

ART & ME

SENIOR VISUAL ARTS

STAGE 6

MARIANNE HULSBOSCH (CONSULTING EDITOR), PAUL FITZGERALD, ALAN GUIHOT, IAN RANDALL



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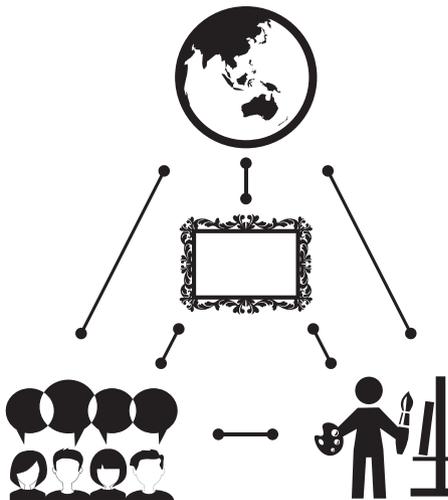
Guide to symbols

The symbols featured on these pages are used throughout this book. They are a simple way to emphasise different aspects of the Conceptual Framework and the four Frames.

The Conceptual Framework

The diagram below, which is set out in a triangular shape, represents the Conceptual Framework. In Visual Arts, the Conceptual Framework is used to understand the relationships between the artwork, the artist, the audience and the wider world. In this diagram the following symbols are used for these four agencies:

- The artwork is represented as an ornately framed canvas.
- The artist is shown at the bottom right as a figure with a paint palette and brush.
- The audience is represented by a group of figures in a pose that suggests that they are thinking.
- The globe at the top symbolises the world.



Relationships between agencies

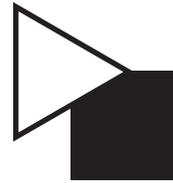
The black lines drawn between the symbols show the relationships between them. In some places in this book where the Conceptual Framework diagram is used, two symbols may be highlighted and the others shown faded. This is to emphasise that there is a specific focus on the relationship between the two highlighted agencies. For example, the focus may be on the relationship between an artist and an audience.

The four Frames

The Frames are different ways of thinking about art. They are explained on page xiv and in further depth in Chapter 5. The following symbols represent the four Frames:



The thought bubble represents the Subjective Frame.



The triangle and square represent the Structural Frame.



The two hands shaking represent the Cultural Frame.



The Mona Lisa with a moustache represents the Postmodern Frame. This symbol is a reference to the artist Marcel Duchamp, who famously painted a moustache on a print of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

DID YOU KNOW?

Because the terms 'framework' and 'frames' both contain the word 'frame', it is easy to confuse these two terms. When you are learning to use these terms take care not to mix them up.

Foreword

Visual art is the ultimate expression of who we are as a human race. We can use a variety of art materials and employ artistic techniques in order to create images and objects. Visual art is expressive and emotive, and it communicates in a unique and creative manner our ideas of who we are and what we are feeling. Fundamentally, art can be considered as mimetic of life because it represents aspects of life and how we, as artists, experience it.

Studying Visual Arts is not solely based around your art practice and the creation of aesthetically pleasing artefacts. More importantly, it also offers you the opportunity to explore the concepts, ideas, emotions and beliefs of others. Not only can you investigate the artistic choices of materials, colour, techniques, overall quality and symbolism used, you can also examine and question the artist's intent and consider if the artist was motivated by politics, religion or by the beauty of the environment. Think about for whom the work was intended. How did these people react? How do people react now? What is your reaction to the work? Does the message and meaning of the work change when you place it in a different context?

While studying Visual Arts opens up myriad possibilities to scrutinise life, *Art and Me: Senior Visual Arts Stage 6* offers you new insight into life as it is experienced by others. It provides case studies to practise and offers tools to interrogate artistic meaning and intent. This text is written with the NSW Stage 6 Syllabus in mind and you will recognise the use of the Frames and the Conceptual Framework throughout the book.

The authors are all experienced Senior Visual Arts teachers who will guide you to further develop your skills in analysis, reflection, critical judgement, and historical understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. Of course, these skills are applicable in a range of contexts. However, the title and the content of this text: *Art and Me*, is chosen because it reflects how critical insight into art allows you to learn about the world you live in and, crucially, more about yourself.

