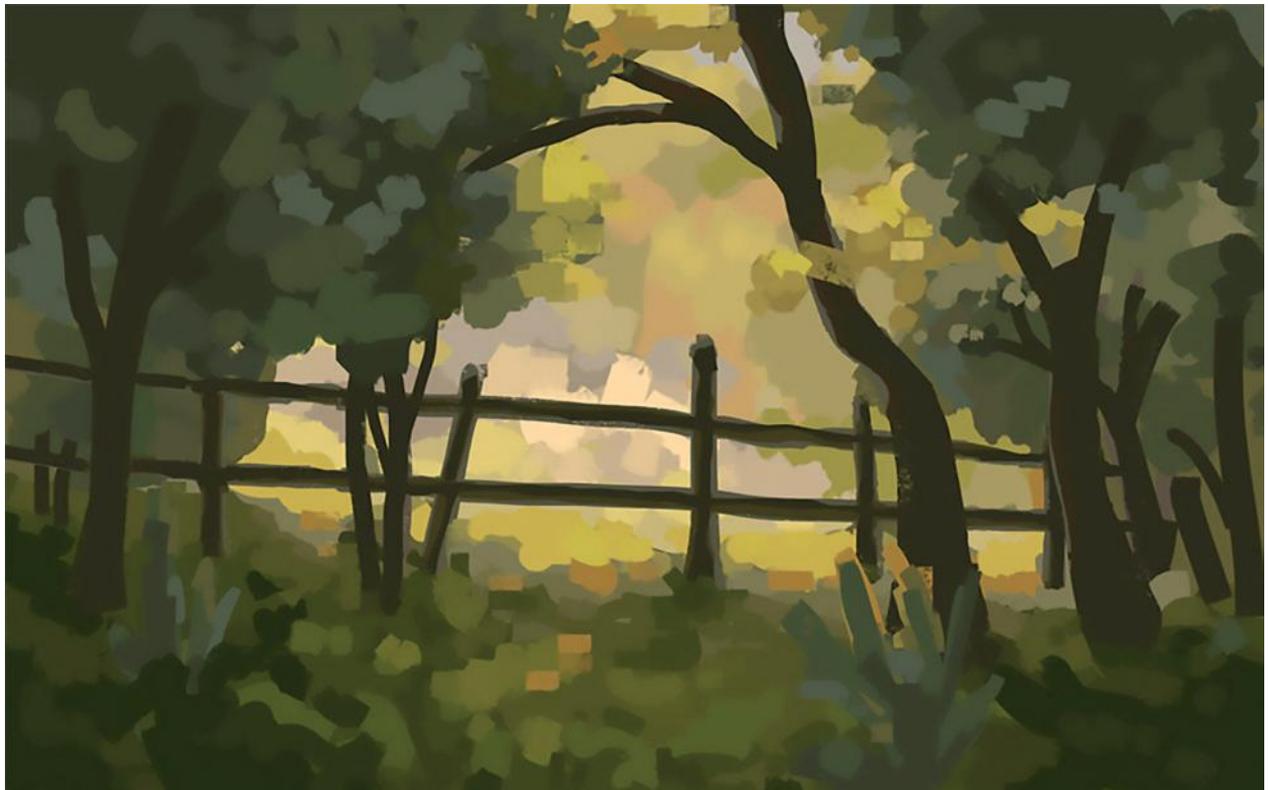


**FIGURE 5.6** Ben Tooth, *The Monitoring*, photomontage, 18 x 25 cm

“ The large industrial structures present an exaggerated urban landscape, of pipes, chains, brick surfaces and factory-esque buildings. The figures look small or insignificant through the large shadows cast over rusted metal and concrete. The feeling of being overshadowed and overwhelmed by urban life and the intrusiveness of technology in contemporary society is communicated through the space. The unusual aesthetic of pattern and black and white creates a code for introspection, timelessness, or removal from reality.

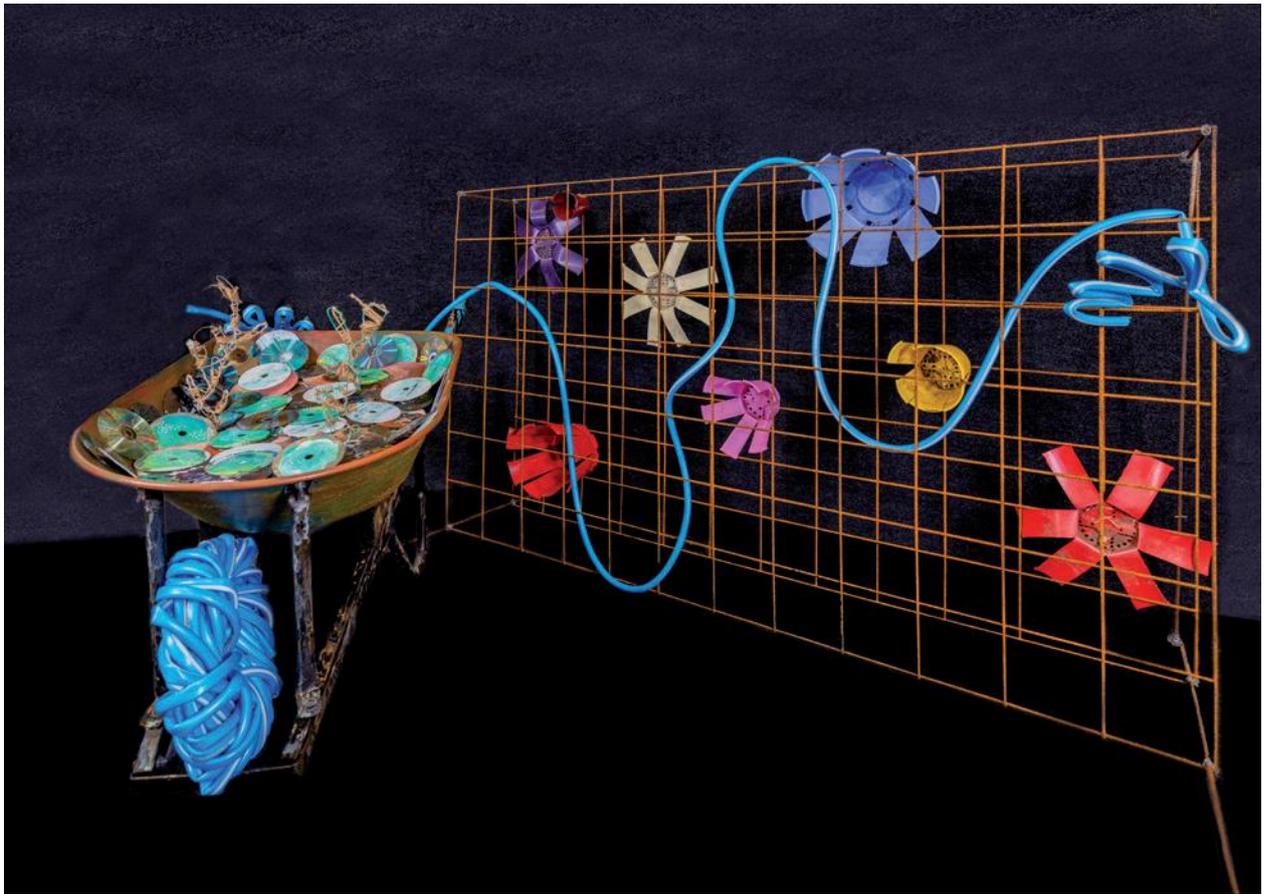
BEN TOOTH

Figure 5.7 is an example of how to define and represent place using the traditional conventions of perspective and tonal values.



**FIGURE 5.7** Georgie Porter, *The clearing*, digital painting





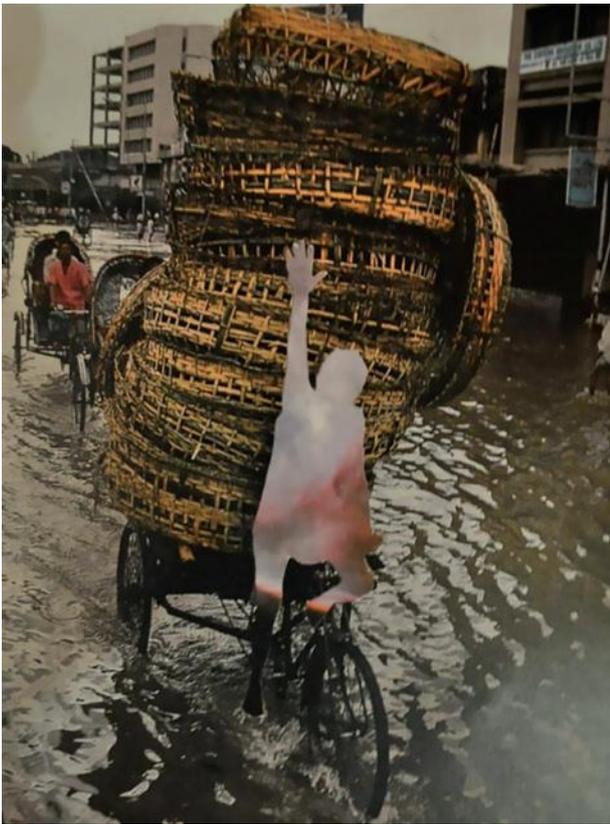
**FIGURE 5.11** Charlotte Krenske, *Greening the Wheels of Progress*, 2022, mixed media: wheelbarrow, garden hose, metal frames, wire, 2 wheels, CD disks, cardboard, rubber, paint, ink, breadcrumbs, pot plants, string, 223 x 175 x 104 cm

“*Greening the Wheels of Progress* amplifies the need be part of the solution and tend the environment for a better future. The depleted garden reflects the reckless environmental decisions we make as a society. The artificial technology sits within a rusted immovable wheelbarrow, constrained with its wheel locked by a twisted hose suggesting a lack of nourishment.

CHARLOTTE KRENSKE

An installation of objects associated with gardening and flowers made from recycled plastic pots, *Greening the Wheels of Progress* (Figure 5.11) develops a viewpoint through the visual language of colour and rusted surfaces to communicate meaning. The old wheelbarrow contrasts the bright plastic hose and CDs that represent artificial intelligence and modern technology.

People, place and object together can also offer a start point for thinking about how we understand and perceive our world. The manipulation of shapes and textures can enhance meaning by assembling new imagery with a focus on juxtaposition; in Figure 5.12, water and the human silhouette develop meaning and interpretation.



**FIGURE 5.12** Tess Passmore, *Surviving*, void collage, 15 x 20 cm

These collages (Figures 5.12 and 5.13) are examples of how exploring the similar and disparate through people, place and objects can be manipulated to create a new meaning. The simple figure symbolising humanity is a shape cut from a magazine photo with water or smoke added to the void; an element required to survive. Humanoid eyes puncture Earth's surface, proposing that we all need to see or take notice of what is happening environmentally to the planet. The vibrating red/orange brings the negative space forward and is indicative of technological advancement, leaving the audience to determine their own viewpoint on the state of the place and solutions.

Figure 5.14 references the work of artist Waratah Lahy, who explores reverse glass painting in her 'Glass Half Full' series, using imagery from a personal, domestic context. Here the inverted glassware carries meaning suggesting the Victorian era 1820–1901, when the bell jar contained a miniature world of preserved or replicated specimens. The light contrasts the dark making the flower glow, a symbol for the beauty of nature.



**FIGURE 5.13** Kaija Sebestyn, *We have all lost our place!*, collage, 17 x 26 cm



**FIGURE 5.14** Class collaboration, St Peters Lutheran College, acrylic paint on glass, digital photography

## 5.2 What is a lens?

**lens** noun [ C ] (GLASS)

(1) a curved piece of glass, plastic, or other transparent material, used in cameras, glasses, and scientific equipment, that makes objects seem closer, larger, smaller, etc.

a camera with a zoom lens

(2) the part of the eye behind the pupil (= the black hole at the front of the eye) that helps you to see clearly by focusing (= collecting) light onto the retina

Art is generally associated with optics – the science of light. The camera, like the eye and its retina, focuses and captures refracting light to form a readable image on a sensor.

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines 'lens' from a more sensory perspective:

It is something that facilitates and influences perception, comprehension, or evaluation.

Art as lens acknowledges the potent combination of how the eye and brain work together to form

and relay images and effect emotional responses. Science and art combine to offer tools that assist in developing powerful visual communication.

Art as lens has the potential to position or locate our personal self within the contemporary world. The camera has proven to be visually influential in the contemporary world; however, it projects a fixed and sometimes flattened viewpoint of the world. Innovative artists continually investigate and create methods aimed at broadening the singular lens, the most common and most recent of these being the use of video, time-based media, digital tools, sound, light, engineering and programs including AI.

 Lenses are important because they subconsciously shape our perceptions ...

DOUG MARMAN

## 5.3 Reacting to the material world: Figurative and non-figurative representations

In this unit, you will investigate how artists use the process of experimentation to create new ways of thinking, meaning and representations. 'Tangible forms' offer inspiration and information that you can respond to in a personal and contemporary context.

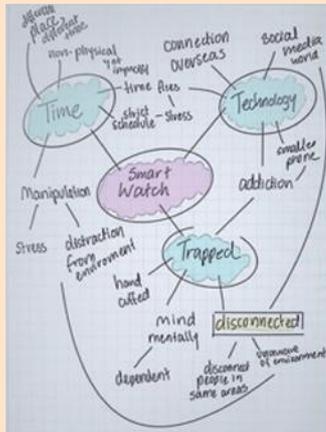
Experimentation requires you to step outside your understanding of how artworks are generated

and what art as lens might look like. Creativity and innovation emerge from challenges and problem-solving. To inspire and discover your creative self, it is not always necessary to make resolved artworks or begin with a clear image in mind.

The focus of people, place and objects is a useful tool that directs and shapes your personal and unique lens or viewpoint.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 5.2

An easy way to start your creativity flowing is to always document your ideas and responses. Grab a camera, phone or sketchbook and organise any responses to the simplest of objects. In this example



### Graphic organiser

Chart of ideas and recurring themes with links to the idea of object, place, people, connection and problems in society. This digital sketch unpacks the object of a watch as a marker of the ephemeral nature of time and the different stigmas associated with smart watches. This map explores the idea of art as lens and how different people view objects. *Ting Ting Wang*

FIGURE 5.15 Documenting ideas can be done in several ways

below, the student has noted ideas about the link between time and their watch.

Try this process and establish a regular practice that best suits you.



### Experimental photography

This photographic image explores the use of angles, lighting and scenery to depict a contrast between the object and place. The photographs were not altered, rather in the spirit of art as lens, the phone lens replaces the eye (people view the outside world through a phone lens these days). The smart watch was photographed outside in the natural environment, a literal depiction of what it looked like. The background represents how even something we view in 2D (on a screen) is the material world. The materials the watch is made of originate in nature, even though technology is usually thought of as quite opposite to nature. This image conveys the resourceful world and how everything made comes from the natural world.

## 5.4 Art as lens: A conceptual challenge

**Figurative** imagery is generally understood as something we visually recognise and understand, and it is often judged on criteria such as accurate representation or realism.

Collaborative activities away from the classroom, if well planned, can immerse students into a process-based experience, while exploring the figurative and non-figurative modes of expression, the latter often known as **abstraction**, to broaden their lens or understanding of the world.

The collaboration *Soundscape* (Figure 5.16) requires art students to visually respond with their

entire body on a large drawing surface to sound and light, during a concert performance in front of an audience. In this activity, sound is used as an abstract stimulus, challenging students to respond visually to a live music performance with a focus on gesture as interpretation culminating in a mixed media work.

**figurative** images or objects clearly derived from real object sources, representational and recognisable in origin

**abstract (non-figurative)** art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours and textures

The students negotiate the resolution or pulling together of marks, colour and layered surfaces, exercising their understanding of media, techniques and processes over a two-hour period. Here the process of imagery development in response to the music was projected onto the large screen behind the performers.

This project requires a preparation and research process where students experiment with

materials to effectively build imagery in layers using the stretching dimensions of their arms and gestures of the body. The class practiced how scale and pressure creates marks and discussed a planned sequence of colour and media to develop an image in layers. This innovative project demonstrates how art students learn through interrelated, non-hierarchical, and non-sequential reflective inquiry.



**FIGURE 5.16** Georgia, Grace and Adam from St Peters Lutheran College collaborate in response to music.



**Video 5.1** Soundscape performance by students at St Peters Lutheran College.



**FIGURE 5.17** Tahlia Piccirillo, overhead shot of the body and drawing forming an image. This interesting imagery offers possibilities by exploring an unusual viewpoint.

## 5.5 Research and critical reflection

Research and critical reflection can be experienced through purely process-driven activities. Photographing each stage of a developing image is a useful tool for reflection and negotiation purposes. The camera summarises the image into a core structure making it easier to analyse the compositional framework and critique the elements and principles of art and design. The use of photo editing tools such as Photoshop enables the artist to work in camera or on the computer to adjust and manipulate tonal value, contrast, light and exposure, to create a focus and problem-solve in a creative space. Risk-taking must outweigh a



**FIGURE 5.18** Tahlia Piccirillo, charcoal and ink on paper, 220 x 100 cm

resolved outcome. You need to be comfortable with the unpredictable and then problem-solve what you don't like. This will encourage you to take risks, try new ideas and let the imagery establish a conversation with the artist.

Through digital manipulation, the two photographic versions of the one large format image explore changes in tonal value as weight and stability and an emphasis on a mesh of layered energetic lines.

### DISCUSS

Notice the change in visual qualities that occur when imagery is photographed. Surface and texture can change. It is important to acquire photographic skills using your camera or device to ensure that you represent your work authentically for your assessment.

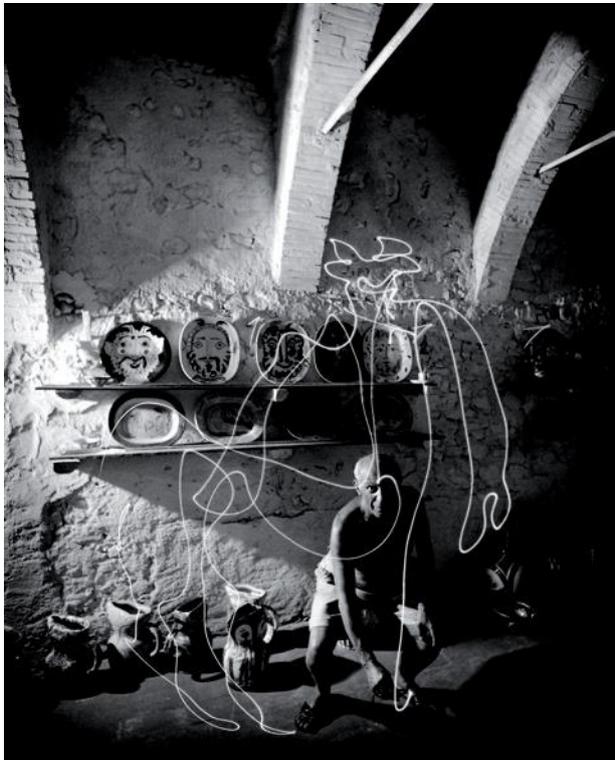
 Form must be balanced by means of space', Hofmann wrote in 1932, '... form exists because of space and space exists because of form.' In any work of art, he looked for a visual unity and form that stimulated interest in the viewer, whether pleasing to the eye or not.

HANS HOFMANN'S FUNDAMENTAL LAWS OF PAINTING, *ARTWIZARD*, 17 FEBRUARY 2020

Research offers some direction when developing art-making activities. The St Peters students researched the work of Heather Hansen, Tony Orrico and contemporary performance artists to establish what might be a workable response for their group and context.



**FIGURE 5.19** Artists Heather Hansen and Diogo De Lima create a piece during the Venice Family Clinic's Annual Art Walk and Auctions, at Google Los Angeles on 22 May 2016, in Venice, California.



**FIGURE 5.20** In the spirit of reverse chronology, no concept or idea is entirely new. Picasso used body movement and a penlight to create photographs in 1949.



**FIGURE 5.21** Thomas Parrott uses a bush brush and paint to develop a texture or ground with the intent of drawing over the top later.

This **intuitive** approach to making imagery first emerged as a significant component of the **Abstract Expressionist** art movement and can be further developed by making bush brushes, long handled mops, poles or sticks with bespoke ends that require the artist to stand and stretch to manipulate the mark using various materials. Researching artists such as John Olsen and Jody Graeme will reveal how this approach is commonly used by many artists who work on a large scale.

In response to the *Soundscape* experience, the non-figurative artwork '*Bagaa-muugu-warra*' was resolved by student Mijili Pearson, a Guugu Yalandji and Guugu Yimidhurr woman from Cape York, who personally embraced the process and combined

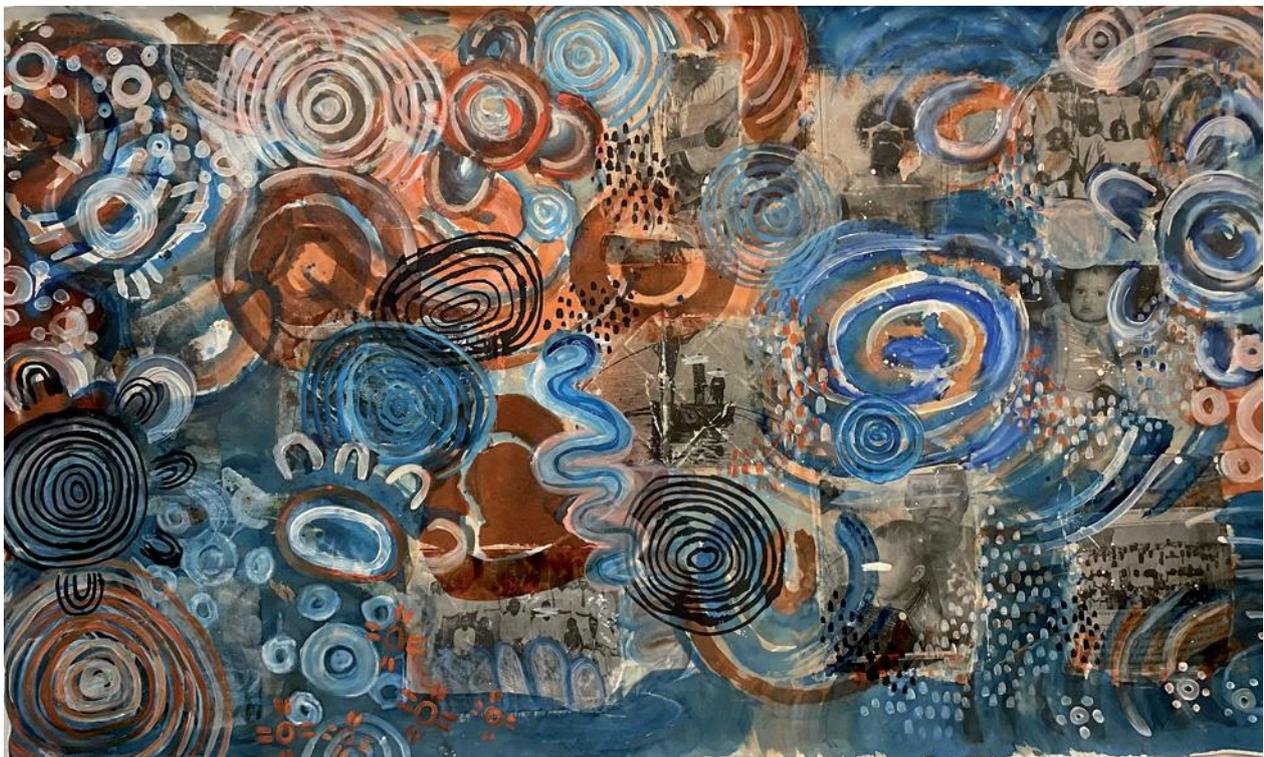
it with a personal concept, developing links to her cultural context (Figure 5.22).

**intuitive** able to know or understand something because of feelings rather than facts or proof

**Abstract Expressionism** a style of art, music, or writing, which began in the 1900s, that tries to express feelings and emotions rather than trying to accurately represent how things appear

## An artist's statement

Later in the course you will be required to write an artist's statement about your resolved work, applying a similar structure to the following example.



**FIGURE 5.22** Mijili Pearson, *Bagaa-muugu-warra*, mixed media, acrylic, ink and image transfer on canvas, 250 x 120 cm

**Video 5.2** *Bagaa-muugu-warra: Hold onto the Rock*.  
Collaboration - Mijili Pearson, Julie Seidel  
Projected animation with live music performance





**TABLE 5.1** PEOPLE, PLACE, OBJECTS

PEOPLE	PLACE	OBJECTS
 <p>Ting Jiang</p>	 <p>Stephanie Fleming</p>	 <p>Beatrix Blinco</p>
<p>Identity Relatives Siblings Twins Cousins Self-portrait School mates The team Health Gender The body</p>	<p>Urban Housing Living room Bedroom Kitchen Back yards Shopping centres Museums Galleries Churches Cathedrals</p>	<p>Natural Organic materials Plant matter Food Coral reefs Forests Hair Rock formations Animals Birds Insects</p>
<p>Scientists Figureheads Historic figures Inventors Mentors Philosophers Royalty Politicians</p>	<p>Environmental National parks Oceans Rivers Genetically modified crops The bush Salt lakes Landmarks</p>	<p>Industrial Tools Factory Machinery Technology devices Mechanical Appliances Equipment</p>
 <p>Georgia Burckhardt</p>	 <p>Tully Button</p>	 <p>Ella Young</p>
<p>Artists Actors Architects Activists Celebrities Cultural identities Historians Inventors Musicians Sportspeople</p>	<p>Global Tourism Travel Politics Immigration Indigenous sites Economy Markets Communications Climate change</p>	<p>Cultural objects Artefacts Crafted objects Obsolete objects The table Vessels Photographs Books Clothing Personal adornments – jewellery, make-up</p>



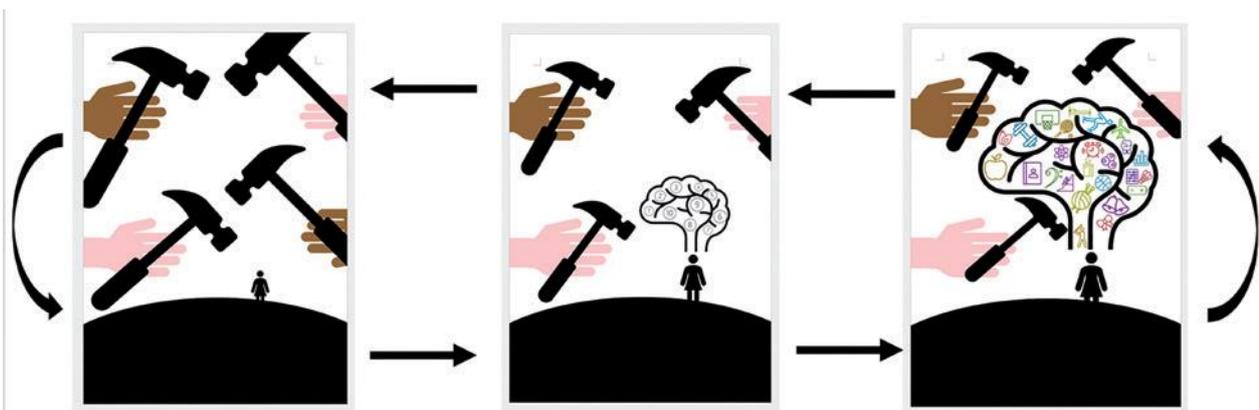
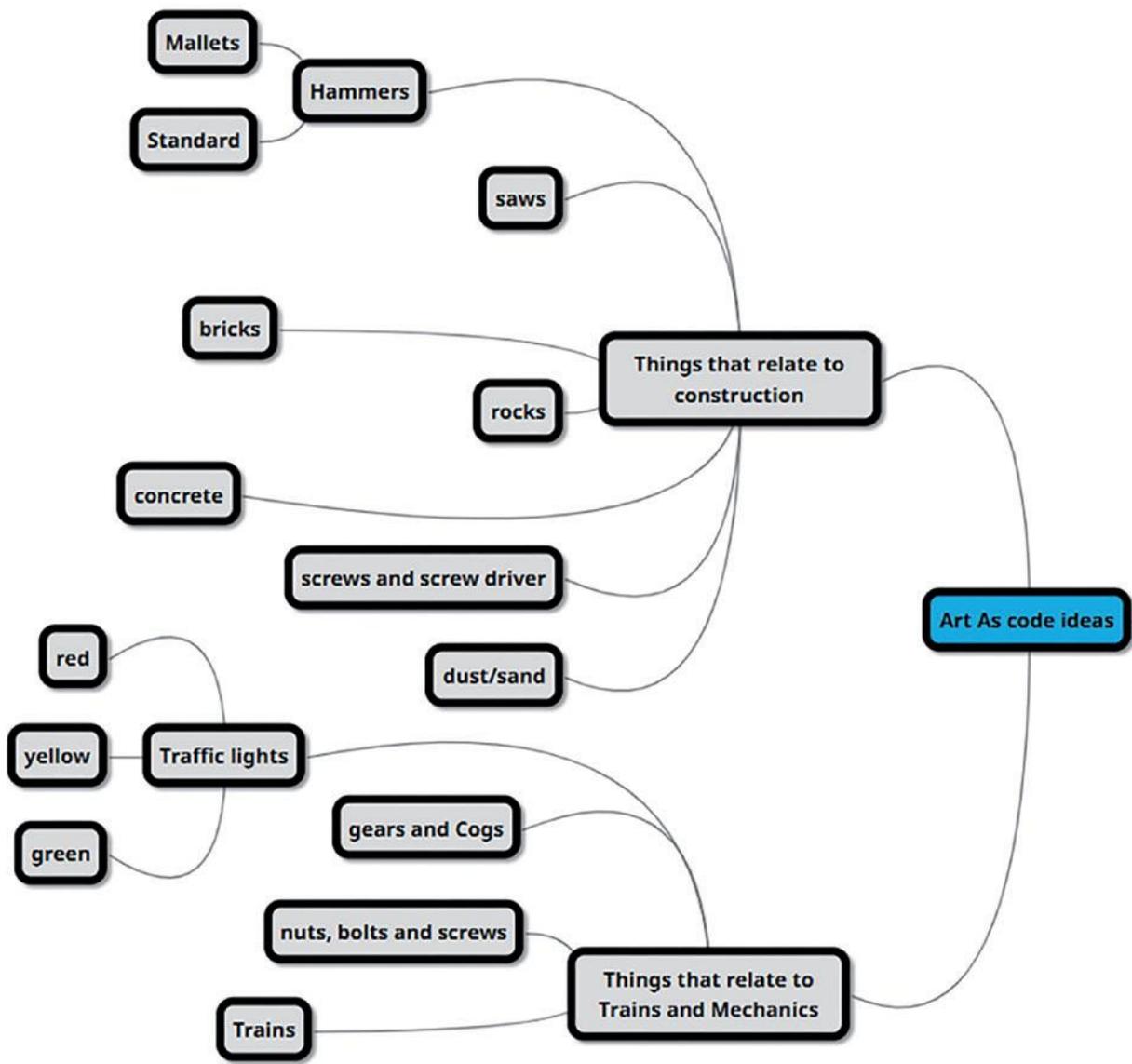
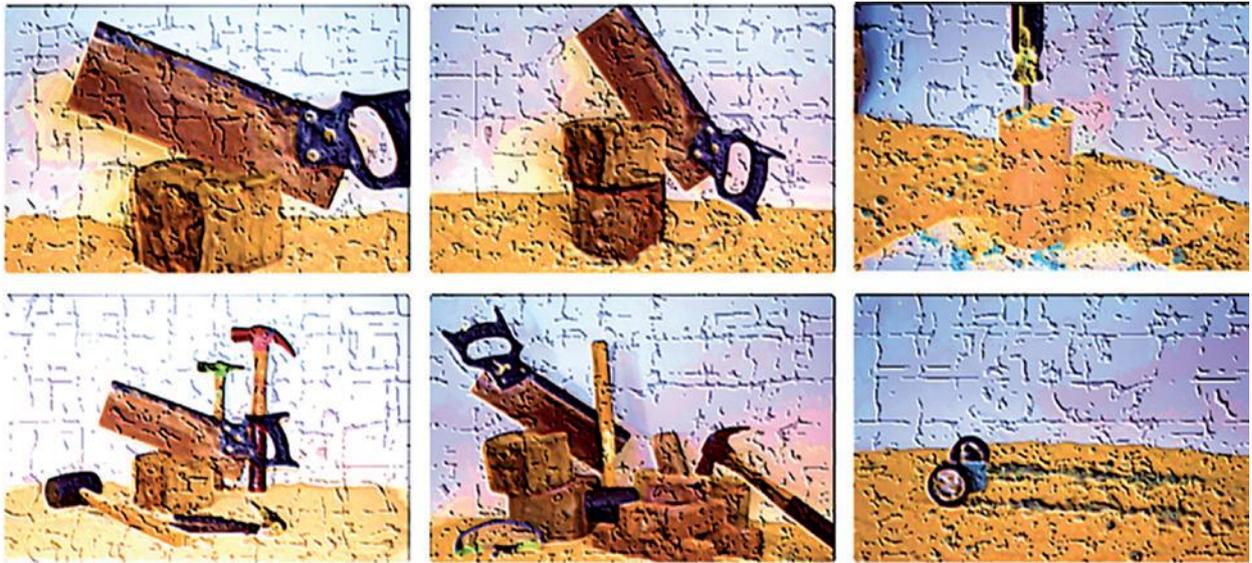


FIGURE 5.25 Kayla Bryant, *Overwhelmed*, digital drawing

Figure 5.25 is a graphic approach to thinking through ideas and responding through ideation. This student researched connections to the

commercial world of design evident in the works of Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Barbara Kruger and Robert MacPherson.



**FIGURE 5.26** Kayla Bryant, *The making*, 6-panel digital series. A response to the object as a positive tool for experiences.

### Artist's statement

Tools are used to create and destroy things. The hammer is a symbol of destruction and creation. The tools represent all the things in our life, good and bad. The hammer specifically represents the destructive things such as pain, loss, and disappointment. If we start to focus on all the negative things in our lives, it can overwhelm us. The hammers represent all the negative thoughts and feelings we experience. The hammers are heavy; however, they are also a metaphor for rebuilding.

KAYLA BRYANT

the barriers between botanical collection and 'assemblage sculpture' through his box collections. Postmodernism embraces the repurposing and relabelling of the object.

**assemblage** a work of art that is made of different things put together

### INQUIRY LEARNING 5.4

Collect, collate and present a meaningful or disparate set of objects relating to nature. (Refer also to Unit 2: Art as code.) Consider responses that explore a similar idea but generate diverse solutions through an alternative approach to media and form; for example:

- Marion Gaemers, *Pod 6*, 2014, installation of forms made from lomandra leaves
- Fiona Hall, *Tender*, 2003–06, US dollars fashioned into 86 bird nests (see Fiona Hall discuss this work online via the link at <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8165>)
- Simryn Gill, *Roadkill*, 2000, found run-over objects and toy wheels, Art Gallery of NSW
- Luke Roberts, *Wunderkammer/Kunstkamera*, 1994, found objects with artist's labels, Queensland Art Gallery.

## Where to start with objects?

Methods of museum presentation such as labelling, arrangements in boxes or purpose-built containers, conservation and storage are often appropriated by artists for art installations. Collection can be an obsessive process. Joseph Cornell (1903–72) is one artist who dissolved

## 5.7 Context: The personal and contemporary

Art practice involves identifying and connecting with your personal understanding of the world by referencing authentic experiences. The contemporary context informs how artists generate visual responses that communicate diverse viewpoints and layers of meaning through art.

Experimentation or practice-driven research involves a continuous cycle of observation and reflection on personal viewpoints. The reflective process challenges and refines a personal lens.

**“Perception is conditioned by a context from which observation and evaluation are made. Instead of general models of understanding, it is conditioned by numerous factors, including political, social, cultural, gender and racial. It affects how we see art and what meanings we attribute to it but is also an active factor in artistic creation.”**

ELI ANIPUR, WRITER AND EDITOR, *WIDEWALLS*

The contemporary context is often cited as the key driver of visual art, as contemporary art is the art of today, globally influenced, culturally diverse and embracing technologies. The contemporary artist employs a dynamic combination of materials, methods, concepts and subjects that challenge traditional boundaries and create meanings that reflect a changing world.

As a viewer, you will have personal visual preferences. Art has always presented a challenge to audiences. The manipulation of visual imagery to evoke pleasant, confronting or emotional responses has, for centuries, been a powerful disruptor of cultural frameworks that define beauty or aesthetics.

The process of creative inquiry aims to alter, change, distort, challenge or justify your authentic



**FIGURE 5.27** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #10*, 2018, acrylic on board, 3 panels. Image: Louis Lim

viewpoints through your representations of the material world. In summary, representations in visual art build upon sensibilities, experiences and interpretations that communicate meaning. They do this through figurative and non-figurative representations, some aesthetically beautiful and some quite confronting. This unique three-panel artwork by Leigh Schoenheimer embraces all three.

These multi-panelled works investigate the relationship between perception (seeing a subject) and meaning (knowing a subject). The starting point is an abstract assemblage painted in stripes. A realist description of the 3D abstraction on the left begins the ‘storyboard’ with a visual pun. The subsequent panels move beyond realism to explore text and a gentle deconstruction offering alternative interpretations of the object.

Your own perceptual and conceptual responses will provide a tantalising glimpse into the creative space where experimentation with materials, techniques and processes can empower you to implement ideas and generate meaningful imagery that is relevant in the contemporary world.

Embedding the painted object into a repeated background similar in colour and pattern collapses spaces and plays with how we perceive form, in the same way that the Modernist art movement explored form.



**FIGURE 5.28** Workshop with artist Leigh Schoenheimer where students made a simple object and then set about camouflaging it after a study of the artist's image *Construction #10*.

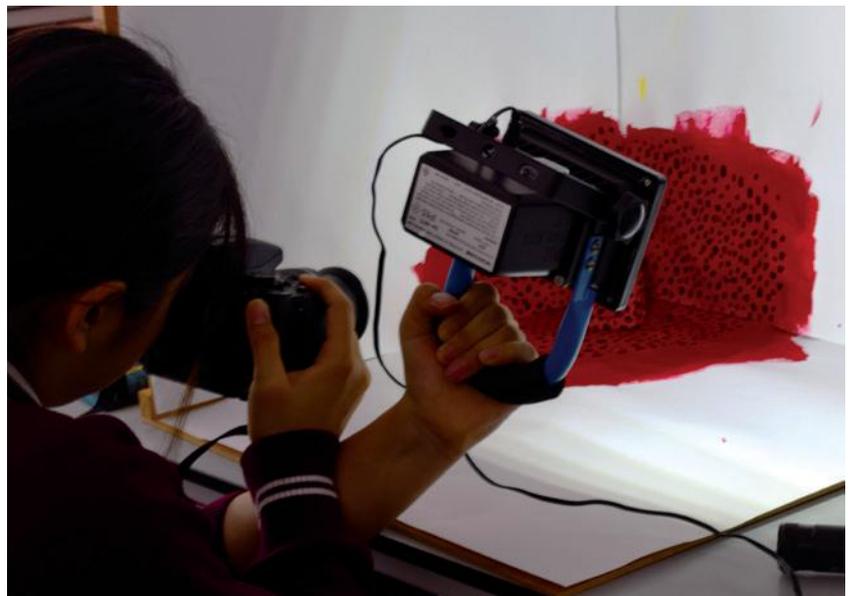
### INQUIRY LEARNING 5.5

Try this experiment by making your own simple object using polymer clay or using a found object that you can paint. Repeat a pattern and limited set of colours and then create a simple backdrop. Photograph from different angles using different lighting effects.

Research signature patterns and colours (reverse chronology). Artists such as Yayoi Kusma, Roy Lichtenstein, Cezanne and Bridget Riley are relevant artists to reference.

Shaping a viewpoint through a specific lens while referencing traditional visual forms is the purpose of contemporary art. It is in this creative space where possibilities are infinite and problem-solving is considered an inspirational process.

Personal and contemporary contexts require you to work with a focus that feels familiar so you can begin from a personal or authentic starting point, by referencing things in your everyday life. As the artist, you will aim to communicate ideas that rely upon an honest voice, ensuring that you have something meaningful to communicate.



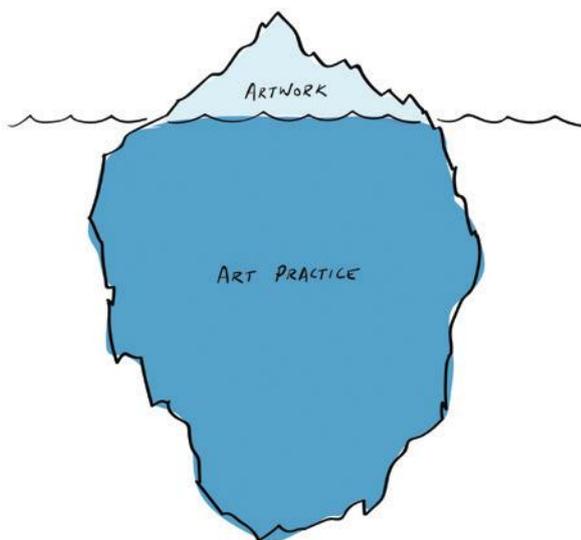
**FIGURE 5.29** St Peters Lutheran College, object experiments using a box to support a painted backdrop. This is also a valuable photography and lighting activity.

## 5.8 Devising an inquiry question through practice-based research

Practice-based research means that you will continually engage in the act of making art and manipulating materials while researching and reflecting upon your work.

A feature of this process is that the work itself generates new ideas and raises questions that direct the investigative artist around and through the concepts and focuses, developing a web of connections and interests. It is essential to record or map the journey so you do not get lost in the search!

A metaphor for the inquiry learning in Units 1 and 2 is the iceberg. The diagram by artist Daniel McKewen reminds us that the foundations of creative inquiry form the base of the iceberg (Figure 5.30). It develops and culminates in the work produced at the end of the course. Underneath the waterline is rarely visible to the audience. However, it is here where inquiry learning develops a depth of understanding and unique viewpoint or lens.



**FIGURE 5.30** Approximately 92% of an iceberg lies below the surface of the water.

### Questions that drive practice-based research

The following are some useful questions to ask yourself in relation to practice-based research.

- What makes you unique and who you are?
- Do you have a particular expertise?
- What are you interested in?
- What do you find intriguing and would like to learn more about?
- Are there specific cultural or social issues that interest you?
- Are there histories or stories associated with your ancestry or family?
- Do you have firm religious or political views?
- Which artists or artworks inspire or confound you?
- Have you seen an artwork that you absolutely love?

#### DISCUSS

The list of useful questions is a short one. Organise a class Q&A session around the questions on the list. Discuss and explain any additional questions that might be useful or enlightening.

Practice-based research reflects the inquiry learning process, as it is multidimensional and continuous. The acquisition of skills and technique might appear linear at times. However, the process of developing, researching, reflecting and resolving may be simultaneous, cyclic, multilayered and self-generating.

The artist case studies in Chapter 6 present sections of the artists' extensive practice that appear to flow naturally from one idea or concept to the next. Connections can be mapped with layers of meaning revealed during the process of reflection.

Artists offer varying models as to what this process or lens might look like. Artists Leigh Schoenheimer and John Honeywill place a specific focus on how visual imagery and aesthetics function in art. In contrast, the student examples often begin with a personal narrative, sometimes conveying a story expressed through symbolism and the emotional power of colour and space developing a specific lens or code that the artists have revealed when researching their work. The inquiry question becomes a common thread that directs the work; however, the visual language is often refined as new ideas emerge from the work itself.

## Reverse chronology

A reverse chronology or 'artworks of precedence' maps a cause-and-effect or thematic pathway to reveal historic, cultural and traditional conventions in art that have been influential and continue to inform and shape contemporary art practice.

Learning about artworks and analysing how they visually function is essential. Venturing beyond one's immediate understanding assists

in developing a more diverse lens. Reverse chronology recognises bodies of knowledge that have informed art and audiences for many centuries while remaining relevant.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 5.6

- 1 See the reverse chronologies provided in the case studies. Look at the referenced images that may be relevant in forming inquiry questions.
- 2 Research similar works and the context in which the works were made, making links between ideas, content, context, concepts, aesthetic theories and visual language conventions.
- 3 Consider the following themes within these works in relation to your own research:
  - the figure as self
  - the environment or scape
  - the object as a treasure.

## 5.9 How do artists develop personal responses?

### Artist John Honeywill

Artists have always been interested in the collective power of science, art and perception, so it is interesting to look at or research how the artists' unique lens influences their response to the material world.

Brisbane artist John Honeywill composes everyday items into elegant arrangements that communicate presence, beauty, humour. He uses light, colour and space with a focus on the visible and stillness, through still life – a genre that links the intimate with the audience. Unlike a photograph that captures an image in a fraction of a second, each layer of brush work builds on time spent with the subject.



FIGURE 5.31 John Honeywill, *Low tide*

Art as lens is the start point for the process of creativity and diversity reinventing itself in the form of developing and resolving, something that often takes many years to achieve. Researching artists such as Honeywill reveals a glimpse into how this process might work.

“What I love about still life is that there is always an abundance of things to paint and since childhood, I have had a love for objects, the stories and meaning they can hold. Still life can be dramatic or sublime – it can explore any subject, any emotion or state of the human condition. Like many people, since my twenties I have collected simple objects as memories of a visit to somewhere or a walk on the beach etc. My current works are about the presence and beauty of the object/s themselves, avoiding any narrative that implies an ongoing domestic environment.

JOHN HONEYWILL

Honeywill paints realism, a process that takes time and requires a meticulous layering of colour and observation of light.



FIGURE 5.32 John Honeywill, *Two loaves of bread*

“I paint simple, everyday subjects that I set-up using artificial lighting so that the subject remains ‘paintable’ for however long is needed in the studio. Initially, I make simple, journal drawings, to observe and become familiar with the subject. I take many photos of slightly differing viewpoints of a possible subject and give it a period of time to see if it feels right. Just because it looks ‘good’ doesn’t mean it deserves to be painted.

JOHN HONEYWILL

Analytical inquiry questions play a significant role in process.

“I ask myself: What does it bring? Does it have visual qualities, e.g. light, potential luminosity of colour, spatial relationships etc? Does it have the feeling I want? Does it have an ‘otherness’? The printouts of a photographed subject are purposely not of high quality and the background colours are always altered to experiment with the feeling that I am after. After drawing a subject up, I paint the background in and let that dry – I might have up to 3 paintings on the go at once. I then paint the actual subject. I consider the ‘background’ very much of equal importance to the ‘subject’ as the relationship of surrounding space to the subject is very important.

JOHN HONEYWILL

Developing visual language to communicate a personal viewpoint takes time and requires total immersion to open up possibilities and tap into a sense of creative flow. Honeywill offers this advice:

“Don’t over-think what you do, play around with ideas/ images/processes so that you can feel what you are doing.

JOHN HONEYWILL



FIGURE 5.33 John Honeywill, *Chair and fabric*

“2011 – I did introduce furniture. These works also included fabrics which is a love of Trish’s and she would bring offerings of possible subjects (which she still does – this fish is an example).

JOHN HONEYWILL



FIGURE 5.34 John Honeywill, *Bream*

“More recently it has been objects from around the house, often with flowers or fruit that have resulted in a focus on a relationship between colour and the organic.

I use stretched linen that I get professionally made. I always put a thin under-colour on; in recent years on the works that have a lighter palette, it has been a coat of Naples Yellow. Generally, I work from an easel. While lighting is important, I have increasingly worked from photographs that I take – something that has been quite liberating in many ways.

JOHN HONEYWILL

Honeywill’s work continually reinvents itself communicating both a personal and contemporary context that exudes a pensive quietness in our busy lives and visually packed environments.



FIGURE 5.35 John Honeywill, *Turkish delight 11*



FIGURE 5.36 John Honeywill, *Like the earth remembering*

“ I hope for a quiet beauty, a luminosity of colour and sometimes a sense of ‘otherness’ – a vague term to describe how my interest in some objects is about capturing a feeling that doesn’t directly have to do with the physical reason of the subject, e.g. the sweets such as Turkish delight, meringue, rocky road. It might be about its colour, it’s form or how it might suggest miniature worlds, e.g. the rocky road paintings have a cliff face and landscape feel.

JOHN HONEYWILL



FIGURE 5.37 Sophia Liu, *Roses*, acrylic on cradleboard, 30 x 30 cm

A body of work can signal how the artist engages with perception as a tool, and how they have developed or refined their focus and responses throughout their art practice.

This student has explored the application of light and a personal context in a similar manner to John Honeywill.

## 5.10 How do artists use visual language to communicate a narrative?

### Artist Leigh Schoenheimer

At first glance, artist Leigh Schoenheimer shares some similarities with Honeywill, as they both explore place, space and objects through the lens of still life.

Schoenheimer employs varying degrees of realism and selectively references art theories and techniques from well-established traditions as part of the storytelling. Her imagery explores aesthetic engagement and how to connect with and stimulate the viewer in a contemporary world saturated with media imagery.

A painter and sculptor, Schoenheimer is best known for her expanded still-life works, assemblages and her more recent series, ‘An Unnatural History.’ She focuses on devising engaging multi-panelled paintings known as a **triptych** to captivate the viewer and set up dialogues about the phenomenon of how we ‘perceive conceive’ imagery.

• •••• • • • • • • •  
**triptych** (pronounced trip-tick) usually three closely related panels or images of the same size

• •••• • • • • • • •



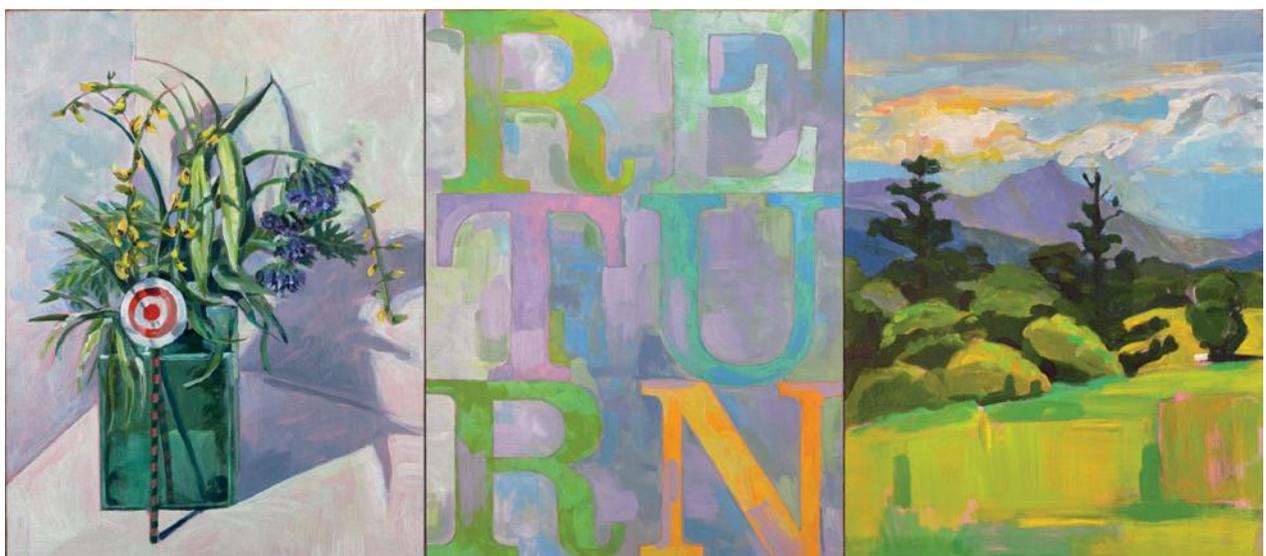
**FIGURE 5.38** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #13*, 2019, oil on plywood triptych and free-standing polychromed timber assemblage, 32 x 73 cm (painting) 25 x 8 x 8 cm (assemblage). Schoenheimer is also interested in pixelation or tessellation of imagery, pattern and vibrant colour, which stimulates the brain and challenges the 'bottom-up processing' that predicts what the viewer hopes to see. Her venture into still life, landscape, and abstraction is also about how to reset or challenge the singular lens.

Schoenheimer overlays conversations between perception, representation, and interpretation with a broad range of styles, ideas, symbols and viewpoints that reference art itself. Her sculptures made from found objects are sometimes paired with paintings and utilise the same personal visual vocabulary that brings wit, humour and a bowerbird curiosity to the hybrid works that simultaneously connect the aesthetic and intellectual realms.

People, place and object are present in the traditional sense, yet contemporary environmental concerns can be read and understood by a diverse audience. She enjoys a play on words and double meanings such as 'still life' and 'still scape'.

Schoenheimer's response to a place suggests that things are not always as they first appear!

**FIGURE 5.39** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Still-Scape: Tweed Weeds #4 - return*, acrylic and oil on plywood. Each panel 30.5 x 40.5 cm. Featuring Rag Weed, Lance-leaved Rattlepod, Verbena Bonariensis



## Artist's statement

The Tweed Gallery is located high on a hill south of Murwillumbah and takes in panoramic views across the verdant Tweed Valley to Woolumbin/Mt Warning. While in residence, I sipped my morning coffee each day blissfully soaking up those views, before going on a daily bicycle ride down through the valley. In amongst the landscape, it became evident that the roadsides and beyond were populated by camphor laurel trees and a proliferation of low growing, flowering weeds – a truth not seen from a distance. The idea for 'Still-Scapes' was born from this realisation.

This series of 'expanded still life' paintings feature arrangements of pretty weeds picked from the district's roadsides, and words appropriated

from the computer keyboard (control, escape, return, save as, etc), which take on new meanings when inserted between these micro and macro views of the area. The various readings suggested by the text elements create shifts in understanding.

If invasive enough, weeds ultimately cause the collapse of local ecosystems, which are in part responsible for the mass extinction process that is currently underway in Australia. Since completing the Tweed-Weeds Still-Scapes, I have begun looking at the invasive weeds in my local Brisbane area – Toohey forest. Different place, same story! ...

LEIGH SCHOENHEIMER

Exotic plant species have shaped our landscapes, in a variety of pretty ways. The extinction of native flora and fauna has been the unintended consequence of this importation. The still life arrangement features the collected weeds that have shaped the landscape. Words appropriated from a computer keyboard are inserted between the two observations symbolising our digitally mediated lives and understanding. These words take on new meanings in this context. The application of colour to form structure and distance is reminiscent of a Cezanne landscape. How artists respond to place and develop ideas is demonstrated through this work.

In summary, John Honeywill talks about avoiding the narrative while skilfully adapting and mastering classical techniques to paint objects in spaces that mine our emotions through the dramatic, sublime or beautiful.

Leigh Schoenheimer focuses on environmental issues building on her personal response to both objects and place, while referencing the story of art from Modernism through to Contemporary art, to communicate an environmental message.

Both artists communicate a viewpoint that challenges how we see and understand the material world.

In Unit 1, you explore representations of people, places and objects that make up the material world. The lists in Table 5.2 show how each of these artists draws inspiration from multiple aspects of their material world to inform their focus. For example, Leigh Schoenheimer considers plants as both still life, responding to aesthetic qualities, and a transmitter of knowledge, reminding the viewer that not all is as it sometimes appears. Context and knowledge are significant tools for the artists to employ.

**TABLE 5.2** THE WAYS IN WHICH ARTISTS DEVELOP MEANING ON MULTIPLE LEVELS

ARTIST	OBJECT	VISUAL LANGUAGE
John Honeywill	Nostalgic representational	The artists have a common interest in the power of composition, the still life genre, and the manipulation of form.
Leigh Schoenheimer	Symbolic deconstruction using the language of Modernism and Contemporary art	



## DISCUSS

Collaborate and brainstorm to identify other possible links in Table 5.2.



Lenses are ways of seeing that frame everything we perceive. They make sense of the situations we find ourselves in, the people we meet – even the ways we see ourselves. They allow us to understand everything from science and art to relationships and teamwork.

DOUG MARMAN, INNOVATOR, JOURNALIST AND PHOTOGRAPHER



## INQUIRY LEARNING 5.7

- Take photographs regularly of your work mid process.
- Compare what you see physically with the image on the screen and observe how scale and resolution are altered. Some imagery may become the process work for developing future photographic images.
- The space between the work and the viewer plays an important role in perception. Some contemporary artists aim to deconstruct this space altogether by making works interactive or controlling space in the form of an installation.
- View the work of Leigh Schoenheimer, noting the dimensions of the work. This demonstrates how critical it is that you always indicate the scale and materials when recording your imagery for assessment and an audience.
- Identifying similarities and differences assists in analysing the artist's intent and the manipulation of perception. Create a comparative table and with reference to a selection of images that appear to have a similar subject matter. Describe the connections between visual perception and application of the elements and principles of art and design that the artist(s) have applied as a result of their focus.



## DISCUSS

Technology potentially offers new possibilities and may ultimately redefine art as lens. Discuss innovations such as time-based media, four-dimensional imaging, digital platforms and communications. How might they influence how art is made in the future? Consider the role of the contemporary art gallery in the future and what it might look like. What are some locations and public spaces where audiences view and participate in artworks/forms?

Art as lens directs and embraces the analytical process of critical and creative thinking and reflection, culminating in independent viewpoints expressed through visual language and communicated through art. It aims to challenge the subconscious and develop a more mindful engagement with the artwork so the viewer can critically reflect upon what they see, understand and consider to be a valid representation of the material world.

## 5.11 How do students respond to the work of artists?



**FIGURE 5.40** Bianca Van Zyl, *Alone in the Feed*, 2023, digital photograph printed on canvas and stretched onto frame, 91 x 61cm. In this work, the student, Bianca Van Zyl, explores the 2D into 3D concept and the idea of a story board.

### Supporting Evidence 4



Leigh Schoenheimer, *Cup and Cowrie*, acrylic on canvas, 25 x 20cm, Schoenheimer's acrylic painting *Cup and Cowrie* depicts a display of collected items transformed into simplified forms that use the same visually appealing colours and patterns. Literally, the painting portrays a stacked tea cup and seashell sitting on a roll of tape on a cup and block, next to a stick. Each form uses bold colours that contrast with each other making them stand out. These were simplified to spell out the word 'view' with each letter in a colour from one of the forms. Non-literally, the paintings symbolise how technology in the modern world generates saturated imagery that takes away from objects' form.



Bianca Van Zyl, *Slice of Cake*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 25 x 20 cm

This experimental work was inspired by Schoenheimer's *Cup and Cowrie*. Literally this work depicts a cake painting that has been simplified to a 2D form using letters. Non-literally, this work symbolises how modern technology removes and saturates art to transform them into simplified pieces made to look 2D. The camera lens that flattens images down to shapes and colours, rather than capturing the full form and depth of objects in real time. The letters in the simplified form all resemble colours from the cake and patterns from the table cloth to enforce this. A strength I found when experimenting with this, was how easy it was to draw the main colours and shades from the cake, and simplifying the forms into letters, with the letters literally spelling out cake. A limitation I experienced was replicating the pattern of the tablecloth onto a 2D surface (letter) rather than an angled position that lay flat on the table. This experimentation has informed my art, as I would like to explore further into flattening painted images.

**FIGURE 5.41** Student process page. Here the use of pattern and bold primary colours is adapted into the image while pursuing the inquiry question – what do we really perceive?



**FIGURE 5.42** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7*, 2017, oil on plywood – triptych with free-standing, polychromed timber assemblage, triptych: 50 x 122 cm, assemblage: 26 x 12 x 12 cm

Artists devise unique viewpoints and representations that challenge the audience to consider their connection to images, objects

and perspectives. Specific lenses potentially filter or distort a viewpoint and influence how we communicate a viewpoint about the world.



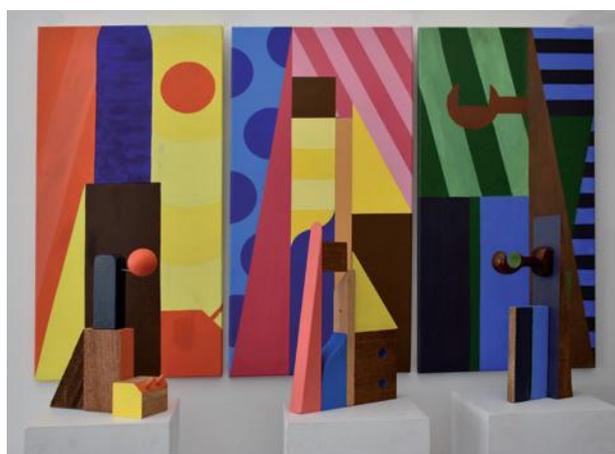
**FIGURE 5.43** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #8*, 2017, oil on plywood, triptych with free-standing, polychromed timber assemblage, triptych: 62 x 92 cm, assemblage: 61 x 17 x 11 cm

Tabitha Holland's series of three paintings and three sculptures experiment with abstraction and the deconstructed shapes of memories. This is evident in the three sculptures, *Suburban Afternoon*, *Sunrise Over the City*, and *Night in the Bush*. The flat colours contrast with the wood grain, and the defined shapes exhibit a beautiful abstraction of form and the ambiguous nature of memory.

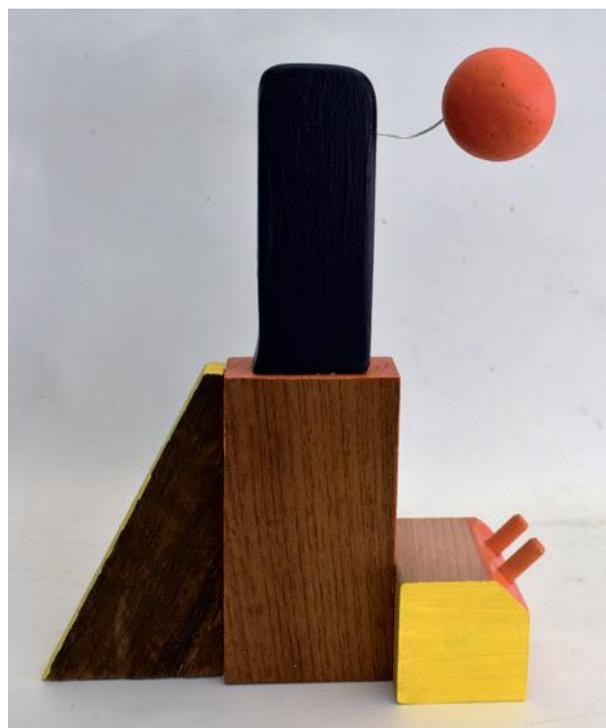
Likewise, the paintings *Memoryscapes 1, 2 & 3* refine the components of memories into vibrant colours, shapes and patterns, exemplifying the conceptual perception of personal memories of these scenes. By sharing space, the paintings are positioned in connection with the sculptural works. The three paintings and three sculptures have a matching partner, and alternate perception of the same moment in time. The viewer can position themselves to create a viewpoint that collapses the 3D colour into the 2D surface of the images.

*Memoryscapes* is a set of three canvases, each abstracting the personal idea and memory of the specific scapes: (from left) the city, suburbia and the bush. The deconstructed shapes, patterns and vibrant colours develop clarified and conceptual characteristics of the specific scene: respectively, skyscrapers, a house and streetlamp, and a green and brown forest. A focus on colour and line over texture was deliberate in fabricating an emotional and entangled memory of these scapes.

The story board format builds an interesting use of multiple panels and viewpoints to explore what is perceived and conceived when investigating suburbia as we know it. The structures are simple and the colours vibrant.



**FIGURE 5.44** Tabitha Holland, *Memoryscapes*, acrylic on three canvases, each 80 x 40 cm, 3 sculptures. This collection explores how perception has a critical function in the view and creation of both personal memories and consciousness.

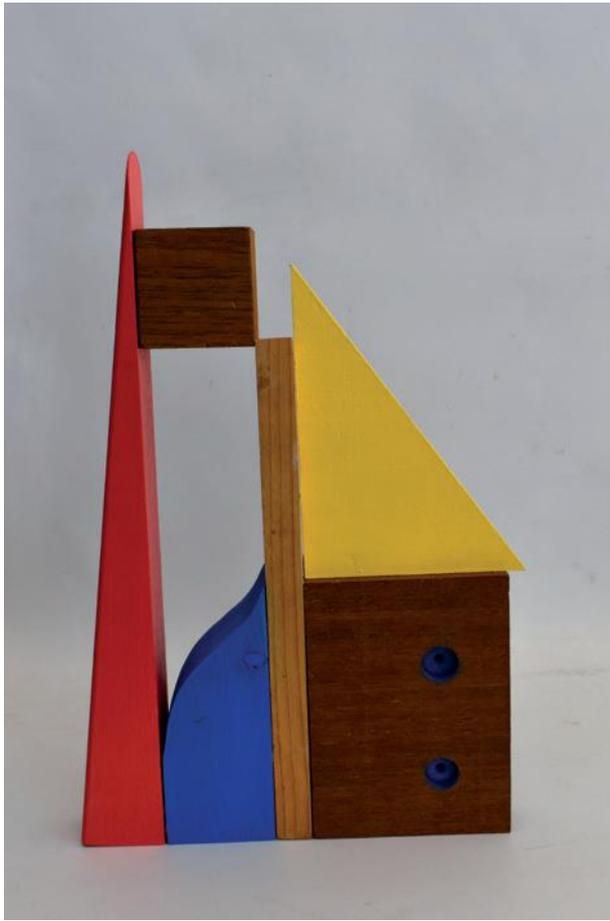


**FIGURE 5.45** Tabitha Holland, *Sunrise Over the City*, acrylic, wood, wire, polystyrene, glue

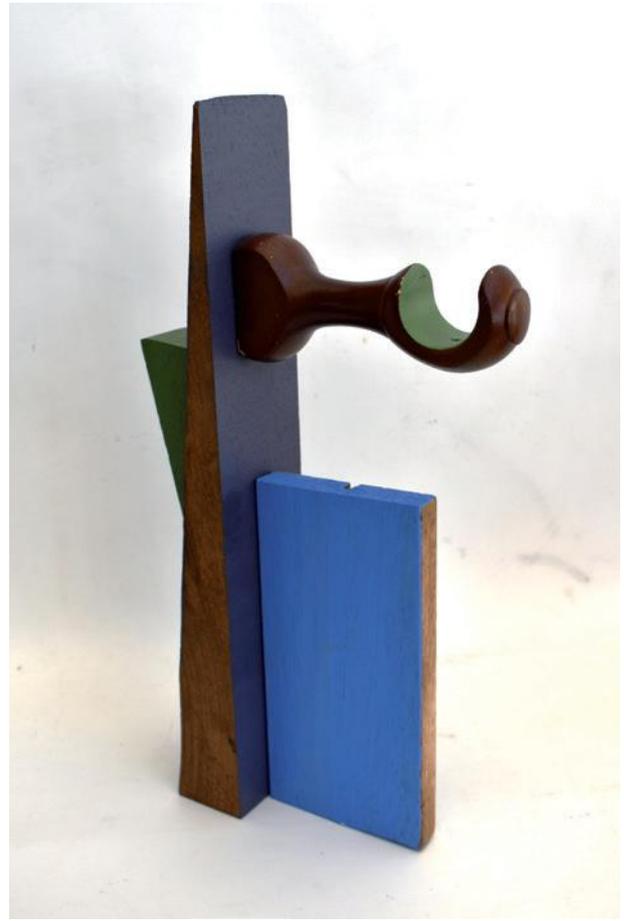
Each component of the work stands alone as a resolved image or form; however, together they tell the story of the specifically designed and repeated blocks of housing found in new suburban developments where the only variation is the time of day and how inhabitants perceive their place and space.

### *Artist's statement*

The sculptural form examines memories of cityscapes and synthetic beauty. The positioning of the 3-dimensional planes creates a balance in the composition of the work, with the weight of the wooden triangle countering the floating orange ball. The angled forms and contrasting colours are reminiscent of a city skyline, with a 'floating' rising sun. The orange and yellow tones contrast the polished wood, creating an artificial glow from the rising sun.



**FIGURE 5.46** Tabitha Holland, *Suburban Afternoon*, acrylic, wood, glue



**FIGURE 5.47** Tabitha Holland, *Night in the Bush*, acrylic, wood, metal, glue

### *Artist's statement's*

This sculpture explores the abstraction of memory, specifically of the suburbs I grew up in. There is a strong emphasis on the aesthetic correlation between the forms found in the suburbs and the arrangement of the discarded wooden pieces. As a deconstruction of suburbia, the wood mimics that of a house, lamppost, and fencing. The bright colours create a contrast with the wood grain, connotating a childlike perception and memory.

### *Artist's statement*

The colours are low in value, apart from the striking blue representative of a waterhole. The deconstructed form separates light and dark in memory, with purple as a night shadow and a strip of green abstractly reflecting on the water. The colours harmonise with the woodgrain, blending the conceptual and literal. It features a discarded piece of wood turning, contrasting the natural and representing human interaction.



# Chapter summary

- In Unit 1, art as lens is used as the concept or key organiser in identifying and shaping an inquiry question. The model of development, research, reflection and resolution has been applied to clarify what the influence of art as lens might look like.
- To develop your research further, it is essential to visit art galleries and museums, search artist websites, follow Instagram pages, read print resources and publications, and connect with local artists.
- To investigate context further, refer to the reverse chronology and references at the end of the case studies and research the influential art movements, theories and artworks of precedence. Collate and record a personal reverse chronology as your inquiry project develops.
- All artists in Creative Inquiry have produced extensive bodies of work, worthy of further research.
- **You have learned that:**
  - Art as lens explores how visual literacy underpins the process that generates responses to the material world.
  - Personal and contemporary contexts are influential in comprehending and devising aesthetic meaning in responses that mirror culture and society.
  - The focus of people, places, objects assist in identifying and developing unique and individual viewpoints or perspectives; that is, the position from which things are judged and represented.
  - The inquiry question directs your understanding, generates ideas and assists you in working towards communicating a viewpoint.
- Artists Leigh Schoenheimer and John Honeywill have modelled for students the process of devising an inquiry question through practice-based research.
- They have implemented ideas and generated visual responses that may appear diverse in content but effectively create and communicate meaning by embracing objects and still life as a start point for personal ideas. The interpretation communicated is closely linked to the artists' lens through application of media, techniques and processes.
- All case studies in Units 1–4 provide insight into how artists have generated solutions to visual problems and how they have reacted to stimulus.
- Student examples demonstrate formats and ideas that are useful starting points for your personal development.
- **Collectively, artists:**
  - explore cultural context, and representations of the material world through personal philosophies and beliefs, and an evaluation of traditions, culture and theories
  - communicate meaning by applying differing lenses that filter and distort, while diversifying our understanding of the material world
  - identify and articulate specific intent in the form of an inquiry question

- apply an inquiry question that frames the development of visual language and expression to communicate meaning through the work
- visually describe, examine and synthesise information through visual, written and spoken responses
- reflect on and refine the inquiry question as part of the creative process.

## Review questions

- 1 Identify how artists generate solutions to visual problems.
- 2 Summarise the nature of stimulus and how different individuals respond to it.
- 3 Identify a variety of stimulus with focuses on people, place and object that offer connections to your personal context.
- 4 Create a small folio of works using any media, and problem-solve how to respond to multiple lenses or viewpoints.
- 5 Use artist research as stimulus. Search for potential links by experimenting with media.

You can read about other case studies in the different chapters of the book. Some examples from this chapter are listed below.

- John Honeywill paints meticulous renditions of still life to develop sensitive, insightful imagery.
  - Leigh Schoenheimer explores how we perceive and conceive imagery to communicate ideas.
- 6 Communicate your ideas and responses through visual, written or spoken forms.



HOW ARTISTS EXPLORE  
IDEAS, KNOWLEDGE, MEDIA,  
TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

Chapter 6



FIGURE 6.1 Michaela Chong, *Summer's Warmth*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 cm



Contemporary research regarding way-finding technology, such as navigational systems, indicates negative effects on brain capacity to remember routes, icons and places, a concern that this work explores. The imagery is founded on non-literal meandering patterns and text inspired by personal memories of place, and those of others. Delicate textiles and paper encourage reflection on the fragility of memory. Bold motifs represent our brain's memory centre capacity. The inability to remember is symbolised through the pattern breaking free. Repurposed wooden reels juxtapose the contemporary monochrome palette reminding us of bygone eras before technology.

ELEENA JACKSON



FIGURE 6.2 Detail from Eleena Jackson's *Rememoratio*

### Focus: People, place, objects

What does an artist's practice look like? Art as lens develops an understanding of the artist's intent through artist case studies. The artists have selected works from their extensive practices with the concept of art as lens in mind and to demonstrate the process of creative inquiry and how artists generate and produce a body of work. The development, research, reflection and resolution of ideas is multilayered, not always sequential and influenced by stimulus, as explored in Chapter 5.

The case studies provide a springboard for investigation, experimentation and further research. To develop your research further, it is essential to visit art galleries and museums, search the artist websites, follow Instagram pages, read print resources and publications and connect with local artists. To investigate context further, refer to the reverse chronology and references at the end of the case studies and research the influential art movements, theories and artworks of precedence.

The artists have many other works and personal projects that you might research or investigate to guide or inspire the development of your personal inquiry question.

The areas of study provide the guiding questions:

- How do artists generate solutions to visual problems?
- How do artists react to stimulus?
- How do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and processes?
- How do artists communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?

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The case studies offer further information and examples of the concepts and skills introduced in Chapter 5.

## 6.1 Investigating the personal and contemporary

Chapter 6 investigates the foregrounding of the personal and contemporary context through case studies. Applying the focus of people, place and objects explores how different lenses or multiple viewpoints are a powerful dynamic and add complexity.

The personal commitment to an inquiry question reflects the artist's philosophies, experiences, beliefs, personal interests and value systems. These underpin or influence the way the subject matter is perceived, generated and represented. The case studies in this chapter foster curiosity, creative thinking and inspire innovative art practices.

Artist Deb Mostert has a passion for drawing every day and these observations fuel her art practice. The images she captures are incredibly diverse in subject matter, and personal. She is completely immersed in visually depicting the material world and communicating experiences, knowledge and viewpoints with an emphasis on her engagement with people and nature. Often in the museum documenting, sketching a moment with friends around the campfire or drawing her grandchild, Mostert expresses an authentic reverence for nature, the environment

and everyday experiences. These stimuli inform her diverse practice, which is a continual dialogue with the viewer about life and truth, communicated through paintings, assemblages, murals and sculptures.

Andrea Huelin has built an inquiry question around conveying the essence of objects, people and places with a sense of familiarity and nostalgia. Primarily a painter, she focuses on materials and techniques through the controlled yet direct use of colour, form and brushwork.



FIGURE 6.3 Deb Mostert, a sketch book page. Creative musings about 'Animal as Object'



FIGURE 6.4 Andrea Huelin, *Still Life with mango and pineapple*, 2022



**FIGURE 6.5** Sarah Rayner, work in progress, studio image. Courtesy of the artist.

Huelin references some traditional principles of painting such as composition, colour theory, light and the rendering of surfaces. She selects the ordinary, experiments with the dynamic of colour, pattern and paint and makes connections with local places, people and the domestic. Her personal context informs the process of devising meaning through visual language in response to the material world.

Sarah Rayner works sculpturally, exploring the reproductive organs of plants and the by-products of plant reproduction, fruits and seedpods. Creating delicate collections of porcelain objects and applying the aesthetics of museology, she introduces and reveals microcosms that are not always immediately noticed. Her contemporary context results in unique specimens, resolved as pristine forms, organised into carefully curated exhibits to inform and foster awareness of the cyclic metamorphosis and adaption that plants undergo within environments. Rayner also collaborates with like-minded artists including Sophie Carnell to develop and expand on forms, materials and her practice.

Dan Elborne utilises clay and the secondary materials of ash, bone, lead and reclaim to reference specific objects that come with a narrative or history. Elborne exploits materiality in tandem with memory, time and labour, exploring the preciousness and permanence of materials. His inquiry is based around events, themes and dichotomies such as survival against suffering, preservation against decay and the intricacies of remembering. The extensive collections of hand-built multiples result in subtly distinctive forms that are installed as a collective or installation in diverse spaces with the intent of enticing viewers into a gentle space of contemplation and reflection.

Christopher Bassi, an artist of Meriam, Yupungathi and British descent, engages in speculative storytelling or the theatrical, by reframing archetypal models of European representational painting to create portraits of plants. Being from the Torres Strait Islands, tropical flora symbolises shared climates, cross-cultural experiences and shifting ideas of place, belonging and home. Questions of history, place and collective identities reflect his personal context with a focus on culture, heritage, alternative genealogies and colonial legacies in Australia and the South Pacific. Bassi considers painting to be both sociological and historical text that provides critical re-imagining.



**FIGURE 6.6** Dan Elborne, *One Drop of Blood*, 2013, porcelain and glaze, varying (interactive) dimensions. This project is partnered with the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Australia.



**FIGURE 6.7** Christopher Bassi, *Twin PawPaw*, 2021, oil on canvas, 100 x 90 cm

Chantal Fraser uses a multimedia approach to examine the structures of capitalism from a Samoan perspective. Her practice explores ornamentation and cultural adornment with references to her lived experiences, a personal context. Her work is sometimes witty, multi-layered and celebrating the subversive nature

of contradictions within the context of cultural exchange. Beautiful materials are manipulated to create optical overload, an assault on the senses, with meaning emerging from a persistent and cumulative experimental process.

The inquiry learning process – develop, research, reflect and resolve – is an interconnected, non-linear practice.

Practice-based research is a process of inquiry learning. Through research, the artist is immersed in ongoing experimentation, absorption of knowledge, the gathering of first-hand experiences and artmaking. Inquiry learning results in visual forms that communicate with the audience through works that respond to diverse stimuli in the material world.

- Audiences consider and navigate the responses produced.
- Artists consider how different lenses might filter or distort viewpoints.
- Diverse lenses direct how artists make sense of the material world.

The student works in Figures 6.9 and 6.10 demonstrate how responses to an inquiry question can be effectively developed when the ideas, processes and knowledge evidenced in a specific set of works by artists are researched and reframed.



**FIGURE 6.8** Chantal Fraser, *Body Amulets 1 - 8* (2023), aluminium plate, steel, wire, tin, brass, metal screws, nails, string, hazard tape, adhesive, acrylic crystals, rhinestones, mirrored glass, 100 x 60 x 20 cm (each). Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Louis Lim



**FIGURE 6.9** Dylan Aberdeen, *A Memoir*, 2023, collage book, 30 cm x 30 cm x 16 cm, animated projection

“Under the scrutinous gaze of society, one dreams of escapism – to rewrite one’s story and be in pure harmony and joy with one’s inner self. In the absence of this ideal, one must look through the layers of one’s own life to catch glimpses of their inner self.”

DYLAN ABERDEEN



**Video 6.1** Dylan Aberdeen’s experimental animation, *Dance*, was included as part of the final installation.



**FIGURE 6.10** Holly Cullen, *Preservation*, installation of found objects, resin

“The arrangements of artificial flowers offer a symbol for humanity focusing on the present and replacing natural objects with human-made ones. The flowers preserved in a dome of resin is ironic, as the natural is replaced with convenient human-made alternatives. The forms reference the sentimental use of flowers in cultural rituals.”

HOLLY CULLEN



**Video 6.2** Video demonstration of Dylan Aberdeen’s final installation of *A Memoir*.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.1

When reading the case studies, create a flow chart to organise information.

Select a set of connected works within each case study to analyse and research.

- Identify the symbolism or meaning evident in the works.
- Examine the relevance of materials.
- Investigate the personal or contemporary context of the work with a focus on how it might be interpreted.
- Research how the artist communicates specific information or viewpoints.
- Reflect on how visual language develops the inquiry question.
- Write a 100-word summary on a specific form or approach that is evident across a body of work, to evaluate and justify how the artist communicates meaning and engagement for the audience.

This is a substantial task and can be repeated multiple times since the case studies contain more than one theme.

## 6.2 Case study: Deb Mostert

**Context:** Personal

**Focus:** People Place Object

Deb Mostert generates informative imagery that records how we culturally encounter and understand the natural world. Intimate and immediate observations of people, places and objects are woven together to communicate diverse interactions with nature by intuitively linking science with cultural and personal contexts. This starts conversations about the objectifying of nature and the importance of capturing and acknowledging the everyday and the ordinary. Mostert's imagery offers a window into intensely private places with a reverence for the natural world and its inhabitants, communicating knowledge and authenticity by the artist sustaining a daily routine of drawing that later develops into painting, assemblage and sculptural responses.

“Through my work I am searching for ways to talk about my concerns using gentle, offbeat narratives and a crisp aesthetic that lean towards grace and truth.”

DEB MOSTERT

“Mostert takes her sketch book everywhere and has an almost scientific approach to documenting and recording. Deb blurs the lines between artist, historian, and scientist in creating her own archive.”

IPSWICH ART GALLERY

The virtual sketchbook project available online offers a lens into Mostert's very personal observations and drawings where she records and distils the essence of people, place, and object.

'Animal as Object – nature and culture' is a body of work that visually explores the paradoxical 'objectness' of animals in the context of the museum, where the scientific process of taxidermy is used as preserver of knowledge while creating an educational and cultural souvenir.



FIGURE 6.11 Deb Mostert, sketch book

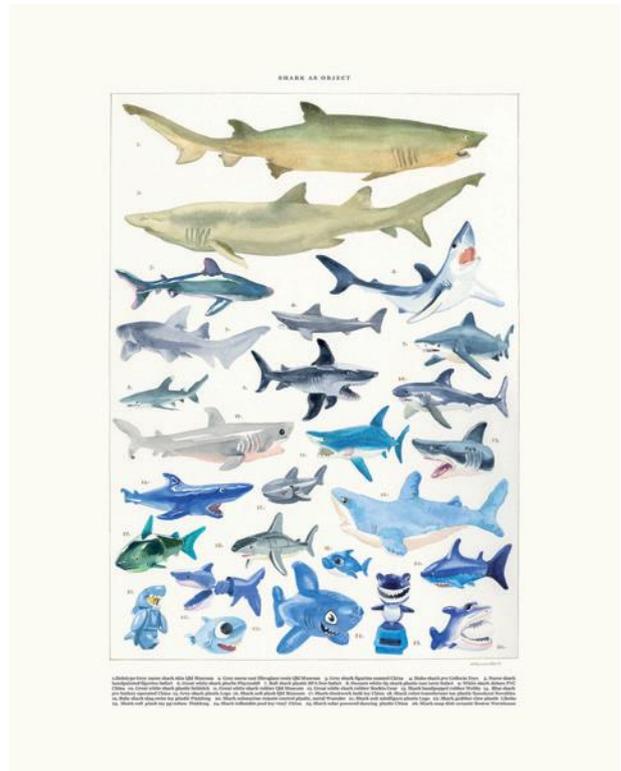


**FIGURE 6.12** Deb Mostert, *Frog as Object*, 2022, watercolour on paper, 55 x 77 cm

“*Frog as Object*, 2022, is one of a series of mashups based on the formal format of early scientific taxonomy charts and illustrations, museum taxidermy, pop culture and the mass-produced souvenir. Suggesting a timeline or process of development the chart is read as a sequential set of data that once fully absorbed, questions the significance and function of artifice, collection, consumerism, mimicry, wonder and beauty. The audience readily recognises the objects that are most familiar, the beginning of the gentle conversation.

DEB MOSTERT

*Shark as Object* features multiple watercolour studies organised as a formal chart reminiscent of reference posters found in science labs at schools and museums, and taxonomy charts in reference books.



**FIGURE 6.13** Deb Mostert, *Shark as Object*, 2019 watercolour 46 x 61 cm

At the top of the composition, the grey nurse shark dominates in its natural form, establishing ‘the alpha’. The chart flows into layers of recognisable objects, symbolic of development and our cultural estrangement from the original, with popular culture characters offering a satisfying recognisable conclusion: Beta.

Beta is a biology reference where dominant hierarchies (formerly and colloquially called a pecking order) map a type of social hierarchy that arises when members of animal social groups interact, creating a ranking system where the submissive lower-ranking individual is referred to as a beta.

A key is provided at the bottom of the chart to ensure a standardised cultural reference. The process of chart reading engages the audience as they read the rows looking for the familiar, discovering the forgotten and renewing a sense of nostalgia. One might also realise that there is much that we know little or nothing about.

**Shark** The work references a 'de-evolution' of animal as object from the important and valuable holotype specimen of the endangered grey nurse shark through to cheaply mass-produced frivolity. The concept is specific information interpreted to create a new but still connected object.

**Frog** All the 'charts' start with a very specific endangered animal that looks real (but is still just a taxidermy object) and follows the 'evolution' into a commodity and an entertainment. The artist chased down pop culture objects, from Disney characters to cereal mascots.

**Koala** The koala proved the hardest chart to curate as the proliferation of the koala as souvenir meant there were an abundance of objects for the artist to include or select. So much koala merchandise! Yet still we are seeing their numbers decline due to habitat destruction.

Mostert's research develops into imagery that communicates information through a forensic process of discovery. The artist's lens is refined through purposeful inquiry questions, and a focus.

### Inquiry questions frame the process of observation

- How has knowledge that previously existed changed over time?
- How does culture form nostalgic memories?
- How do nostalgic objects symbolise our personal identity?
- How does the mass production of objects impact nature?
- What role has culture played in the demise of the natural object over time?
- What informs cultural connections with nature and the environment?



FIGURE 6.14 Deb Mostert, *Crayfish Cast Collectible*, 2022, watercolour on paper on board

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.2

- 1 Identify and analyse all the items on the charts.
- 2 Look for objects you recognise: What memories do they trigger?
- 3 Consider what materials are used to manufacture the toy objects and the environmental impact.
- 4 Compare the charts and summarise the use of symbolism.
- 5 Research animal classification charts and appropriate the format using collage to organise a set of symbols that communicate meaning.
- 6 Create your own animal chart mashup – choose an animal that has some relevance to you or your family.

In *Crayfish Cast Collectible*, the artist seeks to employ a 'gentle dialogue' where natural organic material is contrasted with mass-produced plastic objects, both represented as visually beautiful and appealing.

This work seeks a redemptive lens with which to view this paradox:

**I want to lean towards a future of 'flourishing for all'. We have and are creating facsimiles and profiting from these copies despite the real risk of losing the originals. How can we work towards healing?**

DEB MOSTERT

Mostert devises imagery that focuses on individual elements to communicate knowledge and connect people to nature. The visually alluring commodification of animals as plastic toys is available in crisp, sparkling packaging at museum gift shops. The attractive and well-intended carrier of knowledge is ironically destined for landfill.

The idea of using objects to communicate meaning can be traced back to a period of art referred to as Dada (1915 to mid 1920s). Artist Rene Magritte, renowned for many satirical

## DISCUSS

Think about the replicas of animals or nature you played with as a child. Many kids enjoy building a dinosaur collection. What were some of the positive things you remember learning? Is there a balance between the environmental impact of creating objects that replicate nature and the sharing of knowledge?

Can you think of some alternatives that might fill the role of the replica or souvenir?



**FIGURE 6.15** Rene Magritte, *The Treachery of Images – This is Not a Pipe*, 1929. A symbol of surrealism. On the original work, under the image of the pipe, the artist has written in French: *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*

works including *The treachery of images – This is not a pipe*, 1929, explores how an object carries the capacity to undermine one's philosophical assumptions about reality, through a nonsensical yet witty question which, after consideration, proves to be potent. Mostert searches for a similar but more gentle approach by appropriating this thinking in the title *This is not a Bilby (after Magritte)*. The image asks, 'what do we really know about this endangered yet emblematic species?'

**None of these animal objects conveys the sheer miraculous presence of this wondrous little endangered marsupial but they have gone some way to helping conservation efforts by education and advocacy.**

DEB MOSTERT

In the artwork *Moose Mount* (one of many works in this series), Mostert comments on the cultural practice of hunting where the catch of the hunt becomes the trophy, a displayed sought-after object valued for its unique natural beauty. The familiar but foreign moose, observed at the museum, combined with the whitewashed plastic replica, symbolises the end for many worldwide species with only the remnants or replicas remaining.

Mostert practises insightful social observation through the practice of drawing, anytime and anywhere, exploring subject matter in a manner unlike the cursory snapshot on Instagram. Mostert is committed to compiling “sketch books as an incubator for ideas and a creative habit for life”.

Being present with the subject is a reflective mindful process that generates concepts and ideas that are later developed into resolved works. Mostert combines her whimsical sketches and collection of objects into observations that communicate a passion for nature and our connections with the natural world. Her

environmental viewpoints are informed by regular sketching visits to the bird and mammal collections at the Queensland Museum.



**FIGURE 6.16** Deb Mostert Sketch books, how knowledge is collected, presented and retained in Mostert’s sketches about the process of taxidermy.



**FIGURE 6.17** Deb Mostert Sketch books, the concept of people and their connection to place is insightfully unwound through references to birds and their migratory patterns in Mostert’s paintings and sculptures. The contemporary issues of war, conflict, persecution, environmental degradation and poverty remain relevant and deeply personal. This series of sketches are a type of story board or window into the characters, activity and the long journey to Australia from Europe in the 1950s by ship.



**FIGURE 6.18** Deb Mostert, *Facing the Future - Bar Tailed Godwits* (detail), 2017, 81 x 96 cm, oil on canvas. The exhibition *Australien Future - tales of migration*, tells stories of Mostert's family's migration in the 1950s and weaves together the migratory patterns of bird and human conceptually.

The concept of people and their connection to place is insightfully unwound as it reveals that “place, memory and emotion are inextricably linked”, as noted by Deb Mostert.

Encouraged to leave their native Netherlands for another place, Mostert's paternal grandfather recorded film footage of the departure, shipboard travel and the bald realities of their arrival in a new country called Australia. The family's journey, its upheaval, and the meaning vested in the personal objects carried, elicit empathy.

Migration journeys of shorebirds informed some of the narrative in this exhibition.

“Birds travelling alongside the ship are captured on silent film and one can almost hear their cries, plaintive, mournful, and freewheeling.”

LOUISE MARTIN CHEW



**FIGURE 6.19** Deb Mostert, *Still Life Tabelau - Trekvogels op Tassen (Migratory Birds on Bags)*, 2018, wire, styrene, epoxy, found objects, paint. Photo credit: Louise Martin-Chew

A sculptural installation titled *Trekvogels op Tassen* (Dutch for migratory birds on bags) creates a dramatic finale. Luggage appears like an island rising from the floor, a refuge for those in need, suitcases offering both

potential and familiarity. Birds stand within the sanctuary yet, in ghostly white, memorialise those lost at sea and the ongoing presence of their precarious narratives.

LOUISE MARTIN CHEW

## MEANING

### Focus: Objects, place

- Builds on a passion for the natural world and environmental issues.
- Places the observer in the centre of nature and our connection with it.
- Examines the role of institutions such as museums, and practices such as taxidermy.
- Examines human relationships and the everyday as an exploration into who we are, and what we value.

### Visual language

- Contemporary approach to astutely recording and collating visual statements: artist books, journals, assemblage, sculpture.
- Recontextualises traditional illustration found in the sciences.
- References the museum environment by using a crisp, white background.
- Texture, colour and detailed observation creates a familiar but slightly uncomfortable message.

### Symbols

- Emphasis on the cellophane bag, reflected light, and crisp, clean, white background replicates an enticing shop display where objects are purchased.
- Composition references museum layout, common in displays with use of text and codes.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

- Framed watercolour on paper board.
- Watercolour techniques are fluid and direct, capturing instantaneous moments.
- Delicate, colourful images that entice the viewer to search the content for hints and clues.

### Display

Formal framing presents an opposite to plastic objects in a bag. It suggests a valued

artwork that requires close inspection of intricate details. In similar works sometimes a physical plastic object is added.



## CONTEXTS

Personal, contemporary

- Direct observation of domestic objects /plastic toys as a symbol to create awareness of the plastic rubbish created with the intent of saving the environment and specific species.
- Communicating personal viewpoint about environment, nature and the commercial world.
- Disparate items are juxtaposed to play with the literal yet contemporary approach.

## CONNECTIONS

Marine science, museum, traditional illustration, assemblage, collage, painting, sculpture.

### Collaboration

- Queensland Museum
- Portrait using some traditional methods of representation.

### Display

Formally framed with reference to the painters of the European Old Masters.

Referencing a personal context. This links to other case studies in the book.

FIGURE 6.20 Deb Mostert, *Crayfish Cast Collectible*, 2022, watercolour on paper on board



## DISCUSS

Many families and individuals have stories of migration or relocation. Maybe you have experienced this yourself. Consider what information is available through researching family trees, or local history.

Some information might be recorded in the form of photographs, film, video, letters, diaries or an oral history. How do specific people, places or objects contribute to this memory or experience?

When interviewed in 2016 – 17 for her exhibition *Australien Future – Tales of Migration*, Mostert says, "Birds don't identify as Russian or Australian..."

Through her work, she investigates how the migratory patterns of birds and people connects us to nature through our knowledge and understanding of animal as object.

Mostert pursues a diverse artistic practice, regularly mining the content of her sketchbooks for projects and commissions. Many examples of her bronze sculptures, murals and installations are available on her website and in public spaces around Queensland.



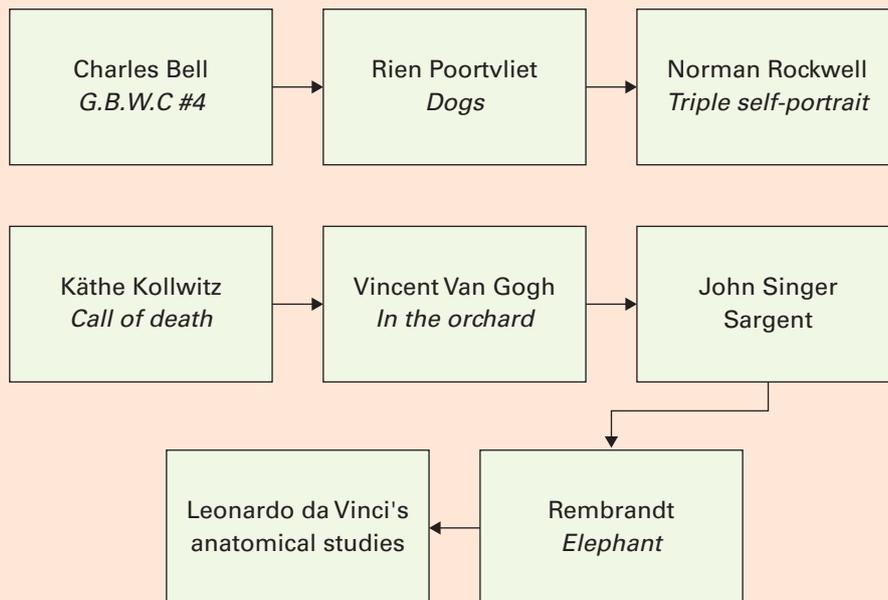
## DISCUSS

How do artists communicate meaning by applying different lenses to the material world?

Through the lens of visual art techniques and materials, how do artists explore diverse practices to develop an understanding of the material world?

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Student responses to observing the everyday

Responding to the material world requires a process-based approach, where visual records can be quick, in the moment and authentic without too much concern for where the journey might lead. Regular drawing and photography routines assist in developing skills and confidence. It is important that you always record and annotate collections of images and experiences for potential development and reflection in the future.

Process : Supporting evidence.



"Experimental work 1", colour pencil on paper, 2023, 14.85 x 21cm



"Experimental work 2", pen on paper, 2023, 14.85 x 21cm



"Experimental work 3", colour pencil on paper, 2023, 14.85 x 21cm

In experimental works 1, 2 and 3, I focused on manipulating **line**, **contrast**, and using **counter-change** to represent my subject matter. I focused on scenery that I have observed in people's gardens. I created a narrative by leaving out certain elements in the artworks. The **negative space** that is created encourages the audience to make their own meanings and connections in response to the artworks. The use of a **monochromatic colour** scheme in each separate work is used to convey emotions such as solitude and isolation, feelings that may be attached to people's memories of certain places. The lack of human figures in these experimental works encourages viewers to reflect solely on how the environment they live or grow up in has impacted their life experiences.

I decided to use the gouache paintings and "Experimental work 2" in my resolved artwork. I also felt particularly connected to the gouache paintings as they reference places close to my home.



"Experimental work", digital illustration, 2023, 21 x 29.7 cm

Through these experiments, I explored the concept of people's connection to places. I focused on elements of nature that are seen frequently in my daily life. My experimental paintings depict trees that I could observe from my backyard as well as a road near my home. Both gouache paintings invite viewers to imagine what lies beyond what is shown in the painting, as much of the scenery is hidden behind trees and bushes.

This digital illustration conveys the feeling of being at peace with one's environment. This is communicated through the horizontal lines within the composition which separates the painting into two halves, with the ground and sky being equally important, creating a sense of harmony. The warmer tones used in the artwork further accentuate a sense of calmness and contentment.



"Experimental paintings", gouache on paper, 2023, 14.85 x 21cm

FIGURE 6.21 Process page for *Heart's Garden*, mixed media, by Alicia Wen

### Artist's Statement

People's connection to their surroundings is a significant part of the human condition and the experience of being human. *Heart's Garden* takes the audience on a journey through the flora and fauna of a thriving garden, exploring the connection that people have to significant places in their lives and the meaning they derive from such connections. To me, a garden is a meaningful place in my life as it is

a symbol of growth, a means of self-expression and a culmination of hard-work and dedication. To make a garden flourish, people put in time and effort. To make a garden beautiful, people fill it with the things they love. Audiences are encouraged to observe the delicate layers of paper and imagery of plants and animals and make their own connections between the various drawings.

ALICIA WEN

**Flipbook:**

Observational drawing  
Pen study  
Linear drawings  
Watercolour

I was inspired by Deb Mostert's sketchbooks. She utilised objects and used watercolours to express the tonal values and capture movement and realism within the observational drawings.



Each sketch complimented the others regarding the use of colours and fluidity of the watercolours. Altogether, I found trying to draw outside overwhelming as I was interacting with the environment and there were so much to record- nature, objects and architecture. I wanted a variety of shapes, lines and colours to capture the movement. This was done by utilising cooler colours for shadows and in contrast, warmer colours to express life. Lines were applied to provide structure and more definition for the objects.

My understanding of how to use watercolour took time and patience, especially the combination of watercolour and pen. I decided to articulate the colour in the fish and coral shown on the right. I wanted the colours to dominate this sketch as I thought it was important to capture the intensity.



Translation:  
"Can I take a photo of your daughter to draw please?"  
Her mum:  
"Of course!"

我可以给她拍照吗?  
当然!



Is that an insect?  
- Random Stranger  
"Is that an insect?"  
- Random Stranger



The small annotations were an idea I tried from Mostert's sketchbooks where she would either add the name of a place or her thoughts while sketching. I found that interaction very special as I loved to see how people interpreted my work. It encourages me broaden my lens on the world!

**Elements and principles:**  
Colour relationships, Tonal values, Composition, Movement, Variety.

FIGURE 6.22 Naomi Li, Flip Book flattened, each page 14 x 20 cm

**Responding to the material world...**



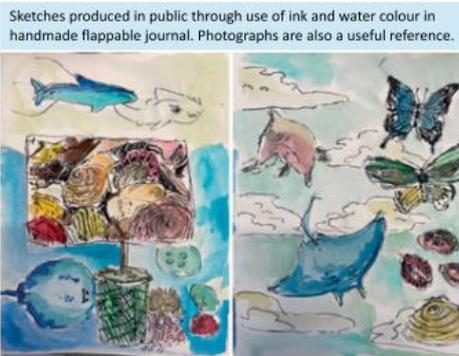
Excursion to Southbank and QAGOMA

An objective of this series is to develop responses to the material and natural world. Artist Deb Mostert guided us on how to develop natural responses to live stimulus and create imagery that is a personal expression of my perceptions in daily life. Watercolours and ink were manipulated to implement elements of flowing line and a playful tone, underpinning the entire series with a sense of imagination and youthful exploration.



Taking inspiration: exploring animal subjects

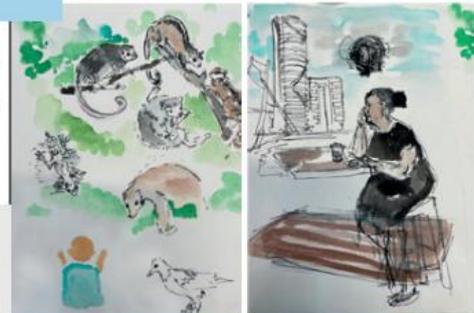
Deb Mostert Redemption Series Birds Sketchbook 2019 watercolor and brush marker on Stonehenge paper



Sketches produced in public through use of ink and water colour in handmade flappable journal. Photographs are also a useful reference.

A variety of colours and line techniques meant that each drawing captured different tones of expression producing individual perceptions expressed creatively through the individuality of the illustration.

I was inspired by Deb Mostert's sketchbooks and explored common subjects found in her work such as animals, while practicing to develop from instinct and impression rather than methodical planning, honest observations and immediate responses.



Exploration of line creates a looser sense of emotion between subjects and the overall tone in the sketches.

FIGURE 6.23 Mijili Pearson, Flip Book studies, each page 14 x 20 cm

## 6.3 Case study: Andrea Huelin

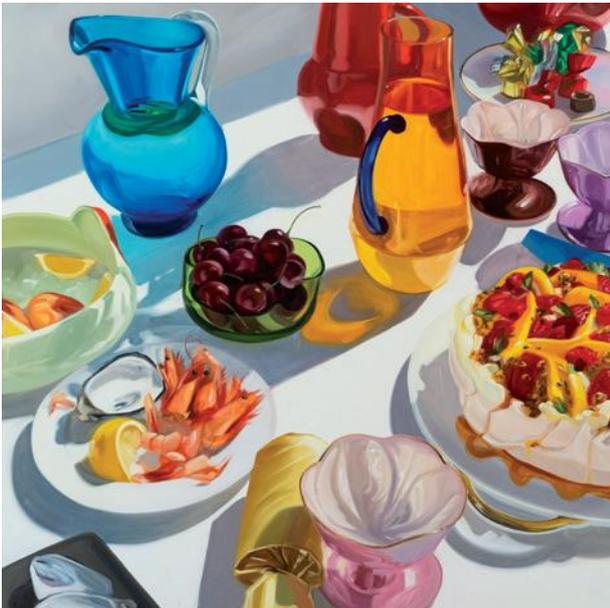
**Concept:** A lens to explore the material world or communicating through diverse lenses

**Context:** Personal and Contemporary

**Focus:** People Place Object

Andrea Huelin is a Cairns-based artist who is best known for her colourful still life paintings of fruit, glassware and everyday household items that she views through a lens of nostalgia. Interested in vibrant colour, form and capturing the elusive qualities of lustre and light, she explores gestural paint application with economic brushwork, and composition as a response to the material world of domestic objects.

Huelin is an accomplished portrait painter who also responds to the urban landscape. Her portrait *Clown jewels* was awarded the Archibald packing room prize 2023, and features an elaborate headdress made by the sitter, the late comedian Cal Wilson, who during the Covid lockdown period played with assembling objects such as toys and ornaments with a hot glue gun and posting them on Instagram. Huelin painted the comedian wearing the headdress, teamed with purple silk, employing her signature sense of colour and energy to communicate the character of the sitter.



**FIGURE 6.24** Andrea Huelin, *Pavlova and Cherries*, oil on board

‘Her poses reminded me of my sister and me making ourselves laugh by pulling funny faces in the mirror as kids and I could tell we share a similar sense of humour,’ she said. ‘I posted a congratulatory comment and Cal wrote back and admired my paintings, so I asked if she’d sit for a portrait.’

The formal composition mocks the 19th-century style portrait in which women were once painted, while capturing her cheeky expression and sparkly head piece.’

ANDREA HUELIN



**FIGURE 6.25** Andrea Huelin, *Clown Jewels*, oil on board, 120.2 x 120.1. Winner: Packing Room Prize 2023. Andrea Huelin’s first Archibald painting features the late Cal Wilson, an Aotearoa/New Zealand-born, Melbourne-based stand-up comedian. Wilson was well known for her appearances on TV shows such as *Spicks and Specks* and *Have you been paying attention?*



**FIGURE 6.26** Andrea Huelin, *Apples and Lemons*, oil on board

Huelin collects domestic or 'cultural generational' items from the 1970s or earlier as a personal investigation into our 'throw away' culture. She asks: 'What do we keep and what do we throw away?' and 'Are people sentimental about objects anymore?' These questions frame her practice.

The sense of the familiar and the domestic entices the viewer to recognise objects that are culturally symbolic, often awakening a delicious pang of nostalgia. She says, "I am drawn to things that are part of our shared experience as Australians – that willow Esky blue, a jar of Vegemite or other common pantry items, distinctive cups or plates".

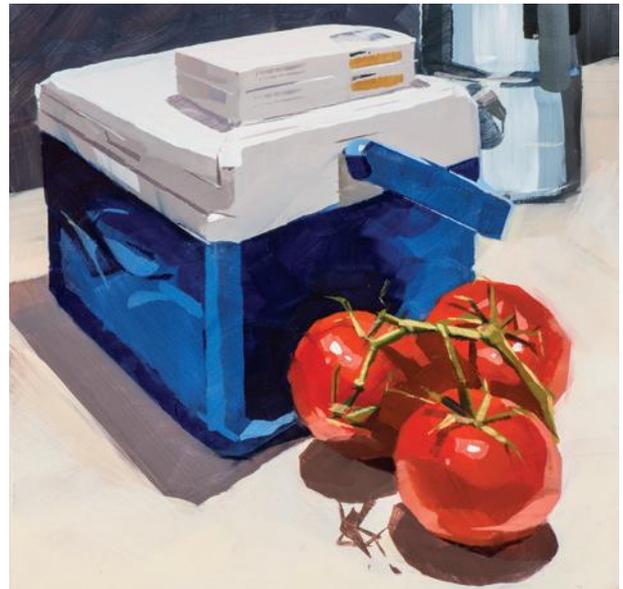
The Esky and Vegemite are considered Australian cultural symbols.



## DISCUSS

- What memories or experiences do they represent?
- What items do you have in the kitchen at home that you might personally think of as symbolic or meaningful?
- What are the cultural items in your family kitchen?

Unit 2 explains how these objects carry meaning as symbols or code.



**FIGURE 6.27** Andrea Huelin, *Esky and Tomatoes*, 2019

Huelin says, 'In my first exhibition, a painting of a shiny toaster led to the idea of painting a little series of things in my kitchen – a blue esky, some tomatoes, some stacked bowls'. The intention was to capture the surface and form with only few brushstrokes and apply paint with a sense of energy.

In the painting *Passionfruit and fig in green bowl* the artist responds to the splendid glass, the juicy fruit and the tropical flowers by 'dialling up the volume' or elevating colour saturation.



**FIGURE 6.28** Andrea Huelin, *Passionfruit and fig in green bowl*, 2020

“ I choose objects based on their form or material, ones that spark a response for me – like a tangy fruit, or something that looks amazing when you pull it apart like a fig or a pomegranate, or those little juicy pods in a passionfruit.

ANDREA HUELIN

Initially the process of painting accidental observations and objects captured on her phone camera resulted in works that Huelin felt were honest and not contrived. She now sets up vignettes in the studio, trying not to think too much about how objects go together, but rather responding to colour and form, lustre, transparency and composition.

“ My paintings are as much about the act of painting as the subject matter and the composition. I choose imagery that will present a challenge or a joy to paint. I am most happy with my paintings when they achieve that quality of capturing the object accurately, but with as few brush strokes as possible. When you make the right brushstroke, the object emerges on the canvas and you feel like you could touch, smell, or taste it.

ANDREA HUELIN

Huelin uses an intuitive process in her approach to developing compositions for paintings. She unconsciously, even playfully arranges and combines the unique surfaces and forms. The uniquely shaped lusterware vases and organic fruit begin to talk the same language as the composition and personal response develops.

The paintings offer an authenticity, connecting with audiences because they are being true to our own experiences and memory of people close to us. They talk of domesticity, motherhood and unpaid work by presenting moments in time. The colour and energy place emphasis on the role of the senses in awakening memories. There is also a feminist lens at play through the domestic nature of the objects.



FIGURE 6.29 Andrea Huelin, *All sorts*, oil on board

*All sorts* features vintage coloured glassware, lusterware and crockery forms sourced from op shops.

“ I feel like these objects do not get the attention they deserve! I have been collecting vintage glassware and crockery that remind me of my grandparents, old houses that I have lived in, people I have known, and the things I looked at as a child, that I thought were amazing.

ANDREA HUELIN

The artist reflects on her personal context:

“ Initially I wanted my paintings to reflect the reality of my day-to-day life, which was not chic, nicely arranged or colour coordinated. There was Tupperware, stacked cups and plates, things in the sink. It felt honest to be showing the stuff that I would probably try to hide if someone was coming over, and it was true to my life at that time.

ANDREA HUELIN

Connections to objects or scenes that we know and share as human beings are communicated in a stylised or abbreviated way, allowing our minds to fill in the gaps. Non-literal qualities like the beauty of colour combinations, a pleasing composition, or the texture of creamy oil paint are manipulated to describe complicated or intricate things in as few brushstrokes as possible. Playing with lost and found edges stimulates the viewer's response. Colour clarity and a calligraphic line combine to achieve a visual sharpness and light intensity that have become a personal signature for Huelin.

Huelin's paintings are a result of a considered and researched developmental process. She starts by experimenting with one object, exploring colour, tone and composition. Colour studies are researched using the iPad or computer to design colour systems that might work with reference to fabric designs and cultural patterns.

The images are vibrant and the application of colour as complementary sets, and highly saturated hues is balanced with chromatic neutrals, and the creamy quality of the oil paint.

Huelin describes her technique:

**I paint on smooth, primed board, standing at an easel to maintain spontaneity. I check my work from a distance regularly. I listen to different music for different stages of my paintings.**

**I do a quick painting sketch – 5 minutes or so – onto the board just to work out where things will sit in relationship to each other. I then block in with a layer of paint that is thinned down with lean medium. I then add a layer of thicker paint, but still working with medium, and leave the details until right at the end.**

ANDREA HUELIN

In *Amber cup and mushrooms* the transparent qualities of the glass have been built using layers of paint and painting mediums to create a glow. Here the intention is to have smooth, sharp edges, using good-quality flat brushes. Huelin prefers painting on panels as the texture and weave of



**FIGURE 6.30** Andrea Huelin, *Amber cup and Mushrooms*, oil on board

canvas interferes with the delicate brushstrokes. The still life paintings are approximately life-sized, so more complicated compositions result in larger paintings. She says, "My brushwork can be loose, and sometimes there is a quality of calligraphy to the marks – I like them to be fluid where possible with the paint applied thinly."

Huelin always uses the same colour palette: Titanium white, a cool and a warm of each of the primaries, and a few 'special guest' colours, red ochre and Paynes grey depending on the painting. She aims for the clean use of colour to install a dynamic and energy even though the objects are still.

**Many Australian still life artists enjoy painting everyday things like I do, which I think reflects a quality of being 'real' and not pretentious. The things we live with, we eat, we bring in from the garden, we wear – we have a relationship with are these things. There are memories attached to them, we recognise them through our senses, they reflect a time in our lives, they make pleasing patterns when you put them together or when they catch the light. Why wouldn't you want to paint them?**

ANDREA HUELIN

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.3

- 1 Search for interesting, obscure, or forgotten objects around home, school or op shops. Experiment with quick, intuitive responses that exploit the media and tap into memory: use graphite, pastels, watercolour, ink, pen, or digital tools such as Procreate.
- 2 Organise objects to form a composition. Use your phone camera or a paper viewfinder to check how objects sit within a frame.
- 3 Set up a coloured background using painted paper, card or fabric to unify the objects.
- 4 Look at directional lighting and observe shadows.
- 5 Draw, photograph or paint objects individually or as a composition, responding to colour, form, surface. You might also create a surreal themed collage in response to the objects with reference to the domestic environment.
- 6 Construct a functional assemblage of found or recycled objects into an object such as a headdress, hat, garment or instrument. Photograph or paint the object in situ as Huelin did in the *Clown Jewels* portrait.
- 7 Investigate and analyse how artists use the genre of still life and manipulate the compositional values of the imagery to communicate an idea with an emphasis on colour.
- 8 Observe how a sense of energy is visible in Huelin's paintings.
- 9 Compare this with the paintings of artist John Honeywill in Chapter 5.
- 10 Practise applying paint using similar brushwork to Huelin or Honeywill (brush size and shape makes a difference).

Art as lens considers how artists engage in the ongoing process of experimentation and investigation sometimes venturing outside their usual practice or safe zone. Huelin responds to people and places as she travels around her local environment.

Sometimes when I travel, I do Plein-air and enjoy the challenge of a speedy proposition. If I take too long on a painting it loses a bit of spontaneity. I live in Cairns, the gateway to the Great Barrier Reef, a rainforest as a backyard, yet I choose to paint Council workers fixing a footpath.

ANDREA HUELIN



FIGURE 6.31 Andrea Huelin, *Median Strip Huddle*

### Artists of precedence:

Marie Mansfield: Use of a limited palette, and skilled development of tone.