We wish you success when bringing together these understandings, newly developed investigative skills and your artmaking processes in order to imaginatively and creatively communicate your ideas through the making of bodies of work. We hope that you seriously engage in the study of the visual arts and use your Visual Arts process diary (VAPD) to clearly document your creative trials and errors, your research, engagement with the Frames, understanding and application of the Conceptual Framework and your investigation into your own artmaking processes. Together, your VAPD and your body of work will reflect a coherent, uniquely personal, creative point of view.

Marianne Hulsbosch

About the authors

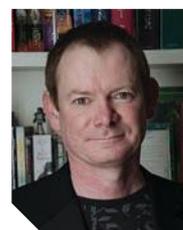
Dr Marianne Hulsbosch, PhD (Creative Arts)

Marianne was the Course Director of Visual Arts Education (Secondary) at the University of Sydney. Marianne has extensive experience lecturing in Visual Arts, Textiles, and Design and Technology. She has developed and implemented secondary education programs in Visual Arts and Design and Technology in the Bachelor of Education and Master of Teaching degrees as well as the Master of Contemporary Arts for Educators degree at Sydney College of the Arts. Marianne continues to exhibit in internationally acclaimed exhibitions that incorporate a wide range of processes, materials and contextual sites.



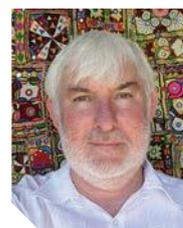
Paul FitzGerald, BA (Visual Communications), MTeachHons (Secondary: Visual Arts)

After an international career in animation, graphics and writing, Paul FitzGerald has turned his attention to teaching Visual Arts at St Andrew's Cathedral School. His many achievements include the animation and book series Gogo's Adventures With English and Ketchup, a 65-part television series released on the international market. Other projects include Farscape, Blinky Bill and Dinky Di. Paul is also an author and illustrator of children's books and is implementing his knowledge and experience in Visual Arts education.



Alan Guihot, BA, DipEd, MEd (Arts Education)

Alan is an experienced Visual Arts teacher and administrator who has worked in a number of comprehensive country high schools. He has had significant experience with syllabus development and HSC marking. Alan has written a Visual Arts HSC Study Guide for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and examination study tips for HSC Online. He devised Stages 4, 5 and 6 exemplar Visual Arts units of study for the Department of Education and Training, presenting these to teachers in workshops throughout New South Wales. In 2007 Alan was selected for an Arts Industry Teacher Placement at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. Alan is currently Head Teacher of Visual Arts at Melville High School, Kempsey.



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Ian is an artist, educator and Franciscan. He seeks to build strong connections between life, art and his classroom. His own paintings are heavily influenced by Australian and French Impressionist painters, in particular Arthur Streeton and Claude Monet. Ian lives with his wife and three children in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney.



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Paul FitzGerald

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Introduction

Why study Visual Arts?

Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known.

Oscar Wilde, writer 1895

Why did you choose to study Visual Arts? For most students it is because making art is fun and rewarding.

The best way to learn about art is by making art and being in contact with other artists and their work. Developing your knowledge of the visual arts will enhance your understanding of the role of the artist, world, audience and artwork in all forms of media as well as in **contemporary** and historical cultures.

By studying Visual Arts you will gain the skills and knowledge that will assist you to interpret your own **body of work** as well as the works of others. This subject encourages individual thinking and offers opportunities for you to engage in the creative process. It will develop your visual literacy, which is an important skill both in other areas of your education and in life in general. Art is increasingly integrated into our daily lives. Much of what we see daily is related to art. It is an increasingly important creative and social force in modern life.

Visual Arts focuses on developing the 'whole person'. You can bring together your ideas and chosen materials and invest them with meaning in the production of art. Investigating artworks from historical and contemporary perspectives will help to broaden your general knowledge and enrich your own artmaking processes. Also, as an artist you will become aware of the possibilities offered by art traditions from different world cultures.

contemporary the most current artists, artworks, practices, theories and movements

body of work art piece or pieces that reflect the practice of their creator

The art classroom

As a Visual Arts student you will always be pushed for time and space. You will need to decide where you are going to work at home and at school. Ask yourself where you will work as an artist and how much space you are going to need.

The art classroom is usually the place where you will do most of your artmaking for the HSC, although some students do a lot of their work at home. Use the tools and materials available, and value the expertise of your teacher. Listen to what they say, experiment with ideas and take risks.

Artmaking is time-consuming and requires organisation. Ensure your work is safely stored; don't assume someone else will put it away when the paint is dry. Maintain a clean, safe working environment and take particular care with dangerous chemicals and materials.

Working off-site

Not all works can be completed at school or in the art classroom. The school may not be able to offer the space or time you will need to complete your work. You may need to work off-site or at home. Clear some space in your room. If you have a shed or spare room at home, ask your parent/carer if you can use it as your art studio.



Figure 0.1 Art classroom.

Working between school and home you will find that many great ideas come to you at the most unexpected times. It's best to carry a pencil and small notebook or Visual Arts Process Diary (VAPD) wherever you go. Think about using other equipment to record your ideas as well. For instance, many mobile phones can be used to take photographs, produce short videos or record speech.

Working away from school raises many issues. Your teacher needs to supervise you and your body of work. At the end of Year 12 they will need to sign a declaration to say that you are the **creator** of your work. There are also safety issues to consider. For example,

creator maker

the teacher has to make sure that students are safe in the ceramics room with kilns and other electrical equipment. The teacher also needs to at all times adhere to the requirements of the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus. When working off-site you will need to bring your work to school regularly so that your teacher can discuss it with you, monitor your progress and advise you.

The Conceptual Framework

The **Conceptual Framework** is a system devised to place art in the wider context of culture, location and history. The Conceptual Framework consists of the **agencies** of the artworld. These agencies are the artist, artwork, world and audience.

The Framework links these agencies. You can investigate each agency separately or explore the links between them to give you a deeper understanding of all aspects of art in society. The Conceptual Framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

Conceptual Framework in art, a visual model and theoretical tool used to study artists, artworks, audiences and the wider world

agencies the elements that make up the Conceptual Framework of the artworld: artist, artwork, world and audience

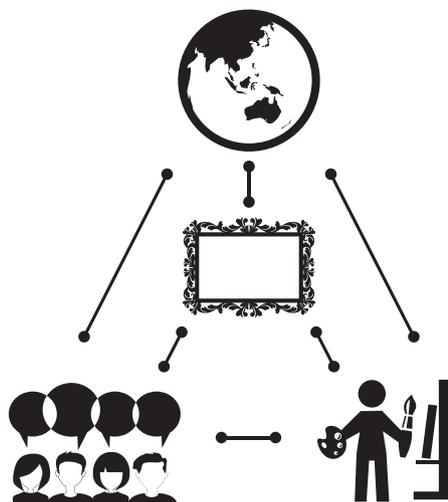


Diagram representing the Conceptual Framework

The Frames

There is more than one way to think about art, and so the Frames were designed as a tool to help students understand the different points of view about art. Four key ways of looking at art were identified:

- The Subjective Frame looks at personal experiences and imagination, such as how we feel about an artwork.
- The Cultural Frame understands art by looking at the shared values and beliefs of the culture in which the work was created.
- The Structural Frame looks at how art is put together and how signs and symbols within it communicate meaning.
- The Postmodern Frame is concerned with ideas that challenge mainstream (dominant) values of histories and ideas.



If, for example, you walked into a gallery and found a sculpture made of camel dung, you could use the Postmodern Frame to help you make sense of what you see. The Frames are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Body of work

Over the years you will have developed your artmaking skills and also gained a deeper understanding of what art is and can be about. For assessment in Year 12, you must create a body of work. This is an artwork or series of artworks that will demonstrate the development and intent of your practice as an artist.

*If people knew how hard I worked to achieve my mastery,
it wouldn't seem so wonderful after all.*

Michelangelo, sculptor and painter 1564

Beginning

Perhaps the most difficult part of creating a body of work is beginning. Where do you start? There are so many possibilities. Many students feel overwhelmed by the choices they must make at this stage and become stuck on the thought 'I don't know what to do'. They wait for the next distraction – lunch, sport, friends or the end of the lesson – to take their mind off answering the question: 'What am I going to make?' Valuable time can be lost simply by not starting. All creative people have to deal with this situation.