Lucy Culliton: paintings about her environment and favourite things.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEXTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Contemporary</li> <li>• A collaborative project in response to Covid lockdown, where the two met via online posts and formed a personal connection as creatives</li> <li>• Explores the character of the sitter who has her own fascination with objects that are recycled, whimsical and fun</li> <li>• The vibrant colour reinforces a personal connection to costumes and the entertainment industry</li> <li>• Replicating the contemporary Instagram moment.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEANING</b></p> <p><b>Visual language</b></p> <p>Formal pose with traditional curtain. The colour purple has a history of status and emphasises the synthetic found objects that glitter with intrigue. The brushstrokes and composition evoke a sense of intimacy and a character who, as a comedian, is full of life and energy.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b></p> <p>Toys are assembled into a decorative headdress reminiscent of royalty. There is a hint of the Thai <i>chada</i> and <i>mongkut</i>, a pointed cloth headdress of Persian origin during the Ayutthaya period, that features a distinctive tall, pointed shape. The textures and saturated colour of the fabric and armchair are luscious. Together they establish an enticing focus on the sitter.</p> <p><b>Materials/media/processes</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COLLABORATION</b></p> <p>Andrea Huelin – artist, reacted to the humour and responded by inviting her to sit for the portrait painting.</p> <p>Cal Wilson – comedian, assembled the objects using plastics and her hot glue gun, posing on a home-made stage, with a haughty expression.</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>Scale, proportion and lighting combine to make a personal portrait using some traditional methods of representation.</p> <p><b>Display</b></p> <p>Formally framed with reference to the painters of the European Old Masters, the scale of 120x120cm is immersive.</p> </div> </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do artists communicate character through the portrait genre?</li> <li>• How does culture and history influence imagery that explores celebrity?</li> <li>• How do materials and construction result in creative imagery?</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 6.32** Evaluation of Andrea Huelin's work *Clown Jewels*. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as lens.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence

A reverse chronology has several purposes.

The first is researching historic knowledge about art.

The second is to construct an inquiry question that is relevant to contemporary art.

How have artists looked at and responded to the material world?

What visual and theoretical art traditions can be challenged or appropriated to create relevant imagery in the 21st century?

A useful chronology is not necessarily based on sequential dates as significant art theories often occurred simultaneously in different regions of Europe – a feature of early Modernism that continues today. This example demonstrates how visual clues might collectively reveal concepts such as manipulation of colour theory or the relevance of common subject matter that offers insight into cultural context. This then opens a pathway for further research.



FIGURE 6.33 Hugh Ramsay, *A mountain shepherd*, 1901

In Figure 6.33 Hugh Ramsay demonstrates wonderful use of tone and simplification, great description of fabrics so that you can feel and hear the rustle of the silk.

The artists shown in Figures 6.33 to 6.39 all explore composition and the connections between colour, shape and placement.



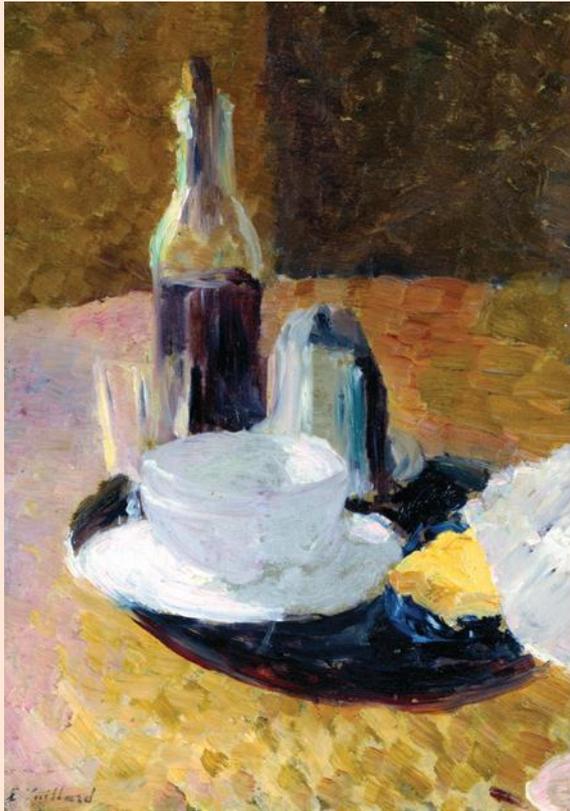
FIGURE 6.34 Chaim Soutine, *Still life with Rayfish*, 1924



FIGURE 6.35 Pierre Prins, *Nature morte a la grande*, 1873, chalk pastel



FIGURE 6.36 Paul Cezanne, *Still life with fruit basket*, 1875



**FIGURE 6.37** Edouard Vuillard, *Still Life*, circa 1900



**FIGURE 6.38** Vincent Van Gogh, *Still life with coffee pot*, 1888

Angles, backgrounds and colour theory are all significant.

A study of light is also a common focus that many artists embrace.

In Figure 6.39, Rembrandt has painted the lush fabric and beautiful headdress, devising a composition in portraiture that continues to be referenced in contemporary art.



**FIGURE 6.39** Rembrandt, *Saskia with Flowers*, 1653, oil on canvas

## Student responses to domestic objects and still life



**FIGURE 6.40** Maxine Sun, *Still life study on Blue*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 cm. A painting from observation

### *Artist's Statement*

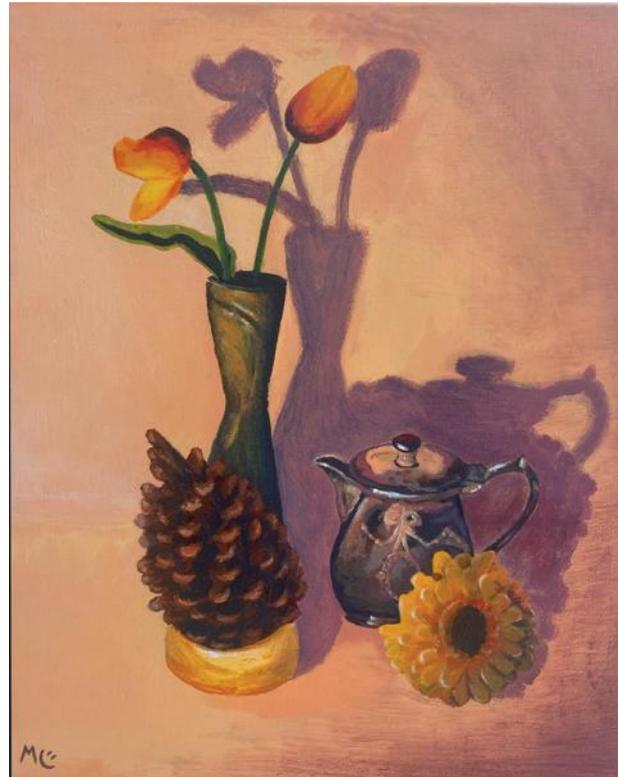
This painting was based on a photograph I took that was inspired by the hot weather of Summer. In this arrangement, I have featured warm colours, seen in the bright yellow sunflower and tulips, that harmonise with the warm brown pinecone.

The gold light was intended to enhance this warm theme, and was tested and developed prior to painting, using Photoshop. This assisted in nicely developing the theme inspired by weather.

MICHAELA CHONG



**FIGURE 6.41** Kate Nothdurth, *Glass study*, acrylic on canvas 50 x 70 cm. Studies of light and shadows with a simple composition offer a powerful visual language.



**FIGURE 6.42** Michaela Chong, *Summer's Warmth*, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 cm



**FIGURE 6.43** Bianca Van Zyl, *Breakfast for one*, digital photograph of painted and handmade items: cardboard, paint, plastic tablecloth, found objects

This experiment, by Bianca Van Zyl, in response to objects and still life as a genre utilises some of Andrea Huelin's ideas about the domestic, familiar and nostalgic.

Composition, colour and a sense of spontaneity results in a whimsical and fun artwork.

There is a message revealed in the process evidence page that has influenced the manipulation of materials and final composition. A painting can evoke many responses from students: digital images, sculptural work using clays or found objects, drawings and prints and time-based media.

**Supporting Evidence 1**



Set up:  
I used a DSLR camera to take my photos and tried different hand positions to select the best composition. Ultimately I decided that two images would convey a sense of movement through my series and create a narrative



Side and back view of tea set depicting the true depth of each 3D item. The objects were placed at an angle to be viewed as flat and 2D. The painted grey tones add an artificial shadow emphasising the form of the objects

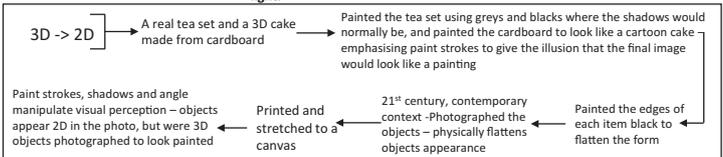
**This image is about making the real, artificial by manipulating forms and shapes using line, colour, and light.**

For the photo, I painted a purple backdrop that would work with the blue gingham pattern and the cakes. The blue and purple tones were selected as they are harmonious with pink and blue. These colours also contrast with the bright yellow and orange that is the focal point in the composition. Using a painted backdrop emphasised the painted 2D effect and flattening of the space. Before taking the photos I experimented with different compositions for each item to gauge which compositions would work best with regards to lighting, natural shadows and the photographic rule of thirds. These factors contributed to the aesthetic design of the image and worked harmoniously with the bright colours.



Using a 21<sup>st</sup> century lens and contemporary context, I moved from the concept of personal isolation that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the social isolation caused by the introduction of new technologies and social media, that breaks connections between communities of people. Through the pandemic we had no choice but to isolate, but with technology, we choose to isolate ourselves and instead communicate through forms of media.

Experimenting with different lighting angles:  
I experimented with using different artificial lighting (ceiling lights, spotlight, and ring light) and discovered that when the light was placed on the side, a natural shadow was created that didn't photograph well. I was trying to make the image appear as a painting, the shadows were already painted on beforehand, so having the natural shadows spoil the colour and effect. I decided to just use the ceiling lights as they worked best for the image



I painted my hand using warm tones for the base and darker shades for the shadows. I experimented with different angles of my hand and painted the black lines to flatten the image. A challenge I had with this was my skin would sometimes twist and effect the outcome with the black lines on the edges. This made it challenging to create a fine black line on my 3D hand with paint to make it appear flat. I also experienced the challenge of the paint sticking to the other items and coming off of my fingers and skin.

This photo was not selected for the final work as I felt that holding the teacup like this didn't make sense because it had to be lowered to fit in frame which ended up overshadowing the other items. There were also many items in one frame which made the photo too busy. I moved the water jug and pushed it back but this caused it to be in shadow behind the hand.

**FIGURE 6.44** Process page for Bianca Van Zyl's *Breakfast for one* - evidence with annotations

## 6.4 Case study: Sarah Rayner

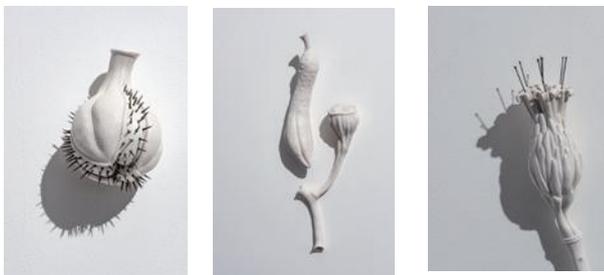
**Concept:** Communicating through diverse lenses

**Context:** Personal Contemporary

**Focus:** People Place Object

“The exhibition *Distance of a whisper* by Sarah Rayner is a series of unfolding stories

... a significant and exquisite body of work that honours the resilience of



**FIGURE 6.45** Images depict a selection of work from *Distance of a whisper*, a solo exhibition by Sarah Rayner, 2023, at Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Overall installation consisted of 58 porcelain sculptural works. Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney

Australian native plants and the slow methodical resistance of the process of the handmade. Rayner’s enduring and distinctive sculptural vocabulary introduces the viewer to a world of fragility and strength, extraordinary beauty and menace, empathy, and care.

ANNE-MAREE REANEY, 2023

Sarah Rayner has always been intrigued with the life cycle of Australian native plants, developing observations into visual responses based on seeds, pods and flowers. She enlarges tiny structures, taking a micro view that reveals a fascinating world of intricate and complex things, and makes them more visible. Her refined application of diverse materials has resulted in collaborative textile works, ceramic objects, sculptures and installations.

“As an artist I respond directly to my immediate environment, my interior and exterior spaces. I am a collector of many things, and our home is filled with objects – Australian ceramic ware, wall vases, glasses, haberdashery items such as buttons and buckles, vintage fabrics from the 1940s-50s, and more generally, bones, artworks and found objects of interest. This interior space has a huge influence on my arts practice. I arrange our collection and continually change pieces around, playing with their relationship to one another and creating new dialogues.

SARAH RAYNER

Rayner enjoys the engaging process of collecting from native Australian plants, fallen fruit, and seedpods, the by-products of plant reproduction, on her property in Wootha, Jinibara country, Sunshine Coast hinterland.



**FIGURE 6.46** A thoughtfully curated collection of sculpture, sketchbooks, and vintage shoe stretchers in Sarah Rayner's Studio, 2022-2023. Courtesy of the artist and Lucy-belle Rayner.

“Close observation of my natural environment, a micro view, leads to a fascinating world of tiny, intricate, and complex things, the understated and overlooked in hidden spaces and places. I feel incredibly lucky to live where I do and to have the opportunity to closely observe plants, insects, birds, and animals in their ongoing cycle of reproduction and survival. It is a truly humbling experience.”

SARAH RAYNER

Rayner explains her research, and the process of responding:

“I have always collected small objects discovered within my immediate surroundings. The tiny things that draw me in and require close observation such as seedpods, bones, galls on sticks, native flowers and dead insects are scrutinized revealing amazing little structures. I examine the form, textures, cracks,



and crevices observing the way layers peel back to reveal sensuous interiors, which cradle the precious seeds. The cyclic nature and metamorphic growth patterns of these minuscule forms is a source of wonderment and informs my arts practice.

SARAH RAYNER

The pristine white, smooth organic forms contrast with patterns and textures that emerge from detailed observations.



**FIGURE 6.47** Sarah Rayner, *Flowerbones*, 2018. A series of seven organic forms crafted in delicate white porcelain clay with terra sigillata. Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artist.

I am inspired by the sheer ingenuity and tenacity of plants, the clever methods they have evolved to attract pollinators and the defence mechanisms devised to repel and ward off parasites and predators. My particular interest lies in the reproductive organs, primarily the Gynoecium which is a collective term for the parts of a flower that produce ovules and ultimately develop into the fruit and seeds.

SARAH RAYNER

These images demonstrate how porcelain, a soft, white clay body, contributes to the curved, smooth forms and intricate textures communicating a sense of the organic.

The white porcelain pods are so refined that they defy the term 'hand built', yet that is how they have been formed. Shaped like pods, seeds, twigs, and stamens, these sculptures morph from familiar to deeply strange, objects drawing the viewer in. Their satin-white *terra sigillata* surface highlights the tiny pinholes covering the outside of the pods. Viewed individually, the sculptures reveal hidden details, tiny, beautiful clefts and crevices, a speckling of fine pinholes, interior cavities filled with miniscule, porcelain balls. Collectively the sculptures pull viewers from one mysterious object to the next, capturing the sense of wonder and discovery found in beachcombing or foraging.

SHANNON GARSON

*terra sigillata* roughly translates from Latin as 'sealed earth', or 'clay bearing little images'). It also has archaeological connotations

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.4

- 1 Research the diverse definitions and history of *terra sigillata*. Investigate how the context and purpose of what is commonly called 'clay slip' has changed throughout history.
- 2 Investigate a range of clay types and alternative mediums, such as air-dried clay, polymer clay, white raku and porcelain clays, and determine the techniques required and their potential use.
- 3 With a focus on form, colour, pattern, texture and surfaces, make drawings or take photographs that record intricate details based on objects found in your environment.
- 4 Source some resources such as science charts, botanical illustrations and marine biology publications and identify interesting imagery. Look for the unfamiliar or unique and make your own organic forms to convey a message of awareness.
- 5 Collect natural materials from the environment and assemble them into new forms. Photograph the objects and use Photoshop to place them in diverse environments to manipulate meaning.



**FIGURE 6.48** Left: *She spoke in a whisper*, 2018, porcelain with *terra sigillata*. Right: *Flowerbones*, 2021, porcelain with *terra sigillata* and entomology pins. Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artist.



**FIGURE 6.49** Images left to right: Sarah Rayner, *Collected Landscapes*, 2020, porcelain with *terra sigillata* and large, flat lay panel of collected native seedpods, sticks and flowers. Photography by Ben Vos. Courtesy of the artist and Caloundra Regional Gallery.

The formal arrangement of natural organic objects grouped on the gallery wall suggest calligraphic forms, which echo the beauty of Persian text and are adjacent to the objects on the table, offering the audience insight into the process of observation and the significance of the stimulus.

*Collected Landscapes* is an installation that makes a collective statement. As Rayner says, “the sculptures are familiar yet morph into the deeply strange as the viewer is drawn through the interconnectedness of objects within the work.”

The installation is exhibited in a pristine white gallery space, through which the audience moves and observes, mimicking the artist’s experience of discovery and scrutiny. The aesthetic of the white porcelain and the details revealed within the peeling layers of the forms contrasts with the natural colours of the found materials.

This work is based on the *Ficus coronata*, predominantly found in southern Queensland. Its colloquial name, ‘Sandpaper fig’, is derived from the tree’s roughly textured leaves.

The coronata produces a fleshy, un-ripened fruit that can only be fertilised by a species of fig wasp. The female must push through a small opening in the fruit, losing her wings and antennae in the process, to reach the flowers inside. The wasp then lays her eggs inside the fruit before dying. After the male larvae hatch, they mate with the females laid in the same fig by other wasps. The wingless male offspring bore a hole in the fig, clearing a path for the young female wasps to carry the mature pollen to another tree. The males, having no wings, cannot leave, and so die inside the fig in which they were born. Carbon dioxide is subsequently released through the opening made by the male wasps, allowing the fig’s fruit to ripen.



**FIGURE 6.50** Sarah Rayner, *The distance of a whisper*, 2020, Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney.



**FIGURE 6.51** Work in progress in Sarah Rayner’s studio, carving the porcelain forms, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.

The material is an important component of the forms. Rayner works with porcelain at a leather-hard stage and carves back into it, revealing her interpretations of the form.

“My work is slow, contemplative, and meticulous in its construction. Many layers of musing are stored inside these little objects as the pieces are small and intimate, held and shaped within the curves of my hands and fingers.

SARAH RAYNER

Another artist who works with porcelain is Dan Elborne, whose practice you will learn more about in the section 6.5 Case Study.

Porcelain has a beautiful duality, fragility, and strength with an almost bone like quality making it a perfect medium in which to represent my translations of the natural world.

It has historical and cultural references to drawing rooms, aristocracy, purity and luxury, its precious nature, correlating to my subject matter and acting as a constant reminder of nature’s delicate and tenuous balance.

SARAH RAYNER

.....  
**porcelain** a hard but delicate, shiny, white substance, created by heating a special type of clay to a high temperature, used to make cups, plates, decorations, etc  
 .....

Rayner is fascinated with the aesthetics of museum processes, the way objects, butterflies, beetles and plant specimens are pinned, labelled, displayed and categorised in order to help viewers understand the natural world.

“Vintage science equipment and laboratories lined with glass vessels have great appeal to me. This intersection between art and science is where much of my practice lies as I observe, research, scrutinize and document my specimens.

SARAH RAYNER

DISCUSS

Display is about presenting diverse responses to reveal the rarely seen and to categorise information. Review artists’ case studies Deb Mostert and Helen Pynor (see Chapter 12) and investigate how they organise the process of observation to communicate information.

Artist collaborations have assisted Rayner in developing a diverse skillset and the opportunity to explore and apply alternate processes which have broadened her art practice.

In 2001, Rayner undertook a collaboration with Andrew MacDonald where both hard and soft materials were explored. This exchange of ideas, methods, materials and problem-solving processes resulted in the work *Involvo Evolve* 2001.

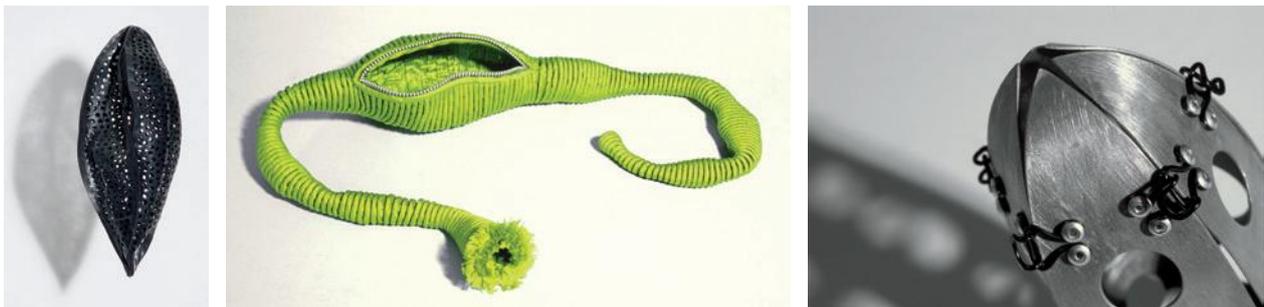


FIGURE 6.52 Sarah Rayner and Andrew MacDonald, *Involvo Evolve*, 2001, inner tyre tubes, zippers, silk, recycled aluminium, haberdashery hooks and eyes. Photography by Don Hildred. Courtesy of the artist.

## Artist's Statement

This series of objects was inspired by our immediate environments. At the time I was living in Ravensbourne, east of Toowoomba on a bush block close to the Ravensbourne National Park. The sculptures created were mysterious mutations crafted from a combination of artificial and natural materials including recycled aluminium, wood, silk, inner tyre tube, glass beads, haberdashery items such as zippers and hooks and eyes. These works were displayed in purpose-built glass cases like museum specimens.

SARAH RAYNER

This exhibition was shown at the Toowoomba Regional Gallery and Craft Queensland (now Artisan Gallery) in Brisbane. A smaller section then went on to the SOFA exposition in Chicago, USA and Sageese Gallery in Singapore. As a direct result of this exhibition, the artists were commissioned by the Brisbane City Council to create public artworks for Melbourne Street in West End, Brisbane.

I have a love of pattern, design, texture, and the ancient techniques associated with fibre such as weaving, spinning and stitching. I am particularly drawn to vintage clothing from the 1940s and 50s and the clever tailoring, tiny intricate features such as piping and bound buttonholes, which are time consuming and skilful details on these garments.

SARAH RAYNER

The 3-dimensional quality of clothing, and the way a flat piece of cloth is moulded, darted and shaped to fit the curves of the body is essential sculptural knowledge. The textile forms evoke a sense of soft outer shell yet natural purposeful form.

Many textile processes such as knitting, crochet and sewing are no longer passed down through generations and a renewed interest in learning and using these techniques in many forms is exciting to see.

SARAH RAYNER



**FIGURE 6.53** Sarah Rayner and Andrew MacDonald, *Involve Evolve*, 2001, inner tyre tubes, zippers, silk, recycled aluminium, haberdashery hooks and eyes, timber, pins. Photography by Don Hildred. Courtesy of the artist.



**FIGURE 6.54** A small selection from Sarah Rayner and Sophie Carnell, *Florilegium ... traversing the poetry of plants*, 2020, entire piece consists of 42 pairs of porcelain and silver brooches. It has been acquired by the Toowoomba Regional Art gallery. Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artist.

A collaboration between Sarah Rayner and Sophie Carnell brought together different interpretations of the same topic through the impact of materials.

The artists worked together on a series of wearable pieces for CERAMIX, an exhibition of interdisciplinary projects by ceramic artists and their peers organised by Australian Ceramics and presented at the Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Sydney.

Initially our proposal for CERAMIX was to create an installation of wearable pieces from porcelain and silver, exploring crossovers in our separate practices. However, this collaboration evolved into a compelling dialogue – between us as artists, our chosen materials and between the created forms themselves.

While our original concept was to create wearable pieces, our focus became less about functionality and more about bodily references, echoing the arches and curves and the sensuousness found in the jewel like fruits and flowers of plants.

Our shared quest is to morph and form porcelain and silver from inert matter

into 3-dimensional tactile, sensual and compelling works. We have allowed our media to communicate, to whisper, to breathe; and created forms that converse with each other. The resulting installation ... like a line of text ... is a poetic anthology that speaks of the beauty, allure and mystery of plants.

SARAH RAYNER AND SOPHIE CARNELL

The exhibition *Anthologia* offers dual meanings, as Carnell's and Rayner's individual and shared responses to their subject matter facilitate an appreciation of the unique. These objects amplify bodily associations, echoing the curvaceous forms of the fruits and flowers of plants. Displayed in pairs, the small-scale porcelain and silver works establish a dialogue between chosen materials and created forms.



**Video 6.3** Sarah Rayner & Sophie Carnell - *Anthologia* exhibition, 2020, Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert

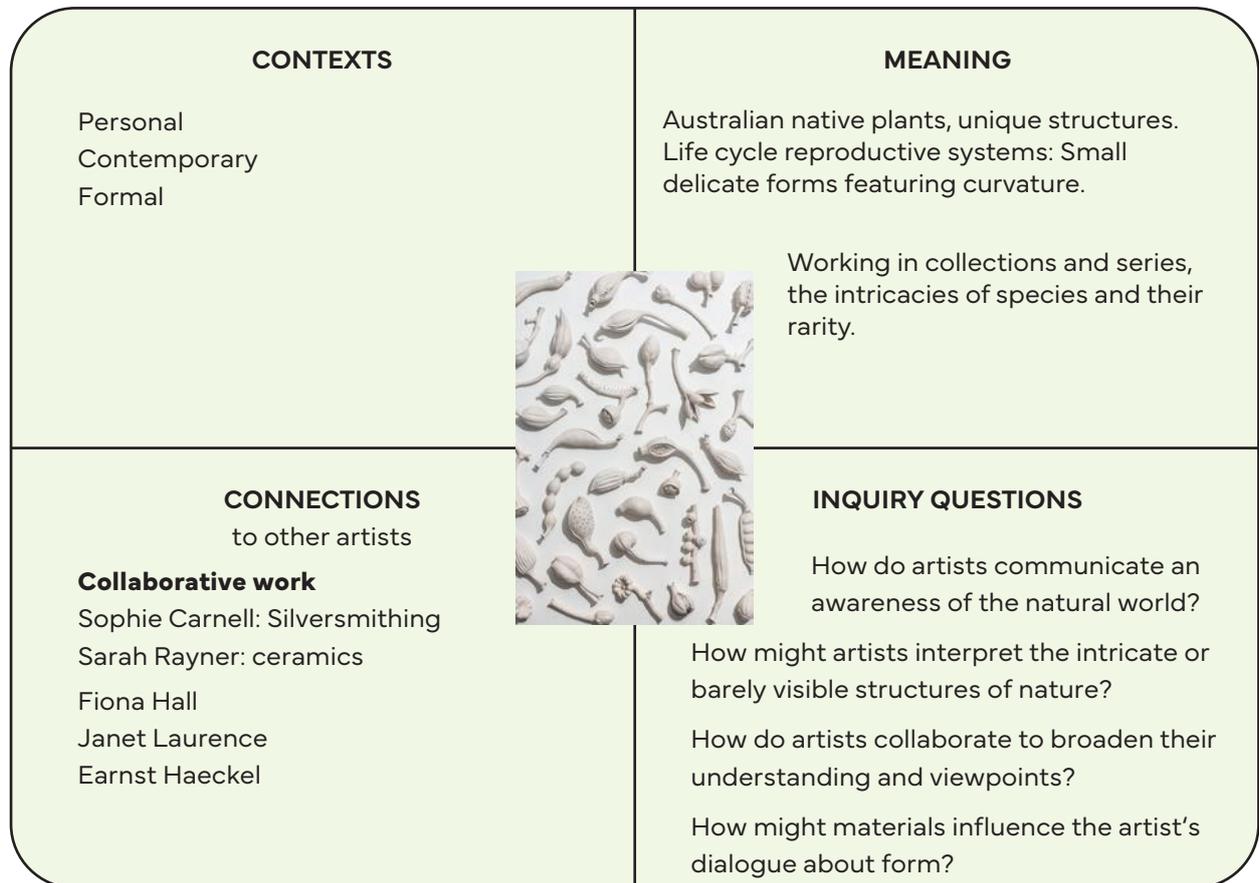
**FIGURE 6.55** *Florilegium Whispered conversations 1*, 2020, Porcelain with terra sigillata and fine sterling silver. Collaborative work by Sarah Rayner & Sophie Carnell from *Anthologia exhibition*, 2020, at Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Photography by Greg Piper. Courtesy of the artists and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney.

*anthologia* a collection of artistic works that have a similar form or subject. *Anthos* is the Greek word for flower, while *logia* is a Greek word for collecting. It can be roughly translated as 'flower gathering'

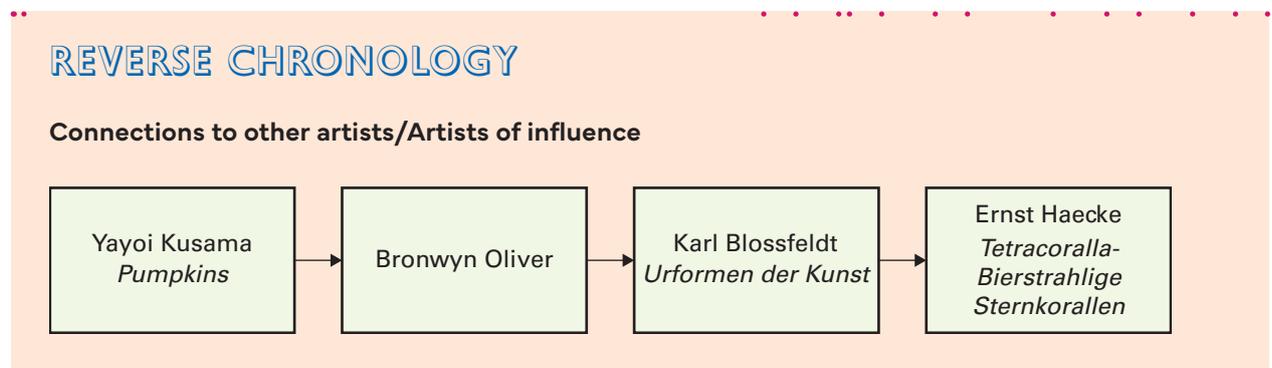
The artists have continued that dialogue and are in regular contact via email and Facetime, where they share documentation of particular species of flora in which they are interested. When one artist completes a work, they mail it to the other, for them to observe and respond to so they are both engaged in a process cycle of experimentation. The opportunity to respond to stimulus or species from

outside their immediate area enhances viewpoints of the fascinating lifecycle of native plants.

The artists make work that speaks to the complexity and richness of native flora; however, the forms are not faithful representations, rather they are subjective interpretations that foreground the precariousness of our delicately balanced ecosystem.



**FIGURE 6.56** Evaluation of *Distance of a whisper* exhibition by Sarah Rayner. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as lens.



## Student responses



**FIGURE 6.57** Sophie Lambourne, *The Shovelled Forest*, polymer clay and trowel

### *Artist's Statement*

*The Shovelled Forest* captures the beauty and essence of a mushroom-dominated forest. This setting may often be disregarded due to a lack of vibrance and 'life'. This work suggests that all forms of life and ecosystems have beauty and account for other living creatures. The viewer is invited to see the actual dirt intensify into a brown and gold world of mushrooms and ladybugs. The contrast between dull brown colours and bright red ladybugs demonstrates that this 'forest' holds a home for its inhabitants. The diverse shapes and detailed forms offer a sense of inclusivity and life. At first glance, *The Shovelled Forest* is a bland miniature world of brown, however the patterns and contrasting colours capture the viewers' attention and guides them to engage with this home, and creatures who inhabit it. Sadly, human nature judges a book by its cover, so what we see is what we get! Perhaps if we took off our sunglasses of judgement, we might see the significance of what is underneath the forest.

SOPHIE LAMBOURNE



**FIGURE 6.58** Top: Tess Curtis, *Epiphany*, polymer clay on tin. Bottom: detail

Inspired by the work of sculptor Stephanie Kilgast, *Epiphany* captures the mind of the little man who is hiding in the handle of the tin cup. The sculpture represents the imagination of this man as it floats behind his head. His epiphany is communicated through his imagination. Mushrooms on the side of the tin are repeated in sequence to lead the viewer on a trail around the cup. Warm pastel colours flow and contrast with the turquoise on the caterpillar creating a captivating place.



FIGURE 6.59 Sophia Jorgenson, *Bleached Future*, perspex, board, acrylic paint, pen 3 x 63 x 2.3, 25 x 25 x 2.3 cm + white detail

## Artist's Statement

*Bleached Future* responds to the fragile beauty of marine life. Our reef contains ecosystems that are the largest living entity on our planet. Corals are stressed by changes such as temperature and light. Nutrients that they expel, the symbiotic algae living in their tissues, causes coral bleaching which leaches a reef of its yellow, greens and pinks,

leaving behind a graveyard of brittle white. We will soon be writing an obituary for the vast coral ecosystems. *Bleached Future* explores the past and questions the future. Conversations and actions need to occur to protect the fragility of this fading underwater world.

SOPHIA JORGENSON

Colours were blended on wooden base to create an uneven terrain to build on.

plastic → Ocean Pollution damage → waste → Industry + Production → plastic

Gold representing preciousness and rarity. Varying rod heights suggest different stages of degradation of our living colourful reefs.

Overlapping forms of contrasting colours create a sense of fluidity found in the reef. Layers suggest different levels of decay with the reef.

- Plastic, a material which is causing the high footprint was used to reverse garbage recycling to stop it entering the ocean.
- The floating plastic shapes elevated on top of the painting was inspired by the way plastic floats on top of the ocean.

plastic → industry → global warming → climate change → coral stress → bleaching

The fragile rods represent the small reliance range corals reefs have on the changes that have been occurring like increasing temperatures, sea levels rising, and the chemical balance of the ocean being altered.

- All the shapes are different sizes because no two reefs are the same.
- Different colour ratios because most reefs are impacted at different time periods and impacted at different amounts.

FIGURE 6.60 Process page for *Bleached Future* by Sophia Jorgenson

## 6.5 Case study: Dan Elborne

**Concept:** A Lens to explore the material world

**Context:** Personal and Contemporary

**Focus:** People Place Objects

**“ I design, produce, and exhibit my work to invite viewers into a gentle space of interpretation, contemplation, and actionable reflection.**

DAN ELBORNE

The earthenware forms were based on standard issue ammunition given to Dutch soldiers during their service in the Indonesian war in 1945–49.

Elborne creates ceramic installations and sculpture, informed by personal memories and experiences. He explores the process of making multiples that require an investment of time and melds this with the fragility of materials. The work also references broader-reaching subjects and historic events. Conscious of the history of ceramics and the qualities of the clay, Elborne utilises the inherent vulnerability, preciousness, permanence and transformational possibilities of his chosen material to address sensitive and profound topics from a personal context.

Dan Elborne creates work that builds on the ‘intersecting foundations of memory, time, labour and materiality.’

Elborne responds to the technical qualities of ceramics and extends this process by



**FIGURE 6.61** Dan Elborne, *Five Hundred*, 2016, slip cast earthenware, glaze and custom-made decals, 500 x .303' bullets

experimenting with the addition of secondary materials such as ash, gold, lead, bone and demolition-site reclaim. His manipulation of materials and their qualities results in physical connections to the material world. This reveals concepts and ideas about how we process cultural stories and personal events through forms.

**“ I reference events, themes, and dichotomies such as survival, against suffering, preservation against decay and the intricacies of remembering.**

DAN ELBORNE

*Five Hundred* explores an intentional contradiction between the historical relevance of the work and the delicate visual appearance through the material quality of the clay. Elborne purposefully aligns the brutality of military forms against the precious, fragile and pristine white material formed with a sense of precision, yet communicating the notion of violence and fear. The harsh realities of war are contrasted with the sensitivity of memories related to it, symbolic of the personal conversations between Elborne and his Opa. (Dutch for Grandfather). In this work, Elborne has appropriated signature patterns and figurative forms different to the traditional Dutch ceramics to convey the cultural context of an object.



**FIGURE 6.62** Dan Elborne, *Five Hundred*, 2016, installation, slip cast earthenware, glaze and custom-made decals, 500 x .303' bullets

## Artist's Statement

*Five Hundred* uses symbolic objects to represent my Dutch Grandfathers' (Opa's) service during the Indonesian War of Independence (1945–1949). Directly after serving in WWII, he was one of five hundred men initially drafted from Holland to the conflict in Indonesia. Each of the five hundred bullets are individually made and explore a balance between contemporary art practices and traditional ceramic production. The objects are cast from .303 bullets, the standard issue ammunition given to Dutch soldiers during my grandfather's service in Indonesia. Significantly,

they are cast using earthenware: the material traditionally used for the creation of Dutch 'blue and white' Delftware ceramics. The floral design has been produced using photographs of the hand-painted detailing on original Delftware plates acquired by my grandfather to commemorate his military service.

DAN ELBORNE

**Delftware** a generic name for tin-glazed earthenware that originated in Antwerp, Belgium as early as 1512

Delftware includes pottery objects of all descriptions – such as plates, vases, figurines and other ornamental or decorative art forms such as tiles. The cultural value of these objects contrasts significantly with the custom-made

bullet, which appears pristine yet is considered deadly. This form of ceramics is still used domestically and continues to be referenced by artists.

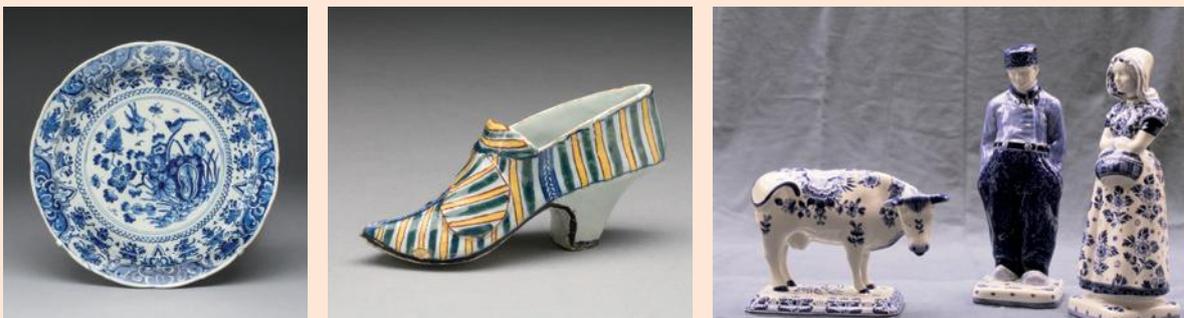


FIGURE 6.63 Plate, Delft, circa 1720, Shoe, Delft, circa 1750, and Delft pottery ceramic from Delft, Netherlands

*Remains* is an ongoing experimental series, begun in 2014, which explores the intrinsic and extrinsic meaning communicated through materials. In this arrangement, the use of scale and placement of the forms is reminiscent of a spine. The contrast between the bone-like material and the reflective surface emphasises a clinical austere uniformity as an interpretation of what remains.

*Remains* is a work about the continual process of inquiry, experimentation and fragility. The artist is happy to reconfigure elements placing them together in the gallery setting or individually as simple engaging forms, suggesting that we personally grapple with the connections between time, decay and memory.

*Remains S4.3–S4.12* offers a contrast in curatorial practice, the singular object as opposed to the strategic placement of a set of forms.

Figure 6.66 demonstrates the use of secondary materials such as gold. The works continue to develop and appear in various exhibitions in differing configurations, an example of process and reflection.

*Series 4* preserves both found and assembled animal bones in a mixture of ash, lead and pulverised ceramic reclaim, sourced from earlier works and failed experiments. This becomes a cyclic process of halting natural decay. Selected works are then finished with 22-carat gold leaf detailing. The theme of mortality and questions of legacy link past works with new works.



**FIGURE 6.64** Dan Elborne, *Remains S1.4*, 2014–16. Image credit: Grace Yu



**FIGURE 6.65** *Remains*, detail



**FIGURE 6.66** Dan Elborne, *Remains S4.3–S4.12*, animal bone, ash, ceramic reclaim, lead and 22k gold leaf

“ I dedicate a lot of time to the development of work; making maquettes, running material tests and asking my community and mentors what they think before committing to a certain aesthetic and process. I officially start work on something new (production) with a clear idea of what the resolved work will be and how to present it.

DAN ELBORNE

Elborne refers to many ‘iterations’ of an idea with his process being exploratory and highly productive rather than linear. He tends to work on projects over long periods of time and engage with interest groups and community issues along the way. Raising awareness, empathy and opening a dialogue with the audience is important to Elborne and drives his practice.

Before starting to work with materials in the studio Elborne responds to specific experiences or historical events, with reading and research an important part of the development process.

Asking key questions that link to broader themes, Elborne would develop inquiry questions such as:

- How does time impact memory?
- What does the cross over of personal and collective experience look like?
- How can ideas of decay and permanence be combined in the same form?

Nineteenth-century German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine’s play *Almawnsor* (1820–21) was burnt in 1933 in Germany: Heine wrote: ‘Where they burn books, they will also ultimately burn people.’

“ I hope that the work speaks in delicate, reverent terms, as a marker for my long-standing study of commemorative traditions and practices. The iterations of *Remains* continue to inform all aspects of my studio practice.

DAN ELBORNE

“ *Where They Burn Books* references the power, resilience and preciousness of knowledge, despite forces against it. By strengthening these porcelain objects through the firing process, they stand as martyrs to spoken, written, and remembered language; and in a contemporary context, they celebrate society’s unprecedented and exponential access to stories, testimony, and ideas.

DAN ELBORNE



**FIGURE 6.67** *Where They Burn Books*, 2016 – ongoing, porcelain, glaze, gold lustre and book ash. The set of books is part of an ongoing series, made during a 2016 residency at Guldager Gaard International Ceramic Research Centre in Denmark, and was influenced by the stark symbolism of historic book burnings.



**FIGURE 6.68** Dan Elborne, *Where they burn books* (detail), 2016

The books have been individually hand-carved and carefully dried over several months. Displayed as if grouped in a bookcase, the white forms unify to make a formal arrangement that appears blank, unwritten and not yet read suggesting a lost history or knowledge. The contrasting dark forms created from an experimental composite material that suspends reclaimed porcelain in compressed paper ash, accentuate cracks in the porcelain pieces emphasising the contradiction of the worn yet unread book.



**FIGURE 6.69** *One Drop of Blood* (detail), 2013, porcelain and glaze, varying interactive dimensions. This project is partnered with the National Breast Cancer Foundation, Australia.

*One Drop of Blood* presents the white blood cell equivalent to one drop of human blood. These cells have the primary function of attacking disease and infection. One drop contains a number that ranges between 7 and 25 000, which often indicates the seriousness of whatever the body is trying to expel.

“ [One Drop of Blood] comprises individually handmade porcelain cells, mimicking a high ranging white blood cell count. Both in its materiality and presentation, *One Drop of Blood* echoes sentiments of vulnerability and preciousness, which have been informed by personal memory. Audience participation is intended to emulate my mother’s dropping white blood cell count during chemotherapy. In the tradition of artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, viewers are invited to take portions of the work away with them in exchange for a donation to the National Breast Cancer Foundation raising awareness and funds for Breast Cancer Research.

DAN ELBORNE

Statistical data translated into time, labour and multiples along with **series** and the interactive nature of installation is a common thread that facilitates insight as the viewer navigates the space and reflects on a broad range of human experiences. There is a powerful juxtaposition, the visual language of the beautifully delicate, and the distressed remnants that both reference material world.

• • • • •  
**series** a number of similar or related events or things, one following another

• • • • •

## DISCUSS

- 1 Devise inquiry questions that resonate with your personal experiences.
- 2 Discuss how a collection of forms and interactive works can promote dialogue and discussion about social issues.

## Other works

*Deathgate* (2015–18)

*48 Hours, 24 Minutes & 15 Seconds* (2018–19)

CONTEXTS	MEANING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal</li> <li>• Contemporary</li> <li>• Grandfather’s narrative and experience of war</li> <li>• Lethal weaponry as a contemporary symbol</li> <li>• Mother’s battle with chemotherapy</li> </ul>	<p>Visual language</p> <p><b>Symbolism</b></p> <p>Bullets made using white porcelain with Delftware patterns has a sensibility of opposites.</p> <p>History and the loaded object, valuable, precious powerful yet lethal.</p> <p>Could be understood as a miniature missile.</p> <p>The cultural practice of collecting objects such as figurines shape cultural identity.</p> <p><b>Materials/media/processes</b></p> <p>Scale, proportion and lighting combine to make a collection that is both delicate and beautiful yet sinister in its function: using traditional methods of working with porcelain.</p> <p>Representation and uniformity.</p> <p><b>Display</b></p> <p>Multiples that coincide with data.</p> <p>Mass arrangement of objects engages the audience within the space.</p>
	
<p><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p>Community: able to collect and take a small part of the work home</p> <p><b>To other artists</b></p> <p>Works with organisations such as the national Breast Cancer Foundation to raise awareness</p> <p><b>Alexis Tacey</b> (Queensland), ceramicist who introduced Elborne to ceramics</p> <p><b>David Usher</b> (Queensland), ceramicist and painter</p> <p><b>Ursula Haines</b> (France), sculptor</p>	<p>Changing arrangement of components in the exhibition space</p> <p><b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How might surface, patterns and materials suggest cultural context?</p> <p>How do artists communicate culture and history through objects?</p> <p>What methods successfully suggest changes in time and memory?</p> <p>How do artists reframe the meaning of objects?</p>

**FIGURE 6.70** Evaluation of Dan Elborne *Five Hundred*, 2016, installation view. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as lens.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.5

- 1 Explore available materials, including found objects, to craft symbolic multiples, and design an interactive activity that will engage the viewer.
- 2 Research artists who commonly use multiples in their work. Begin with political activist Ai Weiwei and his contemporary installation *Kui*

*Hua Zi, Sunflower seeds*, first exhibited at the Tate Modern art gallery in London from 12 October 2010 to 2 May 2011. This work is made of millions of sunflower seeds that have been individually sculpted and painted by specialists working in small-scale workshops in the Chinese city of Jingdezhen.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence

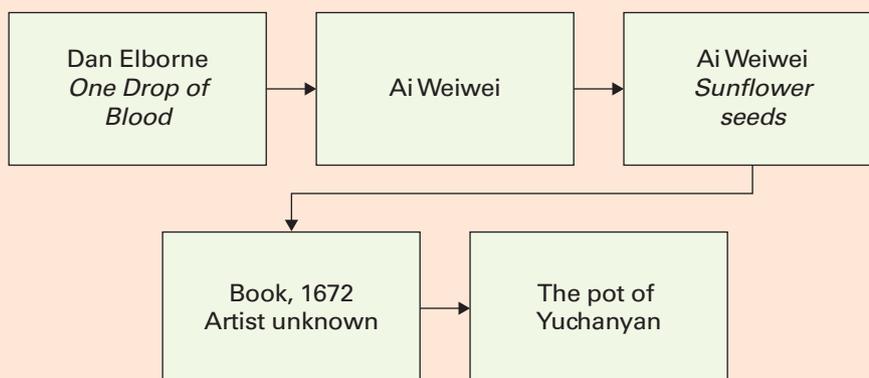
A reverse chronology can represent a diverse practice. Artworks or imagery of precedence or influence can be found through multiple sources.



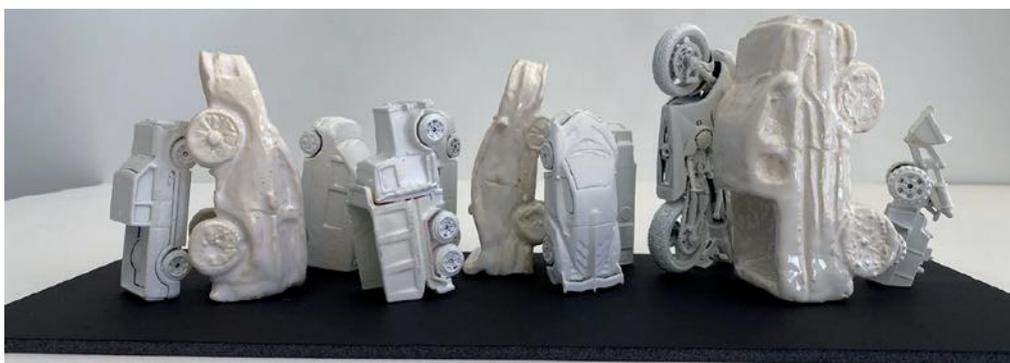
It is of enormous benefit to surround yourself with people and consult with those who have a long-standing

creative practice, who know you as a person and appreciate what you make. Looking broader to the field of international contemporary ceramics and art, the list is too long for who informs my work as it depends on how I'm feeling about the project or series I've got directly in front of me.

DAN ELBORNE



## Student responses



**FIGURE 6.71** Han Trinh, *Dream cars*, assemblage of handmade clay cars and spray painted found objects, 35 x 16 x 10 cm, multiples with a contemporary message



**FIGURE 6.72** Han Trinh, *Dream cars*, clay assemblage, process evidence

### *Artist's Statement*

Everything has been designed for us, the convenience of being able to travel wherever you desire. This work explores the evolution of the industrial technology that we take advantage of.

*Dream Cars* explores the materialistic and the evolution of urban living through a focus on transportation.

The relationship between people and object is the desire in one's dreams to possess something reliable and enduring. Growing up it has always been a dream of mine to own something for myself, my own car. Although it is materialistic, it is significant to people and transport.

HAN TRINH



**FIGURE 6.73** Tabitha Holland, *Reminiscence of the Dinner Table*, table: concrete, spray paint, wood, metal; chair: concrete, spray paint, wood; draped fabric; various objects in concrete and spray paint

### *Artist's Statement*

This work is an introspection into suburbia and familial ties, and the impact of memories as remains. The entire work is solidified in concrete, developing the fossilisation of family dinners as only existing in the past. The neutral palette and monochromatic colouring of the installation emphasises this absence. The single table setting exhibits the singularity of memory as remnants of what would have been, a large, full table now obscured and shrouded by the fabric of memory.

TABITHA HOLLAND



FIGURE 6.74 Tabitha Holland, *Way Stones #1*, photograph

### Artist's Statement

*Way Stones* explores the significance of moments in time and the effort of our consciousness to preserve them. In *Way Stones #1*, the rugged concreted objects are solidified in the past, offering waypoints to look back on. The dynamic lighting highlights the textures on the forms, and the composition where the rocks obscure the objects, represents the selective nature of memory; these objects are a cluster of memories waiting to be revealed. Succumbing to shadow and blocked from view, they enable the creation of new memories.

TABITHA HOLLAND



FIGURE 6.75 Tabitha Holland, *Way Stones #2*, photograph

### Artist's Statement

In *Way Stones #2*, the moulded concrete stones exemplify distinct and unobscured points in memory. They are both metaphorical and literal markers of time, as the rocks are the excess discarded in the artistic process, marking points in development and creation. The arrangement is purposeful as it places emphasis on the material as an object without connections, a fragment or remnant, capturing the moment and challenging what we know.

TABITHA HOLLAND

“The materials and surfaces suggest more than one possible metaphor. Time, destruction, isolation, urban environment, to name a few. The installation of the recognisable objects within a closed space suggests an internal environment for the viewer to interpret. The recognisable objects are a folly, their functionality disguised by cement render. *Way Stones #2* are an experimentation with the concept of remnants.

TABITHA HOLLAND

## 6.6 Case study: Christopher Bassi

**Concept:** Lenses to explore the material world

**Context:** Personal Contemporary

**Focus:** People Object Place

 I see my practice as a critical inquiry into the Western art historical canon through the medium of painting. I approach painting as a language rich with historical and cultural significance and am interested in painting as technique as well as academic tradition.

CHRISTOPHER BASSI

Living and working on Turrbal and Yuggera country (Meanjin, Brisbane), Christopher Bassi is an artist of Meriam, Yupungathi and British descent, known for his representational style. Incorporating **archetypal** models of representational painting, his work engages with the medium as sociological and historical text and as a means of addressing issues surrounding cultural identity, alternative **genealogies**, and colonial legacies in Australia and the South Pacific.

What drives Bassi's practice is a commitment to truth-telling and the reclamation of Indigenous narratives. He is motivated by the potential of art to act as a catalyst for change and understanding. The need to correct historical misrepresentations and to contribute to the decolonisation of Australian art and history is a central force behind his work. By weaving together traditional and contemporary elements, his aim is to create a visual language that speaks to both the past and the present, advocating for a more inclusive and accurate portrayal of Australia's shared history.

Bassi proposes that exploration of the history of painting serves as a starting point for personally engaging with the medium and its cultural evolution. Painting, in this context, is a way of allowing individuals to engage in a type of **atemporality**: that is, to connect with the present, whilst also embracing the historical lineage and potential future possibilities. As an artist, Bassi's interest in painting provides an avenue for how he

tells stories about himself and his culture; it opens a possibility for authors to construct and depict worlds that either diverge from or reinterpret dominant narratives. His artistic intentions aim to follow the traditional style of painting, while delving into its rich history and exploring the potential to break new ground through pushing its boundaries into new territories. He is propelled by the opportunity to communicate ideas of history, culture, nationality, place and belonging through his work and to contribute meaningfully to the ongoing narrative of visual culture. The potential of painting to serve as a tool for world-making, to question and redefine the way we perceive our surroundings and to tell stories that speak to the artist and to his experiences, becomes a question of **agency**. It is what motivates him to continue exploring and creating within this medium.

 To be a painter today is to grapple with both the weight of historical precedence and the boundless possibilities offered by the modern world. The discourse of painting carries with it a tapestry of stylistic evolutions, philosophical discourses, and cultural implications. For me, it is not a matter of simply applying pigment to canvas, but rather actively engaging in a dialogue with centuries of artistic tradition. To paint today, is to be acutely aware of this historical backdrop.

CHRISTOPHER BASSI

.....  
**canon** the general criterion or principle by which something is judged that involves a level of acceptance and recognition within a specific discipline

**archetypal** classic representation of universally recognised themes or patterns that recur in forms of human expression across different cultures and periods of time

**genealogy** line of descent that is continuously traced through reference to ancestry

**atemporality** timelessness; being unaffected by or independent of time

**agency** a course of action or intervention to produce a desired effect  
.....

Bassi embraces his cultural context and creates conversations about what shapes one's personal viewpoint and understanding, with references to works from the past and present.

His work is a direct engagement with painting's stylistic and philosophical dimensions that have shaped the Australian art historical narrative.

**As someone with Torres Strait Islander heritage it becomes an opportunity then to engage with and contribute to a reshaping of an ongoing narrative; to enter a dialogue in hope, that through a type of re-imagining one might be able to contribute something new.**

CHRISTOPHER BASSI

A central aspect of Bassi's artistic practice is exploring painting as a method of storytelling. The process of creating a painting, which unfolds over time, provides a valuable space for contemplation and reflection. This period of creation is not just about the physical act of painting. It is also a meditative yet cathartic journey that allows him to probe deeply into themes close to his heart, particularly those concerning his family and heritage.

As a Meriam and Yupungathi person with connections to the Torres Strait and North Queensland, these elements of his identity are integral to his narrative. The act of painting becomes a way to weave together personal and cultural stories with his lived experiences, and reflect on his lineage and the rich tapestry of his ancestry through a thoughtful, time-imbued process. His paintings become carriers of personal history and cultural legacy.

In *Small Monuments to the South West Waters of a Great Ocean* (2023), exhibited as part of *Primavera 2023*, Bassi has monumentalised a collection of shells from the Torres Strait and Far North Queensland in a series of nine oil on canvas paintings. The reference to 'monument' indicates the extensive history of shell trading and pearling from the Arafura Sea, an area of ocean between the Gulf of Carpentaria and the south coast of Papua New Guinea. The shells have been elevated in status to reflect the representational nature of traditional European portraiture and are a narrative tool which examine Bassi's connection to place and Country. He has reclaimed the significance of the shells as cultural items which historically have been relegated to museums, yet in contemporary times have been significantly devalued through tourism. These commonplace objects have been transformed into something grand, elevated by Bassi's meticulous attention to detail.



**FIGURE 6.76** Christopher Bassi, *Small Monuments to the South West Waters of a Great Ocean*, 2023, oil on canvas, two of a series of nine paintings, 50 x 60 cm. Image courtesy of the artist. Exhibited as part of the *Primavera 2023: Young Australian Artists* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney



## DISCUSS

- How does the physical act of painting allow Bassi to develop a more profound exploration of themes around family, heritage and identity?
- Consider whether the medium of photography might offer the same possibilities.

Bassi's 2023 installation, *Island Revelation*, collates a collection of motifs which are linked to the Torres Strait landscape. It serves not only as a reflection of nostalgia tied to a specific place, but it also infuses significant personal memories. The inclusion of an Australian pied imperial pigeon and a red hibiscus plant are both sentimental and emblematic of Bassi's grandmother. A painting of a giant clam shell also forms part of the installation, along with a triptych of coconut palms which have been re-imagined as an altar-piece, creating a sense of cohesion between all components, thus providing access to Country from a distance.

A sculptural element which highlights historical reference to the Christian Missionary Societies in the Straits and the way they have transformed culture is symbolised in the architectural structure that is positioned on the floor in front of the palm trees. The structure portrays a chapel ruin from Moa Island, which is close to where Bassi's grandmother was born. It draws a sense of

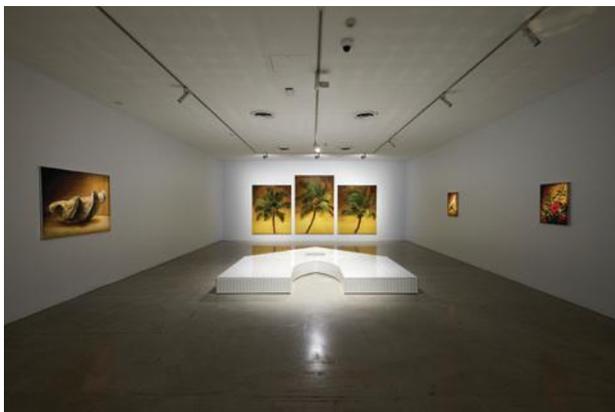
the spiritual and the sacred into the work, which is further enhanced by the white-tiled surface, associated with the way that tombstones are tiled for Tombstone Opening Ceremonies in the Straits. Bassi's process of thinking and working resembles a theatrical experience, whereby the installation may be likened to a stage setting that allows the viewer to enter the space and become immersed in the fusion of culture, history, memory and time.

The ideas for Bassi's artworks originate from a variety of sources. Family stories tied to his heritage in North Queensland provide a cultural and personal context to his work. Personal experiences also significantly influence his art, serving as direct inspiration for many works. Additionally, he draws ideas from literature and poetry, which offer a thematic richness, and science fiction, which opens doors to imaginative and speculative themes. Popular culture is another important source, providing contemporary and relatable elements. These diverse influences collectively shape the content and direction of Bassi's artwork and transport his viewers into his life through referencing connections to family and his cultural heritage.



## DISCUSS

How do Bassi's paintings represent parts of specific memories of place and fragments of culture, whereby the audience is able to enter an installation space and be transported to a different time and place?



**FIGURE 6.77** Christopher Bassi, *Island Revelation*, 2023, installation, mixed media, size variable. Image credits: Mim Stirling. Image courtesy of the artist

## MEANING

### Visual language

Bassi's colour palette (consisting of a backdrop made up of a combination of ochre, umber and sienna) is reminiscent of the hazy warmth of Far North Queensland, a place where frangipanis thrive.

His combination of familiar natural objects radiates a theatrical glow of strong light and shadow. The subject matter, which reflects a tropical narrative, has been developed with subtle detail to create intricate three-dimensional forms.

### Symbols

Tropical flora is a recurring theme in Bassi's work. Through the use of imagery featuring symbols of exotic and coastal undertones (a frangipani tree growing in a steel drum referencing the repurposing of objects that is characteristic of island societies; a bailer shell and two trochus

shells), the audience is invited into Bassi's home, which forms a connection to his Torres Strait Island heritage.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Bassi builds thin layer upon layer of warm washes of oil paint with precision and sophisticated detail; the light-drenched subject matter casts a shadow on the backdrop, similar to the technique of chiaroscuro (which stems from Italian words, *chiaro* (clear/bright) and *oscuro* (obscure/dark). A dramatic balance of light and shade has been developed to illuminate the subject matter and to portray extreme tonal contrast and depth.



### Display

*Frangipani Land* is part of a body of work that was exhibited in his 2022 exhibition, *Northern Verses*, at Yavuz Gallery in Sydney. Each artwork in the body of work represents a strong link to the tropics – pearls, the lush foliage and fruit of pawpaws, palm trees, mangoes and frangipani, intertwined with the presence of human participants.

### CONTEXT

Personal

- Represents link to 'place', associated with the artist's ancestry and cultural heritage – (the tropics, Torres Strait)
- Personal response based on the artist's memories, senses.

### CONNECTIONS

#### Collaboration

Bassi draws continuous inspiration from his peers in Brisbane, a city with a strong community of artists and thinkers. This community plays a crucial role in providing support, inspiration and challenge to his daily practice. He reflects on the contributions of artists like Judy Watson, Richard Bell, Gordon Hookey, Tony Albert, Megan Cope, D Harding, Elisa-Jane Carmichael and Sonja Carmichael. Their influence has assisted in Bassi's navigation of the complexities of being an artist in the Australian Colony today, shaping his understanding of our cultural and political landscape.

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How do artists use models of painting to speak to a history, place and time that resonates with the audience?

**Focus** – history/  
culture/place/  
belonging/home/  
nationality/family/  
memory/connection.

**FIGURE 6.78** Evaluation of Christopher Bassi, *Frangipani Land*, 2022. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as lens.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.6

Examine the role that family stories and personal experiences play in shaping how artists represent a personal narrative through their work. Start by developing a connection to 'place'.

- Develop an extensive list of places/ locations that hold personal memories for you.
- Next to each place, identify at least one object or image that you associate with these locations.
- Take yourself back to the moment and describe a personal or family experience, story or connection that may be linked with

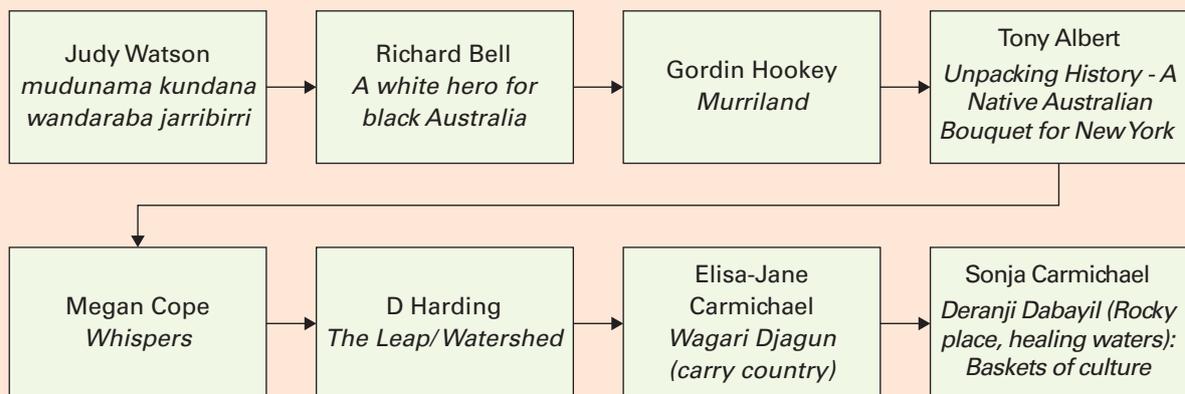
each of the locations. Include reference to sensory experiences also (smells, sights, sounds, tastes, touch plus feelings/ thoughts/ emotions).

- Gather objects, collectables, images, artefacts, memorabilia, trinkets, souvenirs that may relate to the time and place you have described.
- Select one specific place, associated objects and recall experiences, and then create an artwork which draws together ideas you have brainstormed.

Consider incorporating text to enhance the representation you develop.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Christopher Bassi

*A passing storm*, 2023

*Shell Song*, 2022

*History of an ocean*, 2022

*Twin Paw Paw*, 2022

*Shade from the sun*, 2022

*The garden and the sea* (series), 2021

*Mango Flower*, 2020

*Looking beyond*, 2020

## Student artwork

### Referencing a personal context



FIGURE 6.79 Elijah Smith, *Intergeneration Creaks*, 2022, installation and acrylic on canvas

#### *Artist's Statement*

The slightest creak in the stool reminds me of a time when I was young and would watch her, brushing her hair in the mirror. Passed down through four generations, this piece, *Intergeneration Creaks*, features a much deeper meaning than simply a lady seated on a stool. It was originally my Great Grandmother's from the 1940s and came along with its own duchess and mirror. The installation has been presented in a way that

invites the audience to take a seat, then to picture the painting as a mirror which captures an image of my Great Grandmother. When the viewer sits on the stool, they will also hear a slight creak which represents the same creak that has extended across the six decades of time that has passed, since its original owner, my Great Grandmother, sat in the very same position.

ELIJAH SMITH

## 6.7 Case study: Chantal Fraser

**Concept:** Lenses to explore the material world

**Context:** Contemporary, personal

**Focus:** People Object Place

Born in Aotearoa/New Zealand, Chantal Fraser is a Meänjīn-based Sāmoan interdisciplinary artist working in the media areas of photography, performance and sculpture. Informed by her lived experience, Fraser's practice examines and challenges the structures of **capitalism** and state authorities, often by using ornamentation and personal adornment. Fraser's work has been included in numerous exhibitions within Australia, and in Canada and France.

As a visionary, Fraser's artistic intentions transcend conventional boundaries, yet are not always clearly defined. She sees her art-making as a language in itself and an intuitive extension of her mind and body. She reimagines and *recontextualises* a world where **subversion** and the components that form the pillars of **neo-colonialism** are key areas of focus in her work. Fraser's practice sheds light on the intricacies of power dynamics, **cultural appropriation** and exploitation that continue to infiltrate our world. Her work dismantles oppressive practices and confronts the **status quo**, through envisioning a future which is more equitable for all. She moves beyond the conventional and embraces the use of contemporary materials including stitching, fabric, found objects and even hair, weaving them all into thought-provoking narratives that contests pre-conceived notions of art. There is an ongoing compulsion to use artistic mediums to tell stories, reframe context and to navigate her own experience of life, in order to share culture and to stimulate discussion.

•• ..... • • • • •

**capitalism** an economic system where private ownership controls the production of goods or services for profit

**subversion** undermining the power and authority of a government or political system or established institution

**neo-colonialism** the continuation of economic or political dominance or influence which perpetuates inequality and undermines the progression of less developed countries or societies

**cultural appropriation** the inappropriate use of ideas or images belonging to one culture by individuals from another culture without showing respect for the historical, social or cultural context from which the elements originated

**status quo** existing state of affairs, especially of a political, social or economic nature

**colonise** to claim or take control of an area or a group of people as an extension of power

• • • • •

**I have always been interested in non-traditional art materials (for example, waxed paper, items from the discount store, objects of adornment, screws/earrings/found trinkets, fabric). By virtue, these objects will bring their own histories and complexities to the work as they're recontextualised.**

CHANTAL FRASER

Fraser's artwork, *The Way*, responds to the trend of capitalising on Indigenous knowledges for one-directional gain. It prompts the audience to assess ideas of consumption and the dollar figure attached to cultural knowledge. We see the desire for Indigenous or 'holistic' methods of health, wellbeing and education particularly in the wellness industry. One must question, however, if this is a result of the over-pillaging of the environment and constant desire to find the production value in all things. Is our lens so **colonised** that we see no value unless it contains material quality?

## Artist's Statement

Currently we are observing a worldwide obsession with Indigenous knowledges. *The Way* is a three-metre-high fully working wind turbine covered in glass and acrylic rhinestones. It stands as the 'rhinestoned elephant' in the gallery by bringing to the surface the often-unacknowledged one-sided transaction between Indigenous artists, knowledges and the industry of art. Absurdly sitting dormant in a white gallery context, the sculpture has the ability to be powered with a significant expulsion of energy

from the audience and 'art world'. However, having been transplanted from its natural environment, the wind turbine's functionality is limited. Ultimately, *The Way* turns art on its own head, interrogating what, as an artist, one has to benefit from, in an art market currently obsessed with markers of identity, diversity, and difference. Opting not to be a passively consumed other, *The Way* asks of the contemporary art world for a multi-directional transfer of energy.

CHANTAL FRASER



FIGURE 6.80 Chantal Fraser, *The Way*, 2018, wind turbine, generator, rhinestones, steel, size variable. Photo: Louis Lim. Image courtesy of the artist

When developing artworks, Fraser is often led by materials and process, particularly when making works that are labour intensive and require extensive physical input. Her ideas evolve from conversations, reading, news trends on social media and thoughts, and they often come when working on other work in the studio. Fraser can be inspired when viewing other works of contemporary art but, generally, her work is dictated by the concept; this defines the material and scale.

“Often, I start with a full visual of how I want the work to look and how I want it to be experienced. For example, does the concept require the audience to raise their heads and ‘look up’ so the work feels greater in scale? Do I want people to pause for a while and ponder?”

CHANTAL FRASER

Sometimes Fraser feels called to use just one material and therefore the relationship between the hand and the material decides the final outcome of the work. For example, some photo collages she has produced have come from a

## DISCUSS

Often the most successful artworks come from experimentation and by allowing the materials to dictate the direction that an artwork follows.

- How might the spontaneous interaction with media and materials influence the creative process for artists?
- How does this challenge the traditional notion of meticulous pre-planning?
- Can the unpredictability of materials lead to more authentic and dynamic artistic responses?

desire to ‘make art’ again, following a period of performance, video and photography so she feels compelled to cut the photos up and construct.

*The Ascended* is a five-channel moving image work projected at large scale. It explores the aesthetics of power and reflects on the experiences of class-based discrimination. Addressing the myth of Australia as an egalitarian society, in a powerful demonstration of love, *The Ascended* raises up the ordinary body, the working class, to the upper echelons of the extraordinary. The work bridges the realms of



FIGURE 6.81 Chantal Fraser, *The Ascended*, 2023, production stills of video. Images courtesy of the artist

heaven and earth, through the depiction of **Moana Nui** people as the highest of **Atua**. As the title suggests, all performers in the video represent an inverted view of societal hierarchies, whereby ordinary people are elevated and are positioned as deities.

**Atua** deities of the Polynesian peoples; *Atua* is a Polynesian word which translates to 'power' or 'strength'

**Moana Nui** Polynesian name for the Pacific Ocean

Fraser's 2009 photographic portraits, *Annal beads*, and her Maiden anti-portrait series, *Maiden Milita*, showcase a collection of neckpieces (Ula) received from her Samoan family, gifts of significance, ceremony and value, alongside a collection of Mardi Gras beads thrown from the balconies of Bourbon St, New Orleans, read often as a debauchorous ritual that rewards the female tourist more beads on exposure of their breasts.

flamboyancy, titillation and parody. The stills valiantly coerce the female body to become another 'object' within the work dispelling the visceral idea of the Gauguin-esque female 'muse' and/or Dusky Maiden by presenting it in an ambiguous, and sometimes, grotesque manner. It explores themes of body adornment through the female tourist as subject by using intrepid poses and cultural contradiction and a complete refusal of true identity.

CHANTAL FRASER

Fraser's ongoing sculptural series, *Riot Gear*, which she began in 2015, presents a playful armoury stocked with embellished welders' gear, riot shields and makeshift self-defence equipment. The welding helmets are adorned with rhinestones and glass mosaics, a labour-intensive application process to show glory and care towards objects which protect and shield the body, as well as the powerful role that the 'worker' holds in society. The artworks further interrogate themes of power and discrimination by giving agency to individuals who form the foundational elements, crucial to the functioning of society.

Reinterpreting the significance of adornment, the work presents and plays with the disparate meanings of what it means to receive such objects from these heavily tourist promoted regions through

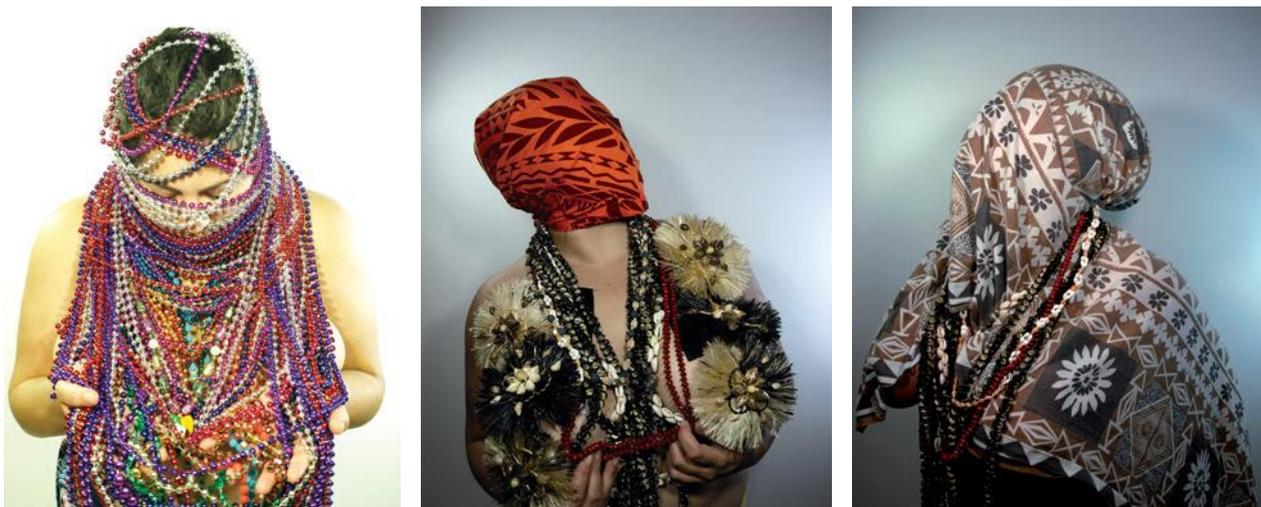


FIGURE 6.82 Chantal Fraser, *Annal Beads, Maiden Milita, Maiden Nesia*, 2009, Type C prints, each 110 x 130 cm. Images courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 6.83** Chantal Fraser, *Fantômas Gold*, *Fantômas Black*, *Fantômas Silver*, 2023, (part of the *Riot Gear* installation series from 2015 – ongoing), welding helmets, rhinestones, glass, 33 x 24 x 25.5 cm each. Images courtesy of the artist

## INQUIRY LEARNING 6.7

- Source recycled textiles and jewellery from the local community. By reflecting on the history, stories, and memories contained in these materials, be guided to create unique and imaginative adornment such as masks, shields, pendants, headpieces.
- Research ideas to create a piece of wearable art or costume using these up-cycled and thrifted materials.

Through a sociological analysis that suggests that individuals at the bottom are there to serve and support the existence of the regal, the wealthy and those in power, Fraser works towards challenging this narrative, instead nurturing and promoting the ordinary, the blue collar, to positions of admiration and esteem. Fraser's work is inspirational as a driving force to prompt cultural change through encouraging a shift in such mainstream ideologies and celebrating the contributions of individuals who keep the cogs of society moving.

## Additional key artworks by Chantal Fraser

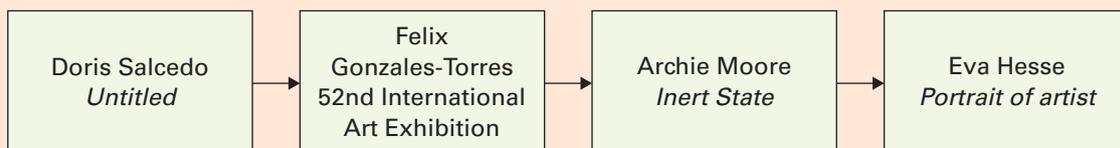
*To be humble*, 2017

*#Traditional #Blurredlines*, 2013

*Green Volume*, 2020

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists and theorists/Artists of influence



## MEANING

### Visual language

The artwork began with students from the local state school engaging in an artist-led workshop to develop their own piece of wearable art. Collectively the group produced a range of colourful, clashing and textural wearable pieces that represented the uniqueness and diversity of the community from which the materials had been drawn. Like part of a costume, the objects of adornment that the students made combined features from animals, plants and humans to embody a new hybrid creature. The process encouraged different ways of seeing and experiencing the world, strengthening empathy, understanding and care for everyone in the community, whether they are people different from us, animals that live alongside us, or plants that we have a responsibility to protect.

The outcome is a captivating, lively floral and botanical sensation that depicts a diverse assortment of shapes based on a colour palette of green, gold and tangerine.

### Symbols

Masks, shields, pendants, headpieces and accessories were produced by combining features from animals, plants and humans to embody new hybrid creatures. When images of these were digitally manipulated, the

final artistic response instils freshness, renewal, and growth to the space. The optical formations resembled rare or 'undiscovered' (in a colonial sense) species like plants, pods, butterflies, fish and eyes.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Students used recycled textiles and jewellery sourced from the local community to create hybrid creatures. They were prompted to reflect on the history, stories and memories contained within the materials and guided to create their own unique and imaginative adornment through a process of creative play. Fraser photographed these and printed multiple images which were then deconstructed and rearranged in repeated symmetrical sections of shape, texture and colour. Through experimentation with collage and

repetition, precise floral forms were developed which were then digitalised, informing the final design of *New Bloom*.

### Display

Large-scale public artwork (pavement surface treatment) in Tarlina Lane, Coorparoo which aims to promote a sense of belonging and bring community together in a shared zone for vehicles and pedestrians in a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment.



## CONTEXTS

### Contemporary

- 1 Use of non-traditional technologies, processes and development of ideas.
- 2 Ideas promote diversity and challenge mainstream thought.
- 3 Promotes care for environment and aesthetically enhances urban space.
- 4 Large-scale artwork displayed in a public place.

## CONNECTIONS

### Collaboration

Students from Coorparoo State School were invited to participate in an initial workshop; the project was commissioned as part of Brisbane City Council's Village Precinct initiative, which aims to create vibrant neighbourhoods around the city. The project involved extensive engagement and consultation with the community.

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How can our experiences impact how we understand each other globally?

How can our experiences connect us as custodians of our environment?

How do artists encourage the vital need for new perspectives?

**Focus** – identity, cultural adornment, ornamentation, individuality, connection, stewardship of the environment, co-existence, protection.

**FIGURE 6.84** Evaluation of Chantal Fraser, *New Bloom*, 2022, Tarlina Lane, Coorparoo. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as lens.

## Student artwork

Referencing a contemporary context



**FIGURE 6.85** Sam Jensen, *The Divine* and *The Corset – Oppression*, 2021, wax, wire, tissue paper, lighting, 450 x 350 x 250 mm each

### *Artist's Statement*

*The Divine* has evolved both aesthetically and symbolically from the corset and draws upon the ideas of social constraints as well as the stereotyped view that females are seen to be the more fragile of the genders, represented through the use of delicate tissue paper. The light within the form illuminates the interior and creates depth to enhance the identity of the body and its shape while also reflecting contrast, movement and texture. The base of the corset was built from the measurements of my own waist to contradict the themes of oppression and the negative connotations which come with the garment, as often the value of women was dependent on the circumference of their waist. The use of wire to construct the foundations of the sculpture presents a dual purpose: to enhance the symbolism of patriarchal oppression, as well as to highlight the immobility the corset produces.

*The Corset – Oppression* portrays the constrictive nature of a corset. The corset was introduced into French society in the 1500s as an undergarment to contain the form of the woman's body. Originally embraced as a fashionable item, the corset eventually became a symbol of women's oppression. However, the contemporary world has welcomed contradictory messages regarding the corset. With messages of dominance and submission, or power and oppression, *The Corset - Oppression* presents the torso of a woman, recognised by the curvature of the body and its bust. The work draws from the contemporary context, in a time where women are speaking out against the injustices and inequality they face because of gender. Made entirely of wax, the texture of the surface plays an indispensable role in completing the work. The wax reveals imperfections and non-uniformity which contrasts the ideals of the male gaze.

SAM JENSEN



## Chapter summary

- In Chapter 6, the personal and contemporary context has been foregrounded through artist case studies that emphasise the process of creative inquiry to generate solutions to visual problems.
- Art as lens has been explored through the focus of people, place and objects showing the diverse artist practices that reflect multiple viewpoints and result in dynamic artworks.
- The artists are immersed in practice-based research as a process of inquiry learning. Research is core to their ongoing art-making, absorption of knowledge and the gathering of first-hand experiences. This has resulted in visual forms and resolved works that communicate personal and contemporary responses to stimuli in the material world.
- We have observed that the inquiry learning processes – developing, researching, reflecting and resolving – are interconnected and non-sequential for both artist and audience:
  - Audiences consider and navigate the responses produced.
  - Artists consider how different lenses might filter or distort viewpoints.
  - Diverse lenses direct how artists make sense of the material world.
- The guiding questions explored in Chapter 5 and expanded in Chapter 6 remain relevant in all chapters of the textbook:
  - How do artists generate solutions to visual problems?
  - How do artists react to stimulus?
  - How do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and processes?
  - How do artists communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?
- Artworks in the case studies have been specifically selected from the artists' extensive art practices to demonstrate the concept of art as lens.
- Personal commitment to an inquiry question and the willingness to reshape the question reflects the artist's philosophies, experiences, beliefs, personal interests and value systems. These have underpinned and influenced the way subject matter is perceived, generated and represented. The case studies in this chapter foster curiosity and creative thinking and inspire innovative art practices.
- The artist case studies explore the material world through the lens of people, place, object or any combination. The focus when applied clarifies or reveals ideas and interpretations that are validated through connections to the personal and contemporary contexts of the artist and viewer.
- The diverse layers of meaning embedded in the works also open up new ways of thinking, enhanced communication of meaning and representations that acknowledge multiple viewpoints.
- In the next chapters, art as lens remains relevant. New concepts can build and develop your practice as an artist. This reflects the multidimensional nature of inquiry learning.

# Review questions

- 1 Experimenting is central to the process of researching and reacting to stimulus. Select a work from the case studies and generate a personal response. Draw from some primary sources and personal experiences to generate responses to the stimulus.
- 2 Making – experiment with the following processes:
  - recontextualise objects
  - combine disparate objects
  - alter object combinations that occur naturally
  - play with the manipulation of scope
  - cut and paste found imagery, creating voids and layers
  - generate projections onto surfaces of objects
  - transform an object by changing its function
  - replicate objects to make a new form.
- 3 Responding – select three artworks from the case studies. Research, analyse and interpret the artworks to identify connections and discuss how the artists have responded to the material world. Formulate a simple inquiry question:
  - a consider representations that depict the material world
  - b examine the use of visual language to depict meaning
  - c analyse the context: what is personal and contemporary
  - d evaluate traditions or cultural influences
  - e justify the artist’s viewpoint.
- 4 Suggested focus: objects – still life genre; people – applying a historic or cultural lens; place – personal connections to interior and exterior.
- 5 Thinking about assessment – refer to the section in the textbook that explains the assessment requirements. Ensure that you are recording your experimentation and process using organisers such as a journal, digital folio or physical folio. Review the Glossary and Area of Study descriptors to ensure you are developing the appropriate literacy skills associated with visual language and expression.
- 6 Start to devise artist’s statements and reflections on your work.
- 7 The syllabus frameworks that are important for Unit 1 are:
  - Inquiry learning is non-sequential – it doesn’t matter where you start and how many times your inquiry question is reviewed or modified. Keep lots of visual records and notations, using an approach that works for you, so you can reflect on your progress often.
  - Inquiry learning is non-hierarchical – experimenting with media, looking at artworks and investigating ideas and experiences are all of equal importance.

Framing inquiry questions through a concept and focus provides a structure that supports reflective inquiry and ensures that the four processes are utilised.





**FIGURE 7.1** Nike Savvas, *Atomic: full of love, full of wonder*, 2005, installation at Art Gallery of NSW.

Through Unit 2 you will explore the concept of 'art as code' to learn how visual language is capable of expressing complex ideas. Although both spoken language and visual language vary by culture, visual language has the potential to transcend and communicate across cultures, time and geography.

You will apply the contexts, foregrounding the formal and the cultural contexts to analyse and interpret visual communication and meaning in artworks. As you make and respond, your teacher will unpack the art processes of creating a body of work. You will be guided through the development of an individualised focus through learning experiences that facilitate more student-directed investigation and experimentation. You will need to use a range of art materials, techniques, technologies and processes to create a folio, including experimental work, artist research and at least one resolved artwork.

Through the inquiry learning process, you will explore how visual language, symbol systems and art conventions can express ideas and feelings in images, objects and experiences. You will experiment with language in art that can be verbal, inaudible, literal or implied, narrative, metaphoric, persuasive, or decorative. You will employ a range of materials, techniques, processes and technologies to make artworks that may be ephemeral or permanent, physical or digital.

As audience, you will examine the art practices, and read and interpret artworks of Australian and international artists who innovatively exploit cross-cultural meaning and communication through visual language. As an artist, you will communicate fluently and expressively through visual forms and engage with audiences to express your ideas.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

Unit objectives are drawn from the syllabus objectives and are contextualised for the subject matter and requirements of the unit. Each unit objective must be assessed at least once.

- 1 Implement ideas and representations to decode artworks and communicate in visual forms.
- 2 Apply literacy skills to communicate understanding of visual language, expression and meaning in the work of self and others.
- 3 Analyse and interpret artworks and art practices through the formal and cultural contexts.
- 4 Evaluate influences to examine how diverse symbol systems are used by artists to communicate meaning.
- 5 Justify viewpoints using evidence of communication in artworks.
- 6 Experiment in response to symbol systems used by artists to communicate meaning.
- 7 Create visual responses with multiple meanings and representations using knowledge and understanding of media.
- 8 Realise responses to demonstrate how meaning is communicated through art forms.

VISUAL LANGUAGE IS CAPABLE  
OF EXPRESSING COMPLEX IDEAS

Chapter 7



FIGURE 7.2 Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire and Château Noir*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 66.2 x 82.1 cm

# 7.1 What are codes and symbols?

When we first think of codes, we associate them with secrecy, to be able to send a message to a recipient without other people knowing what the message is. We use codes every day. The words on this page are codes: they are shapes on a page, but when you see them, your brain interprets them as having a meaning. The words on this page can also have a sound when you read them out aloud. If the recipient can understand the English language, they can read and hear the words and understand them.

Quite simply, a code is a system representing information used to convey a message. In visual art, codes are used extensively, the combination of codes forms the *visual language* and *expression* in an artwork.

## Visual language and expression

Visual language and expression are at the heart of communicating in visual art. Visual language is constructed through the elements of art, which are organised by the principles of design. This can result in infinite possibilities for expression of ideas, as you can see when you look at the many examples of artworks in this text. Due to common understandings of visual language and expression, artworks have the power to bring us to tears, make us question our values or beliefs, call to us to take social action, make us laugh at ourselves and so much more.

## Visual language

Visual language is a type of code used by artists to make meaning in artworks. However, for an exchange of meaning to occur, artists must have an understanding of how an audience is likely to react to the artwork. The elements of art and the way they are organised have the ability to impact us emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. Artists capitalise on this.

You should actively practise using visual language terminology when talking and writing about your own and others' artworks. The more you engage with the terms, the easier it will be to

observe the elements of art and interpret them when analysing meaning. You will be required to decode, analyse, evaluate and reflect on how you and other artists create meaning using visual language and expression in each of the internal and external assessment items in Years 11 and 12.

## Expression

Artists express their ideas in complex ways. While the art elements and the principles of design are the basic building blocks of all artworks, artists arrange and exploit this visual language to express their intentions. Artwork components such as subject matter, images, objects, mark-making, display and exhibition, stylistic conventions and materials can also contribute to the creation of **meaning**. The term expression refers to the creation of visual **symbol** systems through any of these components, including elements and principles, to communicate meaning.

## Expression varies between cultures and traditions

It is important to note that visual language and expression differ between cultures and traditions, so be aware that you also need to consider the cultural context of the artist when decoding and interpreting meaning from artworks.

For instance, space and depth have been communicated using a range of different **art conventions** throughout history and in different cultures. In Europe, the device of linear perspective was developed in the early 1400s to create an illusion of depth on a flat surface.

.....  
**meaning** in the arts, this refers to what an artist expresses in an artwork; or what a viewer understands and interprets from an artwork

**symbol** something that stands for something else or represents an idea; may be in the form of visual forms, gestures, words or sounds

**art conventions** established procedures used by artists to represent or organise ideas, convey meaning and create aesthetic value; for example, one-point and two-point perspective

.....



**FIGURE 7.3** Domenico Veneziano (1400 – c. 1461), *Annunciation* (detail from the predella of the Saint Lucy de' Magnoli Altarpiece), 1445–1450, tempera on panel, 27 x 54 cm

## Perspective

In this system, which artists in many cultures, including Australia, continue to use, parallel lines converge at a vanishing point on the composition's horizon line. See the example by Domenico Veneziano in Figure 7.3. The scene is depicted from a single viewpoint using overlapping, while objects decrease in size and detail as they recede into the distance.

In European art, prior to the discovery of linear perspective, compositions were organised using multiple viewpoints, and this is evident in Figure 7.4. The women are viewed from one angle as if we are looking into the painting, towards the scene. Conversely, the backgammon board is depicted from above as if we are looking down on it to see the details of the game. The lines on the striped carpet and cushion are parallel rather than converging and do not extend behind the figures.

Artists in different cultures invented different conventions for the arrangement of space. Notice in *Studying scholars in a garden* (Figure 7.5) that the spatial arrangement is vertical. This device was a feature of traditional Chinese scroll paintings. The subject matter is presented in an upwards direction rather than overlapping



**FIGURE 7.4** Alfonso X, called The Wise (1221–1284), *Women playing backgammon*, miniature from *Libro De Los Juegos (The Book of Games)*, 1283, Royal Library of the Monastery of El Escorial, Spain

in the European style. The mountains are in the distance at the top of the scroll rather than behind the middle ground and foreground as we would expect in linear perspective. Buildings and fence lines don't converge at a vanishing point but remain parallel. This way of composing a landscape allows the viewer's eye to wander between the scenes and become immersed in the experience of the journey through the space.



**FIGURE 7.5** *Studying scholars in a garden*, hanging scroll, date unknown (possibly Qing Dynasty)

## DISCUSS

What else do you notice about the size and details in *Studying scholars in a garden* (Figure 7.5) compared to those in *Annunciation* (Figure 7.3)?

Australian First Nations and Torres Strait Islander artists often depict space in a completely different way to the previous examples. *Ninjikli*, (Figure 7.6) by Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori refers to the south-eastern coast of her Country on Bentinck Island. It is painted from a birds-eye view, like a map, as if looking down on the Country from the air. There is no horizon line or foreground or background. This painting expresses much more than simply the physical place. Gabori's painting is imbued with her deep spiritual connection to Country.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.1

Research and evaluate how spatial conventions have been applied in other cultures such as Māori and Japanese art.



**FIGURE 7.6** Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori (c. 1924–2015), Kaiadilt people, *Ninjikli*, 2008, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 198.8 x 460.6 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

## Literal and non-literal meaning

Meaning can be considered *literal* if the artwork is understood by a viewer to be what it appears to be, without any hidden meaning. In contrast, *non-literal* meaning is arrived at when a viewer interprets symbolic meaning inherent in the components of the artwork.

For example, *Ninjilki* (Figure 7.6) by Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori can literally be appreciated and understood as a beautiful arrangement of shapes, colours and mark-making, or even as a map of geographical features of the island, such as the lagoon. Non-literally, the painting can be understood as a spiritual expression of the artist's Country.

Gabori paints to Country rather than about it. Her work references her birthplace, her husband's Country, significant features of the landscape, memories and family. They are expressed through shapes, colours and mark-making that are deeply **symbolic** to the artist.

We can discover and make informed and justified statements about the non-literal meanings in artworks by reading about artists' practices and their intentions, and also by developing and practicing a vocabulary of symbols in our own artmaking and responding.

• • • • •  
**symbolic** representing or identified by a symbol or symbols  
• • • • •

## 7.2 Elements of art

Elements of art are evident in all artworks in varying combinations and levels of complexity. They are the basic components of artworks. They include but are not limited to line, shape, colour, tone, texture and form.

### Line

Line is a mark that connects two points. Lines have more length than width. They can lead the viewer's eye: it may be an *actual* line, for example, a positive mark on a surface; or an *implied* line; for example, a negative linear space between two shapes.

Horizontal lines suggest calmness, vertical lines suggest strength and stability, diagonal lines suggest excitement and movement.

### Line vocabulary

Aggressive, arcing, bold, broken, chaotic, continuous, contour, convergent, delicate, diagonal, energetic, feathery, fine, fluid, horizontal, implied, incised, linear, longitudinal, loose, nervous, outline, parallel, perpendicular, radiating, regular, repetitious, scratched, searching, sensitive, serpentine, spiralling, squiggle, sweeping, tentative, undulating, uneven, uniform, vertical, wispy, zigzag ...



**FIGURE 7.7** Albrecht Durer (1471–1528), *Self-portrait with a Bandage*, 1492, pen drawing on paper 204 x 208 mm. Durer's self-portrait, created with minimal use of flowing lines, gives us a sense of the pain and misery he might be feeling. Hatching and cross-hatching has built up three-dimensional form and details around the eyes, hand and mouth, allowing viewers to interpret the emotions of the sitter. The rest of the figure is implied with sketchy contour lines.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.2

Each element of art in this section has a useful list of vocabulary to assist with building your knowledge of visual language terminology and descriptive vocabulary. Take some time to look up definitions for words you are unfamiliar with and find or draw examples to illustrate them. Practise using the vocabulary when talking and writing about your own and others' art.

### Tone

Tone refers to light and shadow or how dark or light something appears. Tone depends on a light source such as the sun or a light bulb, but this may not be visible in the artwork. Tone can range from black to white with many grey tones between them, as might be seen in a black and white photograph. Tone also refers to the darkness and lightness of colour and sometimes this is referred to as value.

Tone can be used to create the illusion of form in two-dimensional artworks. This is evident in Chuck Close's portrait *Fanny/Fingerpainting* (Figure 7.8) which appears three dimensional.

Tone can suggest or evoke various moods. Artworks containing dark shadows may evoke melancholy or anger while those which contain a lot of light may suggest opposite emotional responses.

### Tone vocabulary

Blended, blurry, bright, **chiaroscuro**, crosshatched, dark, dense, dramatic, ethereal, flat, grey, grungy, hatched, hazy, highlights, light, luminous, mid, monotonous, muted, radiant, realistic, scribbled, shadowy, smoky, smudgy, stippled, subdued, subtle, tonal, **tonal gradation**, tonality ...

**chiaroscuro** Italian for 'light-dark' using juxtaposition of darkest and lightest tones to emphasise a focal point. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* capitalises on chiaroscuro to create a dramatic portrait. The brightly lit face abuts the dark shape of negative space, creating maximum contrast.

**tonal gradation** a gradual lightening or darkening



**FIGURE 7.8** Chuck Close, *Fanny/Fingerpainting*, 1985, oil on canvas, 259.1 x 213.4 x 6.3 cm. Close's large-scale tonal painting of his mother-in-law was created in an unconventional way, by dabbing the canvas with his paint-covered fingertips. From a distance the painting resembles a black and white photograph.



**FIGURE 7.9** Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, 1665, 44.5 x 39 cm. Vermeer was famous for his mastery of tone, seen here in his use of chiaroscuro to draw attention to the girl's face.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.3

Search online for examples of tonal techniques such as hatching, crosshatching, stippling and blending. Use these techniques to draw simple forms, such as a piece of crumpled paper.

Explore a range of unconventional art materials, techniques, technologies and processes for making tones, like fingerprinting as Chuck Close did in his portrait of Fanny in Figure 7.8.

Compare your emotional responses to *Fanny/Fingerpainting* (Figure 7.8) and *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Figure 7.9). How does tone evoke mood in each case?

making colour choices to achieve their intentions. In other words, decisions about what their work will look like and how they would like an audience to react.

### Primary colours

The colour wheel is constructed around three primary colours: yellow, red and blue.

All the other colours are derived from these three colours. Primary colours cannot be made by mixing other colours.

### Secondary colours

Mixing two primary colours results in a secondary colour:

- red + yellow = orange
- red + blue = purple
- blue + yellow = green.

### Intermediate secondary colours (sometimes called tertiary colours)

Mixing a secondary colour with the primary colour beside it results in an intermediate colour. These are: blue-green, yellow-green, red-orange, yellow-orange, blue-purple, red-purple.

## Colour

Colour is determined by the range of light that is reflected off objects and perceived by the human eye. In Visual Art, we refer to a colour wheel to understand colour relationships. Artists use their knowledge of the colour wheel when



FIGURE 7.10 The colour wheel is a valuable tool that will assist you to create your intended meaning.

## Saturated and desaturated colours

The colour wheel contains the purest and most saturated version of each colour. These bright colours are sometimes referred to as hues. To desaturate a colour or take the brightness out of it, artists might add white, black or the colour opposite it on the colour wheel.

## Tints and shades

Black and white are not on the colour wheel but they are used to mix with colours to make them lighter or darker.

- Tints are created when white is added; for example, red and white make pink, a tint of red.
- Shades are created when black is added. For example, black and blue make navy blue. Navy blue is a shade of blue.

## Brown

Brown is not on the colour wheel. Sometimes brown is referred to as a tertiary or a neutral colour. Mixing complementary or opposite colours together in varying amounts can result in a range of desaturated tones of a colour, including browns and greys. These are useful for painting shadows, skin tones and creating a variety of colours.

## Colour relationships and their effects

Once we understand the mechanics of the colour wheel, we can use it to determine which colours to use to create visual and emotional effects.



**FIGURE 7.11** Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire and Château Noir*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 66.2 x 82.1 cm

## Complementary colour scheme

Complementary colours sit opposite each other on the colour wheel. For example, red and green. When placed beside each other they provide maximum contrast and appear brighter than they actually are. Using complementary pairs creates vivid and visually interesting and exciting imagery, as in Figure 7.11. The orange building in *Mont Sainte-Victoire and Château Noir* is emphasised due to its contrast with the predominately blue landscape and is therefore the focal point.

## Analogous colour scheme

Colours that sit beside each other on the colour wheel are called analogous. An analogous colour scheme may include between 3 and 5 colours that all sit beside one another. They are similar because they are made with the same or similar primary colours and we refer to their effect as harmonious. The effect on a viewer is pleasing and calming. An example is blue, blue-green, blue as seen in the mesmerising installation by Spencer Tunick in Figure 7.12. The analogous colour scheme of various blues and greens painted onto naked volunteers reflects the colours found in marine paintings in Hull's Ferens Art Gallery.

## Monochromatic colour scheme

When tints, shades and tones of one colour are exclusively used in an artwork, we refer to it as monochromatic (*mono* means one and *chroma* means colour in Ancient Greek).



**FIGURE 7.12** Spencer Tunick, *Sea of Hull*, installation in Kingston upon Hull in England on 9 July 2016

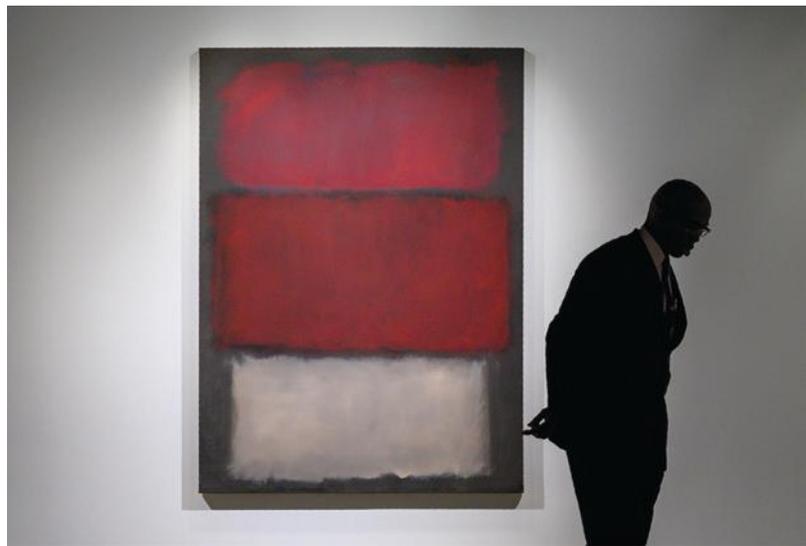
Monochromatic colour schemes are harmonious and unified because of the similarity of the colours. This is evident in Mark Rothko's painting in Figure 7.13. Rothko (1903–1970) explored the nuances of colour and its effects in large-scale *abstract* paintings, known as colour fields. He applied thin layers of colour to build up rich monochromatic surfaces.

### Warm and cool colour schemes

It is easy enough to look at the colour wheel and determine which colours are warm and which are cool. We can do this by thinking about the associations we have, and audiences might have, with particular colours.

Warm colours such as yellow, orange and red, as in Figure 7.14, remind us of fire, deserts, heat and summer. Depending on the experiences of your audience they might evoke excitement, or energy. Warm colours create an illusion of advancing forward in the picture plane of a two-dimensional work. So, to maximise depth, use warm colours in the foreground.

Cool colours remind us of cool weather, ice, snow, rainforests, rivers and the ocean. These are greens,



**FIGURE 7.13** A security guard watches over an untitled painting by Mark Rothko at Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art and Contemporary Art auctions, 3 May 2019 in New York.

blues and blue-purples. These colours are more likely to create an emotion of calmness. Cool colours create an illusion of receding into the background of a two-dimensional work. So, using them in the background will add to the illusion of depth.



**FIGURE 7.14** Nike Savvas, *Atomic: full of love, full of wonder*, 2005, installation at Art Gallery of NSW. Over 50 000 suspended polystyrene balls oscillated with wind from electric fans. The work capitalises on warm colours to suggest a hot Australian landscape.

### Colour theory is a science

Paint brands have their own formulae, so when mixing paint pigment the **hue** and tone may vary from what you expect, causing some frustration. The reason is that colours have a warm or cool temperature depending on the product additives and the pigment tone. Some red pigments, like cadmium red, tend to have warmer undertones, while alizarin crimson tends to have a cooler undertone. Cerulean blue is perceived as warm when compared with ultramarine blue, which is generally considered a cool blue. A useful strategy is to mix colour using the warm and cool versions of the same hue separately, and also together when referencing the colour wheel.

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**hue** the most saturated version of a colour is referred to as hue. It is also interchangeable with the word colour.

..... .. .

### Colour systems in digital artmaking

RGB and CMYK are also systems that each have their own way of producing colour. They differ to the colour wheel. RGB stands for Red, Green, and Blue. Colours are made by mixing different amounts of light on a screen. CMYK stands for Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Key (which means black). This system is used for digital and offset printing. The four colours are mixed in different amounts so we can create many hue variations on paper. So, when you draw on a computer, you use RGB, and when you make digital prints or prepare for offset printing, you use CMYK. Each system has its own way of making colours, and they are all important for creating effective imagery.

## Cultural and symbolic associations with colour

Colour can be associated with rituals and spiritual beliefs and may mean different things in different cultures. For instance, green in Western cultures, like Australia, is a cultural symbol for fertility, and sustainability but in some South American countries, which are rich in rainforest, green is a symbol of death. In Asian cultures, red is considered a positive colour; however, it can also carry mixed messages in a cross-cultural context. For instance, in Chinese culture, red is interpreted as a colour of good luck, happiness and prosperity. However, in certain situations and in Western culture, red is used to indicate danger or a warning, potentially causing confusion between cultures. The use of white to represent purity, mourning, funerals and weddings is another example of how a specific cultural context might change the symbolism of colour.

### Colour vocabulary

Bright, brilliant, broken colour, calming, colourless, dappled, deep, discoloured, drab, earthy, emotional, explosive, flat, flecked, fluorescent, glowing, harsh, hue, intense, layered, limited, loud, muddy, muted, pale, pure, radiant, realistic, sickly, sombre, stimulating, subdued, symbolic, tinged, translucent, transparent, unconventional, unexpected, unnatural, vivid, washed out ...



## Shape

Shape refers to a two-dimensional area enclosed by line. Shapes can be described as geometric or organic.

- Geometric shapes are based on the principles of mathematics, such as a triangle, square, circle. They suggest order, organisation, predictability.
- Organic shapes are similar to those found in nature. They are irregular in appearance. They may seem imperfect, flowing or unpredictable.

## Shape vocabulary

Angular, blob-like, circular, clean, complex, concentric, convoluted, curvilinear, curving, cut-out, deformed, distorted, elliptical, elongated, filled-in, flat, flowing, geometric, graceful, natural, negative, organic, positive, realistic, regular, relaxed, rounded, silhouette, silhouetted, simple, snaking, solid, tapered, triangular ...

## Form, mass and volume

### Form

Form refers to three-dimensionality. Form can be actual or implied.

- Actual forms, such as sculptures, have height, width and depth.



**FIGURE 7.16** Yayoi Kusama, *The Spirits of the Pumpkins Descended Into the Heavens*. Installation was photographed in 2021 in Berlin. Kusama (born in 1929) has used circles as a recurring motif in her artworks throughout her lifetime.

- Implied forms are illusions of 3-dimensionality on a 2-dimensional surface. For instance, when tone is used to create the illusion of realism in a drawing.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.5

Search through the textbook to find examples of implied form in 2-dimensional artworks.

## Mass and volume

Mass and volume are characteristics of 3-dimensional artworks.

- Mass is the impression that the volume of the form is solid and occupies space. *Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial*, Figure 7.17, appears solid and weighty because it is made from concrete and steel, is grand in scale and solid. In comparison, Do-Ho Suh's diaphanous fabric toilet in Figure 7.18, seems weightless because it is transparent and made with a flimsy material.
- Volume is the amount of space occupied by a physical object. Even if an object is not completely enclosed with a solid material it can be described as having open volume. The sculpture, *Maman*, Figure 7.19, has open volume. While it occupies a large area, viewers can interact with the form by walking through the open spaces within the work.



**FIGURE 7.17** Designed by UK artist Rachel Whiteread, the *Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial*, also known as the *Nameless Library* is located Vienna, Austria. It commemorates the 65 000 Austrian Holocaust victims. Unveiled in 2000, it is a steel and concrete construction with a base measuring 10 x 7 metres and a height of 3.8 metres.



**FIGURE 7.18** Do-Ho Suh poses with his sculpture, *Specimen Series: 348 22nd Street, APT, New York, NY 10011, USA – Toilet*, 2013, stainless steel frame and sheer polyester fabric

## Useful vocabulary

Ancient, architectural, balanced, bulbous, closed, concave, contained, convex, dense, diagonal, draped, effigious, effigy, ephemeral, feminine, figurative, figurine, fine, floppy, flowing, fluid, free-standing, grotesque, hand built, handmade, hollow, horizontal, hybrid, kinetic, leaning, maquette, masculine, massive, mechanical, misaligned, misshapen, monumental, movable, muscular, narrow, natural, open, organic, ornate, pierced, recognisable, relief, scattered, spiralling, structural, tall, tilted, traditional, transient, vertical, voluminous, voluptuous, wide, wobbly ...

## Texture

Texture relates to how something feels or appears to feel; texture can be both actual and implied.

- Actual texture exists on any real, three-dimensional textured surface.
- Implied, also known as simulated or visual texture is the illusion of texture on a two-dimensional surface; can be created using tones, lines and colours.



**FIGURE 7.19** This enormous cast bronze sculptural form of a spider was temporarily exhibited at the Kunsthalle Museum in Hamburg, Germany in 2012. Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999, bronze 9271 x 8915 x 10 236 mm



**FIGURE 7.20** Rising 6 metres into the air, a giant, scaled-up cast of artist César Baldaccini's (1921–1998) thumb is displayed outside the Centre Georges Pompidou art centre in Paris, 2017. The surface of the massive sculpture, named *Le Pouce* (The Thumb), is covered with expected textures of an ordinary thumb, such as creases at the knuckle, fingerprint swirls and a smooth fingernail. At the same time the shiny texture of bronze communicates a sense of importance and wealth. The towering scale of the thumb and its golden colour contribute to our understanding of its importance.

## Useful vocabulary

Abrasive, bristly, chalky, cheesy, coarse, corroded, corrugated, diaphanous, feathery, fibrous, fine, flaky, fluffy, glassy, granular, hairy, hyper-realistic, industrial, leathery, linear, metallic, natural, papery, perforated, pitted, realistic, regular, rough, rugged, scratchy, silken, slippery smooth, spongy, synthetic, threadbare, undulating, unnatural, velvety, woolly, woven, wrinkled ...



**FIGURE 7.21** Stefano Torelli (1712–1784), *Portrait of Empress Catherine the Great*, late 18th century, oil on canvas. The coronation robe of Catherine II, Empress of Russia, has been painted with such incredible detail and realism that the luxurious textures of her richly bejewelled crown and flowing silken robe seem life-like and attest to her great importance.

## 7.3 Principles of design

Principles of design are guidelines used to arrange the art elements into 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional **compositions**. They are not limited to those listed here. There are many useful and accurate online sources to support your learning of the principles of design.

• .....

**composition** the arrangement of art elements using art principles to create an artwork. Refers to the way the elements and principles are combined to communicate ideas to a viewer

• .....

### Balance

Balance refers to the organisation of elements to create a sense of stability, equilibrium or visual pleasure. Unbalanced artworks make a viewer feel uncomfortable and might be deliberately composed to do so, although they

are rare. Artists usually aim for a visually pleasing sense of balance.

### Symmetrical balance

Symmetrical (formal) balance is when an image or form is equally weighted on both sides of a central axis: it can apply to vertical, horizontal or diagonal symmetry. We think of each side being a mirror of the other. Symmetrical compositions it can appear static, predictable and not very visually interesting.

### Radial balance

Radial symmetry describes an image or form that is symmetrical on opposite sides around a central point, as if radiating from that point. Think of a bike wheel. It can generate interest and is visually appealing because it usually involves diagonals, it although can be predictable.

## Grids to create balance

Grids are a useful way to arrange elements to create balance and order. Elements of the composition arranged between equidistant, actual or implied grid lines will create a steady, calming and harmonious composition. They can be static and predictable if variety is lacking.

## Asymmetrical balance

Asymmetrical (informal) balance is the most dynamic way to organise compositions. It is achieved when the distribution of visual weight on either side of the central vertical axis is not mirrored but is dependent on various factors, including:

### Position

Elements near the outside edges of a composition appear heavier than those near the centre.

### Size

Larger elements appear heavier than smaller elements. A group of smaller objects will balance a larger object.

### Colour

Bright colours appear heavier than muted colours; a small area of bright colour will balance a larger area of muted colour.

### Tones

Darker tones appear heavier than lighter tones; a small area of dark tone will balance a larger area of lighter tones.

### Texture

Busy texture appears heavier than sparse texture; a small, detailed area will balance a larger less detailed area.

### Repetition

The recurrent use of art elements in a work of art often creates movement, pattern, unity or rhythm.

## Contrast

Refers to visual difference. Dramatic contrast between elements in close proximity to each other draws the viewer's attention to a particular part of a composition, creating a focal point through emphasis.

## Emphasis/focal point

Focal point refers to the specific part of an artwork the viewer's eye is drawn to first. More than one focal point can draw the viewer's eye around the composition creating a sense of movement or rhythm. Focal points can be clues to understanding an artist's intended meaning. Focal points can be created by isolation, position, contrast and directional lines.

## Harmony and variety

Similarity between the elements in an artwork creates harmony. Harmony is calming because there is no element or component that dominates. It contributes to a sense of unity.

The opposite of harmony is variety. Varying an aspect of the artwork will create interest. Too much harmony can be boring while too much variety may be confusing.

## Unity

Unity, or oneness, is achieved when the arrangement of all of the parts of the artwork creates a feeling of visual completeness, coherence and wholeness. Strategies for creating unity include placing elements in close proximity to each other, similarity between the elements, reducing variety and continuation. Continuation occurs when parts of the composition point to, or lead the viewer's eye, to another part.

## Scale

Scale refers to the overall physical size of an artwork or objects in the artwork, in relation to the human body. Therefore, we can talk about artworks being large-scale, scaled-up, small-scale, scaled-down, life-sized or realistic in scale. Artists manipulate scale to create a visual impact and an emotional response.

## Space

Artists manipulate space in two and three dimensions to communicate meaning.

- Three-dimensional artworks are surrounded by space. For example, sculptures may protrude into space, enclose space or contain open spaces or voids.

- Space in two-dimensional artworks:
  - We can talk about positive space as the subject and negative space as the area around it.
  - Space can also refer to the illusion of depth on a flat surface, created through the use of techniques such as overlapping shapes or forms, linear and aerial perspective.

## Movement

In three-dimensional art works, movement can literally refer to the way a kinetic sculpture moves.

In two-dimensional works, it is achieved when art elements lead a viewer's eye through an artwork, creating rhythm, direction, or unity.

## Time-based elements

When making and responding to *time-based media* there is a range of elements that can be organised according to the principles of design. There is a wealth of online sources to draw from when researching time-based media conventions. Students are encouraged to use the following suggested elements as starting points to enhance their work and to consider the impact, meaning and emotional responses they may contribute.

## Time

Manipulating time can include slow-motion footage, sped-up footage, time-lapsed footage, real-time footage or durational performances, as



**FIGURE 7.22** Nick Cave, *Heard*, performance and installation at Carriageworks, Sydney, 2016. Cave's time-based artwork involves dancers wearing elaborately decorated costumes he calls sound suits.

in Marina Abramović's practice (see example in Figure 7.23). Each is characterised by its own visual aesthetic and engages the audience in different ways. For instance, slowing a very fast activity down forces the audience to see it in great detail, with fresh eyes, and changes our perceptions of time.

## Movement

Movement of the subject or camera can impact an emotional response. For instance, a shaky hand-held camera following a running figure may maximise the generation of anxiety and fear, while moving shot-types, such as panning and tilting build anticipation in a viewer.

## Sound

Depending on the artist's intention, silence can be as powerful as sound, especially if they are juxtaposed in a soundscape. Volume, rhythm, layers of sound, white noise, ambient noise, can all be exploited to strengthen and add meaning to visual information.

## Lighting

When filming or editing, emotional impact can be added and manipulated by lighting choices. Different effects can be achieved by natural light, artificial light, spotlights, daylight, candlelight, back lighting, lack of light.



**FIGURE 7.23** Performance artist Marina Abramović carried out an extended durational performance, *The Artist Is Present* at New York's MoMA in 2010. The artist, seen in this image in the red dress, invited audience members to sit in silence with her, for as long as they wished, looking into her eyes.

## Colour

As in two and three-dimensional artworks, colour can generate calculated emotional responses.

## Sequence

Sequence refers to the way the idea is presented to the audience. Traditional, linear or chronological narrative may suggest predictability and generate a sense of safety and calm. In comparison a reverse sequence may require more viewer participation and engagement.

## Pace

Pace refers to the speed with which ideas and images are presented. Fast and furious pacing might generate anxiety and stress in a viewer while slower paced information may seem less chaotic.

## Focus

Sharply focused imagery looks trustworthy and believable. Deliberately unfocused footage can

suggest confusion or the inability to see clearly. Focus can be narrow, creating a focal point or wide and expansive.

## Tone

Black and white and sepia tones can make historical references.

### Useful film-making conventions

- **180-degree rule** is a rule in continuity editing that states the position of the camera should never change the right-to-left relationships of characters in a scene.
- **30-degree rule** is a shift in camera angle between successive shots of the same subject should exceed 30 degrees.

QCAA, Film, Television & New Media General Senior Syllabus 2019, v1.2

## 7.4 Decoding art

### INQUIRY LEARNING 7.6

Choose 3–5 emojis to express how you are feeling. Perhaps draw the emojis or copy this chart, cut out the emojis that symbolise your feelings and place them in a straight line from left to right.

- Swap your emoji message with a 'partner'.
- Decode your partner's emoji message.
- What were elements and principles of design you used to decode the emojis?
- What are the features of the emojis that helped decode the message?
- How did the emojis work together to provide an overall indication of your 'partner's' feelings?



FIGURE 7.24 Emoji chart

## Leigh Schoenheimer

*Glossy Black #1* and *Glossy Black #2* build a story to convey a message, with the consequences growing as the images are viewed together. Schoenheimer aims to capture attention through stylistically diverse images, shared symbology and carefully calibrated colour harmonies that oscillate between distinctly different yet visually coherent narratives.



**FIGURE 7.25** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Glossy Black #1*, triptych, acrylic on ply, with cut plywood shape and gloss medium, 137 x 61 cm. Private collection. Addressing the plight of the Queensland glossy black cockatoo

The glossy black cockatoo, found across eastern Australia, is the smallest of the five species of black cockatoo living here. Due to a decline in habitat and seeds, *C. lathami* or the glossy black cockatoo is listed as vulnerable by the Queensland Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.



**FIGURE 7.26** Leigh Schoenheimer, *Glossy Black #2*, triptych, acrylic on ply, with cut plywood shape and gloss medium, 137 x 61 cm. Private collection. Addressing the plight of the Queensland glossy black cockatoo

Beyond its attention-grabbing graphic-design power, the target symbol has evolved as a metaphor in my environmentally themed paintings. It appears often in my work, as a way of saying ‘look here! – ‘pay attention!’ – ‘focus on this’ – ‘we need to target this issue’.

LEIGH SCHOENHEIMER ON USING TARGET MOTIFS AS A CODE (IN CONVERSATION)

### DISCUSS

Identify the symbols and objects in the imagery and chart what they communicate as codes.

As a starting point what might the hand suggest about human intervention in the environment?

Looking at the pixelated central panel of Figure 7.26 – which modernist art theory does this technique approach reference?

Schoenheimer’s body of work, *The Meaning of (Still) Life: An Unnatural History*, presents ecological narratives about Australia’s threatened species and environmental issues via a set of expanded, conceptual, still life paintings that feature symbols, metaphor and text to present narratives around biodiversity issues.

In each work, a realistic, still life painting is juxtaposed with a set of appropriated clip art equivalences sourced from Google searches. Text panels provide another interpretive layer in many of the works.

Utilising a panoply of sources, styles and symbols these works are simultaneously a study in semiotics – inviting a decoding of visual language and ideas – and a precautionary tale about the plight of our natural environment.

LEIGH SCHOENHEIMER (IN CONVERSATION)

Viewing the three-panel works becomes a decoding process as the viewer searches for clues that are both literal and conceptual. New languages are continuously developing through the impacts of technology on our connectivity and visual environment. Emojis, clip art and words from the computer keyboard (Control, Shift, Return, Escape, Alt etc) are codes that take on new meanings in Schoenheimer's compositions. Codes are key organisers of knowledge in areas such as science or a cultural form of dialogue that continually changes, reflecting an identity that is not necessarily accessible to all and therefore motivate further enquiry.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 7.7

Investigate artworks where text is referenced in or as imagery and consider its function and purpose. Does it convey coded knowledge or cultural meaning?

Schoenheimer cites American artist Robert Indiana as influential in her decision to explore text as code, form and colour to communicate messages in her works. Research the history of Indiana's *Love* sculpture being recognised around the world and discover how people have responded to the image being replicated around the world!



**FIGURE 7.27** Robert Indiana's *Love* – stacked serif capital letters with the tilted o, remains publicly acclaimed around the world. People felt they owned the concept. In response, Indiana has authorised over 50 versions in many languages.

### DISCUSS

As language is technically a code, interesting questions arise around appropriation and when it is valid.

Australian artists Tony Albert and Jon Campbell offer diverse examples of the application of text.

Albert's *Sorry* is an Australian political statement steeped in the search for reconciliation, while Campbell uses snippets of conversation, vernacular words and phrases typically associated with Australia yet not always understood outside the country.

Like Schoenheimer, Campbell transforms the original function of the words by applying the conventions of formal abstraction to both confuse and to elevate them to a pictorial object.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 7.8

Experiment with the use of text or words as visual elements that communicate meaning. Numbers, and short words such as *eat*, *hug*, *die* and *hope*, remain embedded in Robert Indiana's visual repertoire. A simple cut and paste exercise using recycled printed material, photocopied multiples or a design function on your computer will get you started.

Research Schoenheimer's use of code across her practice. Explore the commonly featured target and trace the links back to Jasper Johns.

### About the artist

Brisbane artist Leigh Schoenheimer engages in a multidisciplinary contemporary art practice, emphasising vibrant paintings and assemblage constructions. Her work frequently explores the codes in the images she creates, through

colourful, multi-panel still-life compositions, often addressing environmental themes.

Schoenheimer's distinctive sculptures, which often share the visual language of her paintings, add a playful and inquisitive element. Her art seamlessly blends aesthetic appeal with intellectual depth.

## Focus: codes, symbols, signs and art conventions

The role of the artist is to use codes, symbols and signs that are often unconscious to the everyday person and bring them into their conscious thinking. The artist may purposely combine what

appear to be unrelated signs in an attempt to jolt the viewer's thinking; to make them ask: 'What is this about?'

Your aim through your art-making is to find signs and symbols that have meaning to you and combine them with art making conventions to create an impact on your audience.

## Codes in our everyday

Experiment with language in art that can be verbal, inaudible, literal or implied, narrative, metaphoric, persuasive, or decorative.

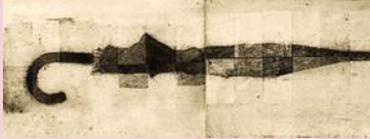
Visual Art General Senior Syllabus 2025 v1.1, © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2024, licensed under CC BY 4.0

**TABLE 7.1** METAPHORS, METONYMS, ALLEGORIES, ICONS, SYMBOLS, MYTHS AND OLD SAYINGS

	DEFINITION	ARTWORK EXAMPLE	MEANING
Metaphor	an expression, often found in literature, that describes a person or object by referring to something that is considered to have similar characteristics to that person or object	 <p>Sancintya Mohini Simpson, <i>Vessel (iteration #2)</i>, 2020</p>	Simpson substitutes the meaning of the <i>lota</i> vessel from an everyday object to that of a human or boat.
Metonym	a word or expression that refers to something using the name of one of its qualities or features	 <p>Jonathan Tse, <i>Portrait of an Australian Medium</i>, hand screenprinted artist's book</p>	Tse uses a passport with personal images printed on each page as a representation of all immigrants to Australia
Allegory	a story, play, poem, picture, or other work in which the characters and events represent particular moral, religious, or political qualities or ideas	 <p>Sancintya Mohini Simpson, <i>kūlī / karambu</i>, 2020-2021</p>	This style of miniature watercolour paintings was traditionally done for wealthy families or to tell a religious story, but Simpson has employed this process to change the narrative to tell of the stories of those that were indentured workers on sugar cane farms.

(Continued)

**TABLE 7.1** METAPHORS, METONYMS, ALLEGORIES, ICONS, SYMBOLS, MYTHS AND OLD SAYINGS (*Continued*)

	DEFINITION	ARTWORK EXAMPLE	MEANING
Icon	a very famous person or thing considered as representing a set of beliefs or a way of life	 <p>Bruce Reynolds, <i>Bullet points</i>, 2021</p>	Reynolds combined three iconic objects: a spear head, a small boat and a cypress pine. The three 'bullet points' can be found in most cultures and countries; they tie together most peoples of the world.
Symbol	anything used to represent something else, such as a sign or mark, a person or an event	 <p>Glen Skien, <i>Umbrella</i>, 2008, etching (detail)</p>	The umbrella, for Skien, is symbolic for when he moved to Brisbane. He had never owned an umbrella before. The black umbrella is also symbolic of European middle-aged men.
Myth	a traditional story, especially one which explains the early history or a cultural belief or practice of a group of people, or explains a natural event	 <p>Urs Fischer, <i>A - Z</i>, 2019, Edition of 2 &amp; 2 AP © Urs Fischer. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian. Photographer: Stefan Altenburger</p>	Fruit is good for us, yet in many stories fruit is a symbol of human weakness and poor decisions. Fruit is depicted as a point of temptation and once consumed there is no ability to reverse the decision.
Old sayings	a well-known expression or wise statement	 <p>Yasumasa Morimura, <i>Blinded by the light</i>, 1991</p>	<p>While the work could be read as an ironic view of 1980s consumer excess, closer inspection reveals the artist's layers of meaning against a background lifted from Pieter Bruegel's painting <i>Parable of the blind</i>, 1568 (Collection: Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples).</p> <p>Each of the protagonists in <i>Blinded by the light</i> (played by the artist himself) is blinded or masked by an element of his or her own personal paraphernalia: a baby is covered in heavy lacy clothing, an artist is weighed down by his tools of trade, a soldier wears a pair of hand grenades in lieu of field glasses, and, most conspicuously, a flamboyant parody of a Ginza shopper is outfitted in designer garb, groaning under an abundance of jewellery and shopping bags. One of these bags is labelled 'Morimura', suggesting a self-referential critique of the commodification of art and of the successful artist as an identifiable 'brand'.</p> <p>Source: QAGOMA website, 'Blinded by the light'</p>

Source for definitions: Cambridge English Dictionary

## 7.5 Interpreting codes

### Cultural context

The cultural context informs the analysis and interpretation of the social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender, spiritual and secular beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, students explore cultural values, historical or current events, social pressures, and attitudes that impact on them and others, and determine the origins of social meaning communicated in artwork
- responding, students consider Aboriginal perspectives and Torres Strait Islander perspectives; regional, national, international, social and cultural identity of artists and audiences; and how artists use their work as a vehicle to invite change and provoke conversation.

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Let's focus on one object and consider how it can be employed symbolically across varied cultures and throughout history. Vessels are universal, they transverse all cultures. They have functional and decorative qualities. Their functionality varies depending on the task required, but all vessels hold or carry something such as, people, objects, food and liquids. The decorative qualities are achieved through many different processes depending on what the vessel is made from. Their overall form can vary greatly from ornate, tiny jewellery boxes to giant silos.

Watercraft are a specific type of vessel which have been used in compositions over millennia. Early representations portray events that would have occurred on a regular basis. The images are

symbolic of a time, a place and a culture, yet they have very similar qualities. Some of the earliest depictions can be seen in Indigenous rock art across northern Australia.

Visit the Western Australian Museum website at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10785> to read the report titled *Aboriginal watercraft depictions in Western Australia*. Compare the image *Rock painting of a canoe from the Kimberley* with the engraving from 2360 BC on the wall of the tomb of Princess Idut of Egypt (Figure 7.28) and the early 14th century medieval painting (Figure 7.29). Each image shows a group of men, from side perspective, in a small boat, fishing. The more recent images show some detail of clothing and equipment being used, the medieval painting features a greater spectrum of colour. The Indigenous rock painting appears as a monochromatic ochre silhouette painted onto the rock surface, whereas the Egyptian etching, also monochromatic, captures the light with its raised surfaces and creative shadows with deeper carved areas to generate a greater tonal range.



**FIGURE 7.28** A wall engraving in the tomb of Princess Idut at the Necropolis of Saqqara, Egypt, depicts a scene of fishing on the Nile. The tomb dates to around 2360 BC.



**FIGURE 7.29** Early 14th-century depiction of fishermen in a small boat, using a drift-net (British Library, Royal Mss. 2 B VII, folio 73).

The medieval painting has framed the scene as if in an ornate building, with patterned wallpaper as sky and an ornate filigree across the top of the frame. As much as the artworks are very similar in their content, the processes are extremely different and typical for the culture at the time.

The utilisation of sailing ships can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, Phoenicians, Romans and Chinese, which were used for trade and transport. From the 16th to the 18th century, water-faring vessels became more advanced with multiple masts and sails. Ocean travel became faster, which increased the movement of people and products from country to country. Throughout history, people have also been treated as a commodity, traded as slaves or cheap indentured labour. The JMW Turner painting *Slave Ship* (Figure 7.30) is



**FIGURE 7.30** JMW Turner (1775–1851), *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840, oil on canvas

based on an 18th century poem that described the horrific true story of a slave ship, the *Zong*, which was caught in a typhoon. The captain of the ship commanded the dead and dying slaves be thrown overboard so he could claim insurance for those 'lost at sea'. Turner's use of warm colours coupled with tumultuous brush strokes captures the horrendous scene, with glimpses of hands appearing out of the water in the foreground with the ship disappearing in the distance. Turner's *Slave Ship* acts as a metaphor for man's inhumanity to man.

Thirty years after Turner's tumultuous work *Slave Ship* was exhibited, the French impressionist Manet created the work *Boating* (Figure 7.31) showing very little of the actual boat and more of the finely dressed occupants and the beautiful calm turquoise water. The man steering the boat appears to be looking directly at the viewer, as if to engage the viewer in a more intimate conversation. The viewer is positioned as if they are also on the boat in this tranquil setting. The focus point created by Manet of the man's eyes draws the viewer into the composition, then the man's white clothes, which are centre in the composition, leads the viewer down the man's right shoulder to the woman's white hat. Manet's use of a cool analogous colour scheme creates a calm and serene atmosphere, inviting the viewer to be part of the boating activity.



**FIGURE 7.31** Edouard Manet, *Boating*, 1874, oil on canvas

Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's 70-metre-long black shiny inflatable lifeboat, *Law of the journey* (Figure 7.32) has a menacing mood. The giant inflatable lifeboat is a metaphor for the number of displaced people from war-torn countries attempting to find refuge in safer territories. Created during the greatest migration in human history, Weiwei first exhibited this work in Prague's National Gallery in 2017 when the Czech Republic refused to accept any refugees. He then exhibited the work on Sydney's Cockatoo Island to direct attention to the Australian government's immigration laws where refugees were maintained offshore, as Eve Sullivan (2018), states:

... these faceless figures mirror the void of Australia's own bureaucratic minefield of maintaining a policy of mandatory offshore detention and relocation through applying the full letter of the law to a relatively small number of individuals that might just as easily have been absorbed into our daily population intake coming in by plane.

EVE SULLIVAN (2018), 'EDITORIAL: HUMAN FLOW', *ARTLINK*

*Uncertain journey* (Figure 7.33) by Japanese artist Chiharu Shiota depicts a series of small black wire boats arranged to be facing the same direction. Emerging from within each boat are thousands of strands of red threads moving web-like toward the ceiling. The threads appear like smoke and

connect each of the boats. Each of the elements in *Uncertain journey* has a meaning. The red thread symbolises blood and the bloodlines that connect individuals to their family. The boats appear to be moving in the same direction, yet as the title suggests the journey is uncertain. As Shiota (cited in Kataoka, 2020, p. 64) states:

Threads become tangled, intertwined, broken off, unravelled. They constantly reflect a part of my mental state, as if they were expressing the state of human relationships.

KATAOKA, M. (2019), *SHIOTA CHIHARU: THE SOUL TREMBLES: EXHIBITION MORI ART MUSEUM*, 20 JUNE – 27 OCTOBER 2019, MORI ART MUSEUM, TOKYO

*Uncertain journey* is a metaphor for our journey through life, we can have goals and make plans but there are also situations we cannot control. The future brings many uncertainties, such as: What shall we do for income? Where shall we live? Will my friendships continue on? How will my health be in 10 years' time?

Euan Macleod is not so much interested in the landscape or the figure, but is interested in the figure in the landscape. The stark figures in his works are usually without clothing and are in a landscape that appears void of any human population. The figure is often with objects such as boats, shovels, wheelbarrows, paintings or coffins. The landscapes appear harsh and foreboding,

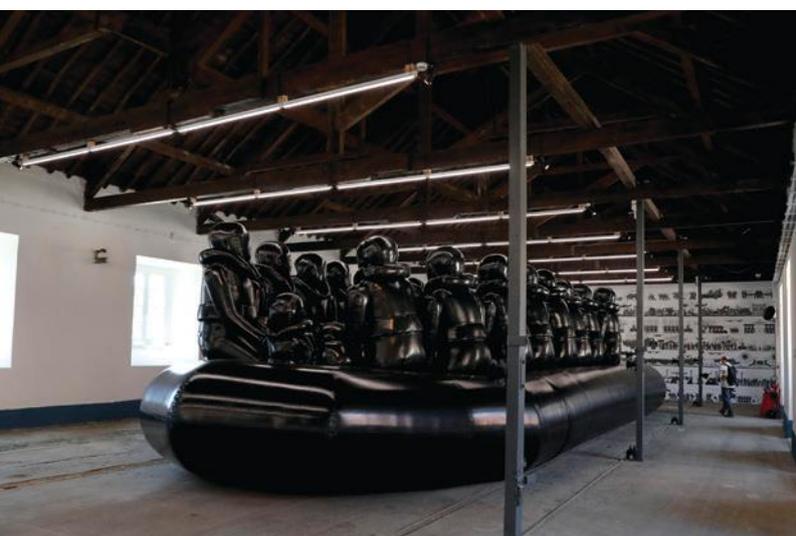


FIGURE 7.32 Ai Weiwei, *Law of the Journey (Prototype B)*, 2016, reinforced PVC with aluminium frame, 51 figures



FIGURE 7.33 Chiharu Shiota, *Uncertain journey*, 2016–2019

containing fire or rain or desert or scrub or ice. The figure appears to be constantly in a struggle within the landscape, often they are working or are solitary and appear contemplative. As Wilson states,

“Macleod takes us back to a time before colonial settlement of the land, when it was still free of the strictures of ownership and progress. He asks us to ponder the power of the environment around us and our own personal responses to it.

WILSON, G. (N.D.), *SURFACE TENSION: THE ART OF EUAN MACLEOD 1991–2009*, TWEED RIVER GALLERY, MURWILLUMBAH

Macleod, *Carrying Leaking Boat Darling River* 2019 (Figure 7.34) flips the narrative. We would normally see a river with flowing water, a boat on the water with someone in it. *Carrying Leaking Boat Darling River* shows a dry, arid riverbed with six men carrying a dinghy filled with water. The scenario appears unpleasant and hard work, forcing the viewer to ask questions. As Wilson states,

“The figure can be read as the artist himself, or as a symbolic representation of humanity. Macleod often includes elements such as fire and water, as well as objects such as boats and shovels which have personal significance to the artist. These elements also speak to the historical relationship of human interaction with the world, and our desire to conquer and tame our surroundings. His work ultimately resonates with a universal need to understand and belong to an environment.

WILSON, G. (N.D.), *SURFACE TENSION: THE ART OF EUAN MACLEOD 1991–2009*, TWEED RIVER GALLERY, MURWILLUMBAH

Macleod's artworks are a metaphor for the human condition and the constant struggles we have in life with our attempts to control what life throws at us.

Within Brian Robinson's *Fishing from the Milky Way*, 2022 (Figure 7.35) he has represented a traditional Torres Strait Island fishing canoe, which resembles



FIGURE 7.34 Euan Macleod, *Carrying Leaking Boat Darling River*, 2019

the ancient First Nations fishing boat rock painting of the Kimberley. A descendant of the Kala Lagaw Ya and Wuthathi language groups of the Torres Strait and Cape York Peninsula and growing up in a Roman Catholic family, Robinson amalgamates many traditional Torres Strait Island stories with religious iconography and Western kitsch culture. In many of Robinson's works the stars are a significant compositional element as Hart (2019) explains,

“Robinson prefaces his studio time with a stroll through the backyard, his head tilted back to read the maps, calendars and histories in the glittering night sky above. ‘I’ve been a stargazer for many years,’ he says. ‘I look up and I start connecting the dots. As a child, I learnt about what the stars meant in my community, to navigate, to hunt, to plant. These same constellations are described in contemporary astronomy and the antique zodiac; in black and white cultures from opposite ends of the earth. It’s an amazing thing to contemplate.’

HART, S. (2019, NOVEMBER 18), *IN THE STARS*, ART GUIDE AUSTRALIA



**FIGURE 7.35** Brian Robinson, *Fishing from the Milky Way*, 2022



**FIGURE 7.36** Andy Warhol, *Green Coca-Cola bottles*, 1962

An iconic vessel that has been depicted over time and across cultures is the Coca Cola bottle. Coca Cola has been the world's number one soft drink for decades. Andy Warhol produced a series of Coca Cola screen prints and paintings during the 1960s, an example is *Green Coca-Cola*

*bottles*, 1962 (Figure 7.36). The repeated motif of the bottle became a commentary on mass consumerism.

Political artist and activist Ai Weiwei branded a Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) jar with a Coca Cola logo. Merging two icons changes the meaning of the original urn. Ai created a hybrid of Chinese antiquity with capitalism; a comment on the shifting political nature of China in the early 1990s toward a manufacturing hub for the West.



**FIGURE 7.37** Ai Weiwei, *Han Dynasty Urn With Coca-Cola logo*, 1993

# 7.6 Devising symbols and signs

## Formal context

The formal context informs the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art elements and principles, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, students focus on the formal organisation and placement of visual components, experimenting with codes, symbols and art conventions, and the communicative value of art materials, techniques and processes
- responding, students decode artworks by reading the relationships between specific visual language, signs, symbols, codes and conventions that are used to transmit information and ideas in artworks.

QCAA, Visual Art 2025, v1.0, General senior syllabus, January 2024

## Colour

The study of colour is a science on many levels: each colour reflects a different light frequency; creating new colours is almost endless, and colours evoke emotions. Psychologist Professor Robert Plutchik developed the 'Wheel of emotion' (Figure 7.38) to help people articulate how they are feeling during counselling sessions.

The psychological research into colour has found colour has a strong effect on people's moods; for example, some people may feel anxious in a room with yellow walls, or feel calm in a room painted light green. Colour can also affect how a person purchases items, they may be more attracted to commodities with certain colours. According to psychologist Kendra Cherry (2022),

“While perceptions of colour are somewhat subjective, some colour effects have universal meanings.”

CHERRY, K. (2022, NOVEMBER 29), CAN COLOUR AFFECT YOUR MOOD AND BEHAVIOUR?, VERYWELL MIND

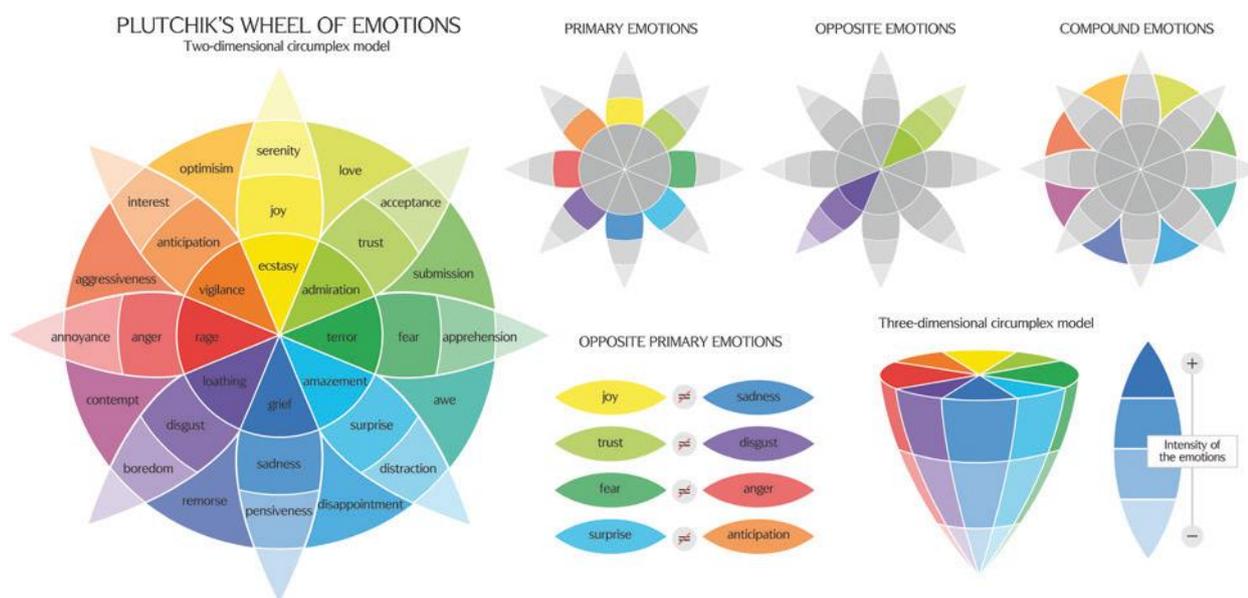


FIGURE 7.38 Wheel of emotion, developed by psychologist Professor Robert Plutchik, 1993

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.9

Analyse the following Bruce Reynolds' artworks then answer the questions below.



FIGURE 7.40 *Amphora*



FIGURE 7.41 *Lesson*, 2014



FIGURE 7.42 *Bulimba Hydria*



FIGURE 7.43 *City Reach Hydra*

- What predominant colour scheme does Reynolds use in each of the artworks?
- Which artwork do you find most aesthetic? Why?
- Describe the mood of each of the artworks.
- What colour/s create the mood in each of the works?

As can be seen in the 'The psychology of colours' (Figure 7.39), the colour of a composition can affect its mood or the feeling you have toward the artwork.

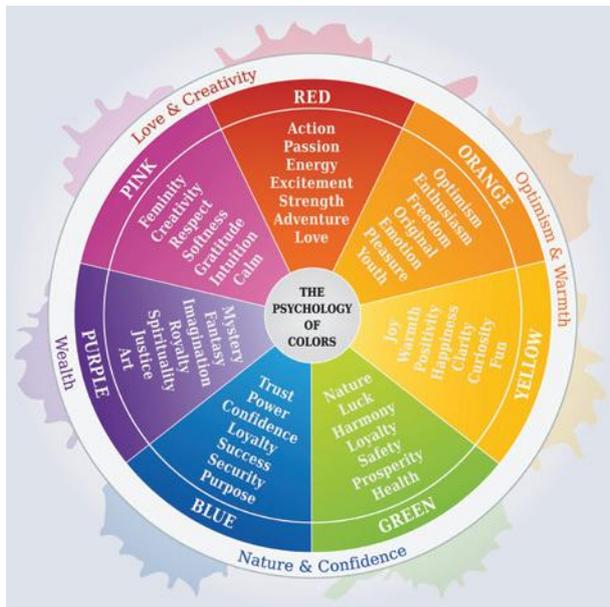


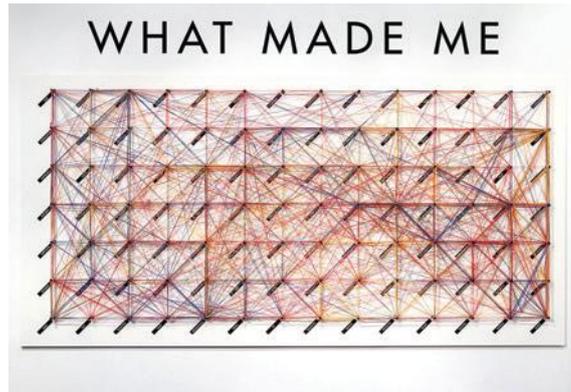
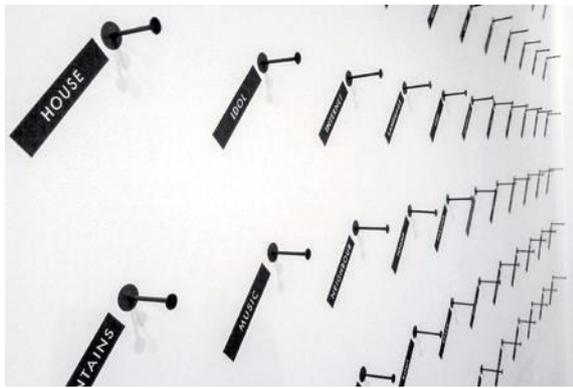
FIGURE 7.39 The psychology of colours

## Colour, line and shape

Combining colour with line and shape can increase emotional responses, as demonstrated in the following inquiry learning activity.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.10

- Compare the two artworks *Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)*, 1840 by JMW Turner (Figure 7.30) with Edouard Manet's *Boating*, 1874 (Figure 7.31).
- Compare the brush strokes of each of the artworks.
- Compare the colour schemes.
- How do the brush strokes and colour scheme affect the mood of the works?
- Compare the use of the human figures in each composition.
- How do the human figures affect the mood of the composition?



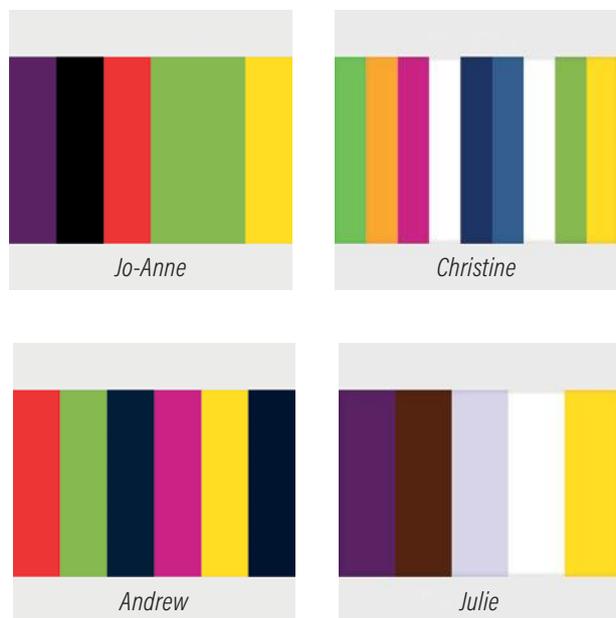
**FIGURE 7.44** Dora Grabkowska, Bernadette Sheridan, *What made me*, a participatory artwork which explores the fundamentals of what shapes us as individuals. It is an interactive and collaborative artwork which asks five questions: What made you: Think, Happy, Angry, Create and Change? The questions correlate with different coloured thread. The thread connects relevant words together which answer each question. Once the work is finished, the thread builds patterns of colour, line and shape, which provides a visual response creating an overall pattern.

Artist Bernadette Sheridan has always seen letters and numbers as colours. This is a type of synaesthesia (a neurological condition where a sensory input is associated with another sense) called grapheme-colour synaesthesia where symbols such as letters are translated into colour in her head. As Sheridan (2023) states:

“When I meet new people, I forget their name immediately. Don’t get me wrong, I hear the name, but my mind is distracted. In my head, I am counting the number of letters in the name, visualizing the colors of each letter.”

SHERIDAN, B. (2023), 'WHAT COLORS IS YOUR NAME?', [HTTPS://SYNESTHESIA.ME/ABOUT](https://synesthesia.me/about)

On Sheridan’s website, [synesthesia.me](https://synesthesia.me), participants can type their name into a dialogue box, and the website will immediately generate a striped coloured rectangle (Figure 7.45)



**FIGURE 7.45** *What color is your name?* Four names generated at the interactive website <https://synesthesia.me>. Sheridan, B (2023), *What color is your name?*

## INQUIRY LEARNING 7.11

- Visit [synesthesia.me](https://synesthesia.me) and type your name.
- What colour pattern does your name generate?
- Using a photocopier or digital printer, print your name pattern onto five or seven sheets of paper. On each sheet draw the silhouette of a significant object, ensure each object is different, then cut them out and arrange them into a new pattern.
- How else can you apply your name colours to shapes and forms?

### Form and texture

Artist couple Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan build sculptures and assemblages with everyday objects. *Last Flight*, 2009 (Figure 7.46) is made of found flip flops (thongs) into the shape of a pair of wings. The arrangement of the flip flops radiates from where the wings meet near the top of the structure, creating a beautiful flow of 'feathers' analogous to a bird's wing. The colours transition from light to dark as the flip flops flow toward the ground.

The Aquilizans have a great interest in the plight of ordinary people and they work in collaboration with particular communities to find out more about their struggles. The flip flops sourced for *Last Flight* came from the fishing village of Bagasbas, Philippines where the Aquilizans worked with the local community to collect and sort personal belongings that had accumulated on the shoreline due to cyclone damage. The angel wings act as a symbol of hope for the community.

Another artist couple, Ken and Julia Yonetani, address environmental concerns in their artworks. Combining specific environmental research with their ability to create highly realistic objects which they populate forms or environments, the Yonetanis create highly textured ornate forms. *Dysbiotica* (Figure 7.47) addresses an imbalance within microbe systems, as the Yonetanis state:



**FIGURE 7.46** Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, *Last Flight*, 2009, recycled flip flops, fibreglass

This series of works is titled *Dysbiotica*, from the term 'dysbiosis', meaning an imbalance in microbial systems. Based on the notion that ecosystems on a global scale as well as humans rely on microbial systems, [the series] questions the role humans have played in causing a systemic imbalance in the micro-world and our own microbiomes.

*DREAMING WITH: KEN + JULIA YONETANI,*  
ASIA SOCIETY. (N.D.)



**FIGURE 7.47** Ken and Julia Yonetani, *Dysbiotica: The Age of Imbalance*, 2020, FRP and porcelain

## 7.7 Applying art conventions

### Clarity of process and materials

It is important to have clarity of the process and materials that you wish to use when beginning your making. It is also important that you allow the process to drive your thinking. As part of the art-making process, ensure you experiment with your chosen materials and be open to successes and mistakes, allow them to inform you of what you do next. When it comes to making decisions about which materials to employ, start with materials that are readily available.

### Limit your palette

Working in two dimensions – a monochromatic colour scheme is a good starting point, you can then clarify the tonal range on your palette.

Once you have worked out the tonal range for your composition, then introduce one or two colours.

Working in three dimensions – when starting, limit the material you are using to the one material, such as clay. Then concentrate on the form, size, scale and texture.

### References

Rather than starting your making process by having a clear image of exactly what you want in your thinking, ensure you have references of some aspects you wish to include in your composition. Have two-dimensional or three-dimensional references in front of you; in other words, have a photograph or the actual person or object in front of you.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 7.12

Choose an image or object that is iconic (big picture), and another image or object that has personal symbolic meaning to you. For example, experiment with different ways of combining the objects.

Some suggestions:

- Draw the outlines of the objects and place them beside each other.
- Draw the shape of one of the objects then place the image of the other object inside it; this could be done as a collage or drawing, painting or monoprint.
- Flip the shape and the image around.
- Repeat each of the images so that you have seven to nine works.
- Arrange them, photograph the composition.
- Continue to arrange the images into new compositions and photograph them.

### *Magandjin Warrar Dreaming* (Brisbane River Dreaming)

During NAIDOC week, St Peters Lutheran College unveiled the First Nations Light Towers in the Campus Heart, with a formal smoking ceremony.

 St Peters Lutheran College stands on the Traditional Lands of the Turrbal and Jagera

peoples who have walked and cared for this land since before recorded time. As a Christian School in the Lutheran tradition we thank God for the land's Traditional Custodians and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging as we travel this journey of reconciliation in Australia.

ST PETERS LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INDOOROOPILLY



**FIGURE 7.48** *Magandjin Warrar (Brisbane River Dreaming)*, Image credit Julie Seidel. Supplied Courtesy St Peters Lutheran College, Indooroopilly.

St Peters devised an outdoor sculpture project to acknowledge cultural context and their Centre for Learning and Innovation (Figure 7.48)

Applying art conventions to devise code appropriately, visual art students and staff at St Peters Lutheran College, collaborated with Urban metal, Cre8tive Nations and First Nations artist Luke Mallie in consultation with Aunty Kerry Charlton (traditional owner, Elder and language specialist). The three pillars pay respect to the Jagera and Turrbal people, acknowledges their Gospel heritage and references innovation and creativity through the curriculum.

The tower's surfaces are covered with symbols that represent the learning (Tower 1, Figure 7.49), the environment (Tower 2, Figure 7.50), and community and people (Tower 3, Figure 7.51).

***Magandjin Warrar Dreaming (Brisbane River Dreaming)* Artist statements can assist with decoding imagery.**

**““** *Magandjin Warrar Dreaming (Brisbane River Dreaming)* The Centre for Learning and

Innovation marks a physical meeting place where the synergy of community, environment and knowledge is acknowledged through visual code.

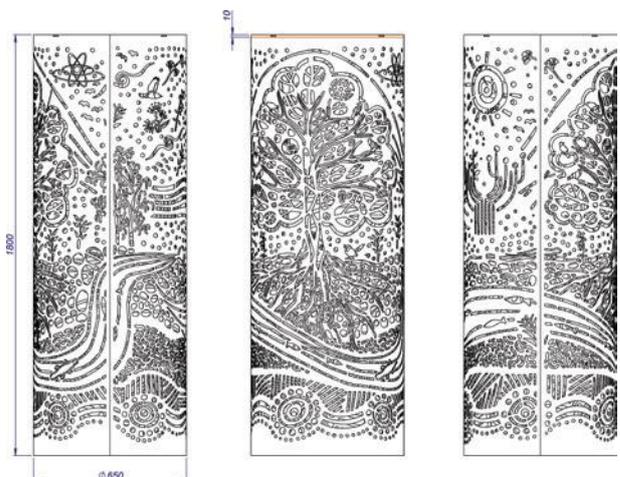
The three pillars that emanate light are connected by Yinduurupilly, the gully of running water, which flows as a constant, sustaining life, growth, connection, and hope.

## Tower 1 Learning

St Peters carries a tradition built on an inspirational story of learning, growth and knowledge with a commitment to academic excellence where every student has agency and learns every day.

The tree of knowledge symbolises diversity, innovation and enhancement of the curriculum through the process of critical inquiry, creative and self-regulated thinking and innovation. Students and the community embrace a global knowledge and understanding of who we are, our role in the world and how to make a difference.

**Tree:** solid roots are foundations for the branches of learning, connections between the college sub schools and growing community.



**FIGURE 7.49** *Light Tower 1 Learning* design, St Peters Lutheran College Indooroopilly, drawings by First Nations artist Luke Mallie and Urban Metal

**Seeds:** nurture growth, develop connections and culture

**Dandelion:** blows in the wind dispersing and sharing knowledge

**Pebbles, rocks, fish:** cycle of life and change in the natural environment

**Atom swirl:** the orbital paths of teaching and learning connected through a community of research and learning with scientific analysis and inquiry that

progresses humankind and ensures a secure future.

**Technology tree:** is a visual representation of the multiple pathways that underpin our contemporary world through constant change and developments in technology.

### Tower 2 Environment

The First Nations People hold the historical significance of the land as place and remain custodians entrusted with past, present, future.

Running water flows through the bedrock as a source of nourishment, part of the intricate ecological balance of a place where harmony, connection and sustainability are valued.

The typography influences interactions, meeting spaces and natural places.

The canopies of the rainforest, the campus heart, the crows, possums and people all echo an engagement in the energetic rhythms and cycles of life.

The Ironbark story enriches an understanding of living on and caring for the land through a positive relationship with the environment.



**FIGURE 7.50** *Light Tower 2 Environment* design, St Peters Lutheran College Indooroopilly, drawings by First Nations artist Luke Mallie and Urban Metal Indooroopilly, designed by Urban Metal

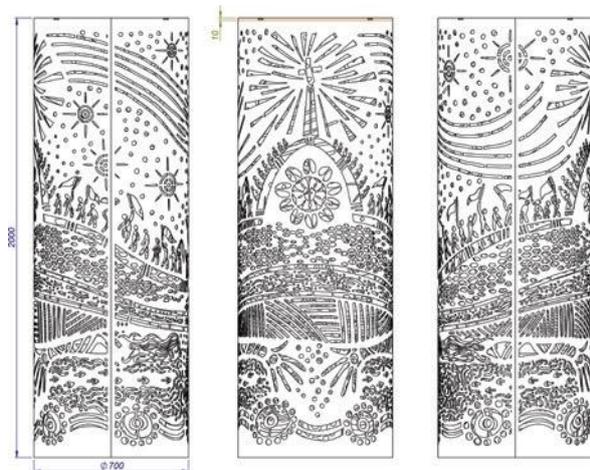
### Tower 3 Community and people

The Rock, a biblical reference, is the highest point on campus, with the Chapel spire and cross a beacon of spiritual sanctuary that is central to the core values of faith, connection, and community.

The Luther rose, found on the college badge, symbolises a collective identity where community and collaboration is fostered.

The natural environment, flags, pebbles and people are intertwined, embracing layers of diversity, ceremony and interaction across all age groups through a sense of connection and acceptance. Cultural mindfulness and empathy for all underpins the rhythms and energy of learning and community.

ST PETER'S LUTHERAN COLLEGE, INDOOROOPILLY



**FIGURE 7.51** *Light Tower 3 Community and People* design, St Peters Lutheran College Indooroopilly, drawing by First Nations artist Luke Mallie, Cre8tive Nations and Urban Metal

## 7.8 Reverse chronology

### Why is reverse chronology part of art as code?

Symbol systems have been imbedded in cultural understanding throughout history. A particular symbol that has been represented over time is iconic, it carries deep and wide-reaching meaning. An example of this is the way fruit and vegetables have been represented throughout the past 500 years. Fruit and vegetables can symbolise significant choices humans make which can affect life, death and wealth, they can represent fertility. Or dominions conquering countries, or how wealthy a person or society is. Instead of 'reinventing the wheel', artists will look back at artists throughout history to see how they created compositions and how they employed symbolism in their artworks.

Fruit is good for us, yet in many stories it is a symbol of human weakness and poor decisions. Fruit is depicted as a point of temptation and once consumed there is no ability to reverse the decision. The bronze hyperrealist sculpture *A-Z*, Figure 7.52, depicts an eaten pear and a once-bitten apple. When viewing this work, stories of temptation to consume forbidden fruit come to mind, such as Adam and Eve tempted by the tree of knowledge or Snow White tempted by the wicked queen dressed as an old woman.

*The Last Supper*, 2014, Figure 7.53, by Ken and Julia Yonetani, was created after an artist residency in the Murray–Darling basin in Victoria. Large areas



**FIGURE 7.52** Urs Fischer, *A - Z*, 2019 Edition of 2 & 2 AP © Urs Fischer. Courtesy of the artist and Gagosian. Photographer: Stefan Altenburger

of farmland have salination problems due to the overuse of the water from the rivers. The area used for farming produces much of Australia's food, but with production comes the negative effects of salination, which in turn will have significant negative impact on food production. All of the objects in *The Last Supper* are made from salt.

Joachim Froese's, *Rhopography #15*, 2000 (Figure 7.54) shows two flies, one on a dried lemon, the other on the floor. The floor is scattered with debris, akin to that seen behind a refrigerator. The fruit appears insignificant, as Froese says:

**Rhopography refers to the Greek word *rhopos*, meaning trivial objects, small wares, trifles. This old-fashioned term for still life painting is the title for a series of images, which depicts dead insects and food left and references the tradition of the Baroque still life.**

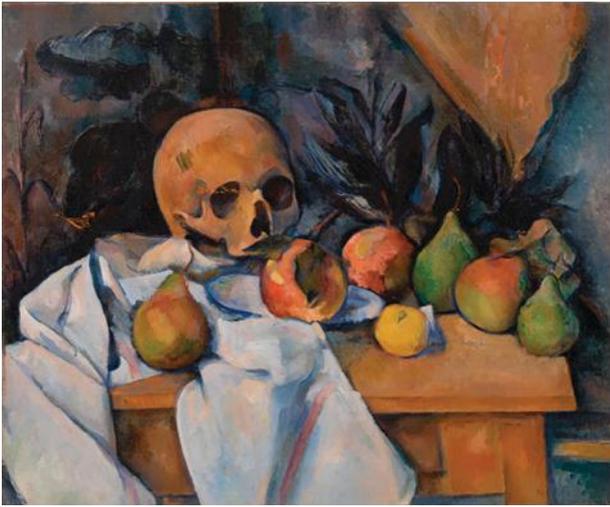
FROESE, J. (N.D.), *RHOPOGRAPHY*, JOACHIM FROESE WEBSITE



**FIGURE 7.53** Ken and Julia Yonetani, *The Last Supper*, 2014, salt



**FIGURE 7.54** Joachim Froese, *Rhopography #15*, 2000, three silver gelatin prints



**FIGURE 7.55** Paul Cézanne, *Still life with skull (Nature morte au crâne)*, 1890–1893

*Still life with skull (Nature morte au crâne)*, 1890–1893 (Figure 7.55) by Paul Cézanne references *memento mori* ('remember you must die') with skull, rotting and new fruit. Cézanne painted this work in the last 10 years of his life, referencing his own mortality.

Christopher Columbus' tomb, created by sculptor Arturo Melida in the Cathedral of Seville, is being carried by four allegorical figures each representing the four kingdoms of Spain during Columbus' life. The figure at the right front holds a spear which is piercing a pomegranate on the ground. The pomegranate is symbolic of Granada (*granada* is pomegranate in Spanish). It was the last kingdom to be conquered, hence the symbolism of it being subdued by the spear.

Vermeer's *Allegory of Faith*, 1671 (Figure 7.57) is full of religious symbolism. The woman represents the Catholic church and below her left foot is



**FIGURE 7.56** Arturo Melida, *Christopher Columbus tomb (detail)*, Cathedral of Seville (Catedral de Sevilla), 1899

a once-bitten apple, symbolic of original sin, the temptation of the fruit from the tree of knowledge.

The very simple but stark composition of *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber*, 1602 (Figure 7.58) by Cotan, represents each of the foods that were introduced into the Americas from Europe – a poignant allegory of the movement of empire across the Atlantic Ocean.



**FIGURE 7.57** Johannes Vermeer, *Allegory of Faith*, 1671



**FIGURE 7.58** Juan Sanchez Cotan, *Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber*, 1602



**FIGURE 7.59** Carlo Crivelli, *Madonna and child*, 1480

Within Carlo Crivelli's, *Madonna and child*, 1480 (Figure 7.59), multiple symbols represent good and evil. The apples and fly represent sin, while the goldfinch and cucumber are symbolic of redemption.

## Symbol systems that are viable across cultures

Academic and anthropologist Mircea Eliade was Professor of the History of Religion at Chicago University for 30 years from 1956. He was one of the greatest religion scholars of the 20th century, who studied cultures and religions across the world from Indigenous communities to major religions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. Eliade was a prolific writer with many published books. In his publications Eliade

outlines symbolism across cultures and religions, including topics: the Sky and sky gods, the Sun and sun worship, the Moon and its mystique, water and water symbolism and the Earth, woman and fertility.

Water and water symbolism is one concept that artists from different cultures have focused on.

United States artist Bill Viola has created multiple time-based artworks such as:

- *Ocean without a shore* (2007);
- *The Messenger* (1996);
- *Tristan's Ascension (The Sound of a Mountain Under a Waterfall)* (2005).

Chinese artist Zhang Huan created time-based works including:

- *To raise the water level of a fish-pond* (1997);
- *12 square metres* (1994).

New Zealand artist Angela Tiatia created the time-based artwork *Holding On* (2015). Australian artist Michael Zavros painted *Bad Dad* (2013).

Australian Indigenous artist Judy Watson sculpted

- *Tow Row* (2015)
- *walkurri kingkarri wamami (string over water)* (2019) (mixed media)

Australian First Nations artist Megan Cope created the sculptures *Re formation I and II* (2016).

### INQUIRY LEARNING 7.13

Research two of the artists who have created works about water. Choose one artwork from each artist.

- Compare the focus, contexts, media and meaning.
- How have the artists used the media to express their personal viewpoint?
- Choose one of the artworks from one of the artists.
- How would you appropriate their work through a different context and media?

## Student responses

### *Artist's Statement*

With a strong surfing family, I have been board riding on Minjerribah many times. Meeting artist Delvene Cockatoo-Collins highlighted the Quandamooka's care for Mother Earth. This resonated with my own environmental concerns. The surfboards show the cause and effect of pollution by humans in the environment. The bleached corals, displaying the organic flow of a branching coral, were created with paper clay reflecting the effect of pollution. Whilst the rubbish on the pollution board displays found objects from beaches arranged into an industrial order, reflecting the cause of ocean destruction.

ELOISE GILBERT



**FIGURE 7.60** Eloise Gilbert, *Aussie created*, 2022, surfboards, paper clay, found objects.

Key artists for Gilbert were Ken and Julia Yonetani, in particular their work *Dysbiotica: The Age of Imbalance*, 2020

Contexts: Personal, cultural, formal, contemporary

### *Artist's Statement*

After exploring how the Quandamooka culture has been preserved through generations, I was challenged to consider why my cultural knowledge of my Slovakian heritage was so limited. My research concluded that the pressures of assimilation after my grandparents immigrated to Australia, combined with a lack of familial support, adversely affected my family's ability to maintain their cultural

identity. My sculpture expresses this 'loss of cultural knowledge', represented with forgotten traditional Slovakian customs of tinkering and embroidery, while simultaneously acknowledging my personal growth and awareness. Inspiration was derived from a family heirloom dress with embroidered flowers, forming the basis of my floral sculptures. The inclusion of hand-made string

both metaphorically and physically ties my feminine homage, while the masculine connection to my heritage is represented with Tinker-like items that form the base of each flower.

A combination of recycled and new metals identifies both forgotten culture while accenting my 'blooming' knowledge.

JEMIMA BOBOŠ



FIGURE 7.61 Jemima Boboš, *Blooming*, 2023, natural fibres, metal objects

A key artist for Jemima was Lorraine Connelly Northey (Waradgerie artist) with her use of discarded rusting and weathered materials.

Contexts: Personal, cultural, formal

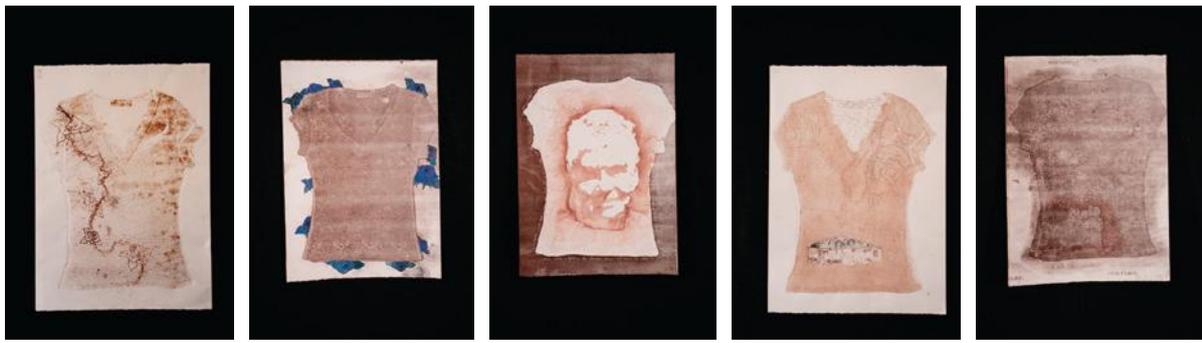
### *Artist's Statement*

This body of work is based on my Nana Nicol, a Birri-Jurru woman at a significant moment in her life.

She has left her legacy on our family and her story to all Indigenous Australians. A strong independent woman who let her voice known as she fought for her freedom against the *Aboriginal Protection Act (1945)*. After my experience on Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah) and time with Delvene Cockatoo Collins as she had relearnt her cultures traditional weaving, she connected family with a contemporary art process which inspired my process. Learning about what my Nana had

to go through during the time of the stolen generation was all interwoven within this series. The past was juxtaposed with a shirt that she used to wear, the roses are very significant to Nana's symbolism, she loved roses. The maps in some of the shirts are from her birth place (Yacumanda) and now resting place (Bowen). Adding liquid transferred images. This series marries past knowledge and a contemporary process. It's my Nana's history interwoven with the current knowledge of her story and how I wish it to be shared.

MIKAYLAH PARKER



**FIGURE 7.62** Mikaylah Parker, *Nana*, 2022, monoprint on Fabriano Roispina 1650gsm paper

A key artist for Mikaylah was Judy Watson (Waanyi artist), with her references to her Grandmother, Great Grandmother and Great Great Grandmother.

Contexts: Personal, cultural, formal and contemporary

### *Artist's Statement*

*Close your eyes and say a prayer,  
And surely you can find a kiss to  
spare.  
Though you are far away, she's with  
you night and day,  
Goodnight children everywhere.*

Sung at nights to Britain's World War II evacuees, code name Operation Pied Piper saved those sent away with only a mask, pair of pants and a single toothbrush. My prints explore my Granddad's experience as a World War II evacuee, expressing the dark and novelty occurrence at the time.

Labelled like a parcel, the tags symbolise the disparaging identities only seen as a name and destination. The daunting mask triggers calamity with its haunting appearance – as an icon object for the period. The colour palette symbolises colours of a bruise – a metaphor for the healing of Britain and the life-long evocative and immortal memories held, juxtaposing the soft watercoloured edges symbolises Britain's clouded skies, in cultural and formal contexts.

ANNABEL MILNE



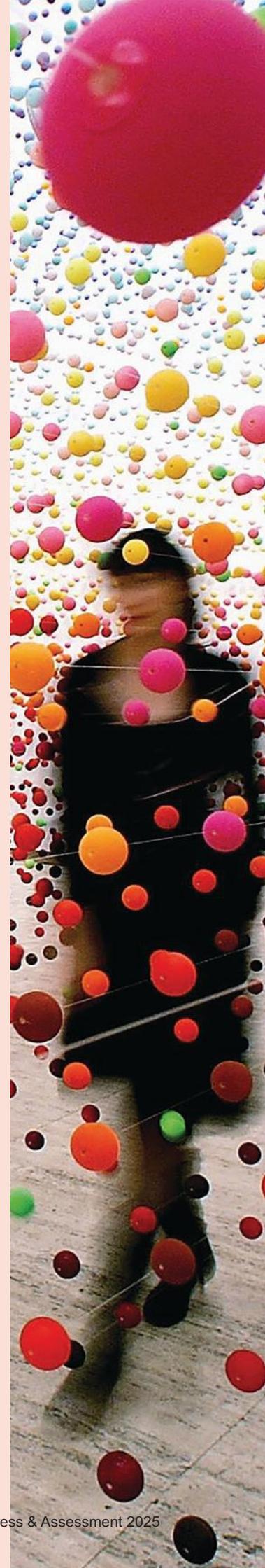
**FIGURE 7.63** Annabel Milne, *Operation Pied Piper*, 2023, ink prints and watercolour on paper, 4 panels, each 29.7 x 42 cm

# Chapter summary

- Codes can be a colour, an image or object that represents something else.
- Art as code is conveyed through the cultural and formal contexts.
- Cultural contexts inform the analysis and interpretation of social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender and spiritual and secular beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning.
- Formal contexts inform the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art elements and principles, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning.
- Artists convey their ideas through visual language and expression.
- Visual language and expression are achieved by the manipulation of the elements and principles of design.
- Artists use many different processes such as drawing, painting, print-making, photography, digital programs, installation, sculpture and time-based media to convey visual language and expression.
- Artists use and combine metaphors, metonyms, allegories, symbols, icons, myths and old sayings to convey visual language.
- Artworks can be decoded by analysing their visual language.

## Review questions

- 1 Name the elements and principles of design.
- 2 How can colour be used to create emotion in a composition?
- 3 How can different colour schemes of the same composition create different responses?
- 4 How can you use everyday objects to express environmental concerns?
- 5 Why is reverse chronology important in art-making?
- 6 How can you employ reverse chronology into problem-solving your composition?
- 7 Compare a metaphor with a metonym.
- 8 How can metaphors or metonyms be used to express a political viewpoint?
- 9 What are some objects in your life that hold significant meaning?
- 10 Why are some of the objects in your life more significant than others? What or who do the objects represent?
- 11 How could you use an everyday 'throwaway' object to represent a significant social issue?
- 12 How can changing the scale or colour or texture or media of an object create greater emphasis?



ART AS A CODED VISUAL  
LANGUAGE

Chapter 8



FIGURE 8.1 Charlotte Peachey, *Settler*, 2021, crocheted raffia suit

## 8.1 Case study: Jenna Lee

**Concepts:** Art as coded visual language

**Contexts:** Formal, Cultural

Identity, materiality and heritage are at the core of Jenna Lee's artmaking practice. She says:

“While there are repeating forms within my practice (dilly bags) it is the material they are made of and the process of deconstruction and reconstruction which give them their meaning. In this way, I feel like I am presenting a translated book which you are able to 'read' in a new way, as opposed to a functional dilly bag which could be used in its traditional way.

JENNA LEE

A Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and KarraJarri Saltwater woman with mixed Japanese, Chinese, Filipino and Anglo-Australian ancestry, Jenna Lee creatively investigates her rich heritage through sculpture, installation and body adornment. Lee interrogates the concept of identity through language, labels and objects.

Lee is interested in the preservation and transformation of First Nations Languages – in particular, Larrakia language. Combining the wisdom of her father's Larrakia stories and the paper-making processes of her mother, Lee sculpts delicate Indigenous objects from selected repurposed paper. An example of her work is the installation of *Dilly Bags, Their Words Vol.2, 2022*.

Lee found dictionaries of First Nations Languages which homogenised more than 250 Indigenous languages, with over 850 dialects, into one



**FIGURE 8.2** Jenna Lee, *Their Words Vol.2, 2022*, pages of 'Aboriginal words and Place names', varnish, garramal-wa (Gulumerridjin white ochre). Courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery

single listing of words. Lee describes this as, 'removing any connection to people or place'. The list of words signified the objectification of groups of people with distinct identities into a homogenised list with a single identity. In doing this, the identity of these diverse peoples was consolidated, and empathy for their cultures and languages was lost.

At this pivotal moment, there was a shift in her interpretation of a book. Lee uses themes of

transformation or translation in her work. She deconstructed the book and used water to turn the pages into pulp, to be reconstructed into another form. Once the book transformed from bound pages between a front and back cover into a three-dimensional form, it became part of material culture, a dilly bag, a symbol of a specific people, a symbol of subjective identity. A form that a people could understand and connect with.

Lee has a postgraduate degree in Museum Studies and has worked in the United Kingdom. Material Culture is part of the terminology that is representative of objects kept in museums worldwide. Lee aims to turn potentially harmful books into objects of beauty that cannot harm anyone anymore. The meaning behind her works has maintained areas of identity and have taken on further layers challenging notions of history.

Lee continued to find source materials of Aboriginal words and places and translated them into objects of adornment as seen in *Self adorned* (Figure 8.3). The collection aims to question our inclination to label and categorise the world dichotomously.

The body adornments represent self-expression and identity, yet the works are not fully complete until they are worn, the black labels are symbolic for the wearer to provide the missing information. As it is determined by the individual, the label can evolve and change.

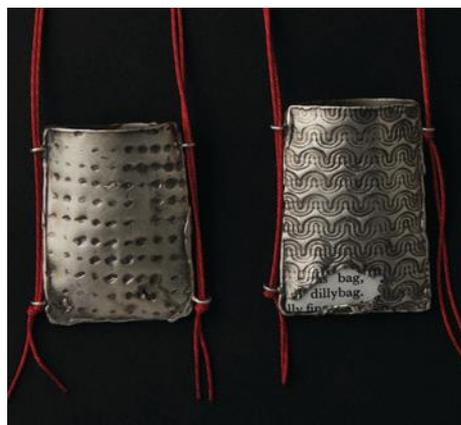
*Self: adorned* throws into question what happens when objects, culture, identity and sexuality have multiple overlapping labels causing confusion where we as individuals struggle to make sense of self in a dominant binary system. The use of body adornment objects represents self-determined acts of expression of individual identity.



**FIGURE 8.3** Jenna Lee, *Self: Adorned #1-4*. Pages of 'Aboriginal words and Place names', Chinese knotting cord, bookbinding thread, entomology display case, entomology display pins, label. 210 x 293 mm. Image credit: Installation view, Victorian Pride Centre. Photo: Victorian Pride Centre.

After researching Gulumerridjin (Larrakia) ancestral material culture in the Melbourne Museum, Queensland Museum, and Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford UK, Lee continued to produce wearable artworks culminating in *doedoet: to tie up*, 2021 (Figure 8.4), which consists of six neck adornments that bring together her family history. Using wax casting, every item bears impressions of either a sewing trim or the weaving pattern from a childhood *danala* (dilly bag). These textures symbolise the transfer of intergenerational knowledge in Lee's practice. Kumihimo silk cord is added to make the silver bags wearable.

Red symbolises familial ties such as blood lines, tartan patterns and silk. Red is important in First Nations, Chinese and Japanese cultures. Lee incorporates it throughout her work including when she is editing books.



**FIGURE 8.4** Jenna Lee (Gulumerridjin (Larrakia), Wardaman and Karrajarri), *doedoet: to tie up 1-6*, 2021, recycled 925 silver, red kumihimo silk cord. Collection of the artist. Photo credit: Fred Kroh

## INQUIRY LEARNING 8.1

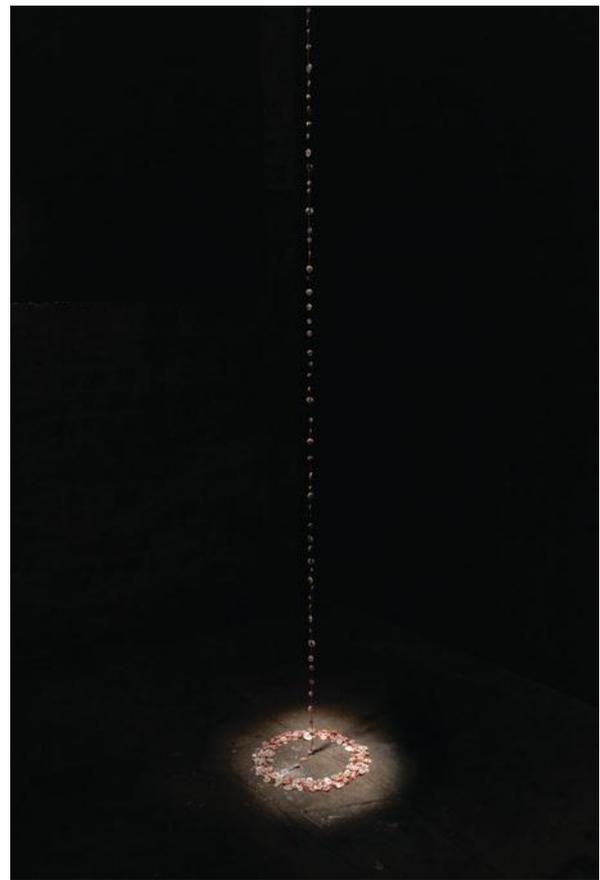
- 1 How much of your family history do you know?
- 2 How can you find out more about your family history?
- 3 Do you know the occupations of previous generations?
- 4 What object/s and colour/s would you choose as symbols of your family?
- 5 What do the object/s and colour/s represent?

### Activity

Using the object/s that are symbolic of your family, either photograph them or draw them. Create multiples of them and compose them into another shape that is symbolic of you.

Choose the colour/s that symbolise your family, employing three tones of the colour/s to draw or paint into the objects.

*/ill-lustrous/*, 2021, is a body of work combining multiple artworks that speak with one voice combining Lee's personal family history. One of the works within */ill-lustrous/* is *Bound by thread*, 2021 (Figure 8.5), an installation situated in a pitch-black room; the viewer sees a single vertical shaft of light which tracks along the vertical red silk thread culminating in a circular pool of light on the floor. The circular red thread emulates the shape of the light. As if the viewer is placed deep underwater, *Bound by thread* imitates a line travelling from the surface of the water to the bottom of the sea providing a glimpse into the world of a pearl diver. Buttons are threaded onto the red pearling thread. The buttons signify the bounty for the pearl divers, not the pearls but the shell, which was used in the manufacturing of buttons. Part of Lee's family were employed as pearl divers. However, this is not a tranquil history. Pearl diving was a thriving industry from the mid 19th century to the early part of the 20th century in Shark Bay, Onslow and Cossack in Western Australia. With the allure of creating financial opportunity, pearl-diving businesses imported divers from Japan, China, Malaysia and the Philippines (see '*Pearl diving*



**FIGURE 8.5** Jenna Lee, *Bound by thread*, 2021, red silk pearling thread, vintage mother of pearl buttons. Image credit: Janelle Low

*in Western Australia'* box). As shallow areas became depleted, the pearling companies demanded pearl divers go into deeper waters, which resulted in 50% of divers dying and 100% of divers receiving terrible injuries caused by 'the bends'. With the decrease in workers, pearling companies procured First Nations workers by deceiving them, which was referred to as 'blackbirding'. With so many First Nations people forced into pearling and the high mortality rate, First Nations populations diminished significantly. The authorities at the time deemed that the First Nations people had worked of their own free will, but many including missionaries, government officials and citizens accused the pearl-diving businesses of slavery.

Included in the body of work */ill-lustrous/*, 2021, are the works *Painting with papers of many origins* (Figure 8.6), which amplify Lee's position as an Australian woman with cross-cultural connections. The media chosen to create *Painting with papers of many origins* speak directly of Lee's heritage, with each layer speaking to each of her family connections. For Lee */ill-lustrous/*, 2021, is a self-portrait.





**FIGURE 8.7** Jenna Lee, *un/bound passage*, medium: hand-dyed and folded paper installation from pages of *The Voyages of Captain Cook Ladybird Book*, with video projection. Year: 2019, Size: 150 x 150 cm installed. Image credit: Installation View, QUT Art Museum. Photo: Carl Warner.

This was part of an exhibition at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) titled *Rights of Passage*. Lee deconstructed the book and reconstructed it into the installation.

Cook's arrival was a pivotal moment in Australian history. There had been many visitors to Australia before Cook, mainly those from nearby countries such as Indonesia for trade purposes. The first documented landing in Australia of a European was Dutch explorer Willem Janszoon in 1606 on the west coast of the Cape York Peninsula. Another Dutch explorer, Dirk Hartog, landed on the west coast of Australia in 1616. The Dutch had sailed along the north, west and southern shorelines because they had also established trade with the East Indies (Indonesia). However, it wasn't until over 160 years later that Cook sailed the east coast of Australia in 1770. Cook had with him the old Dutch maps and he continued to travel to the east coast. Cook had been given instructions from the Royal Navy Admiralty:

**You are also with the Consent of the Natives to take Possession of Convenient Situations in the Country in the Name of the King of Great**

**Britain: Or: if you find the Country uninhabited take Possession for his Majesty by setting up Proper Marks and Incriptions, as first discoverers and possessors.**

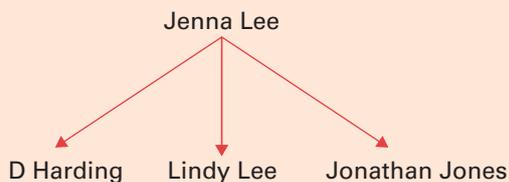
STATE LIBRARY OF NSW, EIGHTEEN YEARS EARLIER,  
JOURNEY OF THE FIRST FLEET

Cook's voyage and his actions have been controversial and the consequential actions since have affected many people. First Nations Australians have been affected the most by these events. It was not long ago that local communities went from living freely in this land, as they had for thousands of years, to being colonised and controlled by foreign settlers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have deep and integrated knowledge of this country including a spiritual connection to it, which has been passed down through generations. This knowledge and their way of life were severely damaged during colonisation, with some of their language, customs and traditions irreparably damaged or lost forever.

Jenna Lee's investigations into her family heritage speaks of a much larger narrative in Australian history. Lee's work through deconstruction and reconstruction of materials brings into the light the flux and misunderstandings in Australia's history. Her artworks convey another perspective of the interchange of Indigenous peoples and migrants, their connections and mistreatments.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



### MEANING

#### Visual language/symbols/media/techniques/processes/technologies/display

- Deconstruction of books to reconstruct Indigenous objects
- Pulped old books pertaining to Aboriginal language to be formed into objects
- Traditional paper-making techniques are employed to reconstitute old books
- Traditional sewing and weaving techniques used to make objects
- The colour red connects in all aspects of family heritage
- Works are displayed in various ways:
  - some are like they are artifacts in a museum such as *Their Words Vol.2, 2022*
  - others within a darkened environment so the viewer becomes part of the installation, such as in *Bound by thread, 2021*



### CONTEXTS

- Formal
- Personal
- Cultural

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How can objects be reconstructed to speak to cultural history?

OR

How can historical events be expressed through the reconstructed contemporary objects?

**FIGURE 8.8** Evaluation of Jenna Lee's work, *Their Words Vol.2, 2022*. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as code.

## 8.2 Case study: Tamika Grant-Iramu

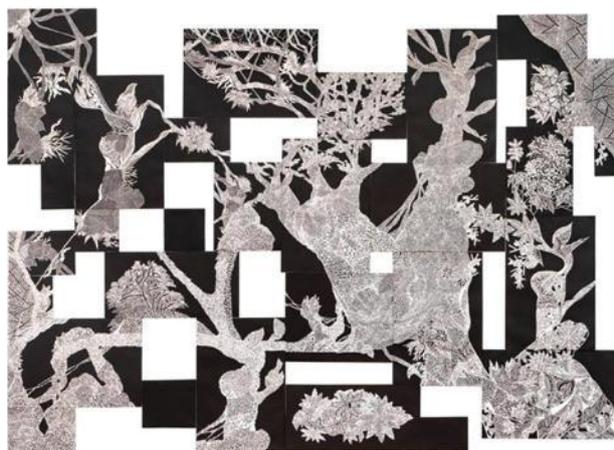
**Concept:** Art as coded visual language

**Contexts:** Formal, Cultural

Since childhood, Tamika Grant-Iramu has had a fascination with nature. The beautiful repeating patterns within the connectedness of plants has inspired Grant-Iramu to create her own motif. The motif is like her signature, appearing in many of her artworks. For Tamika Grant-Iramu, place is very important.

Growing up in Western communities in inner-city Brisbane, Grant-Iramu felt disconnected from her Papua New Guinean and Torres Strait Islander heritage. As an adult she investigated this further which strengthened her motif.

Grant-Iramu's child-like fascination with the natural environment has made her look closer at the repeating microscopic patterns. These tiny patterns appear in her exquisitely vinyl cut prints. The highly detailed prints are assembled together to create a landscape where the viewer can see a high contrasting panorama but then as the viewer moves closer, they can walk along the landscape observing the detail. *Carving Memories: propagation by roots*, 2019, is a series of 34 individual prints which, when assembled, create a multiple perspective landscape two metres by almost three metres



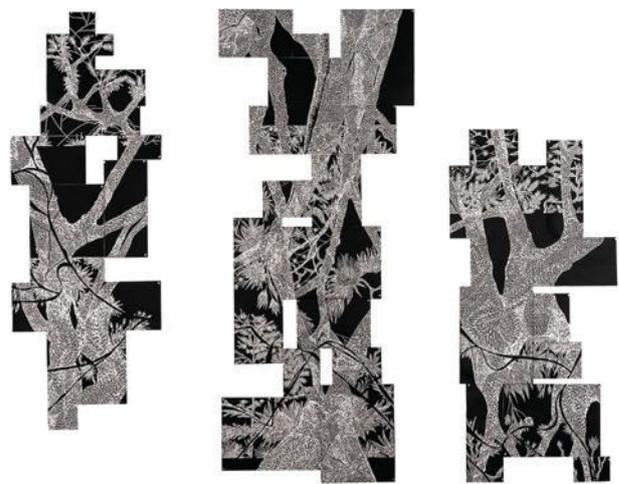
**FIGURE 8.9** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Carving Memories: propagation by roots*, 2019, vinyl-cut print on paper, installation of 30 pieces, 200 x 275cm, 2AP + Edition of 3. Image: Louis Iim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

in size. The viewer looks down onto the earth surface at the roots protruding from the ground, then moving up the multitude of tree trunks skyward to the delicate branches and leaves. Beautiful, and at times, jagged lines traverse the landscape. Grant-Iramu employs high-contrast black and white, with protruding cell-like structures moving across the surface creating a curiously contemplative mood.

Similarly in *Carving Memories: continued line, continued place*, 2019, Grant-Iramu employs strong, fluid lines which traverse the panels that symbolise our story from one place to the next. As Grant-Iramu says:

“How we are influenced by our previous encounters can affect how we inform the rest of our path to grow. Throughout the carving process and exploration of organic forms, the piece creates its own language as the play of movement, rhythm and propagation of linework develops its own conversation.”

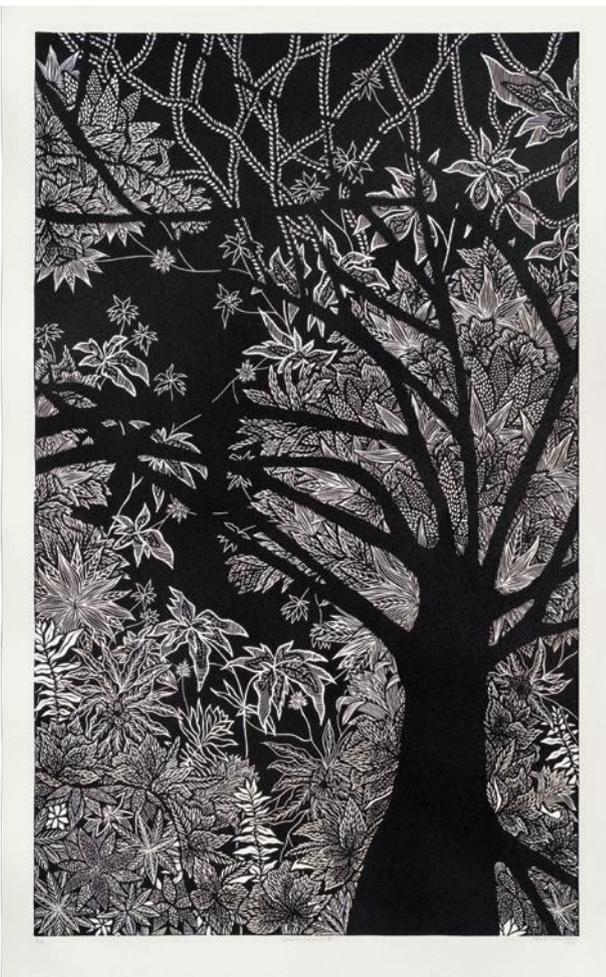
TAMIKA GRANT-IRAMU



**FIGURE 8.10** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Carving Memories: continued line, continued place*, 2021, vinyl-cut print on paper, triptych installation, 200 x 240cm, 2AP + Edition of 3. Image: Carl Warner. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



**FIGURE 8.11** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Carving memories: a new dialect*, 2019, Ink and vinyl-cut print on paper, 55 x 130cm, 2AP + Edition of 5. Image: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



**FIGURE 8.12** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Complex Ecologies III*, 2021, vinyl-cut print on paper, 99 x 56cm, 2AP + Edition of 10. Image: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Playing with variations in the composition aims to move the audience out of their comfort zone and engage with the shift of horizon or the intricate patterns that continuously unfold with new adventures hidden within the landscape.

*Carving Memories: a new dialect*, 2018, was selected as a finalist for the Haugesund International Festival for Artistic Relief Print at the Haugesund Art Gallery (Norway) in 2019, as well as being acquired by the Griffith University Art Museum and Moreton Bay Regional Council.

The floral motif in *Complex Ecologies* explores Brisbane's environments that Grant-Iramu has experienced throughout her life. Grant-Iramu's use of positive and negative space places the viewer under a tree with a foreshortened trunk leading from the lower edge to the centre of the image creating depth and placing them in the foreground. This along with intricate pattern suggests a tall, lush tree canopy.

### DISCUSS

What early memories do you have of playing in the garden or bushland or when camping? Where was this place? Does it hold any special memories regarding other people, friends, parents, grandparents, cousins?

## INQUIRY LEARNING 8.2

Memories on monoprint leaves

### Equipment

- Flat acetate or plastic sheet to roll out ink
- Ink roller (brayer)
- Block printing ink or oil paint
- A spoon or palette knife
- Large spoon or baren
- Newsprint paper
- Choose three or four dry leaves from your garden or close environment.

### Process

Place a small amount of ink onto a flat sheet of plastic.

Use the brayer to roll out the ink, you do not need a lot of ink on the roller.

Arrange the leaves under the newsprint.

Lightly roll the ink over the paper.

The impression of the leaves will appear in ink on the newsprint paper.

Do this onto multiple sheets of newsprint paper so you have many images of leaves.

Allow the ink to dry overnight.

Cut the leaves out.

Write onto the leaves special memories from your childhood. Mention places and people from those times.

Repeat the whole process so you have many leaf shapes with special memories on them.

Arrange the leaves in a specific shape. They may be arranged geometrically such as a circle or organically such as the shape of a tree trunk or leaf.

### Reflect

Has the process of making helped prompt more personal stories from your past?

What other organic matter could you use to monoprint which is reminiscent of your past?

Grant-Iramu's process when creating her works involves taking photographs as she walks through a particular environment. She then selects some of the photographs to collage together which in turn create hybrids of particular plant species. The plant motifs are carefully composed to fit within a large landscape defined by the specific location where the photographs were taken. The compositions are then translated into the language of relief print through the process of stylistically carving the designs into vinyl or linoleum. Once printed with black ink, Grant-Iramu decides whether colour needs to be included in the composition to reflect the landscape.

This is evident in her work *Complex Ecologies: Summer Haze I*, 2023 (Figure 8.13), which highlights through repetitive mark-making the

diverse ecologies of the surrounding mountains of Townsville. As Grant-Iramu says:

“There is a heat that permeates this landscape, the natural colours of the flora subdued, capturing a moment in time as the sun sets behind the mountains.”

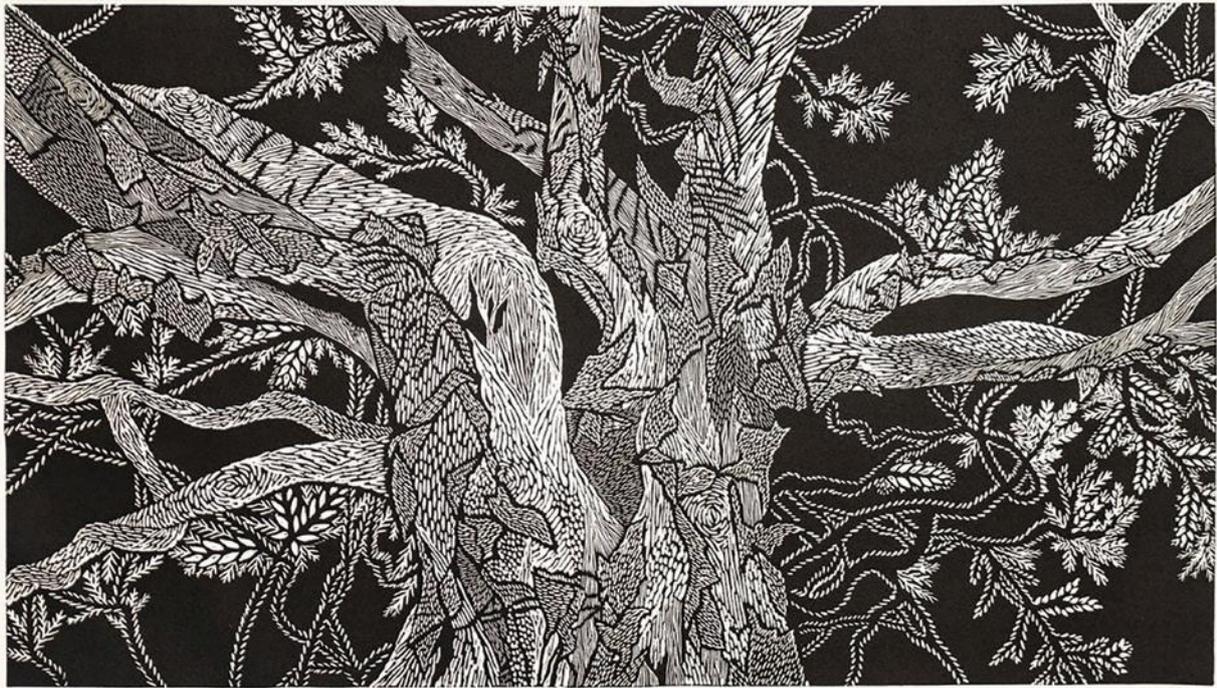
TAMIKA GRANT-IRAMU

The idea of capturing the essence of a place is important to Grant-Iramu.

Grant-Iramu is interested in how art, nature and the health-care sector can combine to create positive experiences for anyone, which in turn



**FIGURE 8.13** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Complex Ecologies: Summer Haze I*, 2023, vinyl-cut print on paper with hand-coloured watercolours, diptych 42 x 128 cm. 2AP + Edition of 10. Photo credit: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace



**FIGURE 8.14** Tamika Grant-Iramu, *Fragments of Redlands: the eucalyptus*, 2020, vinyl-cut relief print on paper, 68.5 x 95.5cm. Image: Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

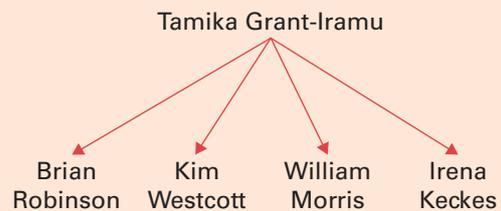
can have a positive impact on overall wellbeing. Being immersed in the landscape, then immersed in printmaking has also helped Grant-Iramu to connect to her heritage, a melding of nature, making and personal history in one place. Grant-Iramu is driven by the desire to understand more about her heritage, so the intention is to express her personal stories through her work. The physical engagement with place becomes an emotional connection and an opportunity to explore her cultural identity.

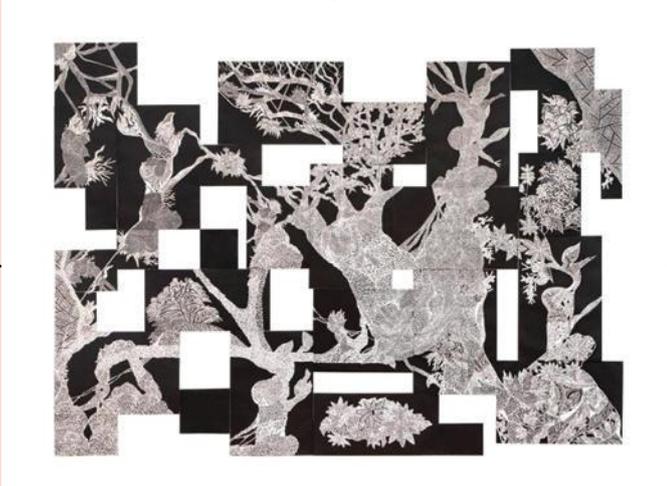
*Fragments of Redlands: the eucalyptus* delves into the significance of an iconic Australian tree. As someone who grew up surrounded by eucalyptus trees, for Grant-Iramu it evokes personal nostalgia and connects her with others who share the experience of Australia's native environment.

Since 2021, Grant-Iramu has been invited to run workshops for multiple schools and at the Pine Rivers and Caboolture Regional Galleries and for Flying Arts.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



CONTEXTS	MEANING
<p><b>Formal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of positive and negative space</li> <li>• Repetitive line work to create one shape</li> <li>• Composition + Perspective</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultural</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explores cultural identity through connection to place</li> <li>• Importance of country: the natural environment</li> <li>• Focusing on the minute aspects of that landscape to bring it into focus – amplifying connection to place</li> <li>• Visceral experience of place – what is my emotional engagement with nature</li> <li>• Exploration of heritage and culture through arts practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Visual language/symbols/media/ techniques/processes/technologies/display</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The intricacy of patterns in nature</li> <li>• Organic material such as trees, leaves, roots</li> <li>• Relief print</li> <li>• Deconstruction of organic imagery reconstructed to create large installations</li> </ul>
	
<p><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>To other artists/collaboration</b></p> <p>Tamika Grant-Iramu has collaborated with Brian Robinson.</p> <p>Installation works align with Brian Robinson and Irene Keckes</p>	<p><b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How can emotional engagement with nature be portrayed through contemporary art?</p> <p>How can memory of place be depicted through contemporary art?</p>

**FIGURE 8.15** Evaluation of Tamika Grant-Iramu's work, *Carving Memories: propagation by roots*, 2019. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as code.

## 8.3 Case study: Jordache

**Concept:** Art as coded visual language

**Context:** Formal Cultural

“Paintings are healings;  
portals to the past, creating a  
physical space like a temple.

Canvases are representations of dancing  
... graffiti dancing.

I love mistakes and I love errors in my  
paintings, I like to give them their own  
voice.

JORDACHE

Jordache recalls an upbringing that was not limited by boundaries. In primary school he'd be up at 5am to ride his skateboard, go to school, come home and skate until 9pm. There were no strict rules. He was free. He'd play basketball, breakdance, listen to hip hop, punk and hard-core metal and watch MTV until late. As a 12-year-old, he knew 20-year-olds. He was immersed in a culture akin to that of the 1999 Woodstock festival, full of energy and aggression. His heroes were Rage Against the Machine, Korn, Fred Durst from Limp Bizkit, and skaters Tony Hawke and Bam Margera. Jordache reminisces,

“It was a beautiful thing  
to not have any privilege.  
The beautiful thing about  
not having privilege is that you value  
everything. Little things like going to  
the video shop and choosing a video to  
watch. It's a very humbling experience  
which I'll never forget. I'll never forget  
where I came from.

JORDACHE

At the heart of all he did in his growing up was the freedom and the energy. He has carried that through to his current art-making practice. When Jordache left home, all he had was his painting; he thought, 'I'd better make this work.' Jordache is a risk-taker, he'd been taking risks his whole life, but it was normal, it's how he grew up.

In his early graffiti works (Figure 8.16) it was all about the energy and movement. The movement was twofold, the movement of the line work in the composition and his physical movement, like a dance across the painting surface. Jordache references how Jackson Pollock would dance around his canvases as he created his action paintings in the 1950s.

Jordache developed a style using repetition and colour. Building the composition as lines are repeated onto the wall or canvas. Prior to beginning a painting, he prefers to select the colours first. He finds it crucial to establish the colour palette as it aids in comprehending depth and shadows. Emotions and feelings are often



FIGURE 8.16 Jordache, early graffiti



FIGURE 8.17 Jordache, *Energy and movement* demonstrates a monochromatic colour scheme of an abstracted form with dynamic movement of line and shape against a gradient background from dark to light. The form appears to be standing on a platform due to the dark area below it.



**FIGURE 8.18** Jordache, early murals

associated with colours he employs. While he has a general idea of his painting's direction, he avoids being overly constrained by it, opting for a more fluid approach to applying the paint.

Jordache has also created large-scale murals as an extension of his graffiti works.

Jordache wanted to move from graffiti to fine art. The graffiti compositions were often a response to the space, but also to the unconscious accumulation of colour and movement onto the space. A bit like skating, moving backwards and forwards through space, but this time creating a traceable path with the spray can or brush. He wanted to say more through his artwork, there was a lot from his past he wanted to get out. *Devil's blues* (Figure 8.19) was the first painting onto canvas Jordache created, the energy and the dance of movement is still very evident. *Devil's blues* is a reference to the Robert Johnson blues song *Me and the Devil Blues*, recorded in 1937 in Dallas Texas. The song tells the story of Johnson being woken by the devil one morning and the conversation that occurred between the two of them. Johnson's life was short, passing away in 1938 at the age of 27 years old, one year after *Me and the Devil Blues* was recorded.

Jordache's reference to the Devil's blues is an acknowledgment to Johnson's exceptional musical talent and the extremely difficult life he led.



**FIGURE 8.19** Jordache, *Devil's blues*, 2020, oil on canvas



### INQUIRY LEARNING 8.3

In your journal write down a recent situation you were involved in.

List the emotions you felt at this time.

Beside each of the emotions, place a colour to represent the emotion.

Beside each colour draw a line which represents the emotion.

On the next page of your journal, make a series of lines combining the colour with the line that represents the scenario you were involved in.

After creating many artworks, Jordache started reading about Modernist art movements. He saw that his work was analogous to Cubism and Futurism, with his use of repetition, breaking the surface up with iterations.

There are patterns all around us in both man-made and natural environments. *Mindless mirage* (Figure 8.20) shows rigid patterns, akin to architectural patterns but it also shows movement breaking

out of those patterns. It is symbolic of the nine to five workday, the rigid environment people work in, the rigid work week and tasks done in that time. Jordache's perspective about how we interact with the environment was affected after reading some of the writing of Indigenous academic Aunty Mary Graham.

**The two most important kinds of relationship in life are, firstly, those between land and people and, secondly, those amongst people themselves, the second being always contingent upon the first. The land, and how we treat it, is what determines our humanness. Because land is sacred and must be looked after, the relation between people and land becomes the template for society and social relations.**

AUNTY MARY GRAHAM, 1999

*Mindless mirage* is an abstracted work that references how we are constantly stuck in

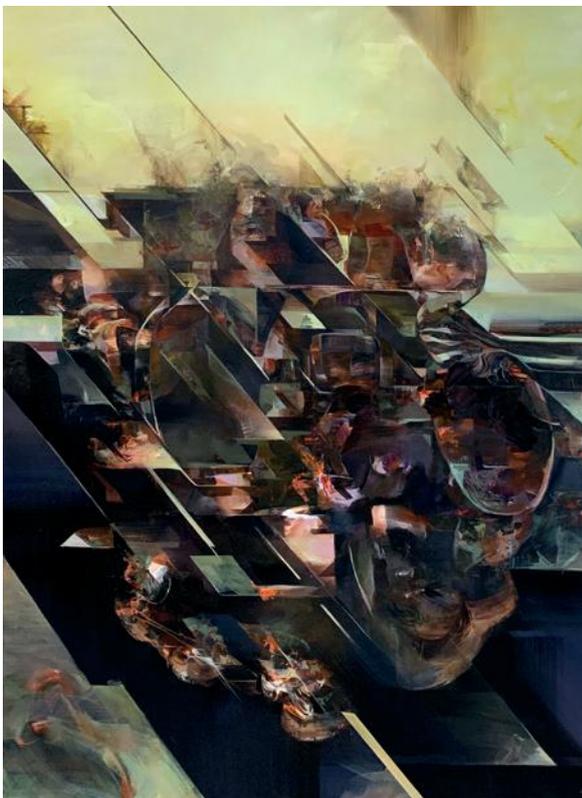


FIGURE 8.20 Jordache, *Mindless Mirage*, 2022, oil on canvas

rigid individualistic patterns, and we need to consciously aim to break out of it.

More recently Jordache has included the figure in his composition. There was so much more to consider when creating the structure. The process started the same as earlier painting with colour and movement, then the figures evolved; but there were more considerations to make with the compositional elements such as contrast and form, where to position the light source, consideration of the placement and scale of the figure and what posture they assume on the canvas. The first painting including the figure references the beginning of Jordache's relationship with his partner. *The Look of Love, The Rush of Blood*, 2022 (Figure 8.21), is a monochromatic composition with two hidden figures. Jordache is on the right, his partner on the left. The background texture shifts from left to right. The left is busy with lots of movement, the right is plain and very flat. The texture represents what each person brought to the relationship. Jordache saw that his partner brought a lot of richness and energy but what he brought was an empty void.

Red can be associated with blood and family. Jordache was influenced by the holy love and



FIGURE 8.21 Jordache, *The Look of Love, The Rush of Blood*, 2022, oil on canvas

devotion depicted in Renaissance paintings of families and couples. One such work is *Messer Marsilio and his wife*, 1523, by Lorenzo Lotto, where the composition shows a tightly cropped image of a couple who were members of the wealthy textile merchants, the Cassotti family. The couple are embraced by a cherub, signifying their love for each other whilst their rich textured clothing contrasts against the textured dark background.

Jordache is attracted to the Renaissance because of its use of colour and energy and because it is about the human experience 'there's holiness; whatever it was, it was energy and they added faces to it'. *The Look of Love*, *The Rush of Blood*, was part of Jordache's first exhibition and based on the first photograph of him with his now ex-partner.

A year after his separation from his partner, Jordache was not in a good place emotionally. He reconnected with one of his old mates from childhood, Jake. As a child Jake had no risk management. Back then, Jordache saw him as the person that went above and beyond, but Jake did it because he had no stability in his life, it was a way for Jake to try and make sense of the world and where he belonged. After growing up, Jordache and Jake had gone their separate ways with no contact for 20 years. It ended up that both Jordache and Jake lived a similar journey, and both had emerged as creatives. Jake made an album, *Cognitive Dissonance*. The album helped Jordache to understand what he was going through in his life; *Aesop*, 2023 (Figure 8.23) is a work about Jake. He is playing his guitar in Jordache's studio. The work is called



**FIGURE 8.22** Lorenzo Lotto, *Messer Marsilio and his wife*, 1523, oil on panel, 71cm x 84 cm



**FIGURE 8.23** Jordache, *Aesop*, 2023, oil on canvas

*Aesop* referring to 'Aesop's fables'. Aesop was a legendary figure: some argued he never existed, that he himself was a fable, others believe he had been a slave and created fables as a way to teach morals. The point is, little is known about Aesop, but much is known about his fables. Jordache saw Jake as an Aesop figure, a storyteller through his music, but few people know who Jake actually is. 'Jake never gave himself the full credit for his own creative works', Jordache says. Jordache wanted to portray Jake as a shimmering spiritual figure.

When Jordache was at school, he'd get into trouble for not paying attention, he'd be in trouble for daydreaming and looking out the window, particularly from years one to three. *Secluded dreams* Figure 8.24 is based on the school of dreamers, those children who dream beyond their immediate environment.

When Jordache was in class he was reprimanded by the teacher for colouring over the lines. This drove him to do it more; to go against the grain with defining how art should be done. As a child, and into his teens, he wanted to dream and go above and beyond. In *Secluded dreams* Jordache uses the



**FIGURE 8.24** Jordache, *Secluded dreams*, 2021, oil on canvas

repetition of line and the iterations of shape to create a dynamic out of mind figure which is analogous to Gino Severini's *Dynamism of a Dancer*, 1912.

“The older you get you realise it’s about other people’s insecurity. *Secluded dreams* is about being boxed in but the fractal aspects of the mind coming back to the being rather than being allowed to be out there.

JORDACHE

Building the composition with repeated mark-making and allowing it to build up, unsure of the final product, Jordache wanted to create a ‘divine’ figure;

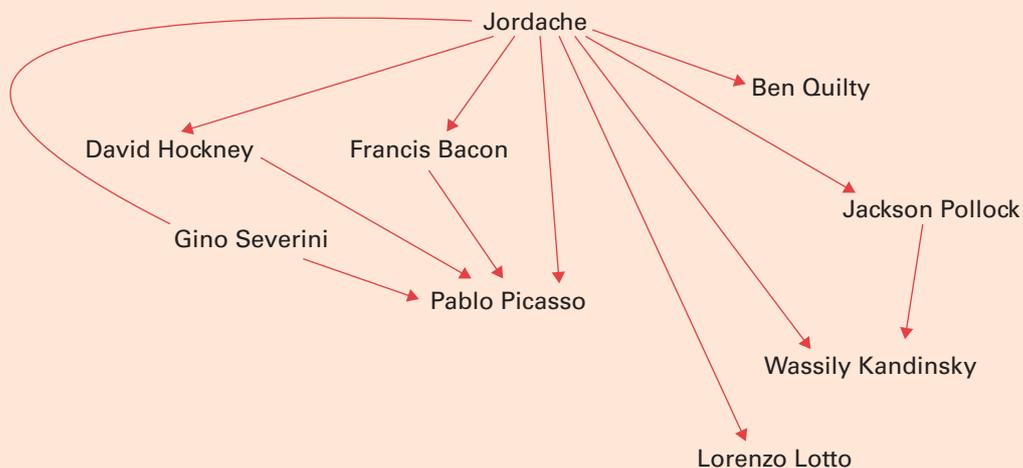


**FIGURE 8.25** Jordache, *Meeting Divine*, 2023, oil on canvas

an ‘out of body’ figure as seen in *Meeting Divine*, 2023 (Figure 8.25). Inspired by Klimt’s *The Kiss*, an image of love, like meeting the divine, someone that is beyond this world. This was Jordache reaching out to find something he had never experienced throughout his growing up, the love from his mum or dad. The embrace of someone special in his life.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEXTS</b></p> <p>Formal Personal Cultural Contemporary</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEANING</b></p> <p><b>Visual language/symbols/media/techniques/processes/technologies/display</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movement and energy are an essential part of the human condition</li> <li>• Colour symbolises emotion</li> <li>• Movement symbolises mood</li> <li>• Oil and enamel paint on canvas, wall</li> <li>• Slowly building the composition with repeated lines and changing tones</li> </ul>
	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>To other artists/collaboration</b></p> <p>'Jake ...' whose music/album informed Jordache's work</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>INQUIRY QUESTION</b></p> <p>How can personal experiences be expressed through line and colour?</p>

**FIGURE 8.26** Evaluation of Jordache's work, *Meeting Divine*, 2023. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as code.

## 8.4 Case study: Jonathan Tse

**Concept:** Art as a coded visual language

**Context:** Cultural

**Focus:** Codes, symbols, signs and art conventions

### *Artist's Statement*

Sometimes artists are humble, but we are proud of the joy that we can give to others through our work. If my work speaks and touches someone, then I feel I have accomplished what I set out to do.

Art is a visual record for future generations to enjoy.

JONATHAN TSE

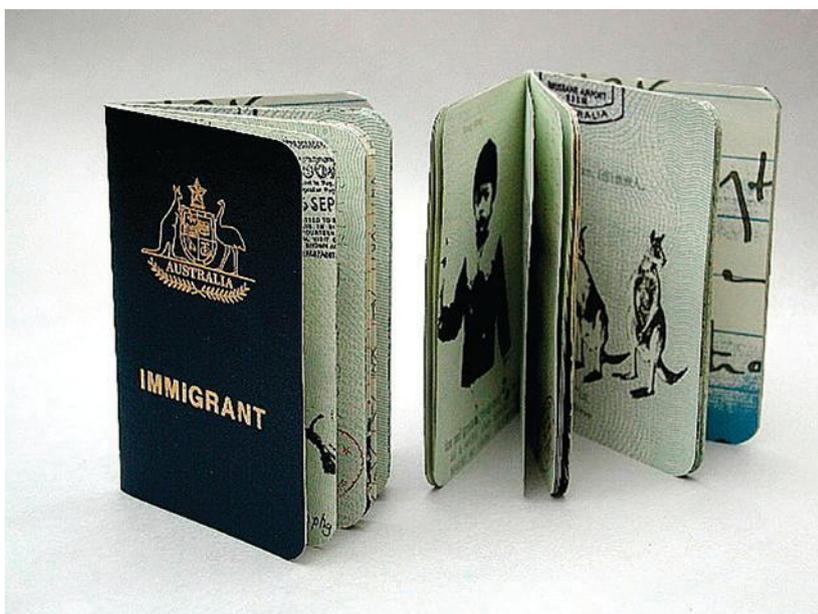
Jonathan Tse is a Brisbane-based artist and printmaker who works across different media areas including screenprinting, monotype, etching and artist's books, as well as sculpture, design, digital media, installation and public art. A continuing theme in Tse's work for over 20 years has reflected on nostalgia and memorabilia. The joy of collecting an inventory of objects like photographs and postcards has provided an invaluable resource for his practice and contributed to

the autobiographical storytelling that filters through most of his artworks. These items have a connection with memory and childhood that has compelled Tse to create meaningful work. Nostalgia serves as a powerful tool for exploring the passing of time, evoking memories and emotions and connecting to the past.

As an artist, Tse's role is not only to inspire others but also to enrich and educate them. As creative thinkers and cultural ambassadors, Tse believes that artists have a moral obligation to voice their thoughts and ideologies through art and bring awareness to an audience on a national and global level.

About 25 years ago Tse was given a box of black and white photographs. The photos were taken by his father in Hong Kong. He kept the box with the forethought that he might use them one day. In November 1996, he screenprinted a Christmas card using one of the early portraits of his family and sent them to friends. They complimented Tse on the idea and suggested that it should become an annual occurrence. After printing another card, the following year, he compiled his favourite photos in a diary and that was how his idea for the printed **artist's book** was developed.

**artist's book** a work of art in book form which focuses on media and techniques



**FIGURE 8.27** Jonathan Tse, *Portrait of an Australian*, 1998, hand screenprinted artist's book (32 pages, 13 x 9 cm), Edition: 10 + 2 artist's proofs. Self-Published in Brisbane, Qld. Image courtesy of artist



FIGURE 8.28 Jonathan Tse, pages from the artist book, *Portrait of an Australian*, 1998

### Artist's Statement

In 1975 my family emigrated from Hong Kong to Brisbane. Adjustment to a new country was difficult not just for a child migrant but also for the parents. My brother and I were the only Asian students at our school. Language was a barrier and assimilation into a new environment was a struggle. For this reason, my mother thought it would be in our best interest to repeat a grade and so we did.

In the 1970s no foreign language classes were taught at school and

my mother did her best to tutor my brother and I with Chinese lessons at home, after school. We are fortunate to be able to still speak conversational Cantonese, our native language, but the reading and writing was lost when I started 6th grade.

JONATHAN TSE

**assimilation** the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are immersed into the dominant culture of a society



FIGURE 8.29 Jonathan Tse, *Postcard from the Past*, 1998, screenprint, 23 cm x 12 cm each. Image courtesy of the artist

Prior to the creation of his major artwork, *Portrait of an Australian*, Tse produced a series of postcards which provided a narrative around his day-to-day experiences as an immigrant. These led to *Portrait of an Australian* which presents an autobiographical reflection of Tse's personal journey and experiences merged with broader social and political themes and is based on the format of an Australian passport. The word 'Passport' is replaced with 'Immigrant' in gold lettering and the appropriation of the

Australian Coat of Arms, as the focal point, has been included in an altered sense with symbols from Tse's own life replacing the state emblems in the centre of the shield. The artwork reflects themes of identity, cultural integration and the impact of political events on people's lives. Pages of a school exercise book are juxtaposed in the background, with a passport motif and blurred black and white photographs taken by Tse's father which mimic customs and immigration stamps. The pages contain transcripts of the artist's

handwriting as a child in traditional Chinese and English script. The passport layout serves as a canvas which documents Tse's arrival in Australia from Hong Kong, whilst serving as a metaphor for the complexities, challenges and transformations he and his family experienced, in the process of becoming Australian citizens.

**“ Semiotics is an important element to my practice. Using screenprinting, I can combine photographic and hand drawn mark-making together. This process is challenging but rewarding and allows me to compose handwriting and photos to imitate the appearance of an official document, like my passport.**

JONATHAN TSE

Further imagery incorporated within the artist's book also represents significant historical events and commentary of political developments. Additionally, it alludes to a pivotal moment in history, when in 1997, the **sovereignty** of Hong Kong, a former British Colony was handed back to mainland China, ending 156 years of British rule. At the time, Tse was finishing *Portrait of an Australian*. Snippets of screenprinted colour near the end of the book aim to transport the viewer back to that time, with reference to the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, and the anti-migration policies highlighting her controversial views on multiculturalism and immigration that formed her vision of Australia. Tse says of his work,

**“ I love the hand-made and in the form of an Australian Passport, *Portrait of an Australian* presents the migrant experience through words and pictures and challenges the notion of what it means to be an Australian.**

**It invites the viewer to consider the complexities of immigration, citizenship and identity within a constantly changing**

**political environment. The ten copies of *Portrait of an Australian* have been acquired by public collections in Australia and overseas and this artist book still has much relevance to contemporary times, even though it was printed some 25 years ago.**

**semiotics** an investigation of how meaning is created and communicated

**sovereignty** the authority of a state or a country to govern itself

### DISCUSS

Passports as keepsakes: How does a passport evoke feelings of nostalgia and contribute to reminiscence about a particular moment in time, memory or experience?

The art of collecting is a routine human behaviour that Freudian psychologists believe is a way that individuals are able to create structure in their lives and impose order on the world. One of the biggest reasons that people collect is nostalgia and their objects of desire are ones that they may have admired since childhood. Gathering and curating objects is not only a satisfying hobby but also holds major benefits for mental health and wellbeing and forges social connections.

Tse's obsession with collecting began with *Made in Hong Kong* toys. He has been an avid collector of toys for many years. About 30 years ago he found an old toy at a garage sale, which was the same toy he had when growing up in Hong Kong and it brought back such great memories. Like many migrants, they were only able to pack essentials, so many of Tse's belongings, prized possessions and childhood toys had to be left behind. Although art and collecting may not have a great deal in common, preserving the history of an object is important to Tse.

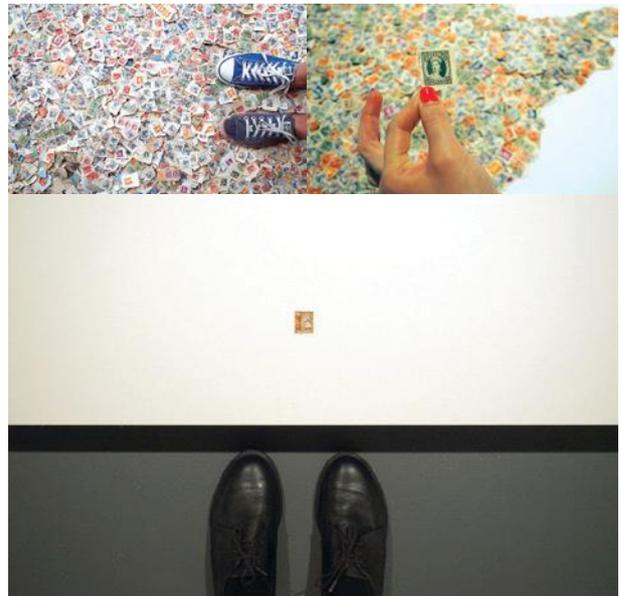


## INQUIRY LEARNING 8.4

Consider items that you collect or may have collected in the past; stamps, stickers, figurines, toys. How could these be used as a starting point to develop a body of work?



**FIGURE 8.30** *Made in Hong Kong*, plastic rampwalker toy soldiers c. 1960s USA and Australia from the artist's collection. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 8.32** Jonathan Tse, *Go Back to Where You Came From*, 2016, installation with 1000 Australian decimal stamps and 1 early Hong Kong stamp of Queen Elizabeth II. Image courtesy of the artist



## DISCUSS

Why do people engage in collecting?  
If 'code' is a system of words, letters, figures, symbols or principles used to represent others, could a collection be seen as a type of code?  
What are some objects that people collect?  
Is hoarding a form of collecting?



**FIGURE 8.31** John Graham, professional collector, *Suitcase Rummage, Brisbane*. Photo credit: Alison Virtue

Tse's interest in collecting is further demonstrated in *Go back to where you came from* which he produced in 2016. It consists of a thousand Australian postage stamps placed in the shape of a map of Australia and one early Hong Kong stamp of Queen Elizabeth II. Following the theme of immigration, the installation symbolises a sense of cultural alienation that goes hand in hand with the life-changing and momentous act of migrating to another country as a child. It also demonstrates the mindset and mental journey that one must navigate in order to assimilate into a new culture and country while also learning a new language.

*His Master's Voice* references an 1898 painting by English artist Francis Barrard of a dog, Nipper, listening to the voice of his master through a wind-up disc gramophone. This is the same image that was taken on by the major British record label HMV for its logo, created in 1901 by the Gramophone Company Limited. Tse's screenprint (Figure 8.33) features a dog pushing a ball which depicts the colours of the Iraqi flag. The image is a reinterpretation of an antique toy which he came across, that had been stamped, 'made in the US Zone, Germany'. What piqued Tse's curiosity were the markings on the toy, which prompted him to further research its history. After the German surrender at the end of World War II, the

American-controlled sector of Bavaria promoted the production of numerous items including toys, with the revival of various industries. Tse has recontextualised the toy in his 2003 screenprint, to present a strong political message, despite it being a seemingly simple yet timeless representation.

### Artist's Statement

Vintage toys have been an inspiration in my work for the past two decades. They have a quality and visual appeal unlike any of today's toys. This wind-up tin toy of a performing circus dog with ball was made in the U.S. Occupied Sector of Germany, for a foreign market. After World War II, Allied Governing Bodies encouraged the rebuilding of industry in the defeated Germany. The juxtaposed Allied flags on the little dog's apron is a subtle intervention by the artist, along with the ball showing the colours of a pre-90's Iraqi flag. The toy dog reminds me of the little Nipper from the now famous HMV label, 'His Master's Voice' sitting inquisitively beside a phonograph. It was originally a British icon but was widely used by RCA Records in America in later years.

JONATHAN TSE

Tse encourages aspiring artists on their own journey to be authentic in their approach, to not be restricted by conventional ideas and materials, but rather being open to many opportunities through exposure to different styles and techniques.



**FIGURE 8.33** Jonathan Tse, *His master's voice*, 2003, screenprint on 300gsm Magnani Incisioni, (35.8 x 25.8 cm), Australian War Memorial Collection, Canberra. Images courtesy of the artist + Original Tin Toy

### Additional key artworks by Jonathan Tse

*Lure*, 2002, screenprint on Magnani Incisioni 300gsm, 35.8 x 26 cm, Australian War Memorial Collection, Canberra

*Subtitles*, 2001, *The Letter that was Never Sent*, 2008, *Nowstalgia*, 2012, *It's a Small World Afterall*, 2020, *The Year of the Mask*, 2021, *Sisters*, 2007

“My art is inspired by objects from my collection: souvenirs from travel, early family photographs, and children's toys. Before the making, I do preliminary sketches, but nothing is really planned. The layers of colour, the edition size, all these things can change during printing. The process itself is informing the work and I have to trust my intuition. I research the objects, to get a better understanding of the history and this helps to cohere and generate a connection between the chosen object and the art. Printmaking can be a long process, but it is also a rewarding one.

JONATHAN TSE

## MEANING

### Visual language

Pattern and texture appear on the ball and garment worn by the dog which contrasts against the paler blue background and wispy white clouds; the colour and combination of the flags connotes cultural and political reference.

### Symbols

Cultural and political references, flags – Union Jack and Iraqi flag, symbolic colours, reinterpretation of vintage toy.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

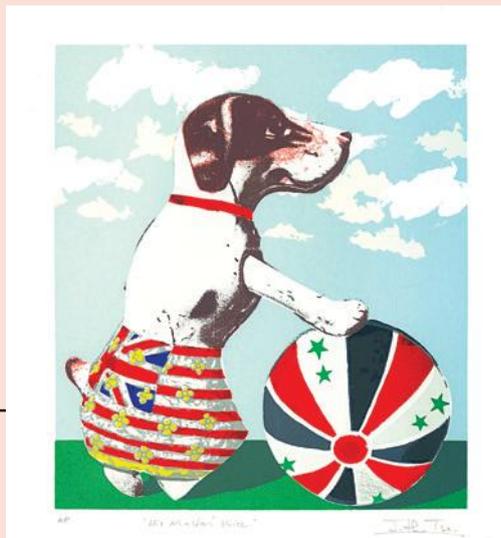
The process of printmaking has always been attractive to Tse. Unlike painting, if the artist sells their work, a photograph or a slide could be their only record of that piece, but with printmaking there is the **edition**, and the artist can keep an original even if they sell their work.

*His master's voice* is a 10-colour screenprint with the lightest colours printed first, then layered with darker colours on top. The printing process is done by hand, with the aid of photo-stencils

on the screen. Areas where no colour is to be printed are masked. Then each colour is carefully registered to line up with the previous layer. Sometimes when colours are layered on top of another, a tint variation may occur. This is always a surprise, even for artists with years of printing experience; there is no such thing as total control during the editioning process. Just like developing film in a darkroom, the outcome is often unpredictable. Opaque and translucent colours are used in *His master's voice*. The inks are tinted to match the colours on the toy. The artist's use of photographic and **autographic** techniques together helped to create this multi-coloured work.

### Display

Edition of screenprints – edition of 33 + 2 artist's proofs.



- **edition** a series of identical impressions made from the one printing surface or plate
- **autographic** produced entirely by a specified artist
- 

## CONTEXTS

### Cultural

- Reflects cultural and community identity and popular culture
- Symbolism referencing time, place, traditions

## INQUIRY QUESTION

How can I visually represent cultural nostalgia and childhood memories?

**Focus** – family memorabilia, childhood memories, toys, nostalgia, collections and collectibles, identity, cultural integration, personal experience as an immigrant, social and political issues.

**FIGURE 8.34** Evaluation of Jonathan Tse's work, *His master's voice*, 2003. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as code.