In a letter written in 1884, the artist Vincent van Gogh described how he dealt with beginning an artwork:

Just slap anything on when you see a blank canvas staring you in the face like some imbecile. You don't know how paralysing that is, that stare of a blank canvas, which says to the painter, 'You can't do a thing'. The canvas has an idiotic stare and mesmerises some painters so much that they turn into idiots themselves. Many painters are afraid in front of the blank canvas, but the blank canvas is afraid of the real, passionate painter who dares and who has broken the spell of 'You can't' once and for all. (Harrison 1991, p. 378)

Inspiration

There are so many ideas about what makes good art that some students fall into the trap of thinking that whatever they create is great art, simply because they say it is. They might argue that because the artist Marcel Duchamp submitted a urinal as a sculpture (see Chapter 14), if they did something similar their work must be of equal significance. How many art teachers around the world have been presented with a canvas splattered in paint that the student firmly believes is a masterpiece in the style of Jackson Pollock (see Chapter 11), and therefore worth millions? What these students have done is to be happy with the first 'easy to do' idea that popped into their heads.

Process

Your teachers will be looking for evidence that you, as an art student, have explored and experimented. Creating art is a process, a journey, and the best journeys have a few surprises.

Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.
Scott Adams, comic artist 1957

Making mistakes

When you are experimenting and exploring ways of creating your body of work, it is important to remember that it is all right to make mistakes. Mistakes are useful as from them you learn. Sometimes they allow you to make useful discoveries that take your work in a whole new direction.

Persistence

Developing your body of work can at times be frustrating. There will be moments when you think it's not working. It is normal for artists to find themselves at a point where they are unhappy with their work. Don't be too quick to throw out an idea. Instead, keep going.

Sometimes if you work through a problem you may discover a great solution that you had never considered.

The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; third, common sense.

Thomas Edison, inventor 1847–1931

It is important to always think of yourself as an artist. Work hard at your artmaking. Never think, 'I can't do it'. Instead, think of ways to make it happen. Always consider the potential effect of your work on an audience. And remember, as Albert Einstein famously said:

Imagination is more important than knowledge. (Viereck 1929)

Visual Arts Process Diary

Purpose

As an art student you will be required to keep a Visual Arts Process Diary (VAPD). Its purpose is to be a place where you can record your experiments and discoveries as you develop your body of work. The diary should give you, your art teacher and the BOSTES an understanding of the process you went through to create your art.

Your VAPD will help your teacher understand how you are working and give them an insight into the ideas you are exploring. It can show the progress you have made and suggest possible new directions. Your teacher might refer to your VAPD when making an assessment of your work.

Presentation

A notebook or sketchbook is a convenient and compact form for a diary. However, the VAPD does not have to be a book. Think outside the square. For example, the diary could be digital, consisting of a series of files. It could be a suitcase containing objects and notes or a bag with many zippered pockets. The form the VAPD takes is up to you, though it will need to be reasonably compact, portable and understandable. Larger works or pieces not included in your submitted body of work can be included in the diary at a later stage.

The VAPD does not need to be a work of art in itself. It does not need to be neat and organised. However, it does need a sense of order and development.

Contents

Research

Your VAPD should contain evidence of research and show the thinking that went into your artmaking. Research might take the form of a collection of images you have found in magazines or on the internet that you find stimulating and are in some way linked to ideas you are developing.

It might also include written text you have found that contains interesting ideas. Quotes from artists you admire, newspaper articles or web logs (blogs) that spark your imagination can also find a place in your VAPD.

Obstacles cannot crush me; every obstacle yields to stern resolve.