# Supporting evidence



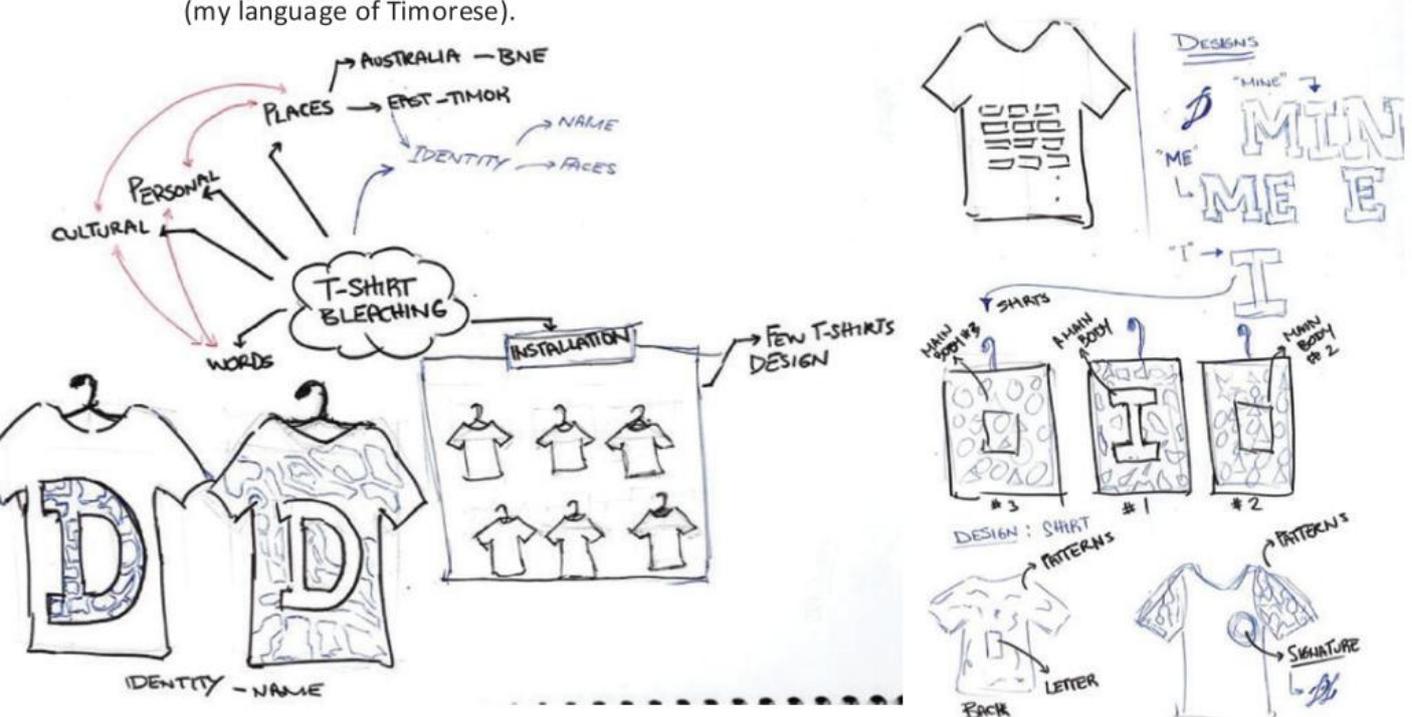
Experimenting with bleach to make marks and stencils on black fabric

- I have used bleach as the main media for my body of work to communicate the cultural and personal contexts – my identity.
- My work is influenced by Tony Albert, an Indigenous Australian artist, who covers the cultural context using kitsch objects. Furthermore, Abdul Abdullah is another artist which I have taken inspiration from, especially his style, his portraiture and the way he installs his works.
- In this artwork I aim to share a piece of me through the symbolism of my cultural background and things I personally resonate with.
- The alternative approach I've presented through my work is a collection of wearable art – the use of T-shirts as the canvas and the use of bleach as a mark-making tool.
- I have experimented with bleach and other materials such as string earlier this unit that led me to my resolved artwork.
- During the early processes of this unit, I explored Sandra Selig's alternative artworks. Selig is an Australian Contemporary artist who illustrates lines and 3D forms in architectural spaces.
- Initially, I was heading towards the style of Selig, however, further research and findings have led me towards another direction. Though, her practice, which demonstrates her personal interest through her artmaking is something that I have adapted throughout my work.
- My artwork has been presented as an installation whereby the audience can interact with it

**FIGURE 8.35** Dino Lopes, process work for *Individualidade*, showing planning, development of ideas and progress images

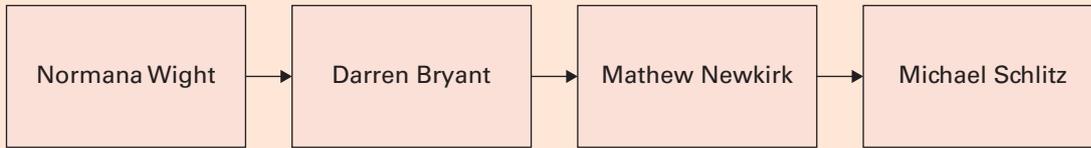


Below the portrait, the text reads “Individualidade” – meaning individuality translated from Tetum (my language of Timorese).



## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Student work – referencing a cultural context



**FIGURE 8.36** Dino Lopes, *Individualidade*, 2021, bleach, stencils, T-shirts, bamboo, string, 68 cm x 153 cm x 1.5 cm. Photo credit: Julia Wilken

### *Artist's Statement*

The use of T-shirts as canvas and the use of bleach as a mark-making tool is an alternative way of communicating the meaning of this artwork. The installation represents cultural identity and includes a self-portrait, a crocodile, traditional hut and a map of East Timor. The imagery on each T-shirt depicts my cultural heritage and includes the outline of my homeland East Timor, a crocodile which is part of my culture's legend, a traditional Timorese hut and a portrait

of myself. Without speaking a word of English, I left my country to come to Australia for the opportunity to gain an education. The word 'Individualidade', meaning 'individuality' translated from Tetum (the language of Timorese), appears underneath my self-portrait and summarises the fact that I will always be an individual with a strong cultural identity and with links to my home country.

DINO LOPES





**FIGURE 8.37** *Aboriginal children at Myora Mission Station, North Stradbroke Island, Queensland, 1896.* CJ (Charles Joseph) Pound, 1866–1946, Brisbane John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, 2016. 30713 CJ Pound Lantern Slides: Digitised images

the garments and school uniforms that the children were forced to wear. In doing so, they were stripped of their identity and all reference to their Indigenous heritage was suppressed. The ethereal impressions of these printed life-sized



garments signify the unjust process of enforcing individuals to conform to Western protocol based on European cultural practices and values, within the confines of the rigorous regime of Myora Mission.

Moongalba, an area on the northern tip of North Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah), was established as a mission station in 1892, known as Myora Mission in the colony of Queensland. In 1896 its purpose shifted and it was labelled as an industrial and reform school which served as a source of inexpensive labour and it ultimately ceased operations, closing in 1943.



**FIGURE 8.38** *View of Myora Mission North Stradbroke Island, 1906,* John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Negative No. 48205



**FIGURE 8.39** Kyra Mancktelow, *Moongalba II*, 2021, two unique monoprints on 350gsm Hahnemühle paper 120 x 80 cm each series of 4



## DISCUSS

How would you approach the challenge of visually representing historical narratives while maintaining sensitivity and respect for the individuals and communities whose stories are being told?

How can art contribute to preserving and honouring cultural knowledge whilst also acknowledging the trauma associated with such histories?

How does Mancktelow's art practice serve as a tool for raising awareness about historical injustices and contribute to ongoing conversations about cultural identity and heritage?

*Gubba Up* is a colloquial term used by Indigenous people, which loosely translates to 'whiten up'. This series from 2022 documents the actions of naval officers on the First Fleet 'gifting' their military jackets to First Nations people so they could cover up, based on the empty assumption that it would be beneficial to them. The work consists of *Blak Skin – Blue Jacket*, 2021, a

split-tailed officer's jacket printed in blue and embellished with impressions of gold buttons and gold trim on the sleeve cuffs and *Blak Skin – Red Coat*, 2022 reflecting a scarlet-coloured military coat also with highlights of gold on the edges of the sleeves and for the buttons. Along the bottom edge of each garment is a silhouette of a club and a boomerang respectively; both are brown to emulate the timber from which the actual artefacts are made. Part of this body of work also includes the ink-infused garments that were used to form the two prints, draped over supporting plinths, and next to these a timber boomerang and club form part of the installation. The duality of meaning is visible not only through the physical act of covering up one's skin, that is, the skin of First Nations people, but is also indicative of the progression towards the gradual erosion of Indigenous culture, tradition and self-esteem. Further contrasts are evident when witnessing the full installation which combines the physicality of the textiles and timber combat weapons, alongside the haunting, translucent quality of the blue and red garments in print. Additionally, there is a cultural contrast presented in the print of the dilly bag overlapping the Western-style women's purse.



**FIGURE 8.40** Kyra Mancktelow, *Gubba Up*, 2021–22, two ink impressions with gold leaf on Hahnemühle paper, 140 x 92 cm each  
*BLAK SKIN – Blue Jacket*, 2021, ink impression and gold leaf on paper, 80 x 120 cm  
*BLAK SKIN – Red Coat* 2022, ink impression and gold leaf on paper, 80 x 120 cm  
*NO PERCEPTION*, 2021, ink impression on Hahnemühle paper with gilt frame, 120 x 40 cm

Mancktelow's practice also involves traditional Quandamooka weaving methods which have informed a number of her artworks including her dilly bags and the wearable artwork *One continuous string* produced in 2021. Mancktelow travels to Quandamooka Country to source natural fibres, *ungaire*, as well as fibres from *tawalpin* (cotton tree, also known as Beach Hibiscus), strengthening her relationship to Country. She combines these natural fibres with ethically sustainable natural raffia, ensuring the use of eco-friendly materials and avoiding waste and over-harvesting of traditional materials. The construction of *One continuous string*, combines traditional Quandamooka weaving with the pattern of a 'Western-style' dress. The artwork not only bridges the gap between the past and the future by inserting her culture back into this important historical space, but it also highlights the resourcefulness of First Nations people in their ability to create such items of beauty that are also functional, using materials from the land.



**FIGURE 8.41** Kyra Mancktelow, *One continuous string*, 2021, handmade garment – Quandamooka traditional weave, woven from natural fibres handmade dilly bag – Quandamooka traditional weave, woven from natural fibres, collected flora from Quandamooka Country, 97 x 75 x 40 cm

Quandamooka weaving is an intergenerational activity that was a daily occurrence as ritual, for ceremony and for making functional objects such as fishing nets and bags for collecting seeds, nuts and fruits. The weaving was constructed from a loop and coil method which was uniquely developed by the Quandamooka people using *ungaire* (pink and green swamp reeds), collected from the

banks of freshwater swamps and waterways on Minjerribah. With colonisation, the traditional cultural events of corroboree, song and weaving were 'lost', when the attempt at assimilation in the government controlled Myora Mission restricted all cultural practices. In recent years, however, contemporary artists have been heavily involved in the regeneration of this traditional weaving method.



### INQUIRY LEARNING 8.5

Collect a range of natural fibres, fine sticks and bark from your local area.

Engage in your own research into fibre art and weaving.

Develop an experimental form (this could be 2-dimensional or 3-dimensional and functional or aesthetic) using natural found materials.

## Student artwork



**FIGURE 8.42** Experimental weaving by students from Marist College Ashgrove. Photo credit: Christine Larsen

Through the body of work created for her 2023 solo exhibition, *We're Marching*, Mancktelow subtly addresses the shift in narrative associated with garments and clothing. In colonial times, the forced wearing of Western clothing was a vehicle for undermining the identity of Indigenous people and suppression of their rights; this is in stark contrast with contemporary times whereby clothing takes on a new role, often one of protest,

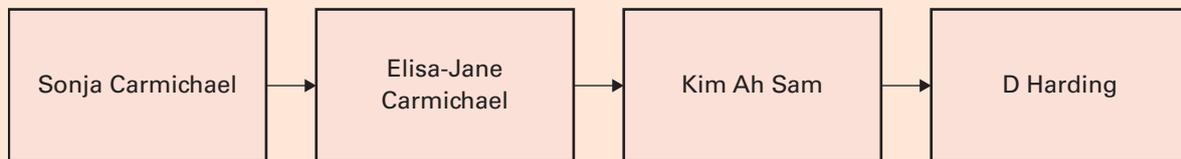
allowing First Nations people to embrace their cultural identity and stand up for their rights. This latest collection of prints of T-shirts and shorts features contemporary messages of resistance observed by Mancktelow during protests on 'Invasion Day 2023'. This is her third body of work which investigates garments and the historic and cultural role they play in the lives of First Nations people.



**FIGURE 8.43** Kyra Mancktelow, *Australia not young not free*, 2023, unique ink transfer & acrylic paint on Hahnemühle paper, 80 x 60 cm, and *Blak Queen*, 2023, unique ink transfer & acrylic paint on Hahnemühle paper, 160 cm

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



Mancktelow's hope is to provide an avenue to recall and accurately document our past and, in doing so, foster resilience to maintain Indigenous identity and culture. Through the presentation, her compelling narratives her work provides perspective on First Nations histories, traditions and beliefs and opens up a conversation.

### Additional key artworks by Kyra Mancktelow

*Gulagulabu*, 2022, unique bronze sculptures of dilly bags

*Sequence*, 2022

*Unfolding Nature*, 2022

*Chester Park Water Tower*, Boronia Heights, 2019

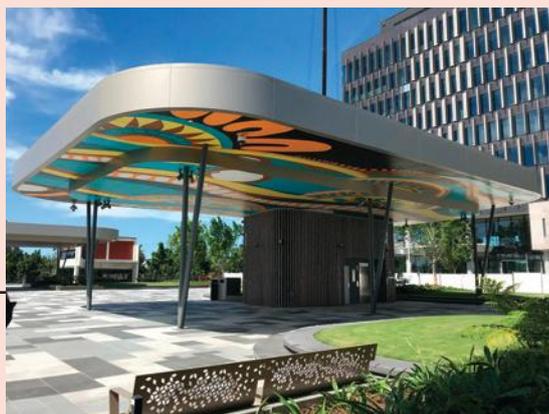
Beenleigh Town Square upgrade, *Our Way*, John Lane, 2021

## MEANING

### Visual language

The extensive public artwork follows a walking trail which has been informed by consultation with local Elders to display the First Nations culture and local history of the area. It consists of three main components:

- Pavilion – which displays a mural, entitled *Trade Routes*, painted on the underside of the roof. The contemporary Indigenous patterns and organic shapes are painted in a combination of earthy tones and with the addition of various tones of green.
- Water play space – which includes a waterfall.
- Cultural garden – The purpose of the garden, located near the library, is to promote storytelling and provide educational opportunities to build upon cultural knowledge within the natural environment.



### Symbols

The mural references local people and the connections they made through song, story and dance which was shared along the traditional pathways through the Ipswich region. Bronze Indigenous fish traps, and two pairs of platypuses cast in bronze are located in the water play space near a waterfall and there are three Brush Tailed Rock Wallabies positioned near large sandstone blocks amongst native plantings to represent their natural habitats.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Mural painting and bronze sculptures cast from original clay forms.

### Display

The public artwork is part of the Ipswich Civic Square Redevelopment and Indigenous

Walking Trail designed for ongoing public engagement and to foster community identity through the creation of a sense of place.

### CONTEXTS

#### Cultural

- Explores First Nations culture through depictions of narrative and traditions
- Identifies cultural influences on the artists such as history
- Communicates through symbols and metaphors
- Reflects community interests

### COLLABORATION

Kim Ah Sam, iAM Projects and Ipswich City Council

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How do we remember and acknowledge our Indigenous histories?

#### Inquiry question for other featured works

How does my art practice reinforce the Western perception of Indigenous garments?

**Focus** – Indigenous culture, history and traditions/identity/place.

**FIGURE 8.44** Evaluation of Kyra Mancktelow and Kim Ah Sam, Tulmur Place Civic Centre, *Trade Routes*, 2020. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as code.

## Student work – referencing a cultural context



### Process

“ I have crocheted a two-piece suit comprising a pair of trousers and a jacket made of raffia. I have woven raffia coils of various sizes from 3cm to 10cm and arranged these into flowing patterns on the front and back panels of the jacket. After crocheting each piece separately, I sewed them together using raffia to create the suit.

CHARLOTTE PEACHEY

FIGURE 8.45 Charlotte Peachey, *Settler*, 2021, crocheted raffia suit



FIGURE 8.46 Charlotte Peachey, *Settler*, 2021, crocheted raffia suit, detail

## Student artwork – referencing a cultural context



**FIGURE 8.47** Gabriel Dinneen, *Resistance*, acrylic paint, stencil, and paper collage on timber door, 80.5 cm x 200 cm. Photo credit: Christine Larsen

### *Artist's Statement*

Indigenous people have been resisting since the moment the ships arrived, standing strong against massacres, land-theft, disease and racism. *Resistance* is about the persecution of the First Nations cultures and resistance throughout time. It uses a personal context to communicate a contemporary issue. The portrait on each side of the door depicts the same Elder warrior spirit overseeing resistance using different tools, from spears and shields to words and political protest.

The artwork is painted on two sides of a door to show a passage through time, with the images of resistance in early colonisation being black and white and modern resistance in colour. The white side of the door includes engraving with a wood burning tool, to reference Indigenous deaths in custody. The viewer interacts with the artwork by opening the door to see how First Nations resistance began and has continued into the modern day; it isn't something new but has been there since the beginning of colonisation.

GABRIEL DINNEEN

## 8.6 Case study: Sancintya Mohini Simpson

This interactive case study can be accessed online in the Interactive Textbook



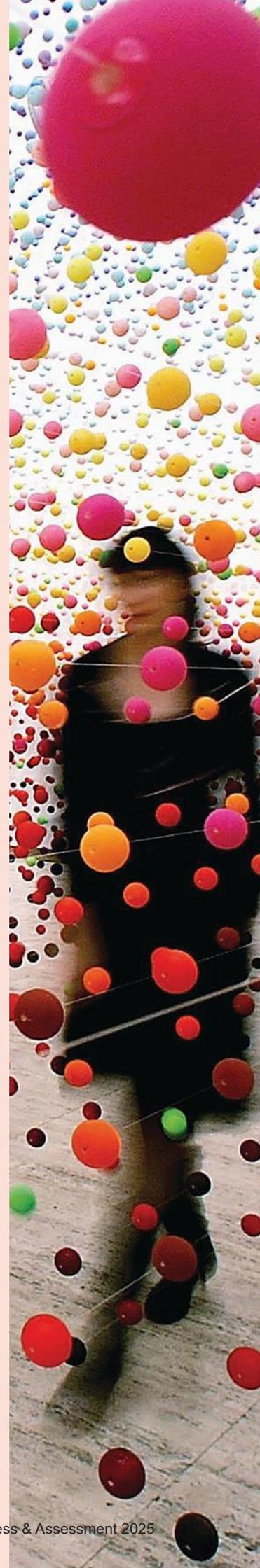
**FIGURE 8.58** kūlī / karambu, 2020–2021, watercolour and gouache on handmade wasli paper, 15 panels, 88 x 63cm (irreg.) each panel. Museum of Contemporary Art Australia Collection. Photo credit: Carl Warner. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

# Chapter summary

- Artists have used symbols and signs to create codes of meaning throughout history.
- Artworks can be decoded by analysing how the artist has combined symbols and signs, the materials, techniques and processes with the elements and principles of design.
- Art as code is viewed through the formal and cultural contexts.
- The formal context informs the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art elements and principles, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. The cultural context informs the analysis and interpretation of the social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender and spiritual and secular beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning.
- Signs and symbols can be the content and/or form in a composition.
- Content is the subject matter such as a person, place or object.
- Form is the elements and principles of design such as the colour or texture or shape or 3-dimensional qualities.
- Each of the elements of design can be used as a code, such as the colour of an object or canvas, or the use of space, or the texture of a surface or the scale of the artwork.
- Artists use signs and symbols to represent something else; for example, the colour red can represent blood or family connection.
- Artists use and combine a variety of materials to express meaning such as canvas, recycled paper, ceramics, found objects, metal, old documents and books.
- Symbols vary depending on the intended message; for example, a symbol could be a metaphor or metonym or allegory.
- Signs and symbols in artworks can be a statement or a story or a warning or a group of people, or a community, or an individual, or a memory.

## Review questions

- 1 How has artist Jenna Lee used old books to transform their meaning?
- 2 How has Jenna Lee used the colour red in her artworks?
- 3 What is the predominant symbol in Sancintya Mohini-Simpson's artwork?
- 4 What does the symbol in Mohini-Simpson's artwork represent?
- 5 Why does Jonathan Tse re-create a passport as an artwork?
- 6 Name the motif in Tamika Grant-Iramu's artworks.
- 7 Why does Grant-Iramu create artworks that are fragmented?
- 8 Why does Jordache align himself with the Futurist art movement?
- 9 How does Kyra Mancktelow use garments to symbolise injustice associated with First Nations history?
- 10 Choose an artwork from two artist case studies and compare how they have used one element of design, such as scale or colour or texture.





**FIGURE 9.1** Doh Ho Suh's exhibit *Staircase - V*, 2008, polyester and stainless steel

# Unit 3 ART AS KNOWLEDGE

In Unit 3, students frame a self-directed inquiry question in response to a teacher-facilitated direct stimulus or first-hand experience. Through independent investigation of their inquiry question and application of critical thinking skills, students build knowledge about art, artist and audience to generate a personal focus and commence a body of work. They explore the concept 'art as knowledge' as they employ new knowledge inspired by their personal interests, beliefs and observations of the world.

Students use the contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal contexts to study selected artists and explore expression, different layers of meaning and diverse interpretations of artworks. In this unit, students enrich their knowledge and aesthetic experience of their world through making and responding. Informed by their knowledge of art practices, experiences, history and influences, they embark on a body of work that visually and intellectually engages the audience perhaps through sensory experiences, or by provoking conversation, inspiring action or challenging expectations.

Students use inquiry learning to Develop, Research, Reflect and Resolve artworks using visual language, media areas and approaches selected for effective communication of intended meaning and their acquired knowledge. They recognise that art knowledge can be constructed and imaginative. Constructed knowledge challenges perceptions and the status quo, is intellectually engaging, innovative, provocative, can present alternative futures and may involve interpretation from a different context. Imaginative knowledge can entertain, express, record, invent, encapsulate the human condition, and may require the suspension of disbelief. Students may connect to other learning and subject disciplines to enrich their intellectual inquiry and approaches.

As audience, students consider what one can learn from works of art and how prior knowledge of culture and society influences our systems of decoding visual language. As artists, students consider what knowledge an artist requires to inform their art practice, and what knowledge and understanding an artwork can convey.

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## UNIT OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will:

- 1 implement ideas and representations to communicate knowledge gained through self-directed inquiry
- 2 apply literacy skills to communicate knowledge of art practices and individualised ideas
- 3 analyse and interpret visual language, expression and meaning in contemporary and traditional artworks and practices using the contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal contexts
- 4 evaluate influences to inform student-directed making and responding
- 5 justify decisions and informed viewpoints using knowledge gained through self-directed inquiry
- 6 experiment with visual language, expression and media in response to a self-directed inquiry
- 7 create visual responses using knowledge and understanding of materials, techniques, technologies and art processes gained through self-directed inquiry
- 8 realise responses to communicate meaning defined by the self-directed inquiry.

# Chapter 9

## CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE AS ARTIST AND AUDIENCE



**FIGURE 9.2** Gabriel Dinneen, *River Stones*, 2023, paver paint on hand-made concrete stepping stones, 30 cm, 40 cm and 50 cm in diameter



All knowledge is connected to all other knowledge. The fun is in making the connections.

ARTHUR C AUFDERHEIDE (1922–2013),  
PALEOPATHOLOGIST

The concept for this unit is art as knowledge: constructing knowledge as artist and audience. This unit will allow you to gain and employ new knowledge, then enrich this understanding further through an aesthetic experience of the world and exploration of art-making.

Knowledge is based on observation, facts, information, descriptions, analysis and skills that are acquired through an understanding of a subject. It develops an awareness or familiarity of a particular experience or situation and can be acquired by perceiving, discovering or learning both theoretically and practically. In this course, you gain knowledge through making and responding. The idea is to acquire new knowledge that inspires your own personal interests, beliefs and observations of the world. Your knowledge will ultimately inform and expand your existing viewpoints.

Think about the knowledge you have in other learning areas. Connections can be made to enhance your visual representations and communicate new links and knowledge across subject disciplines. Visual Art requires you to implement ideas and representations that communicate knowledge.

## Critical thinking

During this unit you will engage with a range of ideas, experiences, artists, artworks and types of knowledge. In your role as both artist and audience member, you are required to use your critical thinking skills as you work through the processes of inquiry learning to generate your focus and inquiry question, develop your inquiry and make and respond to your own and others' artworks. Critical thinking skills are:

- analytical thinking
- problem-solving
- decision-making
- reasoning
- reflecting and evaluating
- intellectual flexibility.

Apply these skills when researching, developing, reflecting and resolving your work.

## Constructed knowledge and imaginative knowledge

Within the assessment instruments of Unit 3, you will be investigating different types of knowledge that relate to the stimulus experience and to your self-directed inquiry. You will be building your own knowledge as you develop your ideas and make your artworks. The unit concept 'knowledge' is used in a broad way to mean areas of interest that you can research and explore, and can be constructed or imaginative.

## Constructed knowledge

Tapping into the knowledge of your other school subjects, or your passions and interests, can present you with a range of knowledge areas that

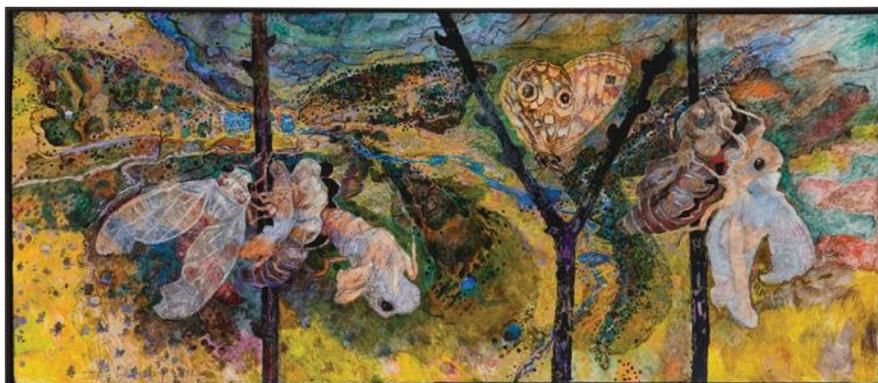


FIGURE 9.3 John Wolseley, *Cicadas hatching by the chain of ponds-Bibbaringa*, 2021–2022, oil on board, 76.5 x 175 cm

can be connected within your art-making. Play to your strengths and personalise your approach to constructing knowledge. Connecting knowledge in unexpected ways can generate impact, challenge perceptions and provoke us to think about the world in different ways. For example, the painting in Figure 9.3, *Cicadas hatching by the chain of ponds-Bibbaringa* by John Wolseley, is typical of the artist's lifelong practice of working in and with nature as a collaborator. This work uses knowledge of a locality and depicts it from above like a map. The artist is interested in nature and biodiversity. The insects are depicted with the accuracy of scientific drawings in various positions, so we can appreciate them from all angles. When you observe this painting carefully, parts of the landscape morph into insect shapes. Wolseley's painting is a construction of new knowledge to alert the viewer to the links between animal habitat, biodiversity and land use.

### Imaginative knowledge

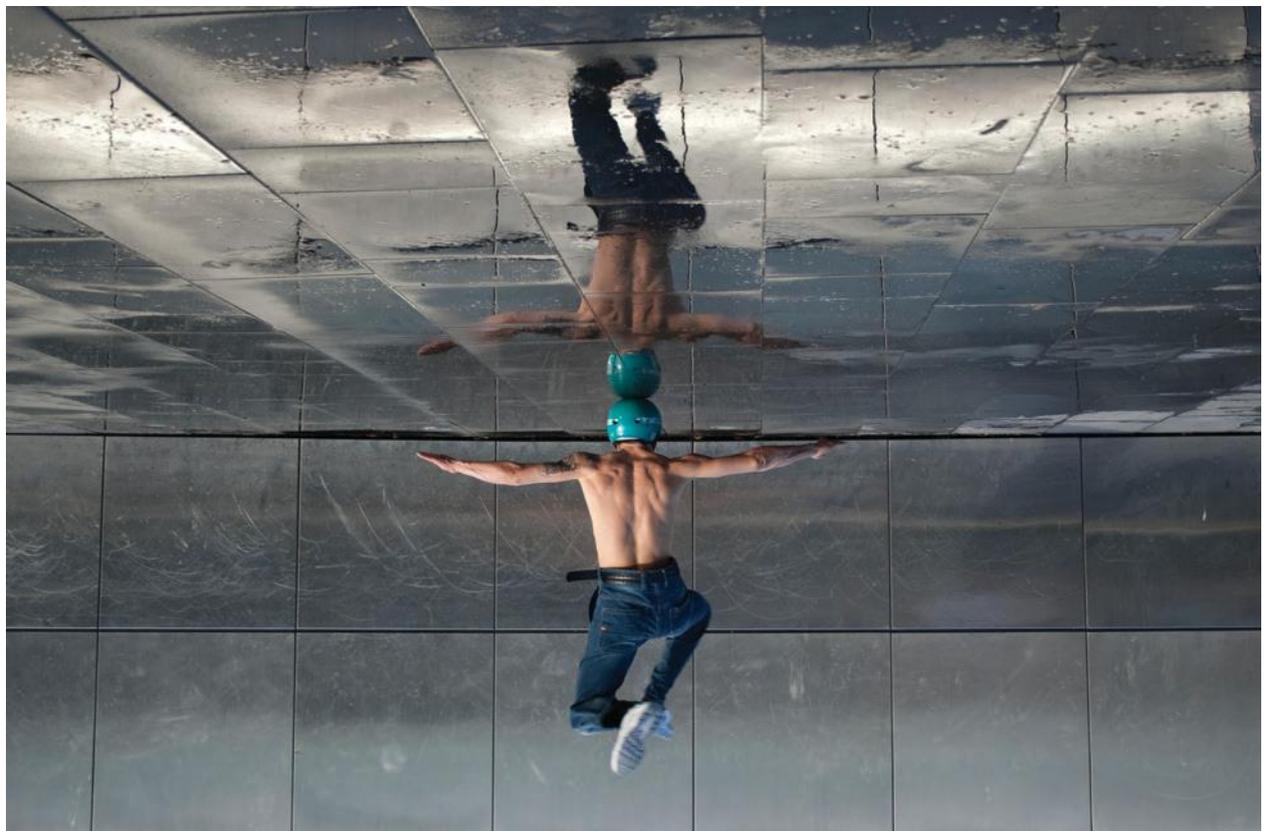
Drawing on your sensory reactions, thoughts, dreams, emotions and other intangible

ideas, feelings or sensations can lead to the construction of imagined knowledge. This may also involve knowledge from other disciplines or interests. As a surfer and skater, Shaun Gladwell has consistently explored the physicality of movement and how it can be represented as artforms. He ties this with art history to create mesmerising and imagined scenarios such as *Pataphysical Man* (Figure 9.4) and *Storm Sequence*. He works with video; manipulating speed and orientation of imagery to immerse viewers in his imagined world.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 9.1

Search the internet to watch videos by Shaun Gladwell. Why are they good examples of imaginary knowledge?

Research Gladwell's work and find out how he injects them with ideas from art history to add meaning.



**FIGURE 9.4** Shaun Gladwell, *Pataphysical Man*, (still) 2005, single channel digital video, high definition, 16:9, colour, silent

# 9.1 Area of study: Developing

## How do artists generate solutions to visual problems?

### Direct stimulus or first-hand experience

 Information is not knowledge. The only source of knowledge is experience.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

Unit 3 begins with a direct stimulus or experience that your teacher will facilitate. Your personal reactions to this stimulus will become the inspiration for your own inquiry question and investigation, which will lead to your focus for your body of work. The purpose of the direct stimulus or first-hand experience is to stimulate your curiosity and critical thinking about **divergent** ideas.

.. .. .  
**divergent** to move in a different or opposite direction; to be different  
.. .. .

 **INQUIRY LEARNING 9.2**  
Compile a list of your own personal interests. What beliefs, issues or observations of the world intrigue, frustrate or inspire passion within you?

A first-hand experience involves viewing, reading, listening, interacting or responding to written, visual or physical evidence such as a documentary, film, talk, event or journey. It is organised by the teacher in order to provide opportunities for you to view the world in new ways and to use your critical thinking skills as you engage in the experience.

Your direct stimulus could stem from one of the following options as provided by your teacher:

- video, documentary, TED Talk, story, poem, literature
- motivation from an expert lecture, editorial, article or symposium
- personal reaction, interest or story relevant to a specified text
- learning in another area
- an excursion to a familiar or unfamiliar place. Such excursions can be diverse and not directly art-related, but interesting and complex enough to generate a range of art ideas. These experiences may broaden your scientific, philosophical, environmental, social, historical and/or cultural knowledge, and could include a day trip or an overnight immersion.

## Framing a self-directed inquiry question

 If we would have new knowledge, we must get a whole world of new questions.

SUSANNE K. LANGER (1895-1985),  
AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER OF ART

Following your stimulus experience you are required to develop and then 'frame' a self-directed inquiry question. The investigation of your inquiry question will generate the focus that will guide your body of work. Through independent investigation of your personal, intellectual inquiry question, you will apply critical thinking skills, independently build a depth of knowledge about art, artists and audience, and identify areas for further investigation. The inquiry question should present a visual problem that you aim to solve through your body of work and it should express your enthusiasm or passion for a specific subject or focus.



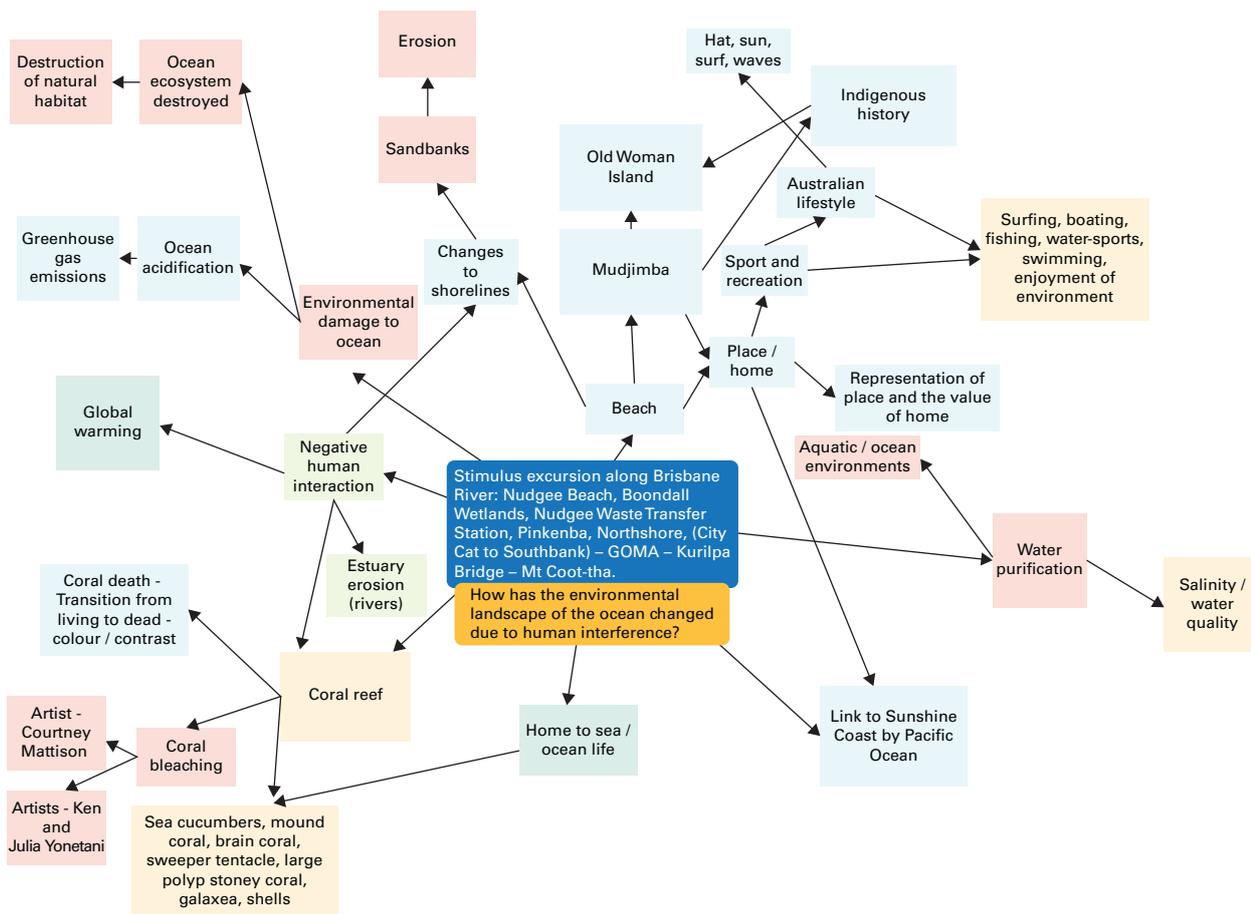


FIGURE 9.6 A mind map containing focus ideas arising from a stimulus experience and a possible open-ended inquiry question.

## Open-ended questions

Frame your inquiry question so that it provides opportunity for exploration by using an open-ended question. Open-ended questions are structured to encourage a meaningful response using new knowledge. They require an in-depth and lengthy response. Typically, they begin with terms such as 'how' and 'why'. It is very important that you ask a question, not write a statement. Your inquiry question needs to deepen your critical thinking. It should provide you with the opportunity to define a focus and synthesise existing and new knowledge, which informs your own art practice. It will also allow you to analyse and interpret artists' works and art practices in different contexts (personal, cultural, formal and contemporary), and evaluate and draw conclusions as you resolve your artwork.

A good inquiry question:

- comes from genuine curiosity about the world
- can be traced back to the stimulus experience
- makes you think about something in a way you never considered before
- invites both deep thinking and feeling through gathering evidence, data and information
- should provide you with the opportunity to define your focus
- should allow you to synthesise existing and new knowledge and draw conclusions through your resolved artwork
- will frame, inform, inspire and drive your investigation to answer the question
- will not be applicable to almost any artist.

Some example inquiry questions that might come out of the mind map in Figure 9.6 could be:

- How can the sensations of the moving body be translated into visual experiences for audiences?
- How might artists interpret and communicate the data from the different energies of moving bodies in different places, times and locations?
- What will happen when humans have bodies that are machine assisted?

possible multiple solutions. Basically, your self-directed focus should allow you to develop an aesthetic that becomes increasingly personal and selective.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 9.3

The terms 'innovative' and 'visual language' are important in the sentence about developing a focus. What is your understanding of these terms?

## Developing a focus

You will generate your own *self-directed focus*, which will inform your own art practice and allow you to solve visual problems. Your focus should allow you to implement ideas and representations to communicate knowledge. Make sure that your chosen self-directed focus allows for the innovative application of visual language and

Table 9.1 lists a sample range of possible self-directed inquiry questions arising out of the stimulus experience.

The case studies in this book include the artists' inquiry questions. Look back over these inquiry questions and consider how they invite new knowledge through investigation.

**TABLE 9.1** POSSIBLE FOCUS IDEAS AND INQUIRY QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE STIMULUS EXPERIENCE

SITES	FOCUS IDEAS	EXAMPLE INQUIRY QUESTIONS
<i>Natural environment land-based</i> For example: rainforests, parklands, caves, deserts, mountains, cane fields	Growth, movement, nature and abstraction, ecology, environment, biology, change, rhythms of nature, science, fossils, prehistoric and mythological flora and fauna, human relationship to nature, decay, natural cycles: death–life, seasonal, ecosystems, environmental disasters, deforestation, toxic pollution, climate change	What if a mythological beast from the rainforests of North Queensland is proven to be true? What is the impact of consumer culture on the environment and animal life?
<i>Natural environment water-based</i> For example: ocean, beach, wetlands, Great Barrier Reef, islands, rivers, creeks, waterholes, marinas	Growth, movement, ecology, biology, change, decay, natural cycles: death–life, seasonal, ecosystems, environmental disasters, toxic pollution, coral bleaching, climate change	How might artists express the complex relationship between humans and marine ecosystems?
<i>Built environment</i> For example: historical buildings, factories, mills, shopping centres, markets	Construction, manufacturing, history, industrial age, pollution, overcrowding, waste, population growth and density, blueprints, urban design, labour, trade unions, workers conditions, engineering, robotics, people, place, objects, consumerism, materialism, chaos, censorship, commodity, agoraphobia, femininity	How has the urban landscape along the riverbanks changed through time and how can this be communicated through art-making? How can I make artwork that expresses the stress, emotions and fears of coexisting as a human?

(Continued)

**TABLE 9.1** POSSIBLE FOCUS IDEAS AND INQUIRY QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE STIMULUS EXPERIENCE (*Continued*)

SITES	FOCUS IDEAS	EXAMPLE INQUIRY QUESTIONS
<p><i>Utility venues</i></p> <p>For example: recycling centres, power stations, police stations, courts, churches, graveyards, libraries, theatres</p>	<p>Consumption, waste, deconstruction, decay, transformation, advocacy, freedom, spirituality, symbolism, trust, rules, government, narrative, propaganda</p>	<p>How does culture and heritage play a role in the history of our town?</p>
<p><i>Transportation</i></p> <p>For example: train stations, bus stations, airports, ferries, ships</p>	<p>Location, dislocation, movement, place, time, travel, journey, borderlines, cartography, landscape, time travel, science fiction</p>	<p>How might artists depict undiscovered worlds and prove them to be true?</p>
<p><i>Health centres</i></p> <p>For example: hospitals, nursing homes, mental rehabilitation centres, headspace</p>	<p>Death, life, family, mental illness, loss, depression, anxiety, euthanasia, emotions, growing up, adolescence, identity, anatomy, loneliness, germs, microorganisms, contagion, medicine</p>	<p>How might the narrative of a family's history and struggles be expressed?</p>
<p><i>Sporting and leisure centres</i></p> <p>For example: stadiums, gymnasiums, skate parks, aquariums, zoos, botanical gardens</p>	<p>Mateship, persistence, glory, struggle, strength, heroes, loyalty, power, collaboration, victory, masculinity, kinaesthetic, movement, memory, play, nostalgia, physics of playground equipment, ergonomics</p>	<p>What is masculinity in contemporary art? How can I create drawing apparatuses and kinaesthetic sculptures that use natural forces as power sources?</p>

## 9.2 Area of study: Researching

### How do artists react to stimulus?

#### Inquiry question – inquiry learning

Do not confuse your inquiry question with inquiry learning, but understand that they go hand in hand. Inquiry learning requires you to solve problems through guiding questions that have more than one possible resolution, and emphasises the process of investigation when making and responding.

Inquiry learning includes four processes: *Developing, Researching, Resolving* and *Reflecting*. When you are framing your inquiry question, consider how it will trigger you to work through and revisit each of these processes.

- **Developing:** How do artists generate solutions to visual problems?
- **Researching:** How do artists react to stimulus?

- **Reflecting:** How do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and processes?
- **Resolving:** How do artists communicate ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?

The formulation of an inquiry question will allow you to take responsibility for your own learning and move beyond the acquisition of facts to metacognition.

#### Context questions

You have learned that contexts are frames of reference that allow visual communication and meaning to evolve. The four contexts provide alternative ways of analysing and interpreting artwork. Remember that they can be employed individually or in combination when understanding and appreciating artists' work.

The four contexts are contemporary, personal, cultural and formal. These are fully explained in Chapter 1 in the Interactive Textbook. Refer

to section 1.3 for the context guiding questions and consider how they can be used to construct meaning in your work.

## Key artists

Through your inquiry question, you will investigate key artists and consider what knowledge artists require to inform their own art practice, and what knowledge and understanding their artwork communicates. You will examine how they challenge, reinforce or manipulate ideas, beliefs and meaning through making and displaying their artworks. You will need to synthesise information and ideas about key artists that include background knowledge, their influences and aesthetic choices. The study of other relevant artists will in turn support, influence and inspire your own art-making and allow you to take into consideration both contemporary and traditional artworks and practices. Choose key artists who reflect your own inquiry and self-

directed focus and examine how your key artists acquire and transmit knowledge through their current art practice.

Use the reverse chronology approach to investigate influences on key contemporary artists. Each of the artist case studies in this book is presented with a reverse chronology summary that shows how their art practices have been influenced.

Artists start with an area of interest, passion or prior knowledge that informs their art practice, and their research often goes beyond art-related learning. For example:

- *literature* – written texts linked to their idea; for example, Charwei Tsai's *Mushroom Mantra*, 2005 (Figure 9.7)
- *historical* – investigation of a historical event, past significant events or issues; for example, Daniel Boyd's *Bitter Sweet* exhibition, 2017, and *Defying Empire* exhibition, 2016



**FIGURE 9.7** Charwei Tsai wrote the Heart Sutra, a Buddhist text, in Chinese calligraphy on fresh mushrooms: *Mushroom Mantra*, 2005.

- *environmental* – assess how location and surface impact their ideas; for example, the artist Madeleine Kelly produced the work *Spectra of Birds*, 2014–2015, looking at the impact of consumer culture on birdlife and the environment (Figure 9.8)



**FIGURE 9.8** Madeleine Kelly, German/Australian b. 1977, *Spectra of Birds*, 2014–2015, encaustic on cardboard with paper and text, 40 parts ranging from 8 × 11 × 11 cm to 27 × 9 × 9 cm (installed dimensions variable). Purchased 2015 with funds from the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Diversity Foundation through the Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art Foundation. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery. Photo credit: Natasha Harth, QAGOMA

- *social concerns* – the impact of current social issues on their ideas and work; for example, Ai Weiwei’s investigation of the refugee crisis through his 2017 documentary and the re-creation of the drowned Syrian toddler in 2016.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 9.4

Use the online link at <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8179> to read the interview by Lesley Ma with artist Charwei Tsai. What new knowledge about the artist did you gain from this interview? Research the work of Charwei Tsai and explain how her body of work links written text with her idea.

## 9.3 Area of study: Reflecting

### How do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and process?

As you make and respond to artworks in Unit 3, you will be reflecting on your investigation, your own art-making and the artwork of the key artists you choose to explore. Reflecting includes both **evaluating** and **justifying**.

**evaluate** make an appraisal by weighing up or assessing strengths, implications and limitations; make judgements about ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to selected criteria; examine and determine the merit, value or significance of something, based on criteria

**justify** give reasons or evidence to support an answer, response or conclusion; show or prove how an argument, statement or conclusion is right or reasonable

**primary sources** direct, original evidence, such as artworks and objects, artefacts, experiments, collected materials or observations of experience through moving image and visual forms

The evaluation of a range of both *primary* and *secondary sources* is an important part of your investigation.

### Primary sources

**Primary sources** are direct, original evidence. They include artworks by the key artists. They include the evidence that you generate, such as your experimental artworks and objects, artefacts, experiments, collected materials or observations of your experiences. While engaging with the direct stimulus or experience, it is important to compile evidence of your observations for reflection. Depending on the nature of the stimulus, the way you observe and the primary sources you gather will vary, but starting points may include observing by:

- 1 annotation and/or drawing
- 2 collecting objects and/or data
- 3 visually recording using photography and/or video documentation
- 4 conducting interviews
- 5 recorded sound or conversation.

## Secondary sources

Reading about artists and artworks, listening to podcasts, watching documentaries are ways of learning about artworks and artists' practices. Explore a wide variety of **secondary sources** so that you are learning about your focus and key artists from more than one viewpoint. Ask your teacher and school librarian for advice.

.....

**secondary sources** another author or creator's response to primary sources; discussion, description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation found in sources such as books, articles, journals, reviews; representations of someone else's ideas

.....

## Body of work

The new and enriched knowledge you gain through your investigation will prepare you to embark on a body of work. Remember, the outcome of your investigation is a clearly articulated focus that will guide your body of work. Think about how your art-making can:

- visually and intellectually engage an audience
- inspire action or challenge expectations
- present an innovative approach
- develop your personal aesthetic.

At all times, you should reflect on, explore and thoughtfully consider alternatives that will guide your future research, development and resolution of your body of work.

## Media

Media areas are organisers of knowledge, skills, techniques and processes. You are required to make personal choices about media through knowledge, understanding and application of materials, techniques, technologies and art processes. Think about the qualities and characteristics of suitable materials, techniques, technologies and art processes for your own art-making. Ensure you work towards the exploitation of media to give form and meaning to ideas, images and objects, and also consider their limitations. With your use of media, you need to refine the application of knowledge and art media through the making process.

*Two-dimensional media* include collage, drawing, painting, photography and printmaking.



FIGURE 9.9 Collage by student Madeleine Payne



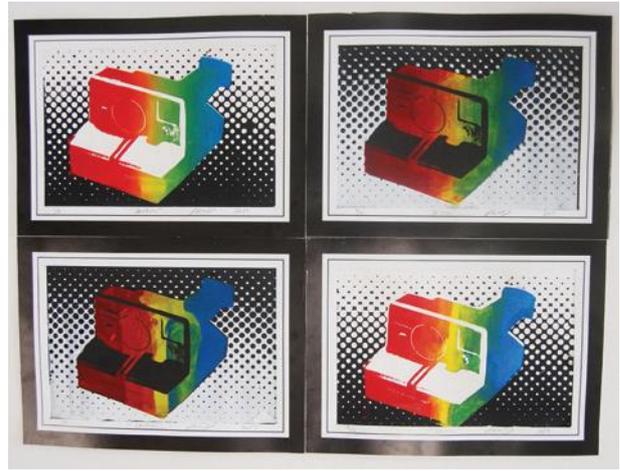
**FIGURE 9.10** Continuous line drawing by student Evelyn Mirembe



**FIGURE 9.11** Black and white photography by student Sophie Kalkowski-Pope



**FIGURE 9.12** Oil painting by student Katie Spuler



**FIGURE 9.13** Silkscreen printing by student Thaine Wood

*Three-dimensional objects* include ceramics, fibre art, installation, sculpture, wearable art and body adornment. See Figures 9.14–9.18 for examples.



**FIGURE 9.14** Ceramic coral sculpture by student Jasmine Trezise



**FIGURE 9.15** Knitted fibre art by student Britney Thomas



**FIGURE 9.16** Suspended installation work by student Victoria Phipps



**FIGURE 9.17** Wearable art by Claudia Philp reflecting coral bleaching



**FIGURE 9.18** Sculptural work using concrete casting by student Claudia Philp

*Time-based media* include electronic imaging, film and animation, sound art, performance art and virtual reality.

### Documentation

You need to establish a system that allows you to document all the processes that make meaningful connections and inform your

investigation, self-directed student focus, experimentation and making.

Using a sketchbook or visual diary is an effective way to chronologically document your processes. Digital documentation using photography and video is another excellent way to record the progressive development of your work. Other modes of documentation could include a folder, container for three-dimensional objects, digital files, website and/or a blog. For assessment, the syllabus states that you must include supporting evidence as visual support, and that includes experimental artworks, sketches, annotated diagrams and images, notes, ideas, photographs and/or collections of stimuli with reflective commentary.



**FIGURE 9.19** Using a sketchbook as a visual diary is an effective mode of documentation.

## 9.4 Area of study: Resolving

### How do artists communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?

#### What is an artist's statement?

Your artist's statement assists the audience with understanding your body of work and your self-directed focus. It should convey the reasoning behind your work, stating why you chose a particular focus and why you worked within a certain medium. You will need to use literacy skills to construct an artist's statement that allows your understanding of intended meaning to be established. A well-written artist's statement shows the relationship between you and your artwork, and helps to create a connection with the viewer.

#### Why do you need an artist's statement?

In Unit 3: Art as knowledge and Unit 4: Art as alternate, both summative internal project assessments stipulate that an artist's statement must be completed as part of the assessment

conditions. If you create a single artwork, one artist's statement is required. If you create a collection of artworks, you can choose to write multiple statements for individual artworks or one statement for the entire collection.

#### Artist's statement content

As a precursor to your written artist's statement, you should include the following details, which are not included as part of the maximum 150 words stipulated in the assessment conditions.

- 1 your full name
- 2 the title of the artwork format in *italics*
- 3 media used
- 4 the size of the artwork, following the convention of height x width x depth.

Titles can be literal or expressive and may help to demonstrate layers of meaning. Some artists deliberately leave their work untitled to avoid influencing the audience's interpretation of the image.

Information about media or materials gives clues about how an artwork was made, which may add to our understanding of non-literal meanings.

Your artist's statement should:

- assist the audience to understand the body of work focus and your critical and creative thinking
- include literacy skills and language conventions to describe and communicate the concept and your self-directed focus.
- the unit concept Unit 3: Art as knowledge, Unit 4: Art as alternate
- invite a dialogue with the audience by acknowledging that viewers bring their experiences with them when they view artworks. For more information about how to create a dialogue with the audience through your artist's statement, refer to section 2.5 in the Interactive Textbook.

You might elaborate on your personal response to any of the following:

- direct stimulus or authentic experience
- primary and/or secondary sources
- inquiry question posed and/or possible response to this question
- reference to contexts as they apply to your work (contemporary, personal, cultural, formal)
- media choices that elaborate on materials and techniques
- influence of key artists.

### Technical tips

Constructing an artist's statement requires literacy skills that allow your understanding of intended meaning to be established. A well-written artist's statement shows the relationship between you and your artwork, and helps to create a connection with the viewer. A list of tips is provided below.

- Your writing should be concise, simple, clear and to-the-point.
- Use as few words as possible; try to communicate your artistic intentions in less than the syllabus-specified maximum of 150 words per statement.

- Make sure you proofread your artist's statement for grammar, spelling, punctuation, clarity of expression and audience engagement.
- Write in first person and refer to your artwork in present tense; for example, 'My experience with ...', 'My painting approach explores ...', 'I am exploring ...'
- Address the audience to include them, for example, 'we adopt a view ...', 'our hearts break ...'. Ask them questions, 'what/how do you ...?' or 'what is your ...?'. These strategies assist in creating a dialogue.
- Avoid using fancy, creative fonts or design layouts.
- Align the font to the left so it is easy to read.



**FIGURE 9.20** Gabriel Dinneen, *River Stones*, 2023, paver paint on hand-made concrete stepping stones, 30 cm, 40 cm and 50 cm in diameter

## Artist's Statement

*River Stones*, focuses on the Brisbane River (Meanjin) in the distant past, drawing on knowledge of the river's significance to the original inhabitants. The artwork depicts the stretch of the river from Hamilton to the city Botanic Gardens and imagines the journeys and pathways of my ancestors.

The artwork is a bird's-eye view, as many Indigenous landscapes are and is installed on the ground, so the viewer looks down at it. From above, the bird's-eye perspective is enhanced

and the linkages between each stone are more easily understood. Painting techniques reference the style used by First Nations peoples. The white dots create pattern and texture so that when walking on the stepping stones in bare feet you can feel different textures, as you would if walking barefoot around the river. This work has been installed into a beach house at Minjerribah, the traditional lands of my people, the Quandamooka people.

GABRIEL DINNEEN

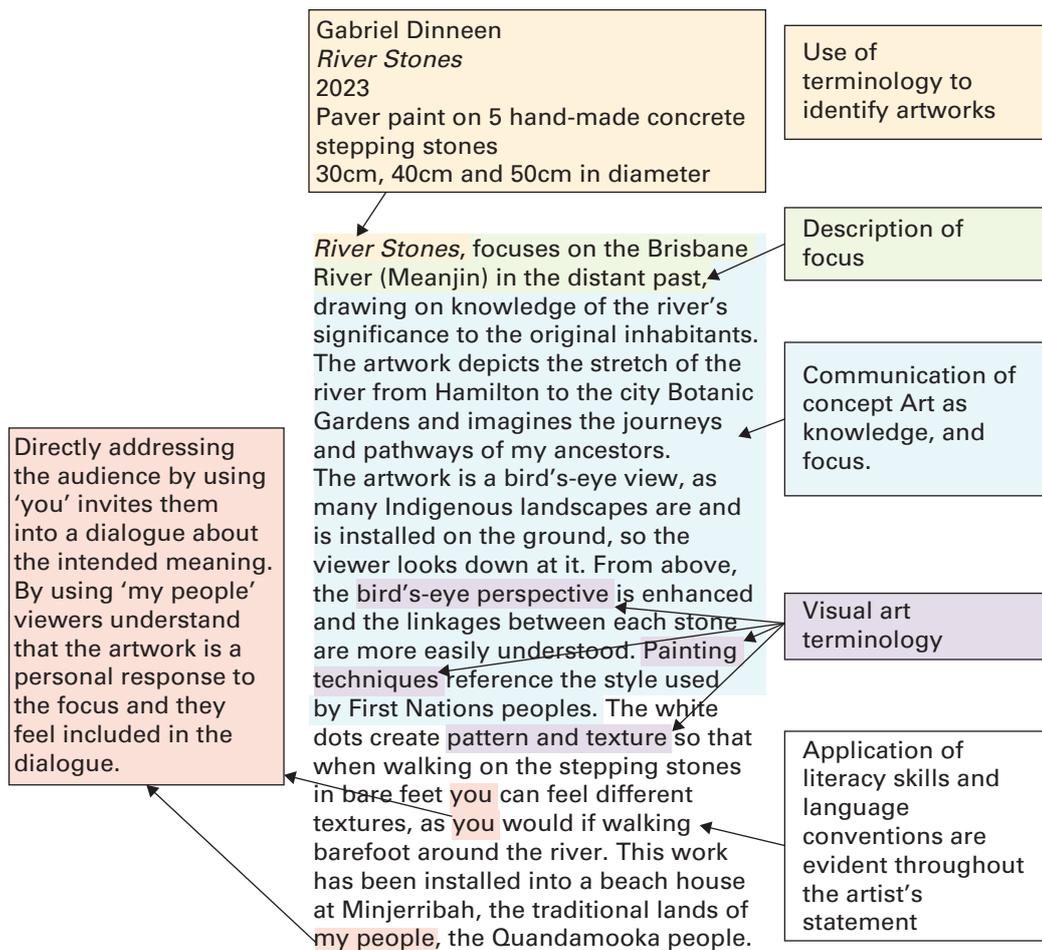


FIGURE 9.21 Analysing the parts of an artist's statement

## Display

Exhibiting your work through display is a vital component of your art practice. Musicians write music so that it can be played for an audience. Visual art serves the same purpose; artists create artwork so that an audience can view it to engage with the work. Audience reaction is a **pivotal** part of the art-making and responding process and this allows for the realisation of your intentions. To achieve the highest levels on the marking guides you need to demonstrate that you have implemented ideas and representations that enhance reading and engagement for the audience. The display can add considerable meaning to the work.

.....  
**pivotal** of crucial importance  
.....

Therefore, when developing your idea it is important to think and plan for how you ideally want audiences to read the work. If you can't actually achieve this display, you need to demonstrate your consideration of it in your planning. For instance, will the work be displayed on the floor for audiences to walk around or through? How will you create a pathway? Do you want audiences to look up at the work like Doh Ho Suh's *Staircase - V*, 2008 (Figure 9.22)? If so, how will it be secured in place? Will the work be hung on a wall in a traditional manner? If so find

out at what height artworks usually hang and why. How will you attach the work to the wall? Will it be framed, pinned or attached with magnets? Is the work multi-modal? Does it have a projected video or light component? If so, how will that be connected? Will electrical cords be a feature or will you hide them? Is there a sound component? What device will you use to make that audible for listeners?

You might have the opportunity to display your work in a student exhibition. This is the perfect opportunity to document your work while it is displayed. It might not be possible to display your work physically, or you might choose an alternative method of display that adds meaning in other ways. For example, digital, virtual or online display and exhibition modes might be more suitable for artworks that employ new technologies or involve remote audience interaction.

You need to consider how display possibilities can enhance your intended meaning.

Student Elijah Smith's wall-hung installation (Figure 9.23) is an example of capitalising on display to enhance meaning. The artist's statement refers to the juxtaposition of nature and industrialisation as sources of mark-making and imagery. Smith's use of found objects arranged with the various abstract images he created has enhanced reading and engagement for the viewer because as we



**FIGURE 9.22** Doh Ho Suh's exhibit *Staircase - V*, 2008, made of polyester and stainless steel, engaged audiences by demanding that they look upwards to the ceiling and by challenging their understanding of the solidity of architecture.



**FIGURE 9.23** Elijah Smith, *Unburdened Mind*, 2023, found objects, lino printing, digital photography, etching, LaserJet printing, Perspex, aluminium air duct, fishing line, collagraph, collage, photogram, frames

examine the work, we make connections between all the components. We automatically seek similarities between textures, tones and colours as we attempt to decipher the origins of the imagery and ask ourselves, are they man-made or natural? When an object overlaps an image in a display, we are compelled to interrogate it, seek connections and visually follow new pathways.

### *Artist's Statement*

*Unburdened Mind* is an immersive art installation, focusing on embracing creativity beyond conventional boundaries. This artwork challenges our knowledge of what art is, providing alternate suggestions. I have been influenced by contemporary influences in our forever evolving and adapting world. The subtle featuring of dynamic and diverse materials and techniques symbolise the constant flux, or adaptation, we see in our contemporary society with each element of the work representing a unique facet of my own artistic evolution. The fusion of nature and industrialisation is suggested through juxtaposed elements, implying the opening of new pathways in our ever-shifting world. Dark and earthy, monochromatic tones have created a harmonious yet enigmatic atmosphere, inviting you to immerse yourselves in the sensory experience rather than searching for a predefined narrative. In this absence of clear narratives, let your imagination roam freely, with an unburdened mind and reflect on the essence of artistic expression.

ELIJAH SMITH

### INQUIRY LEARNING 9.5

Read the artist statement by Elijah Smith and answer these questions:

- 1 How does Elijah Smith use terminology to identify his artwork?
- 2 What was the focus of Smith's inquiry?
- 3 How has Smith worded his engagement with the concept, art as alternate?
- 4 Find some examples of visual art terminology within this statement. How do they add meaning?
- 5 Comment on the way Smith has used language conventions to invite a dialogue with his audience about his intended meaning.
- 6 Use the instrument specific marking guide (ISMG) for resolving in the IA2 or IA3 and consider how you would assess this artist's statement. Remember to start at the bottom and work upwards.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 9.6

- 1 List ways that you are able to display your work within the school environment and suggest ways your work could be displayed within the community or other domains for audience engagement.
- 2 Why do you think display is such an important part of the making and responding process?



# Chapter summary

- Acquiring new knowledge will enrich your understanding and provide a platform for you to discover and learn, to think beyond what you already know and build upon your existing knowledge.
- Make links and research beyond art-based subjects to assist in establishing and expanding your knowledge base. Consider scientific, environmental, historical and social concerns as areas of reference.
- A direct stimulus or first-hand experience is central to the development of this unit and is used as a catalyst and starting point for making and responding.
- Develop a self-directed focus which allows for the innovative creation of ideas that are personal and selective.
- Establish a self-directed inquiry question that is reflective of the stimulus or experience, and that aligns with a personal focus. Ensure this self-directed inquiry question is open-ended, intellectual and has scope for extended research to guide and build your knowledge.
- Primary and secondary sources are compiled evidence of your making and responding processes in response to your personal focus and inquiry question. Primary sources such as drawing, photography and recording can be employed and secondary responses utilise the primary sources and become multiple solutions to visual problems.
- Documentation of all evidence and sources is a vital process to allow movement through ideas from both primary and secondary sources. This foundational work leads to the development of a body of work.
- Writing an artist's statement forms part of the whole work and shows the relationship between your intentions and the physical artwork. Ensure it uses correct visual terminology and literacy, is succinct and clarifies ideas with purpose.

## Review questions

- 1 In relation to your chosen focus, what new knowledge did you acquire prior to completing extended research?
- 2 Reflect on the impact that the teacher-facilitated direct stimulus or first-hand experience had upon the initial starting point for the development of your self-directed focus.
- 3 Review the four contexts: contemporary, personal, cultural and formal in the digital Chapter 1. Select one question from each context to apply to your own artwork and then respond to each question.
- 4 Compile a list of key artists that parallel your personal focus and inquiry question and find examples of their work that utilise two-dimensional media, three-dimensional objects and/or time-based media.
- 5 Compare your primary sources with your secondary source research. How does the secondary source material build on your initial responses? What challenges or roadblocks occurred with each artwork and how will you overcome these to move forward?

# Chapter 10

## COMMUNICATING KNOWLEDGE IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE



**FIGURE 10.1** Red Rebels from Extinction Rebellion. Photo by Thierry Monasse/Getty Images

## 10.1 Case study: Bruce Reynolds

**Concept:** Constructing knowledge as artist and audience

**Contexts:** Formal, Cultural, Contemporary, Personal



**Don't overlook the obvious.**

BRUCE REYNOLDS, IN CONVERSATION

Bruce Reynolds' artworks are in between: in between art and decoration, in between the past and the present, in between reality and ambiguity, in between the known and the unknown, in between East and West, in between 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional, in between laborious high energy and refined mark-making, in between architecture and fine art, in between deep knowledge of art history, artmaking processes and playful, spontaneous and, at times, aggressive gestures, in between gravity and levity.

Materiality and history are at the core of Bruce Reynolds' works. Drawing with chainsaws and extremely sharp knives, mixing large quantities of plaster and meticulously pouring it onto carved surfaces, immersing himself fully into his art-making processes. It is because of Reynolds' deep knowledge of history and artmaking processes that he can be spontaneous, as the accumulated knowledge bursts forth through his multitude of practices.

Bruce Reynolds has travelled extensively to pursue the historic migration of ideas and forms linking Europe and Asia. Throughout his career, Reynolds has aimed to advance his knowledge of European history, in particular the expression of designs and patterns. During his travels through Italy, Reynolds became aware that the rubble he found on demolition sites represented centuries-old constructions. Finding ancient artifacts amidst modern urban debris left a lasting impression and prompted him to contemplate what the discards from Australian culture could be that would reflect its urban history in the future.

When Reynolds returned to Brisbane from a trip in the late 1980s, the Brisbane suburban footpaths were littered with piles of debris from the frantic renovations being made to convert Queenslander houses into modern chic dwellings with white walls and polished floors (see the text box on

'Queenslander houses and linoleum'). This was a major shift in how Queenslander houses had been decorated in the past. The debris comprised of different eras of linoleum (see the text box 'Linoleum: a brief history') and carpet. Reynolds immediately saw how this mirrored his previous experiences in Italy, seeing the discards of everyday patterns from across millennia, but the patterned debris on Brisbane suburban streets represented décor and design which spanned approximately 100 years of Brisbane history.

### Queenslander houses and linoleum

Queenslander houses had evolved through many design and décor transitions since their inception in the 1840s. Built on top of stumps predominantly to keep the occupants cool, with the floor off the ground so air could flow under it, the Queenslander became the staple family home. New products were being developed for the changing design trends including different types of floor covering such as carpet and linoleum, colloquially known as lino. Over the years, as new trends became available, it was common for the new lino to be laid directly over the top of the old lino. When the flooring was eventually taken up, it became like an archaeological dig, pulling back the layers of history, each layer characterising a certain era in Australian history, representative of different eras dating back almost 100 years.

Reynolds has concurrently incorporated photography and collage in his work throughout his career. He was influenced by assemblages and collage works by artists such as Picasso, Braque and Gris, particularly in how Cubism changed perceptions of perspective. Lino's malleability, textured surface and diverse range of patterns offered itself as a material that could be used in collage. Based on his understanding of the history of linoleum, in the late 1980s Reynolds began to experiment with juxtaposing lino patterns to create ambiguous surfaces. Hence, Reynolds' works are multilayered through the history of their materiality and the history of the imagery that is portrayed within them.

### Linoleum: a brief history

By accident, in 1860 engineer Fredrick Walton discovered that linseed oil oxidises, resulting in the oil becoming a glutenous mass. This oil when applied to a fabric and dried, resulted in a flexible water-repellent floor covering called linoleum. Due to its water-repellent qualities, linoleum became important for keeping surfaces hygienically clean. Walton established a factory in 1863 to begin mass production of linoleum. Twenty years later, German merchants from Bremen transplanted the linoleum industry to Germany. Within another 20 years linoleum was seen as being a revolution in architecture, with manufacturers employing artists to create modernist designs. With these modernist designs, linoleum became popular worldwide in households, hotels and hospitals. Linoleum began to be imported to Tasmania in the early 1890s and by 1899 was advertised regularly in home journals and catalogues. Linoleum production was established in Australia in 1927. It declined in the 1970s and had a renaissance in the 1980s. Thanks to renewable materials and ecologically sound production, linoleum is currently again in demand. Within art-making itself, linoleum has been used as a printmaking tool. There is no clear point when lino-cut prints were first produced; however, it became a rival to wood cut, lithography and mezzotint due to its ease of manipulation, having a soft homogenous surface with no grain to contend with.

When presenting to a secondary visual art class, Reynolds showed the work *Bullet points*, 2021 (Figure 10.2) and asked the students; 'What do you see?'

'Three pointy things' was one response, 'Is that a boat?' was another, 'Different green patterns'. Beautiful ambiguity, it makes the viewer question 'What is this that I am looking at?'

Reynolds explained to the class that these three shapes, a spear head, a boat and a cypress pine tree, are found in most countries and cultures of the world.



**FIGURE 10.2** Bruce Reynolds, *Bullet points*, 2021, lino, acrylic paint on wood panel, 106 x 122 cm

Using these three objects within one artwork, Reynolds has traversed history and cultures across the planet. The cultural and artistic freedom that has allowed Reynolds to roam provides almost limitless possibilities of concepts to explore. His knowledge of history, both ancient and modern, serves to link his exploration back and forth through time, juxtaposing historical imagery with traditional and experimental art-making processes.

*Rehang*, 2021 (Figure 10.3) explores spaces in between modernist movements and creates a new dialogue of representation from 3-dimensional metal sculpture into 2-dimensional lino.



**FIGURE 10.3** Bruce Reynolds, *Rehang*, 2021, lino and paint on wood panel, 60 cm x 81 cm

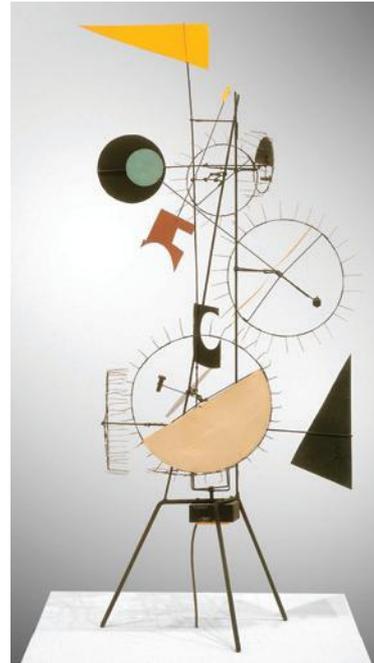


**FIGURE 10.4** Richard Serra, *Prop*, 1968

In *Rehang*, two modernist sculptures are represented side by side. They are rehung next to each other in a new curatorial variation within a 2-dimensional lino collage to pose new questions about sculpture (and painting). The image of the sculpture on the left is a 2-dimensional representation of the experimental ephemeral sculpture *Prop*, 1968 (Figure 10.4) by New York-based artist Richard Serra. In the 1960s, Serra wrote a list of verbs of potential actions he could do with one material. The list included actions such as: to roll, to splash, to drop, to lean. Working in the metal yards at the time provided Serra with access to sheets of lead and steel. At this point in Serra's career, he dedicated himself to the process with no regard for the outcome, his artworks at this time were completely experimental. The processes guided Serra to continue investigating materials, which led to large-scale works that challenged the notions of art and architecture.

The image depicted in Figure 10.5 is a 2-dimensional representation of Swiss artist Jean Tinguely's *Métra mécanique*, 1954. A decade before Serra was creating his experimental works, Tinguely, influenced by Duchamp's *ready-mades*, was creating sculptures from discarded materials.

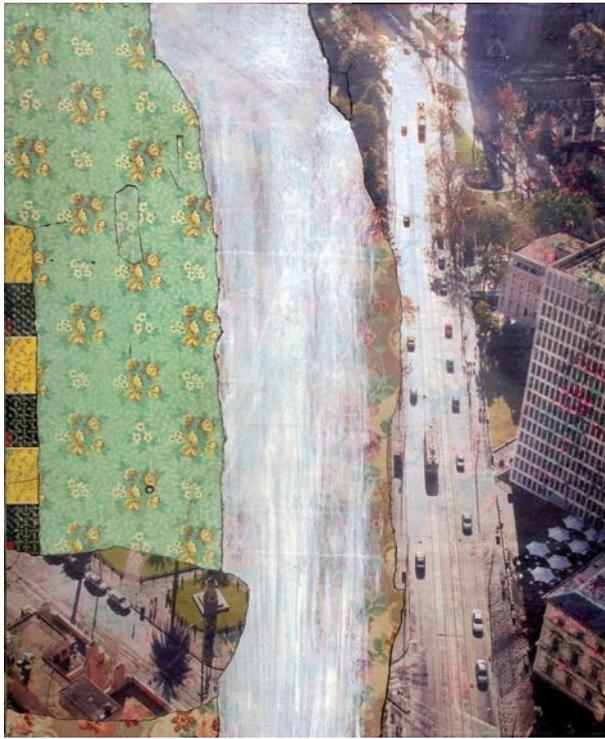
*Rehang* sums up the process Reynolds employs. He allows the process to guide his thinking and is influenced by the materials that are available. When Reynolds began his lino works, a chance moment occurred where he saw a piece of lino



**FIGURE 10.5** Jean Tinguely, *Métra-mécanique (Métra-Herbin)*, 1954, painted steel, electric motor, 174 h x 81.7 w x 108.7 d cm. NGA - National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. © Jean Tinguely. ADAGP/ Copyright Agency

that looked like a painting he had done at age 17 and asked himself, 'can lino be a painting?' Regarding *Rehang*, Reynolds says: 'Revisiting the imagery of modernist sculpture drives a wedge between the objects depicted and the new objects that translate steel into lino.' New meanings are created when appropriating photographs that represent avant-garde sculpture into experimental collage materials of lino and painting. Reynolds continues to allow the process to drive his thinking and asks himself 'What's next?'

Originally from Canberra, a first-generation Australian child of migrants, Reynolds was constantly motivated to make things. When visiting his old hometown, prior to the popularity of aerial drones, Reynolds rode in a hot air balloon over Canberra and photographed the landscape not toward the horizon but straight down. Reynolds would then print the photographs onto lino collages he specifically created for each image, as can be seen in *Wet Road North*, 2011 (Figure 10.6). The patterned frontality of the lino related to the aerial view. Most lino was sourced from floors and bench tops. Reynolds invites correlation between the intimate domestic home environment and the broader cultivated



**FIGURE 10.6** Bruce Reynolds, *Wet Road North*, 2011, paint, photo printed pigments and lino on wood panel, 155 x 122 cm

landscape. He says: 'There are questions of how we treat the floor beneath us as an echo of how we treat the landscape.'

Reynolds developed his sculptural practice in the studios of The British School at Rome. In order to address the complexities of history there, he chose a simple new material to work with: plaster, abandoning the found materials of collage. Plaster is white and clean, unlike linoleum, which is patterned, often colourful and in various stages of decline. He observed elements in the architecture and sculpture in different states of repair. Reynolds used his time in Italy to break from working with found materials. Beginning with a completely blank slate was the beginning of a period of working from blankness, with white materials instead of found materials. He experimented with the texture on the surface of the plaster to create a relief pattern. The relief patterns Reynolds employs translate across time and place.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.1

What type of building do you live in?

What patterns do you have in your place of abode?

Are there patterns on the building for example, in the brickwork or walls or flooring?

Are there patterns in the furnishings, for example, the cushions or bed covers or plates and cups?

How do these compare with older homes and furnishings?

### Activity

Photograph the patterns in your home. Particularly photograph the patterns you take for granted because you see them every day.

Print out the photographs onto A4 paper. Working intuitively, tear the printed patterns into different shapes.

On a new piece of paper, arrange the torn patterns. Don't think about it too much.

Once you have arranged them, glue them down onto the paper.

Do this process three or four times, so you have multiple works.

Now look around your home and see if there are places where patterns come together; for example, patterned concrete against patterned bricks.

How are these patterns indicative of the time the building was built?

What modifications have been done to the property that combines old patterns with new ones?

*Migration*, 2018 (Figure 10.7), is devoid of colour and depicts a textured surface inside the confines of a quatrefoil. The quatrefoil dates back to Gothic and medieval periods. It was often used as a repeated architectural feature. It has symmetry and is symbolic of four leaves, a symbol of good luck. The texture within the quatrefoil of *Migration*



**FIGURE 10.7** Bruce Reynolds, *Migration*, 2018, 40 cm x 40 cm, cast Hydrocal

is divided through the horizontal centre. The texture on the lower half reduces in scale as it moves from the bottom of the quatrefoil to the centre, creating perspective as if the viewer is looking into the distance. The texture is reminiscent of waves on a body of water. The texture in the upper half of the quatrefoil is more ambiguous but has either the suggestion of looking at a mountain range or potentially as if the viewer is looking down onto the landscape from above. With the title of the work combined with the imagery, the viewer may interpret *Migration* as a physical diaspora. It also could be interpreted as a metaphorical diaspora of ideas traversing from continent to continent.

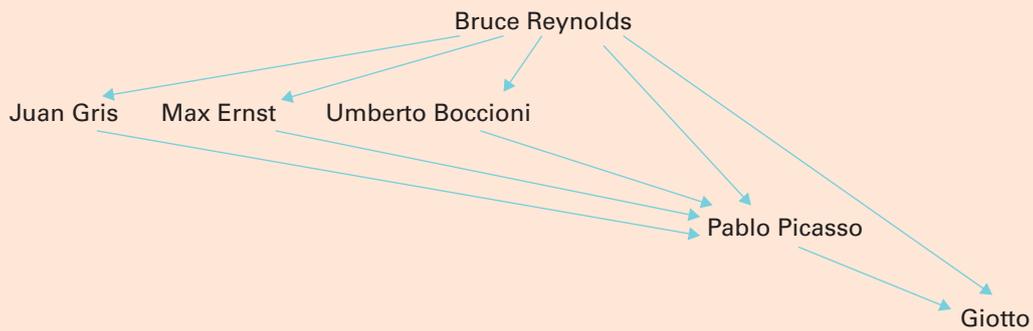
Reynolds has won a number of public art commissions throughout his career. A commission for the Ipswich Magistrates Court was created in collaboration with the architect and the construction company. He researched icons of Ipswich and discovered it is well known for strong and fast machinery, considering its history of coal mining and racing cars. Consequently, Reynolds went to the graveyard of old tyres at the disused New Chum open cut mine, making moulds from various patterned tyre treads of large earthmoving machinery to domestic vehicles, motorcycles and racing cars. The treads were placed into the formwork of the cast in situ prior to the concrete pour. Each of the treads created a relief pattern embedded in the concrete, binding the building to the culture of the city.

Reynolds is represented in the collections of the Queensland Art Gallery, Museum of Brisbane, Artbank, QUT and UQ Art Museums, Canberra Museum and Gallery and regional art galleries.



**FIGURE 10.8** Bruce Reynolds, *Tread*, 2009, cast in-situ pigmented concrete relief in 8 parts, Ipswich Magistrates Court

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY



### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence

Bruce Reynolds, *Rehang*, 2020

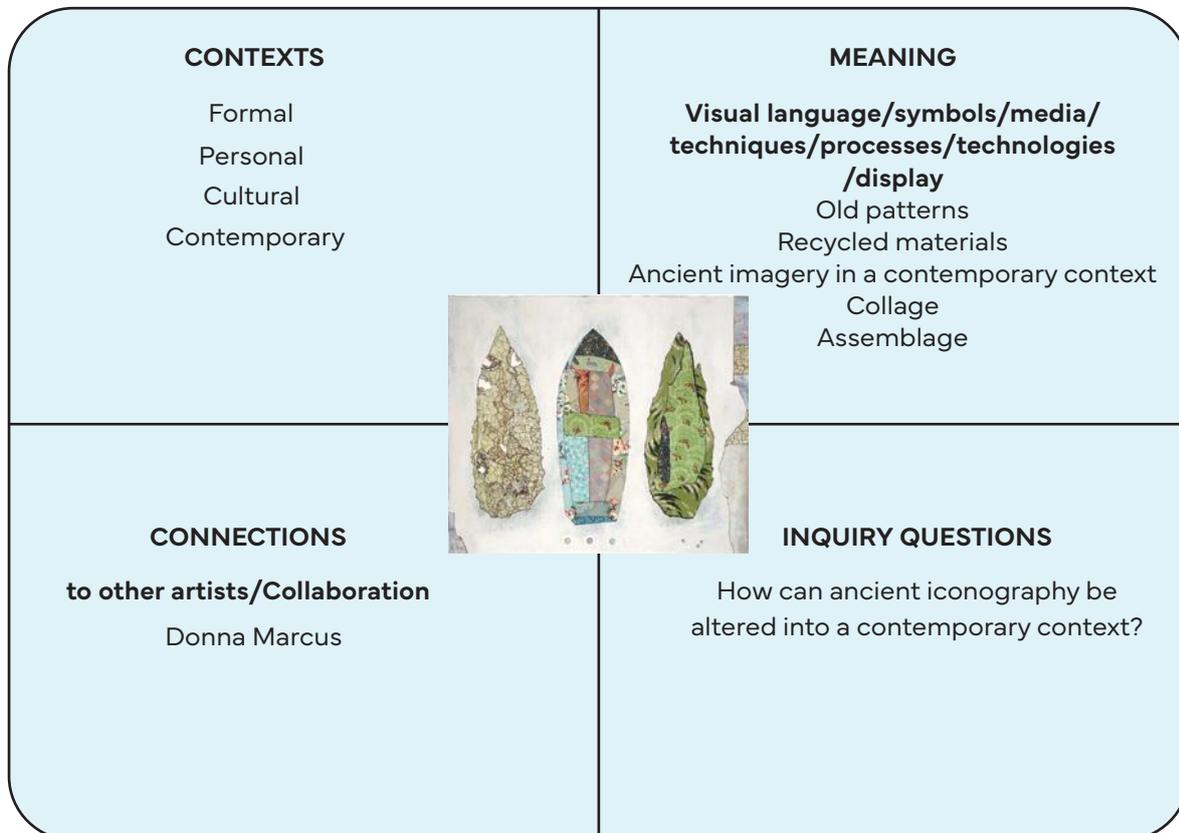
Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, Paris, October–December 1912

Juan Gris, *Bottle of Anís del Mono (La bouteille d'anís)*, 1914

Max Ernst, *Two children are Threatened by a Nightingale*, 1924

Giotto, Scrovegni Chapel

Umberto Boccioni, *Synthèse du dynamisme humain (Synthesis of Human Dynamism)*, 1913, sculpture destroyed



**FIGURE 10.9** Evaluation of Bruce Reynolds' work, *Bullet points*, 2021. Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as knowledge.

## 10.2 Case study: Renata Buziak

**Concept:** Constructing knowledge as artist and audience

**Contexts:** Formal Cultural Contemporary Personal

For most of her life Renata Buziak has had a keen desire to spend time in nature.

 **Curiosity in nature and passion for photography and experimentation drive my practice.**

**My intention is to engage with nature. I aim to inspire people to recognise nature as integral to our existence, fostering a reconnection so we can live in harmony with the environment. We are inherently intertwined with it, we are nature.**

...

**I focus on plants. Knowing more about plants not only enriches my experience of life, it helps me to connect with the living world on a deeper level. This could be true for others. My intention is to share stories, exchange knowledge, care and feelings, and get more familiar with various types of natural environments, to get a better understanding. The more we appreciate, the more we care.**

### RENATA BUZIAK, IN CONVERSATION

Connection with others and helping them to connect with nature, particularly plants, is at the heart of Renata Buziak's art practice. For Buziak, growing up in rural Poland, the natural environment was her life. She would often explore the forest near her parents' house. Her mother and grandmother taught her about the healing powers of plants, which intrigued her and came to be a significant factor in her artistic pursuit.

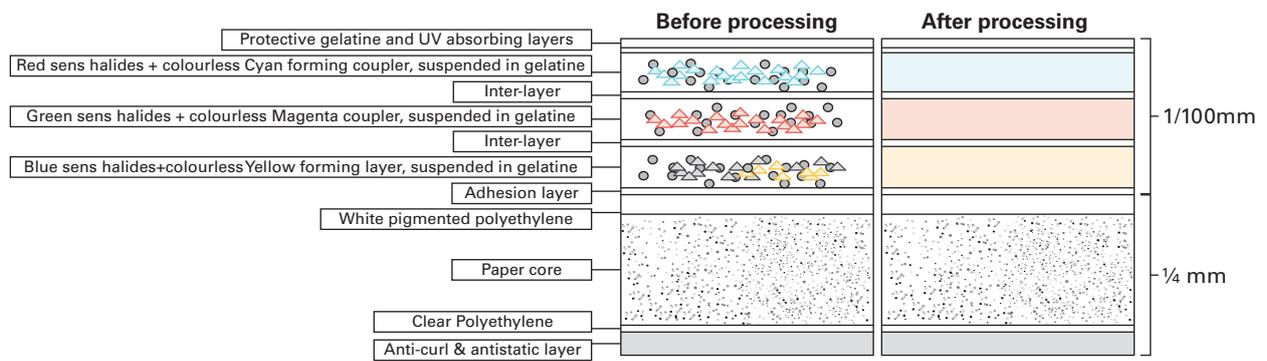
When Buziak was young, she also developed a passion for photography. Her sister created a

makeshift photographic darkroom in their parents' house. The magic of photography captivated Buziak. As digital technology was still to arrive, she used analogue photography, which took time. A roll of film is placed into the back of the camera, usually for either 12, 24 or 36 exposures (photographs). Once the photos were taken, the film was rewound into the canister and usually sent off to be developed. Buziak wanted to develop her own photographs and not rely on anyone else for this process, so she learnt from her sister how to develop the film and expose it onto photographic paper, then use chemicals to develop the image.

Buziak would often spend time in the forest to take photographs of the landscape and plants, then develop the film and print the images. It was a natural progression for her to study photography at tertiary level. With a strong understanding of the history and techniques of conventional analogue photography, Buziak continued to extend her knowledge of photography; in particular, experimental camera-less photography, such as the cyanotype.

Her fascination with camera-less techniques led Buziak to experiment further and to develop her own technique, which bends the rules of traditional photography and allows photographic materials to interact with plants, going deeper into the life and characteristics of plants, and allows for closer observation and deep connection and appreciation of nature. Buziak calls this unique process 'the biochrome'. As part of her research, she discovered that microbes will eat the gelatine surface of analogue paper. As you can see from Figure 10.10, the gelatine and colour layers amount only to 1/100 of a millimetre (mm) thick. Compared to the photographic paper's core, which is ¼ of a mm, the gelatine layers are minuscule. Gelatine's predominant ingredient is protein, which the microbes easily eat through and in turn exposes the different colour layers.

The biochrome process involves Buziak exposing colour analogue photographic paper in the photographic darkroom, then developing, and fixing it. She would place plant matter (leaves) onto the paper, then place them into a plastic bag



**FIGURE 10.10** Typical colour paper – layer structure

Source: Siegfried Manietta, QCA, Griffith University

and store them in the dark for up to three months. Over the time the paper and plants were kept in the dark, microbes would grow just as they do in a compost. They would help decompose the plant matter and gradually eat into the surface of the analogue paper. The results of the images on the analogue photographic paper are diverse, dependent on several factors including the species of plant, type of photographic material, temperature, and the interactions of the microbes on the decaying material and photographic paper. As Buziak says:

“The biochrome process which I developed to create my art is of significant value to me, it is based on the combination of plants and photography two of my passions, and allows me to closely experience nature’s processes and help others to reconnect with the natural world. It fuses nature and photography in an experimental, ever evolving and serendipitous process. It provides me with a huge array of possibilities and results, as nature is not static, it’s in constant flow, and I keep learning from it.

RENATA BUZIAK

After Buziak has left the plants to process on the analogue paper for up to three months, wearing a mask and gloves, she removes the photographic paper and the remnants of the plant from the bag to let them dry. Sunlight sterilises bacteria on the plates so they are safe to handle. Once the paper is dry, Buziak uses a high-resolution scanner to create a digital image. This image is printed onto high-quality paper at whatever size she thinks is appropriate for the plant. Buziak notes, ‘the process and materials are just the means of achieving a goal of connecting with nature. It doesn’t mean that if those materials were not accessible, I would cease my activities of connecting with nature and helping people to do that too.’

Many artists begin their experimentation with what is close to them and Buziak is no exception. When she began her research, she worked with what was available and close to home, her garden. She created a body of work which was very close to her, both geographically and personally; *Biochrome No 1* (Figure 10.11) from *The Biochromes My Garden* series in 2004, is the very first biochrome Buziak created. Within this rich image the viewer is positioned as if looking through the dense foliage toward a clearing, but due to the microbe action on the paper, the third layer of yellow appears between the plant matter, creating space.



**FIGURE 10.11** Renata Buziak, *Biochrome No 1*, from *Biochromes My Garden series*, 2004

Buziak continued her experimental photographic research in an environment close to her heart, the country of her birth, Poland. She produced a body of work from the places she explored in her childhood. An example from this series is *Ice Pond* from *Arterimage series* (2009), Figure 10.12.

As part of Buziak's Doctoral research through the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University in Brisbane, she developed a strong working relationship with the Quandamooka community on Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) in Moreton Bay, Queensland. Echoing back to her childhood with the knowledge she learned from her mother and grandmother about medicinal plants in her town in Poland, Buziak worked closely with the Quandamooka people to learn about their medicinal plants. An example of the *Medicinal Plant series* is Figure 10.13 *Sesuvium portulacastrum*, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, and *Ipomoea pes-caprae* ... *stings remedial* ...

Buziak has continued to connect with communities and scientists to research the plant life in particular environments and build knowledge. Before beginning projects, she asks



**FIGURE 10.12** Renata Buziak, *Ice Pond* from *Arterimage series*, 2009

herself a series of questions: What do I want to learn? What do I want to explore? What's special or specific about the site I'll be working on or about the flora I might work with? What will I focus on and why?

She aims to continually increase her knowledge about an area and its plant life. In the environment, she is constantly familiarising herself with it by walking, observing, listening,



**FIGURE 10.13** Renata Buziak, *Sesuvium portulacastrum*, *Carpobrotus glaucescens*, and *Ipomoea pes-caprae* ... *stings remedial* ...



**FIGURE 10.14** Renata Buziak, *Rhodamnia maideniana, Elliptic*, 2022, *Gondwanan Biochromes* series

feeling and spending time with it, and where possible she works with the local community, experts and First Nations custodians. Buziak has spent time near Stanthorpe on an artist residency with the Harrigans Lane Collective, where she researched the plants on the Granite Belt. Her body of work *Granite Belt Wildflowers* explores the beautiful floral diversity of the region, working on a forested property near Stanthorpe represented in *Harrigans Lane I*, from *Flickering Overtones* series (Figure 10.15).

*Yimbali – Listening is a form of healing* (2020) (Figure 10.16), featuring Umbi Umbi Gumby Gumby medicinal plant, was a two-



**FIGURE 10.15** Renata Buziak, *Granite Belt Wildflowers, Harrigans Lane I*, from *Flickering Overtones* series (2016–2018)

channel projection with layered soundscape collaboration that encompasses traditional Gungarri knowledge, eco-acoustics, time-lapse videos, poetry and music.

In 2022, Buziak was the inaugural Artist-in-Residence on the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape located within the World Heritage Gondwana Rainforest of Australia, which is part of Lamington National Park South-East Queensland. Buziak’s research focused on Gondwanan lineage flora and she worked with local paleobotanist Dr Ray Carpenter, who advised and helped her locate Gondwanan plants. A recent work, *Rhodamnia maideniana, Elliptic*, 2022 (Figure 10.14) features a Gondwanan lineage plant in the *Gondwanan Biochromes* series.

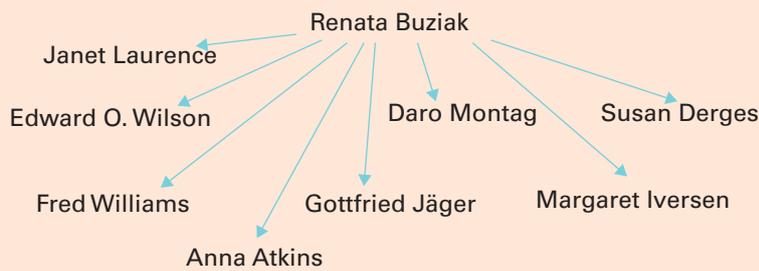


**Video 10.1** Time-lapse video: *Unfolding Rhythms* by Renata Buziak



**FIGURE 10.16** Renata Buziak, *Umbi Umbi Gumby Gumby, Day 1, Day 6, Day 23*, 2020, time-lapse stills, from *Yimbali – Listening is a form of healing*, audio-visual installation

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY



### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence

Edward O. Wilson, *The biophilia Hypothesis*

Daro Montag, *Bioglyphs*

Susan Derges, *Willow Taw River*, 2019

Janet Laurence, *Glass Garden Novartis Medical Maze*, 2016

Fred Williams, *My Garden*, 1965–67

Gottfried Jäger, *Pinhole Structures*, 1967.

Margaret Iversen, *Publication: Chance*

Anna Atkins, *Delesseria sinuosa (in fruit)*, 1853

### Artist's Statement

In my studio research I create Biochrome images that help me and others to reconnect with nature. I often work with specifically selected plants, for example healing plants, Gondwanan flora or bushtucker, some of which overlap by theme or location. I endeavour to research the plants and their uses, and where possible engage local communities, Indigenous Custodians, and scientists in my projects.

I call my process the Biochrome, because I create biochrome art in collaboration with natural processes by fusing plants and photographic emulsions over time. This technique preserves the plant's characteristics while addressing the metamorphic power of natural decomposition, and results in an array of colourful pigmentation arranged in complex and detailed compositions, aided by nature's own creative skill.

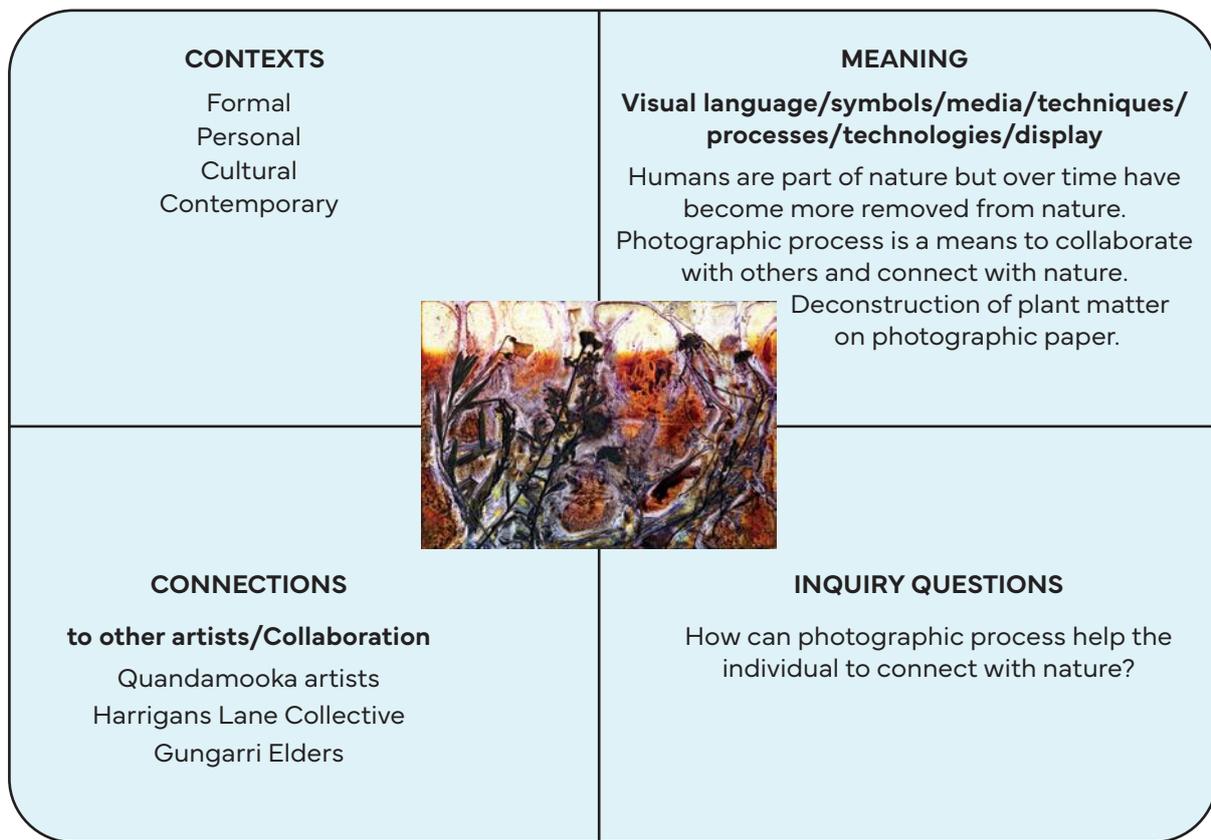
RENATA BUZIAK

### Student responses

Learning about cyanotype processes is a valuable approach to creating personal imagery, however, if this method is not available, a colour photocopy, photoshop, image transfer, mono printing or gel plate printing also offer start points for developing some potent imagery.

Buziak has visited Redlands College several times, giving artist talks and providing

biochrome, cyanotype and chemigrams workshops. The students explored various processes and incorporated nature and found objects in their work. They were eager to experiment, ask questions and explore further possibilities of conveying their messages through their work. Students have taken the process further to producing larger bodies of work, using photography and cyanotype on textiles and ceramics.



**FIGURE 10.17** Evaluation of Renata Buziak's work, *Granite Belt Wildflowers, Harrigans Lane I*, from *Flickering Overtones* series, (2016–2018). Develop and refine this chart based on your research and understanding of art as knowledge.

## 10.3 Case study: Donna Marcus

**Concept:** Constructing knowledge as artist and audience

**Contexts:** Formal Cultural Contemporary Personal

**“I’ve always been really interested in the journey materials take and the changing value of objects. Cheap and throwaway doesn’t make it any less beautiful.”**

DONNA MARCUS

Donna Marcus is a prolific artist who works between her two studios in Brisbane and Tamborine Mountain. She is an award-winning artist who has produced many sculptures that are held in private and public collections in Australia and internationally. Marcus is best known for

her collected discarded aluminium kitchenware with original uses in post-war kitchens, recalled and extended by the process of assemblage. The materials themselves generate another layer of reference through her practice, further extending the modernist impulse to regularity, repetition and dream.

Donna Marcus knows a lot about aluminium; when it was first manufactured, how it was used throughout industry, in military equipment and in households. Unlike many metals, such as gold, silver or iron, aluminium does not exist in nature. The manufacturing process of aluminium requires large amounts of electricity, which became readily available late in the 19th century. When aluminium was produced in 1886, it was deemed a wonder product and worth more than other precious metals. Aluminium is lightweight, yet strong, can be made into any form needed and is used in many applications.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.2

We take electricity for granted, it is everywhere, yet we rarely notice it. We particularly notice it when it is not available, through the many things that rely on electricity.

When your house or school has lost power, what happens to compensate? Are other energy sources employed that are not normally used?

Research the impact of electricity historically and how it changed the world: contrast historical changes with future trends.

The aluminium production process can be broken down into three stages:

- 1 bauxites, which contain aluminium, are extracted from the ground.
- 2 bauxites are processed into alumina or aluminium oxide
- 3 pure aluminium is produced using electrolytic reduction, a process in which aluminium oxide is broken down into its components using electric current.

About 4–5 tonnes of bauxites makes 2 tonnes of alumina from which approximately 1 tonne of aluminium can be made.

In the 20th century, aluminium became synonymous with modernism. Aluminium objects were standardised, to minimise production costs. They were modularised to be easily packed and transported. Aluminium was perfect for mass production, and made good economic sense. Aluminium is odourless and tasteless and posed no health risk. Most households in Australia throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s would have used aluminium cooking products such as: pots and pans, vegetable steamers, cake tins, cups, plates, jelly moulds, ice trays and cooking utensils. As technology advanced, aluminium cookware was

replaced with stainless steel pots or Teflon-coated pans and plastic cooking utensils and storage containers. Today, many households continue to use aluminium in the form of drink cans, cooking foil, medicinal packaging or building materials. Many of the domestic aluminium products from its heyday went out of fashion and were thrown away, recycled or given to second-hand stores for resale.

In Donna Marcus' home were beautiful aluminium jelly moulds, their form and texture capturing the light. She says, 'When my first child was born, I was going to make a very tonal drawing of jelly moulds. I love the aesthetic of the domestic and the industrial.' This attraction to the aesthetics of the form and patina of the jelly mould was a catalyst in the pursuit to find out more about aluminium products. When Marcus went into second-hand stores, she would collect discarded domestic aluminium products and back in her studio she would arrange them into iterations of their original form.

Central to Marcus' artworks is the quantity of the same product. She says, 'My work relies on this critical mass of objects and they really become my palette both colour and form, the results are often quite minimal and repetitive.' The sculpture *Pivot* (Figure 10.18) is a beautiful example of Marcus' process. *Pivot* consists of 220 long loaf aluminium baking trays arranged into squares that are stacked on top of each other but with each layer slightly rotated. Marcus reconfigures the objects whilst preserving their essence. Transforming them into something distinct, yet maintaining their authenticity. *Pivot* was a finalist in the 2022 Bondi Sculpture by the Sea.

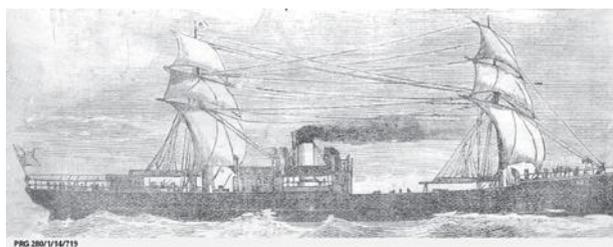


**FIGURE 10.18** Donna Marcus, *Pivot*, 2022, aluminium, adhesive, steel, concrete, Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney, Photography: Charlotte Curd.

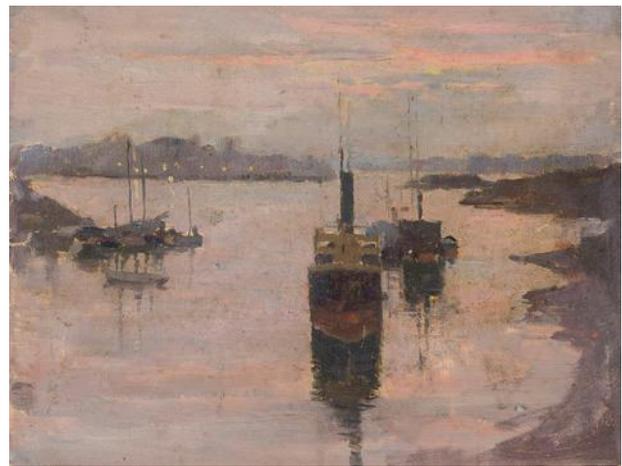
Marcus creates geometric forms which radiate from the original form of the manufactured product resulting in tessellations, hexagons, pentagons, spirals, spires, icosahedrons, truncated icosahedron (soccer ball) and dodecahedrons. She says, 'I try very much to keep them as they are and to use the patina of age and use so the fact these things come from people's homes and lived this life is important.' Each object has its own history. They beg the questions: 'What are the stories behind this object?', 'Who owned this?', 'Where did they live?' Consequently, many of Marcus's works are not just about the arrangement of the original form, they carry deeper stories, some of which are from her own past.

The *SS Gabo* (Figure 10.19) was a comfortable and popular interstate passenger sailing and steam ship, built in Scotland in 1883. During its 40 years of service, the *Gabo* was known for its speed. Today, we wouldn't think of travelling interstate by commercial boat, but in the early 20th century, most people did not travel. Commercial flights were very rare and extremely expensive, most people did not own a car, roads were rough and were made of dirt, interstate steam trains were available but slow. The *Gabo* made travel possible and pleasurable.

At the end of its life, the *Gabo* was anchored in a quiet bay in North Sydney and was slowly salvaged. It was a well-known ship, to the extent that Australian Impressionist artist Percy Lindsay produced an oil painting of it: *SS Gabo. Berry's Bay, Sydney* (Figure 10.20). Berry's Bay is an idyllic place with beautiful light, and in the early 20th century was a location that attracted many artists.



**FIGURE 10.19** *SS Gabo*



**FIGURE 10.20** Percy Lindsay, *SS Gabo. Berry's Bay, Sydney*, n.d., oil on composition board.

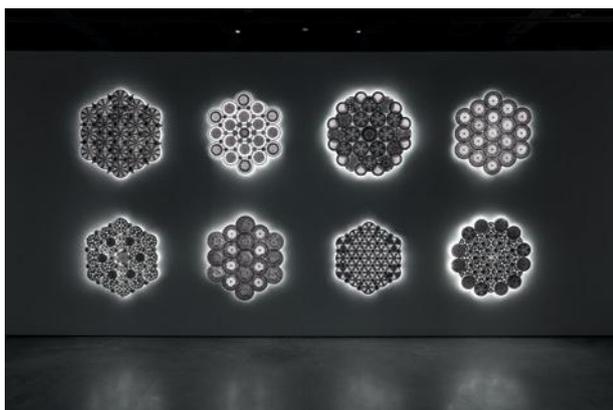
*SS GABO* was a significant vessel in Donna Marcus's family history. At the end of the *Gabo's* life, Marcus' great-grandfather, Captain John Andersen, lived on the ship and slowly salvaged it; in other words, he slowly destroyed his home. Whilst Andersen lived on the *Gabo*, he invited his daughter, Mrs Nielsen, to come and live on the ship with her young daughter Thora, who is Donna Marcus's mother. Marcus's grandmother, Mrs Nielsen, added her imaginative touch to the *Gabo* creating a comfortable and aesthetic living area. The *Gabo* was comfortable to live on as it had a large upper deck, and below deck leather seating in the passenger area, which was converted to a living space, a kitchen and bathroom. Thora later recalled her mother's handmade lace curtains beautifying the portholes, transforming the living space into a haven away from the demolition.

It was cheap to anchor in Berry's Bay for the year, with no rent, providing both home and income for Captain Andersen. Over time, he was able to salvage most of the ship, selling the steel engine parts and brass fittings but he had trouble selling the timber. Eventually, the ship became unliveable and was sold to carry coal, eventually being scuttled off Sydney Heads in 1933.

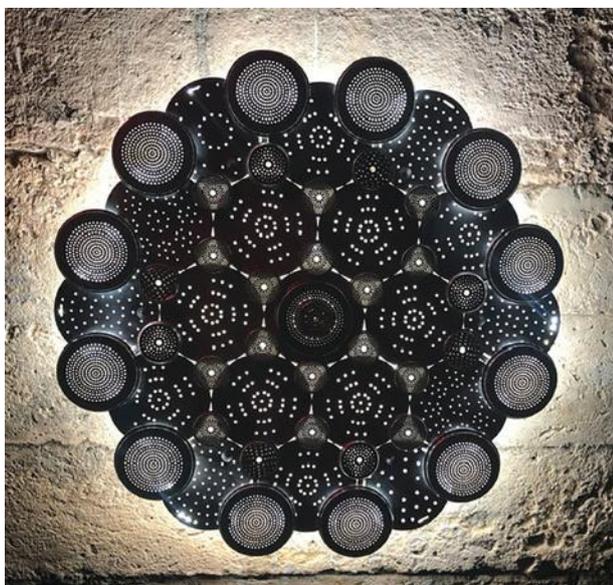
Within the *Gabo* were many stories, but one which stood out to Marcus was the change in its value: as a luxury passenger ship, a home, the value of its parts, to transport coal and now as a dive site.

Marcus created the work *Gabo*, 2022 (Figure 10.21) with domestic aluminium pizza trays, shower

roses, parts from coffee percolator parts and various other sieves. The shapes are reminiscent of her grandmother's lace curtains on the *Gabo* and combine Marcus' attraction to the industrial. The first iteration of this work was titled *Five Tattings* (Figure 10.22), a site-specific work installed at the Coal Loader site in North Sydney very close to Berry's Bay where the *Gabo* had been moored. Tattings refers to decorative handcrafted lace, yet Marcus has been able to replicate the appearance of the lace with ready-made aluminium objects.



**FIGURE 10.21** Donna Marcus, *GABO*, 2022 – 23, aluminium, LED lights, Overall 960 x 360 cm, Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Alex Chomiez



**FIGURE 10.22** Donna Marcus, *Five Tattings*, 2022, aluminium, adhesive, LED lights, steel. Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney.



**FIGURE 10.23** Donna Marcus, *Waist*, 2023, aluminium, anodised aluminium, adhesive, 235 x 180 x 17 cm. Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Heather Faulkner.

Another work which has multiple references to the *SS Gabo* is *Waist*, 2023 (Figure 10.23). The midships portion of a sailing ship used to be known as the *waist*. The *SS Gabo* had both an engine and sailing capacity with two masts.

The colours and shape of *Waist* allude to shipping signals as Marcus (cited by Littlely in Creyton, 2023, p. 58) states:

“The cross formation is used on the flags that comprise the alphabet in International Signals Code, denoting Mike, when featured as a white ‘X’ on a blue ground and Victor when featured as a red ‘X’ on a white ground.

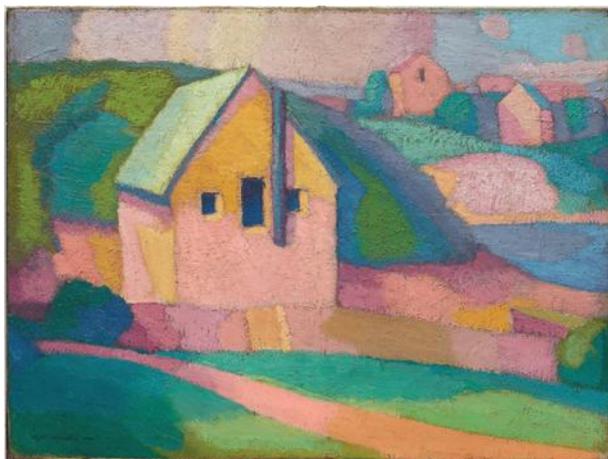
The artwork's form and title also refer to the body and dressmaking. Finally, the ship became waste, it was slowly pulled apart and sold and the section that could not be salvaged was sunk at sea.



**FIGURE 10.24** Donna Marcus, *Pulse (Synchronomy in green minor)*, 2023, aluminium, adhesive, steel, 100 x 87 x 7 cm, Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Heather Faulkner.

*Pulse (Synchronomy in green minor)*, 2023 (Figure 10.24) appears as if a component of *Waist*, where *Pulse* holds positive space to the external negative space of *Waist* and carries the same shimmering greens of the anodised aluminium cake tins.

When the viewer moves across *Pulse (Synchronomy in green minor)*, the colours vibrate as the light shifts and bounces off the conical forms. *Pulse* was inspired by a conversation Marcus had with curator/writer Samantha Littlely about the green light at the end of the jetty in *The Great Gatsby*.



**FIGURE 10.25** Roland Wakelin, *Synchronomy, in orange major (Synchronomy in orange red)*, oil on canvas

*Pulse* is also a reference to the works of two early Australian modernist artists, Roy de Maistre and Roland Wakelin, whose respective works *Synchronomy, Berry's Bay* 1919 and *Synchronomy in orange major (Synchronomy in orange red)*, 1919 (Figure 10.25) capture the colours of Berry's Bay. de Maistre and Wakelin's works were inspired by American Synchronist artists Morgan Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright who experimented with connecting colour to music.

Marcus was part of a group of eight artists who were invited to engage with the Great Victorian Rail Trail (GVRT), which is a walking and bicycle path where the train line used to run. In her usual approach, Marcus researched the particular site and town where her artworks would be installed. The town she was allocated was Tallarook.

She says, "There is an old saying about Tallarook, 'things is crook in Tallarook', an Australian colloquialism, speaks to a time when 'making-do' with great ingenuity and resourcefulness was a necessity." Part of Marcus's research was about the people who lived in Tallarook and built the original railway, itinerant workers who tended to move from job to job with very few possessions, and swagmen who travelled the track. One type of item Marcus saw repeatedly in her research of old photographs were the vitreous enamel plates (Figure 10.26) the workers would use for meals.



**FIGURE 10.26** Vitreous enamel plates and bowls



**FIGURE 10.27** Cotton reels



**FIGURE 10.28** Cotton-reel bush furniture



**FIGURE 10.29** Donna Marcus, *Nook*, 2023, vitreous enamel, Dimensions variable (tallest element 2.7 m), Public artwork, Great Victorian Rail Train Cycle Path, Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney, Photography: Nigel Karikari/Thirldrow Films.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, people in remote locations and with limited financial resources would make ends meet with whatever they could find, often building their own shacks and furniture. Home-built cotton-reel furniture (Figure 10.28) was commonly made to help make life a little more comfortable.

Combining the forms of the vitreous bowls and plates with the vertical stacks of cotton-reel furniture, *Nook* (Figure 10.29) was conceived and created by working with a company in Geelong. Glass Metal Industries (GMI) is the company that created all the original signage for the Victorian Railway in the 19th century and also made all the signage along the GVRT. *Nook* are fabricated 'bowls' which are joined to shape the sentinel forms, connecting the domestic plates and cups with the industrial vintage signage of the railway.