Leonardo da Vinci, painter and sculptor
1452–1519

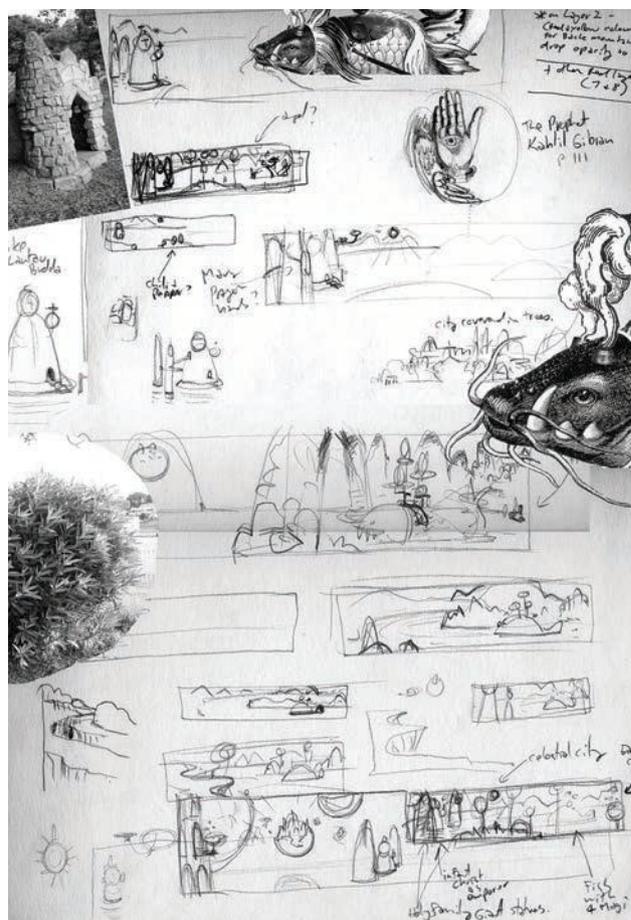


Figure 0.2 Sample planning page from a student's VAPD.

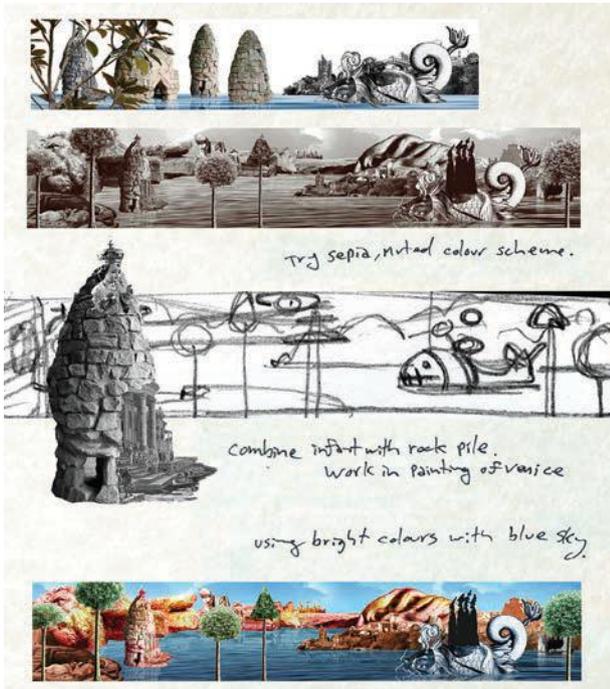


Figure 0.3 Sample recording page from a student's VAPD.

Planning

Your VAPD is a helpful tool in planning your artmaking. On page xvi is a page from a student's VAPD that shows design options for a sculpture.

By making many sketches the student was able to explore alternative design ideas. The student was then able to reflect on the sketches, reject the designs they were unhappy with and rework ideas that showed potential.

Experiments

As you experiment with art materials, such as paint or clay, develop the habit of recording what works and what doesn't. If, for example, you are planning to create a sculpture, you might experiment with different materials to look for solutions to practical problems, such as how the sculpture will stand up by itself. Also, you can record experiments with **aesthetic** ideas, such as working out successful colour combinations.

aesthetic concerning the appearance or beauty of an object

The VAPD can also be a place to record parts of the artmaking process and some technical discoveries found through trial and error. These documents will be useful should the student wish to create another artwork. Record your mistakes and learn from them.

With experimentation comes surprise and discovery.

Kim Lee Kho, artist 2013

Famous art diaries

Many artists over the centuries have kept journals and sketchbooks that record their writings and ideas.

Leonardo da Vinci wrote down ideas with his sketches. Like many artists, he worked out his ideas on paper, and his sketchbooks were used to record his thoughts and plan his work.