**In material, form and pattern, *Nook* recalls the domestic and the industrial, the railway signage and the metal kitchenware both finished in vitreous enamel by the same Victorian company that has operated continuously since the 1890s. *Nook* marks a new beginning, the start of the trail and a restful corner to contemplate earlier paths.**

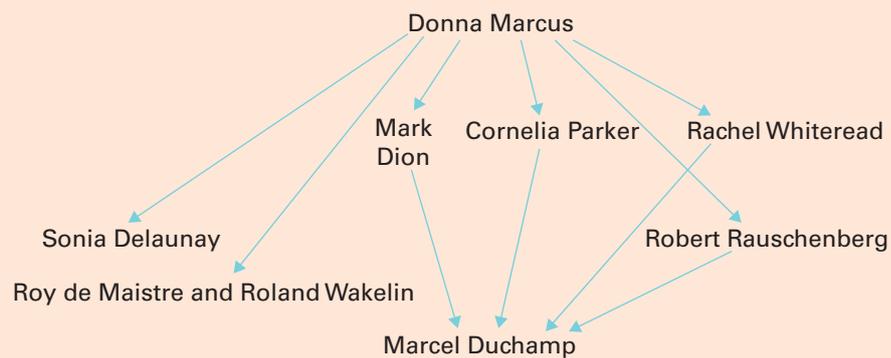
#### DONNA MARCUS IN CONVERSATION

In 2022, Marcus was commissioned to create a sculpture for Kambala Girls School in Sydney. To equip herself for the task, she spent time researching the archives of the 135-year-old school. The achievements of the school's Old Girls were a significant influence on the design of the artwork. The materials and overall form of *Stride* (Figure 10.30) represent achievements across many spheres such as arts and science and, in particular, aviation. *Stride* also speaks of the multifaceted aspects of the curriculum.



**FIGURE 10.30** Donna Marcus, *Stride*, 2023, aluminium, LED lights, Dimensions variable ( 2 elements 1.5 + 1.1 m diameter), Kambala School, Sydney NSW, Courtesy of Donna Marcus and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney, Photography: Felix Cehak.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY



### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence

Mark Dion, *Theatre of the Natural World*, Whitechapel Gallery, 1999

Cornelia Parker, *thirty pieces of silver*, 1988

Rachel Whiteread, *Untitled (One Hundred Spaces)*, 1995, an installation of 100 jewel-like resin casts of the underside of chairs in Tate Britain's iconic Duveen Galleries

Robert Rauschenberg, *Odalisk*, 1955

Sonia Delaunay, *Rhythm Colour No 1076*, 1939

Roy de Maistre, *Syncromy, Berry's Bay*, 1919, oil on canvas

Roland Wakelin, *Syncromy in orange major (Syncromy in orange red)*, 1919, oil on canvas

Marcel Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1964 (after porcelain original, 1917)





**visual resistance** is a key theme in her work. Her reference to visual resistance relates to techniques and strategies that resist the eye: masking, camouflage and pattern, disguise and transformation. Wyman engages in the exploration of various iterations of these in her exhibitions as follows:

- Protesters utilise various masks such as Guy Fawkes, black and brightly coloured ski masks, superhero-themed masks, skulls, gas masks and masks based on world leaders. These masks serve symbolic and tactical purposes and are used globally for different agendas and causes.
- Patterned clothing is employed by protesters as makeshift camouflage, including tie-dye, **keffiyeh**, paisley and **dazzle camouflage**, which disrupt visual perception.
- **Aposematism** is a biological camouflage with high-contrast colours and repeat patterns to signal toxicity, which has inspired protests, notably the yellow and black colour combination in movements like Yellow Vests and the various colour and

pattern representations used in the Umbrella Revolution, Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion protests.

- The use of smoke as protest camouflage can mask a whole group. Flares can visually amplify a group and tear gas is used by police and military to make a group dissipate. The word 'camouflage' stems from the French word *camouflet*, which translates as 'a whiff of smoke'.

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**visual resistance** use of visual media as a form of activism or protest

**keffiyeh** symbolising a yearning for freedom, a *keffiyeh* is fashioned from a square cotton scarf and is a traditional headdress worn by males in the Middle East

**dazzle camouflage** known also as razzle dazzle and dazzle painting, is a family of ship camouflage that was used extensively in World War I, with the intention not to conceal but to make it difficult to estimate a target's range and speed

**aposematism** a biological camouflage, found usually on toxic animals, where high-contrast colours like yellow and black combined with repeat patterns function as a siren to warn off predators and let them know they are poisonous

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## Artist's Statement

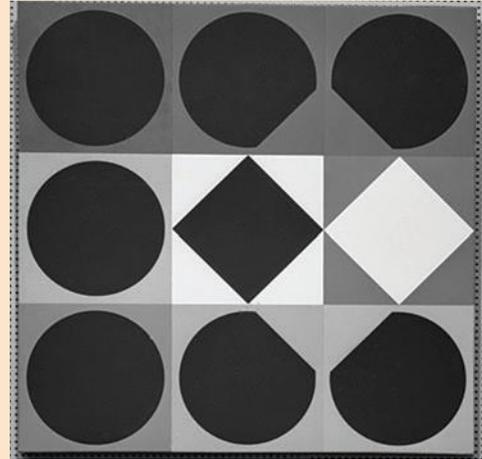
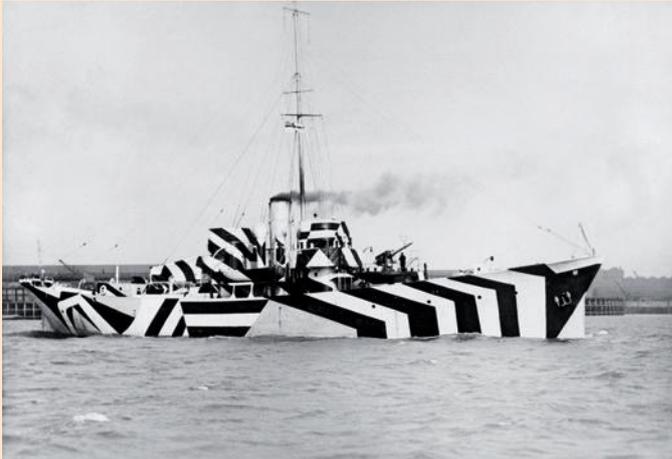
Visual resistance is at the core of my practice. I make work that investigates camouflage as a social, formal and political strategy. I work with various mediums in order to detail the playful **subterfuge** present in the dynamics of camouflage. My recent work explores the theme of visual resistance through patterning and masking, especially when it is used by marginalized groups to gain power in zones of conflict. I have collected and archived a vast amount of images of masked protesters engaged in this very subterfuge of counterpower. As I pull images and create various groupings, different 'collective skins' are emphasized.

A paisley bandana, a *Keffiyeh*, a balaclava, or a Guy Fawkes mask unites these imaginary collectives, even when they have divergent ideological positions or are made up of protesters who live millions of miles apart. The members of these imaginary collectives share the same social camouflage. This social camouflage is permissive and facilitates collective visual resistance and the imagination of different futures beyond now. The mask creates a social imaginary space under and despite the watchful gaze of networked surveillance.

JEMIMA WYMAN

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.3

- 1 Research the history of dazzle camouflage.
  - a What is it?
  - b Why was it used?
  - c Find some examples of its use throughout history.
  - d How does it relate to Op Art? (Identify similarities and differences.)
  - e Where do you see this type of camouflage in nature?



**FIGURE 10.32** British gunboat *HMS Kildangan* in dazzle camouflage, 1918. (Photo by Imperial War Museums via Getty Images) + Victor Vasarely, *Topaze Noire Negatif*, 1967, wood relief, 36 x 36 x 4 cm

- 2 Research aposematism.
  - a How is it beneficial to the predator and the prey?
  - b Identify several species which have evolved this anti-predator adaptation as a means of survival.
  - c Print a range of images from the internet of species that you have identified and develop a collage which focuses on pattern, repetition and colour.
  - d Colour, sound and odour are all warning signals which are characteristic of aposematic organisms. How could you incorporate each of these into the development of an artwork which appeals to the senses extending beyond vision only?



**FIGURE 10.33** Mandarin Fish, *Synchiropus splendidus*, Isla Banda Neira, Indonesia, Asia + Arrow poison frog, *Dendrobates leucomelas*, native to rainforests of Venezuela, Colombia, South America

*Thronging Bluff Face* is a multi-masked cape/tent/quilt made for a live performance which has been documented in video form, and continues to exist as a sculptural textile work which can be exhibited as a quilt, a tent or freestanding sculpture. It combines thrifted 'protest' garments, online protest images custom printed on fabric, masks, performance and music to make a new object that can be used on the streets or in the gallery. During the live performance, the textile work is modified with spray-paint and markers and Wyman incorporates her voice to occupy each mask, inviting the audience to experience various modes of resistance necessary to wrestle with power. The underside of the work contains a visual essay of images featuring masked protesters highlighting the use of 'hybrid' masks that show overlaps between different protest movements (for example, a Guy Fawkes mask painted black by **black bloc**). The top side consists of repurposed protest attire, including masks, bandanas, scarves and T-shirts patchworked together, which align with the visual essay on the underside.

**subterfuge** act of deception in order to achieve one's goal

**black bloc** a movement where protesters dress tactically in black and wear face-concealing items with the aim to obscure their identities, making it challenging for authorities to differentiate individuals and prosecute them. The attire also serves to shield their faces from pepper spray commonly used in protests or civil unrest.

**contemporaneoussness** existing synchronously or occurring in the same period of time

Collage allows Wyman to bring together different images from different locations, times and contexts to make a new 'world' and create new knowledge related to the individual images that are constructed into a collective formation. Collage and patchwork as techniques are linked to feminist and political histories because of the analogue, affordable, do-it-yourself nature and **contemporaneoussness** of the images, materials and process. Wyman's 2021 exhibition *Fume* investigates the focus of camouflage, featuring collages created from plumes of smoke arising from protests and consists of three different series of collages, *Haze*, *Plume* and *Billow*. The *Haze* series of works from within the exhibition, weaves images of smoke together to form nebulous landscapes that mimic the abstract shapes found in the designs of camouflage textiles. The titles for the works continue to be a list detailing the protest information relating to the collaged pieces. The full title for *Plume 20* details a vast 13 000-word list which also serves as an archival document of global unrest for moments that have already passed.

Ephemeral, and sometimes noxious, the particles caught in the air of these collages also contain rage. Smoke is a siren, a signal of past, current and future distress.

JEMIMA WYMAN



**Video 10.2** Jemima Wyman, *Thronging Bluff Face*, live performance, 2014, Long Beach, California, USA.

**FIGURE 10.34** Jemima Wyman, *Thronging Bluff Face*, still image from live performance, 2014, Long Beach, California, USA. Photo: James Naish, Image courtesy of the artist + *Iconography of Revolt*, (exhibition), 2018, Installation view. Photo credit: Elias Rodriguez. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 10.35** Jemima Wyman, *Plume 20*, 2022, installation view with artist, 'Air', GOMA, 2022, hand-cut digital photos, 450 x 530 cm. Photo: Chloë Callistemon, QAGOMA, Image courtesy of the artist + *Plume 20* (detail), 2022, Hand-cut digital photos, 450 x 530 cm. Photo: Ed Mumford. Image courtesy of the artist  
The full title of this artwork can be accessed at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10642>

“When I was looking at the ‘Yellow Vest’ movement they were using yellow flares during protests. The smoke was a great collective covering and made their bodies operate on an architectural scale in the landscape. I wondered where else was smoke in protest used and why? When I made the first smoke collage, there was a global outcry because the Amazon rainforest was burning and all the images

I saw online looked like the smoke scapes I was making in the studio. I could also smell smoke in my Los Angeles studio from nearby wildfires. So even though the collages only use smoke from protests, they appear to be wildfire smoke scapes that also speak to this contemporary awareness of climate crisis and interest in Air (spurred by Covid-19).

JEMIMA WYMAN



**FIGURE 10.36** Jemima Wyman, *Untitled*, 2019, hand-cut digital photos, 66 x 106.5 cm, Photo credit: Ed Mumford. Image courtesy of the artist + *Haze 1*, 2020, Hand-cut digital photos, 124.5 x 183 cm Photo credit: Ed Mumford. Image courtesy of the artist  
The full title of these artworks can be accessed at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10643>



**FIGURE 10.37** Jemima Wyman, *Flourish 6*, 2020, 132 x 101.5 cm, hand-cut digital photos on paper. Photo credit: Ed Mumford. Image courtesy of the artist

The full title of this artwork can be accessed at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10645>

In the photo-collage series, *Flourish*, Wyman investigates the use of yellow and black in protest and biology, as it relates to aposematism. The chromatic and luminous contrast of yellow and black increases visibility and warns of a potential danger for both animals and humans alike. In the artwork, she highlights how countless individual protesters and collectives have employed this optical strategy as a device, warning of past, current and future hazards.

As Wyman works with images to create various groupings, different 'collective coverings' are emphasised. Her hand-cut photo collages often become what she calls 'ideological textiles': wallpaper, curtains, fabric swatch books and installations. Her interest in the history of decoration as a visual tool for communicating political messages prompts her to continue to develop these surface designs. From 2014–2017, Wyman worked on an ongoing series inspired by Soviet textiles from the 1920s and 30s that culminated in a fabric swatch book called *Propaganda Textiles*. The aim was to research and create a fabric for our times. The project



**FIGURE 10.38** Jemima Wyman, *Domestic Rage*, 2017, custom printed textiles and thread, 143 x 119 cm. Photo credit: Jemima Wyman. Image courtesy of the artist

resulted in a commercially produced artist swatch book consisting of 40 unique custom fabric patterns. The patterns were developed as a series of works on paper using collage, painting and drawing. These works were then digitised and photoshopped into larger repeat patterns for bolts of fabric. In the final stage of producing the book, Wyman worked closely over a number of months with a company that specialises in fabricating swatch books in the United States. Each pattern featured one or more masked protesters and archived the related information specific to the protest: cause, date and country. This contextual information was listed on the reverse side of the fabric swatch along with the type of fabric, the width of the fabric and the swatch code. At the back of the book, a world map records where each of the protests had occurred (related to the images used in the fabrics) with an explanation of the archive and scope of the project.

*Aggregate Icon (RBW)* is a two-metre diameter collage comprising hundreds of hand-cut photographs. For this particular work, the **MAS-archive** was curated using the filter of

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**MAS-archive** (referencing en masse, in a group together) is the name Wyman has given to her extensive and growing collection of images of masked protesters and documentation of fires and protest movements online. The archive was started in 2008 and is housed in Los Angeles on hard drives. From the archive, Wyman selects a range of photographs which she resizes and reshapes and after removing the backgrounds, she arranges the remaining fragments into colourful collaged compositions

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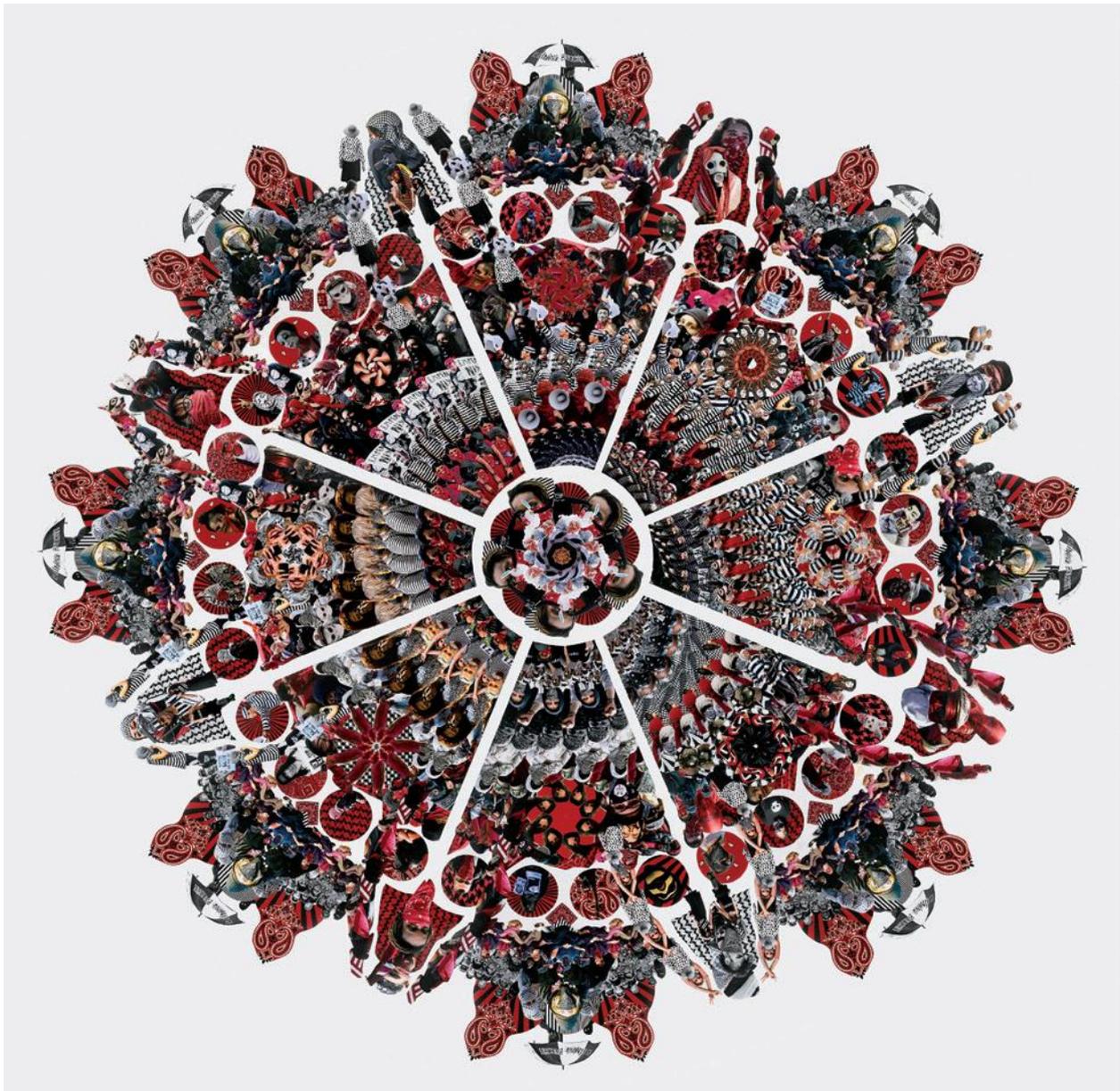
protesters wearing paisley, *keffiyehs*, dazzle camouflage, within the palette of red, black and white. The title for this work is two-pages long and lists each individual image with the related information specific to the protest (reason for protesting, place and date). In this collage, images date from 2002 to 2016, and span the globe (Chile, Egypt, Prague, Thailand, Bahrain, China, Spain). The protesters are ideologically divergent in their positions. They stand for various causes ranging from labour and **fiscal reform**, Indigenous land rights, unjust police shootings, air pollution, mass-student deaths,

anti-fascism and pro-government support. Compositionally, what could be considered to be a contemporary **mandala** based on a kaleidoscopic arrangement, *Aggregate Icon (RBW)* mimics a rose window, reminiscent of a Gothic cathedral in Europe.

• • • • •  
**fiscal reform** changes in the expenditure and revenue policies of a government

**mandala** a circular configuration of symbols, often used in Hinduism and Buddhism where they are considered sacred representations of the cosmos

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**FIGURE 10.39** Jemima Wyman, *Aggregate icon (RBW)*, 2017, hand-cut digital photographs, 200 cm. Photo credit: Jemima Wyman. Image courtesy of the artist  
 The full title of this artwork can be accessed at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10646>

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.4

Research some of the major world protests that have occurred: for example, Yellow Vests, Umbrella Revolution, Black Lives Matter and Extinction Rebellion.

- Select one and describe how colour, textiles and masks/masking are utilised by the participants to uphold a collective identity as the protest plays out.
- Find images from the protest you selected; print in colour and develop a collage, giving consideration to repeat pattern and radial symmetry (symmetry which extends from a central axis).



**FIGURE 10.40** Red Rebels from Extinction Rebellion together with around 20 000 people march for climate action in the streets of Brussels on 3 December 2023 in Belgium. Photo by Thierry Monasse/Getty Images



**FIGURE 10.41** Activists mark one month of Umbrella Movement, Hong Kong, China, 28 October 2014

Wyman's practice is an act of piecing together contemporary events and images from a growing global protest culture, whether this is through fragments of photos in her hand-cut collages or pieces of custom-printed textiles that are patchworked together or poured paint blobs that sit adjacent to one another to make an image. As an Indigenous woman, her art-making through her personal lens is politically informed, which is integral when considering the nuances of her work. For Wyman, it isn't about pictorial depth, it is more about the complexity of a multi-faceted optical surface that provides an opportunity for awareness of one's own body through the act of looking and thinking.

Wyman's advice is to balance modes of thinking, researching, experimenting and making so that all four areas are evolving and developing, thus enabling discoveries to be made that will feedback into the other modes. The goal with every new project is to extend upon previous approaches to keep work innovative and progressive. She uses the synchronicity of what is happening in her studio and how that overlaps with her observations of world events and what she is researching.

## MEANING

### Visual language

Wyman investigates the transformative and protective potential of patterned textiles, clothing, and masking with a collective focus on visual resistance.

Transformative textiles and **recombinant** forms, including spatial installations with protest symbol patterns, seek social camouflage, providing a versatile collective space which depict turbulent times.

### Symbols

Combining military-style preparedness with protester's protective symbols, motifs and images have been selected from Wyman's ongoing MAS-archive of clothing and costuming of masked protesters from around the world. The work projects a complex social message where makeshift actions and **talismanic** imagery come together to ward off evil.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Wyman paints on **Zeltbahns** to create a series of double-sided recombinant paintings. These triangular pieces of fabric, used as shelter-halves by various militaries, became a testing ground for military camouflage graphics. Wyman focuses on do-it-yourself painterly effects applied by street protesters to banners, signs,

clothing and masks. Four double-sided **Zeltbahn** paintings accompany three large-scale textile works: a monument built from quilted panels of silver material bearing photos of chrome-masked protesters, and two spatial installation featuring patterned swatches of protest symbols, spray-painted using stencils cut from photographs. These transformative textiles and recombinant forms aim for social camouflage, offering a **manifold cloak** for the resistant body – a provisional, repurposable, collective space in highly volatile times.

### Display

Installation of banners and printed and painted textiles.

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**recombinant** produced by combining genetic material from different places

**talismanic** representative of a particular group

**Zeltbahn** multi-buttoned triangular pieces of fabric, also known as a **shelter-half** when translated from German

**shelter-half** a partial tent used by the military, designed for concealment and temporary shelter; when one or more sections are combined, they can serve as a poncho, tent, floatation device, stretcher or a sling and have many additional uses

**manifold cloak** a cape that is aimed at protecting the body through keeping it dry and safe (reflective in the dark)

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### CONTEXTS

- Contemporary Formal
- Challenges mainstream ideas about boundaries of art
- Uses non-traditional materials and new technologies
- Borrowing of imagery
- Represents ideas as a system of symbolic objects and motifs which may be decoded as evidence of the artist's intention
- Emphasis on process, elements, principles, materials and media

### CONNECTIONS

#### Collaboration

Collection of banners, painted textiles, images and photographs from other unknown craftspeople and photographers from around the world

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How can woven fabric and pattern be used as modes of counterpower for marginalised groups in conflict zones?

**Inquiry questions for other featured works** – Where/why/how do people use camouflage (masks, patterned textiles and smoke) in the everyday in order to have power? Are there connections between these choices of camouflage?

**Focus** – resistance/camouflage/pattern/protest/history of surface design in textiles.

**FIGURE 10.42** Evaluation of Jemima Wyman's work, *Deepsurface Fray Rage*, 2018, custom sewn shelter-quarter spray-painted with original metal buttons, painted-photographs, metal armature, painted moving blankets, various painted fabric, approx. 297.2 x 3910.4 x 91.4 cm. Photo credit: Ruben Diaz. Image courtesy of the artist. The full title of this artwork can be accessed at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10647>

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Jemima Wyman

*A haze descends* (exhibition), 2022

*Haze* (series), 2022

*like a siren it repeats* (exhibition), 2019

*Iconography of revolt* (exhibition), 2018

*Pattern Bandits* (exhibition), 2014

## Student artwork referencing a formal context



**FIGURE 10.43** Elijah Smith, *Reservoir daydream*, mixed media installation, digital photography, size variable

## Artist's Statement

*Reservoir Daydream* explores the convergence of alternate art-making processes through unconventional mediums, challenging the boundaries of traditional artistic expression. The sizeable circular bowl, filled with black liquid, symbolises the reservoir a profound wellspring of creativity. Each photograph not only exemplifies the beauty found in divergence and innovation but also serves as the fragmented echoes of our multifaceted realities. This *altered reality* is a profound concept I wish viewers to share with me in a journey of boundless creativity and self-discovery. The work explores themes in a contemporary context that break the barriers between traditional and conventional art-making processes. This artwork embodies the fusion of the tangible and intangible, embracing chaos and harmony simultaneously. *Reservoir Daydream* beckons its audience to peer upon the gloomy surface, forcing their contemplation of a false reality.

ELIJAH SMITH

## Process work



FIGURE 10.44 Elijah Smith process work

## 10.5 Case study: Phoebe Paradise

**Concept:** Constructing knowledge as artist and audience

**Context:** Cultural Contemporary

“My practice often explores the tension between humanity and nature recurring motifs include Queensland architecture, mangroves, flooding and climate change, colonialism and the Australian underground punk subculture, represented both in current realities and speculative science-fiction futures. A technicolour, subtropical Australian Gothic.”

PHOEBE PARADISE

Phoebe Paradise is a Meanjin, Brisbane-based, self-taught, multi-disciplinary artist, designer and musician, who works in the media areas of illustration, drawing, digital media and textiles and is also known for her engaging public art installations and murals. Her work explores the multiplicities of Brisbane’s visual identity and history, through a lens which reflects a focus on popular culture, fashion, sultry summer days and the medley of architectural styles in houses and buildings. In describing the various visions of her hometown, Paradise refers to the rusted-on cultural cringe, the tombstones of Modernism in the textured, concrete Brutalist buildings juxtaposed with the lush, subtropical landscape. Her love of the suburbs has become a common presence in her evocative illustrations and artworks, which authentically capture what it is about Brisbane that makes it

one of the most liveable cities in the world: the laid-back attitude and sense of community in the suburbs, the humidity and sunshine interspersed with afternoon thunderstorms.

Paradise's artistic career has its origins in somewhat unconventional beginnings and she entered the professional scene as an illustrator and designer for indie labels, punk bands and venues, creating merchandise, gig flyers and record covers. Consequently, a significant influence on her work and style has stemmed from **lowbrow art** and art movements.

.. .. .

**lowbrow art** (also known as Pop-Surrealism) is a populist art movement which began in Los Angeles in the 1970s, with its cultural roots in punk music, underground culture, graffiti and street art, skate and surf culture and design, tattoo art, comic book design, poster art, digital art and kitsch

.. .. .

The housing crisis, the effects of climate change, and the disruption of flooding blend to form a recurring theme in her work. Paradise alludes to the inevitability of flooding, and the unfortunate, long-lasting effects that are still observable many years later, particularly with water-level marks still visible on the sides of houses and buildings. Most recently, Paradise has been developing artworks that investigate the diverse assortment of architecture of the city, visually documenting Brisbane's history of urban development. Queenslanders, and their characteristic architectural features, are of particular focus in Paradise's work. What sets a traditional Queenslander style of house apart from houses is the defining trait of being raised on stumps. Lifting the main living spaces off the ground, it appears to be floating above the terrain, not only a stylistic feature, but also for practical purposes, in allowing air to circulate underneath and cool the house. It also protects the main structure from structural pests and pre-empts the effects of flooding, enabling the natural flow of water underneath during torrential rain.

Situated in the lower lagoon of Brisbane Botanical Gardens, Paradise's 2023 installation

*Foundation* pays homage to the ubiquitous suburban icon of the Queenslander, a beloved and enduring feature of Brisbane's urban landscape. Built for the subtropics and a cherished element of Brisbane's history, these familiar forms stand on stilts, which sometimes appear to be disproportionate to the overall balance of the structures. Paradise's houses are not only a symbol of historical nostalgia, but they also reference adaptation and the global crisis of climate change. She visualises a suburban Brisbane lifestyle where extreme weather events are so frequent, that floods have become commonplace. Flickering lights and the glow of inhabited interiors communicate resilience against the unsettling stillness of the water beneath. Reflections of the stilts and house above on the surface of the water adds a gothic twist, evoking the quiet calm that pervades the atmosphere after the rain when residents wait for the floodwaters to recede. The scaled-down houses are lit from the inside at night as though the residents are going about their daily lives, oblivious to the weather outside. These sculptural houses were fabricated with aluminium that had been laser-cut from Paradise's computer-rendered designs, then welded and mounted onto stilts before being installed in the lagoon.

Process and materials are significant to Paradise when developing a response to a public art project or installation. This large-scale installation was part of *Botanica: Contemporary Art Outside*, an annual public art exhibition melding art, science and technology and reflecting themes of sustainability. Paradise explains that the large budget and high-profile location also came with many challenges. For a sculpture of this magnitude, the role as visual artist blurs with the boundaries of project manager. Planning the budget for the build and materials began six months before the work came to fruition. Researching and engaging with contractors and industry professionals to develop the project was a necessity to guarantee seamless execution.



**FIGURE 10.45** Phoebe Paradise, *Foundation*, 2023, laser-cut and welded aluminium, size variable, Brisbane Botanical Gardens installation. Commissioned by Museum of Brisbane for Botanica: Contemporary Art Outside. Photography & Videography by Joey Bailey. Image courtesy of the artist

## Student artwork reflecting a contemporary context



**FIGURE 10.46** Angel Butten, *Torrential Grasp*, 2021, Plaster of Paris and cardboard, plaster casting, plasticine, hot glue, impasto gel medium, acrylic paint, dowel, black card paper, skewers and metallic corrugated cardboard sheets, 80 x 30 x 30 cm

### *Artist's Statement*

Informed by flooding in Brisbane, *Torrential Grasp* is a sculptural piece inspired by the concept of mortality and the versatility with which its intricacies can be presented. I challenged myself to create a piece that demonstrates the sense of mortality that is permeated even by the destruction of an inanimate object that never has nor ever will 'live'. Through the use of crude and rough construction methods, the house aspect of the sculpture has been made to feel as if it is in a state of decay. In contrast, the hand, made of plaster, is living and full of vitality, produced by the rich tones and the writhing surface created by impasto gel medium.

ANGEL BUTTEN

## Process work

### Supporting Evidence

- \* Inspired by the Brisbane landscape: the constant vulnerability of floods and the capacity for the destruction of personal possessions that creates a sense of mortality when considering their absence.
- \* Plaster of Paris casting was utilised alongside impasto gel medium to create the hand. Dense sheets of modelling cardboard were used to create the house structure, which was in turn held together by hot glue and supported by lengths of dowel.
- \* The meaning that the piece communicates revolves around the presence of mortality along the banks of the Brisbane River and its relevance to its inhabitants and their possessions.
- \* The immense upheaval caused by the 2011 floods in Brisbane influenced the way in which I implemented the style of impasto painting onto the sculptural arm piece.
- \* The many challenges imposed by creating a realistic arm cast without fully encasing my arm, as well as working around creating a structure that looks decayed without collapsing. There were many difficulties inherent in supporting the arm structure, from cardboard to wires none of which fully supported the piece; however, plasticine reigned supreme in supporting the final piece.
- \* The thick distribution of paint which is relevant to the impasto style of painting was heavily utilized in creating a texture for the hand.
- \* The piece is presented in a way that attempts to convey the inherent mortality of possessions through their capacity to be destroyed.



FIGURE 10.47 Angel Butten, process work

Paradise also enjoys the comfort and ease of digital art observation, and the lens through which she views the world is the most important tool for these works. Her architectural drawings and tableaux are often generated from thousands of reference images and personal experiences, usually obtained during long early morning walks around the quiet suburban streets of Brisbane. For Paradise, her walks become a game, similar to the children's picture book, *Where's Wally*, providing opportunities to examine people's complex internal lives, through the exterior of their suburban share houses and apartments. Paradise also acquires inspiration from items of Australian **kitsch**: vintage postcards, tourism posters, lost merchandise and film advertising, which contributes to the 'sunshine state' vibe that permeates her artworks. Additionally, she considers font choices, compositional elements, print quality and artistic intent as important elements in her creative process.

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**kitsch** a German word which translates to 'worthless trashy art'; usually associated with mass-produced items and considered poor taste due to its garish nature and superficiality

**voyeuristic** the watching of others in violation of privacy  
 • ..... • • • • • • • • • •

“ My phone is full of strange, **voyeuristic** photos of house exteriors zoomed in to strange textures or details that entranced me in the moment which often find their way into my sculptures and illustrations in one way or another. Bursting gutters packed with leaves from a storm, a particularly beautiful bloom of black mould on an ageing air conditioning unit, a rotten staircase with missing steps all worthy of documentation to help construct my illustrations.

My work is usually developed for its site-specific context. I must always ask myself:

Where will this work be primarily viewed?  
What medium will best convey the intent of the work?

Who is the audience most likely to be reached by this work? How will the work live on after its initial exhibit? How can I best document the work for digital spaces?

PHOEBE PARADISE

Paradise's 2022 solo exhibition, *Sunburnt in the Suburbs*, at Pine Rivers Art Gallery in the Moreton Bay Region, was inspired by her exploration of the streets of Strathpine, Bray Park and Albany Creek and the beauty found in observations of the mundane. The exhibition included a mix of illustrations, sculptures and installation pieces and provided Paradise with an invaluable opportunity to push the limits of her practice into larger and more complex concepts, which included programming for the public through community engagement activities, such as digital drawing workshops and the painting of miniatures. A remarkable outcome of the full project was the universal quality that it revealed. While the exhibition focused specifically on imagery representative of the Moreton Bay region

through its unique architecture and character, the relatability of the narrative meant that the full exhibition experience was appreciated by national and international audiences.



FIGURE 10.48 Phoebe Paradise, *Sunburnt in the Suburbs*, 2022, Pine Rivers Art Gallery. Photo credit: Cian Saunders and Katie Bennett. Image courtesy of the artist



FIGURE 10.49 Phoebe Paradise, *Castle*, 2022, various foams, cardboard, paper, recycled detritus (bottle caps, shampoo pumps, plastic takeout containers etc.), natural materials (dried flowers, twigs), acrylic paints, corflute, varnish, wooden base. Commissioned by Pine Rivers Art Gallery, Moreton Bay Regional Council. A part of the *Sunburnt in the Suburbs* solo exhibition 2022–2023, size variable. Photo: Cian Saunders and Katie Bennett. Image courtesy of the artist

*Castle*, a centrepiece in the *Sunburnt in the Suburbs* exhibition, is a sculptural collection of suburban houses which have been stacked on top of each other to form a fantastical tower. Each layer within the tower depicts a representation of an individual house, in keeping with the

appearance of a Queenslander style of house. The arrangement of the composition also hints at the urban sprawl, where development is forcing suburban expansion to grow upwards, in light of the limited availability of spare land.

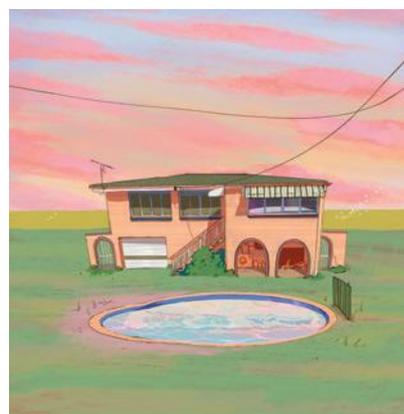
## Student artwork referencing a contemporary context



**FIGURE 10.50** St Peters Lutheran College, *Tall House* and *Night House*, mixed media sculptures

*Portrait of a house* consists of six houses in a style that is characteristic of many in the suburbs that form part of the Moreton Bay region. As depicted in this body of work, the houses were often low-lying, brick or weatherboard, with coloured glass, bold paint choices and sometimes came with

renovations that clearly demonstrated a do-it-yourself aesthetic. The homes give off a sense of familiarity which draws the audience in to exploring the surface colours and textures. The full collection of this series can be viewed in the Interactive Textbook.



**FIGURE 10.51** Phoebe Paradise, *Portrait of a house*, 2022, digital illustrations 210.7 x 42 cm. Commissioned by Pine Rivers Art Gallery, Moreton Bay Regional Council for *Sunburnt in the Suburbs* solo exhibition 2022–2023, acquired by the Moreton Bay Regional Council Art Collection. Photo credit: Cian Saunders and Katie Bennett. Image courtesy of the artist

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.5

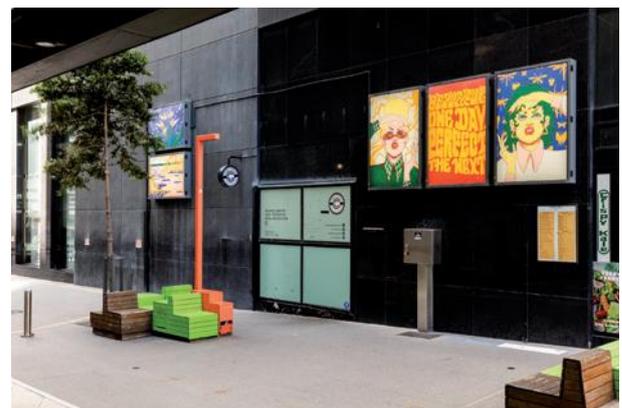
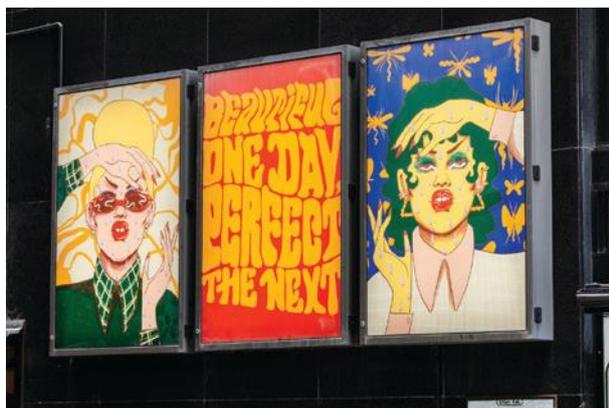
Research how the architectural styles of houses in Queensland have changed over the years.

Search Google Streetview for your place of residence. Does it fit into a style or type you have researched? (E.g. Queenslander, Colonial, Victorian, Federation, Edwardian, Ashgrovian, Californian Bungalow, Art Nouveau, Mid-century modern, Interwar, or post-World War II styles.)

If you have access to digital software (such as Procreate), develop a realistic digital drawing that reflects an image of your house. (Exaggerate the use of colour, or choose the use of unrealistic colours, or limit your colour palette to a monochromatic, complementary or analogous colour scheme.) If you don't have access to software, produce a hand-drawn image and colour with watercolour paint. Include an element in your design that you can animate (for example, a clothes-line with clothes moving in the breeze, an animal or car moving in front of the house, or lights that turn on in the windows.)

A vibrant compilation of artworks by emerging contemporary artists from Brisbane, exploring the subtropical essence, distinctive landscapes and cultural ambience of the city, formed the *Sunny Side Up* exhibition in 2020. The exhibition highlighted the Sunshine State's abundance, richness and optimism and featured Paradise's artwork *Beautiful one Day, Perfect the Next*, the title of which alludes to the Sunshine State's tourism campaign slogan from the late '90s. *Beautiful One Day, Perfect the Next* was a commission for the Brisbane City Council's Outdoor Gallery Program, which involved the production of five digital illustrations installed as lightboxes featured in Eagle Lane in the Central Business District. With collaborators, Paradise expanded this idea by incorporating **Augmented Reality (AR)** animations that could be activated by users' smartphones, and became part of a city-wide 'AR Treasure Hunt', combining art and technology.

**Augmented Reality (AR)** an enhanced, interactive version of a real-world environment achieved through digital visual elements, sounds and other sensory stimuli via holographic technology



**FIGURE 10.52** Phoebe Paradise, *Beautiful One Day, Perfect the Next*, 2020, 5 digital illustrations in lightboxes in Eagle Lane, Brisbane. Commissioned by the Brisbane City Council for the Outdoor Gallery Program 2020, *Sunny Side Up* exhibition. Photo credit: Joe Ruckli. Image courtesy of the artist

The connection to Brisbane that Paradise has developed through her work is a reflection of the city's multi-faceted identity. In her various imagined worlds, there is no attempt to smooth over the unsettling or the turbulent. Instead, Paradise embraces darkness as a form of celebration, turning

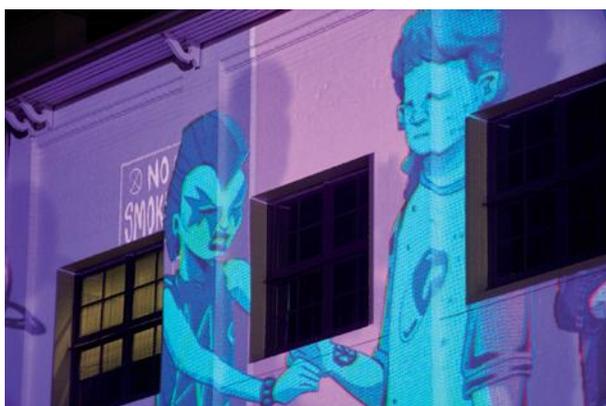
it into a negative bliss. Her 2022 digital work, *Mallrats*, pays reverence to Brisbane’s night life. The work captures a lively scene in Fortitude Valley, portraying a diverse crowd awaiting entry into a venue, illuminated by neon lights that shift between various shades of aqua, magenta, blue and purple. The street characters become increasingly strange and hellish, which creates an uncanny atmosphere, as a sedan drives slowly by each one. The demonisation of the space aligns with Foucault’s concept of the **Gothic sublime**. In the context of Phoebe Paradise’s art practice, Bris Vegas (a city that never fails to entertain), could also be appropriate to describe the *Mallrats* scene that is projected onto the Judith Wright Centre for the *Outerface* public arts programme.

**Gothic sublime** a sense of decline, decay and disintegration; the experience of both thrill and fear from something dark, uncertain or confused, combining revulsion with fascination

## INQUIRY LEARNING 10.6

The concept of the Gothic sublime stems from literature and is found in novels such as *Frankenstein*, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Dracula* and *Wuthering Heights*. It creates conflict and tension and may present contrasting views or concepts such as desire and fear, the beautiful and the grotesque, love and hatred, awe and terror.

Research how other artists depict contrasting views or concepts within the same artwork. What other contrasts can you think of that represent the Gothic sublime? Develop several experimental works in your own choice of media that represent the sets of contrasts you have chosen.



**FIGURE 10.53** Phoebe Paradise, *Mallrats*, 2022, digital projection onto the Judith Wright Centre building, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Qld. Commissioned by Outer Space for ‘Outer Face’ public art program. Photo credit: Cian Saunders. Image courtesy of the artist

In addition to her arts practice, Paradise is also the mastermind behind the curation of many events around Brisbane, which have included film programming and festivals, art shows for illustrators and fashion events. She and her work also featured in a year-long national advertising campaign for Apple, *Behind the Mac* in 2021, chosen by Apple as a notable emergent creative practitioner and for the unique visual lens

through which she depicts Brisbane. The multi-dimensional campaign centred Paradise’s visual arts journey and included original illustrations and the recently acquired *Subtropical Surreal*. This campaign was the start of a change in direction for Paradise’s career, and it was the impetus for expanding the reach of her practice and showcasing her work in distinct new contexts.



**FIGURE 10.54** Phoebe Paradise, national advertising campaign for Apple, 2021

## Student artwork reflecting a contemporary and formal context



**FIGURE 10.55** Aymar De Roquefeuil, *Man's Eye View of Brisbane*, laser-cut panels of marine ply with hand cut stencil + aerosol, 1550 x 550 mm

Along with her portrayal of the suburbs from backyards, cul-de-sacs, pizza shops and bus stops, Paradise's aesthetic presents a refreshing truth about her subject matter. The abundant beauty of Brisbane and Queensland shines through her work, but she also shows her audience detritus from the local grunge that extends from night life, murky river waters, shared housing and trash that can be seen in the back streets of the city and the suburbs.

Whilst responding to her immediate material world, Paradise's intention as an artist is to elicit delight, curiosity and a familiar yet peculiar sense of unreality for the viewer. She seeks to inject a sense of folklore and tradition into Australian mundane suburbia with fanciful compositions, colours and pop surrealism. Highlighting and recontextualising the often-overlooked details of a place in time can completely alter the way an individual or community sees and appreciates the built environment around them. Paradise hopes to impact and reflect the unique **zeitgeist** of Australian culture, using Brisbane as a niche case study, whether it is inventing mythology around the stilt houses of the suburbs or garnering a dedicated group of appreciators for the modernist buildings dotted around Brisbane's CBD.

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**zeitgeist** the general, moral or cultural disposition or climate specific to a particular era  
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## MEANING

### Visual language

*Subtropical Surreal* captures dreamy, animated snapshots of everyday life, magnifying surreal moments from around the city and always reshaping the connection with the sub-tropical surroundings. The moving images reflect the colours that are characteristic of Brisbane, particularly in the summer-time: the blue-purple haze of jacaranda flowers that drop onto the station wagon; the tropical bird of paradise flowers being struck by lightning and heavy rains; the strong complementary colour scheme of the urban skyline with five Queenslanders from various eras glowing from the golden lights shimmering in the windows forming a contrast with the purple tinge at night fall as the sun sets behind Mt Coot-Tha; the murky green floodwaters outside the doublehung window, the air so dense with humidity from the rain, that it starts to drip down the walls inside the house; the mangrove habitat of

twisting roots as they extend upwards from the mud flats and the bland, beige monolithic 1970s high-rise building.

### Symbols

The stylised animation depicts scenes, landscapes, landmarks and everyday occurrences that are recognisable as being typically relevant to Brisbane.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Procreate, Photoshop (illustrations with a Wacom Tablet), Photoshop timeline animation and Adobe After Effects for additional animation; projected onto the cliffs next to Howard Smith Wharves.

### Display

*Subtropical Surreal* is a moving image piece projected along the edge of the Brisbane River. This work became the first digital art

acquisition made by the Brisbane City Council's Public Art Collection.



## CONTEXTS

Cultural Contemporary

The use of non-traditional materials and new technologies

Exhibited in public spaces rather than traditional gallery environments

Exploration of Australian culture through narrative depictions

Demonstrate influences of art movements, styles and origins of time and place

References historical framework

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

### Inquiry question

Can you create myth out of the mundane?

How can hyperlocal subject matter change how we see the world?

### Inquiry questions for other featured works

How can my art capture the zeitgeist of the current time and place?

**Focus** – The suburbs sense of place sub-tropical climate and thunderstorms/ Queensland houses and urban scape mangroves and local flora.



**Video 10.3** Phoebe Paradise, *Subtropical Surreal*. Illustrated and animated by Phoebe Paradise and Helena Papageorgiou. Courtesy of the artists

## CONNECTIONS

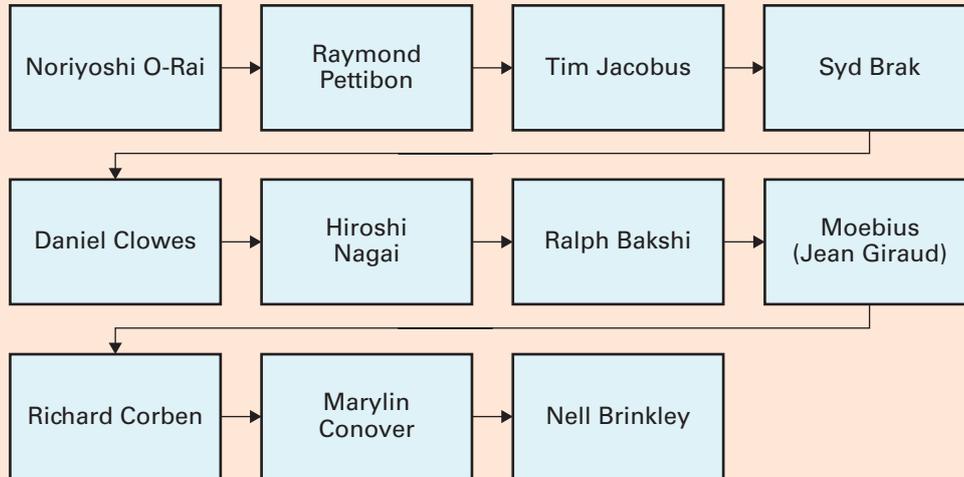
### Collaboration

Commissioned by the Brisbane City Council, animated with animator and motion designer, Helen Papageorgiou

**FIGURE 10.56** Evaluation of Phoebe Paradise's work, *Subtropical Surreal*, 2020, animated digital illustrations projection. Commissioned by and acquired as part of the Brisbane City Council's Public Art Collection. Originally projected onto the cliffside of Howard Smith Wharves, Brisbane. Illustrated and animated by Phoebe Paradise and Helena Papageorgiou. Image courtesy of the artist

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Phoebe Paradise

*A Moment*, 2023

*Sunburnt in the Suburbs* (exhibition), 2022

*After Us*, 2021

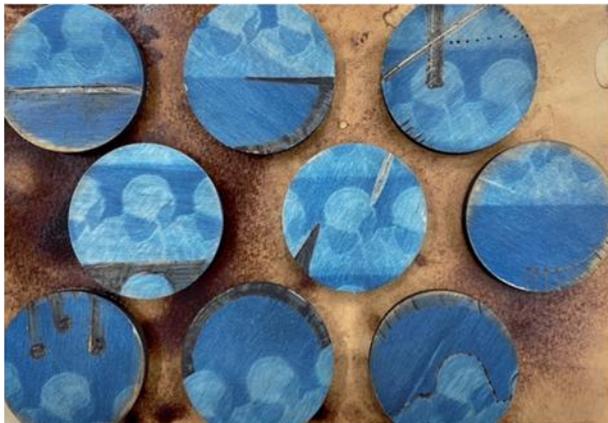
*Stumble Home*, 2021

*Sunshine City*, 2020

*Swamp City*, 2020

## 10.6 Case study: Martin Smith

This interactive Case study can be accessed online in the Interactive Textbook.



**FIGURE 10.57** Sam Jensen, 2020, cyanotype on nine timber discs placed on Canson watercolour paper stained with coffee, size variable

# Chapter summary

- The artist case studies in this chapter have presented bodies of work exploring diverse materials, techniques, processes and technologies. They vary in the contexts through which they engage with the world. Characteristics that the artists share are a continuous immersion into researching their concept deeply and a focus that enables them to develop a highly resolved body of work.
- Bruce Reynolds works through the cultural, contemporary and formal contexts. Reynolds researches ancient and modern materials, processes, techniques and technologies. He is interested in repeated motifs through history and across cultures. It can be argued that Reynolds artworks are in between ancient and modern times, in between abstraction and realism and in between many cultures. He juxtaposes ancient and modern patterns and materials such as linoleum, photography and plaster to create contemporary works of art.
- Renata Buziak loves to connect with nature, she explores the world through cultural, contemporary, personal and formal contexts. She has been curious about nature and photography since she was a child and her curiosity is a driving force through her research. Buziak connects with communities to understand the plant life in their environment, including the Quandamooka people, researching their medicinal plants for her doctoral studies. Buziak created the process *Biochromes*, an experimental photographic process employing camera-less techniques by placing plant matter directly onto analogue photographic paper. Biochromes are created when the microbes from the plants interact with the photographic paper. Buziak works with nature to create her complex photographs.
- Donna Marcus explores the world through cultural, contemporary, personal and formal contexts. Marcus is fascinated by the relationship between the industrial and domestic through recycled aluminium products and their changing value over time. The materials themselves generate layers of reference through her practice, further extending the modernist desire for regularity, repetition and dream. Marcus' assemblages and sculptures celebrate the objects in their found state including their form and patina, their history from their past lives permeating into the narrative of the artworks created. Her works are reliant on the critical mass of objects, with Marcus manipulating them into iterations of their original form.
- Jemima Wyman challenges mainstream ideas about boundaries of art. She explores the world through contemporary and formal contexts. Wyman uses non-traditional materials and new technologies. Her practice is an act of piecing together contemporary events and images from a growing global protest culture. As a First Nations woman, her art-making through her personal lens is politically informed, which is integral when considering the nuances of her work. For Wyman, it isn't



about pictorial depth, it is about the complexity of a multi-faceted optical surface that provides an opportunity for awareness of one's own body through the act of looking and thinking.

- Exploring the world through cultural and contemporary contexts, Phoebe Paradise's aesthetic presents a refreshing truth about her subject matter. The abundant beauty of Brisbane and Queensland shines through her work, but she also

shows her audience detritus from the local grunge. Whilst responding to her immediate material world, Paradise's intention as an artist is to elicit delight, curiosity and a familiar yet peculiar sense of unreality for the viewer.

- The case studies analyse how each of the artists approach their focus, inquire into areas of knowledge and make connections between their artmaking, contexts and the wider world.

## Review questions

- 1 Summarise the six case study artists using a table format to identify each of the following points:
  - a How does their art practice reflect knowledge?
  - b What is their inquiry question?
  - c What is their direct stimulus or authentic experience?
- 2 Select one of the case study artists from this chapter that most closely aligns with or parallels your own personal focus and compare their work with one other key artist that you have selected and researched.





**FIGURE 11.1** Nick Cave's Heard, 2016, in Sydney.

In Unit 4, students continue and build on their focus, knowledge and art practice from Unit 3. They refine their expression and personal aesthetic by applying skills associated with creative thinking. Students resolve their body of work through the concept 'art as alternate' as they imagine, generate and apply new ideas and links. Through the pursuit of an individualised response, they challenge their approaches to identify alternatives and opportunities for innovation.

Students foreground the contemporary context to develop new meanings through a lens of 21st-century art ideas and issues. They simultaneously select from the personal, cultural and formal contexts to examine and compare visual language, expression and the communication of multiple meanings in various art forms.

Students use the inquiry learning model to resolve their body of work. They challenge their own art-making practices by researching and developing new knowledge of and skills in materials, techniques, technologies and arts processes. They look for opportunities for focused experimentation and risk taking. They explore how new and multimodal technologies can alter and enhance their ideas. Students determine alternate representations or expansions of their ideas by reflecting on their work from Unit 3 and considering how exploiting existing approaches or applying new knowledge and skill may enrich meaning in their body of work.

Students consider the roles and interaction between artist and audience. As audience, students consider how alternate methods of display and exhibition, contemporary approaches with materials, and new technologies impact upon the sensory experience and engagement with art. As artists, students consider the role of art in the dialogue with audience. They evaluate how alternate approaches in a body of work can develop and expand the communication of meaning and fully realise artistic intentions.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, students will:

- 1 implement ideas and representations that challenge, extend and refine existing knowledge
- 2 apply literacy skills to communicate understanding of art practices and individualised ideas
- 3 analyse and interpret the impact of contemporary context on visual language, expression and meaning in artworks and art practices
- 4 evaluate influences to inform an alternate approach
- 5 justify new viewpoints and evolving ideas
- 6 experiment with familiar or alternate media to solve visual problems informed by research of contemporary art practice
- 7 create visual responses using knowledge and understanding of media to support alternate approaches
- 8 realise responses to communicate intended meaning.



**FIGURE 11.2** Casey Chen, *Big Robot 3*, 2022, glazed porcelain, ceramic colourants, enamels and gold lustre; fired four times, 38 x 23 x 23 cm

In Unit 4, you will develop your idea using alternate approaches through the contemporary context. Consciously applying creative thinking strategies will be helpful in generating your divergent responses.

 Creativity begins with a foundation of knowledge, learning a discipline and mastering a

way of thinking. You can learn to be creative by experimenting, exploring, questioning assumptions, using imagination and synthesising information. Learning to be creative is akin to learning a sport. It requires practice to develop the right muscles and a supportive environment in which to flourish.

LINDA NAIMAN, CREATIVITY COACH

# 11.1 Area of study: Developing

## How do artists generate solutions to visual problems?

Artists generate solutions to visual problems in countless different ways. These include the implementation of creative thinking strategies and the application of divergent approaches.

### Creative thinking

Creativity is the process of generating new ideas or knowledge. In Visual Art, we value creativity because it is the process we use to find original approaches, pathways and points of view that enrich both our making and responding. **Creative thinking** establishes a point of difference between your work and that of others. It helps you develop your **personal aesthetic**. In Unit 4, you should be aiming to express your ideas in an inventive way using your own evolved personal style. Creative thinking will assist this process.

.....

**creative** resulting from originality of thought or expression; relating to or involving the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something; having good imagination or original ideas

**personal aesthetic** where the artist develops a particular style or expression that is individual and inventive; students take ownership of their own approaches and style even if these approaches or styles have been appropriated from or have seeds in other artists' work

.....

### Creative traits

Creativity is not a mysterious attribute (talent) that only some people can attain or are born with. On the contrary, everyone can consciously develop creative traits.

Creative people are:

- curious – you should ask questions often, be inquisitive, investigate and experiment with art materials, techniques, processes, concepts
- courageous – you should be willing to try things out and make mistakes because that's how learning occurs
- adventurous and open-minded – you should challenge your own perceptions and common beliefs, make connections between ideas, be a critical thinker, analyse, evaluate and interpret information

- observant – you should learn to observe details, analyse and record what you see
- persistent – you should do a little bit every day, practise, keep working through problems, don't give up
- reflective – you should reflect on your ideas, past achievements, and feedback; consider implications for current and future projects.

### Strategies to improve creative thinking

 **The creative act does not create something out of nothing; it combines, reshuffles and relates already existing but hitherto separate ideas, facts, frames of perception and associative contexts.**

ARTHUR KOESTLER, AUTHOR

There have been many books and blogs written about improving creativity. They provide activities for building your creative capacity by helping you make connections between ideas. For instance, you can access design thinking activities online through the State Library of Queensland's Curriculum Connect site. These will help you to learn techniques that will give you confidence to reconsider your art practice and develop possibilities by combining, changing or reapplying existing ideas.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 11.1

#### **Brain warm-up: 40 uses for an object**

Challenge yourself to individually think of 40 different uses for an object such as a brick, ping-pong ball, shoe or paperclip, with a time limit of 10 minutes. Then compare your list with your classmates. Reflect on how your brain worked during this brainstorming session. If you practise this activity, it should improve your divergent thinking.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.2

### **Making connections exercise: Finding faces in unusual places**

Facial pareidolia is the name of the phenomenon that causes us to see faces in inanimate objects like clouds, wallpaper, machinery and household appliances. Your challenge is to actively hunt for 10 faces, photograph them and share them with your classmates. This task forces you to make creative connections and be an observer. Observation is key to creativity.

Adapted from John Ingledew, 2016, *How to Have Great Ideas: A Guide to Creative Thinking*

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.3

### **Positive action: How might I?**

Rephrase your task for Unit 4 into a 'how might I?' question. This reframes the problem and forces it into an opportunity for innovation rather than allowing you to dwell on negatives. For instance, 'how might I create a collaborative work using my existing focus?' Once you have a question that is suitable, brainstorm as many possible answers to it as you can. Resist the urge to edit your brainstorming; be courageous.

Adapted from "How might we" questions, Stanford University online



**FIGURE 11.3** An example of a face hiding in an inanimate object



**FIGURE 11.4** Can you see the face in this old telephone?

Invite your peers and teachers to share your problem-solving. Sometimes other people see the obvious things that you miss yourself. There are useful online brainstorming and collaboration sites that you can use to generate solutions to your problem. Ask for, listen to and act on feedback from your peers and your teacher. Survey your classmates and seek their suggestions about ways to evolve your making. Listen thoughtfully and openly to the suggestions from your teacher and act on their feedback from Unit 3.

Being creative in your art-making practice takes conscious effort, but there is also evidence to suggest that allowing your mind to subconsciously work on the problem has great advantages. So, ideally, begin the creative process early enough to allow for unconscious idea development to occur. To foster this, go for walks, swim, do the dishes and get a good night's sleep. When you allow time and opportunities for your brain to digest the problem, you might find you have a 'eureka' moment that sparks your alternate making adventure.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.4

### SCAMPER: A technique to encourage divergent thinking

Apply the SCAMPER technique to your body of work to come up with some potential divergent approaches. SCAMPER stands for substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate, reverse. Record your SCAMPER ideas and then share them with your classmates.

- *Substitute* – is there another medium you could use, or a different art-making process you could apply to create new meaning?
- *Combine* – add elements from someone or something else. Can you combine some of the elements you have with others to create a redefined problem? Can you bring together different people or skills to collaborate to help you achieve a divergent approach?
- *Adapt* – take your existing focus and shape it using contemporary approaches but through a new context. Could new meaning be expressed through a personal, formal or cultural context?
- *Modify* – rework the focus. Are there dimensions of your idea you can expand/reduce? How might you change the way

your idea is perceived – shape, scale, look, feel? Can you apply other verbs – magnify, minimise, manipulate, multiply?

- *Put to another use* – use your original focus in a new way. How could audiences be involved as joint constructors of meaning in a version of your idea? Could you change the method of display?
- *Eliminate* – get rid of unnecessary elements, or streamline the core idea. What would happen if you took away parts of the idea; what would that look like and how would people react?
- *Reverse* – turn your idea around. How can you make it communicate your original intention by implementing opposites? Consider **parody**, irony, sarcasm, binaries, **wabi-sabi**.

Adapted from 'Scamper',  
Innovation Portal website

**parody** a humorous imitation designed to ridicule

**wabi-sabi** Japanese aesthetic that values simplicity, incompleteness, imperfection, impermanence, irregularity and nature

## 11.2 Area of study: Researching

### How do artists react to stimulus?

A stimulus is a catalyst that provokes us to act. Artists are provoked into responding to stimuli in countless ways. In your research into artists, it is important to investigate their motivation for making artwork. Often there will be an overarching issue, concept or inquiry question that continues to drive the artist. Katie Harris-MacLeod's contemporary art practice consistently investigates our connection to natural places, drawing on a field of knowledge known as **psychogeography**. Her other influences are her Scottish heritage and folklore, multigenerational

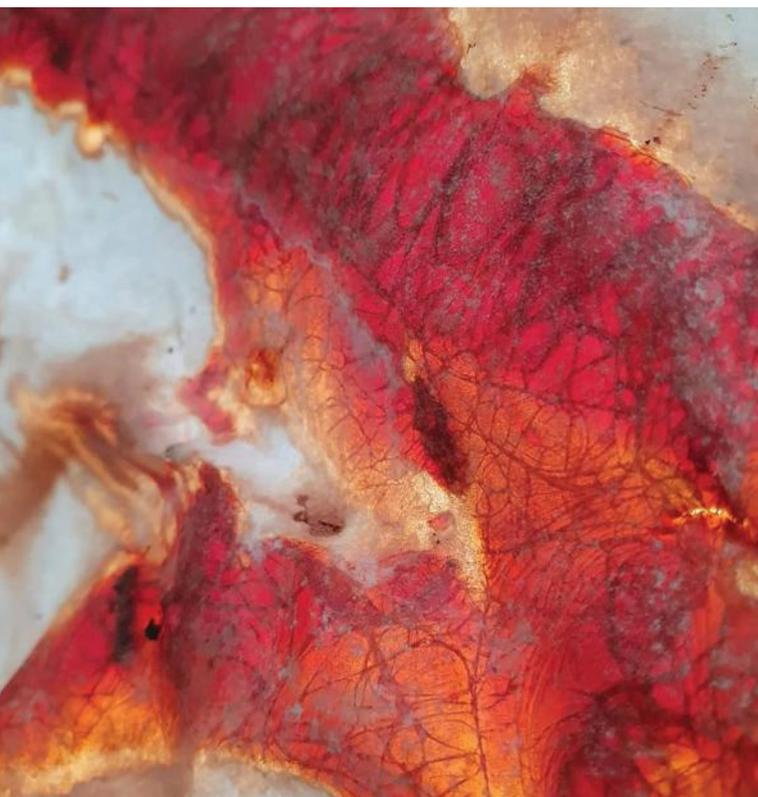
narratives, femininity, loss and isolation. Harris-MacLeod is particularly drawn to nature, forests, isolated and remote landscapes. She innovatively and poetically responds to natural sites through her artworks. While her interest in these concepts is constant, her focus for different series of works evolves, allowing her to explore and produce a variety of divergent approaches to what is often an intense experience of a place.

**psychogeography** the influence or effect of a geographical environment on a person's emotions and behaviour. Artists often take this approach when they interact with a city or a specific site and its history. The term was first used by French philosopher Guy Debord in 1955.

*Sapworks* is an ongoing project exploring the interwoven connectivities between bodies of human beings and bodies of trees focusing on the female body. It began during an Arts and Ecology residency at the Maroochy Bushland Botanic Gardens. Harris-MacLeod's intention in this project was to intricately study Bloodwood trees, and the sap that they excrete.

Mapping stressed Bloodwood trees across the Sunshine Coast region, she made artworks from their sap as a process of reconnecting to place and country.

The sap from the Bloodwood tree visually resembles blood, and when used as a drawing ink, as Harris-MacLeod has done, results in mark-making suggestive of corporeality, light shining through skin, veins and bodily interiors, wounds or surgery. The works resonate with viewers, causing visceral responses. The project has given her a way to understand experiences and trauma from her own past.



**FIGURE 11.5** Katie Harris-MacLeod, *Sap Excretion - II*, 2020, bloodwood tree sap on paper, left under a bleeding bloodwood tree overnight in the rain – the sap exudes onto the paper, 29.7 x 42 cm

Harris-MacLeod's innovative use of materials is also evident in her *Sleep Drawings* series. In an online interview Harris-MacLeod talks about how she is influenced by her Scottish heritage and the places she and her ancestors have lived. The Scottish environment has influenced her to find comfort in isolated environments, far away from people. She loves the sound of the wind and the vastness of the sky. Her Celtic/Gaelic culture, in which language and sense of place are interwoven, comes through in her use of poetry within her works as spoken word and also through the language of the marks she makes with her drawing media and implements. The artist describes the *Sleep Drawing* series as:

“... inspired by lucid dream memories from sleeping on the edge of mountains; mind wanderings, dreams of creatures that live within the mountains, memories, myths, speaking rocks, lichens and mosses, mountain flowers, mist and distant echoes from the human world below.”

*SLEEP DRAWINGS* AN EXHIBITION BY ARTIST  
KATIE HARRIS-MACLEOD. THE TIN SHED | PALMWOODS |  
9TH - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Figure 11.6 is an example of this body of work in which layer upon layer of marks and inks, some made from the materials in the landscape, are built up. Residue and memory of the layers below suggest memories and the passing of time.

Harris-MacLeod's practice includes performance and video as ways to respond to place and time and memory. Her grandmother's poem titled *Going Away*, has been read and recorded by Harris-MacLeod in a video work. The poem is accompanied by vision of slow-moving seaweeds as they are washed by gentle waves (see Figure 11.7). The calls of sea birds are heard and enhance the connection to place. The artist calls this work a 'Film Poem'.

Harris-MacLeod says of this work and her grandmother, “each time I read these words I understand her sense of longing more profoundly than before”.

Harris-MacLeod provides us with an excellent model of how a body of work can include divergent approaches.



**FIGURE 11.6** Katie Harris-MacLeod, *Sleep Drawing (Mountain Dream Drawing)*, 2022, copper oxide ink, cyanotype, tree sap, salt, lichen ink and acrylic ink on 300gsm watercolour paper, 29.7 x 42 cm



**FIGURE 11.7** Katie Harris-MacLeod's video, *Going Away*, a poem by Janet M. MacLeod read by Katie Harris-MacLeod. Duration, 0.42 seconds, 2023. It can be viewed on the artist's website, <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10774>

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.5

Katie Harris-MacLeod takes a psychogeographical approach to her art practice. Other artists who take or have taken this approach include Jonathan Jones, Megan Cope, Francis Alÿs, Jill Orr, Richard Long, Robert Smithson, James Turrell, Andy Goldsworthy, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Ana Mendieta, Sophie Calle, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Vivian Maier and Asger Jorn.

With Katie Harris-MacLeod as a starting point, research the artists listed above to develop a reverse chronology showing how artists have approached psychogeographical influences in their art practice. Take care to indicate how the artists' practices and approaches are divergent to each other.

## Identifying and researching divergent approaches

Your new, divergent approach to your body of work should aim to create alternate meaning through the knowledge, understanding and application of contemporary art processes. Contemporary artists approach their work in a myriad of different ways. Table 11.1 outlines some approaches you could take, but it is not exhaustive. Search broadly for artists to support your ideas and affirm your practice. Use art galleries, art museum sites or artists' own websites for research.

**TABLE 11.1** POSSIBLE WAYS TO CREATE ALTERNATE MEANING THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF CONTEMPORARY ART PROCESSES

ALTERNATE APPROACHES	SYLLABUS SUGGESTED ARTISTS/ARTWORKS	OTHER CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS TO CONSIDER
Adopting the opposing, contrary or polar point of view to communicate the same focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tony Albert, <i>Sorry</i>, 2008</li> <li>• Bindi Cole, <i>I Forgive You</i>, 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaun Gladwell, <i>Double Balancing Act</i>, 2009–10</li> </ul>
Questioning ideas and representations through the adoption of a different context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Zavros, <i>Spring/Fall</i> series, 2003–06</li> <li>• Abdul Abdullah, <i>Coming to Terms</i> series, 2015</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Zavros, <i>Ars Longa, Vita Brevis</i>, 2010; <i>Phoebe is Dead/McQueen</i>, 2010; <i>The Octopus</i>, 2014</li> </ul>
Exploiting traditional materials and techniques in new or unexpected ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ricky Swallow, <i>Killing Time</i>, 2003–04</li> <li>• Owen Leong, <i>Infiltrator: Bone</i>, 2011</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Louise Weaver, <i>Guido Valdez (Vendetta for Love)</i>, 2006</li> <li>• Fiona Hall, <i>Manuhiri (Travellers)</i>, 2014–15</li> <li>• Casey Chen, <i>Big Robot 3</i>, 2022</li> </ul>
Employing parody or irony to communicate meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daniel Boyd, <i>Treasure Island</i>, 2005</li> <li>• Christian Thompson, <i>Museum of Others</i> series, 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cal Lane, <i>Doily Dumbbells</i>, 2020</li> <li>• Mike Parr, <i>BDH</i>, 2016</li> <li>• Richard Bell, <i>Worth Exploring?</i>, 2002</li> </ul>
Changing scale, multiplying forms or changing the site or location of the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ben Quilty, <i>Livvi</i>, 2009</li> <li>• Simryn Gill, <i>Roadkill</i>, 2000</li> <li>• Rosemary Laing, <i>Groundspeed</i>, 2001</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert MacPherson, <i>Boss Drivers</i>, 1996–2004</li> <li>• Donna Marcus, <i>Burst</i>, 2017</li> <li>• Kathleen Ryan, <i>Bad lemon (lichen)</i>, 2022</li> </ul>
Making a single calculated change in materials, techniques, technologies or processes to alter the way audiences read, interpret and engage with the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tsuyoshi Ozawa, <i>Vegetable weapon: Nishime, Fukushima</i>, 2011</li> <li>• Hrafnhildur Arnardóttir/Shoplifter, <i>Planets</i> series, 2014–16</li> <li>• Lucienne Rickard, <i>Extinction Studies</i>, 2019</li> <li>• Fiona Hall, <i>Afraid Cascade</i>, 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claire Healey and Sean Cordeiro, <i>Par Avion</i>, 2011–12</li> <li>• Li Hongbo, <i>Ocean of Flowers</i>, 2017</li> <li>• Joachim Froese, <i>Turned Towards the Firmament</i>, 2022</li> <li>• Diane Meyer, <i>time spent that might otherwise be forgotten</i>, ongoing project</li> </ul>
Exploring the digital equivalent of analogue technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• William Kentridge, <i>I Am Not Me, the Horse Is Not Mine</i>, 2008</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiona McMonagle, <i>One Hundred Days at 7pm</i>, 2015</li> <li>• Renata Buziak, <i>Centella asiatica... anti-inflammatory...</i>, 2015</li> <li>• James Barth, <i>Gleaming, I'm shown</i>, 2021</li> </ul>
Moving between the 2-dimensional plane, 3-dimensional form or time-based media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deborah Kelly, <i>Beastliness</i>, 2011</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elizabeth Willing, <i>Tastes like Sunshine</i>, 2017</li> <li>• Vernon Ah Kee, <i>a contented slave</i>, 2015</li> <li>• Fiona Hall, <i>Wrong Way Time</i>, 2015</li> <li>• Joan Ross, <i>Did you ask the river?</i>, 2019</li> </ul>

(continued)

Inviting others in as joint constructors of meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gosia Wlodarczak and Longin Sarnecki, <i>400</i>, 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imants Tillers and Michael Nelson Jagamara, <i>The Messenger</i>, 2014</li> <li>• Ai Weiwei, <i>Sunflower Seeds</i>, 2010</li> </ul>
Moving from high degrees of artist control and authorship of works to collaborative approaches that may require the relinquishing of some artist control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sophie Calle, <i>Take Care of Yourself</i>, 2009</li> <li>• Hiromi Tango, <i>Art Magic: The Climbing Plant</i>, 2015</li> <li>• Antony Gormley, <i>Field</i>, 1989–2003</li> <li>• Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan, <i>Inhabit</i>, 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The One Year Drawing Project</i>, 2005–07</li> <li>• Marina Abramović, <i>Rhythm 0</i>, 1974</li> </ul>
Using an AI tool and engineered prompts to suggest or determine the next phase of the body of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sam Leach, <i>EV Helmet with Egret Crest</i>, 2018</li> <li>• Jessie Hughes, <i>Soul of Sol – La Palma</i></li> <li>• Georgie Pinn, <i>Ripple</i>, 2021</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sougwen Chung, <i>Wave Studies</i>, 2021</li> </ul>

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Casey Chen exploits the traditional techniques and forms of South-East Asian fine ceramic production through his wheel throwing and decorating of clay vessels. He unexpectedly juxtaposes images from pop culture, folklore and mythology onto the surfaces of the otherwise authentic-looking ceramic ware.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.6

- 1 Read through the list of artists in Table 11.1. Choose three artists to explore further. Read about them, and analyse how they apply contemporary approaches in their practice.
- 2 Use mind mapping or brainstorming, either individually or as a group, to think of ways that you could apply one of these identified contemporary processes to your focus from Unit 3 that would result in a divergent approach.



**FIGURE 11.8** Casey Chen, *Big Robot 3*, 2022, glazed porcelain, ceramic colourants, enamels and gold lustre; fired four times, 38 x 23 x 23 cm

# 11.3 Area of study: Reflecting

## How do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and processes?

Reflection is essential to the inquiry learning model. As a vital component of the creative process, it forces you to stop and think or evaluate how you are proceeding in terms of producing a response to your inquiry question. This provides opportunities to consider various ways to enhance, evolve and refine your art-making and communication of meaning.

### Reflecting on Unit 3

In Unit 4, you will use reflection initially to evaluate how well your artwork from Unit 3 has communicated your intended meaning. Surveying audiences, such as your classmates, is a good way

to gauge how the audience understood and responded to your work. After you have collected their ideas, you need to collate their responses and evaluate them. Add this knowledge to the mix when developing your alternate approach.

Another useful exercise is to look carefully at your teacher's feedback on your IA1 and IA2. Write the feedback into your visual diary and analyse it. Evaluate how you can improve your art-making practice. Throughout this unit you should take responsibility for your art-making and use reflection as a key tool in your making process.

### Reflecting as you go in Unit 4

#### When to reflect

Reflection needs to occur regularly during the art-making cycle. The best way to reflect is to make a regular time and develop a habit to do so. It could be at the end of a series of

### INQUIRY LEARNING 11.7

Reflect on your own and others' body of work. In an informal discussion in a small group, give thoughtful feedback and suggestions to each other about how to implement alternate approaches.

#### Part 1

Answer the questions and use the prompts below to help you prepare and then explain your work to your group.

- 1 What knowledge did you engage with in Unit 3?
- 2 What focus did you explore?
- 3 What was your inquiry question?
- 4 What context did you work in?
- 5 What media, processes, technologies and materials did you work with?
- 6 Which key artists helped shape your ideas, and why?
- 7 Evaluate the success of your intended communication of meaning. What worked? What didn't work?

- 8 What would you do differently?
- 9 Did audiences understand/empathise/question/challenge/learn/react? How? Why?
- 10 What divergent approaches are you considering?

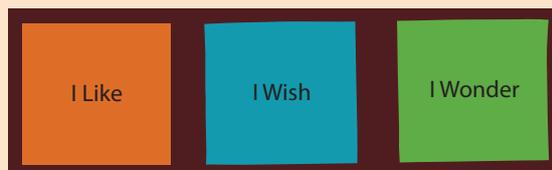


FIGURE 11.9 'I like, I wish, I wonder' is a strategy for providing constructive feedback to others.

#### Part 2

After hearing about your work, each of the other group members writes down on a sticky note an idea they like about your work – something they wish could have been done in the work – and a question: I wonder ... in response. These are given to you to stick in your book, and evaluate and reflect on.

Adapted from A. Kotahri, 'I like, I wish, I wonder', LinkedIn, 17 October 2013

experiments, after a session of reading about an artist, at the end of each lesson, after each one-on-one consultation with your teacher or once a week. You need to show you have reflected meaningfully on your art-making at each stage – in developing, in researching and in resolving. Key evidence will need to be gathered for your IA3 assessment submission.

### How to reflect and what to reflect on

In Unit 4, you need to use reflection to evaluate your progress and justify your aesthetic decision-making and your viewpoint. Specifically, you need to ensure you reflect on:

- contemporary artists' uses of alternate approaches to enhance and communicate alternate meaning through innovative art practice and exploitation of audience expectations
- your own initial artworks in your body of work and the intention and success of meaning communicated
- ideas for alternate methods and/or approaches to expand communication of focus and meaning
- your own experiments with media, technology, processes and materials to create alternate approaches
- the impact of key contemporary artists from diverse practices, traditions, cultures and theories to develop and inspire alternate representations and meaning in your own body of work
- your individual art practice, justifying your choices and application of alternate approaches to explain how new viewpoints or interpretations are communicated
- you will need to justify your intended outcomes by having evidence of how you evaluated or weighed up the strengths, implications and limitations of your alternate approaches to the problem
- you will need to have evidence that you have evaluated the interrelationships of visual language and influences to demonstrate purposeful problem solving and choices.

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### A strategy for reflecting

To make your reflection meaningful, try the *Stop, Evaluate, Document* strategy.

- *Stop*: Give yourself space and time to sit and look at your work, your experimentation, your research, your plans, your trials or whatever you have been working on at any stage.
- *Evaluate*: Assess how a small section of the project or the project as a whole is progressing and fits into your intentions. Ask yourself all or some of these questions and record your answers.
  - What was I trying to achieve by doing this (research new ideas, experiment with new materials)?
  - How was it successful in relation to the inquiry question (what has worked, what are the strengths, are there unexpected results that I can capitalise on)?
  - How could it be done differently (what were the limitations, acknowledge failure and learn from it, propose new experiments, solutions, options)?
  - How can I use it (how will it add meaning to my alternate approach)?
  - What did I learn from it (what are the implications for improving my approach, how did it affirm my pathway or challenge my thinking)?
  - How does it support my intentions and the communication of meaning (what are the implications for meaning-making, how will I use this knowledge to create new meaning in my artwork)?
  - How do/might audiences react to this (what unanticipated associations or readings does an audience bring to the work, how could I use this insight as an opportunity to develop new meaning, how could the audience be joint constructors of meaning or collaborators)?
  - How will I move forward from this point (what's next, based on this new knowledge, what changes do I need to make to my intentions or goals, if any; why)?
- *Document*: Keep a record of all reflection. This might be in a visual diary, a series of digital files, written or spoken, a website or a blog. Documentation shows your ability to make meaningful connections and informs the evolution and refining of your focus and making. It will inform the evolution

of your thinking and the refinement of the resolved work. It will help you explain how new viewpoints or interpretations are

communicated. It will be needed to help you to form your artist's statement and annotated illustration for your IA3.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 11.8

Reflect on a range of contemporary art approaches to explore and consider alternate ideas as you construct new personalised meaning. (Refer to Table 11.1.)

- 1 Consider the list of alternate contemporary approaches in the left-hand column and choose five that appeal to you.
- 2 For each, brainstorm a series of experiments that would propel your divergent art-making. For example, if you have worked in two-dimensional media in Unit 3, you might plan a series of experiments using three-dimensional processes such as plaster casting, modelling with plasticine, building with clay or carving in wood.
- 3 Use the Stop, Evaluate, Document strategy or create your own series of questions to help you reflect on these ideas and then answer them. For instance:
  - What knowledge do I have of these materials?
  - What do I need to learn about them?
  - How could I construct new meaning with these divergent approaches?
  - What aspects of my focus (knowledge, subject matter, meaning, use of visual language and expression) could I apply to this approach?
- 4 Document and save your reflection. Your reflection can be written, spoken and may even be developed into thumbnail drawings.

## 11.4 Area of study: Resolving

### How do artists communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?

By the end of Unit 4, you need to resolve your body of work and are expected to realise and communicate your intentions in both your visual and written responses. This is when everything comes together.

In your written work, you need to apply literacy knowledge and skills, visual art terminology, language conventions, referencing conventions and critical literacies. Refer to the syllabus for a more detailed explanation of the subject matter.

At this point in your art-making, your personal aesthetic will have evolved through your research and understanding of contemporary artists, art theories and knowledge of art media and processes. You need to use this knowledge to guide the application of your divergent approaches to achieve refinement of your art-making.

In resolving your work, you need to communicate your intended meaning through its display or virtual display and you need to consider and show understanding of how audiences will experience the work.

### The role of the audience

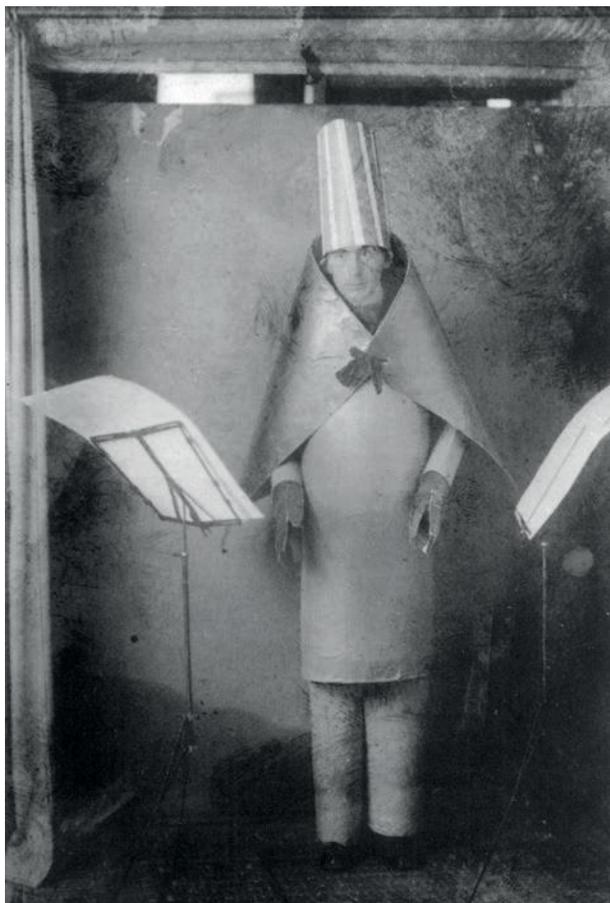
#### *Artist's Statement*

All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act.

MARCEL DUCHAMP

The **Dadaists**, a modernist movement with which Marcel Duchamp is associated, as early as 1916 enticed the audiences of their bizarre cabarets to interact by pelting the performers with food, thus reinforcing the anti-art nature of their ideas.

Yet it wasn't until the latter part of the 20th century that artists and theorists began to acknowledge the important role the audience plays in the creation of meaning within artworks. **Fluxus** artists, such as Yoko Ono, began including the audience as participants in the 1960s. Ono's *Cut Piece* is a good example of an early Fluxus work that required audience participation to be fully resolved. In this work, she sat fully clothed and vulnerable, on a stage with a pair of scissors, and invited the audience to cut pieces of her clothing from her. She provided instructions for the participants to follow. This work made a statement about feminine passivity and vulnerability. There is video footage of this work available online. If you watch it, you will see that it becomes increasingly difficult to view as the audience becomes increasingly



**FIGURE 11.10** Hugo Ball (1886–1927), Dadaist writer and poet, wearing a Cubist suit made by himself and Marcel Janco for reciting his poems at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich, 23 June 1916

aggressive. While Ono gives up artistic control, she nonetheless achieves a genuine response from the audience. In 2003, she reprised this work as a reaction against the pervasive, global climate of fear caused by the terrorist attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001. In this work, she asked participants to send a piece of her clothing to a loved one as a gesture of world peace.

**Dada** a modernist art movement originating in Zurich in 1916. It was a reaction against the horror of World War I and its devastating impact. The Dadaists created bizarre and satirical performances and happenings at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and in other European cities

**Fluxus** somewhat founded on the ideas of Dada, but was a network of artists with an attitude of taking chances and trying new things, rather than a movement. They were against the commercialism of art and its elitist status. They used everyday materials and alternate venues to galleries. It was based in New York.

In contemporary art practice, it is acknowledged that audiences bring their own experiences and knowledge to their perception and understanding of artwork. The implication for artists is that they need to consider or anticipate the possible readings inherent in their work. Your intended meaning may not be read by the audience the way you expect. In the research, development and reflection of your project, you need to be analysing and evaluating how to manipulate visual language and expression effectively to elicit your desired response from your audience.



**FIGURE 11.11** Sean Lennon snips off a piece of his mother's clothes with a pair of scissors, 15 September 2003, at the Ranelagh theatre in Paris during *Cut Piece* – an avant-garde performance staged by Yoko Ono 40 years after her work was first put on in a Japanese theatre.

## Alternate display opportunities

Contemporary artists are not restricted to traditional display conventions. You should seek to display your resolved work in a way that contributes to the communication of meaning and enhances engagement for the audience. The physical or virtual display of the work should be guided by the characteristics of the contemporary context, which are explained in chapter 1.

If your idea for display of your body of work is not actually physically achievable, you are required to provide documentation of the intended display through digital or virtual forums.

Alternate contemporary innovative display could include, but is not limited, to:

- audience participation – Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*, 1964, Ken + Julia Yonetani, *Fumie Tiles*, 2003; Super Critical Mass, *Bell Field*, 2014
- collaborative performance – Nick Cave, *Heard*, 2016 (Figure 11.12)
- immersive experience – Yayoi Kusama, *Soul under the Moon*, 2002; Olafur Eliasson, *Riverbed*, 2014; Anthony McCall, *Crossing*, 2016
- working directly onto gallery walls – Dale Harding, *Wall Composition in Reckitt's Blue*, 2017; Elizabeth Willing, *Dark*, 2017, Robert Andrew, *A connective reveal—nainmurra guuruburrii dhaura*, 2022 (Figure 11.13)
- digital projection – onto walls, floors, other objects, exterior environments, multichannel – Pipilotti Rist, *Your Room Opposite the Opera*, 2017; Bill Viola, *Fire Woman*, 2005; Tony Oursler, *Incubator*, 2003; Shaun Gladwell, *Double Balancing Act*, 2009–10; Craig Walsh, *Murujuga in the Pilbara*, 2012–13, Maeve Baker, *Do Your Chores, Try Not To Think Too Much, And Repeat*, 7 Dec–31 Jan 2021 (Figure 11.14)
- display in exterior environment – Fiona Hall, *The Barbarians at the Gate*, 2010.



**FIGURE 11.12** Nick Cave's *Heard*, 2016, in Sydney. Cave constructs 'sound suits' that are worn in performances by dancers who collaborate with Cave to animate the costumes.



**FIGURE 11.13** Robert Andrew, *A connective reveal—nainmurra guuruburrii dhaura*, 2022, National Gallery of Australia. Layers of ochres were directly applied to the gallery wall and are slowly revealed using a device programmed to spray water at the wall. This progressively reveals the text, written in a local language or the artist's Yawuru language. The display of the work is integral to the artist's intentions which we can interpret through the contemporary context because Andrew comments on the use of language (and denial of language) as a tool for colonising.



**FIGURE 11.14** Maeve Baker, *Do Your Chores, Try Not To Think Too Much, And Repeat*, 7 Dec–31 Jan 2021, façade projection onto the IMA Belltower of Brisbane's Judith Wright Arts Centre. The contemporary artwork expresses the emotional impact of living in lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work is a personal response yet it resonates with the community at large because everyone experienced those emotions. The work, displayed in such a public place, allows for maximum access for the audience. The size of the projection emphasises the enormity of the boredom and anxiety felt by everyone living through the pandemic.

# Chapter summary

- Creativity is not a mysterious attribute. Everyone can consciously develop creative traits, so apply yourself to developing yours.
- Divergent solutions can be arrived at by practising creative thinking and developing possibilities through the combination, changing or reapplication of existing ideas.
- Invite others to share your problem-solving. Sometimes others see the things you miss.
- Begin the creative process early enough to allow for unconscious idea development to occur, to capitalise on serendipitous opportunities and to provide time for reflection and feedback.
- Artists respond to stimuli in countless ways, so research broadly.
- Your new approach to your body of work should aim to create alternate meaning through the knowledge, understanding and application of contemporary art processes.
- Reflect meaningfully on your art-making and responding at each stage of the project – in developing, researching and resolving.
- Use your personal aesthetic to guide the way you apply your divergent approach to the body of work.
- Audiences bring their own meaning when they respond to visual art, so ensure you consider audience engagement and their experience in the resolution of your body of work.
- Consider ways to enhance meaning and engage audiences through knowledge of contemporary context and alternate display opportunities.

## Review questions

- 1 Identify the meaning of divergent pathways in artistic practice.
- 2 Evaluate some contemporary approaches to art-making.
- 3 Analyse the value of reflection in an inquiry-driven artistic practice.
- 4 Create and justify your own viewpoint on the importance of creativity in artistic practice.





**FIGURE 12.1** Angel Butten, *Coiled Keratin*, 2021, foam core, acrylic paint, aluminium wire, condensed wood chips, PVA glue, hand-stitched and machine-sewn stockings, masking tape, cardboard, 50 x 60 cm

The case studies in this chapter provide examples of contemporary art practices. They explain how artists approach particular contemporary art processes, which you could adopt as a divergent approach in your own work. The case studies relate specifically to some of the processes that are specified in the syllabus. By analysing and evaluating the way artists apply contemporary approaches, you will develop your knowledge and understanding of contemporary art and artists. This will give you the confidence to experiment and explore more widely within your own art-making. Attempt to exploit your chosen materials; be rigorous in your intellectual inquiry into your techniques and processes and look for new ways of working. Reflect on what you know and what you need to know and seek answers. This will provide a rich platform for you to communicate your intentions in an original way.

## 12.1 Case study: Zoe Porter

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning

**Context:** Contemporary



I am interested in creating collaborative artworks that blur the boundaries between the artist/performer and the audience as well as bringing together different disciplinary areas including dance, film, circus, music and visual art. Many of my live performances take place in unusual or site-specific locations and I like the idea that a passer-by can stumble across an artwork in a quiet urban side street or thoroughfare; in-between places where art is not usually expected to be found.

ZOE PORTER

Zoe Porter is a Meanjin/Brisbane-based interdisciplinary artist whose art making primarily revolves around drawing, but also extends into performance, painting, installation, sculpture, site-specific works and video. Porter's creative practice engages in depictions of hybrid figurative forms (animal-human and plant-human forms) as a method to explore our human connection with the natural world. By crossing the boundaries between the human and non-human, the everyday and dreamlike, her aim is to integrate these different aspects in her work. Current ecological crises also highlight the urgent need to protect and care for non-human species and the environment, within a local and global context. The animal or the monster has often been associated with the unknown and in her work the animal represents a creative drive that potentially exists within the human psyche.

Her cross-disciplinary work is largely process-based and always starts with drawing as a combination of large-scale, medium- and small-

scale works on paper, using ink and watercolour. There is an interrelationship between all areas of her practice; for example, she often translates her drawings into sculptures or costumes, which then become part of a live performance. That performance is then documented through photography and video, and post-performance she will often re-draw images as a re-creation of the process. The performance-based works bring the artist's studio into a gallery space and allow viewers to not only view but participate in the creative process. Porter has created work in traditional gallery contexts as well as non-traditional contexts such as at festivals and in outdoor spaces. The materials she employs incorporate traditional drawing materials with found materials such as second-hand clothing, textiles, musical instruments and furniture and her performance-based works exist as temporary or ephemeral works, sometimes lasting only for the duration of an exhibition.

In her collaborative performance-based artworks, Porter's intention is to create an immersive experience for the viewer. The performances cater to those who are visual and enjoy theatre, dance and music which she merges with art. The performances, which are playful yet hold a dark undercurrent, amalgamate a number of simultaneous experiences and can be likened to a setting within an artist's studio, a nightclub, while being surrounded by an illogical theatre performance. Shadows are incorporated in the work through the use of strong lighting, which is suggestive of the subconscious and also mimics the dark, inky figures that are characteristic in her watercolours and drawings. The works are also multi-sensory as they bring together sound, physical performance, visual art and moving image.

Porter's desire to create an imaginary space or otherworldly environment that brings together everyday life with the possibility to imagine another way of existing that is creative, playful, absurd and fun; this is what drives her practice.



**FIGURE 12.2** Zoe Porter, *Wasteland*, 2014, Digital photograph of live collaboration performance. Dimensions variable. Image: Eduardo Vieira. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Many of her live performance-based works focus on inviting an audience into the work, where they are able to draw on the large-scale wall works and interact with the performers. Breaking the boundary between artist and audience enhances possibilities for collaboration and allows viewers to be part of the performative nature of Porter's art-making process. By working in performance and through working collaboratively, she hopes to stimulate and engage others in creative practice. These works allow the artist and viewers to immerse themselves in the experience, to transform the space and to imagine another reality. The performance *Wasteland* (2014) incorporated everyday objects including milk crates, ladders, buckets, human bodies/performers, drop sheets, references to buildings/architecture and rubbish bins. These items from the material world are included as drawings and props within the performance and make reference to the physical, rational world alongside the performers who are engaged in dance and elements of circus performance. They are adorned in costumes and are derived from the imagination.

*The Squid & Scarlett Sided Pobblebonk* (2021) is a watercolour that uses a reference from the *Wasteland* performance. The human figures have become part sea creatures (based on squid and octopus) and part frog human creatures,

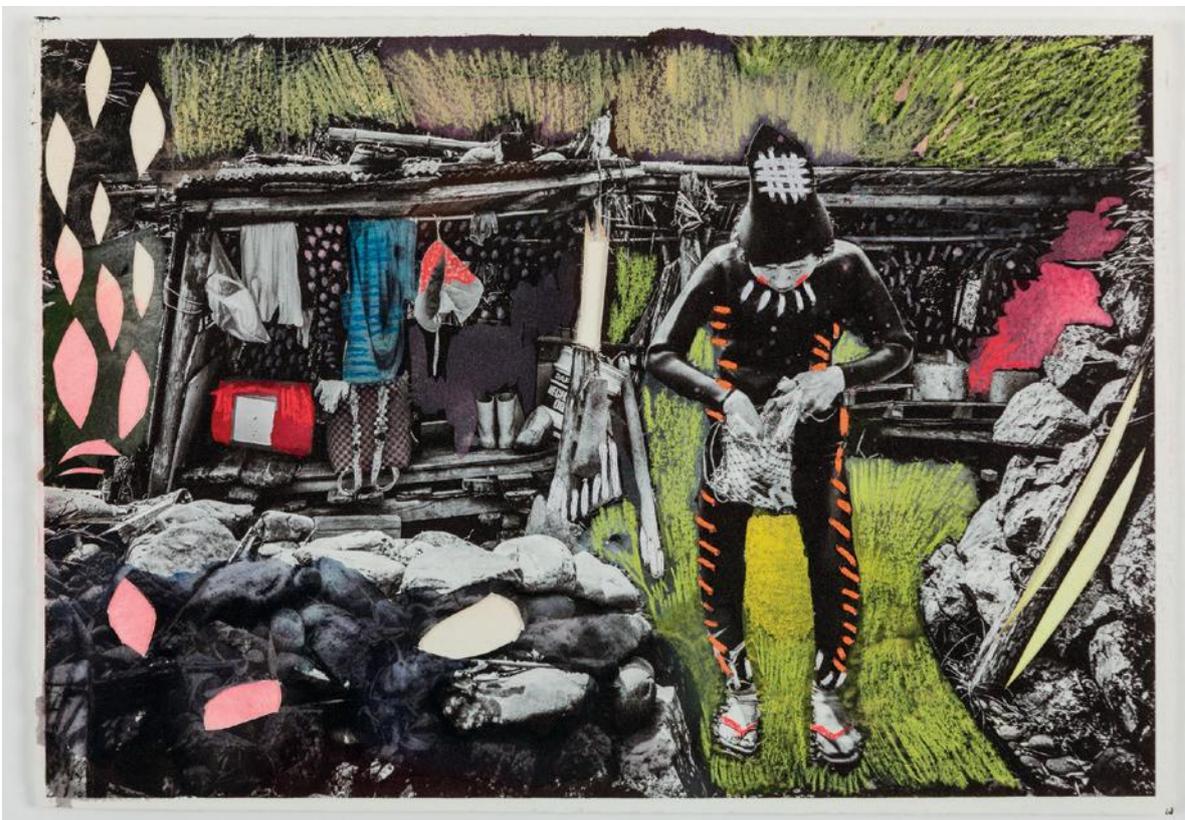
which are interacting on a simulated stage or theatre set. This drawing makes reference to reality through the inclusion of objects such as spray bottles, balloons, milk crates and ladders. In both the collage and watercolour works on paper there are depictions of everyday objects, people, animals or environments. *The Driver* (2018) is another example which makes reference to the material world, whereby the bird-woman hybrid form is driving a truck.

*Before and After the Dive #3* (2021) is a series created in response to research into Ama divers, who are Japanese female free divers. This work specifically includes photographic imagery of female divers from the Toba region in Japan. These images have been revised and re-worked using pencil, watercolour, cut-out sections and embroidery in order to re-locate the diver into a more imaginary or unusual space.

Porter's work begins with spontaneous and automatic drawings, which allow her to conjure up imaginary and hybrid characters or environments. This also leads her to consider which site or location she might stage a performance. When invited to create a live performance for a specific site, the imagery will evolve out of research into the space and place or as a response to a specific location or environment.



**FIGURE 12.3** Zoe Porter, *The Squid & Scarlett Sided Pobblebonk*, 2021, watercolour and ink on arches paper, 56 x 77cm



**FIGURE 12.4** Zoe Porter, *Before and After the Dive #3*, 2021, in collaboration with Aiko Ohno (photography), watercolour, pencil and embroidery on arches paper. Photo credit: Joe Ruckli & Onespace Gallery. Image courtesy of the artist

## Artist's Statement

Porter's work frequently depicts the animal-human hybrid in an attempt at crossing the boundaries between the animal and the human, real and imaginary states, chaos and order. Much of her work explores a personal mythology that presents the human form undergoing transformation, suggestive of the possibilities for other ways of being or existing. She has most recently produced a

body of work based on research into Japanese Ama divers (female free divers) and their relationship to the sea. Her performance-based works are often collaborative and site-specific, merging art, theatre, sound and physical performance in order to highlight the artistic and creative processes involved in producing artworks.

ZOE PORTER

## Student work



FIGURE 12.5 Darcy Hotston, *The Toad and The Octopus*, pen and ink and copic markers on watercolour paper, 21 x 29.7 cm each



FIGURE 12.6 Darcy Hotston, *Wearable artwork*, sharpie on Hazmat suit, size variable

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.1

- Create a shadow projection (either a real shadow or black paper cut-out/torn paper) which merges the human body with an everyday object, for example a chair, and situate the two together to make a new hybrid form.
- Draw the outline of that shadow form, use an ink wash inside the form and let it bleed and spread within the contour line that has been drawn.
- Document the art-making/creative process to produce an artwork.

## DISCUSS

- How can art merge different disciplines or areas of interest together into a cohesive artwork?
- What are some actions or ways of making art that can be documented using photos or video?
  - For example, you could ride a bike or skateboard through black acrylic paint and then ride across large sheets of paper, documenting the motion of the bike/board moving across a surface.

## MEANING

### Visual language

The setting for this site-specific work is positioned in an otherworldly, liminal space somewhere between the human and animal worlds and the kinship that develops. The performers improvise through movement which simulates the fluidity of the Brisbane River and the organic shapes and forms of the native flora and fauna that inhabit it. The audience is able to engage with a dream-like environment which combines a sense of slow motion with physical intensity. Drawings and the bodies of the performers combine and emerge, morphed into new hybrid forms.

### Symbols

The Queensland *Dipnomorpha* (lungfish), one of the

oldest known living vertebrate species, serves as the central inspiration for this performance project, tying together visual design, costuming and choreography. It also carries symbolic and metaphoric meaning pertaining to the Brisbane River and its ecosystem.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

The costumes and head dresses have been constructed from Porter's earlier performances and paintings and consist of sheep fleece, silver paper, newspaper.

### Display

The artwork incorporates video, lighting, sound, drawing, painting, performance piece as part of the Brisbane Street Art Festival, Queensland Museum.



## CONTEXTS

### Contemporary

Use of non-traditional materials and new technologies  
Exploitation of multi-sensory experiences (including sound and movement) and digital technology  
Reference imagery from both real-life and fiction  
Exhibited in public spaces

## CONNECTIONS

### Collaboration

*Dipnomorpha* is a collaborative performance between Zoe Porter (artist and concept, collaborative costuming and choreography), Megan Janet White (collaborative costuming and choreography) and STORMBODIES (James Scott, Alice Gittins, Robyn Mill, Jo Booth) and Matt Dabrowski & The Many Hands of Glamour (lights and smoke installation).

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How can artists present work that crosses boundaries between different disciplines or forms of media?  
How can hybrid or animal-human forms and the subconscious be explored through art-making?

### Inquiry questions for other featured artworks

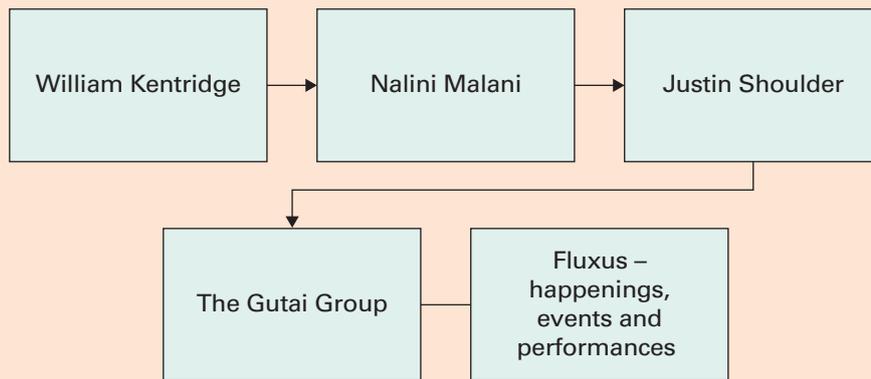
How can wearable elements be designed to create a surreal environment?  
How can artists present a personal mythology or narrative in their artworks?

**Focus** – Feminist art, performance art, automatic drawing and the imagination.

**FIGURE 12.7** Evaluation of Zoe Porter's work *Dipnomorpha* (in collaboration with Megan Janet White / Stormbodies), 2017. Digital photograph of live collaboration performance 59.4 x 84.1cm. Image: Luke J. Going. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Zoe Porter

*Dream Narrative*, 2010

*Goat Girl*, 2010/2011

*Conjure*, 2011

*In a Landscape*, 2012

*Mutations*, 2015

*Homunculi*, performance, 2016

*In the Studio* series, 2016–2019

*The Driver*, 2018

*Apparitions*, 2018

*The Encroacher*, 2018

*Submerged*, 2020

*Ama divers' series*, 2021

*Surface*, 2022

*Fish lane*, performance, 2023

## Student artwork – based on a contemporary context



**FIGURE 12.8** Josh Pignolet, L: *Living on the sun*, paint pen, acrylic on canvas, 61 x 61 cm R: *Existence*, Felt, acrylic rods, timber bases, animal skulls, fabric hardener, 70 x 100 x 60 cm

## Artist's Statement

*Living on the sun* and *Existence* reflect my interpretation and exploration of the concept of 'otherworldly', where objects and beings do not always make sense and the mind can get lost in the imaginative, bizarre and often mystical reality of the artwork. The artworks draw inspiration from the irrational and dreamlike approach of Dadaism and Surrealism. My artwork, *Living on the sun*, explores the personal context and depicts my interpretation of an otherworldly dimension which seems uninhabitable yet flourishes with ethereal life. My sculpture, *Existence*, develops on the idea of otherworldly objects and creatures by using unique materials and techniques which immerses the audience in the imaginative reality of the artwork.

JOSH PIGNOLET



**FIGURE 12.9** Josh Pignolet, *Growing decay*, painting and installation: acrylic on canvas, paint pen, animal skulls, dirt, flowers, string, and moss, canvas: 60 x 60 cm

## Artist's Statement

The true reality on this earth is the endless cycle of life and death. When a life ends, death takes its place and makes room for a new life to begin. Fungi and other micro-organisms flourish on the decaying remnants of life; creating almost a twilight state between life and death. My painting and installation explore the ethereal concept of decay and the role micro-organisms play in this cycle of life. The painting portrays

mushrooms flourishing from the tongue of a decaying skull; symbolising the intertwined state between decay and growth; and between life and death. The installation of the *kokedama* with flowers sprouting from the top, alongside an animal skull sitting within dirt represents the ugly, yet beautiful concept that is the transition between life and death.

JOSH PIGNOLET

## 12.2 Case study: Sarah Sculley

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning

**Context:** Cultural, Contemporary

All of these people have stories and it is my job as an artist to listen, interpret and create a reflection of the narrative they want the community to hear.

SARAH SCULLEY

Sunshine Coast artist Sarah Sculley is known for her energetic, large-scale murals and vibrant canvases, which are constructed with layers of pattern, bold, saturated colour and stencilled imagery. The fusion of her diverse skills in graphic design and street art paired with her solid foundation in visual communication allows her to create visually captivating works that provide commentary on a range of contemporary issues. With community, connection, education and joy as her personal and professional values, it is evident that each artwork she creates is invariably imbued with these same values.

Creating mural works in public places means working with the community to produce artworks that reflect the collective voice of specific groups. As mural works are never a solo practice, Sculley's desire is to work with community groups that often do not have a platform to be heard: Indigenous people, women and environmental activists. Her commitment to inclusivity and community engagement provides an avenue for these groups to generate knowledge and to raise awareness of important social or environmental issues through her work. Regardless of the project, Sculley's aim always remains the same: to inspire, to educate, to connect the community and to foster joy and hope.

The foundation for her creative process when commencing a new project is to reflect initially upon the emotional impact that she wants her audience to feel when viewing the work. This is followed by the selection of colour by pulling swatches together which align to the intended feeling or emotion she wishes to convey.



**FIGURE 12.10** Sarah Sculley – on location. Image courtesy of the artist

Figurative elements that support the desired emotional response are then considered: people, animals, objects. Layered elements to connect the work such as textural stencils, splashes of paint, scribbles, leaves, dots or organic shapes are added. Whilst Sculley uses a sketchbook, she often prefers the spontaneity of immediate experimentation and exploration of ideas straight onto a canvas or in a digital environment such as Procreate; and if initial attempts don't live up to her or her client's expectations, additional layers can always be added to enhance the output.

Working on large-scale walls, her range of media is somewhat limited due to external environmental factors, and the process of creating the mural is often restricted by the tight deadlines. The benefits of working with a combination of exterior acrylic house paint and spray paint are that they are able to be applied in layers easily due to the reasonably quick drying time. The mural design is also often dictated by conditions and other mitigating circumstances. In instances where there is a short turnaround time, there may be access issues due to road closures or poor weather, then Sculley adjusts

and simplifies her design to meet the needs of the conditions and time frame. The use of stencils in her mural projects allows her to prepare these in the studio prior to mural painting. When collaborating with community groups and schools, the use of stencils also ensures greater accuracy and uniformity of the design and it is able to be applied to the wall quickly and with relative ease. When working with other artists or students, Sculley will break down the mural into simple steps with fewer layers and less detail to ensure they don't take weeks to complete. This differs greatly from her process when working on her canvas pieces, which are more emotive and layered and include some intricate aspects to them, often with the inclusion of text and typography.

Sculley has recently introduced *Augmented Reality (AR)* into her acrylic and spray-painted mural works to add depth and interactivity to the concept. She says that she refuses to be an artist who complains about what technology and **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is doing to the industry and instead embraces it by intertwining new and evolving technologies with her practice through AR and **Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)**. Some of her clients who have seen her previous work which includes AR may ask for an animated component to add another dimension to the mural. Sculley either finds a stock image or develops something in Procreate to add energy and vibrancy to the mural, whereby her audience can view the mural using the Artvive app and see an animation interacting with her painted imagery.

The process starts by pitching a mural design and AR element to the client. Once the client has approved the concept, she will paint the mural and photograph the finished wall. The photo acts as a 'barcode' to then activate the animation on people's phones. The community enjoys the interaction with the animations and are able to stand in between the mural and the animation and take photos and videos of themselves.

An effective example which generates knowledge and educates the intended audience is *Women on Wall* (2018), located in Nepal. In Nepal, it is the societal norm for the women to do the domestic work and for men to act as the patriarch and

women don't often have a voice in the smaller communities. The *Women on Wall* project allowed Sculley to communicate with the women in the **Patan community** in Kathmandu for several months leading up to the street art event. She asked them about specific issues that affected them in their everyday lives and over the months it was clear that the women spent so much of their daily lives collecting water for washing clothes, dishes and the household. There had previously been a free-flowing well that the community used but due to poor infrastructure and government corruption, the well had not been maintained and the women wanted to draw attention to this concern. Sculley designed the wall to look like the old well and the water drops were the space for women to express themselves freely. This not only educated the Patan community of the women's struggles, but it educated other communities outside of Nepal. With the women participating in painting the mural, it was also an opportunity to educate them around painting and creative processes.

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**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines such as computer systems to perform tasks which are characteristic of humans

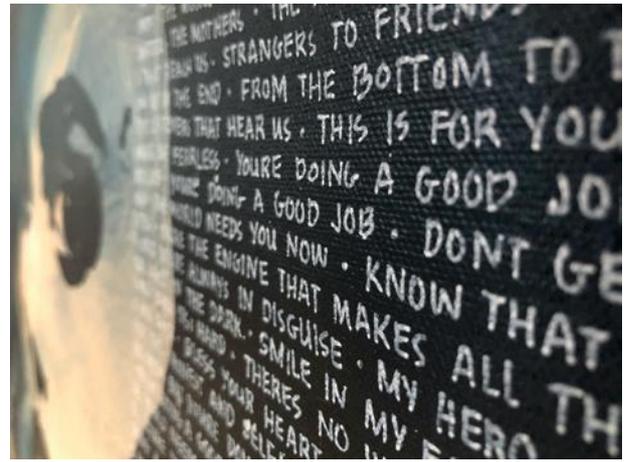
**Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)** unique cryptographic tokens that exist on a blockchain and cannot be replicated. They can represent digital or real-world items such as artworks.

**Patan community** Patan is one of the largest cities in Nepal, located across the Bagmati River from Kathmandu

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**FIGURE 12.11** Sarah Sculley, *Women on Wall*, 2018, Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo credit: Lara Furst. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 12.12** Sarah Sculley, *Good Job*, 2020, acrylic, spray paint and post pen on canvas. Image courtesy of the artist

“When I create canvas works, I am inspired by my own experiences and emotions. Often the painting is the therapy and when I show the works to the public, the connection happens when the viewers relate their own experiences and emotions to the ones depicted in the artworks.”

SARAH SCULLEY

*Good Job* is a very personal artwork painted to process the loss of her former self as she foraged

her way through post-partum depression. Sculley was grieving for the independent, intelligent, athletic woman she used to be and was struggling to see the woman she was becoming as a mother. She was inspired by the portrait photos from the '80s with the profile photo in the background and in utilising this technique she aimed to show her 'old' self, fading away. The colours connected directly to her feelings of despair and torment. The inclusion of the small text was her way to 'control' the narrative of the artwork and the lyrics of the song 'Good Job' by Alicia Keys are written over and over, almost as an affirmation.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.2

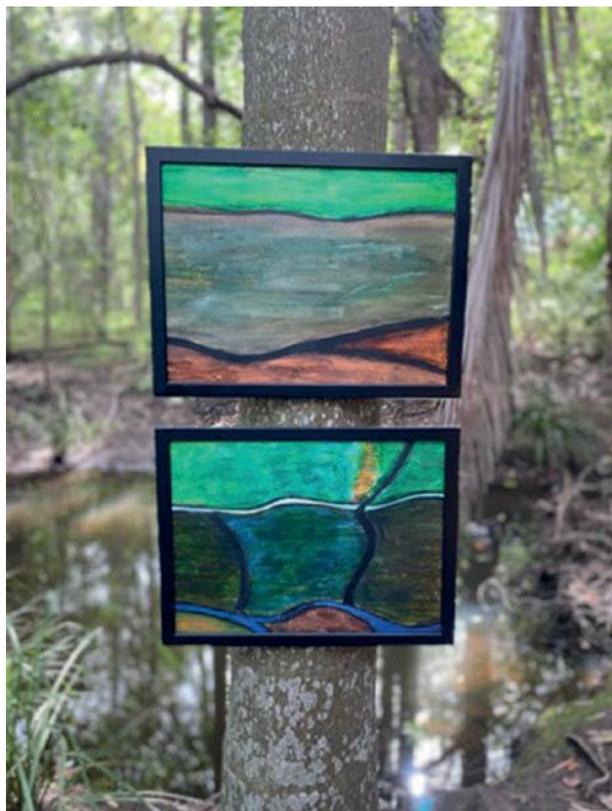
Artists respond to issues which focus on the impact of natural disaster and extreme weather conditions on the environment. Research an environmental concern and experiment with materials gathered from the natural environment to create an ephemeral artwork.



**FIGURE 12.13** Sarah Sculley, *Koala*, 2020, charcoal, Ninderry, Sunshine Coast. Image courtesy of the artist

The brief for *Koala: Day of creative action against climate change* (2020) was to create a public artwork that brought attention to climate change. Several weeks prior, there had been devastating fires that ravaged through the Peregian Springs area of the Sunshine Coast. The media reported on the many homes that were lost but there was minimal reporting on the wildlife, in particular the koalas that perished in the fire, considerably reducing the koala population in the area. After the fire, Sculley collected natural charcoal and used it to draw a koala on a tree in Ninderry. The ephemeral nature of this piece added strength to the message due to the weather conditions causing the image to fade and eventually completely wash away; this became symbolic of Australia's diminishing koala population.

## Student work – referencing a contemporary context



**FIGURE 12.14** Shaun Klette, *Enoggera Creek*, 2020, 2 panels 29.7 × 42.0 cm, pastel and binding medium on paper

### DISCUSS

- How does the impermanence of *Koala* influence and enhance its meaning and purpose?
- How can art be used to raise awareness about environmental issues?
- What other ways can artists engage with their natural surroundings?

### Artist's Statement

The main focus of this artwork was to create a representation of a landscape that was dictated by a formal context, whilst retaining the theme of 'exploring the unexplored'. I have utilised the notion of wayfaring, to portray my vision of Enoggera Creek, as a bridge between the reality I experienced and my medium to display my vision to my audience. This process involved me going down to the creek and absorbing myself within nature and my surroundings (known as *shinrin-yoku*), encapsulating the core elements which I witnessed during this specific encounter. This was done twice and through two different panels, I have depicted the creek during flooding, as well as during a dry patch. I have thus displayed the ever-changing, volatile and diverse force of nature and the transition it undergoes over time.

SHAUN KLETTE

*shinrin-yoku* (*shin* meaning 'forest', and *yoku* meaning 'bath' in Japanese) is a long-held tradition of immersing oneself in nature

## Student work

### Use of stencils and referencing a personal context



**FIGURE 12.15** Van Sanders, *Culture Currents: A youth world*, 2023, stencil, spray paint, collaged mixed media, 60 x 70 cm

Working with Youturn and Headspace in collaboration with local Indigenous artist Jandamarra Cadd, a mural was created for the *Kawana Shopping Centre* (2021). It was developed with the involvement of the Youturn men's group to provide them with a sense of ownership, engagement and education around street art. The brief was to create a mural that connected communities and reflected the region. Jandamarra and Sculley ran a workshop with the men's group and collected ideas to align with the

brief, through the creation of a visual narrative supporting mental health and wellbeing. The outcome, which was painted over three days with the assistance of 12 young men from the community group, depicts a supporting hand holding a youth's hand, blending First Nations with a contemporary painting style. The Indigenous artwork symbolises community and connection as well as a reflection of local flora and fauna.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 12.3

The potential value of engaging in community art projects is invaluable in promoting wellbeing and mental health. Artmaking plays an important role in building social connections to alleviate feelings of isolation and loneliness. Look for artworks that have been developed in public spaces within your community or nearby communities. Interpret the message that is being communicated and evaluate how the artwork/s forge connections between individuals within the community.



**FIGURE 12.16** Sarah Sculley and Jandamarra Cadd, *Kawana Shopping Centre*, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist.



**FIGURE 12.17** Sarah Sculley, *Nambour RSL*, 2022. Image courtesy of the artist

As with all of Sculley's artworks, symbolism features strongly in the mural project produced for an external wall of the Nambour RSL Club. The use of colour plays an important role in the symbolic features of the piece as seen in the colours used in the midground, which while adding energy and vibrancy to the work, are also indicative of the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. The respectful representation of the three armed forces (air force, army and navy) shows individuals from diverse racial backgrounds, cultural heritage and gender identities, all working in unison for the same cause. An Indigenous naval officer, a female air force officer and an army officer combine to form the main focal point of the composition while iconography symbolic of the transport methods associated with each of the services is also visible within the layers of the artwork. Depth has been created through the darker tones in the background as an affirmation to the solemn respect associated with the ANZAC ceremonies held at the RSL each year. Sculley's overarching goal in this memorial mural was to show the pride and respect held by the community for Australia's service men and women.

Sculley's parting advice is to make mistakes. She suggests that because street art is messy, layered and rough, it drips, smears and cracks and it is full of mistakes, which is what makes her art enriching, transformative and accessible to a wide audience.



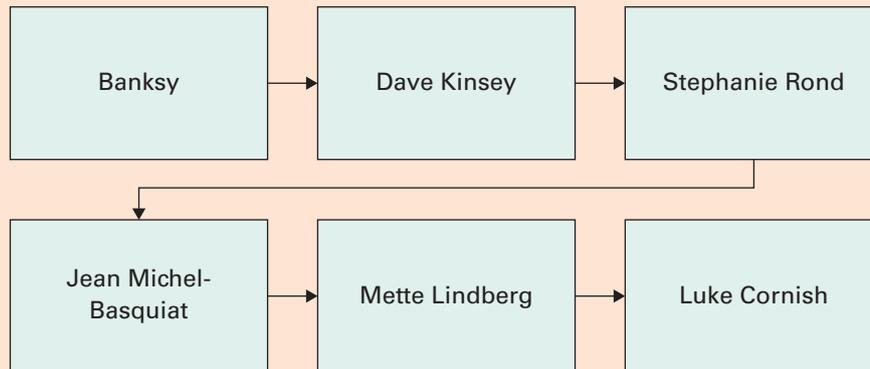
**FIGURE 12.18** Sarah Sculley working with students at Marist College Ashgrove. Photo credit: Christine Larsen

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEXTS</b></p> <p>Cultural Contemporary</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEANING</b></p> <p><b>Visual language</b></p> <p>A vibrant colour palette has been utilised to represent youth, positivity and energy. The physical features of the mural, being colour, shape and the textural elements which are visible in the patterned background, contribute to the impact generated by this public artwork.</p> <p><b>Symbols</b></p> <p>Kawana wildflowers along the coast and hinterland region have been included to communicate that nature is an integral part of life in Indigenous culture; the central focal point is the hero image of hands reaching out and forming a strong bond or connection.</p> <p><b>Media/techniques/processes/technologies</b></p> <p>Aerosol/spray paint/stencilling/painting using brushes (exterior acrylic house paint).</p> <p><b>Display</b></p> <p>Large-scale wall in a public space (Kawana Shoppingworld, Niklin Way, Sunshine Coast), which allows for community engagement.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Jandamarra Cadd in conjunction with Maroochydore Headspace and Youturn Youth Support Men's Group</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p><b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How can we represent connection and community through a collaborative mural?</p> <p><b>Inquiry questions for other featured works</b></p> <p>What does postnatal depression look like? How can I visually connect with other people suffering from depression? (<i>Good job</i> canvas work)</p> <p>How can I show a global audience the devastation climate change is having on the fauna in Australia? (<i>Koala</i>)</p> <p>How can I create a mural that is respectful of our armed forces while still showing equality, diversity and that will last for decades to come? (<i>Nambour RSL</i>)</p> <p><b>Focus</b> – Community/social connection/support/inclusivity/providing an avenue for community groups to have a voice/mental health/wellbeing/hope/resilience.</p> </div> </div>

**FIGURE 12.19** Evaluation of the work of Sarah Sculley and Jandamarra Cadd, *Kawana Shopping Centre*, 2021. Photo credit: Lara Furst. Image courtesy of the artist

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Sarah Sculley

Football Australia, *100 years of women in football mural*, 2021, a collaboration with Kim Walmsey  
*Tears in Vain*, 2006, mixed media on canvas  
*Hayden*, 2016, acrylic on canvas

## 12.3 Case study: Robert Andrew

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning

**Contexts:** Cultural, Contemporary

“My work speaks to the past yet articulates a contemporary and growing relationship to Country. I build custom mechanical devices that slowly unearth language and history over the exhibition period. The work is often embedded with historical and cultural information that has been buried or denied in the written records. I research First Nations language to gain insight through their conceptual makeup.”

ROBERT ANDREW

A descendant of the Yawuru people, Meanjin (Brisbane)-based artist Robert Andrew gives voice to First Nations culture and histories through his art practice. Andrew’s work often combines programmable machinery with earth pigments, ochres, rocks and soil. The work responds to First Nations histories by bringing language, culture, land and historical events to light. It communicates narratives relating to the encounter of Indigenous and colonial heritage, as well as a personal and growing relationship to Yawuru Country. Yawuru Country spans the lands and waters in and around Rubibi (the town of Broome) from Bangarangara to the *yalimban* (south) to Wirrinmirr (Willie Creek) to the *guniyan* (north), and *banu* (east) covering Roebuck Plains and Thangoo pastoral leases, in the Kimberley region of northern Western Australia.

Conversations with Traditional Owners and research within the archives are key to the materials and approach he takes when developing a work. His works often combine custom-built mechanical components that facilitate chance encounters with natural materials. This means that key stages of his process sit at polar-opposite ends of the scale in relation to production methods. He uses contemporary technology to design and machine precise elements in his studio to produce the mechanical components, while also gathering natural elements and earth pigments during time spent with community on Country. These two key stages of production occur simultaneously, each informing the other while being directed by research, conversation with Traditional Owners, and engagement with Indigenous language. The artistic outcome is a display of art-making where kinetic mechanical components manipulate natural materials from the land to form wonderfully textural surface transformations and a unique sensory experience for the audience.

The starting point for many of Andrew's works is approached through a cultural context, with consideration given to the exhibition itself, as well as the location in which it will be shown. His work also evolves through contemplation on whether the project and community is better served by communicating his growing connection to his Yawuru lineage and histories or whether he should consult with Traditional Owners to help respectfully articulate their voices and stories. He has an ongoing relationship with the Nyamba Buru Yawuru centre in Broome, Western Australia as a conduit to the facilitation of conversations with community Elders. He gives thought to how he should unearth or respectfully tell these ideas and how the work will grow and translate this information over the exhibition period. These initial thoughts innately inform how his kinetic works will operate, what natural materials will be used and what knowledge will direct the interactions between these two elements.

His practice aligns to a movement of contemporary First Nations artists who are seeking to connect with their histories by reviving cultural practices or knowledge gained

through research. Andrew is in the company of a number of leading Australian artists who work in conversation with community or with historical archives to uncover histories pertaining to Indigenous peoples that have been buried, hidden or denied.

*Tracing Inscriptions-palawa kani* (2022) draws on the ancestral knowledge held within *lutruwita* (Tasmania). This artwork was developed through conversations Andrew had with local speakers of *palawa kani*: the revived language of *lutruwita*'s Aboriginal people. *Palawa kani* is a language pieced together from community memory, colonial records and extant voice recordings from the many Aboriginal nations. The artwork is a custom-built mechanical **cartesian plotting system** that slowly traces *palawa kani* words gifted for use in this artwork. A plotter mechanism guides the movement of 100 strings with ochre-dipped charcoal sticks and rocks tied to each end. The slow tracing of the mechanism causes the ochre and charcoal to scrape across the wall, building large gestural drawings. A landscape of mark-making in earthy tones builds across the exhibition period, gradually translating and imprinting the ancient *palawa kani* words onto the gallery walls.

.....  
**cartesian plotting system** a mathematical system that describes the position of points in 2-dimensional space along an x axis and a y axis that intersect

.....

### DISCUSS

- Andrew integrates traditional knowledge with contemporary technologies. How do his artworks seamlessly bridge the gap between the two, thus allowing his audience to engage and elicit meaning?
- As his exhibitions progress, Andrew's artworks evolve, and text and imagery are revealed over time. Discuss how his works become a fully immersive experience for the viewer, as they witness the artworks slowly unfolding in front of them.

.....



**FIGURE 12.20** Robert Andrew, *Tracing Inscriptions-palawa kani*, 2022, string, rocks from Muwinina (Hobart) Country, charcoal and burnt branches from Melukerdee (Huon Valley) Country, ochres from Mumirimina (Lower Jordan River Valley) Country, and electro-mechanical components. Commissioned by MONA. Exhibition: *Within an utterance*, MONA. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Photo: MONA/Jesse Hunniford. Image Courtesy MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

*Tracing Inscriptions* (2020) is also based on an electro-mechanically driven cartesian plotting system and robotic mechanism which controls the movements of one hundred strings, each tied to ochre and oxide-dipped charcoal branches gathered after local bushfires. Words in Yawuru language are entered into the plotter at one end

of this network and the output is a large-scale wall drawing at the other end. The words are no longer recognisable in the charcoal traces of the drawing; instead, the Yawuru words have the freedom to move and to be unconstrained by the inadequacies of literal, linear, written, word translations in English.



**FIGURE 12.21** Robert Andrew *Tracing Inscriptions*, 2020, string, rocks, burnt branches, ochre, and electromechanical mechanisms, size variable, installation view, *Overlapping Magisteria: The 2020 Macfarlane Commissions*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA). Commissioned by ACCA and the Macfarlane Fund. Photo: Andrew Curtis. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.4

- Research how to make natural pigments from foraged natural resources from the land (such as local plants, minerals, dirt, dried clays). Grind or crush collected materials to extract pigments. Experiment with different textures and consistencies by adding water and/or binder medium.
- Explore your surroundings and capture several images of landscapes or natural environments that inspire you, or find images that already exist on your mobile phone.
- Collect sticks, twine, rocks etc. and consider how they might create interesting marks onto paper in order to recreate each photograph using the natural pigments you have made.
- Display the finished artworks alongside the implements you have used to develop your mark-making.



**FIGURE 12.22** Robert Andrew, *Presence-within an utterance* (video still), 2022, video, silent; duration 00:23:00, looped, video post-production by Sai Karlen. Commissioned by MONA. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Exhibition: *Within an utterance*, MONA.

*Presence-within an utterance* (2022) is a video work that draws on Robert Andrew's conversations with local *palawa kani* knowledge holders. Earth pigments, ochre and natural materials shift and move translating the vocal landscape of *palawa kani* into visuals. Language cannot be seen nor heard but is translated into a constantly evolving and layered mineral landscape. The unheard voice speaks the name of important places around *lutruwita* (Tasmania), from a rainforest to an island to a massacre site. The work brings the spoken word back into the natural landscape, reflecting the idea of language being born from the Country, the earth, sea and sky that is innately entwined in the cultural make-up of its people.

*A connective reveal – Wulani yinamirlgan buru* (2022) is a custom-built drawing machine that slowly unveils Yawuru language across the exhibition period. The artwork references cultural connections to the land and sea, articulating the role of water in the formation of culture. Water is accurately projected to erode layers of white chalks drawing forth the deep reds of ochres and oxides that lay. Andrew works closely with the Nyambu Buru Yawuru and for this artwork was gifted the phrase, '*wulani yinamirlgan buru*' which means 'water waking Country'. Yawuru language is an oral and conceptual language. Conceptual languages require expansive discourse and emphasis on experiences, ideas, abstractions and connections. The phrase '*wulani yinamirlgan buru*' (water waking Country) underscores the role of the environment in the formation of Yawuru culture.

In conceptual languages, each word conveys a larger intangible cultural context that cannot be translated into clean English definitions. By growing his connection to language, Andrew gains insight into a larger social, philosophical, and cultural context that each word helps articulate. He engages in consultations with Yawuru Elders through the Nyamba Buru Yawuru centre who gift specific Yawuru words for use in particular artworks. He also often consults with Traditional Owners local to the exhibition region, to help bring their communities' stories, culture and history to light.



**FIGURE 12.23** Robert Andrew, *A connective reveal – Wulani yinamirlgan buru*, 2022, ongoing, installation view, ochre, oxides, chalk, water and electromechanical devices, size variable. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from the Australia Council for the Arts. 23rd Biennale of Sydney, *rivus*, 2022, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia. Photo: Jodie Barker. Image courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

## MEANING

### Visual language

Starting as a monolithic block of rammed earth, a slow drip of water precisely erodes the structure over the exhibition period to reveal a word in *palawa kani*. As the water releases the soil from its monumental form, the rich colours of ochre are drawn forth from beneath. Riverlets and streams form, carving out paths down the side of the structure and pooling on the plinth beneath

### Symbols

The artwork was inspired by the local context of *lutruwita* (Tasmania) as well as conversations with Pakana (people/community) curator Zoe Rimmer, Aboriginal linguistic consultant Theresa Sainty, and cultural burning practitioner and Wakka Wakka man Luke Mabb.

The layered ochre and gravel structure and its material make-up was informed by the architecture of MONA and the 12 shell middens dotted around the gallery's peninsula site.

### Media/techniques/ processes/ technologies

Andrew made a number of trips to *lutruwita*, to spend time on Country with Rimmer, Mabb and

Sainty, which informed his approach to the artwork and the materials used. During the time on local land around Nipaluna (Hobart), they collected small quantities of ochre for use in the artwork, in keeping with their cultural protocols. This ochre had stunning shades of lavender, pink, vibrant yellow, greys, whites and earthen red. This precious resource was combined with compressed gravel and rocks from around MONA's grounds to form a monolithic rammed earth block.

A slow drip of water progressively erodes the geometric building-like form to gradually reveal a word in *palawa kani* over the exhibition period. The slow crumbling of this form is like an archaeological dig which seeks to 'unearth' ancient knowledge systems from the land. This slow reveal of what's beneath mirrors the construction and revival of the *palawa kani* language. Rich coloured ochres are drawn forth and spill in rivulets down the sides of the earthen structure; each material element

informs this chance encounter and pooling of colours on the plinth beneath.

### Display

Large-scale artwork displayed in a gallery space.



## CONTEXTS

Cultural Contemporary  
Explores First Nations language and traditions  
Exploits digital technologies which are combined with traditional art-making processes  
Provides a unique sensory experience for the audience

## CONNECTIONS

**Collaboration**  
*A connective reveal-language in Country* was commissioned by the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) and was produced in response to conversations with Traditional Owners as well as the history of the site.

## INQUIRY QUESTIONS

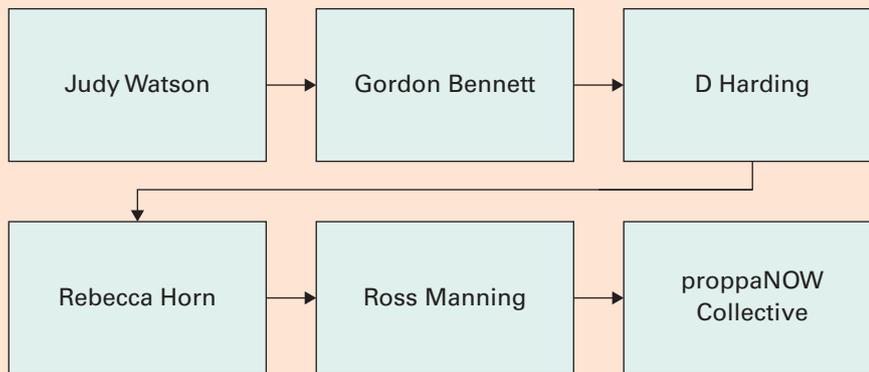
Each word has a greater social, environmental, and cultural context that is embedded in it. How can striving to understand this larger context in First Nations languages and Yawuru language, in particular, give greater contextual insights into the culture and lived experience on Country?

**Focus** – the spoken word and First Nations language and the relationship it has with Country.

**FIGURE 12.24** Evaluation of Robert Andrew's work, *A connective reveal-language in Country*, 2022, soil, rocks from Muwinina Country, ochres from Mumirimina Country, iron oxide, water, aluminium and electro-mechanical components, size variable. Exhibition view: *Within an utterance*, MONA. Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery. Photo credit: MONA/Jesse Hunniford. Image courtesy MONA Museum of Old and New Art, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Robert Andrew

*Moving beyond the line*, 2022, book, rock, water, aluminium, ochre and electromechanical components

*A connective reveal-nainmurra guuruburrii dhaura*, 2022, ochre, oxides, chalk, water and electromechanical devices

*Connective reveal-nagula*, 2020, ongoing, ochre, oxides, chalk, water and electromechanical devices. Exhibition: *Yokohama Triennial*, Yokohama Museum of Art, 2020

*Through Whose Eyes?*, 2018–2020, ochres and oxides on board

*Garabara*, 2018, CNC milled into each granite with bronze and steel forms, façade artwork, University of Sydney, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Building, Build Urban Art Projects (UAP). (Note: This artwork is designed to continue to rust and form rivulets of red down the wall over time.)

## Student artwork – referencing a cultural context



**FIGURE 12.25** John Murphy, *Silent Riverbeds*, MDF, styrofoam, airdried clay, pigment from the earth and resin, 120 x 60 cm

## Artist's Statement

The parched red earth is dry, dehydrated and awaiting rain. This is rural Australia. Natural disasters, including droughts, floods and fires affect the land and for those whose livelihoods depend on the land, the effects can be devastating. The riverbed is dry and all that is visible is the natural pigment of the earth. Growing up on a cattle farm, I have seen how drought impacts farmers and their families. The artwork represents

not only my personal life where I spend a great deal of time working on the land on my family's farm, but from a global perspective, the artwork also represents global warming and climate change. It indicates the changes in weather patterns where we are typically seeing more dry spells than wet weather. *Silent Riverbeds* has been created to represent rural Australia and the challenges that are regularly faced.

JOHN MURPHY

## 12.4 Case study: Lincoln Austin

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning

**Context:** Formal, Contemporary, Personal



Art for me is the physical manifestation of thought through effort in time.

LINCOLN AUSTIN

Abstract, geometric sculptures and assemblages with architectural undertones and a play on optical illusion form the core of Lincoln Austin's practice. As a multimedia artist, originally from Adelaide and now living and working in Tulumur (Ipswich), Austin has forged a successful career through the development of compositional excellence, depicting extreme mathematical precision and microscopic attention to detail. Interlocking shapes which form complex tessellating patterns and textures exude an energy that appears to make the artworks pulsate and move. Sophisticated compositions, which are usually three-dimensional and textural in nature, revolve around the complexity of form and structure, many with recurring patterns and motifs. The logic behind the artworks, which are based on pattern, is that they have the potential to repeat infinitely. Although Austin's works are

static, they provide a perceptual experience for the viewer in a rhythmic sensation of dazzling, illusory effects with carefully chosen colours to enhance chromatic tension, synonymous with Op Art and Minimalist compositions.

As unique individuals, each person sees situations, events or phenomena differently. Austin is interested in how **perception** influences our understanding and how interaction can alter perception. Most of Austin's works, whether free-standing or in relief, require the viewer to move around and interact with the work to fully appreciate the liveliness within, and to perceive the spatial, geometric and optical qualities they possess. Some are **lenticular** in nature, so can at times be optically puzzling, as depending on where the viewer is positioned, the appearance can appear to be considerably different. If the viewer moves around the work and views it from all angles, they are rewarded by a shifting 3-dimensional vision.

**perception** one's understanding of a situation, person or object; it relates to what is interpreted

**lenticular** reflecting two different perspectives, angles or images at the same which change depending on the position from which it is viewed

**Op Art (or optical art)** is a style of non-objective abstract art that exploits the process of visual perception, using purely geometric form, line and patterns in black and white or contrasting colours to create rhythmic or pulsating optical illusions. With Dada and the Bauhaus as historical predecessors, the movement came into prominence in the 1960s.

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**Minimalism** is a form of abstract art, characterised by simplistic, geometric shapes and hard edges. The art movement gained prominence in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, drawing influences from Constructivism, De Stijl and the notion of Duchamp's 'readymades' and rejecting narratives associated with the fluidity and free-form nature of Abstract Expressionism.

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**FIGURE 12.26** Minimalism: Frank Stella, *Jacques le Fataliste*, 1974, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 343 x 343 cm; Op Art: Victor Vasarely, *Trois Hexagones*, 1969, polychrome construction set in enamelled sheet metal, Flaine, France

Austin has exhibited nationally and internationally, has work in many public and private collections including Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) and has produced 19 large-scale public artworks. In 2021, a retrospective exhibition, *The Space Between Us*, presented a major mid-career survey of the last two decades showcasing the diversity and unpredictability of approaches in Austin's practice. Every artwork that has

been produced across a 30-year career is so individual and so remarkably different from the next, but they all share one common feature, and that is a meticulous accuracy in design and construction. Austin has been the recipient of numerous awards, including two prizes for Art and Architecture from the Australian Institute of Architects and most recently the Queensland Regional Art Awards, Art for Life Award.

Although rigid in structure, many of Austin's works are a self-analysis or a self-reflection of life events and experiences. Personal psychology plays a role in their work and the vulnerability that is infused into later works, along with the titles, allows for a deep dive into the way Austin thinks and feels, by letting the audience in a little more, through the additional information released in the titles.

Austin's artistic career began after completing a art course which encompassed many forms of media, such as drawing, ceramics, glass, painting, sculpture and jewellery-making. It wasn't until they enrolled in an Advanced Diploma in Theatre Design that involved working at scale, in a very dynamic environment with a multitude of ideas, together with 3-dimensional materials and forms, that a serious career in art took off. Theatre allowed for Austin to explore a broad range of ideas and while they dabbled in painting and image-making, it was the material, space, light and optics of sculpture that was enticing.

Working with industrial materials and materials used in architecture and construction allows the artist to manipulate these with a sense of discipline and truth. The use of such materials does not limit the responses based on a pre-conceived plan; rather, they often guide the outcome. Austin suggests that material drives process by utilising material that lends itself to certain techniques and processes, based on its properties and potential. Alternatively, there may be an idea for a form in mind, and then the search will take place for a material that would best suit the purpose and the outcome.



**FIGURE 12.27** Lincoln Austin, *Held by logic*, 2000, copper wire, tin solder, 20 x 20 x 17cm. Photo credit: Lincoln Austin. Image courtesy of the artist

“Sculpture doesn't always have to be expensive. There are always recycled materials to use, as well as hardware store materials. I like to transform industrial materials into something meaningful. Responding to how my work will condition a space and how people will experience and move through the space are important things I rely on when considering a brief. Because it's a public space, I have to negotiate and address the concerns surrounding workplace health and safety: climb-ability, entrapment issues, longevity and environmental conditions. The concept phase and planning is vital for the whole process and it reduces risk of mishaps.

LINCOLN AUSTIN

*Held by logic* is a smaller piece which could be described as a copper matrix. One of the objectives in this sculpture, was for the process of the fabrication to remain visible. The overall structural composition plays with negative and positive space through the creation of different angles and layers of overlapping linear components. The work expresses a concern which encourages the viewer to engage physically, in order to fully immerse in the piece to activate both the textural, exterior surface and what exists in the layers within.

The steel mesh construction of *Interloper*, which is housed in the Queensland Art Gallery Contemporary Australian Art collection, reflects the formality of mathematics through interwoven geometric shapes which produce a pattern across different planes or levels. The language of mathematics is a universal one that can be shared, understood and communicated with on a global level, allowing for a common understanding to be generated, without any cultural or language barriers.



**FIGURE 12.28** Lincoln Austin, *Interloper*, 2009, stainless steel mesh, 164 x 101 x 123 cm, Photo credit: Lincoln Austin. Image courtesy of the artist

“The touchstone, for me, of the success of a sculpture is that a person feels obliged to circumnavigate it. There’s a physical experience attached to the process of looking; it’s not just a passive observation. That’s how I know whether the work is successful or not: watching people interact with it. If they’re being static I’ve done something wrong, I haven’t engaged them enough.”

LINCOLN AUSTIN

*Ebb and Flow*, aptly named due to its location on the edge of the Brisbane River at Milton, was commissioned by the Brisbane City Council and Hale Street Link Alliance, as part of the

## DISCUSS

- What role or influence does mathematics play in art?
- What are some conceptual tools that overlap in both disciplines (for example, symmetry, Fibonacci sequence, rule of thirds).
- Look for some examples of artists or artworks that display the intersection between art and mathematics (consider historical references).
- What art movements rely on mathematical concepts?

Go Between Bridge development. Although it is painted onto a flat surface, it morphs into an almost sculptural form due to the various angled surfaces of the concrete wall across which it spans. The entire environment was built firstly as a **CAD model**, artificially projected onto the surface and then painted. Despite being a slightly different approach for Austin, in that it is one of only two large-scale paintings that they have produced, it is still based on the regularity of a pattern, the structure of which uses **inverse or reversed perspective**. A pattern, which if it were regular, would appear to get smaller at a distance, appears to remain constant. The visibility of this expansive mural from various vantage points – the Go Between Bridge, the adjacent train bridge, the southern bank of the Brisbane River, the river ferries and those using the cycle path – meant that it was important to devise a design that was successful when viewed at close range and from a distance.

**CAD model (computer-aided design)** through the use of computer-based software to aid in the design process, two-dimensional drawings or three-dimensional models are able to be generated

**inverse or reversed perspective** the opposite of linear perspective; the vanishing point is positioned outside the compositional boundary, so instead of a pattern appearing to become smaller at a distance, this is reversed and the pattern or object is smaller the closer it is to the viewer





**FIGURE 12.30** Lincoln Austin, *Don't get carried away with yourself, Lincoln*, (2020– ongoing), nylon fabric, carbon fibre, brass, 300cm<sup>3</sup>. Photo credits: Left: Steve Ryan, Right: Lincoln Austin, Images courtesy of the artist

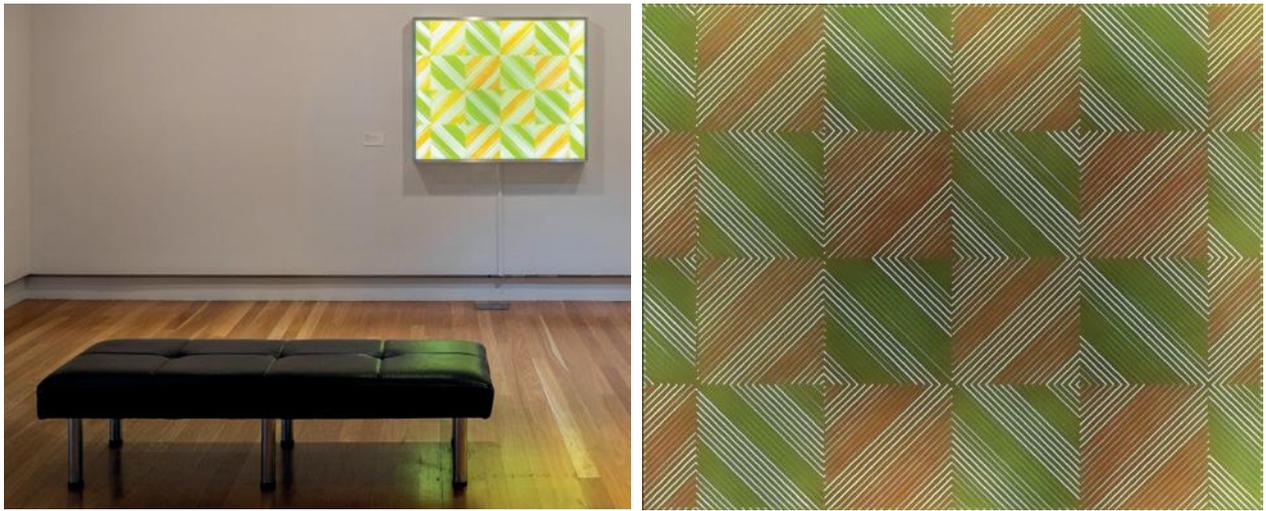
At the time this work was being produced, Austin was the primary carer for their mother who had been diagnosed with ovarian cancer. It was produced over many hours spent sewing and constructing at the kitchen table, with her support and input into the work. (Austin's mother has since made a full recovery.) While the form reflects calculated precision, is very methodical in its construction and on the surface does not appear to reflect an emotional response, it will always hold a much deeper personal meaning to Austin, based on the life events that were unfolding at the time.

This artwork also provides a platform for LGBTQIA+ dialogue. One of the objectives of *Don't get carried away with yourself, Lincoln*, was to create awareness of the challenges experienced by LGBTQIA+ individuals through generating public discussions inspired by participation in the project. The project endeavours to create enjoyable, colourful and lively experiences through the performances, which have been informed by the artist's personal journey and the apprehension that has been associated with openly expressing emotion. Additionally, this has been further amplified by the complexities of growing up queer while tackling identity and masculinity matters and navigating the relationship with their mother. Austin's hope is that this project will continue to provide joy and sustain positive conversations and acceptance in the wider community.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.5

- Focusing purely on colour and form, develop an abstract sculpture using geometric shapes as the basis of the structure (sheets of painted polystyrene foam using pins to hold the pieces together could be your starting point).
- Research other artists who produce abstract colourful, sculptural works for inspiration.
- Consider the choice of colours to create a sense of tension or harmony in the work.
- Using digital technology, photograph the sculpture and manipulate the imagery using software that is available to you. This could also include software that will allow you to animate the work or create a mirrored or kaleidoscopic outcome.

*Yesterday when I was mad* is a work about experience. Depicting a system of repetitive patterns in yellow and green, it reads as a photograph and encourages movement in the audience, with the reward of gratification due to the changing point of view. The title of this work is from a Pet Shop Boys song of the same name. The song itself is a wry and sarcastic response to harsh criticism and self-reflexivity of one's own seriousness, with the music video being set in an asylum.



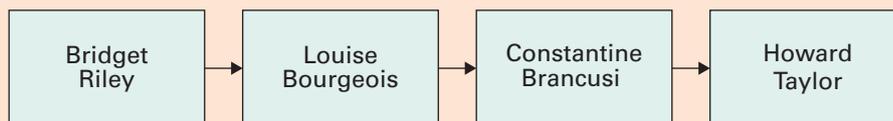
**FIGURE 12.31** Lincoln Austin, *Yesterday when I was mad*, 2012, light box, acrylic sheet, acrylic paint, LED lights, aluminium. Photo credit: Mick Richards. Image courtesy of the artist

After a moderate personal breakdown in 2012, resulting from burnout and exhaustion, Austin developed this work to make light of his own studiosness, aptly choosing the song title to further strengthen the purpose and meaning inherent in the artwork. *Yesterday when I was mad* is one of a series, where all artworks have been allocated a title based on a pop song.

Austin encourages the audience to find their own meanings in the artworks. In the past, the titles often had one-word names but more recently have evolved with a balance to becoming depictive and emotional, through the use of more elaborate written language. In doing so, this delineates a little more about meaning, so as to invite the viewer into the conceptual ideas and inspirations behind the work.

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Additional key artworks by Lincoln Austin

*Unbecoming*, 2023

*Longing for the Vitruvian Man*, 2021–2022

*Standing*, 2020

*Causal Loop*, 2016

*Sky Door*, 2016

*The Impossibility of Objectivity*, 2016

*Habena*, 2013

*Abracadabra*, 2013

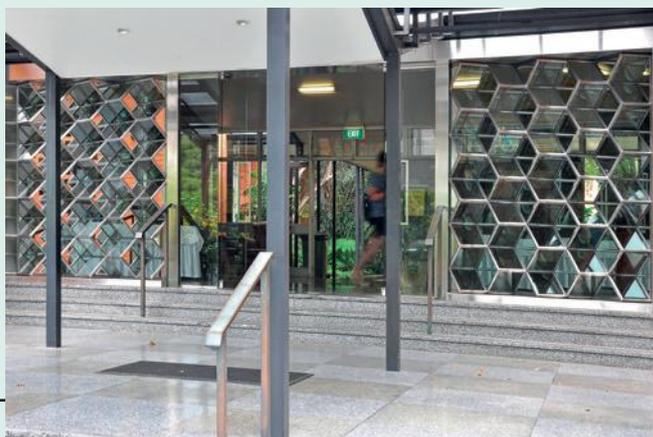
*Once again*, 2009

*Field of Vision*, 2009

## MEANING

### Visual language

Austin's 2010 artwork *Correlate* was commissioned by St Leo's Catholic College to celebrate the centenary of the University of Queensland and a 93-year relationship between the college and the university. Through the use of mirrored, transparent and reflective surfaces, a simultaneous view of both sites (St Leo's and the University of Queensland) has been achieved. The work responds to the space around it, as individuals must move through / between the sculptural work to enter the foyer of Leo House. An impression of movement and 3-dimensionality exists, whilst a distortion of colour and shape is reflected from each surface of the work. As is often the case with Austin's work, there is no hidden substructure supporting the form. The full structure always remains visible and is integral and integrated into the form.



### Symbols

This glass and steel work is intended to reflect a dynamic and interactive relationship that exists between the two institutions. Reflecting an **isometric** grid pattern, it metaphorically depicts the student journey each college resident takes and produces different optical effects depending on the time of day it is witnessed.

### Media/techniques/processes/technologies

Informed by previous constructed cardboard topographic experiments and connected to Austin's *Imperfect Pattern* series which began in 2002, *Correlation* is made from manufactured glass, steel and mirrors. CAD modelling was employed early on in the development of this work, in order to scale

the grid so that it would fit the available space.

### Display

On permanent display as part of the architectural structure of the building.

### CONTEXTS

#### Formal

Emphasis on process, elements, principles, materials and media

Represents ideas as a system of symbolic motifs

Employs imagery as a visualisation of ideas

Relies on aesthetic experience

#### Contemporary

### CONNECTIONS

#### Collaboration

The façade has been designed and constructed through collaboration with an architectural firm and forms part of the architecture at University of Queensland's Leo House, a residential college for male students.

### INQUIRY QUESTIONS

How can I create an illusion of depth beyond a 2-dimensional surface?

How can the viewer become part of an artwork through their interaction with its reflective surfaces?

**Focus** – geometry/precision/repeat pattern/perspective/perception.

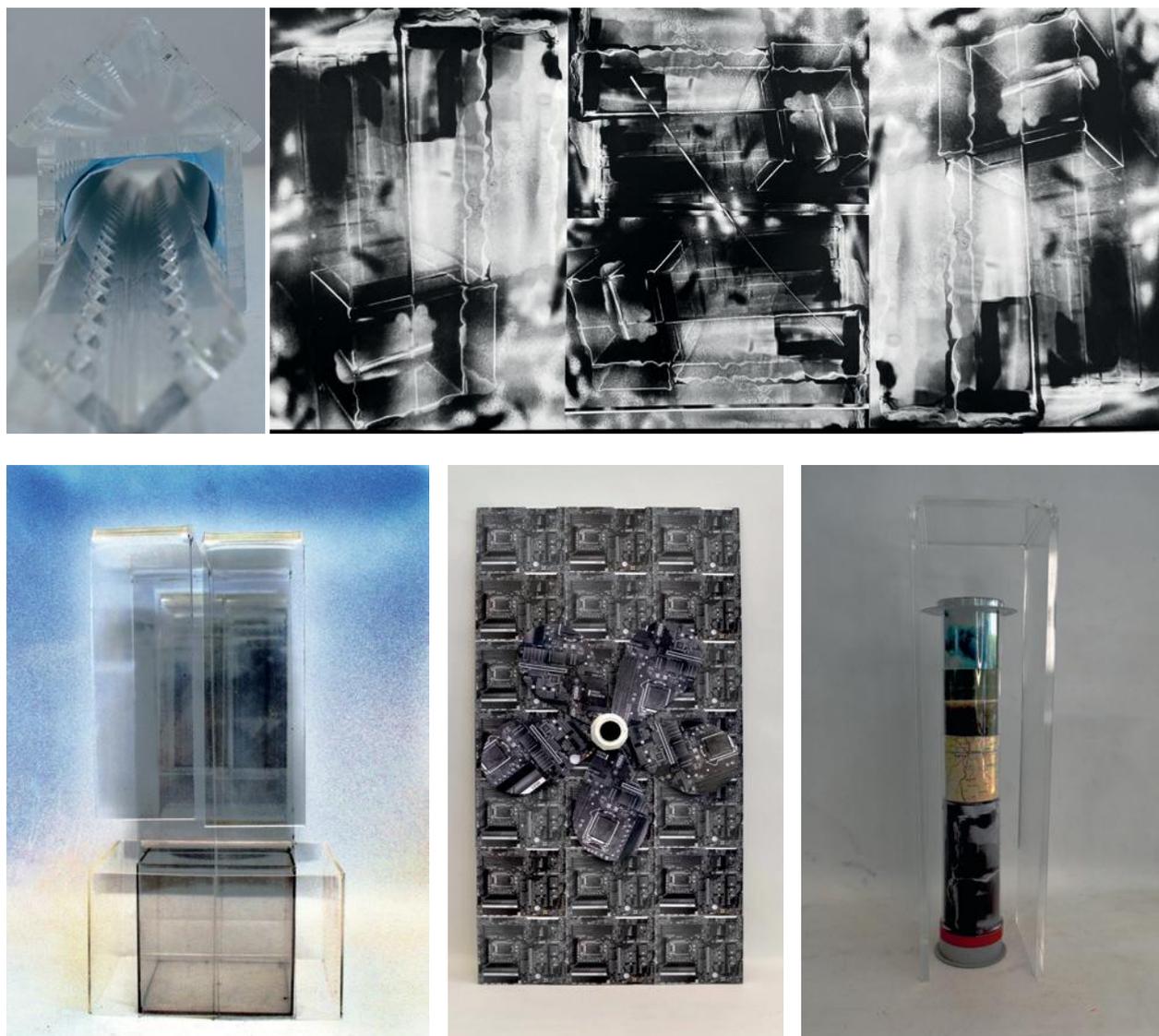
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**isometric** stemming from the Greek term which means 'equal measure'; a technique known as parallel projection, where the same scale is used to draw along every axis of the design grid and the top and sides of the shape being drawn are all visible

.. .. . .. . . . . . . . . . .

**FIGURE 12.32** Evaluation of Lincoln Austin's work, *Correlate*, 2010–2011, tempered glass, double-sided mirror, stainless steel, silicon, 257 x 716 x 45 cm. Photo: Lincoln Austin. Image courtesy of the artist

## Student work – referencing a formal context



**FIGURE 12.33** Experimental student responses to the inquiry question, 'How can artists manipulate materials and light to create and collapse space, and develop ambiguous imagery to communicate complex concepts?'; media: Perspex objects, collage, lights, digital manipulation.



**FIGURE 12.34** Luca Masotti, *Crystal Colours*, digital photograph of glass prism and light mounted on foam core, 29.7 x 42 cm

## 12.5 Case study: Carolyn V Watson

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning

**Context:** Contemporary, Personal

“Addressing elements of abstraction and landscape, there is a playful relationship between the sourced natural materials and the intervention of myself, the maker. As the pieces develop, they transgress obvious anatomical boundaries to reach a state of the in-between. It is neither alive nor dead nor is it exclusively animal or botanical.

CAROLYN V WATSON

Born in regional New South Wales, Carolyn V Watson is a Meanjin/Brisbane-based artist whose practice employs labour-intensive processes with a repetitive physicality to assemble and reconstruct. Her studio practice is methodical, fluid, yet slow and while shifting between two- and three-dimensional modes, Watson sees her two-dimensional work as being interconnected to her object-making; a symbiotic relationship exists with one informing the other and she learns and problem-solves by working on multiple pieces simultaneously. In doing so, works that are set aside for a period of time while she ponders their resolution are re-invented and re-purposed, with the outcome often being significantly different from what was initially planned. Watson has shown in solo and group shows throughout Australia, and her work is held in public and private collections in Australia and internationally.

Watson's artistic process involves observing, gathering and documenting. She collects materials, text, images and strips of memories, many of which are sourced from her personal and family history. Her intention is to utilise excerpts of these gathered resources and re-animate them in ways that honour the object, the image and the memory and they are ultimately echoed in her artwork in an entirely new form. By using materials that have been sourced, traded, unearthed or donated, this

manner of collecting and renewal of purpose has become a vital part of Watson's art-making. It becomes a process of cooperation, as an ongoing conversation involving artist and material.

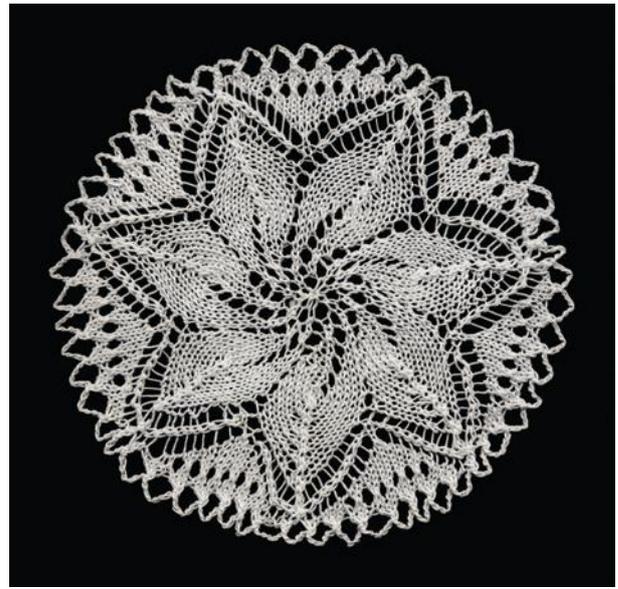
The decision to incorporate materials that have had a previous life or purpose offers a connection to and an understanding of another time and place, another bank of memories, another artisan and their skill set. The inclusion of materials and objects, such as bones, taxidermy forms, antlers, fur, reclaimed timber, sheep leather, vintage photographs and medical curiosities, suggests that it is about creating life from the inanimate through exotic combinations of the impossible to promote a sense of curiosity within her audience.

This process forms a symbolic link to nostalgia and memory and her resulting bodies of work exhibit recurring motifs of natural history, found imagery and personal memory. The intricate and often decorative, yet skilfully formed assemblages that emerge from Watson's studio, are in part representative of a revival of traditional handcrafts of stitching, sewing and the utilisation of collage and textiles which includes the use of vintage crocheted **doilies**. Watson's two-dimensional works and paintings take on sculptural qualities through the integration of open space, layering, textured and patterned surfaces, all held together with intersecting lines.

“For myself, an active interest in biology, modern history and practical effects, provides an insight into the outcomes of my studio practice; also looking at the way craft, especially created by women, has been viewed and valued in the visual arts.

CAROLYN V WATSON

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**doily** with origins in the 16th century, a London cloth merchant by the name of Doiley (also spelt Doyley), sold open lace-like textiles which were used as ornamental mats or napkins. The name (now spelt 'doily') has continued to be used for the small decorative mats, which are usually crocheted.  
.....



**FIGURE 12.35** Vintage crocheted lace doilies



## DISCUSS

- How does Watson's use of materials align with stewardship of place and of the environment?
- By re-purposing and recycling materials that have been initially crafted through hand-made and artisanal methods (such as doilies, linen strips from old paintings), what additional qualities does this bring to Watson's artworks, compared with if she used solely commercially-made media and materials?



**FIGURE 12.36** Carolyn V Watson, *You forget so easy (almost plus then never)*, 2023, porcelain doll parts, antler tips, handmade epoxy clay clusters, glass beads, pearl beads, glass spheres, crochet thread, upholstery thread, epoxy clay, 17 reconstructed doilies, rotating display stand, 50 x 45 x 45 cm. Photo credit: Louis Lim. Image courtesy of the artist

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.6

- Explore second-hand stores, jumble sales, kerbside collections, recycling stations, collections of personal keepsakes and online platforms such as Gumtree and Marketplace to discover remnants of art and crafts made by artisans from different times and historical settings.
- Incorporating materials that have had a previous life and purpose adds an extra dimension of significance to your artwork, and reflects a cultural context through reference to time and place.
- Seek out two or more materials crafted by others and blend them together in an experimental artwork by drawing the historical meaning or significance of the material into contemporary times.

An example of this may be seen in Carolyn's artwork, *You forget so easy (almost plus then never)*, 2023, which includes 17 reconstructed doilies as part of the media.

Since 2008, Watson had adopted a process of creating objects and images that were subversive extensions of 'self'. By cloaking or creating conduits that would appear or act in place of herself, this method became a way of directly communicating her observations and own anxieties with her audience. *I am Goya's dog (self-portrait)*, 2010, was a result of a gallery director's negative reaction to a traditional self-portrait that Watson submitted for a group show. The work began as a clear-headed **homage** to one of her own art heroes; by directly referencing Spanish artist, Francisco de Goya's *The Dog*, it was an opportunity to explore her own fears of open space and negative space within her practice. One of the compositional considerations adapted in the process of the work's development, was to contemplate how surface and space could allow the **protagonist** to breathe and simultaneously be oppressed by their surroundings. The pink (Australian Grey – Art Spectrum Colourfix Primer) that creates the surface colour of the space is built up over eight to nine layers of darker earth tones to create the illusion of depth.

The 'dog' itself, is a faceless female figure in a costume (a fox head and cloak). The fox, like the rabbit and the crow, are reoccurring motifs in Watson's work, alluding to themes of strength and vulnerability and the artist's birthplace of Wagga Wagga. Watson was also thinking about the performance art and textile work of Meanjin/ Brisbane artist, Zoe Porter, and conveying the weight of costume and how it affected the posture of the faceless protagonist. The stance also echoes the shadow of Count Orlok climbing up the staircase in the 1922 film *Nosferatu*. The methodology of open space, gestural drawing and layered surface became the foundation for the nine paintings that comprised the 2-dimensional element of her first sell-out commercial gallery solo exhibition, *Owning the bones* in 2012.



**FIGURE 12.37** Carolyn V Watson, *I am Goya's dog (self portrait)*, 2010, ink, charcoal, conte, pastel primer on linen, 121 x 83cm. Image courtesy of the artist

**homage** respect or special honour shown publicly to someone or something, as an acknowledgement of their influence or importance

**protagonist** the leading or major character in a story or event



**FIGURE 12.38** *Nosferatu*, 1922



**FIGURE 12.39** Francisco de Goya, *The Dog*, 1819–1923, oil mural on plaster, 80 x 134 cm

*One thing led to another (and one thing leads to another)* is the culmination of three years of process and experimentation.

“To increase the scale of small polymer clay works, I had to readdress the use of armatures, how to use textiles to complement the composition and how I could use inverted fox skulls with polymer clay and bees wax to maintain the tension between the two protagonists. There was also practical consideration of how two large forms would be able to support the weight and movement. Each piece relies upon the other to remain upright; they are physically twisted into place.

CAROLYN V WATSON

In recent years, Watson has also begun to explore and research Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky's theory of Defamiliarisation (also known as *Ostranenie*), and Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud's concept of 'The Uncanny' (*Das Unheimliche*). Defamiliarisation is an artistic device whereby common things are presented to the audience in an unfamiliar or strange way so they can gain new perspectives and see the world differently. Art is a way of seeing and experiencing an object out of their usual context; the object

itself is not important (Shklovsky, 1917). This relates closely to Freud's notion of 'The Uncanny', which pertains to a feeling of something being both strange and familiar at the same time (Freud, 1919). It is clear that characteristics of each of these theories filter through Watson's work.

Watson's artistic response to her influences and use of materials, techniques and processes is characterised by artworks which reflect the push and pull of conceptual **dichotomies**: totemic and ritualistic, the familiar and the foreign, the natural and the artificial, the abject and the poetic, beauty and the grotesque. For Watson, the notion of duality is an integral aspect to her practice and is deeply personal. Not only do these delicate intersections of contrasting dualities create tension in the work, but the output also sits in an indeterminate space that is difficult to define or categorise. They occupy a position of ambiguity, somewhere in an alternate world, on a continuum that extends to opposing outer edges of the dualisms.

*Smalltown* has evolved from the watercolour painting, *Our plucky hero met her fate* (2011), which has been the only time that Watson has recreated a sculpture from her own painting.

• • • • • **armature** the open framework onto which a sculpture is moulded

**dichotomies** the division or separation of two concepts, objects or categories which are depicted as two mutually exclusive and opposing parts

• • • • •



**FIGURE 12.40** Carolyn V Watson, *One thing led to another (and one thing leads to another)*, 2012, doilies, two fox skulls, linen off cuts from old paintings, steel rod, toy filling, felt, sheep leather, reclaimed timber, 40 x 45 x 78 cm. Photo credit: Heidi Stevens. Image courtesy of the artist; 2012 John Fries Memorial Art Prize Finalist



**FIGURE 12.41** Carolyn V Watson, *Smalltown*, 2013, polymer clay, ink, flocking, beeswax, epoxy clay, modelling wire, white rabbit pelt, 63 x 42 x 28 cm. Photo credit: Heidi Stevens. Image courtesy of the artist; 2013 Moreton Bay Art Prize Finalist

On the surface, *Smalltown* could be interpreted as a piece that questions genetic engineering, biological abnormality and carnivalesque freakshows. For myself at the core of this work is nostalgia and familial bonds. Here are two siblings, twins oblivious to their surrounds and physical condition, and instead engaged in a warm interplay, suspended in time. The construction of this piece was an extension of the skills that I had taught myself from my 2012 sculpture, *One thing led to another (and one thing leads to another)*. With an internal armature of wire and aluminium foil, the piece was built up of consecutive layers of polymer clay and was baked after each applied layer, approximately 10 to 12 times. The outer surface comprised a process of applications of inks, then sanding, followed by the final painted layer of beeswax and wax hardener.

CAROLYN V WATSON



**FIGURE 12.42** Carolyn V Watson, *Our plucky hero met her fate*, 2011, ink, watercolour, graphite on cold pressed 640gsm Arches water paper, 56 x 76 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Highly Commended – 2012 Marie Ellis Prize for Drawing

## Student work – produced in workshop with Carolyn V Watson



**FIGURE 12.43** Harvey Madden, *New man in Rome*, 2023, wire, masking tape, wax, animal skull, 30 cm x 8 cm x 3 cm



**FIGURE 12.44** Carolyn V Watson, *Trophyghosts*, 2015, deer taxidermy foam form, fox taxidermy foam form, Epoxy clay, antler pieces, shellac, bees wax, polymer clay, ink, sheep leather, doilies, lamb pelt, thread, linen offcuts, fox bones. *Trophyghost 1*. 48 x 74 x 50 cm, *Trophyghost 2*. 26 x 31 x 45cm. Photo credit: Heidi Stevens. Image courtesy of the artist; 2018 – *All glory is fleeting*, Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery

Watson develops her initial responses by accumulating a collection of source material: references, objects and images. The processes of collecting, sourcing and networking provides the foundation for making and are significant to Watson in developing artistic responses, focusing on key words, lines of text or phrases. This provides a cornerstone that she is able to refer back to, add to and alter. With a stockpile of objects and images, she then begins a culling process to see what is relevant for the task ahead. From this point, an editing process occurs with these two groups of visual responses, objects and images.

I actively encourage chance to occur through the process of making, so that I avoid illustrating a single idea. As my practice process is intensive, I actively document each stage with notes and photographs for future reference.

CAROLYN V WATSON

With an accessible accumulation of handmade components, each piece that Watson constructs is built on the skills developed from the process of previous works. The stitching and layering of found and sourced materials have become an integral component to understanding the narrative of the forms she creates. This experimentation leads to developing structures that could

simultaneously reveal internal and external components, which adds to the mystery and physical impossibility of the object.

*Trophyghosts* echoes the familiar form of the mounted deer and fox, heads found in hunting lodges. It was my role to take these taxidermy foam manikins to a place where they appeared as phantasms, conversing and observing the world below. With human-like masks and a gentle interplay of placement and gesture, *Trophyghosts*, possessed both curiosity and pathos and marked a significant step forward in my practice.

CAROLYN V WATSON

... ..

**phantasm** illusion, not real, existing only on the imagination

**pathos** a quality that evokes sadness or pity; usually refers to the element in an experience or in an artistic work that makes us feel compassion or sympathy

... ..

The titles of Watson's artworks play a significant role in conveying a suggested feeling to the audience. They strategically align or challenge the vision of what appears on the surface, creating a dynamic interplay between the image and the title, resonating in the mind and memory of the viewers.

*It reflects enough that sometimes I dream* is an example of a specific way of working for Watson, which included a painting of an image/object with a cut-out section on one side of the panel, an approach which first appeared in her 2018 exhibition, *modifiedwonder* (Penny Contemporary, Hobart, Tasmania). It was a process that she had long toyed with, but never had the opportunity, nor the supportive environment to conduct such a series of experiments. It was through many detailed discussions with Andy Lowrie (see his website), a highly skilled jeweller formally from Meanjin/Brisbane now teaching at Montgomery College, MD, USA, who provided her with the confidence to extend herself into this new format of working.

The construction of the panel involved the formulation of a template that echoed the repeated shapes of the assemblage works that were to be shown with these paintings. Once determined, the negative space was removed and the panel sanded and prepared for painting. The key intent was to use the cut-out section to complement the image composition, not to make the cut out the focal point. The four cut-out panels that featured in the exhibition, *Cuttings from a homecoming* (Side Gallery, Brisbane, Queensland) in 2022 representing images that originated from photographs from Watson's garden were developed into a pared-back drawing of purely shape and line and then transferred onto the prepared panel. Unlike the open-ended construction time for the 32 assemblages that were also part of this show, she could not apply the same time and logic to the paintings; Watson set herself a two-day limit with each image to maintain a looseness and a level of abstraction within the small space and, most importantly, she was able to avoid overcomplicating the image. *Beautiful women standing around doing empty things*, 2021, is an example of Watson's puzzle paintings. These images can take up to three months to complete, and six were created for her exhibition *let's play pretend* in 2021.



**FIGURE 12.45** Carolyn V Watson, *It reflects enough that sometimes I dream*, 2022, cut-out panel painting, pastel primer, conte, graphite, archival fixative, archival matte varnish, 31.5 x 31.5 x 2 cm. Photo credit: Carl Warner. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 12.46** Carolyn V Watson, *beautiful women standing around doing empty things*, 2021, archival fixative, gouache, watercolour, graphite on birch panel, 52.5 x 42.5 cm. Photo credit: Carl Warner. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 12.47** Carolyn V Watson, *History of Energies (Youswallowedmeandsetmefree)*, 2022, porcelain doll hands, glass spheres, handmade epoxy clay components, 24kt gold leaf, flocking, 5 doilies, reclaimed timber, epoxy clay, (cow) rib bones, pelvis bone, 56 x 31 x 31 cm. Photo credit: Louis Lim. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 12.48** Carolyn V Watson, *Glory crowned (The tick in time when your heart tightened...)*, 2023, Epoxy clay, doily, glass spheres, pearl beads, gold beads, ball bearings, upholstery thread, quartz crystals, concave mirror, antler pieces, boar skull, 53 x 27 x 38 cm. Photo credit: Louis Lim. Image courtesy of the artist

Produced in 2023, *Glory crowned (The tick in time when your heart tightened...)*, continued a series of processes discovered and refined during the construction of *History of Energies (Youswallowedmeandsetmefree)*, 2022, the work that directly preceded *Glory crowned*.

The work also serves as the foundation for a two-year endeavour for Watson, yielding a substantial body of work of over 30 individual artworks. The sculpture was built upon the skull of a pig which had come to an unfortunate end, due to

a tumour having eaten into the bone, causing a lattice-like effect. A landscape was built onto the surface, with hundreds of small glass spheres and a multitude of handmade epoxy clay clusters. By directly attaching these elements and a crown of antlers, constructed with 27 separate antler tips and pieces and 18 quartz crystals, followed by a hand-dyed doily to create a stitched shroud, the objective was to alter the once recognisable natural form into an object of otherworldliness and wonder. The artwork speaks to a recognition of Watson's own mortality and how the body can fail. What fills her with joy each time she talks about the work relates to the process of making and how truly delicate and interconnected each action was. It became a precise form of meditation, a series of quiet, calm, small, calculated moments that led to the completion of this piece.

Watson's advice is to be self-reliant, resourceful and inquisitive. Allow time for process as well as play and look towards other artists for inspiration. Consider working on smaller scale multiples, rather than one large hero piece that may have in-built hurdles and limitations. In reflecting upon her own work, Watson learns from each work she makes, takes from every experience she has, from each artist she admires and looks to improve, adapt and evolve with every opportunity. Her method of making revolves around the use of repetition, making mistakes, adapting, building, layering. She is driven by the quest for ongoing improvement: how to be more efficient, more eloquent with her intentions, more ambitious with the scale of her work.

**MEANING**

**Visual language**

Compelling in the occupation of real space, Watson's sculpture communicates something conjured from primordial depths, an expression of the intangible. *Follow (act accordingly)* is the girl aged 7, 14, 21, 28, 32, 41, reflecting an inability to escape her own history and decisions, running to a standstill.

**Simian** in nature, there are only three feet, with the fourth leg anchored into place and a repetition of fungal growths attached and growing over the body. Watson's intention for the sculpture was to create a sense of rhythm, movement and forward momentum, even though the protagonist was trapped, secured to a base point. Marcel Duchamp's painting *Nude descending a staircase* (Figure 12.50) was another compositional reference for this work.

**Symbols**

The rabbit has been a recurring motif in Watson's practice, in both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works since 2008, as an evolved, altered and changed entity which stems from its original inception in the *Rabbitwemin*, a series of self-portrait images where the artist's head has been replaced with that of a rabbit's. Why the rabbit? It signifies rebirth or resurrection. The rabbit is also a symbol of fertility or sensuality. With Anglo origins, rabbits are an introduced species; they breed and

are hunted as a commodity. Extending from a personal context, a rabbit was also Watson's first toy, which is still in her possession. She also holds memories of watching the original 1978 film of *Watership Down*, which inspired her with the power and possibilities of animation.

**Media/techniques/processes/technologies**

Built on a seated rabbit taxidermy foam form, the sculpture has been developed with various layers of materials including sheep leather, a collection of hand-made epoxy clay shapes, doilies, porcelain and glass spheres, with the sculpture mounted on a piece of painted reclaimed timber.

**Display**

Three-dimensional, free-standing sculpture, supported with a base of reclaimed timber.

*Follow (act accordingly)* demonstrates the idea of constantly reassessing your position, your purpose, your worth. It's about growth; the organic, the visceral gut intuition versus the analytical, the calculated and detached evaluation at a clear distance. It references action consequence and arbitrary rules, the need to run to outwit a crumbling, constructed history; the voids and the space we fill; breathing backward.

CAROLYN V WATSON



**CONTEXTS**

Contemporary Personal  
Manipulates and changes the familiar  
Use of non-traditional materials  
Explores the artist's personal journey and memories

**INQUIRY QUESTIONS**

How has reclaiming/altering/acknowledging the origin of these selected works provided an alternate means of interpreting the materials implemented and how have these informed the resulting forms?  
**Focus** – renewal, *memento mori*, ceremony, celebration, honouring memory, nostalgia, mortality.

• • • • •  
**simian** of, relating to, or resembling monkeys or apes  
**memento mori** (Latin for 'remember that you must die'); it is an artistic metaphor which acts as a reminder that death is inevitable  
• • • • •

**FIGURE 12.49** Evaluation of Carolyn V Watson's work, *Follow (act accordingly)*, 2019, seated rabbit taxidermy foam form, steel rods, wire, epoxy clay, doilies, porcelain and glass spheres, reclaimed timber, sheep leather, crochet thread, size variable. Photo: Carl Warner. Image courtesy of the artist



**FIGURE 12.50** Marcel Duchamp, *Nude descending a staircase No.2*, 1912, oil on canvas, 89 x 146 cm

## Additional key artworks by Carolyn V Watson

*Just out of sight*, 2022

*Spotlight*, 2021

*From the wood*, 2018

*Background (self-portrait)*, 2017

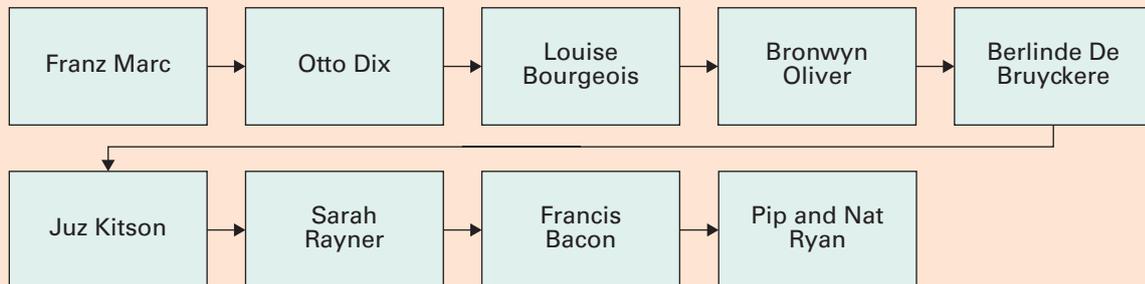
*Born of beauty and fear (colony)*, 2015

*There are known knowns*, 2014

*Bluevelvet (states of grace) x 9*, 2013

## REVERSE CHRONOLOGY

### Connections to other artists/Artists of influence



## Student work



**FIGURE 12.51** Angel Butten, *Coiled Keratin*, 2021, foam core, acrylic paint, aluminium wire, condensed wood chips, PVA glue, hand-stitched and machine-sewn stockings, masking tape, cardboard, 50 x 60 cm

### *Artist's Statement*

Historically speaking, humans are prone to sacrifice, whether it be themselves or some offering to the supernatural. Many sacrifices come unintentionally and can range from selfish to selfless. At its core, sacrifice involves relinquishing control over something of value for the sake of alternate considerations that are predicted to create more benefit than the thing being sacrificed; these predictions are rarely accurate. My sculptural piece explores one of many forms alluding to the prevalence of senseless sacrifice being enacted upon

terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems as humanity continues to progressively bottleneck biodiversity without heeding the possible consequences. The empty sea-turtle shell in the centre envisions the victims of humanity's sacrifice, garbed in coils of stained rotting seaweed, drowned in waves that made its livelihood. The ambiguity of how the shell became empty insights contemplation of the many ways in which animals are silently sacrificed by humanity's detachment from the struggles of nature.

ANGEL BUTTEN

## Student work



**FIGURE 12.52** Ryan Kucsak, *Memento Mori – Remember that you will die*, 2022, folded Canson watercolour paper; on location at Nudgee Cemetery, size variable. Photo credit: Kurtis Leicht

### *Artist's Statement*

As the name suggests, *Memento Mori – Remember that you will die* displays the ever-progressing fatality of time, to provoke a sense of reality and urgency to the lives of its viewers, and incidentally, to its creator. This artwork is derived from a personal context of one's own fatality, the belief that time is running out and that we must achieve something meaningful before time catches up with us. It is reflective of the driving force that makes many of us human, and it is this force that the work

references. The material used in creating the skull is important, with our physical being as humans being derived of the recycled remains of past physical forms on earth; recycled material is important. Using cardstock made from ground and pressed paper, the skull itself is thus recycled through the process of the materials from which it has been constructed. For this reason, *Memento Mori* is just as much a real skull as the one inside the viewer's head.

RYAN KUCAK

## 12.6 Case study: Helen Pynor

**Concept:** Evolving alternate representations and meaning.

**Context:** Personal, Contemporary, Cultural

Helen Pynor engages the audience by using intriguing materials and a hybrid approach where science and art intersect. Her work is imbued with deep questions about materiality and draws on her knowledge as artist, scientist and collaborator. She has a particular interest in ambiguous zones such as the life/death boundary, the inter-personal nature of organ transplantation, and the relationship between prosthetics and living tissues. Using a range of mediums from installation to video, photography, sculpture and microscopy, her works are underscored by a life-

affirming sense of wonder and curiosity about life forms, and human and non-human bodies. Access the Interactive Textbook to explore Pynor's body of work in detail.

The *Hair works* sculptures play with the in-between status of hair, hovering between culture and nature, living and dead, beauty and repulsion.

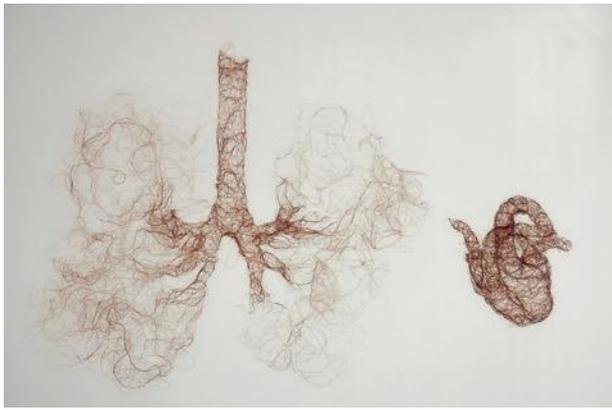
Pynor explains the process involved in developing the delicate 3-dimensional forms:

**“In my knitted hair sculptures, I knot single strands of hair end-to-end to make yarn, that I then knit into larger shapes using traditional knit stitch, to create a translucent fabric resembling a delicate filigree. I use paper patterns to guide the size of the knitted shapes, sewing knitted shapes together with hair thread. I find the process of making the works meditative, a state of flow descends as I respond to prompts offered by the hair threads. In knitting these strands together, history, memory and time are metaphorically entwined into a matrix. Up close, the sculptures reveal a surface of densely interconnecting threads, suggesting the minutiae and endurances of everyday living. Seen from a distance the works take on a ghostly quality, blurring the distinction between presence and absence, past and present, flesh and memory. I explore the imprint of personal and social memory on the physical body, the fragmentation and decay of memory over time, and the melancholy associated with a lost past.”**

HELEN PYNOR



**FIGURE 12.53** Helen Pynor, *Exhale*, 2005, knitted human hair, 197 x 130 x 70 cm. Photo credit: Paul Green. Image courtesy of the artist and Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney



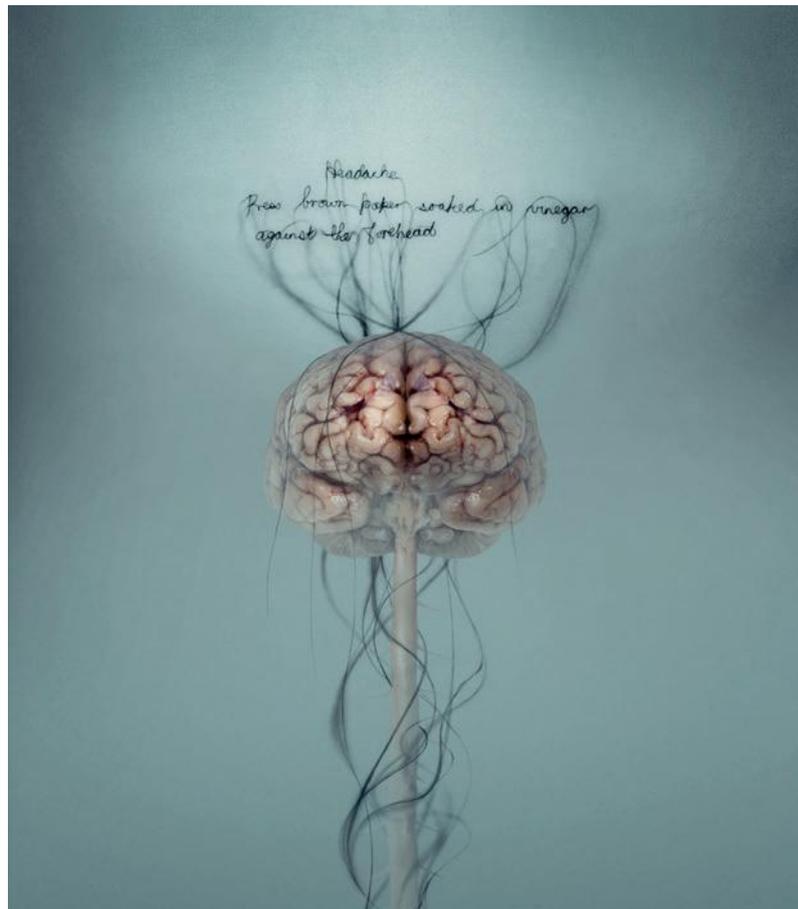
**FIGURE 12.54** Helen Pynor, *Untitled (heart lungs)*, 2007, knitted human hair, 25 x 40 x 15 cm. Photo credit: Danny Kildare. Image courtesy of the artist

The *red sea blue water* series is a collection of beautiful and striking photographs of embroidered home remedy recipes, with black threads drifting downwards through the watery milieu to entangle with internal organs of the body. The remedies are treatments for illnesses such as head colds, backache, ear ache, tooth abscess and headache, to name a few.

### Artist's Statement

The starting point for my *red sea blue water* works were traditional home remedy recipes, that I sourced from a social history archive in Sydney. I bring these recipes into dialogue with the physicality of the body's organs, creating a metaphoric conversation between the body's materiality and ideas about its healing. The series seeks to highlight the entanglement and mutual interplay of thought, cultural practices, and the physical body. In this conversation the cultural and biological perpetually make and re-make each other.

HELEN PYNOR



**FIGURE 12.55** Helen Pynor, *Headache* (detail), 2008, C-type photographic print on Duratran, face-mounted on glass, 173 x 39 cm, edition of 5 + 1AP. Image courtesy of the artist, GV Art gallery, London, and Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.7

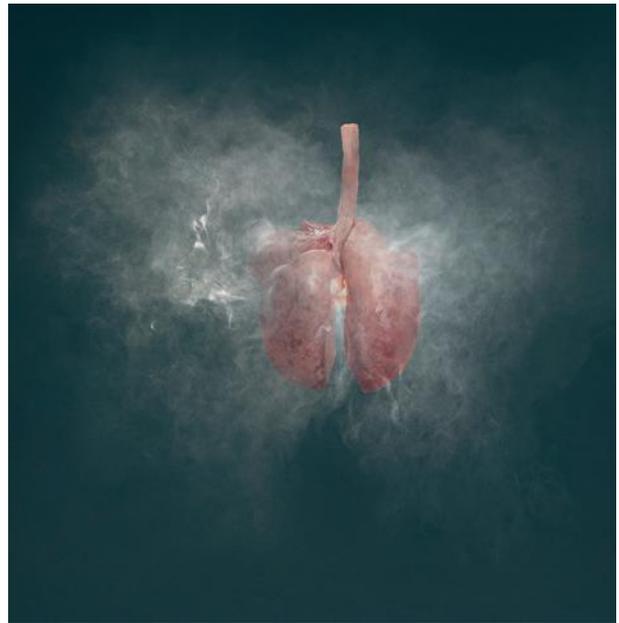
The work *Headache* became the iconic image for the exhibition *Brains: The Mind as Matter* at Wellcome Collection in London in 2012 and The Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester in 2013. There was some controversy about the use of the brain in the media.

Research more about why there was a concern about the origin of the brain that was used.

Look for other examples of contemporary artists using biological materials in their work.

Consider personal physical or medical experiences you have had, such as headache, toothache or injury and consider how artists raise awareness of these through visual language.

Experiment with organic materials and techniques such as knitting, crocheting, weaving or sewing to build and develop structures.



**FIGURE 12.56** Helen Pynor, *Breathwork*, 2021, archival pigment print, face-mounted on acrylic with shadow frame, 160 x 133 cm, edition of 5 + 1AP. Image courtesy of the artist

*Breathwork* (2021) uses photography to metaphorically capture the split second of a breath exhalation.

### Artist's Statement

*Breathwork* conveys the body's porosity to the world. The lungs as an open system, absorb the world into the interior of the body, and diffuses the body's interior back out into the world. *Breathwork* draws on research I undertook in the laboratory of geneticist and bioinformatician Dr Jimmy Breen at The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI). As humans exhale, we release a wide variety of organic molecules from the interior of our bodies, as small particles suspended in tiny droplets of water vapour.

These exhaled molecules include DNA molecules, both our own DNA and DNA from the microbes that inhabit our respiratory tracts. Our exhaled DNA is in turn inhaled by others. We regard DNA as central to our biological identity. The casual exchange of DNA molecules through breath exhalation and inhalation highlights our material continuity with human and non-human others.

HELEN PYNOR



**FIGURE 12.57** Helen Pynor, *Habitation*, 2021, unglazed bone china (made from the artist's bone removed during surgery, supplemented by animal bone), unglazed earthenware, felt, coral, metal, acrylic, archival pigment prints (drawn from the artist's own archive of CT and X-Ray scans), lightboxes, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Helen Pynor. Image courtesy of the artist

Prompted by Pynor's hip replacement surgery, undertaken as a result of a congenital hip abnormality, *Habitation* explores the breakdown of the animate-inanimate boundary we are currently witnessing, due to the widespread use of prosthetics.

The work borrows philosopher Monika Bakke's concept of 'lithic intimacies': life's diverse, intimate relationships of exchange and inter-species companionship with minerals.

Adjacent to the bone china works are lightbox images that reference the absent bone, and bodily change and transformation following surgery. The imagery is drawn from Pynor's archive of CT scans and X-rays, which trace her bone's dynamic adaptation to change over the course of her life.

### *Artist's Statement*

*Habitation* seeks to challenge perceptions of the body as a passive recipient of human-engineered implants. My ceramic and titanium hip implant is 'cementless', meaning no adhesives were used to attach the implant to my bone. Rather, the implant has a hydroxyapatite coating that stimulates my own bone cells to grow into the prosthetic coating.

The ongoing dynamic renewal of these cells holds my implant in place, now and into the future. I'm interested in the molecular and atomic exchanges that inevitably take place between living and prosthetic 'tissues' at this dynamic interface, and the way it enacts the breakdown of a clear separation of organic and inanimate material.

HELEN PYNOR

Navigating medical prohibitions, Pynor gained permission to retain the bone removed from her body during surgery, raising important questions about ownership and personal control over our own bodily materials, and what happens to them after surgical removal.

Pynor reflects:

**“It felt significant to hold this small piece of bone in my hands and acknowledge all the hard work it had done for me over the course of my life, under the difficult conditions of a bone abnormality. To honour the material, symbolic and spiritual potential embedded in my excised bone, I used my bone to make an unglazed, bone china replica of my surgically excised femur head, which sits alongside white, earthenware pelvis and femur bones, the bones that remain in my body. The bone forms were cast from 3D prints of my bones, made using 3D data exported from the CT scan I had prior to surgery.**

HELEN PYNOR

Bone china production entails an almost alchemical transformation of bone material into its mineral constituents. The bone is boiled, sun dried, and calcined in a ceramics kiln at 1000 degrees (the same temperature as cremation) to burn off the soft tissue, leaving only the mineral content of bone – calcium, iron and mineral trace elements. This bone is ground to a fine, white bone ash powder. Bone china clay contains up to 50% bone, and it is the calcium content of the bone that gives bone china its characteristic strength.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 12.8

- 1 Locate x-rays, scans or imagery associated with health diagnoses in your family archive. Rescan, use as a photograph, or explore methods such as cyanotype, photographic etching or sun prints to exploit the reference image.
- 2 Investigate charts and descriptive imagery to record and collate knowledge from biology, ecology and other branches of science to authenticate a chosen context.
- 3 Consider how art as code and art as knowledge might frame and contextualise sensory perceptions in response to stimulus.
- 4 Experiment with materials that assist in replicating bones; plaster bandage, clay or natural materials treated with shoe polish or wax.

**“In using my own bone material to make a bone china object, I bring two seemingly incongruent ideas into dialogue with each other: the ‘animality’ of bone china, and the ‘minerality’ of animals. This offers a metaphoric gesture that reveals underlying structures of material connectivity between living and mineral worlds, that are not immediately available to our sensory perception.**

HELEN PYNOR

### **Sensory**

The five senses we possess: hearing, vision, taste, smell, and touch. Sensory perception involves detecting, recognizing, characterising and responding to stimuli. There are five different kinds of stimulus, which can be categorised as mechanical, chemical, electrical, light and temperature.

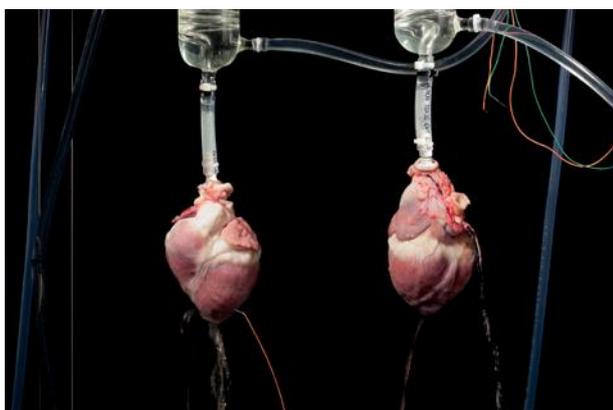
## *The Body is a Big Place – Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy*

*The Body is a Big Place* is a large-scale immersive installation exploring organ transplantation and the ambiguous thresholds between life and death. Developed by artists Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy, in collaboration with scientists, clinicians

and sound artist Gail Priest, the installation includes a multi-channel video projection, a fully functioning heart perfusion device used in live performances, soundscape and single channel video. The work's title refers to the capacity for parts of the body to traverse vast geographic, temporal and interpersonal distances during the process of organ transplantation.



**FIGURE 12.58** Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy, *The Body is a Big Place* (2011–2013), 3-channel video projection, heart perfusion device, live heart perfusion performance, single-channel video on monitor, soundscape by Gail Priest. Photo credit: Miha Fras. Image courtesy of the artists



**FIGURE 12.59** Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy, *The Body is a Big Place* (performance still), 2011–2013, 5-channel video projection, heart perfusion device, live heart perfusion performance, single-channel video on monitor, soundscape by Gail Priest. Photo credit: Geordie Cargill. Image courtesy of the artists



**FIGURE 12.60** Helen Pynor and Peta Clancy, *The Body is a Big Place* (video still), 2011–2013, 5-channel video projection, heart perfusion device, live heart perfusion performance, single-channel video on monitor, soundscape by Gail Priest. Photo credit: Chris Hamilton. Image courtesy of the artists

## Artist's Statement

*The Body is a Big Place* re-enacts certain defining aspects of the human heart transplant process. In live performances in the gallery space the heart perfusion device is used to re-animate fresh pig hearts to a beating state, revealing death to be an extended durational process, rather than an event that occurs in a single moment of time. Rather than sensationalising these performative

events, we sought to raise questions about the ambiguous status of the hearts themselves, and to encourage 'empathic' responses from viewers by appealing to their somatic senses and fostering identification with the hearts they are watching. This opens up the possibility of a deeper awareness of viewers' own interiors.

HELEN PYNOR AND PETA CLANCY

The performance makes apparent the heart's own 'mini' oscillator; a bundle of nerve cells called the sinus node, which can initiate the heart's muscular contractions independently of the central nervous system. This trait allows transplanted hearts to continue to beat for years without connection to the central nervous system, and the hearts in this performance to beat without external mechanical or electrical stimulation.

*The Body is a Big Place* was underscored by risk and uncertainty, mirroring the uncertainties lying at the heart of organ transplantation. Collaborative research within and between the media arts and life sciences by artists, scientists and clinicians was central to the work's development.

“The work's realisation depended on engagement with an organ transplant community in Melbourne who were performers in the work's underwater video sequences. These were individuals who had received, donated, or stood closely by loved ones as they received or posthumously donated human organs. The performance generates a series of metaphors that go some way towards articulating the complexity of human relations within organ transplantation, where the intimate sharing of a vital organ and the resulting bodily hybridity take place within institutional rules that prevent organ recipients and the family members of donors from meeting or knowing each other's identity.

HELEN PYNOR AND PETA CLANCY

## ***Habitation***

2021

Unglazed bone china (made from the artist's bone removed during surgery, supplemented by animal bone), unglazed earthenware, felt, coral, metal, acrylic, archival pigment prints, lightboxes

Dimensions variable

Photo: Helen Pynor

***Habitation***, a 2020 Experimenta Commission, for  
**Experimenta Life Forms International Triennial of Media Art (2021–2024)**

**Capacity** was supported by City of Joondalup, Western Australia

### **This project was supported by**

The Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts,  
its arts funding and advisory body

Sydney College of the Arts, The University of Sydney

Corin Group

### ***Habitation (Capacity)***

**CT Scan Data, 2D Output** Zoe Hart, Corin Group

**CT Scan Data Postproduction** Sam Sobey

**Digital Image Postproduction** Richard Luxton

**Graphic Design** Fiona Hudson Otis Design

**Print and Digital Postproduction** High Res Digital

**Framing** Graphic Art Mount

**Photographer's Model** Brett Adrien

**Photographer's Assistant** Tim Simon

### ***Habitation (Load Bearing)***

**Bone China Ceramics Consultant** Jan Guy

**Medical Legal Research and Post-Surgery Bone Collection** Jaden J.A. Hastings

**Bone China Ceramics Assistants** Allyson Adeney, Bea Maddock

**CT Scan Data, 3D Output** Zoe Hart, Corin Group

**3D Digital Modelling and CNC Routing** Andrew Southwood-Jones, Kink Fabrication

**Pelvis Bone Mould** Claire Tennant, Claire Tennant Workshop

**Display Cabinet Design** Anna Tregloan

**Jeweller** Erin Pearce, Mill Foundry

**Display Cabinet Fabrication** Thomas Creative

### **Grateful thanks to**

Dr Michael O'Sullivan, Zoe Hart, Jan Guy, Bec Dean, Canbora Bayraktar

**FIGURE 12.61** The detailed list of credits for Pynor's work *Habitation*

## Collaboration

To create multi-layered works, Pynor collaborates extensively with scientists, clinicians, sound artists, performance-makers and members of the broader community whose embodied experiences connect with the themes of her work. Her work is informed by in-depth residencies in scientific and clinical institutions; for example, The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute, Adelaide; The Francis Crick Institute, London; The Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics, Dresden; The Heart and Lung Transplant Unit, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney; and SymbioticA, The University of Western Australia, Perth. In addition, Pynor undertakes residencies in cultural institutions and organisations such as Bundanon, NSW; The Australia Council for the Arts London Studio; Performance Space, Sydney; and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris.

The detailed list of credits for Pynor's work *Habitation* offer insight into how contemporary artists draw on a diverse range of disciplines and collaborators, who contribute specialist skills and knowledge to support the realisation of complex works, which can speak authentically and authoritatively on the artist's chosen subject.

## Additional key artworks by Helen Pynor

*93% Human*, 2023

*Development of the Visual Circuit of Drosophila melanogaster in 3 Acts: Larva; Pupa I; Pupa II*, 2018

*Fallen*, 2017

*The End is a Distant Memory*, 2016

*Slit series*, 2016

*The Accidental Primate*, 2014

*The Life Raft*, 2012

*Liquid Ground*, 2010

*Milk*, 2008

### INQUIRY LEARNING 12.9

- 1 Make a list of the skill sets involved in creating a contemporary installation.
- 2 Discuss – When is it appropriate to collaborate with others to develop an artwork?
- 3 Explore how sound can suggest the rhythm of a heartbeat, be recorded and used to animate an image.
- 4 Visit the fishmonger or butcher to source organic material that can be photographed or used to explore alternate ideas about tissue and material as we understand it
- 5 Explore food and disrupt its context to challenge the viewers' expectations or familiarity with the subject matter.

CONTEXTS	MEANING
<p><b>Contemporary</b> STEM and STEAM are models where science and art collaborate and make connections using alternate approaches that engage and inform the audience.</p> <p><b>Personal</b> The personal context facilitates the work through Pynor's use of her own bone material. This negates some of the ethical issues associated with the use of alternate materials.</p> <p><b>Cultural</b> The intersection between creative problem-solving, research, knowledge and collaboration becomes a cultural construct when developing the work.</p>	<p><b>Symbols</b> X-rays, bone forms, clinical environment</p> <p><b>Materials</b> Unglazed bone china (made from the artist's bone, animal bone), unglazed earthenware, felt, coral, metal, acrylic clay, lightbox images</p> <p>With the assistance of technology, artists can communicate information about the body, giving visual form to the felt but otherwise unseen systems. The internal is revealed through technological advances.</p> <p>How do we culturally and psychologically deal with this information?</p>
<p><b>CONNECTIONS</b></p> <p>to other artists</p> <p><b>Collaboration</b> note extensive list of scientists, clinicians, sound artists, performance makers, and members of the broader community to create performance work in an installation format.</p>	<p><b>INQUIRY QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>How are animate-inanimate boundaries collapsing due to the widespread use of medical prosthetics?</p> <p>How might artists explore philosophically and experientially ambiguous zones such as the life-death boundary?</p> <p>How does experimentation and engagement with living biological entities raise awareness of internal and external functions of the body?</p>



**FIGURE 12.62** Evaluation of Helen Pynor's work, *Habitation*, 2021, unglazed bone china (made from the artist's bone removed during surgery, supplemented by animal bone), unglazed earthenware, felt, coral, metal, acrylic, archival pigment prints (drawn from the artist's own archive of CT and X-Ray scans), lightboxes, dimensions variable. Photo credit: Helen Pynor. Image courtesy of the artist

## 12.7 Case study: Hiromi Tango

This interactive case study can be accessed online in the Interactive Textbook.

## 12.8 Case study: Michael Candy

This interactive Case Study can be accessed online in the Interactive Textbook.

# Chapter summary

- In this chapter, the practices of Zoe Porter, Sarah Sculley, Robert Andrew, Lincoln Austin, Carolyn V Watson, Helen Pynor, Hiromi Tango and Michael Candy are investigated through case studies.
- Each of these artists explores their chosen focus and ideas by developing alternate meaning and approaches. This allows them to continue investigating and extending the focus through different viewpoints and media.
- In this chapter, the case studies reveal the ways in which the audience can be considered by artists as a vital component in making meaning.

## Review questions

- 1 Compare ways that audiences can be engaged in the contemporary artworks in the case studies in this chapter.
- 2 Examine Table 11.1 from Chapter 11 and identify the alternate approaches taken by these eight case study artists.
- 3 Choose an artwork by two artists in this chapter. Compare the impact of contemporary context on the visual language, expression and meaning in the artworks. Refer to the context guiding questions in Chapter 1.
- 4 Select the artist that most closely aligns with your own inquiry or in whose work you are most interested. Answer the Inquiry Learning Model questions to summarise the artist's practice.
  - a How does the artist generate solutions to visual problems?
  - b How does the artist react to stimulus?
  - c How does the artist consider ideas and information, media, techniques and processes?
  - d How does the artist communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?



# GLOSSARY

**2-dimensional** artworks, such as paintings and drawings, that exist on a flat surface

**3-dimensional** art forms, such as sculpture, which have depth

**abstract (non-figurative)** art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours and textures

**Abstract Expressionism** a style of art, music, or writing, which began in the 1900s, that tries to express feelings and emotions rather than trying to accurately represent how things appear

**acronym** a prompt for remembering information that uses the first letters of words, and is pronounced as a word. For instance, FOMO – fear of missing out; ROY G. BIV – the colours of the rainbow

**aesthetic** considerations within the visual arts usually associated with the sense of vision; an art image or object is perceived spatially by recognised associations with form and context; the form of the work can be subject to an aesthetic as much as the content

**aesthetic qualities** the components and characteristics that all combine to influence the mood, feeling or meaning for the viewer

**affective** connected with the emotions

**agency** a course of action or intervention to produce a desired effect

**analogue** opposite of digital; technology that doesn't break everything down into binary code (for example vinyl records or clocks with hands and faces)

**anthologia** a collection of artistic works that have a similar form or subject. *Anthos* is the Greek word for flower, while *logia* is a Greek word for collecting. It can be roughly translated as 'flower gathering'

**anthropocentric** a viewpoint that human beings are more important than any other entity

**anthropomorphism** the attribution of human characteristics, behaviour, emotions or intentions to non-human entities, including animals

**aposematism** a biological camouflage, found usually on toxic animals, where high-contrast colours like yellow and black combined with

repeat patterns function as a siren to warn off predators and let them know they are poisonous

**appraise** evaluate the worth, significance or status of something; judge or consider a text or piece

**appropriation** the incorporation of a borrowed idea or image that is reconceptualised to give new meaning

**archetypal** classic representation of universally recognised themes or patterns that recur in forms of human expression across different cultures and periods of time

**armature** the open framework onto which a sculpture is moulded

**art appreciation** the process of judging the success of an artist's use of visual language to communicate an intended meaning

**art conventions** established procedures used by artists to represent or organise ideas, convey meaning and create aesthetic value; for example, one-point and two-point perspective

**art criticism** the activity of writing and talking about art to express a viewpoint

**art media areas** overviews of knowledge, skills, techniques and processes; each area should not be viewed as distinct or limited to preconceived understandings of the visual art discipline; media areas are not separate and multi/cross-media presentations are encouraged

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines such as computer systems to perform tasks which are characteristic of humans

**artist's book** a work of art in book form which focuses on media and techniques

**assemblage** a work of art that is made of different things put together

**assimilation** the process whereby individuals or groups of differing ethnic heritage are immersed into the dominant culture of a society

**asterism** a pattern or group of stars which is smaller than a constellation

**atemporality** timelessness; unaffected by or independent of time

**atlas** a book containing maps showing where particular things are made, found, etc.

**Atua** deities of the Polynesian peoples; *Atua* is a Polynesian word which translates to 'power' or 'strength'

**audience engagement** experience of an artwork by deliberately drawing the attention of the audience in a sensory, emotional or meaningful way; artists may consider the potential engagement or reactions of the audience when developing ideas or artforms

**Augmented Reality (AR)** an enhanced, interactive version of a real-world environment achieved through digital visual elements, sounds and other sensory stimuli via holographic technology

**authentic experience** engagement with actual and original art forms through participation in a live experience; for example, a site visit to a museum or gallery; working with an artist as mentor, collaborator or artist in residence

**autographic** produced entirely by a specified artist

**azimuth** an angular measurement that exists in a spherical co-ordinate system representing a horizontal angle from a cardinal direction that is most commonly north

**biodiversity** the variety of plant and animal life

**black bloc** a movement where protesters dress tactically in black and wear face-concealing items with the aim to obscure their identities, making it challenging for authorities to differentiate individuals and prosecute them. The attire also serves to shield their faces from pepper spray commonly used in protests or civil unrest.

**blackbirding** the 19th and early 20th century practice of enslaving (often by force and deception) South Pacific islanders on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland, Australia (as well as those of the Fiji and Samoan islands)

**brushless robotic servo motors** have permanent magnets which rotate and a fixed armature; robotic vehicles use servo motors to control their wheels, providing the necessary torque for movement, starting, stopping and speed control

**CAD model (computer-aided design)** through the use of computer-based software to aid in the design process, 2-dimensional drawings or 3-dimensional models are able to be generated

**canon** the general criterion or principle by which something is judged that involves a level of acceptance and recognition within a specific discipline

**capitalism** an economic system where private ownership controls the production of goods or services for profit

**cartesian plotting system** a mathematical system that describes the position of points in 2-dimensional space along an x axis and a y axis that intersect

**chiaroscuro** Italian for 'light-dark' using juxtaposition of darkest and lightest tones to emphasise a focal point. *Girl with a Pearl Earring* capitalises on chiaroscuro to create a dramatic portrait. The brightly lit face abuts the dark shape of negative space, creating maximum contrast.

**citation** an abbreviated note to identify a reference as the source of a quote or other information used within a text, usually the author's name and year of publication

**cognitive** connected with thinking or conscious mental processes

**collagraph** a method of printmaking that involves gluing or attaching a collection of textured materials to a base plate to build up the printing surface, which is then inked, rubbed back and printed through a printing press

**colonialism** where foreign power directly controls a territory

**colonise** to claim or take control of an area or a group of people as an extension of power

**community of practice** a group of people who share a common concern or interest who come together to fulfill a shared goal

**compare** display recognition of similarities and differences and recognise the significance of these similarities and differences

**composition** the arrangement of art elements using art principles to create an artwork. Refers to the way the elements and principles are combined to communicate ideas to a viewer

**connoisseur** a person who knows a lot about and enjoys one of the arts

**consider** to think deliberately or carefully about something, typically before making a decision; take something into account when making a judgement; view attentively or scrutinise; reflect on

**construct** create or put together (e.g. an argument) by arranging ideas or items; display information in a diagrammatic or logical form; make; build

**contemporaneousness** existing synchronously or occurring in the same period of time

**Contemporary art** the work of artists who are living and producing work in the 21st century

**contrast** show how things are different or opposite

**cornucopia** a container shaped like a goat's horn; an abundance

**creative** resulting from originality of thought or expression; relating to or involving the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something; having good imagination or original ideas

**critical literacy** the active analysis and interpretation of codes and conventions of aural, digital, kinaesthetic, oral, visual and written texts

**critical understanding** analysis, evaluation and questioning of your approaches

**critique** evaluate and analyse a wide variety of things, based on reasons or criteria

**cross-media** a collection of media across disciplines (also mixed media; multimedia)

**cultural appropriation** the inappropriate use of ideas or images belonging to one culture by individuals from another culture without showing respect for the historical, social or cultural context from which the elements originated

**culture** diverse knowledge, beliefs, values and perspectives that members of a group share and embody in their rituals, roles, relationships and customs

**curatorial decisions** decisions that impact the selection, exhibition and display of artworks to engage audiences and communicate meaning

**cybernetics** the study of communication and control in living organisms and machines

**Dada** a modernist art movement originating in Zurich in 1916. It was a reaction against the horror of World War I and its devastating impact. The Dadaists created bizarre and satirical performances and happenings at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and in other European cities

**dazzle camouflage** known also as razzle dazzle and dazzle painting, is a family of ship camouflage that was used extensively in World War I, with the

intention not to conceal but to make it difficult to estimate a target's range and speed

**decode** extract meaning from spoken, written or visual form

**deference** willing to consider a differing perspective

**Delftware** a generic name for tin-glazed earthenware that originated in Antwerp, Belgium as early as 1512

**design** produce a plan, simulation, model or similar; plan, form or conceive in the mind

**develop** elaborate, expand or enlarge in detail; add detail and fullness to; cause to become more complex or intricate

**dialogue** a conversation between two or more people

**dichotomies** the division or separation of two concepts, objects or categories which are depicted as two mutually exclusive and opposing parts

**display** involves presenting art images and objects through public exhibition or personal display; display is an important part of providing and responding to inherent meaning in an artwork and is an intrinsic process in art-making; display can be physically installed in a space or place, or it can be virtual or digital, particularly when used to demonstrate intended ideas that cannot be realised in a practical sense

**divergent** to move in a different or opposite direction; to be different

**doily** with origins in the 16th century, a London cloth merchant by the name of Doiley (also spelt Doyley), sold open lace-like textiles which were used as ornamental mats or napkins. The name (now spelt 'doily') has continued to be used for the small decorative mats, which are usually crocheted.

**durational performance** artworks in which the performance artist sustains or endures a physical or emotional state for a long time

**edition** a series of identical impressions made from the one printing surface or plate

**electro-mechanical technology** integration of electrical and mechanical systems; combines principles and skills from electrical engineering and mechanical engineering

**element** a component or constituent part of a complex whole; a fundamental, essential or irreducible part of a composite entity. Elements of design are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.

**embodiment** someone or something that is a tangible form of an idea, feeling or quality

**ephemera** materials which are designed to be short-lived rather than for longevity and are often not retained by the recipient

**ephemeral** lasting for only a short period of time

**evaluate** make an appraisal by weighing up or assessing strengths, implications and limitations; make judgments about ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to selected criteria; examine and determine the merit, value or significance of something, based on criteria

**evaluating** making judgments about the ideas and concepts in art forms in relation to purpose and context. In the external examination we appraise the significance of relevant similarities, differences and ideas of work

**expression** the creation of visual symbol systems through the making of marks or objects that communicate ideas

**extended response** an open-ended assessment technique that focuses on the interpretation, analysis, examination and/or evaluation of ideas and information in response to a particular situation or stimulus

**figurative** images or objects clearly derived from real object sources, representational and recognisable in origin

**fiscal reform** changes in the expenditure and revenue policies of a government

**Fluxus** somewhat founded on the ideas of Dada, but was a network of artists with an attitude of taking chances and trying new things, rather than a movement. They were against the commercialism of art and its elitist status. They used everyday materials and alternate venues to galleries. It was based in New York.

**genealogy** line of descent that is continuously traced through reference to ancestry

**geodesic** with Greek origins, 'geo' means earth, particularly with reference to the spherical shape; 'desic' means to measure

**geodiversity** the variety of rocks, soils, minerals, fossils and landforms that provide habitats for healthy ecosystems

**germicidal UV-C lamp** also known as a disinfection or steriliser lamp, is an electric lamp producing ultraviolet C light. The short-wave ultraviolet light leads to the inactivation of bacteria, viruses and protozoans

**golden ratio** is a mathematical system used for centuries in Western cultures. It can be expressed by a number equal to 1.618

**Gothic sublime** a sense of decline, decay and disintegration; the experience of both thrill and fear from something dark, uncertain or confused, combining revulsion with fascination

**gyroscopic** the tendency of a rotating object to maintain the orientation of its rotation

**hierarchical** arranged in order of rank

**homage** respect or special honour shown publicly to someone or something, as an acknowledgement of their influence or importance

**Hortus Conclusus painting** a genre of 15th-century European symbolic paintings depicting the Christian figure of the Virgin Mary in a closed garden

**hue** the most saturated version of a colour is referred to as hue. It is also interchangeable with the word colour.

**hypothesise** formulate a supposition to account for known facts or observed occurrences; conjecture, theorise, speculate; especially on uncertain or tentative grounds

**iconography** a particular system of types of imagery, symbols, themes and subject matter used by artists to communicate particular meanings. For example, in Christian iconography a lamb represents Jesus.

**implications** what may happen if you follow a particular approach, the effects or consequences on the future of your body of work, based on the choices you make as you move through your inquiry

**Industrial Revolution** an economic and social transition in late 18th- and 19th-century Britain, caused by rapid advances in industry

**inherent** existing in something as a permanent, essential or characteristic attribute

**inquiry learning** emphasises the process of investigation as well as the production of

an image or object; it moves away from the acquisition of facts to the development, research, reflection and resolution of ideas and new knowledge; also *art processes*

**instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG)** a tool for marking that describes the characteristics evident in student responses and aligns with the identified objectives for the assessment

**intaglio** a method of printing using a surface with lines cut into it

**intergenerational trauma** occurs when original traumatic experiences are transferred through generations

**intuitive** able to know or understand something because of feelings rather than facts or proof

**inverse or reversed perspective** the opposite of linear perspective; the vanishing point is positioned outside the compositional boundary, so instead of a pattern appearing to become smaller at a distance, this is reversed and the pattern or object is smaller the closer it is to the viewer

**investigation** an assessment technique that requires students to research a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or hypothesis through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary data

**isometric** stemming from the Greek term which means 'equal measure'; a technique known as parallel projection, where the same scale is used to draw along every axis of the design grid and the top and sides of the shape being drawn are all visible

**justify** give reasons or evidence to support an answer, response or conclusion; show or prove how an argument, statement or conclusion is right or reasonable

**justifying** providing reasons using evidence to support a response or conclusion about artistic processes, intentions and expression

**keffiyeh** symbolising a yearning for freedom, a *keffiyeh* is fashioned from a square cotton scarf and is a traditional headdress worn by males in the Middle East

**key** a simple explanation of the parts of a diagram or map

**kitsch** a German word which translates to 'worthless trashy art'; usually associated with mass-produced items and considered poor taste due to its garish nature and superficiality

**lenticular** reflecting two different perspectives, angles or images at the same which change depending on the position from which it is viewed

**limitations** the qualities of your work that reduce the communication of intended meaning or required outcomes

**literal meaning** is interpreted by features the viewer can see in the artwork

**lota** an ancient South Asian style of small, rounded vessel with a spout, traditionally used for serving liquids in both ceremonial and domestic settings

**lowbrow art** (also known as Pop-Surrealism) is a populist art movement which began in Los Angeles in the 1970s, with its cultural roots in punk music, underground culture, graffiti and street art, skate and surf culture and design, tattoo art, comic book design, poster art, digital art and kitsch

**making** learning about and using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies to explore arts practices and make artworks that communicate ideas and intentions (Australian Curriculum, 2024); making is working in the art form as artist

**mandala** a circular configuration of symbols, often used in Hinduism and Buddhism where they are considered sacred representations of the cosmos

**manifesto** a published document that gives voice to a new way of thinking and the ideology that supports it

**manifold cloak** a cape that is aimed at protecting the body through keeping it dry and safe (reflective in the dark)

**MAS-archive** (referencing *en masse*, in a group together) is the name Wyman has given to her extensive and growing collection of images of masked protesters and documentation of fires and protest movements online. The archive was started in 2008 and is housed in Los Angeles on hard drives. From the archive, Wyman selects a range of photographs which she resizes and reshapes and after removing the backgrounds, she arranges the remaining fragments into colourful collaged compositions

**materials** physical resources, equipment and information

**meaning** in the arts, this refers to what an artist expresses in an artwork; or what a viewer understands and interprets from an artwork

**memento mori** (Latin for 'remember that you must die'); it is an artistic metaphor which acts as a reminder that death is inevitable

**metaphor** expresses the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar

**metonymy** substitution of a name by an image or word that represents the thing (e.g. 'the Crown' instead of 'the king')

**Minimalism** a form of abstract art, characterised by simplistic, geometric shapes and hard edges. It gained prominence in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, drawing influences from Constructivism, De Stijl and the notion of Duchamp's 'readymades', rejecting narratives associated with the fluidity and free-form nature of Abstract Expressionism

**mnemonic** prompt for helping you remember information. For instance, *Richard of York gave battle in vain* is a mnemonic in which the first letters of each word represent a colour of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet

**Moana Nui** Polynesian name for the Pacific Ocean

**Modern art** the work of artists from the modernist period

**Modernism/modernist period** a global movement in society and culture that for most of the 20th century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life. (Modernism is a proper noun so it begins with a capital letter; modernist is an adjective so it doesn't require a capital letter.)

**multimedia** refers predominantly to computer-based artworks that may incorporate and combine images, sounds, videos and interactive components

**neo-colonialism** the continuation of economic or political dominance or influence which perpetuates inequality and undermines the progression of less developed countries or societies

**Ni-Vanuatu** the indigenous people of Vanuatu

**non-autonomous** dependent, lacking the power to make your own decisions

**Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)** unique cryptographic tokens that exist on a blockchain and cannot be replicated. They can represent digital or real-world items such as artworks.

**non-literal meaning** is interpreted by drawing on the viewer's understanding of symbols and metaphors and by making wider inferences about the artwork in connection to society

**observation** in art, to draw or otherwise depict something as accurately as possible

**oeuvre** the complete works of a writer, painter or other artist

**Op Art (or optical art)** a style of non-objective abstract art that exploits the process of visual perception, using purely geometric form, line and patterns in black and white or contrasting colours to create rhythmic or pulsating optical illusions. With Dada and the Bauhaus as historical predecessors, the movement came into prominence in the 1960s

**pantheistic** in alignment with the belief that God and the universe are one and the same, thus the universe is the ultimate focus of *reverence*, and the natural earth is sacred

**parody** a humorous imitation designed to ridicule

**Patan community** Patan is one of the largest cities in Nepal, located across the Bagmati River from Kathmandu

**pathos** a quality that evokes sadness or pity; usually refers to the element in an experience or in an artistic work that makes us feel compassion or sympathy

**perception** one's understanding of a situation, person or object; it relates to what is interpreted

**performative** relating to artistic or dramatic performance

**personal aesthetic** where the artist develops a particular style or expression that is individual and inventive; students take ownership of their own approaches and style even if these approaches or styles have been appropriated from or have seeds in other artists' work

**phantasm** illusion, not real, existing only on the imagination

**phenomena** a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen

**phenomenological** an approach or enquiry based on lived experiences of a particular phenomenon or construct

**pivotal** of crucial importance

**planning time** time allocated in an assessment to planning how to respond to items and tasks and associated assessment materials; students may make notes (in the stimulus book and on the planning paper) but may not commence responding to the assessment in the response space/book; notes made during planning are not collected, nor are they graded or used as evidence of achievement. Planning paper is provided.

**porcelain** a hard but delicate, shiny, white substance, created by heating a special type of clay to a high temperature, used to make cups, plates, decorations, etc

**Postmodernism** a reaction against the ideas and values of Modernism

**precedents** guiding examples

**primary sources** direct, original evidence, such as artworks and objects, artefacts, experiments, collected materials or observations of experience through moving image and visual forms

**principle** principles of design describe the ways that artists use the elements of design

**processes** a systematic series of actions directed to the production of an artwork

**protagonist** the leading or major character in a story or event

**psychogeography** the influence or effect of a geographical environment on a person's emotions and behaviour. Artists often take this approach when they interact with a city or a specific site and its history. The term was first used by French philosopher Guy Debord in 1955.

**recombinant** produced by combining genetic material from different places

**recontextualise** to change from original format into a new context for creative purposes

**reflect (on)** think about deeply and carefully; considering ideas and information

**research** study or investigative practices to locate and use information beyond your own knowledge and the data you have been given

**resolve** in the arts, consolidate and communicate intent through a synthesis of ideas and application of media to express meaning

**responding** exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting artworks (Australian Curriculum, 2024); responding is working about the art form as audience

**reverence** deep respect for someone or something

**reverse chronology** a cause-and-effect pathway to understanding influences on artists, styles and approaches

**scape** a view or picture of a scene, usually used as a suffix to describe the setting

**secondary sources** another author or creator's response to primary sources; discussion, description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation found in sources such as books, articles, journals, reviews; representations of someone else's ideas

**secular concepts** non-religious ideas such as medicine, science and politics

**self-reflexivity** process of reflecting on one's own actions or processes

**semiotics** an investigation of how meaning is created and communicated

**sentient** able to feel emotions and sensory experiences, such as pain

**series** a number of similar or related events or things, one following another

**shelter-half** a partial tent used by the military, designed for concealment and temporary shelter; when one or more sections are combined, they can serve as a poncho, tent, floatation device, stretcher or a sling and have many additional uses

**shinrin yoku** (*shin* meaning 'forest', and *yoku* meaning 'bath' in Japanese) is a long-held tradition of immersing oneself in nature

**simian** of, relating to, or resembling monkeys or apes

**simultaneity** a state of more than one thing occurring at the same time

**sovereignty** the authority of a state or a country to govern itself

**status quo** existing state of affairs, especially of a political, social or economic nature

**still life** one of the principal genres (subject types) of Western art – essentially, the subject matter of a still-life painting or sculpture is anything that does not move or is dead

**strengths** the positive qualities of your work that clearly and *strongly* communicate intentions or required outcomes

**subjectivity** the quality of being based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions

**subterfuge** act of deception in order to achieve one's goal

**subversion** undermining the power and authority of a government or political system or established institution

**symbol** something that stands for something else or represents an idea; may be in the form of visual forms, gestures, words or sounds

**symbol systems** personal, cultural or global language that communicates when read and interpreted by the viewer; artists communicate through combinations of art form conventions and symbol systems

**symbolic** representing or identified by a symbol or symbols

**synthesis** the combination of different parts or elements (e.g. information, ideas, components) into a whole, in order to create new understanding

**talismanic** representative of a particular group

**tarlatan** a thin open weave cotton fabric stiffened with starch, used in printmaking to wipe excess ink from the surface of an etching or collagraph plate

**techniques** procedures or skills used in a task

**technologies** digital platforms, programs, apps, software, hardware and so on, used in the creation of web-based, video, moving image, sound or other digital artworks

**terra sigillata** roughly translates as 'sealed earth', or 'clay bearing little images' (Latin *sigilla*). It also has archaeological connotations

**tessellation** (of shapes) to fit together in a pattern with no spaces in between

**thesis** the main viewpoint you want to communicate through the essay. It must relate to the question and both artworks. You are required to have a viewpoint for both artworks.

**time-based** artworks that use time as a dimension; measured in duration, e.g. film, video, animation, sound, computer-based technologies and some performance works

**tonal gradation** a gradual lightening or darkening

**triptych** (pronounced trip-tick) usually three closely related panels or images of the same size

**Umwelt** the environmental factors, collectively, that are capable of affecting the behaviour of an animal or individual

**vellum** a medieval surface made from animal skins, for writing and painting on

**Venn diagram** a type of diagram that uses overlapping circles to illustrate relationships between specific things

**vernacular** the everyday language or native dialect spoken by the local people of a particular region

**viewpoint** perspectives, contexts or positions through which artworks and ideas can be explored and interpreted

**visual language** constructed using art elements that are organised through design principles; together these create meaning that can be decoded and interpreted by an audience

**visual literacy** the ability to look closely at visual texts, observing and describing visual elements to analyse and interpret form, symbols, ideas and meaning. It is also the ability to use materials, elements and symbols to create visual texts.

**visual resistance** use of visual media as a form of activism or protest

**voyeuristic** the watching of others in violation of privacy

**wabi-sabi** Japanese aesthetic that values simplicity, incompleteness, imperfection, impermanence, irregularity and nature

**yarning** a casual, non-structured conversational process which helps build relationships in a safe space and is a means to share knowledge or pass on stories or information

**zeitgeist** the general, moral or cultural disposition or climate specific to a particular era

**Zeltbahn** multi-buttoned triangular pieces of fabric, also known as a *shelter-half* when translated from German

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**FIGURE 1.1** Yayoi Kusama, *Dots Obsession: Infinity Mirrored Room*, exhibited on 7 June 2008, at the contemporary art centre 'Le Spot' in Le Havre, western France.

To inquire creatively and successfully within the parameters of the Visual Art General Senior Syllabus your actions and thinking will be guided by a framework that consists of:

- an inquiry learning model to refer to as you develop and resolve ideas
- an understanding that making and responding to art are integrated activities, and that all internal assessment instruments include this interconnection
- knowledge of the four contexts: personal, contemporary, cultural and formal, and how they are used in the construction of meaning as both artist and audience
- using a reverse chronology approach to historical influences and precedence when investigating concepts, focuses, contemporary artists and media areas
- drawing on 21st-century art practices that include diversity of viewpoints, approaches and ways to construct meaning
- investigation of a range of materials, techniques, skills and processes, including, digital, cross-media and multimedia.

# 1.1 Inquiry learning

**Inquiry learning** in Visual Art centres around four very important processes: **developing**, **researching**, **reflecting** and **resolving**. Each of these processes has a function in how you think and learn as an artist and an audience. The inquiry learning processes structure what you learn and the evidence of your learning; that is, your assessment. The diagram in Figure 1.2 shows the relationship between the four inquiry learning processes. These four processes are interrelated and equally important for solving visual problems. They can occur in any order and can be continually revisited as you make and respond. You will also see that each inquiry process has a specific inquiry guiding question and has been assigned two Visual Art objectives.

It is important to know what each process requires you to do and how you can demonstrate

each process as you make and respond. Instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs) for assessment are structured into criteria using the inquiry learning processes and describe how your work should demonstrate each process.

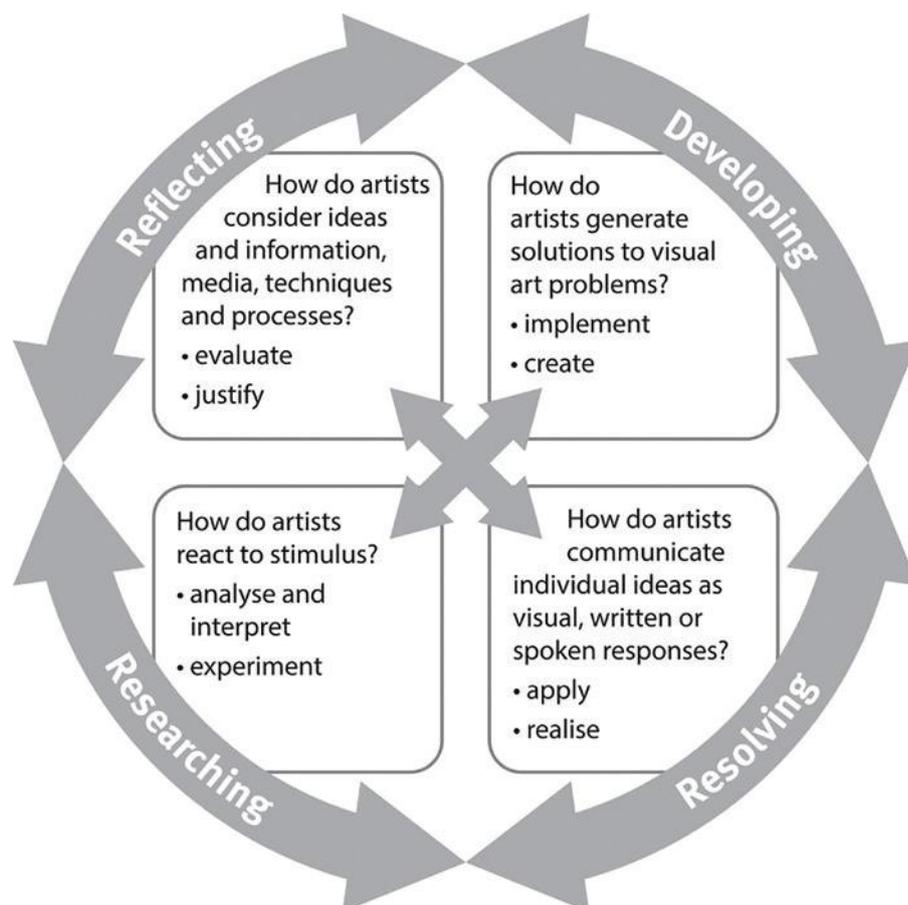
**inquiry learning** emphasises the process of investigation as well as the production of an image or object; it moves away from the acquisition of facts to the development, research, reflection and resolution of ideas and new knowledge; also art processes

**develop** elaborate, expand or enlarge in detail; add detail and fullness to; cause to become more complex or intricate

**research** study or investigative practices to locate and use information beyond your own knowledge and the data you have been given

**reflect (on)** think about deeply and carefully; considering ideas and information

**resolve** in the arts, consolidate and communicate intent through a synthesis of ideas and application of media to express meaning



**FIGURE 1.2** Inquiry learning in Visual Art

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## 1.2 Making and responding in Visual Art

Making and responding are interconnected processes in Visual Art.

In each of your internal assessment instruments you will be assessed on both **making** and **responding**. Valuing the interrelationship between making and responding is critical to your success in the subject.

Making artwork is your opportunity to learn about art practices by working as an artist. Making uses knowledge and application of skills associated with art processes, materials and technologies. It also involves your intention to communicate a meaning to an audience using visual language and expression.

Responding involves analysing the language of art, interpreting its meaning and expressing your **viewpoints**. As audience members we respond to artworks. We learn how to engage or make an

impact on audiences by being audience members ourselves.

As you respond to artists' works and your own artwork, you will be informed by the knowledge and experiences you gain as both artist and audience member.

**making** learning about and using knowledge, skills, techniques, processes, materials and technologies to explore arts practices and make artworks that communicate ideas and intentions; making is working in the art form as artist

**responding** exploring, responding to, analysing and interpreting artworks; responding is working about the art form as audience

**viewpoint** perspectives, contexts or positions through which artworks and ideas can be explored and interpreted

## 1.3 Contexts in Visual Art

Contexts are frames of reference that inform concepts and focuses, allowing visual communication and meaning to evolve.

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The contexts in Queensland's Visual Art General Senior Syllabus are:

- contemporary
- personal
- cultural
- formal.

The contexts assist artists and audiences to organise the information in artworks and to communicate and understand meaning. The contexts are embedded in the inquiry learning processes as well as the unit and assessment objectives. Think of them as the starting point whenever you make or respond.

As you make and respond, you will use one or more appropriate contexts to understand and appreciate how artists and audiences are inspired and informed by a range of influences.

The most engaging artworks often have layers of meaning that can be derived from different influences and sources. These could be personal values and experiences, contemporary ways of thinking about the past, expressions of **culture**, use of **visual language**, particular art styles, materials, techniques, processes and practices. Understanding and expressing **aesthetic** information can be overwhelming. By using contexts as frames of reference, you can make sense of art.

**culture** diverse knowledge, beliefs, values and perspectives that members of a group share and embody in their rituals, roles, relationships and customs

**visual language** constructed using art elements that are organised through design principles; together these create meaning that can be decoded and interpreted by an audience

**aesthetic** considerations within the visual arts usually associated with the sense of vision; an art image or object is perceived spatially by recognised associations with form and context; the form of the work can be subject to an aesthetic as much as the content

## Contemporary context

The contemporary context informs the analysis and interpretation of past and present artwork through a lens of 21st-century art ideas and issues, and how these challenge engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, you can test boundaries of traditional art practices; you can reconceptualise, modify and explore **appropriation** of artworks and images, and investigate the impact and place of new technologies on art practices and experiences
- responding, you examine new or different meaning and significance that may be assigned to artworks of the past; you question and re-evaluate traditionally held values and assumptions of art and representation.

## Personal context

The personal context informs the analysis and interpretation of emotions, sensory experiences, personal philosophy, beliefs and ideas that are reflected in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, you investigate your responses to the world around you; your personal interests, experiences and philosophies; and the impact these have on symbolism and practices
- responding, you examine how artists are influenced by life and experiences, and consider how your own feelings and backgrounds influence their physical and emotional reactions as audience.

## Cultural context

The cultural context informs the analysis and interpretation of the social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender and spiritual and secular

beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, you explore cultural values, historical or current events, social pressures and attitudes that impact on you and others, and determine the origins of social meaning communicated in artwork
- responding, you **consider** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives; regional, national, international, social and cultural identity of artists and audiences; and how artists use their work as a vehicle to invite change and provoke conversation.

## Formal context

The formal context informs the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art **elements** and **principles**, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- making, you focus on the formal organisation and placement of visual components, experimenting with codes, symbols and art conventions, and the communicative value of art materials, techniques and processes

• • • • • • • • • •

**appropriation** the incorporation of a borrowed idea or image that is reconceptualised to give new meaning

**consider** to think deliberately or carefully about something, typically before making a decision; take something into account when making a judgement; view attentively or scrutinise; reflect on

**element** a component or constituent part of a complex whole; a fundamental, essential or irreducible part of a composite entity. Elements of design are the building blocks used by artists to create a work of art.

**principle** principles of design describe the ways that artists use the elements of design

• • • • • • • • • •

- responding, you **decode** artworks by reading the relationships between specific visual language, signs, symbols, codes and conventions that are used to transmit information and ideas in artworks.

.. .. .

**decode** extract meaning from spoken, written or visual form

.. .. .

Indigenous art forms are recognised for their visual culture, traditions, skill, technique, symbolic purposes and response to lived experiences. All four contexts are relevant when engaging with artwork by Aboriginal artists and Torres Strait Islander artists. Through the contemporary context, you can consider how artists extend traditional art practices and challenge artworks and ideas of the past. Through the personal context, you can consider the unique experiences of individual artists and personal connections to communities, Country and place. Through the cultural context, you can consider the communication of the cultural uniqueness of

the communities and narratives of Aboriginal artists and Torres Strait Islander artists. Through the formal context, you can consider the visual elements that artists use to communicate meaning, the stylistic qualities of individual artists and the manipulation of materials, techniques and art processes.

All students in Visual Art engage with Aboriginal artworks and Torres Strait Islander artworks as recognition of the world's oldest continuous living culture and to understand the significant contribution of Australia's First Peoples to visual art, through both contemporary and historical traditions and practices.

### Context guiding questions

Each context is used to understand artworks and art practices from different viewpoints. It is possible to apply one or more contexts in making and responding to art. The series of guiding questions listed in Table 1.1 will help you to apply each context.

**TABLE 1.1** CONTEXT GUIDING QUESTIONS

Contemporary context guiding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st-century ideas and issues?</li> <li>• How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact on the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?</li> <li>• How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</li> <li>• How do artists communicate or provoke ideas about current issues and concerns and challenge established philosophies?</li> </ul>
Personal context guiding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</li> <li>• How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</li> <li>• How does an artist use symbols, metaphors and expression to communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</li> </ul>
Cultural context guiding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?</li> <li>• How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</li> <li>• How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?</li> <li>• How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</li> </ul>
Formal context guiding questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?</li> <li>• How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?</li> <li>• How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?</li> </ul>

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Gerhard Richter (German, born 1932) is among the most successful and influential living artists, redefining painting in an 'entertainment'-obsessed society. Richter has both embraced and rejected artistic traditions. His **oeuvre** includes works that are figurative (derived from real sources and therefore representational) and abstract (non-representational). The figurative works are an attempt to capture all the senses – not just what can be observed. Richter describes his formal art training in Germany as 'lies', criticising the emphasis on technique over ideology. This response has given him an ongoing interest in the life of an image over time. He recycles and **recontextualises** works to animate them for a contemporary audience. He is concerned with natural **phenomena** and deliberately exploits the audience's desire to 'recognise' form and create associations with reality.

Richter exploits the materiality of the printed image and the physicality of paint. In painting over photographic images, he manipulates reality by both blurring and challenging our common understanding of events, such as the terror attack in the United States on 11 September 2001. In a social media-soaked culture, Richter questions the way that events are recorded that are 'beyond representation'. His most recent works are gestural abstract paintings on canvas, manipulated using a squeegee. Richter simultaneously adds more paint and scrapes the lower layers to reveal bursts of blurred colour in organic shapes. These works are sensory and lack a specific narrative, relying on the surfaces to inspire imagination and curiosity.

**oeuvre** the complete works of a writer, painter or other artist

**recontextualise** to change from original format for creative purposes

**phenomena** a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen

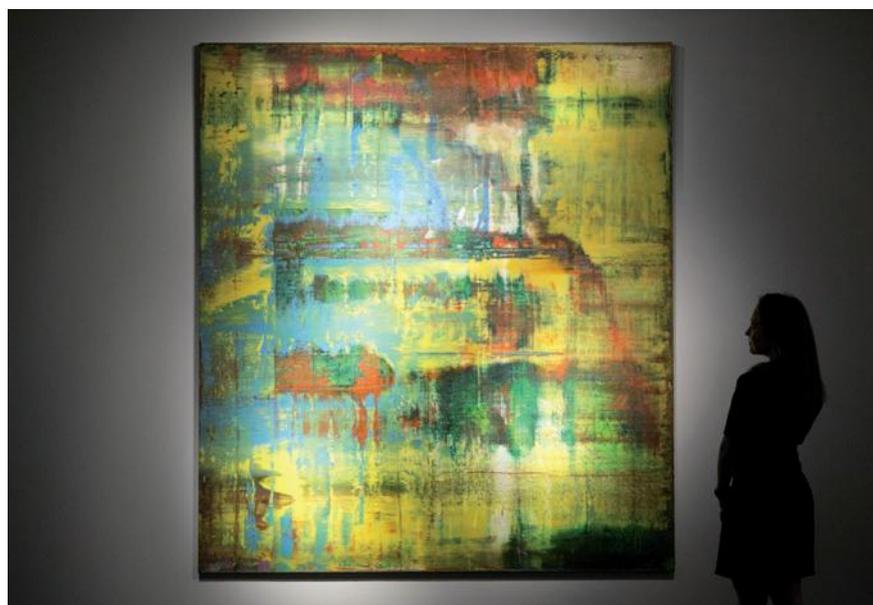
**To paint is Richter's means of telling.**

– GERALDINE KIRRIHI BARLOW,  
CURATOR, QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY &  
GALLERY OF MODERN ART (QAGOMA)

### INQUIRY LEARNING 1.1

With an art career spanning many decades, Gerhard Richter continues to create artworks that engage contemporary audiences.

- 1 Conduct some research to find out more about Richter's art practice.
- 2 Use the context guiding questions to discuss Richter's work through each of the four contexts. Some guiding questions are more suited to an artist's practice than others. Select one or two guiding questions for each context that you feel are most relevant to Richter's approach as an artist and his relationship with his audience.



**FIGURE 1.3** Gerhard Richter, b. 1932, *Abstraktes Bild (809-2)*, signed, numbered and dated '809-2 Richter 1994' (on the reverse), oil on canvas, 88 1/2 x 78 3/4 inches (225 x 200 cm). Painted in 1994.

## Contemporary context guiding questions and answers

- How is the meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of - [21st-century] ideas and issues?
  - The artwork *appropriates* a historical photo of South Sea Islanders hoeing weeds in a field of young sugar cane while a white overseer watches. Slavery was a reality at the time but is not acceptable now, so it makes viewers think critically about what is right and wrong and how people should be treated.
- How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact on the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?
  - Covering the surface of the painting with spots of glue makes viewers work hard to see what is going on in the painting. The image is veiled by the dots or lenses, causing some of it to be concealed. Viewers can see the details under the clear lenses but the spaces between them are coloured black, creating a distorted view of the scene.



## Personal context guiding questions and answers

- How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?
  - Boyd has **Ni-Vanuatu** heritage. His great-great-grandfather was a victim of '**blackbirding**', he was taken from Vanuatu and forced into slavery in the Australian sugar industry.
  - Boyd grew up in Cairns where South Sea Islander slavery was never talked about.
  - Boyd found this work difficult to make because of his personal connection to the imagery.
  - Boyd was familiar with the plantation, which is now ironically a fun park called Sugar World, and he is interested in the way we view and understand places and their histories, both complete and incomplete.

Daniel Boyd is an Australian artist with First Nations and **Ni-Vanuatu** heritage. His work critiques Australia's colonial past. He has developed a symbol system using dots of glue that disrupt the surface of his paintings and challenge audiences to think about what is seen and unseen in the imagery and in history itself.

- **Ni-Vanuatu** the indigenous people of Vanuatu
- **blackbirding** the 19th and early 20th century practice of enslaving (often by force and deception) South Pacific islanders on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland, Australia (as well as those of the Fiji and Samoan islands)

**FIGURE 1.4** Daniel Boyd, *Untitled (HNDFWMIAFN)* 2017, oil, charcoal and archival glue on polyester, 210 x 360cm. This example demonstrates how the context guiding questions can be used to make sense of an artwork. Research into the artwork and Boyd's artistic practice provided evidence for the analysis and interpretation of the painting through each of the contexts. Note that not all the questions were used. Some guiding questions are more suited to an artist's practice than others.

## Cultural context guiding questions and answers

- How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?
  - *Untitled (HNDFWMIAFN)*, made in 2017, looks back at the historical era, when 'blackbirding' was an acceptable practice.
- How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?
  - This painting might be interpreted by South Sea Islander viewers as an acknowledgement of the contribution their ancestors made to the development of Queensland.



## Formal context guiding questions and answers

- How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?
  - Black and white tones are a reference to the original black and white photograph. Photographs were evidence of the truth. The term 'seeing something in black and white' is also a colloquial saying referring to the truth (due to the use of black print on white paper in newspapers). Black and white might also allude to racism and the social and economic divide between black and white Australians. Black fills the spaces between the dots reminding us of the negative impacts of 'blackbirding', such as the loss of family knowledge and histories.
  - The focal point of the overseer figure is created through the use of emphasis in several ways. His white face is clearly different to the other figures, which emphasises him. The figure's trousers are whiter and brighter than the other figures' clothing and he wears a bright white hat. This tonal contrast draws viewers' attention and also marks the figure as someone who doesn't get their clothes dirty. The figure's placement towards the centre of the artwork makes viewers see him first and further connotes his importance. The figure shares an intense gaze with a dark figure on the left-hand edge of the painting. Everyone else in the field is looking on. This causes visual balance but also interest and tension. It leaves viewers wondering what the interaction is and how it might play out.
- How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?
  - The dots are a stylistic device associated with Western Desert dot paintings. This style of Aboriginal painting on canvas includes a layer of dots painted over culturally sensitive imagery to protect it from being seen by the wrong people.
- How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?
  - The large size emphasises the extent of the damage done by colonialism, but it also makes it harder to read the fractured imagery up close. Audiences will see it better from a distance. This might allude to the way we can look back at history and see it more clearly or how we may never know the full history of a place and people due to colonialism.
  - The title of the painting, *Untitled (HNDFWMIAFN)*, is an intriguing device that proposes a range of possible meanings. It challenges viewers to decipher and interpret it.

## 1.4 Investigating art through reverse chronology

**Reverse chronology** is an approach that invites investigation of art ideas of the past that are relevant and connected to contemporary art and art practices. This approach begins with you identifying artworks of **precedents** and exploring relevant influences on the ideas and issues you are investigating in your own artworks. Think about what is relevant or has a connection to you so you can combine ideas and transform them. It is important to understand that contemporary artists continually investigate and collect ideas that have meaning for their own interests, ways of working and focuses. Influences on contemporary artists may come from earlier artwork, artists, art movements and styles, or other historical pathways such as events, cultures, societies or individuals. They might come from scientific inventions, or other fields of knowledge, as the Joachim Froese case study shows.

The benefit of researching in a reverse chronological way is that you will find historical

references that are relevant to your own ideas and will strengthen and support your art practice. Try to expose yourself to books, journals, documentaries, podcasts and films about artists' lives and ideas. Visit galleries if you can, read widely, follow contemporary artists on social media. Contemporary artists approach and transform ideas from the past in different ways. They might embrace or they might challenge traditional understandings of art and representation. By understanding how artists reference history and traditions, you will recognise the complexity of 21st-century ideas and issues and your own art-making will be richer.

.....  
**reverse chronology** a cause-and-effect pathway to understanding influences on artists, styles and approaches

**precedents** guiding examples  
.....

## 1.5 Case study: reverse chronology

### Joachim Froese: contemporary photographic practice



**FIGURE 1.5** Joachim Froese, *Brachychiton bidwillii*, from the series *Entangled*, 2020, salt print, 20 cm x 25 cm



**FIGURE 1.6** Joachim Froese, *Untitled #3*, from the series *Wollemi Giants*. Panel on left: 56 individual cyanotypes; panel on right: 56 individual wax-coated digital negatives, 1,4 x 2 metres

Joachim Froese's personal reaction to the environmental crisis is only one of several stimuli for his two recent series *Entangled* and *Wollemi Giants*.

I make sense of the world through my art.  
Without my art I am blind.

Froese remembers as a teenager, hearing scientists talk about climate change, but he says:

... it was an abstract term then. Now it's in everyone's lives. We can't ignore the weather, floods and fires. Climate change has crept into my personal world.

His practice is also influenced by his research into diverse photographic processes. He combines cutting-edge digital technology with some of the oldest analogue processes. In fact, Froese also looks to historical paintings and early science to develop his concepts.

All of these influences are evident in *Brachychiton bidwillii* from *Entangled* and *Untitled #3* from the *Wollemi Giants*, both of which are closely connected. He says:

Together these images describe an uncertain trajectory from the beginnings of life, when a small seedling pushes out of dark soil, to life destroyed by the devastating bushfires that wreaked havoc in Australia in the Black Summer of 2019/20.

Early 20th-century biologist Jakob von Uexküll's concept of **Umwelt** has influenced the way Froese constructs his imagery. This theory suggests that each individual organism perceives its distinct **sentient** world, determined by the way it physically experiences its surroundings to aid survival. Froese applies this idea to photography. What we perceive as reality, he suggests, is a subjective perception of the world – a construction. Therefore, photography does not depict a commonly shared reality, it reveals the individual worlds we all construct around us.

In response to the ideas of constructing his own world, nature and gardens, Froese began growing and photographing seedlings. *Brachychiton bidwillii* is an example of one of his dramatically lit salt prints of tiny plants after they have just burst through the earth. Viewers might recall science experiments and childhood memories of seeds thriving or dying on beds of cotton wool. The seedling is full of potential; yet at the mercy of the weather and humankind. If it is not watered

and nurtured it will die. The seedling is a reminder that humans are connected to nature. Froese's research led him to historic paintings of gardens. He was particularly inspired by a **Hortus Conclusus painting** called *The Little Garden of Paradise*.

**Umwelt** the environmental factors, collectively, that are capable of affecting the behaviour of an animal or individual

**sentient** able to feel emotions and sensory experiences, such as pain

**Hortus Conclusus painting** a genre of 15th-century European symbolic paintings depicting the Christian figure of the Virgin Mary in a closed garden

*The Little Garden of Paradise* is a small painting depicting an idyllic scene inside an enclosed garden. While Joachim Froese's contemporary work is situated in the personal context, *The Little Garden of Paradise* can be interpreted through its cultural context because it illustrates common religious beliefs of the time in which it was painted. It is brimming with Christian imagery including the central figures of the Virgin Mary in blue, with the Christ child at her feet playing a musical instrument. The winged Archangel Michael has overpowered evil, represented by a monkey, while a dead dragon in the foreground has shrunk to insignificance at the hand of Saint George, recognisable by his chainmail armour.



**FIGURE 1.7** *The Little Garden of Paradise* by an artist known as Upper Rhenish Master, c. 1410–1420, egg tempera and oil paint on oak, 25.6 x 31.8 cm. Found in the collection of the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main.

However, the painting also contains surprisingly realistic depictions of plants and animals, which viewers in the 1400s would have been familiar with. There are 24 plant and 12 bird species identifiable. Therefore, this small, constructed world is a mixture of religious and **secular concepts**, unusual for the early 15th century, which was dominated by religious imagery. It illustrates the significance of the environment and the interconnectedness of humanity, spirituality and nature to the culture in which it was made. The painting literally depicts a lively garden, but it also contains significant symbolism. In contrast, Froese's *Brachychiton bidwillii* contains no humans or garden fence, only the tiny seedling which we might consider a symbol for nature and our ability to harness it, since it appears to be growing in an artificial environment.

**secular concepts** non-religious ideas such as medicine, science and politics

William Henry Fox Talbot was a British inventor and scientist whose curiosity and experimentation led to the invention of black and white photography. Talbot's early photograms – direct prints on paper – of botanical specimens were the inspiration for Froese's use of unusual processes in his current work.

In Talbot's quest to capture images using light, he invented a process he called photogenic



**FIGURE 1.8** William Henry Fox Talbot, *Fern*, c.1839. Talbot invented salt printing, one of the very first photographic processes, between 1835 and 1839. (Photo by SSPL/Getty Images)

drawing. He found that by sensitising thin paper sheets with salt and then brushing them with a solution of silver nitrate, the paper would darken when exposed to light. He placed plant specimens on top of such a sensitised paper, held it flat in place with a sheet of glass and exposed it to the sun. Where light hit the paper it went dark, while the parts of paper covered by the plant remained white.

Like Talbot, Froese first prepares his paper with salt and silver nitrate to make it light sensitive. But instead of using a real plant specimen he uses a contact negative derived from the digital photographs he takes. This negative is placed on the sensitised paper under a sheet of glass and exposed to sunlight. Just like Talbot's experimental process, Froese's salt prints are completely at the mercy of the weather.

Despite Froese's technical expertise, this process is fickle. On cloudy days exposure times are longer and more unreliable. Froese has embraced trialling and learning from failure; experimenting with hundreds of images to arrive at his understanding of this unpredictable and challenging process.

### DISCUSS

Observe *The Little Garden of Paradise* slowly and carefully.

Use a thinking routine, such as Think, Pair, Share, to discuss the following:

- 1 Which plants do you recognise?
- 2 What type of building do you think was attached to this garden? Why do you think this?
- 3 In medieval paintings, the scale of a figure indicated their importance. Which figure do you think is most important in *The Little Garden of Paradise*? Who is this person and why is she important?

## INQUIRY LEARNING 1.2

Analyse and compare the importance of tone, shape, form and pattern in Froese's *Brachychiton bidwillii* and Henry Fox Talbot's *Fern*. Which image gives more information about the plant? Justify your viewpoint.

Froese's large work *Untitled #3* from his series *Wollemi Giants* is comprised of two large panels depicting the same burnt tree stump. The images are mirrored. This work was inspired by the Blue Mountains, one of the world's key locations for **biodiversity** and **geodiversity**, which had been devastated by bushfires in the summer of 2019–2020. The fires, a tangible result of climate change, made a personal impact on Froese.

During my residency we went on numerous bush walks in the Wollemi National Park, often hiking through burned forest. Walking through the charcoaled shrub literally turned us black. Climate change left its marks on my body and I couldn't escape it anymore. It had entered my personal world. This is how it works for me, my personal experiences inevitably turn into art.

The series was produced in a hybrid process that uses two distinct technologies: digital capture and analogue printing. He takes up to 70 digital photos of the tree stump and photo-merges them to create a single, high-resolution file. This very large file is required to keep the fine detail in the final prints. Next, he converts this file to black and white and inverts it on the computer to create a negative image. The negative image is divided into 56 individual files of 25 x 20 cm and each individual negative is printed out on his home printer in black and white.

To create his final panel, he uses another historical photographic process, the cyanotype. Now he works entirely analogue. The paper negatives receive a carefully applied coat of beeswax that renders them semi-transparent. Then they are placed onto another paper that has been prepared in a dark room with a light-sensitive

chemical solution. As with the salt prints, the negatives are held in place with glass and exposed to the sun to produce the images. In *Untitled #3* the panel on the right consists of the waxed paper negatives. The resulting positive prints, the cyanotypes, comprise the panel at left. The audience experiences a sense of the significance of the photographic process when they view this work due to the human scale of the two large panels and the **simultaneity** of the positive and negative images.

**biodiversity** the variety of plant and animal life

**geodiversity** the variety of rocks, soils, minerals, fossils and landforms that provide habitats for healthy ecosystems

**simultaneity** a state of more than one thing occurring at the same time

Discovered in 1842, cyanotypes are named for their blue colour, from the Ancient Greek word *cyan*, because the chemically treated paper exposed to the sun undergoes a chemical reaction and turns blue. They are also known as blueprints and they were used to make copies of architectural plans before photocopying was invented. Notice the strong blue colour and the incredible details captured by historical cyanotypes in both Figures 1.9 and 1.10.



**FIGURE 1.9** An architectural blueprint made in 1893, showing detailed building plans for an exhibition pavilion in white on the classic blue cyanotype background. Artist: Peter Joseph Weber.



**FIGURE 1.10** *Ptilota plumosa*, circa 1853. Artist: Anna Atkins. She is considered to be the first person to illustrate a book using photography. Her cyanotypes documented plant species for scientific study. (Photo by Heritage Art/Heritage Images via Getty Images)

Froese avoids the blue colour while still using the cyanotype process by applying a toning technique using a bath in strong green tea to change the chemical structure of the cyanotype. As a result, the colour of his prints become charcoal black.

Joachim Froese draws inspiration from contemporary issues and diverse historical sources showing that ideas and discoveries from the past are essential to his art-making. Working through a personal context, his practice fuses the

earliest photographic discoveries with the most recent digital innovations. Referencing historical paintings, philosophy and scientific discoveries, he constructs his imagery to express his personal ideas and emotions about the **anthropocentric** way humans organise and control nature and the devastating effects of this.

• • • • • • • • • •  
**anthropocentric** a viewpoint that human beings are more important than any other entity  
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# 1.6 Twenty-first century art practices

## What is Contemporary art?

Contemporary art is made by living artists and it reflects the diverse cultures and concerns of a global society. It can't be defined by a style. Contemporary artists are not bound by rules or ideology as most *Modernist* artists and those who came before them were. Contemporary artists make artwork with both traditional and non-traditional materials, technologies and processes. Contemporary artists recognise that audiences play an active role in the construction of meaning.

## How does Contemporary art differ from Modern art?

The terms **Contemporary art** and **Modern art** are not interchangeable. They mean different things. Practice using the correct terminology.

From a Western perspective, it can be argued that the invention of photography and the **Industrial Revolution** in Europe were two major events that contributed to changing the purpose and nature of art. Photography, invented in the 1820s, instead of painting eventually became a logical means of recording portraits, historical events and daily life. This left painters with alternative opportunities for image making beyond realism and classical subjects; there was time for conceptual and creative thought and experimentation. In the late 1800s, the Impressionists, who are widely regarded as the first modernists, began using brushstrokes in loose, textural and expressive ways that had not been seen before, and they painted scenes that were not based on traditional classical narratives but of everyday, modern life and ordinary people.

Simultaneously, increased leisure time for the working classes, as a result of the invention of the steam engine and automated machinery in factories, contributed to growth and accessibility in all forms of the arts, including visual art, music, theatre and literature.

Throughout the 20th century, artists continued to try to come up with innovative ways of seeing, thinking and making what was referred to as Modern art. This period, called Modernism, was

centred in Europe and North America. **Modernism** was characterised by a series of art movements, beginning with the Impressionists. Modernist art movements were created by groups of artists who believed in a particular ideology or way of thinking about the world and the place of art in it. Art movements followed the stylistic approaches and ideologies or philosophies decided on by the group. Some movements had leaders and rules to follow about art and life. The Surrealists even had a **manifesto**.

Over time, Modernist art movements morphed and changed and influenced each other and responded to industrialisation, technological change, social change and global issues and events, such as both World Wars, the Great Depression, the advent of supermarkets and television, mass media and advertising. Some movements were only interested in exploring the formal visual language of art, while others explored ideas as artworks.

Not all modernist artists were associated with art movements and it's also important to understand that Contemporary artists can't be post-historically pigeonholed into Modernist art movements. For example, a Contemporary artist might be influenced by Surrealism and might work in a style similar to the Surrealists, who were active in the 1910s and into the 1920s, but they should not be referred to as a Surrealist artist.

.....  
**Contemporary art** the work of artists who are living and producing work in the 21st century

**Modern art** the work of artists from the modernist period

**Industrial Revolution** an economic and social transition in late 18th- and 19th-century Britain, caused by rapid advances in industry

**Modernism/modernist period** a global movement in society and culture that for most of the 20th century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life. (Modernism is a proper noun so it begins with a capital letter; modernist is an adjective so it doesn't require a capital letter.)

.....  
**manifesto** a published document that gives voice to a new way of thinking and the ideology that supports it

Later in the 20th century, the invention of affordable technology such as television, computers and video cameras allowed artists to begin looking more critically at the world and the rapid rate of change that was occurring. This led to a way of approaching art called **Postmodernism**, which embraced technology, video and performance art. Postmodernists used irony and satire to critique and reimagine history, appropriating imagery from Modernism, other historical art styles and popular culture, often using satire and irony. They valued other cultures and were accepting of multiple points of view as being true at the same time. They refused to recognise that art should be made in a certain style, as modernists did. Individualism was valued. Many of these characteristics remain evident in Contemporary art within the 21st century.

.. .. .  
**Postmodernism** a reaction against the ideas and values of Modernism  
 .. .. .

## INQUIRY LEARNING 1.3

- Do some research to create a timeline on your classroom wall that spans from the advent of the camera until the year 2000. Include the following Western art movements, their intentions, their beliefs and their key members:
  - Impressionism, Post impressionism, Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Op Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Fluxus, Postmodernism. Look beyond the obvious group member names for women participants who have been overlooked historically.
- Investigate the art of Asian, African, South American and Middle Eastern countries during the 20th century. Are there influences of European Modernism in these countries?



**FIGURE 1.11** Bridget Riley, British painter and leading figure in the Op Art movement, photographed in front of one of her geometric paintings in 1979. Op Art is short for optical art. Op Art works were abstract and usually 2-dimensional. They created an illusion of movement through the arrangement of shapes, lines or colours.

# Ideas and approaches in 21st-century art practices

## Diversity of perspectives

Contemporary art practice is shaped by the connectedness of different people from around the world, with different social and political systems, histories and personal challenges. It is inclusive of artists who identify with diverse perspectives. These are viewpoints that differ from dominant ideologies. Examples may include: cultures and religions; gender and sexuality; languages, ethnicity and race; trauma and impact of colonisation; perspectives of living with sensory impairment, disability, chronic illness or neurodiversity.

Artists who express diverse perspectives include: Puppies Puppies aka Jade Kuriki Olivo, Yinka Shonibare, Yasumasa Morimura, The Huxleys, Yayoi Kusama, Kirsten Lyttle, Dylan Mooney, Chantal Fraser, Kyra Mancktelow, Justin Talplacido Shoulder, Sarah Lucas and many more.

## Critique

Contemporary artists **critique** both current events and historical ideas. Examples might include activist artworks that point out shortcomings in

political, social, religious, economic and commercial systems; artworks that protest against violations of human rights from the past or present or artworks that champion sustainability and environmental concerns. By exposing, critiquing or protesting as they express their ideas, artists invite us to question what is wrong in the world and what we can do to change things. Critique can be presented in various ways; with humour or with serious intent. Artists often use humour, whimsy and fantasy to present speculative futures, providing positive alternative solutions to problems.

Some artists who approach their artmaking through critique include: La Toya Ruby Frazier (Levi's), Joiir Minaya, Maya Lin, Joan Ross, eX de Medici, Fiona Foley, Ai Weiwei, Michael Cook, Vernon Ah Kee, The Guerilla Girls, Richard Bell, William Kentridge, Jessie French, Pip and Pop, Dominique Chen and Libby Harward (The Blak Laundry).

**critique** evaluate and analyse a wide variety of things, based on reasons or criteria

Fiona Foley's art practice has consistently focused on the terrible injustices inflicted on First Nations peoples. Her research responds to invasion and the atrocities of colonial governments, which included creating laws that subjugated First Nations peoples. Her work critiques the brutality and



**FIGURE 1.12** Yayoi Kusama, *Dots Obsession: Infinity Mirrored Room*, exhibited on June 7, 2008, at the contemporary art centre 'Le Spot' in Le Havre, western France. Kusama, born in 1929 in Japan, began to have vivid hallucinations in her childhood and she has expressed these throughout her entire career as infinity nets or fields of dots. All of her work explores her diverse and unique perspective of the world. Kusama has resided in a mental health facility since the 1970s and also maintained her art practice.



**FIGURE 1.13** A view of a large multi-screen video installation in William Kentridge's exhibition, *NO IT IS!* 2016 in Berlin. Kentridge's hand-drawn animations communicate uncomfortable scenarios and montage-like narratives critiquing the brutality of South Africa's apartheid history and the current post-apartheid society.



**FIGURE 1.14** Fiona Foley, *The Magna Carta Tree #2*, 2021, inkjet print. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Mick Richards.

barbarism of colonisation in order to educate the general public about their own history.

Fiona Foley is from the Wondunna clan of the Badtjala nation. The Badtjala people are the Traditional Owners of K'gari (Fraser Island). *The Magna Carta Tree #2* belongs to a large photographic series set around Maryborough in Queensland. Some of the series was shot at the site of a 700-year-old mangrove tree on a cattle property on Badtjala Country. Due to the similarities of their ages, the tree is named after *Magna Carta*, a British document from 1215 that led to Western law. Ironically, *Magna Carta* has become synonymous with human rights and justice for all. Along with her critique in this series, Foley also creates a magical reality within a narrative that juxtaposes cultural symbols, time and place to celebrate the rich cultural history of the Badtjala people and their Country.

## Cross-disciplinary connections

Twenty-first century art practices are often characterised by investigations into diverse bodies of knowledge and collaborations with experts. Increased technology, providing instant access to research and innovative ideas, has contributed to cross-disciplinary art practices. In this type of practice, artists investigate ideas in fields of knowledge such as science, technology, medicine, biology, ecology, museology, psychology, architecture, history, geography, cartography and so on. A good example is the artistic duo Ruth Jarman and Joe Gerhardt, known as Semiconductor. Based in the UK, they produce moving image, sound and sculptural works that explore the material nature of our world and how we experience it through the lens of science and



**FIGURE 1.15** *Where Shapes Come From*, by Semiconductor is viewed by audience members in 2018 in Sydney, Australia. The work was filmed in the mineral sciences laboratory at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. In this work, raw seismic data collected from the Mariana Trench is converted into sound. Semiconductor uses the noise to control computer-generated animations that are integrated with footage of a scientist preparing mineral samples for study. The video work illustrates the connections between theory and nature, and encourages the viewer to rethink their experience of the physical world.

technology. They employ rigorous research with scientists to convert scientific data into engaging works of art. They have completed a number of fellowships and residencies including at CERN, Geneva, Switzerland. CERN is a major laboratory working to help uncover what the universe is made of and how it works. It houses a unique range of particle accelerator facilities.



**FIGURE 1.16** A close up view of Tiffany Chung's *Reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries*, 2017, embroidery on fabric, 140 x 350.5 cm

This hand-embroidered map of the world (Figure 1.16) locates the departure points, routes and ports of disembarkation of Vietnamese political refugees who fled their homeland by boat between 1979 and 1989, after the Vietnam War. Tiffany Chung was one of these refugees. Chung's artistic practice examines cartography (map-making). She is interested in the way maps reflect geopolitical history. She analyses carefully researched data from a multitude of sources including archival records, academic studies, ethnographic fieldwork and first-hand

### INQUIRY LEARNING 1.4

Carry out an internet search to find other images of Tiffany Chung's *Reconstructing an exodus history: boat trajectories, ports of first asylum and resettlement countries*, 2017. Read about the work online and discuss the possible reasons she has used thread and embroidery to make the work.

testimonies. She layers individual stories and statistics over charts identifying countries and nations.

Helen Pynor's artistic practice explores issues to do with the human body and medical procedures. She investigates ideas to do with organ transplants and dichotomies such as life and death and the animate–inanimate boundary in relation to prosthetics; exploring the medical technology that supports the body's ability to embrace, nurture and integrate medical prosthetics internally. Her work is informed by in-depth residencies in scientific and clinical institutions; for example, The Francis Crick Institute, London. More detail on Pynor's works can be found in the Case study in Chapter 12.

Geology is the field that Helga Groves explores in her artistic practice. *Star Fragments #1* investigates the crystalline patterns within meteorites. Her artworks are the result of close collaborations with geologists. Other artists using cross-disciplinary art practices include Australian performance artist Stelarc, Phoebe Paradise and Donna Davis.

## 1.7 The role of audience in 21st-century art practice

Twenty-first century artists recognise that an audience is essential for the construction of meaning to occur. They understand that viewers bring their own experiences to the interpretation of artworks and that active mental or physical engagement leaves rich impressions on audiences. Innovative contemporary approaches to art-making have increased opportunities for audiences to become actively involved in meaning-making. Some examples of audience involvement include interactive art, participatory art and socially engaged art.

### Interactive art

Interactive art installations engage the viewer by positioning them as a physical part of the work. The audience is no longer just a spectator but is provided with opportunities to activate otherwise



**FIGURE 1.17** Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto walks in his hanging installation *Life is a Body We are Part of* during the presentation of his exhibition 'The Body That Carries Me', 2014, at the Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain.

static components of the work by moving through or interacting with the installations in some way. Ball pits, slides and swings are examples. So is Ernesto Neto's *Life is a Body We are Part of*.

This enormous hand-crocheted multicoloured sculpture is suspended from the ceiling and symbolises Ernesto Neto's conception of life, in which there is no separation between humans and nature. The interactive installation invites visitors to climb up and walk around, experiencing how the floor moves as it separates from the ground, hearing the sound of the plastic balls beneath their bare feet, and finally lying down at the highest part of the sculpture to enjoy the view, rest, or tune into their own thoughts.

Other artworks include Carsten Holler's *Test Site*, Ann Hamilton's *the event of a thread*, Tomás Saraceno's *in orbit* and many more.



**FIGURE 1.18** A visitor slides down Carsten Holler's installation, *Test Site* at The Tate Modern Gallery in 2006 in London. The work consists of five gigantic tubes which spiral from different levels of the gallery. The largest tube is 55.5 metres long and has a gradient of 30 degrees. The physicality of sliding within the tubes is exhilarating and challenging and brings the work to life.

**This is art you breathe in. This is embodied art, imagination animated by vitality. You are not just looking, or feeling, or hearing, or speaking; you are all of that and something more — you are its centre.**

MARIAH HELGESON, *ON BEING*, 24 JANUARY 2014

## Participatory art

Participatory art breaks down the traditional artist/audience relationship. Meaning in the artwork is created more democratically as audiences become participants or collaborators in the making of the work, or the outcomes of it. Artists must give up their control and be flexible and open to elements of chance. This allows the artworks to become a two-way exchange and the experience of the audience's sensory or emotional response may actually be the subject of the work. In some cases, the work would not exist without collaboration from visitors: for example, Roman Ondak's *Measuring The Universe*.

Other artworks using this approach include: Gillian Wearing's *Signs*, Kimsooja's *Archive of mind*, Ai Weiwei's *sunflowers seeds*, Marina Abramović's *The Artist is Present*, Antony Gormley's *Field*, Roman Ondak's *Measuring The Universe* and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's *Pulse series*.

## Socially engaged art practice

Socially engaged art practice involves artists building relationships with communities to realise positive change. Artists are more like facilitators than makers and artworks are seen as information exchanged between the artist and social group, rather than being about objects. Socially engaged artworks can give agency to communities, help them to solve problems, and empower individuals. One such example is Raphaela Rosella's, *You'll know it when you feel it*, which is a collaborative and ongoing project between the artist and incarcerated women. The project produces artefacts, such as photography and video; however, its main purpose is to give agency to the collaborators, ensuring their voices are heard. Other artists known for their socially engaged practices include Theaster Gates's *Dorchester project*, Assemble's *Granby Four Streets*, Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Untitled (Lunch box)*, C3West projects such as Cherine Fahd's *Being Together: Parramatta Yearbook* and Linda Brescia's *Skirts*.



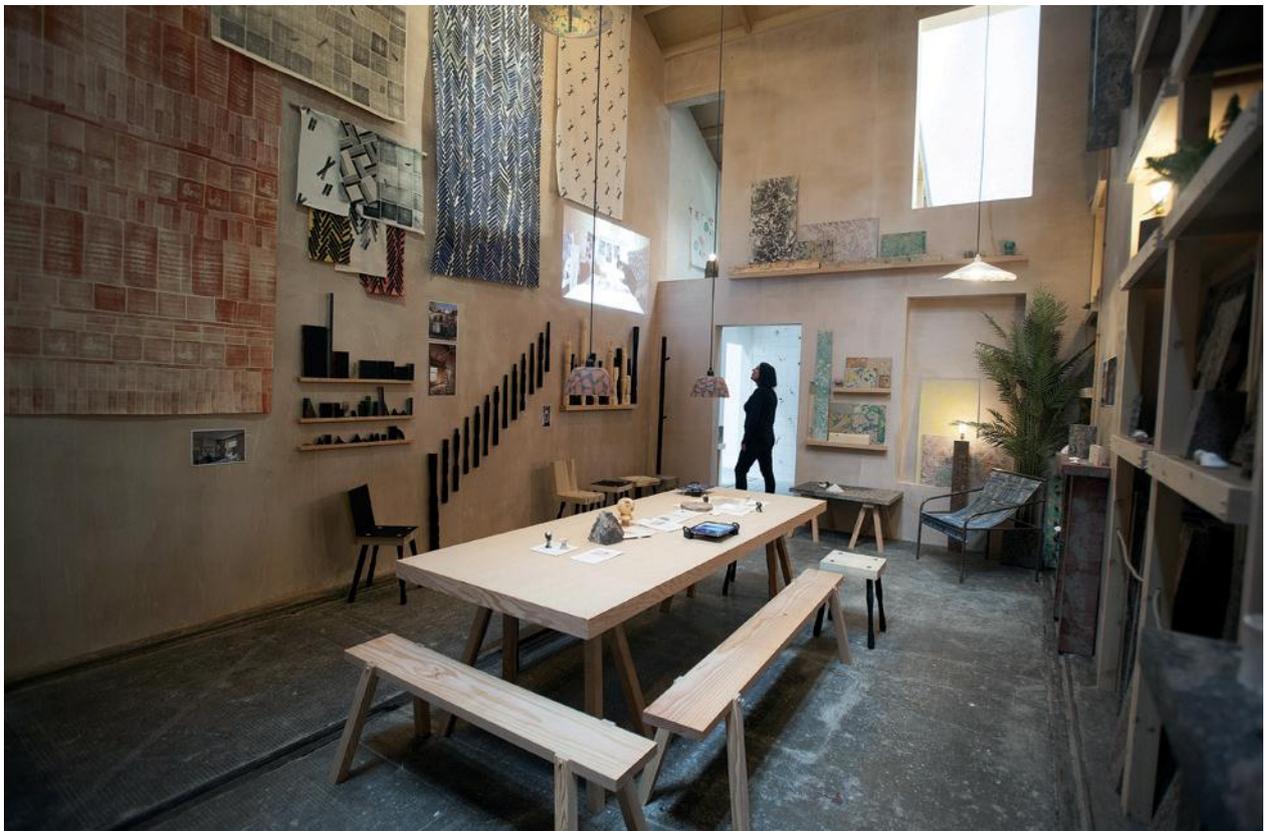
**FIGURE 1.19** Roman Ondak's, *Measuring The Universe*, relies entirely on the audience who collaborate to create the work. The names of each visitor, the date of visit and their body height is recorded on the wall in the white gallery space. Throughout the course of the exhibition this conceptual work gradually fills the wall spaces. Without visitors there would be no artwork.



**FIGURE 1.20** An example of a typical Thai tiffin lunch, as featured in Rirkrit Tiravanija's interactive artwork. Visit the gallery website at <https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10783> to discover more detail about this installation. The project was conceived in 1996 and has been activated in different galleries since then. The artwork is centred around a multi-tiered, stainless-steel tiffin, or lunchbox, filled with a menu of take away food, stipulated by the artist. Yellow chicken curry, rice, pork satay, peanut sauce, and green papaya salad fill the lunchbox sections. The lunchbox sits on a table set for four people. Also on the table is a Thai magazine. The gallery staff select four random visitors to activate the work by sitting and eating together. The work is designed to disrupt the normally tranquil and pristine environment of a gallery space. It relies on the familiar activity of sharing a meal to encourage discussion between the four strangers. The interaction and participation of the diners realises or actualises the ephemeral work.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 1.5

Find out more about interactive, participatory and socially engaged practices and projects by researching online.



**FIGURE 1.21** A visitor looks through Assemble's *A Showroom for Granby Workshop*. Assemble is a group of designers and architects whose *Granby Four Streets* project in Liverpool was developed with social engagement from the residents of a rundown council housing estate. The project involved cleaning up the neighbourhood, painting empty houses and establishing a local creative maker's market. The showroom in the installation is the group's vision for this market. Assemble won the prestigious Turner Prize in 2015 with this work.

# 1.8 Twenty-first century art media

Artists select and use visual art media, techniques and processes to make art and communicate meaning. **Art media areas** are often classified as **2-dimensional**, **3-dimensional** or **time-based** and you will explore these in Senior Visual Art.

**art media areas** overviews of knowledge, skills, techniques and processes; each area should not be viewed as distinct or limited to preconceived understandings of the visual art discipline; media areas are not separate and multi/cross-media presentations are encouraged

**2-dimensional** artworks, such as paintings and drawings, that exist on a flat surface

**3-dimensional** art forms, such as sculpture, which have depth

**time-based** artworks that use time as a dimension; measured in duration, e.g. film, video, animation, sound, computer-based technologies and some performance works

Contemporary artists are not limited by tradition. In the 21st century, artists use the most appropriate art materials and technologies at their disposal in order to solve their visual problems and communicate intended meaning with their audience. There are no rules. For example, artworks might be made of food or be designed as a smelly, sensory experience to evoke an emotional response. They might rely on the audience to participate, follow instructions or make the work by doing a particular activity as instructed by the artist. They might be made with traditional or unexpected, innovative high-tech processes and materials.

**Durational performances** may extend over days, weeks or even years, testing the artist's mental and physical stamina, while **ephemeral** artworks last very briefly. Both may exist only as a photographic or video documentation.

The breaking down of the distinction between art and craft has seen a blossoming of traditionally women's crafts as valid approaches to art-making. Therefore embroidery, sewing, knitting, crochet and other textile processes are relevant and exciting approaches to 21st-century art-making.

**Cross-media** approaches such as digital components within 2- or 3-dimensional works are seen often, especially within site-specific installations. For instance, Kellie O'Dempsey's practice employs traditional collage, augmented reality, sound and projections which activate whole gallery spaces.

Found objects continue to be used by contemporary artists who explore their potential as carriers of meaning. The materials and their application may convey important symbolic or contextual meaning to the audience.

**durational performance** artworks in which the performance artist sustains or endures a physical or emotional state for a long time

**ephemeral** lasting for only a short period of time

**cross-media** a collection of media across disciplines (also mixed media; multimedia)

**Media areas include, but are not restricted to:**

- 2-dimensional media:
  - collage
  - drawing
  - painting
  - photographic
  - printmaking.
- 3-dimensional media:
  - ceramics
  - fibre art
  - installation
  - sculpture
  - wearable art and body adornment.
- time-based media:
  - electronic imaging
  - film and animation
  - sound art
  - performance art.



**FIGURE 1.22** Lucienne Rickard, performing her durational performance, *Extinction Studies*, photographed in Sydney, 2020. In this durational performance Rickard draws then erases a series of recently extinct species across a large sheet of paper. The work in Sydney was an iteration of a year-long project at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, where each day Rickard drew, then erased a recently extinct species. This process of drawing and erasure, or evolution and extinction, is repeated in full knowledge that the paper will deteriorate and eraser shavings will accumulate.

When analysing and interpreting artworks it is important to look for and consider the visual language, meaning and expression inherent in visual art materials and making processes. Your intentions can be enhanced significantly with innovative and engaging media choices.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 1.6

Search for and watch videos of Lucienne Rickard's durational performance, *Extinction Studies*. What aspect of her work is durational? What aspect of it is ephemeral?

While traditional mediums such as oil paint on canvas continue to be used in the 21st century, artists increasingly explore **multimedia** approaches such as digital and interactive technologies, virtual reality, the internet, gaming and programming in which multiple digital elements such as video and audio are included.

Artificial intelligence is a technological innovation that artists are embracing. Sam Leach's art practice has evolved using

experimentation with AI to conceive imagery (Figure 1.23) yet he continues to execute his resolved works with the traditional medium of oil paints. Conversely, Alex Seton exploits the traditional medium of marble, carving it using technologically advanced tools (Figure 1.24). Others explore the potential of analogue processes, such as Joachim Froese's use of salt in his photographic prints (Figure 1.4) or ancient cultural techniques using new or found materials. An example is Sonja Carmichael's use of ghost net in her traditionally woven baskets, *Deranji Dabayil (Rocky place, healing waters): Baskets of Culture*.

• • • • •  
**multimedia** refers predominantly to computer-based artworks that may incorporate and combine images, sounds, videos and interactive components  
 • • • • •



**FIGURE 1.23** Sam Leach, *Polar Bear Stack*, 2022, oil and resin on linen, 51 cm x 51 cm. Australian artist Sam Leach worked with a physicist to develop an artificial intelligence that invents images, which Leach uses as the basis of paintings. He works back into the vague and foggy imagery to refine it. The AI is trained using a range of diverse imagery from the history of art and architecture and Leach's past works. The imagery is completely dependent on what information the AI has been given and Leach exploits this by including blurs, gaps and the uncertainties inherent in the process.



**FIGURE 1.24** Alex Seton, *The Patch (Tasmanian Tuxedo)*, 2022, Champagne marble from the traditional land of the Wakaman people (QLD) and black marble. 60 x 53 x 66 cm. This sculpture, carved in traditional marble using 21st-century tools such as dental drills, grinders and chainsaws, presents the audience with the illusion of a soft textured, down-filled jacket. The sculpture explores memories of Seton in his dad's oversized puffy jacket and reflects on the distortions that occur when you try to reconstruct memories. Marble is a material that is normally associated with historical monuments and commemorative sculpture, so Seton challenges audiences' understandings of art and materials.



## INQUIRY LEARNING 1.7

Search online to find and view the video about Seton called 'Shaping marble with dental drills: Alex Seton | Old Artforms, New Tricks' by ABC arts. Create a reverse chronology case study to explore marble sculptures from the past and compare them with Seton's. Consider marble sculptures from ancient Rome and Greece, the Renaissance and Modernism.

## 1.9 Using art media safely



**FIGURE 1.25** Safe art-making practices include wearing suitable and well-fitting personal protective equipment or PPE. These students wear safety glasses, masks with filters, gloves and aprons while using spray paints. Spray painting is one of the most dangerous ways of applying paint because the tiny airborne particles of paint can be easily breathed in and will damage the respiratory system if care is not taken. Photograph by Justin Leegwater.

In senior Visual Art, you may often work independently and with different media to your peers. It is important to follow safe work practices when using materials to make art, especially when trying new media, experimenting and manipulating unusual combinations. It is an Australian Government regulation that art materials suppliers provide safety data sheets (SDS) identifying the health risks of the products they sell. The SDS provides information about safe use of a product, hazards associated with the product, safe storage and disposal of the product and appropriate first aid. Your school should have a register of SDS for every hazardous material. Ask your teacher to find out more about the materials you are using.

You should always exercise caution, know the risks and follow procedures for your own safety and the safety of your classmates.

Some basic guidelines are:

- Make sure you have discussed your materials and equipment with your teacher, who can help you to identify potential risks.
  - Wear appropriate protective clothing such as aprons, dust masks, gloves, safety glasses and closed-in shoes.
  - Making art is active. Be aware of trip hazards and spills when moving around the classroom and maintain a tidy workspace.
  - Make sure you are following correct procedures when you dispose of materials. Some materials, such as liquid chemicals, dyes, paints or plaster, are dangerous or destructive if washed down drains.
  - Work in well-ventilated areas to avoid breathing in fumes and chemicals.
- Wear a mask when working with materials with dust or airborne particles.
  - Only use tools you have been instructed to use correctly.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 1.8

Investigate the safety risks of working with a material in the classroom, such as clay. Make a safety poster for the classroom to inform other students about the hazards of this material.

Find and read the SDS of any hazardous materials you are currently working with. Based on what you have learned, is there anything you should change about your working practices or clean-up procedures to be safer?



**FIGURE 1.26** Clay is hazardous if you are unaware of how to use it and clean it up safely.



## Chapter summary

- Making and responding are interrelated in Visual Art. Knowledge, skills and experience in making will assist you to respond; knowledge, skills and experience in responding will assist you to make artworks.
- Inquiry learning involves developing, researching, reflecting and resolving. These inquiry learning processes form the structure of making and responding in Visual Art.
- The four contexts in Visual Art are contemporary, personal, cultural and formal. Different contexts allow a range of influences and layers of meaning to be analysed and interpreted when making and responding to art.
- Context guiding questions will assist you to investigate artworks and practices through each of the different contexts.
- Reverse chronology begins with Contemporary art and ideas and follows relevant pathways to understand historical, cultural and traditional influences.
- Contemporary art practices are central to your study of Visual Art. Contemporary art is the art of today and reflects the issues of our contemporary world. Contemporary artists are living artists.
- Features of 21st-century Contemporary art practices include diversity of perspectives, critique, cross-disciplinary connections and the importance of the audience in constructing meaning.
- Audiences are instrumental in the construction of meaning. Examples in which audiences are key to the construction of meaning include interactive art, participatory art and socially engaged art.
- In Visual Art you will have opportunities to experiment with 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional and time-based media. It is important to explore the potential of traditional and non-traditional media, techniques and processes to enhance the communication of meaning in your artworks.
- Safety is a priority. Ensure you wear the correct PPE and have discussed the hazards and safety aspects of your chosen materials with your teacher. If in doubt, search online to make sure you are using equipment and materials safely and maintaining a safe environment for everyone.

# Review questions

- 1 Choose an artwork from any chapter in this book. Read about it or do some online research to find out about the artist and their practice. Use the context guiding questions to analyse and interpret the artwork. Share your understanding of the meaning of the artwork with your elbow partner.
- 2 Create a graphic organiser to illustrate the reverse chronology of Joachim Froese's contemporary practice. Show how it is informed by artists of precedence and historic processes.
- 3 What are the key features of contemporary 21st-century art practices?
- 4 Search online to view the artwork *Machine-assisted river* by Sam Leach. Leach has developed the imagery with the assistance of a machine-learning algorithm. Investigate his approach and outcomes. Examine the painting closely and consider this approach through the contemporary context and the formal context.
  - a What are the limitations, if any?
  - b In what ways does such technology impact on art and the communication of meaning?
- 5 Think of a diverse set of situations you have experienced as a member of an audience; for example, a sporting event, a cinema, a school assembly, a conversation with friends. Compare and evaluate the audience experiences of each situation. What senses are employed? How active is the involvement? Which of these experiences do you find the most worthwhile?
- 6 How does audience involvement differ between interactive art, participatory art and socially engaged art?
- 7 Name some examples of non-traditional art materials. Why might a Contemporary artist choose to use non-traditional media?
- 8 What is the difference between a durational performance and an ephemeral artwork? Find an example of each and share your findings with your classmates.



# HOW TO MAKE AND COMMUNICATE MEANING THROUGH ART

## Chapter 2



**FIGURE 2.1** Cornelia Parker, *Island*, 2022

Artworks can make us laugh and cry by stirring up strong personal emotions. Art is a universal language that has the power to unite disparate peoples by emphasising common humanity, it can express divergent viewpoints and invite audiences to question their beliefs about art and life. It can mesmerise us and entertain us. For these things to occur, artists and viewers share an understanding of how we make meaning through art. This chapter aims to assist you, the artist, as you learn to communicate your intentions to your audience.

## 2.1 Know your 'tool' kit

It is human nature to want to understand and make sense of the world and the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Artists do this in a visual form using a range of essential features or 'tools'. When you make artworks, you deliberately make choices about what essential features to include and how they will relate to each other so the communication of your intended meaning is as clear as possible. Essential features to choose from include **visual language, expression, materials, processes, technologies, display**.

### Visual language

The tools in your kit bag include elements of art and principles of design. The elements and principles are known as *visual language*. Elements of art are the basic building blocks of any artwork and the principles of design are guidelines about how to arrange the elements to create meaning. Visual language is a code that you can exploit to create meaning.

You can read more about visual language in Chapter 7.

**visual language** is constructed using art elements that are organised through design principles; together these create meaning that can be decoded and interpreted by an audience

**expression** the creation of visual symbol systems through the making of marks or objects that communicate ideas

**materials** physical resources, equipment and information

**processes** a systematic series of actions directed to the production of an artwork

**technologies** digital platforms, programs, apps, software, hardware and so on, used in the creation of web-based, video, moving image, sound or other digital artworks

**display** involves presenting art images and objects through public exhibition or personal display; display is an important part of providing and responding to inherent meaning in an artwork and is an intrinsic process in art-making; display can be physically installed in a space or place, or it can be virtual or digital, particularly when used to demonstrate intended ideas that cannot be realised in a practical sense

### Visual language

Elements of art are generally regarded as:

- Line
- Shape
- Colour
- Texture
- Tone
- Form
- Mass
- Volume.

Principles of design are generally regarded as:

- Balance
- Repetition
- Pattern
- Contrast
- Emphasis
- Harmony.
- Unity
- Scale
- Movement
- Rhythm
- Space

Additionally, time-based media might use the elements of:

- Lighting
- Sound
- Silence
- Sequence
- Pace
- Focus.

### Expression

Artists express ideas using symbols or codes that may not be obvious until we begin to observe, analyse and make connections between the intentions of the artist and the features in the artwork. Sometimes artists may purposely combine what appear to be unrelated symbols in an attempt to jolt the viewer's thinking, and to make them ask, 'What is this about?'

Your aim through your art-making is to find or create symbol systems that have meaning to you and that communicate your ideas. Symbolic meaning or *expression* can be generated through every aspect of your artwork, such as subject matter, visual language, found objects,



for First Nations people. Additionally, the fact that the net is scaled up to be larger than it would have been, has been cast in bronze and sits in a prominent position at an important state-run institution carries further meaning associated with significance and longevity, suggesting the durability and importance of First Nations culture.

Another medium that has cultural significance is oil paint. Besides its richness and ability to express light, it is a medium that denotes tradition, culture, history and dependability. It has been around for 600 years and has been used to make paintings we regard as iconic, such as *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (Figure 2.4).

Using oil paint in a contemporary context will bring those inherent meanings to the work and Christopher Bassi's work is an example of this. Christopher Bassi is based in Brisbane but his heritage is Meriam and Yupungathi. His painting practice is engaged with the history of representational European oil painting as a storytelling device. He looks to historical European painters to think about how he can tell his own Torres Strait Island stories using the cultural lineage of oil painting and all it



**FIGURE 2.4** Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, 1665, oil on canvas, 44.5 cm x 39 cm

represents. By working in oil paint, he quietly gives agency to Torres Strait stories and culture; subtly critiquing colonial viewpoints and the dominant culture. In the title of the self-portrait, *A Piece of the Continent, a Part of the Main* (Figure 2.5), Bassi references a 1624 poem by English poet John Donne, which expresses ideas about how individuals are also part of something larger and are connected. Bassi depicts himself listening to the sound of the sea from a large baler shell. Despite the impact of colonisation and despite being born in the city, he remains connected to his Torres Strait culture and family. He reminds viewers about the impacts of disconnection and his large oil painting tells that story within the dominant cultural tradition of 'dependable' and 'respectable' story telling. He turns the meaning of oil painting on its head because his story is now equal with all the European stories and told through historical paintings.



**FIGURE 2.5** Christopher Bassi, (Meriam and Yupungathi), *A Piece of the Continent, a Part of the Main*, 2022, oil on canvas, 240 x 160 cm

## INQUIRY LEARNING 2.1

Compare the way meaning is generated in *Girl with a Pearl Earring* and *A Piece of the Continent, a Part of the Main*. Things to consider: symbolic use of media, symbolic inclusion of objects, the sitter's clothes, direction of the sitter's gaze, backgrounds, composition, titles. You might need to

research *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. You might need to find out where the Torres Strait Islands are too. Appraise the strengths and weaknesses in the way each painting carries non-literal meaning and decide which painting has the most to say about the culture in which it was painted.

## 2.2 Making meaning with your own original ideas

You've thought of a great focus for your inquiry but can't work out how to get started? Or maybe you're stuck on your IA1 experiments.

Creating original imagery and objects is vital because it is illegal to copy an artwork or an image and call it your own. This is plagiarism. Your school will have policies and procedures in place for managing authenticity. Discuss these with your teacher and make sure you understand the implications of plagiarism.

Stay away from internet image searches, Pinterest and other social media.

Be active. Making anything is better than nothing. This section offers some practical suggestions for getting started and to avoid plagiarism.

### Objects

Use mind maps or brainstorming to generate ideas for objects that represent the focus. This will help make invisible ideas visible. For instance, a water tap might represent climate change. Choose one or more of the objects and draw it, paint it, build it from clay, cast it in plaster, photograph it, video it, cut it from card or cloth and monoprint it, stitch it, make a soft sculpture of it, create or collect multiples of it, add words to it ... What meaning is communicated by the object? What meaning is created when you work with multiples of the same object? Kyra Mancktelow, a Quandamooka

artist with links to the Mardigan people of Cunnamulla, has reimagined the mission clothing imposed on the children of Minjerribah in Moreton Bay near Brisbane (Figure 2.6). Mancktelow has sewn the garments with an open weave fabric, such as muslin; this allows the textures and forms of the garments to be revealed when monoprinted.

### Materials

Use mind maps or brainstorming to generate a list of materials symbolic of the focus. Experiment with one or two of them to create images or



**FIGURE 2.6** Kyra Mancktelow, *Moongalba II*, 2021, two unique monoprints on 350gsm Hahnemühle paper, 120 x 80 cm each. This pair of monoprints symbolise the cultural legacy of colonialism. Minjerribah children were forced to wear clothes in this style at Moongalba (Myora mission) in the late 1800s. The monoprinted garments are a fragile and ghostly reference to a tragic history.

objects that reference your focus. For instance, climate change might be represented by water or a lack of it. Explore water in all its different states: still, bubbling, moving, overflowing, drying up, clean, purified, dirty, as mud, frozen, as vapour, as drawing medium, as video subject, as sculptural material, as scientific specimen, as museum artefact, as rain, as snow, as ice, as devastation, as life-saver ... What can materials say about the focus?



**FIGURE 2.7** Cornelia Parker, *Island*, 2022, 2440 × 3050 × 1980 cm. Installation featuring a green-house with glass walls, a single light bulb hanging from its ceiling. The floor of the glass house is paved with tiles that once lined the floor of a hallway between the British Houses of Parliament and are worn down by the feet of politicians. The glass walls are painted with lines of white chalk paint from the white cliffs of Dover. Every material within the installation is a symbolic reference to Britain and its exit from the European Union (Brexit).

## INQUIRY LEARNING 2.2

What do the materials in Cornelia Parker's *Island* say about her focus?

Do some research and find out about:

- Brexit and its impact on Britain
- what the white cliffs of Dover are, when people would see them, their historic and cultural significance, how they are being impacted by current climate issues
- what a glass house could represent
- what it means to chalk-up lines on a wall.

Use your findings to support your viewpoint about the meaning of *Island* in a discussion with your classmates.

## Appropriation

Use and reassign meaning to pages, images or words from old encyclopedias, magazines, dictionaries, religious texts, scientific texts, school texts, children's stories, picture books, novels, newspapers, letters, historic images, maps, atlases. Tear up, rearrange, fold, cut, pierce, block out, draw over, write over, combine, layer, shred, pulp, construct ... How can cultural sources enrich your ideas about the focus?

## Process

If your making becomes repetitive, for instance knitting, shredding paper, making pinch pots and so on, set up a video camera to capture the repetition as video or stop motion. Video a ritualistic set of movements that communicate



**FIGURE 2.8** Wang Lei, *Armour of Triumph*, 2012, knitted newspapers, figure 263 x 94 x 40 cm, install diameter variable. Wang Lei used newspaper as the raw material for making the fibres from which he knitted his suit of armour. The work comments on the power of the media, which is regarded as authoritative sources of truth, in the same way that an emperor used to be. The absence of a person inside the suit suggests the absence of truth in today's media.

something about your focus. What can repetition or ritual communicate about the focus? How could the video of the making process add meaning to the finished work? What happens if you edit the video to run in reverse, in slow motion or crop the subject in really close?

## Sensory responses

Your focus can be directed by how you personally respond to a situation or a place. Record what you see, hear, feel and smell. Liberally collect sound recordings, videos, timelapse photos, slow-motion photos and other accessible digital technology. What can your senses say about the focus? How might you capture a scent, a texture, a fleeting facial expression? How can you alter the experience of the place by editing the sensory information? Some artists use scents and soundscapes to strengthen the impact of their work.

## Collaborate

Set up a photo and video shoot with your classmates as collaborators. Choose relevant costumes, props, lights, backgrounds and movements to experiment with your focus. Be spontaneous and stick to time limits. How can your collaborators add meaning to your focus?



**FIGURE 2.9** Tamara Dean, *Introversion*, 2020, pigment print on cotton rag paper, 120 x 160 cm. Dean is known for her whimsical imagery that positions humans and nature as one.



**FIGURE 2.10** *Vanity* by students who collaborated to create this exceptional image.

### DISCUSS

- What makes *Vanity* an exceptional image?
- What meaning is added to this image by the title?
- Why would collaborating result in such effective imagery?

## Experts

What do experts say about the focus? Collect quotes, statistics, data, graphs, scientific imaging, x-rays, reports, plans of the focus from different sources. Experiment with layering and juxtaposing these sources against images and objects. Megan Cope's triptych of lithographs (Figure 2.11) tells a story about a Quandamooka warrior referred to by the British forces in the early 1800s as the Black Napoleon. His name was also recorded as Eulope. Cope's lithographs reference the escape made by Eulope, who had been imprisoned on St Helena



**FIGURE 2.11** Megan Cope, *Nyanba tahbiylbanjara gnanany (He knew his saltwater country)*, 2019, lithograph, 55 x 229.5 cm

Island. After only three days he made a bark canoe and simply sailed back home to Minjerribah. The setting of the imagery is contextualised as Moreton Bay due to the use of historical maps from the time the incident took place. Cope has overwritten the maps with First Nations place names and added her signature dots to signify her culture and her viewpoint. What can authority add to your focus?

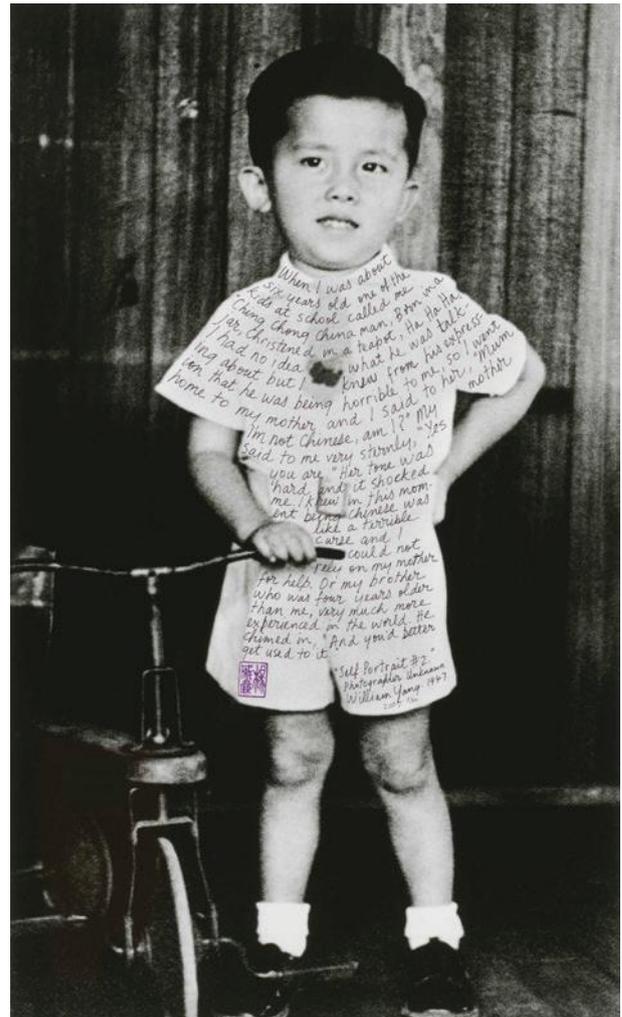
## Opinions and memories

How is the focus treated in popular culture?

Research how television news programs, sitcoms, movies, memes, newspapers, magazines or social media have represented the focus. Collect quotes from these sources and the general population, your family and friends. Juxtapose their ideas as text, soundscape or imagery against findings from experts or your own findings ... What can opinions or memories add to your thinking about the focus?

## What if?

Construct proof of the imagined. For instance, in the future, what if we have to travel to other planets to seek water? How would this look, sound, be challenged, be welcomed, be documented? What can speculative futures and imagined geographies, histories, artefacts, creatures or proof of myths and folklore add to your focus? How would you create, organise and document this? Simone Eisler's *Horned Dingo Feeder* (Figure 2.13) is one of several sculptures she has made that speculate on how animals might need to evolve in the future to survive.



**FIGURE 2.12** William Yang and an unknown artist (photographer), *Self portrait #2*, 1947/2007, from the series 'Self Portrait', inkjet print, black and purple ink on paper, edition 5/30, 82.0 cm x 50.0 cm

## DISCUSS

What does the text add to the meaning of William Yang's *Self portrait #2*?



**FIGURE 2.13** Simone Eisler, *Horned Dingo Feeder*, 2010, dingo skull and cow horn, 25 x 15 x 12 cm

Art has always had to deal with issues surrounding originality and artists need to be aware of intellectual property and copyright laws. Images and other source material on the internet are not necessarily free of copyright restrictions. If you need to use images that are online, search for Creative Commons – free public access images, music or video that will not result in copyright infringements. Alternatively, seek permission from the photographer to use the images.

You can find information on Creative Commons materials via the link at <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8164>

## 2.3 Communicating meaning by documenting your inquiry process

You will be asked to include carefully selected elements of relevant inquiry process documentation as supporting evidence for your internal assessment instruments. It is important to work out the best way to document your process while ensuring that you have suitable evidence to satisfy assessment requirements.

Process documentation is a record of your art inquiry and investigation of ideas, subject matter, experimentation, reflection, interests, issues, processes, expressive forms and inspirational materials. How you document your processes depends on how you work as an artist.

Some students can research, reflect and plan their way to resolving artworks through meticulous step-by-step procedures. They may prefer to use a visual diary to record their ideas and research and include photographs of the development of their work.

Other students may solve visual problems through spontaneous experimentation and manipulation of media, resolving artworks

through a variety of unpredictable approaches and experiments. These students may photograph their work as it unfolds and then reflect upon the failures and successes they experience. This organic approach may suit a blog or a slide presentation.

Whatever form you adopt, documentation is a way of capturing your creative processes. This evidence provides a useful link between you and your teacher during discussions and feedback. It can assist you to visualise your conceptual challenges and communicate your intentions. Documenting your thinking assists you to respond to stimulus, work through multiple ideas and evolving changes, deal with risks and challenges, and evaluate the expressive and technical considerations of your art practice.

Process documentation has a significant purpose in Visual Art, but maintaining comprehensive documentation will not guarantee your success. You should never get lost in the process work and lose sight of realising visual problems as resolved work.

**RESEARCH**  
THREE RIVERS COUNTRY (2020)

**LORRAINE CONNELLY-NORTHEY!**

- ↳ USES MATERIALS ASSOCIATED WITH EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT
- ↳ REPAIRS TO REPRESENT HER INDIGENOUS HERITAGE (WARRABE & GAIPE PEOPLE)

**WARRABE-GAIPE (2019)**

I'LL USE CORRUGATED IRON  
↳ ASSOCIATED WITH AUSTRALIA  
↳ IRONIC/EMPLOYING PARODY BECAUSE IT WAS MOVING TO AUSTRALIA THAT CAUSED THE CULTURE TO DISAPPEAR

**HULLER GATHERED (2004-5)**

GREAT FOR THE TOP

USE FOR APRON

ATTACH TO SKIRT

WARP BONE (2021)

DEVELOPING PROCESS

PERFECT SHAPE FOR THE SKIRT

**RESEARCH**

**ELISA JANE CARMICHAEL**

- ↳ HONOURS HER HERITAGE BY WEAVING GARMENTS
- ↳ WEAVING AS CULTURAL PRACTICE WAS INTERRUPTED BY COLONISATION

**SIMILARLY!**

- ↳ GRANDPARENTS SLOVAKIAN CULTURE WAS DISRUPTED DUE TO THE PRESSURES OF ASSIMILATION AFTER IMMIGRATING TO AUSTRALIA

IN THE SAME WAY CARMICHAEL MAKES GARMENTS, I WILL MAKE A METAPHORICAL GARMENT TO HONOUR MY GRANDPARENTS

**CARRYING HOME SALTWATER (2021)**

ECOLOGICAL DRESSES

MY DRESSES

INTERVIEWS WITH EXTENDED FAMILY = COLLABORATIVE

**REFINING MY MAKING PROCESS**

TRACED CIRCLES → TRACED FLOWERS → LAY → MANIPULATED

DEVELOPING MY TECHNICAL SKILLS

RIVET JOINS THE LAYERS

AFTER

BEFORE

BENDING LEAVES WITH NEEDLENOSE PLIERS - DETAIL

LOOKS GOOD

HAMMERING ADDS TEXTURE!

REFLECTING: IF I DON'T LIKE A CERTAIN PETAL I CAN ALTER IT

**PROBLEM:** THIS FLOWER IS VERY DELICATE, HARD TO MAKE WITH METAL

**SOLUTION!** USE LAYERS = MAKES IT STRONGER

FINISHED PRODUCT

FLOWERS FROM A SLOVAKIAN DRESS

↳ MY GRANDMOTHER

**ART AS ALTERNATE**

EMPLOYS PARODY AND IRONY.

REPRESENTING THIS WITH CORRUGATED IRON  
↳ A TRADITIONALLY AUSTRALIAN MATERIAL

WHILST MY IAZ FOCUSED THE LOST ART OF SLOVAKIAN TINKERS (NOT SPECIFIC TO MY FAMILY)

My IAZ FOCUSES ON MY GRANDPARENTS AND THEIR JOURNEY TO AUSTRALIA

I HAVE REPRESENTED THE NEW BUDDING OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING WITH BUDS OF NEW FLOWERS

THIS IS CONTRASTED WITH THE CORRUGATED IRON

GRANDPARENTS + AUNT, DAD

GRANDPARENTS LEAVE

AUNT, DAD, GREAT GRANDMA, AUNT

SCOTT'S AUSTRALIA 298

ENTRY CARD

PERMITTED ON 14 JUL 1969 TO ENTER AUSTRALIA FREEMANTLE WA

BRANDPARENTS I D

BRANDPARENTS USA

**FIGURE 2.14** Visual diary pages showing some of the record of student *Jemima Boboš* inquiry process. Her resolved work was successful due to her extensive experimentation with metal. She photographed these experiments and showed how they connected to her family's heritage in Slovakia.



**FIGURE 2.15** Jemima Boboš' resolved work, *Stefanna*. corrugated iron, aluminium and wire mesh.



**FIGURE 2.16** Detail of Jemima Boboš' resolved work, *Stefanna*. corrugated iron, aluminium and wire mesh.

## 2.4 Making meaning through display

The display of your resolved work can impact the way an audience perceives and engages with it. As you create art, you should experiment with **designing** and selecting methods of display. As you progress through Units 3 and 4 you will be expected to make **curatorial decisions** that will enhance your meaning and contribute to rich experiences and **audience engagement**.

Decision-making about display is useful to document as part of your inquiry process. To meet the highest levels of the Developing criteria, you should provide evidence of your

.. .. .

**design** produce a plan, simulation, model or similar; plan, form or conceive in the mind

**curatorial decisions** decisions that impact the selection, exhibition and display of artworks to engage audiences and communicate meaning

**audience engagement** experience of an artwork by deliberately drawing the attention of the audience in a sensory, emotional or meaningful way; artists may consider the potential engagement or reactions of the audience when developing ideas or artforms

.. .. .

ideas for display and ways you have considered audience engagement. Show a range of alternate possibilities that would support a viewer to really understand and experience the artwork. For instance, should the work be hung on a wall, displayed on a floor, viewed as a video, would it engage audiences more if it was a different size, projected onto a surface ...?

Your resolved artwork for Units 3 and 4 should be displayed and photographed for your submission. You can display your work anywhere for this purpose and it doesn't have to be an ongoing exhibition. Rather, it is a way of you documenting how an audience would engage with it. Your school may be lucky enough to have a dedicated exhibition space or walls/spaces suitable for displaying artwork, but more than likely it will not.

If physical display is not an option at your school, you might create a digital or virtual display that shows your intentions for display. Look for online platforms that would be suitable for the technologies you have used and your anticipated audience interaction.





FIGURE 2.18 Charlotte Peachey, *Settler*, raffia and photography



## DISCUSS

How does Charlotte Peachey's artist's statement create a dialogue with the audience?

What were her concept and focus?

## Artist's Statement

Textiles provide significant insights into the lives of individuals and their cultures over millennia. Delvene Cockatoo-Collins, a Quandamooka woman from Minjerribah, uses cotton tree fibres in traditional weaving practices to create a metaphor for how practices, family and culture are closely intertwined and I took this as my focus too. I replicated the style of significant garments owned by my ancestors but juxtaposed the European style with the non-traditional medium of raffia, which is a similar material to that used by Indigenous people for weaving. However, I employed the traditional European technique of crochet. Whereas traditional weaving skills were actively quashed by settlers, the European skill of crocheting was valued and actively passed down to me by my grandmother. These two elements combined signify the connection I share with my European ancestors and the land that I live on now and who it belongs to.

CHARLOTTE PEACHEY



**FIGURE 2.19** Joachim Froese, 'Ireson Hill', Mars, from the series *Turned towards the firmament*, 2022, 4 unfixated salt prints, 25 x 80 cm o/a

### *Artist's Statement example*

In 1839, François Arago presented the daguerreotype and he mused about photography's future applications:

... turned towards the firmament, one discovers myriads of new worlds; by penetrating into the constitution of the six planets of the ancients, we find them similar to that of our earth, with mountains whose heights can be measured ...

What was fantasy in 1839 is now reality with rovers on Mars depicting and measuring its geological features – as Arago predicted. But the images are deceptive, what resembles Earth remains an alien and toxic environment.

The concept of historical photographic processes is explored through the focus of the subjectivity of photography. We see what we want to see. I translate NASA's imagery into unfixated salt prints. Washed in a solution of sodium chloride, I stabilize the prints, but I don't make them permanent. They remain sensitive to UV light and are destined to change and eventually disappear.

JOACHIM FROESE

### INQUIRY LEARNING 2.3

- How does Joachim Froese create audience engagement in his artists' statement for 'Ireson Hill', Mars?
- Research the Visual Art syllabus online and find out how many words an artist's statement should be.
- Explain how Froese's process of working with a non-permanent process communicates meaning about his focus.



"What is man without the beasts? If all the beasts were gone, man would die from a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts soon happens to the man. All things are connected."-Chief Seattle

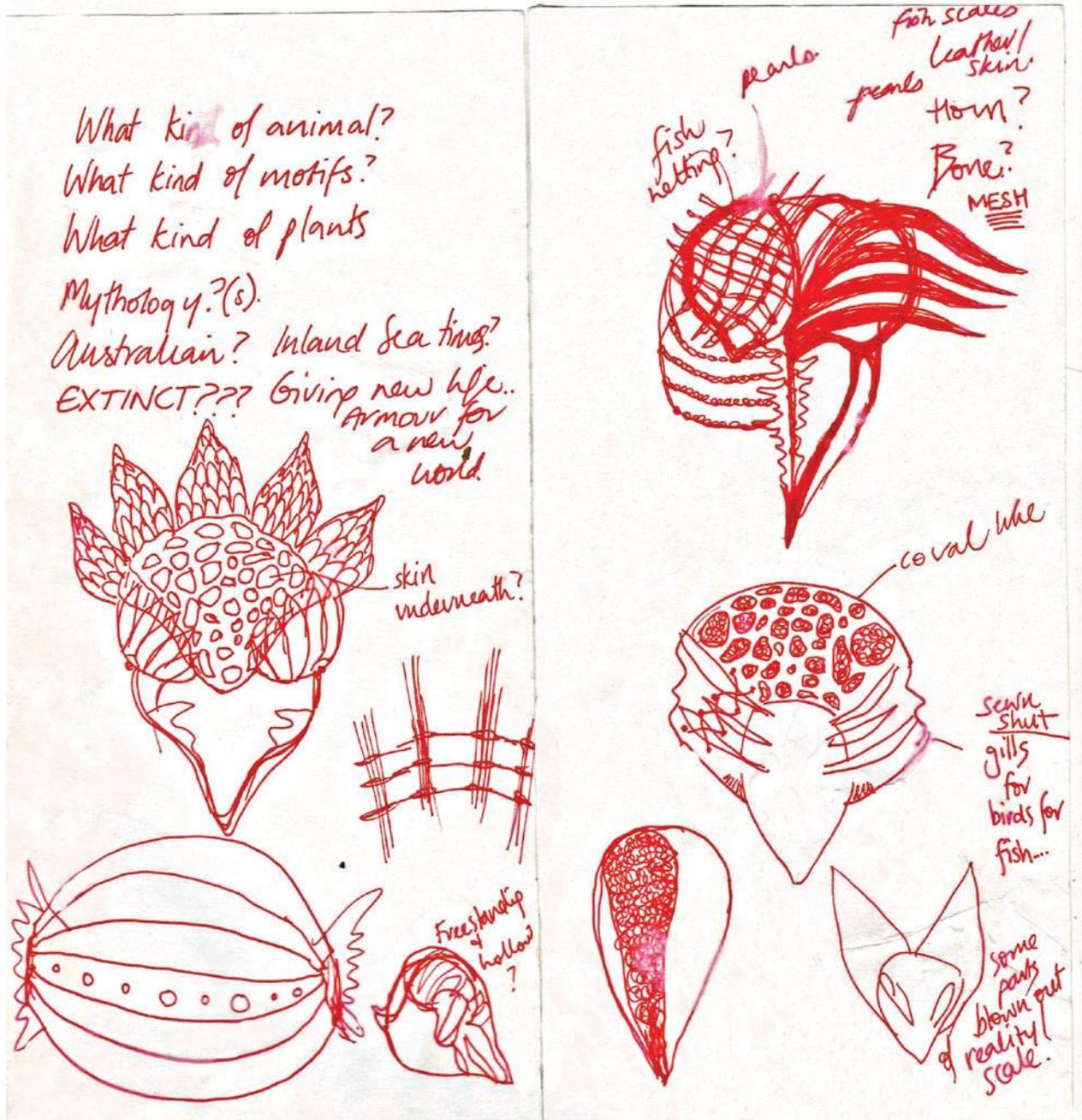


FIGURE 2.20 A page of early drawings and notes from Eisler's visual diary documenting her idea generation for a series of masks that express animalistic forms and textures



**FIGURE 2.21** A second page of ideas from Eisler's visual diary, showing the artist's drawings over photos of animal forms and masks



**FIGURE 2.22** Eisler's visual diary page showing research of animal masks including a ram mask previously made and worn in a performance by the artist

## The stimulus

After a bad night's sleep caused by strange noises coming from the upstairs apartment, Eisler convinced herself the historic building was haunted. This idea took hold when a towel she had just placed on a hook seemed to throw itself onto the floor. In doing so it took on the form of a hood or a veil.

Seizing this opportunity to develop her mask series, Eisler scrounged old newspapers which she soaked with glue in the bathtub and then shaped over the towel hooks to form a series of paper veils. She titled them *Paper Armour*. Eisler saw these as substrates with the potential for adornment and decoration with textures that might reference animals and bring the hood-like forms to life.



**FIGURE 2.23** An example of Eisler's paper and glue experimentation titled *Paper Armour 1*

## Researching

Always looking for opportunities to innovate in her work has pushed Eisler to experiment widely with materials. On a visit to the fish market, she came across large, fresh salmon skins, which she took back to her haunted apartment to explore the possibilities of tanning them. She washed the smelly skins, soaking them in vinegar and salt. She tried several different ways to manipulate the skins so they would hold the form of the veil, eventually finding that sewing the skins together and drying them over the towel hooks gave her some control over the forms.



**FIGURE 2.24** Simone Eisler experiments with salmon skin as a sculptural material.



**FIGURE 2.25** Eisler's early experiments in tanning and moulding fish skin over the bathroom towel rack resulted in some simple but suggestive forms. Here in *Fish Armour 1*, a skin takes on the suggestion of a veil. The negative space speaks to the absence of the human head.

## Reflecting

As the series and experimentation developed, Eisler continued to reflect on her ideas and think about how to develop them further. Eisler says she was,

“exploring other materials to coat the veils with – reversing what is normally covered by a veil – for example hair/skin – and putting it on the outside; allowing her to expose social and psychological preconceptions. By inserting and integrating the masks with moulded metal beaks, shells, skin, armour – and nature in the form of plants or trees – into these veil forms, I was looking to highlight the notion of cyclical time as opposed to the religious eternal.”

SIMONE EISLER

Eisler's residency in Gozo lasted only two weeks but it was a time of intense idea development, reflection and research and led to further experimentation with skins.



**FIGURE 2.26** In *Fish Armour 2*, two cured fish skins are sewn together. The artist has reflected carefully about how to fold the skin along the dark line of scale pattern so as to emphasise the form of the human head.

“ The salmon skins were beautiful to work with, so when I returned to Australia I learnt how to cure and tan salmon skins by talking and working with fish taxidermists and rattlesnake skin specialists in America.

SIMONE EISLER



**FIGURE 2.27** In this visual diary extract, Eisler has made rough drawings over printed photos of the newspaper veils. The notes describe various materials, including fish skin and textures that might be suitable to adhere to the interiors and exteriors of the veil forms.

## DISCUSS

- How can a veil or a mask be symbolic of so many different ideas?
- Use a thinking routine such as Think, Pair, Share, to explain the meaning of some of the symbolism.
- Make a list of other non-literal meaning mentioned by Eisler as you continue reading.

## Non-literal meaning

“ The symbolism of the veil and mask allows me to explore pre-enlightened states, hidden knowledge, secrecy, illusion and ignorance. There is also a religious reference that symbolises the primacy of the word over the image and the suppression of nature and change, growth and evolution.

SIMONE EISLER



**FIGURE 2.28** *New Skin 4*, Ultrachrome K3 print photograph, 1190 x 840 mm. The refined fish skin mask gleams in contrast to the dark figure of the artist causing the animal qualities of the mask to appear much more important than the human figure.



**FIGURE 2.29** *New Skin 1*, Ultrachrome K3 print photograph, 1190 x 840 mm. The salmon skin helmet featured in this photograph became a resolved work in its own right.



**FIGURE 2.30** Front view of *Accoutrement*, 2011, perspex box, cured and tanned salmon skin, 42 x 34 x 34 cm. Photo credit: Brian Hand

## Artist's Statement

*Accoutrement* sits somewhere between the concepts of museum display and fashion iconography. The New Skin series focuses on an imagined, future world of animal and human transformation. A world in which animals and humans are on an equal footing. Equally vulnerable. *Accoutrement* is an artefact from this speculative future.

The work encompasses ideas of protection, display, pose, past/present and ritual as part of an enquiry that covers a wide spectrum of issues from

simple preservation mechanisms such as skins and exoskeletons, to fashion and contemporary museology.

*Accoutrement* speaks of the absent body – both the human host and the trace of the former animal, without giving precedence to either. It is an unsettling work that undermines the drive towards anthropomorphism and speaks of reconnection with the animal, and a pantheistic reverence for nature but also of our fears of the unknown and of a future world.

SIMONE EISLER

## Resolution

Eisler's practice includes a performative element, so the logical resolution of the salmon skin works was a series of performative photographic works in which the artist wears the sculpted masks that are more refined and animalistic than the earlier veil series. Titled *New Skin*, the resolved photographs and head pieces:

“push my ideas about human-animal hybridity and transformation through an investigation of human accoutrement – additional items of dress or equipment carried or worn by a person – particularly masks and headwear. This has allowed me to place a greater focus on the presence and absence of human form and to give myself room to play with ritual and protection.

SIMONE EISLER

**iconography** a particular system of types of imagery, symbols, themes and subject matter used by artists to communicate particular meanings. For example, in Christian iconography a lamb represents Jesus.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 2.4

Draw a diagram or a flowchart to illustrate the connections between the inquiry processes Simone Eisler used to make *New Skins*. The headings of each section of Simone's story give you clues. Include arrows and notes. Remember, the processes of Developing, Researching, Reflecting and Resolving are interrelated, non-hierarchical and non-sequential. Refer to the Inquiry Learning diagram on page 339, taken from the Queensland Visual Art General Senior Syllabus.

**pantheistic** in alignment with the belief that God and the universe are one and the same, thus the universe is the ultimate focus of reverence, and the natural earth is sacred

**reverence** deep respect for someone or something

## Conclusion

This case study has explored Simone Eisler's practice by considering how she approached each of the four areas of study – Developing, Researching, Reflecting and Resolving. Eisler's interconnected and fluid approach to these inquiry processes illustrates how you can carry out your own inquiry learning within your unique Visual Art practice.

# Chapter summary

- Art has the potential to transform, impact or connect with viewers in profound and diverse ways. For such communication to occur, artists and viewers must share an understanding of how meaning is constructed.
- As well as subject matter, artists employ other essential features to create meaning. These include visual language, expression, materials, processes, technologies, display.
- Visual language refers to the elements of art and the principles of design.
- Expression is the term we use in the Queensland syllabus to refer to non-literal or symbolic meaning. Every aspect of the artwork can contribute to symbolic meaning. For instance, subject matter, visual language, found objects, processes, materials, mark-making, sound, smell, display, lighting and so on.
- All art media, processes, techniques and technologies have inherent meaning. For instance, due to their artistic significance, traditional use, associations or reference to a contemporary issue or a period in history.
- When trying to come up with your own original ideas, look to your own experiences and interests. Beginning with simply drawing, photographing and videoing are easy ways to start, but there are many diverse ways you can approach this. You might draw inspiration from objects, materials, appropriation, processes, sensory responses, collaboration, research and experts, opinions, memories, speculative futures and imagined places and creatures. Stay away from internet image searches, Pinterest and other social media. Be active. Making anything is better than nothing when getting started.
- Process documentation has a significant purpose in Visual Art. It should be completed as the work is being made, not afterwards. Maintaining comprehensive documentation will not guarantee your success and visual diaries do not need to be decorated. They should be working journals of your practice. Labelling your pages with the inquiry learning processes as you work will assist when it comes time to select evidence for your submission in Units 3 and 4. Remember the processes of Developing, Researching, Reflecting and Resolving are interrelated, non-hierarchical and non-sequential.
- The way you choose to display your artwork can contribute to meaning.
- Artist's statements assist the audience to engage with your artwork. It takes time and practice to write an artist's statement that thoughtfully creates a dialogue with your viewers.



# Review questions

- 1 Examine Megan Cope's *Nyanba tahbiyilbanjara gnanany* (*He knew his saltwater country*) (Figure 2.11). Decode the visual language and analyse how meaning is made through the lithograph's subject matter and essential features.
- 2 Explain to your group the difference between literal and non-literal meaning. Use examples from the textbook to justify your ideas.
- 3 Consider the importance of the materials, techniques and processes in the construction of meaning in Charlotte Peachey's work, *Settler* (Figure 2.17).
- 4 Think about contemporary artworks you have seen in galleries or search through the textbook to find unusual ways that artists display their works. How does display contribute to the construction of meaning? How could you display your work to maximise the communication of your intentions?
- 5 Choose one of your own artworks or one from the textbook. Write an artist's statement that stays within the 150-word count and creates a dialogue with the audience by using some of the strategies suggested in section 2.5.





**FIGURE 3.1** Christian Holstad, *Consider yourself a guest (Cornucopia)*, 2019

Responding to art is in the realm of both artist and audience. When you respond, you recognise the relationship between artist, artwork and audience. Responding to art involves analysing, interpreting, evaluating and justifying. It can be referred to as **art appreciation** and **art criticism**. This does not mean you must like every artwork you experience. Art appreciation actually refers to the processes the audience

applies to decode or understand the visual language artists use to communicate their intended meaning. Art criticism refers to the activity of writing and talking about art to express a viewpoint.

• • • • • • • • • •

**art appreciation** the process of judging the success of an artist's use of visual language to communicate an intended meaning

**art criticism** the activity of writing and talking about art to express a viewpoint

• • • • • • • • • •

# 3.1 From novice to expert



*Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation. Connoisseurs notice in the field of their expertise what others may miss seeing. They have cultivated their ability to know what they are looking at.*

- ELLIOT W. EISNER, PROFESSOR ART AND EDUCATION

Responding to art is a skill that can be learned and must be practised. Responding requires intellectual and emotional involvement. How you respond to an artwork as an audience depends on your prior knowledge and experiences, and the personal connections you make as you **construct** your own meaning.

.....

**connoisseur** a person who knows a lot about and enjoys one of the arts

**construct** create or put together (e.g. an argument) by arranging ideas or items; display information in a diagrammatic or logical form; make; build

.....

You can improve your writing and art vocabulary by reading and listening to art criticism; for example, through exhibition reviews and catalogue essays, art journals and magazines, podcasts, art texts, art documentaries and artist interviews. Practise talking and writing about your own work too. Internal assessment 1 (IA1) requires you to respond to the stimulus experience, artists' work and your own experimental work. Internal assessments 2 and 3 (IA2 and IA3) also include reflections on your own work through artists' statements and annotations.

As you develop from novice art critic to expert art appreciator, you will develop the ability to recognise subtle but significant interrelationships in visual language and art expression, and present what you see as justified viewpoints. Informed evaluation and judgement of artwork success can only come from experience and growing knowledge.

# 3.2 Authentic experience and the role of the art gallery

Visiting art galleries and museums provides opportunities to extend your knowledge and understanding of art, art practices and culture and, in turn, improve your written, spoken and **visual literacy** skills. You may be in a location where you can select from a variety of galleries and exhibitions to visit or you may be restricted by what is available in your proximity. Art galleries differ in size, architecture, specialisation, regional focus, purpose and audience. Despite these differences, the role of the art gallery as a place to learn remains the same. Learning through active engagement and **authentic experiences** as audience will enable you to develop lifelong skills such as observation,

analysis, reflection and critical and creative thinking. You need these skills to respond to art and appreciate not only the work in front of you, but any artwork you encounter, including your own.

.....

**visual literacy** the ability to look closely at visual texts, observing and describing visual elements to analyse and interpret form, symbols, ideas and meaning. It is also the ability to use materials, elements and symbols to create visual texts.

**authentic experience** engagement with actual and original art forms through participation in a live experience; for example, a site visit to a museum or gallery; working with an artist as mentor, collaborator or artist in residence

.....



When you engage with art, you construct personal meaning by forming connections to your prior knowledge and experiences. It makes sense that interpretations of art can differ depending on the experiences of individuals. It is important to consider your relationship to a work of art. Look for connections to other aspects of your life to make meaning and reinforce your viewpoint.

Authentic art experiences allow opportunity for active learning, triggering physical, social and intellectual engagement. Simply discussing your observations and interpretations with your peers engages cognitive and affective processes that enable the construction of personal meaning, in turn enhancing your curiosity and ability to retain information. If you talk about your observations and interpretations before you need to write about them, you will have already made useful connections between your ideas and the vocabulary and details required to express them.



### INQUIRY LEARNING 3.1

Work with a partner in the classroom and try out the questions in the question framework that follows. Spend 5–10 minutes discussing an unfamiliar artwork and then set a timer to write about the artwork individually for five minutes. Compare your responses. Do your written responses demonstrate independent ideas?

## Questions to ask at the art gallery

You can improve your Visual Art knowledge and understanding by seeking opportunities to visit art galleries and engage with art. Practise using a question framework such as the following example to build observation and critical thinking skills required for responding.

This question framework is a simplified form of art criticism.

Responding to art:

- What do I see?  
(Observe closely and describe)
- What do I think?  
(Analyse and consider relationships)
- What do I want to learn more about?  
(Research)
- What do I think it means?  
(Interpret and connect)
- How do I feel about it?  
(Reflect and critically evaluate).

## 3.3 Approaching art criticism

Many art criticism models exist, with most following a series of steps that are **hierarchical** in complexity. Each step is necessary, but you should concentrate on the later steps to present a **synthesis** of your ideas and judgement of **aesthetic qualities**.

**hierarchical** arranged in order of rank

**synthesis** the combination of different parts or elements (e.g. information, ideas, components) into a whole, in order to create new understanding

**aesthetic qualities** the components and characteristics that all combine to influence the mood, feeling or meaning for the viewer

Steps in art criticism relate to researching and reflecting in inquiry learning.

### Observe

Identify artworks and take time to observe closely, recording objective features, facts and details about images, forms, structures and other sensory elements. From this step, your reader should be able to imagine the artwork without having seen it.

## Analyse

Consider the relationships of the observed features. Focus on how art elements and principles have been organised, using art vocabulary to emphasise specific and significant features of the artwork. Consider that every mark or action made by the artist is purposeful. Annotating the artwork as you analyse it will assist you to identify the most significant elements in the creation of meaning. Your reader should understand what draws your attention and what visual tools the artist uses to communicate.

## Interpret

Draw conclusions to construct the meaning or message from your observation and analysis. Research may assist your understanding of the artist's intentions, links to the chosen context and the layers of meaning that may exist within the work or the artist's practice. However, interpretation is also about your personal reactions and is influenced by your prior knowledge and experiences. Clearly demonstrate the connections you have made between all of

these factors and your interpretation of meaning. Use expressive language that captures the mood or feeling of the artwork for your reader.

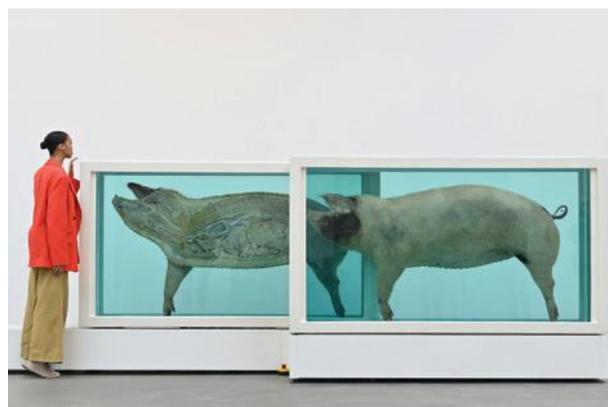
## Evaluate

Reflect on your observations, analysis and interpretations and evaluate the success of the artwork in meeting the artist's intentions. When you evaluate, you present your viewpoint and support your ideas with evidence of aesthetic qualities from the previous steps. This step is about knowing what to look for, being able to recognise significant elements, factors, aspects and components, and giving reasons for your judgement. Your reader should be presented with a clearly stated answer to a question (this is your viewpoint) with carefully selected reasons and evidence to support it.

Keep in mind that evaluating the success of artworks is not about liking or disliking. An artwork that is made to shock is not necessarily likeable; however, if it achieves the artist's intentions by provoking discussion and action, it is probably highly successful.

## 3.4 Responding as artist and audience

Your experiences of making artworks will assist you to critically evaluate how artists communicate meaning to an audience. When you reflect on your own making processes and artworks, you use the same cognitions (thinking skills) as when you write and talk about the work of other artists. Equally, the knowledge you gain through your research and evaluation of artists will increase your creativity and inspire new ideas. Try to approach responding by considering both roles. As audience, consider *what* meaning is being communicated to you and your reactions or responses. As an artist, consider *how* the meaning is communicated and what qualities or characteristics achieve the artist's intention.



**FIGURE 3.4** Damien Hirst's *This Little Piggy Went to Market, This Little Piggy Stayed Home*, 1996, shocks the audience with its unconventional use of an animal preserved in formaldehyde. This work is one of a series of formaldehyde sculptures made by Hirst as an exploration of life and death.



## DISCUSS

Read through the **instrument-specific marking guides (ISMGs)** for the three internal assessment instruments. (The ISMGs are included on the task sheets provided by your teacher.) Where is audience referred to in the performance level descriptors?

How do you react to Damien Hirst’s sculpture, *This Little Piggy Went to Market, This Little Piggy Stayed Home* (Figure 3.4)?

Evaluate the success of the sculpture in meeting the artist’s intentions of provoking viewers to consider their own physicality and mortality, the connections between art and science, and our anthropocentrism.

# 3.5 Symbols and metaphors

Artists use symbols and **metaphors** to communicate meaning. Responding to art involves decoding **symbol systems**, which may contribute to multiple layers of meaning. Symbol systems may be drawn from personal, cultural or global language and traditions. You may recognise symbols and metaphors that are in common use in your culture, but artworks from other times and places may be more difficult to read and interpret. Knowledge of an artist’s culture, influences and experiences will assist your interpretation of symbols and metaphors.

**instrument-specific marking guide (ISMG)** a tool for marking that describes the characteristics evident in student responses and aligns with the identified objectives for the assessment

**metaphor** expresses the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar

**symbol systems** personal, cultural or global language that communicates when read and interpreted by the viewer; artists communicate through combinations of art form conventions and symbol systems



## INQUIRY LEARNING 3.2

Look through this book and identify an artwork from an unfamiliar culture. Without reading about the artwork, work through the responding to art framework questions (on page 389).

Now do some background research on the artist’s culture or subject matter of the artwork, and work through the framework again.

- 1 What further layers of meaning can you decode from the work?
- 2 How does your knowledge assist your understanding of symbols and metaphors?

## 3.6 Academic rigour

In senior Visual Art, conditions for responding tasks, such as word length and time, are consistent with other senior subjects. Visual Art will challenge and extend your critical and creative thinking skills. This subject can contribute to your ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) score, and the inquiry learning processes and academic expectations will be useful preparation if you are planning on tertiary study.

### Acknowledging sources of information

Reasons for acknowledging sources are to:

- demonstrate depth of research
- credit the intellectual property of others
- enable the reader to locate more information about a topic to which you have introduced them.

It is an academic requirement that you use research conventions to acknowledge sources you have used in the construction of new knowledge; for example, using another person's

ideas, work or research, including quotes and paraphrased information.

There is no specification in the syllabus for the referencing style that is used, but it is important to be consistent and accurate in the application of the style you choose. Your teacher or school might specify the referencing style you should use. Common referencing styles are APA and Harvard. Expected research conventions include **citations** and reference lists. It is not appropriate to simply list website addresses you have used. You will find many useful online resources that explain and even format your references automatically. Word processing programs also include tools for referencing in a variety of styles.

**citation** an abbreviated note to identify a reference as the source of a quote or other information used within a text, usually the author's name and year of publication

In Visual Art, acknowledgement of sources is also expected for making; for example, in an artwork of appropriation, or digital works that make use of photographs found on the internet.

## 3.7 Genres of art writing for assessment

In Units 3 and 4, you will be required to respond in at least three genres:

- 1 IA1 is an **investigation**, which may be a written report, multimodal or digital presentation.
- 2 IA2 and IA3 require written artist's statements.
- 3 External assessment is an **extended response** analytical essay.

The genres for assessment in Units 1 and 2 may mirror Units 3 and 4 and will be chosen by your teacher.

**investigation** an assessment technique that requires students to research a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or hypothesis through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary data

**extended response** an open-ended assessment technique that focuses on the interpretation, analysis, examination and/or evaluation of ideas and information in response to a particular situation or stimulus

Different genres require you to use a language style and format suitable for that genre. For example, a written report uses subheadings and illustrations and is written in first person. Artists' statements are succinct, catchy paragraphs that entice your audience to engage with your artwork. Extended responses are formal essays written in third person, carefully structured to present your viewpoint and evidence to justify your ideas. Your teacher can help you with scaffolds and model responses that demonstrate each genre.

PEEL paragraphs are highly effective in art writing as they assist you to deliver your viewpoint clearly and require analytical and interpretative evidence from artworks and/or research to support your ideas.

You can extend PEEL paragraphs with further explanations, evidence and comparison to develop extended responses. Try structuring paragraphs using a template like the one demonstrated in Table 3.1.

PEEL paragraphs:

- P – Point: state your viewpoint or topic sentence
- E – Explanation: explain how the artwork demonstrates the point
- E – Evidence: use evidence from the artwork and/or research to support your viewpoint
- L – Link: connect the main ideas and link to the question.

The Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority (QCAA) is responsible for setting and marking external assessment. QCAA creates resources, such as sample responses and questions to assist your preparation. Visit the QCAA website and find out what resources are available.



**FIGURE 3.5** American artist Christian Holstad made a site-specific installation at the 2019 Venice Biennale to draw viewers' attention to sustainability. *Consider yourself a guest (Cornucopia)* is a sculpture made with plastic detritus collected by fishers over a 6-week period. The sculpture takes the form of a **cornucopia** to remind us of the overabundance of plastic.



**FIGURE 3.6** Koji Ryui, *Safe Haven*, 2018, Besser block, sand, PVA, found glassware, polystyrene, 73 x 40 x 21 cm

.. . . . .  
**cornucopia** a container shaped like a goat's horn; an abundance  
 .. . . . .

**TABLE 3.1** PEEL PARAGRAPH TEMPLATE, ALSO INCLUDING COMPARISON

<b>QUESTION: HOW DO ARTISTS CONSTRUCT MEANING FROM FOUND OBJECTS?</b>		
<b>Point sentence</b>	<i>Consider yourself a guest (Cornucopia) by Christian Holstad and Safe Haven by Koji Ryui transform discarded objects through careful selection and arrangement.</i>	<i>Turn the question into a statement.</i>
<b>Explanation Evidence</b>	Holstad has assembled marine detritus to represent a large, colourful cornucopia or horn-shaped form to remind viewers of the overabundance of plastic products that are destroying the environment. The form is created by a variety of plastic items such as oil containers, water bottles and even shopping trolleys. They are arranged according to colour, with the warm-coloured objects forming the horn, while cool-coloured plastics surround the base of the horn as if they represent the oceans that the horn might be floating on or resting in. The size and scale have been deliberately manipulated to create impact. This public artwork is positioned in a city square where people can interact with it. The scale of the surrounding building gives an indication of the large size of the sculpture which reaches upwards towards the second floor. The large number of individual items within the form communicates the huge scale of the problem and contributes to a sense of messy energy as they appear to be jostling for position and stick out of the form at odd angles. The diagonal curve of the large horn and the bright contrasting colours of the components emphasise this buzzing, bombastic energy.	<i>What do you see? What does it mean?</i>
<b>Comparison</b>	Both Holstad's and Ryui's sculptures are built from discarded objects yet they have very different aesthetic qualities. While Holstad's sculpture is colourful, loud and synthetic, Ryui's sculpture has organic and earthy textures. The application of sand to some of the objects results in a calming, unified appearance.	<i>Use text connectives to signpost comparison. Be specific about how they are similar or different.</i>
<b>Explanation Evidence</b>	<i>Safe Haven</i> is a carefully balanced and stable arrangement of objects. There is no sense of haphazardness, although there is tension caused by the narrow base that supports an asymmetrical arrangement of forms. Composed from familiar objects such as cups, vases and goblets, arranged in unlikely stacks and unfamiliar ways, then disguised by sand, they playfully suggest figures or a family.	<i>What do I see? What does it mean?</i>
<b>Link sentence(s) plus comparison</b>	Holstad and Ryui have selected and arranged discarded objects in opposing ways in order to communicate their ideas. Holstad's bold and lively work addresses viewers; reminding them of their duty to clean up the planet, like a good house guest. Conversely, Ryui's <i>Safe Haven</i> is contemplative and joyful like a home or a cubby house, where the stress of the world can be forgotten.	<i>Summarises the main ideas to specifically answer the question. If the Point sentence is the question, this is the answer.</i>

# Chapter summary

- Responding involves both art appreciation – the processes the audience applies to decode or understand the visual language artists use to communicate their intended meaning, and art criticism – the activity of writing and talking about art to express a viewpoint.
- Responding to art is a skill that can be learned and must be practised. Improve your writing and art vocabulary by reading and listening to a variety of art criticism examples. Practise writing and talking about your own work as well as other artists' works.
- Active engagement with original artworks at art galleries and museums improves observation and visual literacy skills, which in turn develop your skills with art appreciation and art criticism.
- Art criticism can be simplified into four hierarchical steps: observation, analysis, interpretation and evaluation.
- Responding to art requires writing and talking about an artwork's aesthetic qualities. Consider the combination of formal, literal and expressive aesthetic qualities that communicate a mood, feeling or message to the audience.
- The external assessment examination will assess your visual literacy skills and understanding of contemporary art practices as you analyse, interpret and evaluate visual language, expression and meaning, and justify your viewpoints. Practising these responding skills throughout the two years of senior Visual Art will prepare you for the examination.

## Review questions

Assessment task questions can seem complex. It is good practice to separate questions into parts. Mistakes are made in assessment tasks when the question is only partially answered or parts of the question are not shown to link. Look for words that signify different components that need to be responded to. Even the word 'and' suggests there are multiple ideas that need to be explored. Know the cues that invite you to analyse and interpret through a particular context.

- 1 Read the following question and discuss what response is required: *How do artists use objects as metaphors for the past, present or future?* (Review the context guiding questions in Chapter 1 that assist you to investigate artworks and practices through each of the different contexts.)
  - a What is the minimum number of artists and artworks required to answer the question?
  - b What context will you use to analyse and interpret the work?
  - c What subject matter will you look for to select suitable artworks?
  - d What is the focus of the artists' work?
  - e What should you compare to construct significant relationships?
  - f What does 'how' require you to discuss?
- 2 Draft a plan for an extended response to this question.
- 3 Practise using these questions to scaffold other responding tasks.



# Chapter 4 ASSESSMENT



**FIGURE 4.1** Sophia Jorgensen, *Experiment*, mixed media on 42.5 x 20 cm, pastel paper

For the most current syllabus versions and curriculum information please refer to the QCAA website <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/>

## 4.1 Unit 3 Assessment

Unit 3 requires you to complete two internal summative assessment instruments that contribute to your body of work. The first instrument, Investigation – inquiry phase 1, leads to the second instrument, Project – inquiry phase 2.

The Investigation – inquiry phase 1 can be defined as:

- Investigation is an assessment technique that requires students to research a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or hypothesis through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary data; it uses research or investigative practices to assess a range of cognitions in a particular context; an investigation occurs over an extended and defined period of time.

The Project – inquiry phase 2 can be defined as:

- Project is an assessment technique that focuses on the output or result of a process requiring the application of a range of cognitive, physical, technical, creative and/or expressive skills, and the theoretical and conceptual understanding; a product is developed over an extended and defined period of time.

### What is assessment?

Assessment is a process where the documentation of evidence or data based on knowledge, skill, attitudes and/or beliefs is formally evaluated. Each assessment instrument, IA1 and IA2, has its own eight assessment objectives that align with the predetermined syllabus and unit objectives. For up-to-date information, refer to the instrument task sheet that your teacher will give you. Also, you can see these objectives in the syllabus document online at the QCAA website.

### Research conventions

Because this investigation will require you to research beyond your existing knowledge, you should employ correct research conventions to evidence the sources from which you obtained information. This is known as referencing and acknowledges the original source, upholds intellectual honesty and avoids plagiarism. Your school will require you to use a particular referencing style such as APA or Harvard. Ask your teacher, or librarian, what style to use and how to use it correctly.

Different referencing styles may include:

- *Citations* – abbreviated alphanumeric expressions included within the body of text that are then documented as footnotes (notes at the end of the page) or endnotes (notes on a page at the end of the paper) that provide the source details in greater depth. These are commonly referred to as in-text citations.
- *Reference lists* – are required if you have used citations. This list is presented at the end of your writing, immediately before your bibliography. This needs to be a complete list, detailing all of the sources that you have deliberately referred to in your writing, especially if cited. Sources include websites, journal articles, books, etc.
- *Bibliographies* – this usually includes sources that you have researched or consulted when researching to assist you in generating general ideas and where you have not directly referred to specific text in your writing.

## 4.2 Summative internal assessment 1 (IA1): Investigation – inquiry phase 1

### Assessment description

This is the initial stage in the self-directed body of work and occurs at the start of Unit 3 for a stipulated period of time. This first assessment process requires you to independently investigate an inquiry question in response to the teacher-facilitated direct stimulus experience. This means you will set yourself a specific problem, question, issue, design challenge or **hypothesis** through the collection, analysis and synthesis of primary and/or secondary sources. Primary sources include your own experimental artworks. Your resolved investigation provides a focus for how you will proceed with answering your inquiry question through the remainder of the body of work. It is a focused investigation and invites you to research beyond your own knowledge and data given. You will use class time but also your own time to develop a response to your inquiry.

.....

**hypothesise** formulate a supposition to account for known facts or observed occurrences; conjecture, theorise, speculate; especially on uncertain or tentative grounds

.....

### Assessment specifications

This task requires students to:

- develop an individual inquiry question in response to a stimulus or experience and explore ideas and representations to answer the inquiry question
- research art practices of selected key artists and experiment with visual approaches inspired by new knowledge to answer the inquiry question
- reflect on the impact of influences from a variety of sources to evaluate and justify viewpoints and responses to the inquiry question

- resolve and communicate a self-directed focus informed by development, research and reflection
- present findings in a research report form with the following headings – title page, abstract, introduction, discussion, experimentation, conclusion, focus, reference list and appendixes.

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### Assessment conditions

This Investigation – inquiry phase 1 task will be developed during class time and it is expected that you will also use your own time to work on this assessment. Your teacher will stipulate a set period of time within which you are required to complete this task. This time frame will be stated on your assessment instrument and be indicated in hours, weeks or lessons. This is an individual task.

Response requirements:

- Visual evidence, including experimental artworks, relevant annotated artworks, images and/or diagrams
- Student-selected media.

This investigation can be presented through one of three modes. Students may choose the mode. Modes include:

- a written report up to 2000 words
- a multimodal (at least 2 modes delivered at the same time): up to 10 minutes (up to 2000 words, or up to 12 presentation slides)
- a digital presentation such as a video or digital book: up to 12 presentation slides (up to 2000 words or up to 10 minutes).

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.1

Examine a student assessment example and tick off the following checkpoints.

- Identifies the unit being assessed; for example, Unit 3: Art as knowledge
- Indicates the assessment task; for example, Investigation – inquiry phase 1
- States the mode of assessment; for example, written report, multimodal or digital presentation, and adheres to set limitations
- Stipulates the direct stimulus or first-hand experience facilitated by their teacher
- Communicates a resolved and self-directed focus
- Frames and unpacks a self-directed inquiry question
- Includes research of key artists and examples of their artwork (art practices of others)
- Incorporates visual support; for example, annotated artworks, images, diagrams, experiments
- Includes primary and secondary sources; for example, student experiments, key artist's artworks, in-text citations
- Analyses and interprets meaning in artworks through a contexts; for example, contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal
- Applies literacy skills and uses visual art terminology; for example, in identifying materials, techniques and processes, or analysing visual elements
- Provides research conventions; for example, citations, reference lists and/or bibliography.

## Strengths, implications and limitations

When you make decisions as you work through your body of work, you are required to articulate and demonstrate how you justified the choices you made. This is an essential part of the Reflecting Criteria. In Visual Art, you are expected to use and develop your critical thinking skills.

... critical thinking does not mean being negative or focusing on faults. It means being able to clarify your thinking so that you can break down a problem or a piece of information, interpret it and use that interpretation to arrive at an informed decision or judgement ...

MONASH UNIVERSITY, 'WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?';  
STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS – ENHANCE YOUR THINKING  
© 2024 MONASH UNIVERSITY

In the IA1, 2 and 3 you will need to apply critical thinking skills by demonstrating that you have **critically understood** and considered **strengths, implications** and **limitations** of possible options that will impact the inquiry.

Ask yourself, 'What are the implications of this choice, approach or decision?' Do not use running out of time as a limitation of the experiment.

**critical understanding** analysis, evaluation and questioning of your approaches

**strengths** the positive qualities of your work that clearly and *strongly* communicate intentions or required outcomes

**implications** what may happen if you follow a particular approach, the effects or consequences on the future of your body of work, based on the choices you make as you move through your inquiry

**limitations** the qualities of your work that reduce the communication of intended meaning or required outcomes

In IA1, as you reflect on and justify your inquiry, you must show that you critically understand the strengths, implications and limitations of the experimental approaches you have explored, in relation to the focus and the inquiry question. Your discussion needs to include passages that justify by giving reasons (in relation to the focus and inquiry question) why an experiment might be stronger or more limited than others. Use a graphic organiser, like the one in Table 4.1, to decide on strengths, implications and limitations, then transfer them into the discussion.

In IA2, you are required to justify your intended outcomes and meaning in artworks, supported by understanding of strengths, implications and limitations of approaches. In this case, you need to weigh up and justify your possible

approaches to the inquiry, based on which ones best communicate your viewpoint or intended meaning. Evidence that documents the strengths, implications and limitations of visual language, expression, materials, symbols etc. in relation to the intended meaning is required in your supporting evidence. Use a graphic organiser in your visual diary to visualise and communicate this complex thinking so you can include it in your supporting evidence.

In IA3 you need to justify a new intended outcome supported by strengths, implications and limitations of possible alternate approaches. Use a graphic organiser to help visualise the complexity of this decision-making and include it in supporting evidence.

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.2

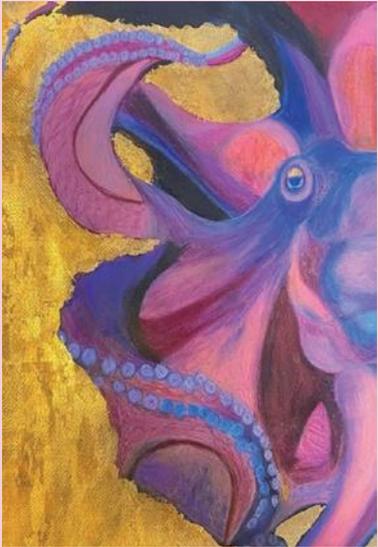
As you work through the experimentation in the IA1, use this graphic organiser to evaluate your choices and justify your decisions.

In IA2 and IA3, build your own graphic organiser to support evidence of meeting the Reflecting Criteria.

**FOCUS:**  
**INQUIRY QUESTION:**

	FIRST EXPERIMENT	SECOND EXPERIMENT	THIRD EXPERIMENT
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the strengths of your experiments</li> <li><b>Why</b> is it successful in communicating intentions to do with focus and the inquiry question?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Implications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>What</b> are the implications of the experiment, in terms of how meaning about focus is communicated?</li> </ul> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does it suggest you are exploring a different focus to the one intended?</li> <li>Will emphasising a particular visual design element or using a particular material improve, alter or diminish the way audiences interpret meaning?</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Limitations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the limitations of the experiments</li> <li><b>Why</b> is it limited in communicating intentions to do with focus and inquiry question?</li> </ul>			

**TABLE 4.1** AN EXAMPLE OF HOW TO DISCUSS STRENGTHS, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS, TAKEN FROM AN IA1 BY SOPHIA JORGENSEN. THE FULL IA1 CAN BE ACCESSED IN THE INTERACTIVE TEXTBOOK.

 <p><b>FIGURE 4</b> <i>Experiment</i>, Posca pens, 20.5 x 20.5 cm wooden board</p>	<p>...The repetition in Figure 4 successfully captures the idea of a jellyfish bloom but the painting is less successful at evoking the idea of movement. The jellyfish look too solid and static. It looks like a wallpaper pattern rather than creatures floating in liquid. However, it does provoke a sense of disgust.</p>	<p>Strength Limitation Limitation Limitation Strength</p>
 <p><b>FIGURE 3</b> <i>Experiment</i>, mixed media on 42.5 x 20 cm, pastel paper</p>	<p>Figure 3, conversely, succeeds in evoking a different emotional response because of its transparent, layered, delicate lines and rich colours suggesting elegance and beauty. In this experiment the viewer peers side-on at the jellyfish, experiencing it as if swimming with it and the close-up view enhances their experience.</p>	<p>Strength  Implication</p>
 <p><b>FIGURE 10</b> <i>Experiment</i>, wax based pencils and gold leaf on 42.5 x 20 cm pastel paper</p>	<p>...Gold leaf in Figure 10 creates non-literal meaning because of its fragility, like the ocean ecosystem, but gold also symbolises wealth. The gold leaf is flaking away from the eyelid of the octopus and the background, suggesting the richness of the ocean's ecosystem is diminishing. This symbolism is a <b>strength</b> of this work, communicating meaning subtly. However, an <b>implication</b> of pursuing this approach will be making sure that the meaning is not too subtle, because the colour strength suggests positivity and that is not my intention.</p>	<p>Strength  Implication</p>

## Inquiry phase 1: Scaffolding

Regardless of in which mode you choose to present your findings, the essential ingredients of the investigation remain the same. The QCAA Visual Art Syllabus website has a resource called Supporting Resource: Investigation Scaffold, which can assist you with organising your

information. It has been used by the students whose work features in this section.

### Inquiry phase 1, example: Written report

The following example shows how you might present your IA1 in the written mode.

Sophia Jorgensen: Unit 3 Art as knowledge, IA1- Investigation



Experimental work

How do artists respond to environmental degradation and other critical issues associated with climate change in today's contemporary world?

Word count: 2000

Summary

This investigation responds to the sensory and emotional reaction I had on the stimulus experience when I saw a bleached coral reef on our excursion to Green Island. This inspired me to research artists who explore marine degradation and led to my experimental works. Contemporary artists, Vanessa Barragão and Penelope Davis influenced my experiments, as did my research into the effects of climate change and floating plastic debris. I drew on the personal context I experienced when seeing the effects of climate change. I want to make work that showcases the beauty of the ocean's diverse ecosystems, to engage viewers and encourage them to make a difference while there is still time.

1

**FIGURE 4.2** This is the first page of an example of an Investigation – inquiry phase 1 (IA1) by Sophia Jorgensen. It is in the mode of a written report. The full report is available in the Interactive Textbook. This page indicates the inquiry question, the summary of the report, an indication of word length and an example of imagery that will also appear later. The summary is not counted in the word length.

## INTRODUCTION

This investigation responds through a personal context to the stimulus excursion to Green Island. Instead of feeling immersed in a thriving ecosystem, as I had expected, I noticed that the coral reef was significantly bleached. This experience inspired me to investigate and create experimental works to explore the concept of climate change and how it impacts oceans. Artists Vanessa Barragão and Penelope Davis have both explored this topic. Their upcycling of waste, and how they communicate their research on climate change, inspired me to experiment with drawing, painting and sculpture to communicate my own ideas.

## DISCUSSION

### Key Artist 1- Vanessa Barragão

Vanessa Barragão, a Portuguese contemporary textile artist, creates artworks designed to remind us of the harsh reality of human consumption and climate change (Barragão, 2023). Her early exposure to textile and fibre techniques through her grandmother's knitting and crocheting, instilled in her a desire to create things by hand. This is evident in her contemporary application of textiles. After working in the fashion industry where she saw significant wastage, she began using recycled textiles and yarns in her practice to help reduce environmental impact.

Barragão's practice is informed by her personal context. Her interest in coral reefs began as a child when she travelled to the Caribbean with her family. She still remembers the coral as the most impressive thing she has ever seen. She wants to raise awareness of the impact of industrial processes on fragile coral ecosystems (Barragão, 2023) and bring about change by using her sculptural textiles to inform people about the issue. *Coral Garden* (figure 1) is an example of how she does this.

*Coral Garden* is a large, organically shaped, sculptural tapestry depicting a coral reef. It features various coral forms made of yarn. All the corals have been individually hand looped or crocheted by Barragão, resulting in a variety of textures that are familiar to us because they are found in clothing. The coral forms literally represent the current state of this ecosystem, with a significant section of the tapestry devoid of colour because it represents bleached coral. Non-literally, through the subject matter and the

2

**FIGURE 4.3** On page 2 of Sophia's report, you can clearly see the section headings, the introduction which introduces both artists, contexts, reaction to stimulus experience and other influences.



**FIGURE 4.4** Artist Vanessa Barragão poses in front of her work, *Coral Garden*, 2019. This is one of the artworks that Sophia Jorgensen investigated for her IA1.

## Focus

The final section of the IA1 is the **Focus Statement** that will inform the remaining body of work, the IA2 and IA3. The focus is a defined, context-driven idea about how the inquiry will progress. It should show you have reached conclusions through your research and answered the inquiry question. It should express meaning about the interrelationship of knowledge and art practice. You can't change your IA1 focus as you develop the body of work. However, the focus may evolve and develop as you refine your inquiry, research further artists and continue experimenting. You might

develop ideas that could send you in particular directions, but the inquiry should be sustained and evident within each response. The focus and inquiry question remain consistent.

The focus provides a clear direction for the student's body of work and demonstrates how they have linked the stimulus, the inquiry question, the research and impact of artists' practices on experiments and new knowledge. The focus specifies what the student has learned and how this will be applied to the work they will do in IA2 and IA3.

Effective practices in Visual Art submissions, p. 14  
© Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority

Below is the focus in Sophia Jorgensen's report. The full report is available in the interactive textbook.

My focus has been informed by my personal experience during the stimulus experience at Green Island. I went swimming around an endangered reef, bleached by the thermal stress of rising seawater temperatures and it made me want to find out what was happening to the reef. In my body of work, inspired by my personal interests but working through a contemporary context, I aim to create artworks that will explore the impact of rising water temperatures on marine animals. Additionally, I want to explore the impact of plastic pollutants on marine animals and habitats. I am hoping to manipulate visual language to suggest precious and beautiful forms that will communicate the environmental horrors within the ocean and actually challenge viewers to change their habits.

SOPHIA JORGENSEN



Cover Image: Wood-Wide Web

### Abstract

This investigation is in response to the physical and sensory stimulus provided on the stimulus experience day in Kin Kin.

I was inspired by the complexity of ecological connections and the interdependence of all living matter. I was drawn to explore beneath my feet and the unified yet unseen connections of roots, fungi and bacteria, and explore the similarities with human connectivity.

Artists Sun-Hyuk Kim and Fred Williams assisted in the exploration of this concept. The focus for my body of work will be an appreciation of the complexity and nature of connectivity humans build as part of the human condition, using personal and contemporary contexts.

IA1

## INQUIRY PHASE 1 Unit 3 – Art as Knowledge

How do artists' practices explore  
concepts of human connectivity?

Word Count: 1660

IA1 Inquiry Phase – Eleena Jackson

Page 1 of 12

**FIGURE 4.5** See the Interactive Textbook for further examples of IA1. This one by Eleena Jackson investigates how artists explore human connectivity.

## 4.3 Summative internal assessment 2 (IA2): Project – inquiry phase 2

### Assessment objectives

This assessment is the second stage or inquiry phase in your self-directed body of work and is referred to as a project because you will produce an output as a result of a process. This assessment, referred to as the IA2, continues from your investigation and requires you to resolve ideas that you developed in your IA1 through effective problem-solving. Refer to your assessment instrument or the online version of the syllabus for the assessment objectives.

#### Stimulus specifications

It is very important to note that the IA2 maintains a connection, through sustained inquiry, to the IA1 stimulus or experience. In the IA2 you will respond to the focus you developed in your IA1 and your inquiry question.

### Assessment specifications

This task requires students to:

- develop, create and display visual responses that communicate the student-directed focus, concept and context
- research and experiment with visual language, expression and media to communicate focus, concept and context
- reflect on new knowledge and influential art-making approaches and practices that demonstrate an aesthetic understanding when evaluating and justifying decisions
- resolve and communicate intended meaning through artworks and artist's statements
- document the inquiry process, including:
  - photographic evidence of resolved artwork/s, showing details of media application as required
  - multiple angles for 3-dimensional artworks
  - display in physical form, or intended display demonstrated through digital or virtual forms
  - video and audio of time-based media or site-specific work as required

- artist's statement/s that assist audience understanding of body of work focus and critical thinking
- annotated image/s of resolved artworks to indicate connections and support performance descriptors in developing, researching and reflecting criteria as required
- supporting evidence to:
  - communicate relevant development of solutions, research and experimentation in the creative process, and evaluation and judgement during problem-solving
  - demonstrate a connection between processes of conceptual development and resolved work; appropriate evidence is dependent on the nature of the work, media and approaches
  - support the authenticity of student work through evidence of primary sources, acknowledgement of secondary sources and/or documentation of progressive development.

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### Assessment conditions

The Project – inquiry phase 2 task will be developed during class time and it is expected that you will also use your own time to work on this. Your teacher will stipulate a set period of time within which you are required to complete this task. This time frame will be stated and be indicated in hours.

Conditions for the Project – inquiry phase 2 are different to Investigation – inquiry phase 1, but continue from and extend on it. You are to state and refer to your focus from inquiry phase 1 to clarify the ideas and representations previously established. This focus will not be reassessed, but is required to show continuity. The media choice for this assessment is student directed. It is your own decision as to what type of media you want to use to create your artwork. You should select media areas that you have previously built skills in and

have technical control, experience and confidence using. However, do not be totally limited by this decision as experimentation with familiar and unfamiliar materials and techniques may offer you areas of new and innovative exploration. Use of non-conventional materials and techniques can often provide a platform for creative exploration. Choices include 2D media, 3D objects and time-based media.

The outcome will be a single resolved artwork or a collection of related, resolved artworks. If you decide to produce a collection of artworks, each work must be related to each other and be as important as each other. As well as making and displaying your resolved work/s you will also submit a digital document, such as a PowerPoint presentation, that contains all the other evidence as outlined in the IA2 checklist, Table 4.2.

**TABLE 4.2** IA2 CHECKLIST. THE IA2 IS A COMPLEX ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT WITH SEVERAL COMPONENTS. USE THIS CHECKLIST TO ENSURE YOUR SUBMISSION IS COMPLETE AND MEETS THE EXPECTED REQUIREMENTS.

MY COMPLETE IA2 SUBMISSION HAS:	TICK WHEN COMPLETE ✓
The written focus statement from my IA1 (will not be reassessed – but communicates ideas and starting point)	
Photographic documentation of my resolved work (there is no limit to how many can be included)	
Well-lit and focused photographs of my resolved artwork/s showing my work on display OR Images showing my work on <i>virtual</i> display. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photograph captions include title of work/s, media and size</li> <li>• Sculptural work has been photographed from front, back and side views and these are all included to indicate how it looks from different angles. They are labelled to indicate the angle.</li> <li>• Detail photographs: these are zoomed-in photos showing details of important sections that are hard to see in an overview photo</li> <li>• Video and audio of time-based media or site-specific media or site-specific work</li> </ul>	
Artist's statement Is a written paragraph up to 150 words per statement (name, title, media, and size are not included in word count) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one artist's statement for a single artwork or a collection of artworks</li> </ul> OR Multiple artist's statements for individual artworks in a collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have proof-read and checked for spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>	
Annotations Annotated images of resolved artwork/s: multimodal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one page only (even if there are several resolved works) with photograph/s of my resolved work/s</li> <li>• up to 200 words of annotations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– shows how the resolved artwork/s meet the Developing, Researching and Reflecting criteria and can reference performance-level descriptors on the ISMGs</li> <li>– explains meaning of components so that a deeper understanding of intentions can be established</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I have proof-read and checked for spelling and grammatical errors</li> </ul>	
Supporting evidence: multimodal, up to 4 pages/slides or similar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was selected by me</li> <li>• Contains evidence to show how my work meets the performance levels in the IA2 ISMGs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– For instance, experimental artworks, sketches, diagrams, graphic organisers, images, photographs, and/or collections of stimuli with notes, annotations, and/or reflective commentary</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.3

Table 4.2 is a checklist to assist you with the compilation of your IA2 submission. Tick off each section as you gather your evidence and insert it into a PowerPoint presentation or other digital file for submission to your teacher.

### What is resolved work?

Resolving is the point where communication of meaning and understanding is clearly evident. It demonstrates synthesis of ideas as a result of researching, developing and reflecting. Characteristics of resolved work include:

- Evidence of in-depth research, development and critical reflection
- Communication of personal aesthetic
- A degree of 'finish', showing knowledge, understanding of media and technical skills
- End-points are reached
- Concept, focus, context and media areas are used to solve complex problems of visual language and expression.

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### Annotated images of resolved artworks

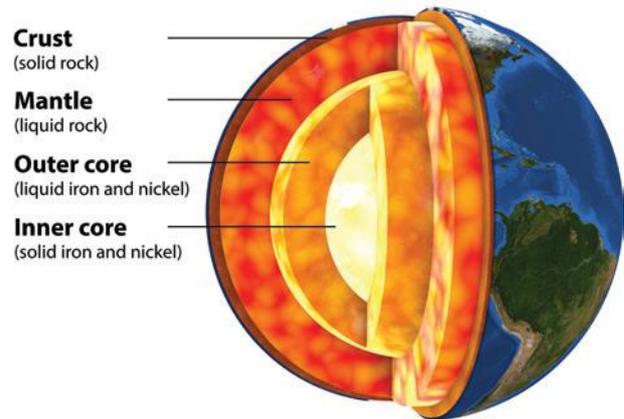
Students are required to include an annotated image of their resolved artwork/s in their responses to both Internal Assessments 2 and 3 (IA2 and IA3).

#### What is an annotated image?

Annotations are notes that explain, comment on or clarify texts or images. They are brief. An annotated image contains an image with notes that explain it.

The annotated image of resolved artwork/s should provide a snapshot of the work's essential ingredients based on the assessment criteria of Developing, Researching and Reflecting. The most effective of these will use text boxes with arrows

### Structure of the Earth



**FIGURE 4.6** This is an example of a very basic annotated image. The words are connected by lines to the part of the image that relates to them.

pointing to the relevant parts of the artwork so a visual connection is made between the written information and the image/s.

#### Why include an annotated image in your response for IA2 and IA3?

The inclusion of the annotated image is stipulated in the syllabus specifications and response requirements. It also allows you to decode your artwork, and to include information to support the Developing, Researching and Reflecting criteria that haven't been emphasised or captured in your four pages of supporting evidence. The annotated illustration explains the meaning of components of your artwork so that a deeper understanding of intentions can be established. It provides a snapshot for anyone who has never seen your artwork before, so they can follow the development of your focus.

#### What to include in an annotated image

- **You are only allowed one annotated image in each submission.** So, if you have several resolved components in your response, they are all discussed on one annotated image.
- **200 words of text is allowed.** Decide which aspects of your resolved work match the performance levels in the ISMG. Explain how you developed, researched and reflected to get to the resolved end product.
- **An image of your resolved artwork/s.** If the resolved work contains a collection of works, they must all be presented together in the one





**FIGURE 4.8** Janet Dovers, *A Collection of Uncomfortable Chairs – Saccharum Officinarum (Sugar)*, 2022, water colour and gouache on polished paper, 26.7 x 16.5 cm



**FIGURE 4.9** Janet Dovers, *A Collection of Uncomfortable Chairs – Gossypium*, 2022, water colour and gouache on polished paper, 26.7 x 16.5 cm

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.4

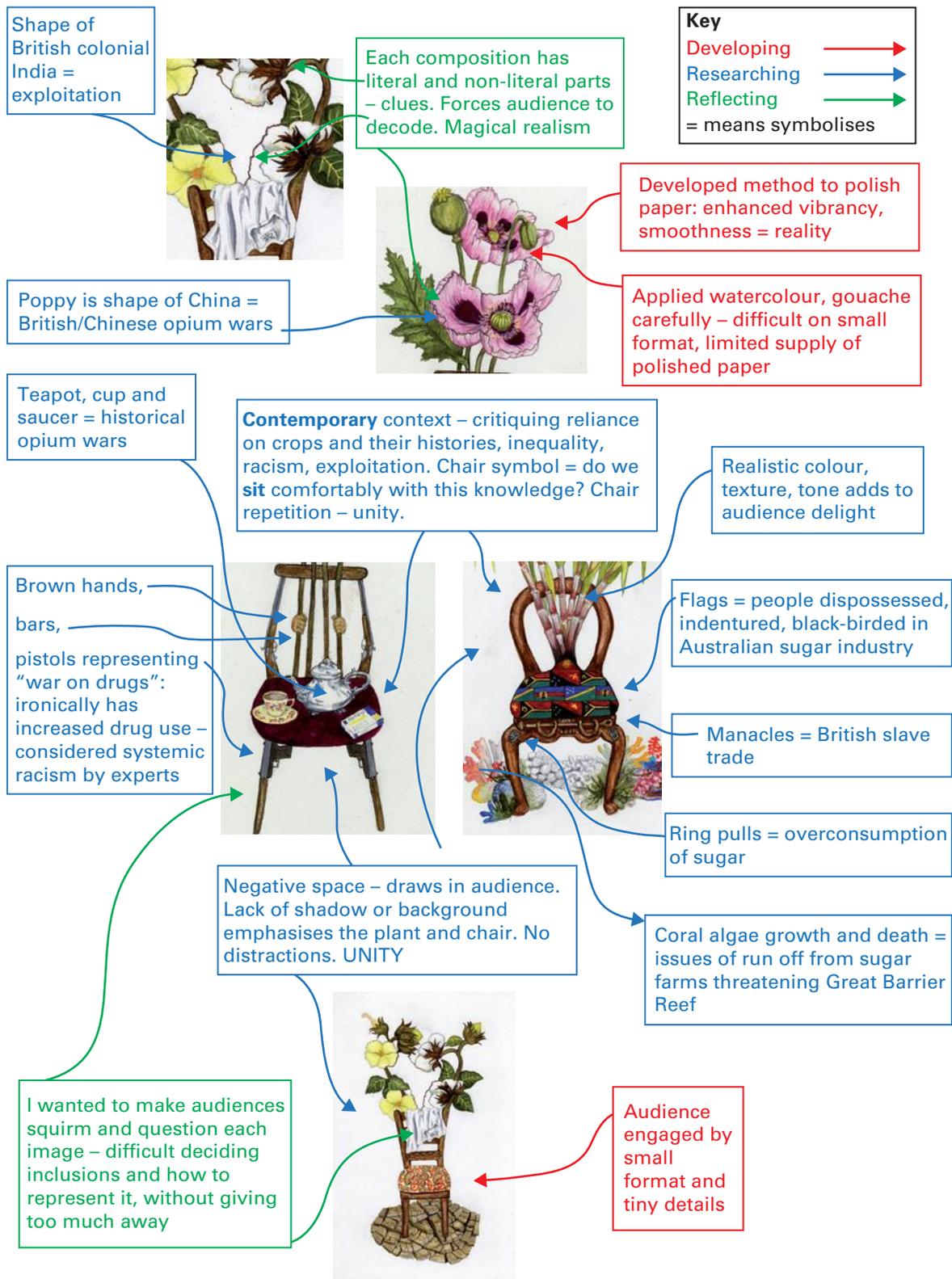
- 1 Take one of your experimental works and practise making an annotated image of it.
- 2 Use any artwork from an artist case study in this text. Read about it and construct an annotated image of the work. Refer to the IA2 or IA3 performance level descriptors in the current online QCAA General Visual Art senior syllabus to help you decide what to include.
- 3 After you have done either of the annotated image activities above, use the annotations to help you write a paragraph about the work.

## Scaffolding for IA2 and IA3

The QCAA has published PowerPoint templates that teachers and students can download and use to present their Projects. Search online for the QCAA Visual Art Syllabus, assessment resources, related resources.

They are called:

- IA2 student response template: Project – Inquiry Phase 2
- IA3 student response template: Project – Inquiry Phase 3.



**FIGURE 4.10** Janet Dovers' paintings have been organised to show an example of an annotated image of resolved artwork/s, with up to 200 words in annotations for the collection of works.

## Example of an IA2

Look through the example of a partial IA2 student assessment by Eleena Jackson, then complete the activity Inquiry learning 4.5. The complete assessment example is available in the Interactive Textbook. Eleena's IA1 and IA3 are also available in the Interactive Textbook.

**FIGURE 4.11** Eleena Jackson's title page for her IA2. She has submitted her project as a PowerPoint presentation.

## IA2 Project - Inquiry phase 2 Unit 3 Art as knowledge

Inquiry question:  
How do Artists' practices explore concepts of human connectivity?

Eleena Jackson

## Focus — Inquiry phase 1

The focus of my body of work will be an appreciation of the complexity and nature of human connectivity, formed as part of the human condition, by exploring various understandings of connections, root systems, thriving ecosystems and people-to-people networks. I intend to exploit a diverse array of media, including the use of natural materials, to communicate the sensibility, layers, transparency, and fragility of connections, establishing a clear literal and non-literal link to the initial stimulus experience from a personal context.

**FIGURE 4.12** The focus from Eleena's IA1 is included in her submission. It is not reassessed. It highlights your focus to confirmers and gives your project context. Confirmers are subject experts who confirm the marks you have been awarded by the school.

## Resolved work 1 Artist statement

*We are Woven*  
Interactive Sculpture: cane, paper, cotton,  
paint 41cm diameter x 22cm height

*Together we weave, over and under, between and around.*

*We are Woven* explores the knowledge of human connections and their impact on identity; how we are influenced by those we build relationships with and how we are guided by their values, beliefs, and those they are connected to.

The three-dimensional form, suggesting a nest, with connotations of nurture and growth, is interactive. The chaotic nature of weaving highlighting the complexities and randomness of connections and identity. Its modern minimalistic colour scheme juxtaposing traditional ideas of what weaving is.

The sculpture specifically focuses on the connections that have faded or been lost: through distance, death or conflict. People who have guided me contributed by weaving in a strip of paper on which they wrote a significant lost connection. Who would you like to weave into the sculpture?

**FIGURE 4.13** Eleena has resolved a series of three related artworks in her IA2. She chose to write three different artist's statements, one for each resolved artwork. This is the artist's statement for the first resolved artwork.

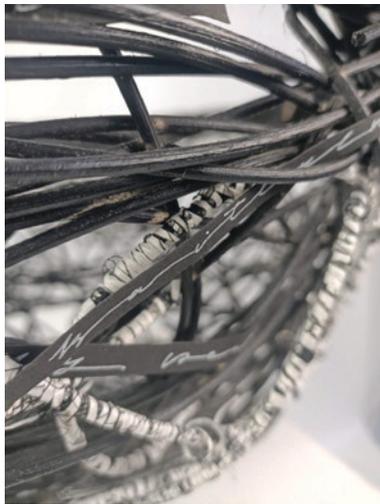
## Resolved Work 1 Display View



*We are Woven*  
Interactive Sculpture  
cane, paper, cotton, paint  
41cm diameter x 22cm

**FIGURE 4.14** This slide is a clear and well-focused photograph of the work on display. There are no distractions in the background. Note the information on the slide giving artwork details, including size.

## Resolved Work 1 Detail



*We are Woven (detail)*  
Interactive Sculpture  
cane, paper, cotton, paint  
41cm diameter x 22cm

**FIGURE 4.15** The detail photographs include close-ups to show texture and a range of views of different angles of the sculpture.



## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.5

Examine the partial student assessment example by Eleena Jackson and look for the following:

- identifies the unit; for example, Unit 3: Art as knowledge
- indicates the task; for example, Project – inquiry phase 2 (IA2)
- includes the focus from inquiry phase 1 (IA1)
- produces a single resolved artwork or a collection of artworks with specific details
- documents resolved artwork/s photographically, includes artwork details, includes display or intended display
- writes an artist’s statement
- presents an annotated illustration of the resolved artwork/s using prescribed performance descriptors; for example, developing, researching and reflecting criteria
- written information in the annotated illustration
- supporting evidence, between 1–4 pages or slides.

## DISCUSS

In your own words, explain to your elbow partner what the literal and non-literal meanings of this work are.

How does Eleena’s artist’s statement communicate concept (art as knowledge) and her self-directed focus?

How does Eleena’s artist’s statement invite a dialogue between the artist and audience about the intended meaning?

## Second example of an IA2

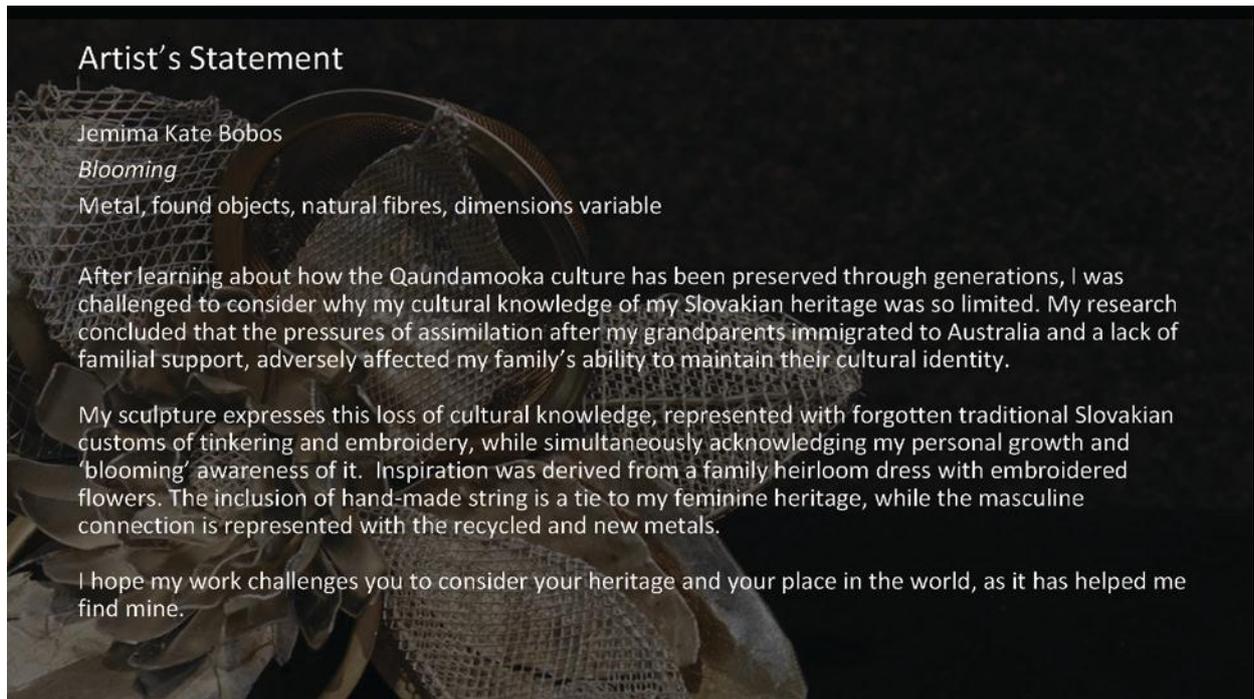
The focus statement from Jemima Kate Boboš’ IA1 personalised her response to the stimulus experience and created a pathway forward for her IA2. The following images show part of her IA2 submission. The full document is available in the Interactive Textbook.

### Jemima Kate Boboš

Focus from IA1

#### (Not for re-assessment)

The stimulus experience at Minjerribah with Delvene Cockatoo Collins influenced me to explore my Slovakian heritage, which I knew very little about. In my experimentation I explored the idea of using rusted metal to represent how my culture has faded away, but I want to be able to create art that will bring it back to life. I would like to incorporate knowledge of traditional Slovakian weaving practices using metal and other industrial materials to reference my research into Slovakian Tinkers. I also want to keep in mind the Slovakian floral embroidery and the significance it has for traditional Slovakian clothing. My future works will exemplify how the notions of loss of cultural knowledge may be acknowledged through personal and cultural contexts in innovative contemporary art. My works will need to take this into account as I further my strengths in working with metal and string. Through experimenting I have gained much knowledge about my family’s heritage which I am passionate about portraying, to ensure that I keep my Slovakian culture and heritage alive.



**FIGURE 4.18** Jemima Kate Boboš' IA2 artist's statement



**FIGURE 4.19** Display view of the resolved IA2 artwork



**FIGURE 4.20** An example of one of the detail photographs that provide information about Jemima Kate Boboš' use of materials

**DISCUSS**

What is the link between the IA1 focus statement and the IA2 resolved work in Jemima Kate Boboš' submission? From the evidence provided, evaluate the impact of key artist's practices on Jemima Kate Boboš' IA2 resolved work. Evaluate the success of Jemima Kate Boboš' display and detail photographs on providing information to a marker.

**Annotated image of resolved artwork**

**Key**  
 Researching  
 Developing  
 Reflecting

**Engagement:**

- Display- flowers falling embodies my abandoned cultural heritage.
- the use of new metals and Tinker-like items 'blooming' represents my new knowledge and discovery.

Chose working with metal as a unique expression of my culture.

Inspired by authentic experience at Minjerribah and exploration of personal cultural identity.

**Personal context impacted significantly-** extremely personal - moved me to consider my heritage - make connections with family who were unable to preserve their cultural identity.

Lorraine Connelly-Northey influenced choice to use discarded metals representing cultural heritage,  
 Elisa Jane Carmichael influenced choice to make string – meaningful connection to her culture and mine.  
 Both- combine traditional practices with contemporary processes.



Capitalised on new knowledge of materials and culture (heirloom dress)

**Literal** - Traditional Slovakian floral embroidery replicated with Tinker-like items.

**Non-literal**

- metal work, metal items- represents my culture + family- ancestors Tinkers.
- Hand-made string /natural fibres –represents my female ancestors, pays homage to their traditional embroidery skills and patterns.





Strength – juxtaposition of metal with delicate floral sculptures- visual surprise

Limitations – skills took time to develop- components made early are less floral-like.

Implications – made group of objects because more small objects = greater impact-

FIGURE 4.21 Jemima Kate Boboš' annotated illustration of her resolved work provides written and visual information about how the resolved artwork meets the assessment criteria.

**Supporting Evidence**

**Researched artist Lorraine Connelly-Northey and her process as well as her materials.**

**RESEARCH ON ARTISTS** LORRAINE CONNELLY-NORTHEY

CONTEXTS: personal and cultural

Process:

- Collects discarded metals
- A 'Scavenger' by 'cleaning up Australia'
- Uses these materials to represent traditional Aboriginal Australia

Descendant of the Wadjarie people

**Key Idea**  
 Uses discarded materials to represent her heritage

Inspired me to use Tinker items in my art. Both discarded and part of my culture

Uses 'Coolamons' in her art, which are a part of her culture.

**INSPIRED BY CONNELLY-NORTHEY**  
 Uses discarded metals to represent her heritage → as well as Coolamons

After research from IA1, I decided to use discarded Tinker items to represent my Slovakian heritage.

**DEVELOPING: MY PROCESS**

Hard to work with

**OLD METAL**- old metal with new metals creating the flowers, representing new knowledge of my SLOVAKIAN HERITAGE

**MY MAIN INSPIRATION**  
 Flowers embroidered on Slovakian women's clothing.

**Researched Tinkers which led me to using Tinker materials to create the flowers.**

**Developed solutions to difficulties found when working with metal.**

FIGURE 4.22 One of Jemima Kate Boboš' four pages of supporting evidence. The full document is available in the Interactive Textbook.

## 4.4 Unit 4 Assessment

In Unit 4 you will be assessed twice. The first assessment item is the summative internal assessment 3, also known as the IA3. This is the third phase of the self-directed inquiry that began with the investigation in the IA1 and was developed in the IA2 project. The IA3 is a project and has specific documentation requirements, which are outlined in section 4.5.

The second assessment item in Unit 4 is the summative external assessment (EA), which is an examination. The examination is discussed in section 4.6. Although the examination occurs during Unit 4, learning in both Units 3 and 4 is relevant in the external assessment.

## 4.5 Summative internal assessment 3 (IA3): Project – inquiry phase 3

### Description

Project – inquiry phase 3, also known as IA3, requires students to evolve their body of work using an alternate approach to the student focus. This should be determined through your research into contemporary approaches to making, display and audience engagement. The outcome of the project will be resolved work that is arrived at by extended application of inquiry learning.

For a detailed description of Project – inquiry phase 3 and its assessment objectives, refer to the QCAA Visual Art 2025 v1.1 General Senior Syllabus.

### Description

The inquiry phase 3 (IA3) involves solving problems in relation to a concept that is different to the one you used in your IA2. In IA2 you solved a self-directed inquiry question related to the concept of Art as knowledge. In IA3 you must retain your individual focus (developed in IA1 and explored in IA2), but now you must apply the concept of Art as alternate. In doing so, you will research, explore and apply an alternate approach to your art-making. Additionally, in this task you

are required to demonstrate your knowledge of the contemporary context, which may be combined with other contexts as determined by your focus and approach to the concept. It is at this point that you are required to apply divergent thinking and come up with alternate solutions to extend the focus of your body of work. Refer to your school's specific endorsed assessment instrument and discuss your approaches with your teacher to ensure you are meeting all the requirements of the task.

The Visual Art syllabus and your school's endorsed IA3 instrument outline the specifications and conditions of the task. It is important to refer to the IA3 instrument to ensure you are meeting these specifications and requirements.

### Conditions

You should spend most of your class time on this project, but you should also be prepared to allow some time for homework and study, just as you will for every other subject that you study in Year 12. Check your school's homework policy to be sure you are meeting expectations and are working at a level that will help you achieve your potential.

### A note on time

Working through the inquiry learning process takes time and this project carries more weight than any other item in the Visual Art course. To reach your potential in Visual Art, start the project early, work through it steadily and use class time effectively. Make sure you allocate study time and organise a study timetable with Visual Art included on it. Procrastination can result in insufficient time to reflect and develop a suitably meaningful resolution. Remember, the 'aha' moments that will help you solve the problem often happen when you've given your subconscious mind a chance to work through ideas in a restful state.

## What to include in your submission

### The resolved work/s

Resolving is the point where communication of meaning and understanding is clearly evident. It demonstrates synthesis of ideas as a result of researching, developing and reflecting. Characteristics of resolved work include:

- Evidence of in-depth research, development and critical reflection
- Communication of personal aesthetic
- A degree of 'finish', showing knowledge, understanding of media and technical skills
- End-points are reached
- Concept, focus, context and media areas are used to solve complex problems of visual language and expression.

It is important to note that if there is more than one resolved work in the project, they are equal in importance. Consult with your teacher before you make decisions about which works will be displayed and how you will display them. Display and audience engagement are important considerations in this project.

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### A note on displaying your work

Displaying your work is an essential means of communicating meaning and features heavily in the resolving criterion. If your school lacks suitable space in the art room, you could look further afield. Consider displaying your work in other classrooms, corridors, administration areas and offices at school. Display opportunities could also exist at your local library, community hall, civic offices or shopping centre. Discuss these ideas with your teacher and plan in advance as these spaces would need to be booked and perhaps hired. Remember, you must document the display of the work to include it in the IA3 submission. This means taking good-quality, well-lit and focused photographs of the work as it is displayed.

If your work is ephemeral in its display – for example, you have digital imagery projected at night onto a building – you will need to document that using video and photographs and ensure they are good enough quality to indicate the way the work looked as it was being displayed.

Virtual display can be used if necessary. For instance, if your idea for ultimate resolution relies on a very large public sculpture that you can't possibly cast, you could take photos of your smaller version of it and digitally manipulate imagery to create the intended display. This would need to be explained in the submission. Digital display, such as a digital exhibition, could also be considered. This means using a digital platform that can be accessed by invited audience members. The main thing to consider is that you engage the audience through a contemporary context. This can be through active engagement (when they do something to interact with the work that enhances the intended meaning) or it can be through creating an experience for the audience when viewing it that deliberately draws their attention in a sensory, emotional or meaningful way. Consideration needs to be given to this in the developing stages of the project so that it doesn't become an afterthought.

## Documentation of the resolved work/s

The Visual Art syllabus outlines the required documentation of resolved work. It is important to note that photographic documentation should be well-focused and well-lit. Try to minimise distracting backgrounds. The point is to show its aesthetic qualities to an assessor. Make sure you take several photos of your work on display from different angles. Also take close-ups to document small technical details that would not be apparent in a mid-shot. See the examples of Elise Ridoutt's resolved IA3 project. Elise's work, *UnReality TV*, was a suite of three wooden boxes made to resemble old style televisions. Each box measured 30 cm high

x 47 cm wide x 30 cm deep. They hung on the wall in a total width of 175 cm. This meant that Elise needed to capture the width and depth of them in her photography. Each box or television set contained a light attached to the interior ceiling plus a different component that added to the complexity of the photography. The television on the left contained a tiny replica of the entire artwork including a tiny person interacting with it. The central television contained an iPad on which a looped video played. The right hand television contained a mirror. Viewers engage with the work by looking into each box through a cut-out shape, suggestive of a head, on the front of each one. Elise's submission also contained a digital file of the video that projected inside the central television set.



**FIGURE 4.23** Elise Ridoutt begins her photography shoot with an overview of the whole wall-mounted sculpture as it appeared on display.



**FIGURE 4.24** Elise took a photo of the work from the side so the depth of the sculpture is visible. This also showcases the skilful application of media in the construction and detailing to replicate television sets.



**FIGURE 4.25** Next, Elise took a series of close-ups to make sure the details of the interiors would be clearly visible to any markers/confirmers who might need to view the artwork through the photography only – not in-real-life. This image is a detail of the television set that contains the looped video.



**FIGURE 4.26** This photograph is an example of a well-lit and carefully focused close-up of the interior of the box, that shows aesthetic qualities and details of the degree of finish and knowledge of art media and processes. This is what you are aiming to demonstrate in your detail photographs.

## Artist's statement/s

The artist's statement is a brief written text that accompanies the display of artwork. It assists the viewer to understand the body of work's focus and the meaning of the work, which has resulted from creative thinking. It is interpretive rather than descriptive. Refer to the many examples in other chapters of this textbook. Also refer to the

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.6

Refer to and analyse Elise Ridoutt's artist's statement and images of her artwork in Figures 4.23 - 4.26 Justify your answers to the following questions:

- 1 What was Elise's focus?
- 2 What could the inquiry question have been?
- 3 What materials did Elise work with?
- 4 How large is the resolved work?
- 5 Through which context is the resolved work created?
- 6 How does the display enhance the communication of meaning?

specifications of IA3 in your school's endorsed IA3 instrument or task sheet. Ensure your artist's statement/s meet the requirements of the task. See Elise Ridoutt's artist's statement in the text box as an example. This statement was developed by the student after carefully considering the synthesis of her inquiry question, the focus, the concept, the materials and how they work together to communicate meaning in her resolution.

### *Artist's Statement*

Elise Ridoutt, *UnReality TV*, mixed media, video, 175 cm x 30 cm x 47 cm

My focus "conscious reality" has evolved from an exploration of the tangible physicality of existence. In Art as alternate I approach the internality of existence. Instead of the physical body, I now investigate the interior monologues, congruencies and dichotomies of my mind and your mind. Influenced by Pipilotti Rist, my work can be understood through the contemporary context due to its

impermanence and looping reality; challenging the senses and plunging the viewer into various different 'headspaces'. Fast-paced, patterned video, endlessly reflected mirrors, and an eerie, confronting mini depiction of one's self confront the viewer as they peer gingerly into each face-shaped hole. Through the pressing of their faces into the boxes the audience is invited into the unknown and must leave behind their own identity to confront themselves, asking how many versions of myself have I not yet met?

## Annotated image/s of the resolved work

The annotated illustration supports the performance descriptors in developing, researching and reflecting criteria as required. See more information about annotated image/s in section 4.3. Figure 4.27 is an example of an annotated illustration of a resolved work. It allowed the student to briefly explain how she met the performance level descriptors in the criteria of researching, developing and reflecting. It includes photographs of the resolved work and a written summary of significant contributing factors in the different stages of the inquiry learning process. Make sure you leave enough time to resolve the writing of this annotated illustration. Summarising your project within the limit of 200 words requires reflection and patience.

When determining what to include, you should consider how you have addressed each area of study. For example:

- **Developing:** Include significant influences on how you generated solutions to the problem. For example, you could include, but are not limited to: the alternate approach you took and how your resolved work communicates

your intended meaning by the effective combining of concept, context and focus; how you created meaning through knowledge and understanding of materials, techniques, technologies and art processes; how you applied your knowledge of contemporary art and its display and audience engagement.

- **Researching:** Include significant influences on the way you reacted to stimulus. For example, you could include, but are not limited to: the contemporary artists that influenced you to push your art practice further and evolve your thinking; the stimulus you responded to; how you responded using the contemporary context; how you included other contexts; how you have exploited familiar or alternate media and ideas in response to contemporary practice; how you have included symbols that express non-literal meaning.
- **Reflecting:** Include significant influences on the way you considered ideas and information. For example, you could include, but are not limited to: evaluation of how the resolved work incorporates and is informed by alternate influences such as approaches/traditions/cultures/theories. Justify how the resolved work provides an effective solution to the inquiry question and adds to the self-directed inquiry.

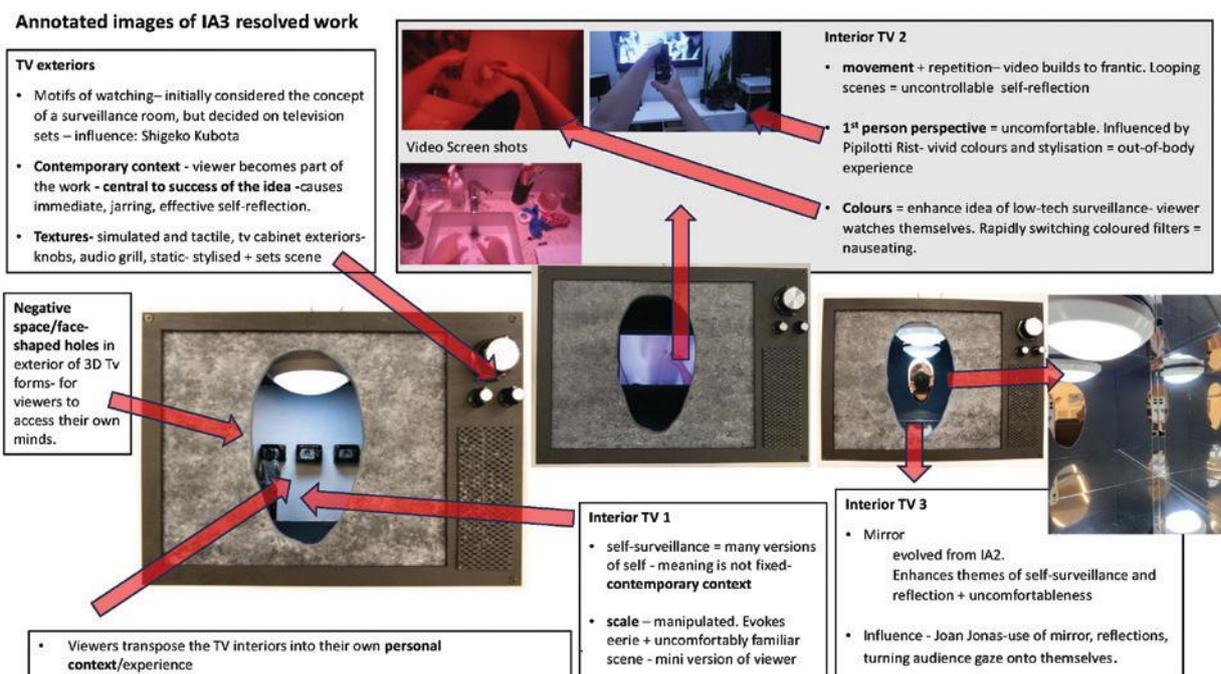


FIGURE 4.27 Example of an annotated image from Elise Ridoutt's resolved IA3

## Focus from inquiry phase 1 and annotated illustration of the resolved work from inquiry phase 2

Refer to the Visual Art syllabus for details regarding inclusion of the focus from IA1 and the annotated illustration from IA2. These two pieces of evidence help to communicate your meaning and put your Unit 4 work in context for an assessor. Refer to section 4.2 for information about the focus.

## Supporting evidence

You are able to submit up to 4 pages of supporting evidence. Refer to the Visual Art syllabus or your school's endorsed instrument (task sheet) to ensure you include adequate and appropriate supporting evidence that signposts, evaluates and justifies your inquiry learning within each of the criteria. Refer to the performance level descriptors in the instrument-specific marking guides (IMSGs) to ensure you meet all characteristics.

**TABLE 4.3** IA3 CHECKLIST. THE IA3 IS A COMPLEX ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT WITH SEVERAL COMPONENTS. USE THIS CHECKLIST TO ENSURE YOUR SUBMISSION IS COMPLETE AND MEETS THE EXPECTED REQUIREMENTS.

MY COMPLETE IA3 SUBMISSION CONTAINS:	TICK WHEN COMPLETE ✓
The written focus statement from my IA1 (will not be reassessed – but communicates ideas and starting point)	
The annotated image of resolved work from IA2 (will not be reassessed – but communicates key ideas in IA2)	
Photographic documentation of my resolved IA3 work (there is no limit to how many can be included) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-lit and focused photographs of my resolved artwork/s showing my work on display</li> </ul> OR Images showing my work on <i>virtual</i> display <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photograph captions all include title of work/s, media and size</li> <li>Sculptural work has been photographed from front, back and side views and these are all included to indicate how it looks from different angles. They are labelled to indicate the angle.</li> <li>Detail photographs: these are zoomed-in photos showing details of important sections that are hard to see in an overview photo</li> <li>Snips of video files, labelled</li> <li>Video and audio files can be embedded but must also be saved and submitted as separate files, labelled.</li> </ul>	
Artist's statement Is a written paragraph up to 150 words per statement (name, title, media, and size are not included in word count) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>one artist's statement for a single artwork or a collection of artworks</li> </ul> OR Multiple artist's statements for individual artworks in a collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have proof-read and checked for spelling and grammatical errors</li> <li>I have used relevant visual art terminology, sentences and punctuation that assists meaning</li> <li>Each artist's statement communicates your approach to the concept (Art as alternate) and your focus</li> <li>Each artist's statement invites a dialogue between artist and audience about your intended meaning.</li> </ul>	

(Continued)

MY COMPLETE IA3 SUBMISSION CONTAINS:	TICK WHEN COMPLETE ✓
Annotated images of resolved artwork/s: multimodal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one page only (even if there are several resolved works) with photograph/s of my resolved work/s</li> <li>• up to 200 words of annotations               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— shows how the resolved artwork/s meet the Developing, Researching and Reflecting criteria and can reference performance-level descriptors on the ISMGs</li> <li>— explains meaning of components so that a deeper understanding of intentions can be established</li> </ul> </li> <li>• I have proof-read and checked for spelling and grammatical errors.</li> </ul>	
Supporting evidence: multimodal, up to 4 pages/slides or similar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was selected by me</li> <li>• Contains evidence to show how my work meets the higher performance levels in the IA3 ISMGs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— For instance, experimental artworks, sketches, diagrams, graphic organisers, images, photographs, and/or collections of stimuli with notes, annotations and/or reflective commentary.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

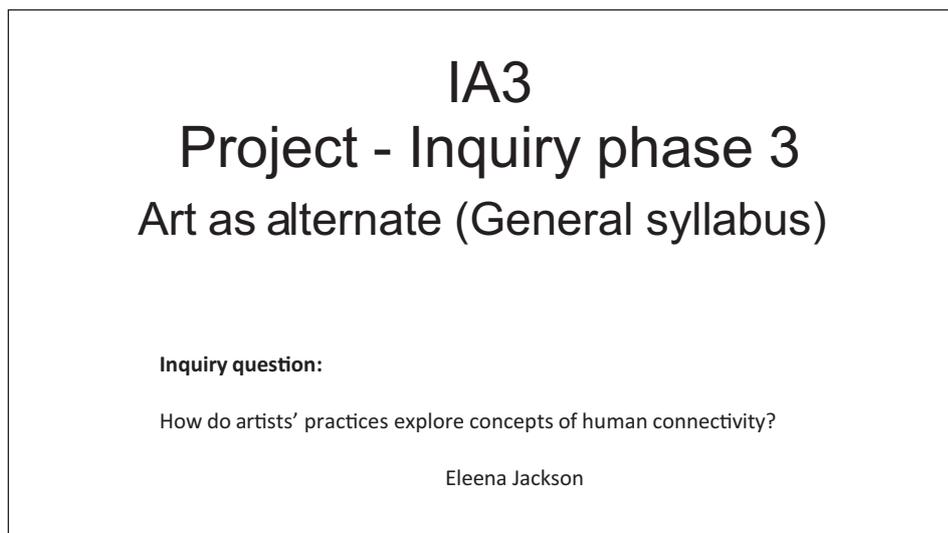
## Example of an IA3 submission

The example submission in Figures 4.28–4.41 shows one way that your IA3 could look. The complete IA3 submission is included in the Interactive Textbook.

This IA3 was made by Eleena Jackson. The submission was put together using PowerPoint. Eleena made two resolved works. The first is a pair

of interactive sculptures and the second is a set of three mixed-media, wall-mounted works. They have included an artist’s statement for each work.

This student’s IA1 and IA2 submissions are also available in the Interactive Textbook so you can see the sustained progression of the inquiry and the relationship to the stimulus.



**FIGURE 4.28** On the title page, make sure you identify the unit, the assessment task, your name and school, and the date. In this case, the original inquiry question is also included to provide context for an assessor. You could also add the context you worked through and the media used.

## Focus — Inquiry phase 1

(Not for assessment)

The focus of my body of works will be an appreciation of the complexity and nature of human connectivity, formed as part of the human condition, by exploring various understandings of connections, root systems, thriving ecosystems and people-to-people networks. I intend to exploit a diverse array of media, including the use of natural materials, to communicate the sensibility, layers, transparency, and fragility of connections, establishing a clear literal and non-literal link to the initial stimulus experience from a personal context.

**FIGURE 4.29** Focus from inquiry phase 1 is included to provide context for an assessor. This will not be reassessed. It indicates the level of sustained inquiry within the response.

**Annotated Resolved Work IA2**

**Developing**

- Personal Context: Interested in vital human connections, similar to trees and their roots. A personal commitment to equality and justice.
- Contemporary Context: Cohesive Control and the need for change developed from initial interviews.
- Formal Context: abstract human motif shapes, line, repetition, and negative space in pattern marking using technology (mathematical program)
- Exploring materials. Mental and physical fragility: porcelain. Change: impermeable glass and gold wire. Natural Materials.

**Research**

- Reference photographs from AAE day
- Interviews - exploring lost connections
- Researched Coercive Control and Domestic Violence
- Example Artists:
  - Paul Klee; formal qualities of the line, a journey, the movement from one point to the other.
  - Bouke de Vries: Formal use of broken shards to create new porcelain forms, with gold lacquer highlighting repairs.

**Reflecting**

- Meaning highlighted in organic lines, pattern, form, movement and shape. Interested in how line and form communicate narrative.
- Exploration of deconstruction and reconstruction of objects to create a new form.
- Interested in the intersection of 2D and 3D works, working with 2D lines on 3D forms.
- Using found objects for powerful narrative: associated with domestic and routine life, should be a safe space. Adds to strength of work.
- Chose to represent connections using non-literal symbols.
- Audience interactions, to obtain emotional and sensory audience response.

**FIGURE 4.30** Annotated images of resolved work from inquiry phase 2 is included to provide context for an assessor. This is an important inclusion because it indicates the approaches taken in the IA2, so that the alternate approach in IA3 can be understood. This will not be reassessed.

**IA3 Resolved work Display view**

**Artwork 1** (on plinth), *Diaphanous Memor.*  
Interactive Sculpture: various papers and textiles  
3x (20cmx5cm) reels

and

**Artwork 2** (on wall), *Rememoratio*  
Mixed Media (printmaking and textile), 3 panels  
90x189cm in total.

**FIGURE 4.31** Provide an image of the work on display. Ensure documentation is focused and well-lit. In this case, both works are displayed together but have their own artist's statements.

# Resolved 1: Artist's statement

## Diaphanous Memor

Interactive Sculpture: various papers and textiles  
3x (20cmx5cm) wooden reels

Our memories of places flow and surge...They flourish and expire... They are everchanging...

They are the foundation of our connections and sustain us. Our minds bursting with far-reaching routes, of icons and familiar landmarks, of special spaces.

As an alternate to previous works about connections between humans, *Diaphanous Memor* explores the nature of connections between humans and place, through the vehicle of memories; the correlation between memory and connections to place, as well the complexity and fragility of memory.

The various translucent media allows the audience to view a multitude of monoprint layers and storytelling text, highlighting the intricacy of connections; they are not just black and white but many shades of grey. The memories of routes and places are represented in the symbolic and organic printmaking patterns on the scrolls. I encourage the audience to explore and reflect as they turn the layers that make up our connections.

**FIGURE 4.32** Artist's statement for first resolved work in the submission. It includes a caption stating the title of the work, media and size. This caption is not included in the word count. The 150-word statement communicates the concept (Art as alternate) and focus (the connections between humans and place). Literacy skills have been employed to ensure the intended meaning of each sentence is clear to a reader. Ideas are presented logically and the statement invites dialogue between artist and audience by using the pronoun 'our', which creates inclusion for the viewer.

Resolved Work 1 –Alternative display view



Diaphanous Memor  
Interactive Sculpture: various papers and textiles  
3x (20cmx5cm) reels

**FIGURE 4.33** Resolved work needs to be photographed clearly and effectively. There is no limit on documentation photographs, so use this opportunity to show off all aspects of the work. This slide shows the resolved work from different angles, as you would see it in a gallery. Note that on each slide there is a caption stating title, media and size. Unnecessary distractions in the background have been cropped out.

Resolved Work 1 - Details



Diaphanous Memor  
Interactive Sculpture: various papers and textiles  
3x (20cmx5cm) reels

**FIGURE 4.34** This slide shows the details of the layered transparent papers. Use slides of details to highlight the key features of your work, particularly those that demonstrate mastery of advanced or refined methods and approaches with media that establish an individualised practice. There is no limit to the number of images you can submit. This is one of three details slides in this submission.

## Resolved 2: Artist statement

### *Rememoratio*

Mixed Media  
(printmaking and textile)  
90x189cm

*Rememoratio* delves into the connections we form with places, providing an alternate approach in my body of work.

We've made connections to the places we go daily, yearly, and those from childhood.

Core to these connections is memory, the foundation of human experience. Disturbingly, contemporary research suggests we are losing our memories associated with place and wayfinding, as we are becoming caught up in the technological environment.

*Rememoratio* utilises visual language; line, pattern, movement, to signify place connections. The inability to remember connections is symbolised through the pattern breaking away from the memory centres. Additional symbolism of complexity and fragility of connections is illustrated through the delicate textiles. The work utilises meanderings, patterns inspired by routes and journeys both personal and by others. The bold shapes representing the brain's memory centres, emphasising the importance of place and connection in a world of advancing technology.

**FIGURE 4.35** The artist's statement for the second resolved work in the submission. Each resolved work in this submission has its own artist's statement. It includes the title of the work, media, size and a 150-word statement to assist audience understanding of how this work addresses the concept and focus and highlights creative thinking.

## Resolved Work 2 - Display View



*Rememoratio*  
Mixed Media (printmaking and textile)  
90x189cm

**FIGURE 4.36** This slide contains the displayed second resolved work. Note the caption and the clearly labelled slide. Note also the focused and well-presented photographs.

## Resolved Work 2 - Details



*Rememoratio*  
Mixed Media (printmaking and textile)  
90x189cm

**FIGURE 4.37** Details of the second resolved work, including close-ups that highlight the textures, wrapping and stitching.

### Annotated Resolved Works from IA3

**Developing**

- Personal Context: Inspired to evolve my knowledge of human-place connectivity: memory research regarding way-finding technology.
- Formal Context: Develop abstract motifs that represent the brain's memory centres and non-literal meandering patterns developed from exploring place memories.
- Use line, shape, movement, and composition to develop meaning and encourage audience reflection.
- Contemporary Context: Exploiting traditional materials, techniques and compositions in alternative ways by pairing woven textiles and printmaking to create meaning.

**Researching**

- Invited "joint constructors of knowledge" through participant's mapping inspired by Gosia Wlodarczak and Longin Sarnecki.
- Examined contemporary printmakers such as Eleanor Sher that represent memory through untraditional printmaking with alternative materials and composition.
- Challenged myself to embrace post-modernist thinking around repurposing objects in a new manner (reels /recycled textiles/disused carbon paper) as part of the narrative.

**Reflecting**

- Continued IA2 exploration of organic line, pattern, form, movement and shape to convey explicit and implicit meaning in an alternative way.
- Exploration of alternative materials. Strength: textiles/printmaking combination encouraged engagement with meaning. Limitation: impacted by material's characteristics and availability.
- Focus justified by concern about memory loss due to modern technology.
- Continued representing connections using non-literal symbols.
- Audience interaction from IA2 effective, so continued with IA3 works to obtain emotional and sensory audience response.

**FIGURE 4.38** Annotated images of resolved works. Both resolved works are included. Include significant influences on decision-making within the Developing, Researching and Reflecting areas of study. The word limit for annotations is 200 words.

### Supporting Evidence

Challenging my IA2 approach - How artists examine complexity of human connectivity.

*generating alternative ideas*

**What do I see when I look at the overlapping connections in resolved works IA2?**

- Paths crossing, intersections
- Conduits of emotions
- Human arteries
- Different directions**
- Routes/Maps**
- Brainwaves: Interconnecting lines**
- How do we remember the things we are connective to?**

*Resolved IA2 The Energy Between Us*

**Exploring further the idea of permanency of connections/memories and how we overlay memories. How can I transform the shadows and layers into 3D? Explore further**

**Experimental Work**  
Use of lightboard for layering with transparencies of route shapes by drawing over road maps using cubism and conceptual line marks.

**Experimental Shadow Work - Roots/connections on paper**

*colour*

**Continuation of Monochrome colour palette - black and white contrast: contemporary. Directs the viewer's eye to the form. Reflecting:** I like how the lines plays with the viewer's eye leading audience on a journey. Decision made to continue to use monochromatic black lines to maintain a clear personal aesthetic that traverses all my processes. Inspired by Paul Klee, and method of expression through abstraction artists such as Jackson Pollock (No.28, 1950) and Ralph Stour's collection of works.

*personal context*

**How do you form connections with places? Why? My Personal Theory - It's the memories made in the place or the memories it may remind you of.**

*joint constructors of knowledge and meaning*

**Oh, the places you'll go...**

Inspired by the process of Gosia Wlodarczak and Longin Sarnecki, 400, 2010 in inviting others as joint constructors of meaning. I looked to my friends and family to help construct meaning and knowledge around memory/places.

**Experimental Activity**  
I created "Oh the Places you'll Go" blank map books which prompted friends and family to think about where and why they formed with places. Connected the foundation of the development of my resolved works. Further discussion provided on next slide.

**Process Photos:**  
Creation of books and prompts for map creations given to friends and family.

**Process Photo**  
Digital image created from canvas and masking tape word 'connect' acrylic paint. Use of syntagm with the spelling of the word 'connect' but, like Schoenheimer's work, the word is structured in a way that disrupts the viewers perception. Manipulated digitally into a motif of a face by the repetition and mirroring of text. During process reflected on the similarities with Christopher Wool's oeuvre and his use of bold stencil text and tension created between depth and flatness.

**Exploring the word 'connect' influenced by Schoenheimer** - Drawn to how she plays with the idea of visual representation through paradigm of styles - realism, cubism and conceptual. How can I explore paradigm and story boards like Leigh's work? Maybe through transparency layers and maintaining the same application of line work but differing the style? Use of transparencies/Artist Book - turning pages? (see experimental work at top of page using shadows/lightboard)

**Exploring the idea of permanency**  
AAB day  
layering  
connects to place overlay experience in place  
transparency  
seeing through shadows, bringing what lays in dark shape.

**AAE Day - School Based Artist workshop: Leigh Schoenheimer**

Leigh Schoenheimer, 'Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing': Gurneets with African Head, 2016, acrylic on play (54 x 123cm)

**Exploring further the idea of permanency of connections/memories and how we overlay memories. How can I transform the shadows and layers into 3D? Explore further**

**Experimental Work**  
Use of lightboard for layering with transparencies of route shapes by drawing over road maps using cubism and conceptual line marks.

**Experimental Shadow Work - Roots/connections on paper**

**Continuation of Monochrome colour palette - black and white contrast: contemporary. Directs the viewer's eye to the form. Reflecting:** I like how the lines plays with the viewer's eye leading audience on a journey. Decision made to continue to use monochromatic black lines to maintain a clear personal aesthetic that traverses all my processes. Inspired by Paul Klee, and method of expression through abstraction artists such as Jackson Pollock (No.28, 1950) and Ralph Stour's collection of works.

**How do you form connections with places? Why? My Personal Theory - It's the memories made in the place or the memories it may remind you of.**

**Oh, the places you'll go...**

Inspired by the process of Gosia Wlodarczak and Longin Sarnecki, 400, 2010 in inviting others as joint constructors of meaning. I looked to my friends and family to help construct meaning and knowledge around memory/places.

**Experimental Activity**  
I created "Oh the Places you'll Go" blank map books which prompted friends and family to think about where and why they formed with places. Connected the foundation of the development of my resolved works. Further discussion provided on next slide.

**FIGURE 4.39** The first of four pages of supporting evidence. Choose these carefully. They need to communicate relevant development of solutions, research and experimentation in the creative process, and evaluation and judgement during problem-solving. Check the performance levels of the ISMGs and check with your teacher to ensure your evidence is meeting the targets.

## Supporting Evidence: Challenging my IA2 approach: New Technique Inquiry and Alternative Experimentation

**MONOTYPE**  
 - handmade + requires  
 long-term preparation  
 - preparing and printing  
 ink  
 - typically positively effect

**LINOCUT**  
 - approximately used in posters  
 - (Concrete 10 and 11)  
 - 100% recyclable  
 - for finest lines

**WOODCUT**  
 - German origins with  
 1400-1500  
 - 19th century  
 - to create images/illustrations etc.

**CONTEMPORARY PRINTMAKING**  
 - use of different  
 substrates  
 - such as wood  
 - aluminium  
 - electrochemical  
 printing (resistive)  
 - photo etching  
 - various media  
 - experimenting

**ETCHING**  
 - drypoint  
 - large of etching  
 - does not use acid  
 - instead uses sharp  
 knives  
 - 19th century  
 - traditional etching  
 of contemporary  
 technique  
 - Albert Besnard  
 - developed drypoint etching  
 and drypoint  
 - experimenting with emotion  
 colouring

**COLLOGRAPH**  
 - built up the image  
 - emulsion  
 - cardboard  
 - aluminium  
 - introduced by Chen Hsin  
 1965  
 - spontaneous approach  
 - ability to acknowledge  
 the potential of the  
 medium  
 - not conceptualised by means  
 of creation or focus on  
 the ideas

**Wood as a substrate** – Experimented with using ink on wooden boxes. Rather than engraving into the wood like linocut, I scratched into an Encaustic wax layer on top of wood.

- Manipulating traditional India ink in a non-traditional way.
- Using wax as a seal: reflecting on “sealing places and people into long-term memory”
- Building up route pattern on the cube – *loaded object* – Joachim Froese

**Reflection:**  
 - **Limitations:** Encaustic costly process on large scale  
 - Route pattern not as organic and free flowing as would have like.  
 - Technique would need to be mastered more to use as part of a resolved piece.  
 - Not pursued further.

**Dry Point Experimentations (contemporary-non-solvent/acids)**  
 - Continuing experimentation from IA2 with line and journey in an alternative way. Use recycled acrylic (from recycled art shop) as plate.  
**Reflect:**  
 - I like the aesthetic of drypoint print making – the detail the method suits my fine patterns/motifs. Not limited by environmental impacts such as solvent use (environmentally-friendly technique)

**Experimenting further with Glasson paper** further with thread. Difficult to sew on machine as was causing a continuous error.

**Reflecting (limitations):**  
 - Tried to **problem solve** by sewing dissolvable interfacing also. Decided that a choice would have to be made between using textile as a substrate or using it as a secondary element. Important for me to use the grid aspect of a textile as a metaphor for connection.

**Monoprinting various patterns** able to be placed behind material. **Experimented** with human motif from IA2 and newly created route patterns.  
**Decided** not to use human motif, in favour of creating a new motif as an alternative exploration. **Limitation** – I liked a heavy open weave material (shown in process photo) – but could not source enough black for a larger resolve piece. Sourced a cheaper and more accessible hand dyed scrim which had an open grid weave element to symbolise complexity and fragility.

**FIGURE 4.40** The second of four pages of supporting evidence. There is no set way to assemble the supporting evidence. You may prefer to scan pages of a visual diary that demonstrate the criteria or curate a digital document. It is the student’s choice and depends on working preferences.

## References

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Redland Art Gallery 2017, Perceive/conceive: Leigh Schoenheimer, viewed 15 July 2021, <<https://artgallery.redland.qld.gov.au/exhibitions/exhibitions-2017/perceiveconceive-leigh-schoenheimer/>>.

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Urban Studio Unbound n.d., Richard Pitts, viewed 12 July 2021, <<https://www.urbanstudiounbound.org/richard-pitts/>>.

Whitney Museum of American Art 2021, Glen Earl Alps: Untitled, viewed 28 July 2021, <<https://whitney.org/collection/works/12030>>.

Wool, C 2021, Christopher Wool: Introduction, viewed 24 July 2021, <<http://web.augustinheim.org/exhibitions/wool/>>.

**FIGURE 4.41** The final page in the presentation. In this slide, the student has collated their research into a reference list. Your school will have a preferred referencing style. Find out what it is and organise your references accordingly.

## Interactive Textbook example of IA3 submission

A further complete example of an IA3 by Jemima Kate Boboš is available in the Interactive Textbook.

### DISCUSS

Evaluate and justify the divergent approach taken by Eleena Jackson in the IA3 compared to the IA2.

Resolved artwork  
display view



*Stefanna*  
Jemima Kate Boboš  
Corrugated Iron, Aluminium and Wire Mesh,  
100cm x 50cm x 10cm

**FIGURE 4.42** Jemima Kate Boboš inquired into her heritage throughout her body of work. She was inspired by the stimulus experience on Stradbroke Island. The full submission is available in the Interactive Textbook.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 4.7

To develop your understanding of how to resolve your own work, analyse Eleena Jackson's submission and evaluate the resolution in both works. Justify your views by writing a paragraph. In your response you should consider:

- the depth of research, development and critical reflection
- the communication of personal aesthetic
- the degree of 'finish'
- knowledge and understanding of media and technical skills
- end-points reached
- concept, focus, contexts and media areas used to solve complex problems of visual language and expression.

## 4.6 External assessment: Examination – extended response

The Visual Art external examination measures your knowledge of the syllabus objectives through an extended written response, in the form of an analytical essay.

In the examination, you may be provided with a collection of artworks (stimulus) and a choice of questions. The artworks and artists may or may not be familiar to you. It is not expected that you have studied the artworks in class. If necessary, the stimulus might include brief contextual information to support your understanding.

To respond to an examination question, you may need to select artworks from the stimulus that best support your viewpoint. It is likely that there are numerous combinations of artworks to do this. It is up to you to demonstrate the connections between the artworks and the question by presenting well-supported and valid analysis, interpretation and evaluation of visual language and expression.

While you might spend dedicated lessons in external assessment preparation with your

Refer to the Visual Art General Senior Syllabus at the QCAA website, read about the conditions of the external assessment and make a note of the external assessment objectives.

The external assessment objectives are developed into an External Assessment Marking Guide (EAMG) unique to each examination. Get to know the objectives and use them in your exam preparation.

Which objectives require multiple examples of evidence because they are written in plural form? How will this impact your external exam preparation?

teacher, it is very important to remember that the work you do throughout the two years of senior Visual Art will prepare you for the examination.

Visual Art is a subject that emphasises processes over content. You will be required to apply visual literacy skills and understanding of contemporary art practices to analyse, interpret and evaluate visual language, expression and meaning, and justify your viewpoints. These are lifelong skills that are continually developed through your experiences as an artist and as an audience of art by:

- reading, writing and talking about diverse art and artists to build your literacy skills and fluency with visual language terminology.
- experiencing art forms from a range of cultures, times and places.

However, there are two areas of subject specific content that you should learn well enough to apply as you carry out the processes involved in writing the extended response. Specifically, you should know:

- the elements of art and principles of design and what effects they can have on the expression of meaning
- each of the four contexts and how they inform expression and meaning.

### **Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority Annual Subject Report**

For up-to-date information, samples of effective student examination responses and a list of practices to strengthen, visit the annual Visual Art Report. This is published on the QCAA website in the Visual Art General Senior Syllabus, Teaching and learning resources.

## Preparation

In preparing for the external examination, the following focus areas could be useful.

These suggestions are derived from the experiences of examination markers. They are not designed as a recipe for success but in response to perceived needs and gaps.

### Visual language

In the examination, you should do more than simply list the elements of art and principles of design. Learn how to identify them, and practise decoding artworks, by talking and writing about how visual language makes meaning in artworks through the context. It's important to communicate how elements and principles support the artist's intentions and how audiences might make meaning from them. You will need to decode multiple elements and principles because of the plural nouns in the objective.

### Meaning

Practise identifying, analysing and interpreting literal and non-literal expression and meaning in artworks. This is a skill that can be developed by reading and researching about artists' practices and engaging with diverse artworks as an audience member. In your analysis and interpretation of an artwork, you can extract meaning from subject matter, visual language, symbols, media, techniques, technologies,



Visit the following sites to develop your understanding of First Nations' cultures:

- QCAA Visual Art General Senior Syllabus, on the QCAA website, has a section on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.
- The AIATSIS website has up-to-date information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia, Country, human rights, history and culture, which are issues that many First Nations artists express ideas about.
- Visit the State Library of Queensland website to find out about First Nations' languages and history.

## Language conventions, literacy skills and information organisation

You may find it useful to prepare by:

- directing your reader around an artwork using Visual Art terminology such as foreground, background, middle ground, horizon line, and so on.
- referring to artists using their surnames (or family names) in the body of the essay. Full name should be used in the introduction and conclusion. This convention contributes to flow of ideas. Never refer to the artist using their first name alone. Artist's names must be spelled correctly, as provided in the contextual information.
- using quotation marks or underlining artwork titles to improve your communication. Always use the title when referring to the artwork. Avoid calling the artworks stimulus 1 or 2. Spell and punctuate artwork titles exactly as they are presented in the stimulus booklet.
- using comparative language when discussing and writing about art. Comparative language alerts the reader to similarities and differences. Comparison is an essential aspect of the exam.

- planning and structuring information using a system such as PEEL paragraphs (see Table 3.1).
- structuring essay plans that cover the assessment objectives and communicating your ideas without repetition.
- spelling and using common Visual Art terminology. For example, colour, palette, parallel, appropriation, juxtaposition, 2-dimensional, 3-dimensional and so on.

## Handwriting

Prepare by holding and writing with a pen by hand for extended periods. It is important that external markers can read your writing. If your great ideas are undecipherable, they will be lost on their audience.



## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.8

- Build a class list of Visual Art terminology to share as you read, write and talk about art.
- Make yourself a set of flash cards or a board game to learn the visual language terms, contexts, common symbols, art conventions and their meanings.
- Make a class list of comparative words and phrases. Learn where to use them correctly.

## Planning time

The exam session provides you with **planning time** and writing time. For current information on the duration of planning and writing times, refer to the Visual Art General Senior Syllabus on the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment website.

**planning time** time allocated in an assessment to planning how to respond to items and tasks and associated assessment materials; students may make notes (in the stimulus book and on the planning paper) but may not commence responding to the assessment in the response space/book; notes made during planning are not collected, nor are they graded or used as evidence of achievement. Planning paper is provided.

## Using planning time in the examination

As you prepare for the examination, you should develop your own strategies to ensure effective use of planning time. Some suggestions for using planning time include:

- Choose the question you feel most confident answering. You need to understand what is being asked of you. Write it out on your planning paper and use highlighter pens to break it up if you need to.
- Choose artworks that you can confidently analyse and interpret through a context. If the question does not name a context, then **you must** specify a context for each artwork and show understanding of how that context informs your analysis and interpretation. Look for clues in the artwork itself, its title, media, size, the information that accompanies each artwork. If you are not sure what is happening in an artwork, then choose a different one to discuss.
- Annotate the chosen artworks in the stimulus book. If you need to, you can tear the pages out of the stimulus booklet, so the two artworks sit side by side to help you make connections between the artworks and the question. Observe and make notes on the artworks about visual language, expression, contexts, literal and non-literal meaning, media and processes that are relevant to the

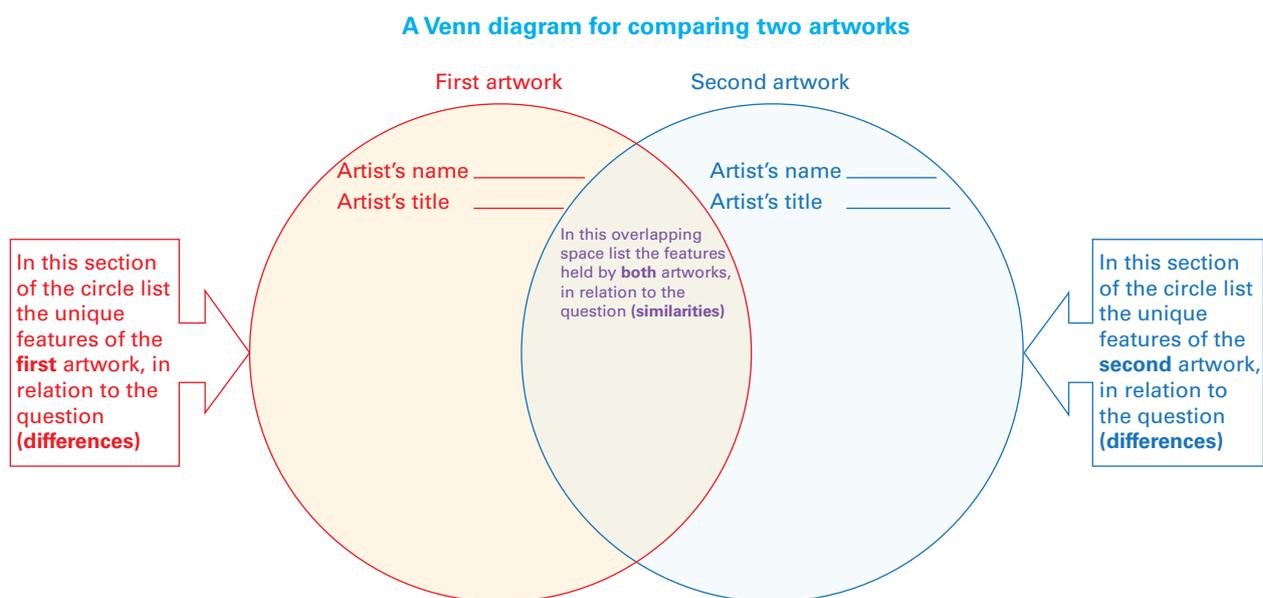
question. Look for and note similarities and differences.

- Look for connections or relationships between the artworks and the wider world, issues in society, or how the meanings might be extrapolated, while still addressing the question. Note similarities and differences in relation to the question – these are the ones of which you should appraise the significance.
- You could use a **Venn diagram**, a table or other graphic organiser to capture and organise the information. See Figure 4.43.
- Write your viewpoint as a sentence to clarify your thinking – ensure you have a viewpoint that includes both artworks.
- Plan and sequence your paragraph topics.
- You may prefer to write a draft on your planning paper first, then write out your final response onto the answer booklet, but be very aware of time if you take this approach.

**Venn diagram** a type of diagram that uses overlapping circles to illustrate relationships between specific things

## Graphic organisers

In planning time you might draw a graphic organiser, such as a Venn diagram, a table or a spider map, which shows the similarities and differences of the two artworks in relation to the question.



**FIGURE 4.43** A Venn diagram may assist you in planning for the evaluation of similarities and differences during your external exam.

**TABLE 4.4** A GRAPHIC ORGANISER CAN BE A TABLE AS DETAILED AS THIS WHICH CAN HELP TO VISUALISE THE COMPONENTS OF THE EXAM AND WHAT YOU NEED TO DISCUSS. PRACTISE USING ONE LIKE THIS. CREATE A **MNEMONIC** DEVICE TO PROMPT YOUR MEMORY OF EACH SECTION.

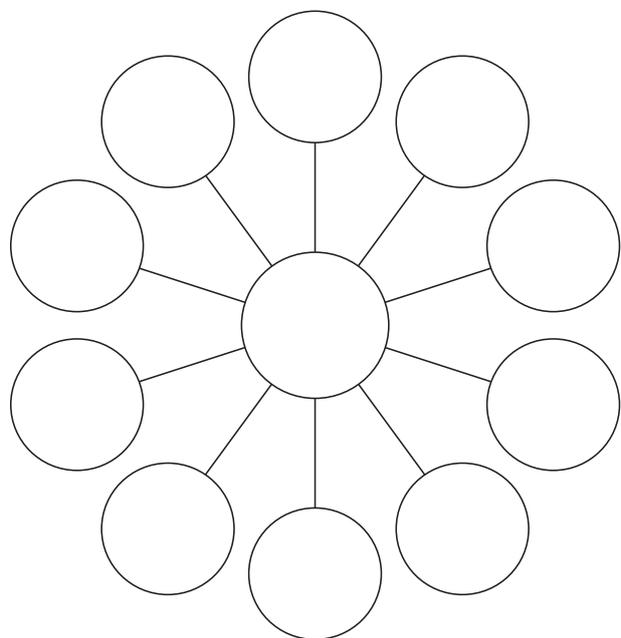
	Decode visual language				Analyse and interpret meaning through a context				Justify a viewpoint	Evaluate		
	Artist	Artwork "title"	Elements of art What is communicated by each one? Aim for 3.	Principles of design What is communicated by each one? Aim for 3.	Literal meaning - subject matter	Non-literal meanings - symbols	Context Personal Cultural Formal Contemporary Why?	Materials technologies, processes, techniques - Do they add to meaning?	Audience How does the work engage an audience?	Viewpoint Multiple examples of supporting evidence, in relation to the question. Evidence should interrelate features of the artwork from the columns at left.	Appraise significance of similarities of both works in relation to the question. Make global connections	Appraise significance of differences of both works in relation to the question. Make global connections
First artwork												
Second artwork												

### INQUIRY LEARNING 4.9

Practise planning your essays using Venn diagrams, tables and other graphic organisers.

Create your own graphic organisers such as a spider map or mind map (see Figure 4.44). Create a **mnemonic** device, such as a rhyme, **acronym** or song to help you remember the components of the analytical essay.

Create a bookmark to carry in your pocket as a study tool. Refer to Figure 4.45 for ideas.



**FIGURE 4.44** A spider map or mind map is a useful planning device in the exam. Practise drawing it up and remembering the essential components to put into each circle. Check the table above for the artwork features to include in each circle as you analyse and interpret.

**mnemonic** prompt for helping you remember information. For instance, *Richard of York gave battle in vain* is a mnemonic in which the first letters of each word represent a colour of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet

**acronym** a prompt for remembering information that uses the first letters of words, and is pronounced as a word. For instance, FOMO – fear of missing out; ROY G. BIV – the colours of the rainbow

**Refer to Elements and Principles of Design to create meaning, representations (min. 3 of each)**

**CHOOSE ONE or more CONTEXT for EACH artwork:**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CONTEMPORARY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-new technologies</li> <li>-current social issues</li> <li>-new knowledge</li> <li>-reimagined</li> <li>-challenging the old</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PERSONAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-memories</li> <li>-opinions</li> <li>-experiences</li> <li>-feelings</li> <li>-unique or shared</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CULTURAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-race, gender, etc.</li> <li>-generational or time period</li> <li>-society</li> <li>-beliefs and values</li> <li>-country</li> <li>-consumers</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FORMAL</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-aesthetic</li> <li>-repetition</li> <li>-juxtaposition</li> <li>-sensory</li> <li>-manipulation</li> <li>-elements &amp; principles</li> </ul>

**DISCUSS for BOTH artworks:**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LITERAL</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NON-LITERAL</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Symbolism</p>
---------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**FOR BOTH artworks:**

<p><b>JUSTIFY A VIEWPOINT:</b> <i>(the position, argument or claim asserted)</i> <b>How is or does it:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-respond to context</li> <li>-accessible or interactive</li> <li>-allow for universal understanding</li> <li>-comforting, disrupting or displaced</li> <li>-create a new meaning</li> <li>-communicate new knowledge</li> <li>-create a narrative</li> </ul>
<p><b>EVALUATION - link to question</b> <b>COMPARE AND CONTRAST</b> <b>SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES</b></p> <p><b>Because.....</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-deliberate or challenges</li> <li>-humour, parody, irony, etc.</li> <li>-manipulation or deconstruction</li> <li>-mixed messages</li> <li>-metaphor</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>NB: Use QUOTE or evidence</b></p>
<p><b>AUDIENCE/Realising</b> <b>(HOW is meaning communicated)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-passive vs active</li> <li>-walks away thinking...</li> <li>-confronted by...</li> <li>-engagement or interaction...</li> <li>-bring own knowledge and experience of...</li> </ul>

**FIGURE 4.45** An example of the front side of a bookmark that can be used as a reminder of the different components of the analytical essay

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Elements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Line</li> <li>Colour</li> <li>Shape</li> <li>Space</li> <li>Texture</li> <li>Form</li> <li>Tone</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pattern or Repetition</li> <li>Contrast</li> <li>Emphasis</li> <li>Balance</li> <li>Scale and Proportion</li> <li>Unity</li> <li>Harmony</li> <li>Rhythm or Movement</li> <li>Variety</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do this for stimulus 1 then repeat for stimulus 2</b></p>	<p><b>Intro:</b> Identify question, artists, artwork (year), media/descript, context.</p> <p><b>Decode:</b> Identify features, <b>apply multiple E+P</b>, meanings and symbolism – how ideas are represented.</p> <p><b>Analyse and Interpret: Context</b> knowledge, <b>literal &amp; non-literal</b> meanings, detailed evidence - connect to features in artwork.</p> <p><b>Justify a Viewpoint: Detailed</b> relevant <b>examples</b> to support ideas and link back to the question.</p> <p><b>Evaluation:</b> Significance of <b>similarities &amp; differences, compare &amp; contrast</b> both must connect to the question link to question with a definitive statement.</p> <p><b>Conclude:</b> How meaning is communicated with reference to both artworks. Summary response to question, asserting complex relationships presented, and audience response.</p>

**FIGURE 4.46** Example of reverse side of a bookmark to aid your memory in the exam preparation phase.

## Stimulus artworks and contextual information

The contextual information and the caption with each artwork provide enough information to assist with your analysis and interpretation of the artwork. Read these thoroughly and search for clues. This text does not provide you with any analysis. It is constructed from facts about the artist and the artist's practice. Its function is to help you make sense of the artwork so you can develop your viewpoint and decide on the context through which to analyse and interpret.

Use the contextual information as evidence, if relevant, to justify your viewpoint. However, avoid copying it word for word into your essay. This is a waste of time and words and does not contribute to your response. Similarly, there is no requirement to cite or apply in-text referencing of the information you use from the context statements.

## Examples of artworks with their contextual information

### Example 1

Sonja Carmichael's fibre arts practice is centred around traditional Quandamooka weaving techniques unique to her community on Minjerribah, an island off the Queensland coast near Brisbane. From the 1890s, when the mission opened on the island, traditional cultural practices, such as weaving bags and fishing nets from reeds, were interrupted and largely forgotten. Carmichael conducted extensive research to learn and revitalise traditional weaving. Her practice is bound to the stories, community and deep cultural connection to Minjerribah.

Ghost nets are enormous, discarded fishing nets which float through the oceans. They destroy reefs, entangling and drowning wildlife. It is now common for islands such as Minjerribah to have ghost nets washed up on their beaches.

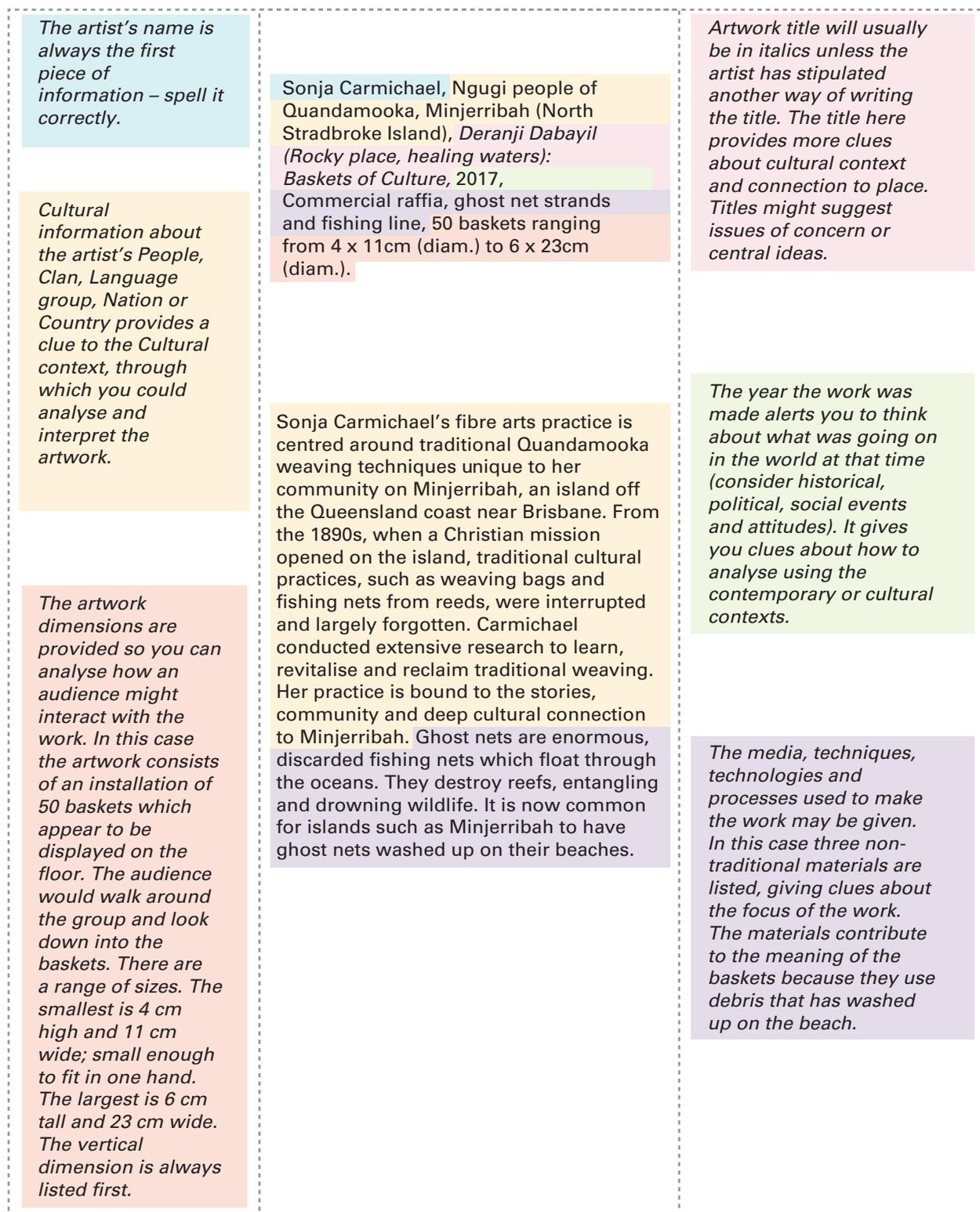
## Unpacking contextual information: what can we learn from it?

### Example 2

French artist Christian Boltanski focused on mortality, loss, memory and human tragedy. His art practice consistently included found objects, particularly second-hand clothing, lighting and photography. Boltanski was influenced by his family's stories and their experiences in World War II in Paris. Before his birth, Boltanski's father, a Russian Jew, spent 18 months hiding under the floorboards of the family's apartment to avoid deportation by Nazi soldiers. Boltanski was known for his installations that directly or indirectly memorialised the millions of European Jewish Holocaust victims, many of whom were deported in freight train carriages between 1942 and 1945.



**FIGURE 4.47** Sonja Carmichael, Ngugi people of Quandamooka, Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island), *Deranji Dabayil (Rocky place, healing waters): Baskets of Culture*, 2017, commercial raffia, ghost net strands and fishing line, 50 baskets ranging from 4 x 11 cm (diam.) to 6 x 23 cm (diam.)



**FIGURE 4.48** The link between the contextual information about Sonja Carmichael's *Deranji Dabayil (Rocky place, healing waters): Baskets of Culture* and how it can inform your essay.



**FIGURE 4.49** Christian Boltanski (1944–2021), *Containers*, 2010, metal trolleys on wheels with wire mesh sides, second-hand clothing, electric neon lights, photographs with lighting. Dimensions variable

## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.10

Decode the contextual information about Christian Boltanski's *Containers*. Use this table as a guide:

<p>Artist's name?</p> <p>What clues do you get about meaning from the title? What is being contained?</p> <p>When and where did Boltanski live? What was happening in the world at this time?</p> <p>When was <i>Containers</i> made? Does this give us any useful information?</p> <p>What media, technologies, techniques or processes were used to make the work?</p> <p>How do they contribute to the meaning of the work?</p> <p>Which context is best suited to analysing and interpreting the artwork? Why?</p>	<p>Christian Boltanski (1944–2021)</p> <p><i>Containers</i>, 2010. Metal trolleys on wheels with wire mesh sides, second-hand clothing, electric neon lights, photographs with lighting. Dimensions variable.</p> <p>French artist Christian Boltanski focused on mortality, loss, memory and human tragedy. His art practice consistently included found objects, particularly second-hand clothing, lighting and photography. Boltanski was influenced by his family's stories and their experiences in World War II in Paris. Before his birth, Boltanski's father, a Russian Jew, spent 18 months hiding under the floorboards of the family's apartment to avoid deportation by Nazi soldiers. Boltanski was known for his installations that directly or indirectly memorialised the millions of European Jewish Holocaust victims, many of whom were deported in freight train carriages between 1942 and 1945.</p>
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## The introduction and conclusion

### The introduction

The opening paragraph of your essay is the introduction. It alerts the reader to the important details about the artists, the artworks, and your viewpoint about each artwork or the **thesis**. Keep it succinct. Avoid long and overly wordy sentences.

A useful strategy for the introduction:

- An opening sentence that makes a broad statement about the concept (the main idea in the question)
- A sentence that connects the concept to the artists. Introduce both artists by using their full names. Name each of the artworks.
- State the thesis of the essay, which should include a viewpoint about each artist's work in relation to the question. You might need two sentences for this.

In the body of the essay, you should justify your viewpoint about each artwork using examples.

### Example introduction

**Evaluate how artists reinvest discarded materials with meaning.**

Discarded materials are an unfortunate by-product of life in our contemporary consumer society. Two artworks that feature discarded materials are *Deranji Dabayil (Rocky place, healing waters)*: *Baskets of Culture* by Sonja Carmichael and *Containers* by Christian Boltanski. Meaning in both installations is framed through the cultural context, yet the artworks are fundamentally different in focus and meaning. *Containers* evokes emotion about human loss and tragedy through the use of discarded second-

.....

**thesis** the main viewpoint you want to communicate through the essay. It must relate to the question and both artworks. You are required to have a viewpoint for both artworks.

.....

hand clothes as symbols of people. Conversely, Carmichael's installation of traditional baskets invests new life and cultural meaning into environmental plastic waste, but her work also makes viewers confront uncomfortable histories.

### The conclusion

The conclusion is a summary of the main arguments you have presented throughout the body paragraphs.

It should include:

- Restatement of the **thesis** in one sentence – vary the language.
- A sentence or two that summarises the main arguments in the body paragraphs that proved the **thesis or your viewpoint for each artwork**. Keep this brief by combining ideas.
- A sentence that makes a statement about the broader implications of your arguments or conclusions.

### Example conclusion

**Evaluate how artists reinvest discarded materials with meaning.**

Both artworks similarly repurpose the detritus of everyday life; reinvesting it with symbolic cultural meaning. Both installations rely on repetition of similar forms and discarded materials to emphasise the enormity of their concerns. Made with cleaned ghost net plastic, *Deranji Dabayil (Rocky place, healing waters)*: *Baskets of Culture* by Sonja Carmichael is a colourful and hopeful symbol of the resilience of the Quandamooka People, who have emerged from a dark time to reclaim their cultural practice of weaving. Conversely, *Containers* by Christian Boltanski is a sombre work in which each article of discarded clothing signifies a lost human life. The installations, while different in mood, reinvest discarded materials to

make audiences remember unacceptable, dehumanising practices of the past in the hope that the future can be a kinder place.

## The decoding and analysis paragraphs

In the essay you will be required to decode visual language to communicate understanding of ideas and representations in artworks. You will also have to analyse and interpret the visual language, expression and meaning of each artwork through a specified context. The interpretation of meaning informed by the context should be consistent and purposefully referenced throughout the response. If the question doesn't name the context, then you must specify the context for each work. Below are sections of student essays illustrating decoding, analysing and interpreting meaning.

### Examples of decoding and analysis paragraphs written by students

Follow the link below to read about eX de Medici's body of work on the QAGOMA blog, with a focus on her 2016 artwork *Spies Like Us*.  
<https://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/10784>

#### Example 1

 *Spies like us* by eX de Medici portrays a number of telecommunication towers in a monochromatic colour scheme based on greyscale ranging from pure white, through various greys to black. This forms a strong contrast against the vivid yellow sky. The sky at first appears to be textured but on closer inspection, the texture is formed by stylised shapes of birds, which are in a darker yellow ochre colour forming a repeated pattern across the background of the composition. The formation of the towers has been created

through a mix of both straight lines for the poles of the towers and fluid, organic lines used to depict the tangled yet detailed representations of conduit and wires. There is little empty space giving the artwork a cluttered sense, further adding impact to the influence of phones on society. The repetition of the towers allows for there to be no main subject but instead prompts the viewer to ponder the movement and rhythm that exists where one tower overlaps and connects to the next.

The close cropping of the tower tops and the complexity of the tangled wires and detailed electrical equipment suggests a panoramic view of a forest of treetops as if the phone towers have become as normal to our lives as trees. This symbolises the invasive nature of telecommunications and surveillance in our lives through the cultural context. The painting's large scale and horizontal composition direct the viewers to only see the tops of the towers which we don't normally view as they are up very high. We usually miss the details that de Medici insists we see in this large painting. The composition points out that by not seeing the whole picture, we lose sight of the fact that large corporations and governments use these devices to collect data on all of us. The metaphor of a forest is supported by the inclusion of birds perching on the tower tops as if they are trees. Birds in flight cover the contrasting yellow background. They represent freedom, while human beings are not free. They are controlled by the owners of the data that is collected through our use

of mobile phones and the internet. The title *Spies like us* can be interpreted in two ways. Viewers are left wondering if spies like us because our lives can be controlled, or are we actually the spies?

### Example 2

“ Situated in Wellington Street, Collingwood, in Melbourne, this is the tallest mural in the southern hemisphere, and it showcases the profiles of four of the estate’s inhabitants. It is the size of the artwork that creates the greatest impact for the audience. Whilst the mural includes only the head and neck of each individual, the sheer larger-than-life proportions, which are linked by the vertical arrangement of the faces, draws the eye upwards to scan the details of each face, thus creating a sense of rhythm. The use of spray paint which adheres to the street art style has been expertly applied resulting in a sense of realism. There is a glow produced across the work, as the strong light source which floods each face, allows the artist to produce depth, tone and three dimensions, causing us to see the details in the four diverse individual’s faces. The harmonious mix of primary colours depicting the faces, contrasts against the bland, beige colour of the bricks. The gentle curves of the faces and facial features also contrast greatly with the repeated geometric shapes of the windows on each level. The contrast of the building and bright artwork is what separates it from its surroundings.

Adnate’s large-scale public housing project mural can be analysed and interpreted through the cultural context because it references a place, the people who live there and the social

implications of high-rise living. The tower block is very tall, which implies there are many residents, which might lead to disputes or annoying neighbours, yet the four faces are harmoniously depicted through repetition of elements such as colours, size and form. This suggests that the community of residents is harmonious. The diversity of age, gender and ethnicity of the four individuals emphasises the idea that a community can exist in harmony despite differences. Additionally, the faces are detailed and full of individualised personality, symbolising that everyone in the large apartment block is valued and important to this community. Despite living in small flats in the building, as indicated by the small windows, the four faces are enormous and calmly gaze outward as if they are looking to their own futures and are determined to not be restricted in their lives. Although they live in public housing, which may indicate they are having a tough time, this mural offers a message of hope and positivity to everyone in the building and locality.



FIGURE 4.50 Matt Adnate, *Public housing project*, 2018, Wellington Street, Collingwood, Melbourne



at 5 metres wide; however, its size is limited by the size of paper to paint on. Similarly, the mural's size, although much larger, is also determined by the size of the painting surface – in this case the 20-storey building. Furthermore, the vertical composition of the mural is determined by the form of the building while the wide horizontal composition of the watercolour painting requires a long gallery wall to display it on.

Both painting mediums are applied using processes of layering and techniques that manipulate light and shadows to create realistic forms from tones. de Medici's control of the medium of watercolour and attention to detail involved in painting with fine brushwork has created a realism that is mesmerising in its detail. While there are no humans in the image, the detailed painting symbolises de Medici's concerns about our human rights. Adnate's mural, however, shows realistic representations of human figures, albeit just the face and neck of each. This is a strength of both artworks as we are drawn to the realism of the images to try to decipher their meanings. It is clear that Adnate effectively prompts a joyful, emotional reaction for his audience, as the subject matter of refugees who have the opportunity to access housing and shelter, symbolises hope, a fresh start and new possibilities. The imagery in *Spies like us*, however, is devoid of any feeling and emotion due to the skilful and detailed painting of tangled wires and cold metal posts which instead symbolise something quite sinister.

## Example 2

Example 2 evaluates Naomi Hobson's *Fish Boys* (Figure 4.51) and Jemima Wyman's *Plume* (Figure 4.52).

Both artworks, *Fish Boys* by Naomi Hobson and *Plume* by Jemima Wyman represent a deep connection to people and culture. They also share the communication of cultural knowledge through a contemporary context yet they are nothing alike in subject matter or meaning. *Fish Boys* reflects an Indigenous connection between humanity and country and the cross-pollination of cultures in modern society, whilst *Plume* presents how activism can shape culture through persuasive action by a group



FIGURE 4.51 Naomi Hobson, *Fish Boys*, 2022, photographic print on 310gsm rag paper, 70 x 104 cm



FIGURE 4.52 Jemima Wyman, *Plume 20*, 2022, installation of hand cut digital photos collaged to the wall of QAGOMA, 450 x 530 cm

or groups of people to promote change and social reform now and into the future. The media and techniques used to create each artwork, whilst both based on photography, have been developed by very different approaches and are central to the communication of meaning in each work. Wyman has laboriously constructed the cloud of smoke by hand-cutting digital photographs of flares, fires and smoke bombs from sources which document global activism. The visibility of the contemporary context is also apparent through Wyman using her artwork to comment on the contemporary subject of activism and how it impacts society and our changing times. The artwork is symbolic of the toxic nature of conflict and power. Hobson presents a more light-hearted composition which combines colour photography with traditional black and white photography to portray contemporary Indigenous identity and the joyous vision of adolescents being themselves in their local community.

Further differences can be seen in the artworks through the different representations of interpersonal relationships, where *Plume* represents the collective action of people simply as part of the smoke cloud which has been built up from collaged sections of photographs of smoke from riots. Through the process of digital editing, *Fish Boys*, however, forefronts the personal relationship of the boys, making them the colourful centrepiece of the artwork rather than just a small part of the composition. The artworks are also different in the way that they view or portray society as a whole. *Fish Boys*, part of the *Adolescent Wonderland* series, represents a concept where there is a harmonious interaction

between people and culture, whereas *Plume* is the end result whereby the actions of people have shaped and directly affected culture in a negative way.



## INQUIRY LEARNING 4.12

Read the evaluating paragraph examples and identify:

- comparative language
- appraising language

Choose two artworks from this textbook, and practise writing your own evaluation paragraphs to answer the same question as these examples.

## Unpacking exam questions in Visual Art

The extended response questions are usually just one or two sentences. They may contain a number of components such as a command, a question, subject matter or concept on which to focus, a specified context or the name of a stimulus. Questions will vary and you need to be prepared for anything.

An example question might look like this:

Evaluate how artists reinvest discarded materials with meaning. Justify your viewpoint by comparing two artworks from the stimulus book.

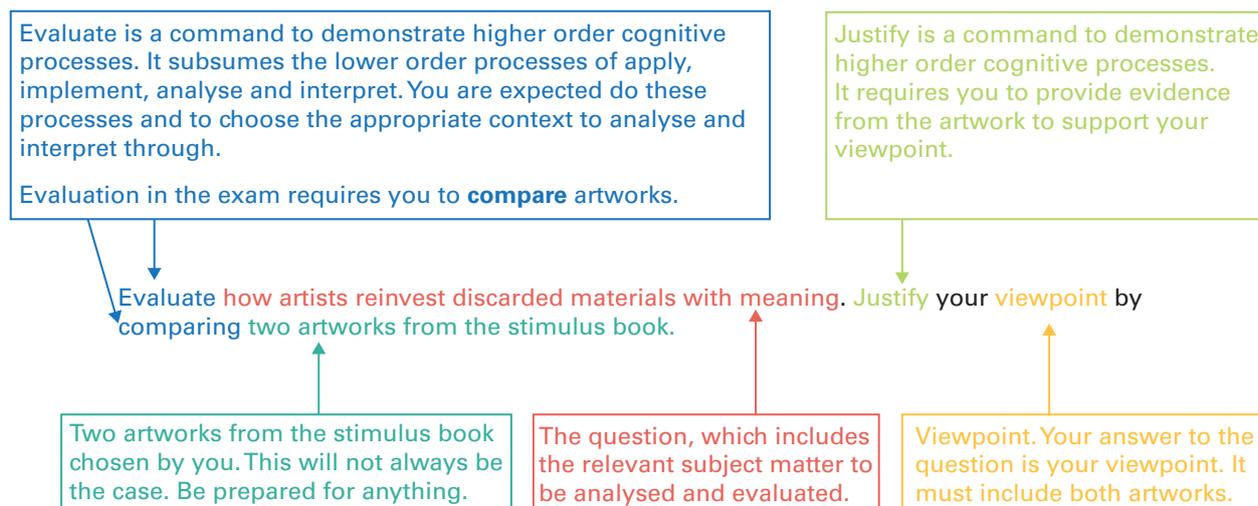
The same question might be asked without the command at the beginning, and it would still require you to implement decoding skills, analyse and interpret meaning through a context and compare.

For instance:

How do artists reinvest discarded materials with meaning? Justify your viewpoint by comparing two artworks from the stimulus book.

Each word in the question is important. Understand what is being asked of you by knowing what the parts of the question are asking you to do.

## Understanding the question



**FIGURE 4.53** Example exam question showing how it relates to the cognitions in the assessment objectives.

### INQUIRY LEARNING 4.13

Deconstruct the following exam question using coloured highlighters. Turn and talk with your neighbour to check your understanding:

**Evaluate how artists draw on the cultural context to communicate meaning using found objects. Justify your viewpoint by comparing *Containers* by Christian Boltanski and an artwork of your choice from the stimulus book.**

Plan and write an essay to answer the question:

**Evaluate how artists reinvest discarded materials with meaning. Justify your viewpoint by comparing two artworks from this textbook.**

For specific information about the external examination, refer to the QCAA Visual Art General Senior Syllabus at the QCAA website.



# Chapter summary

- Project – inquiry phase 3 (IA3) is weighted more heavily than all other summative assessment items and requires consistency to Develop, Research, Reflect and Resolve effectively.
- IA3 assesses all the unit objectives.
- In IA3 you must retain your individual focus (developed in IA1 and explored in IA2), but now you must apply the concept of Art as alternate. In doing so, you will research, explore and apply an alternate approach to your art-making.
- Keep a record of all your decision-making, planning, problem-solving, reflection and research to ensure you have sufficient resources for your submission: up to four pages. It is very important to only include supporting evidence that is relevant to your resolved work – choose carefully.
- Document your resolved artwork using focused and well-lit photographs.
- Display your work and document the display or intended display.
- Draft and redraft your artist's statement and annotated illustrations so that you meet the word limits and succinctly communicate meaning.
- Much of the documentation is digital, so ensure you back up your work. A good way to do that is to email it to yourself, save it to a cloud server or use a hard drive.
- Your personal aesthetic should be evident in your resolved work.
- Use the checklist provided to make sure you include all assessment requirements in your submission.

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