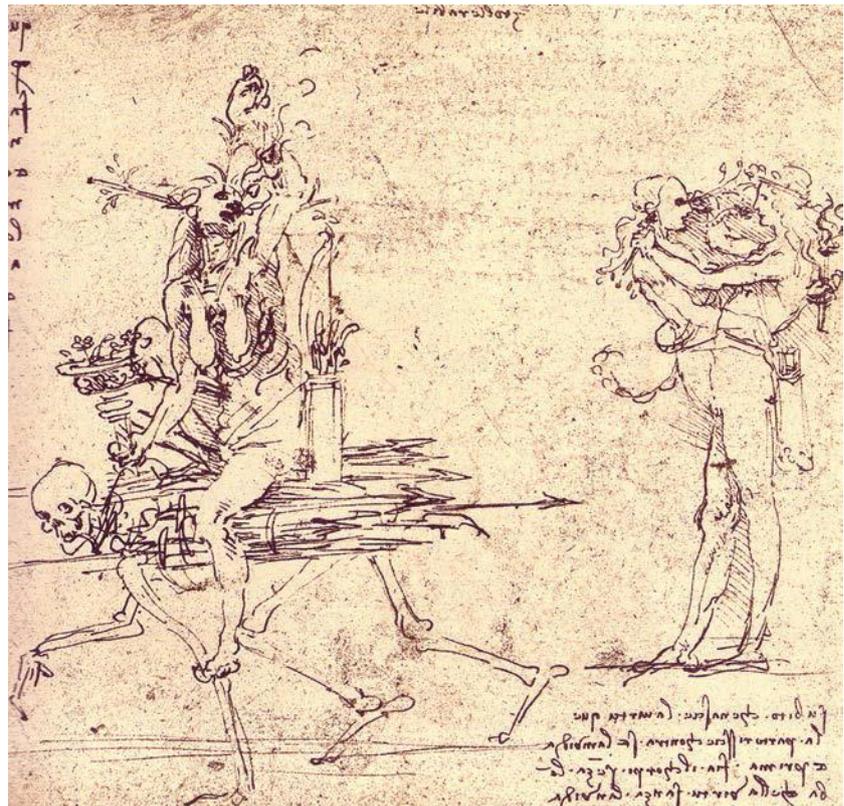


Figure 0.4 Sketches by Leonardo da Vinci.

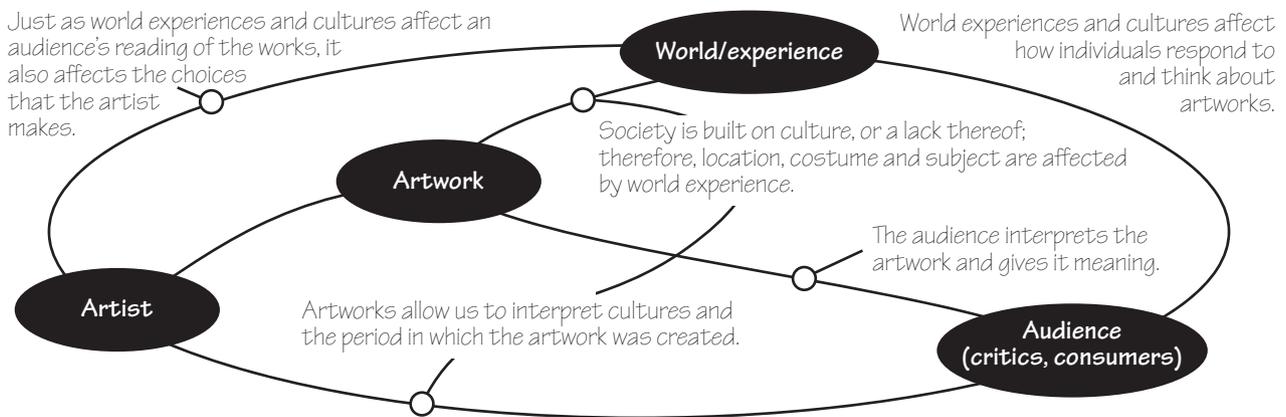


Figure 0.5 A student's analysis of the Conceptual Framework.

The imagination allows artists to create works of meaning and aesthetic value. In my body of work, the imagination of both the artist and the audience are involved in making/creating meaning. This will be accomplished through suggestion and photographs of a dramatic nature that infer that something is about to, or has, happened. The way in which this will be achieved practically will be discussed under the 'structural frame'.



Linked to my idea of suggestion will be another of my explorations: the exploration of human and non-human subject dislocation or bizarre placement, that is, the placement of a subject in a foreign setting/location. My interest in this concept can be tracked back to my case study of photographer Philip-Lorca DiCorcia. His works display an alienation of the subjects from their surroundings. The photographs, taken candidly, are the subject of much controversy. Some critics say that his works, due to their candid nature, display their subjects for who they are, with a removal of synthetic pose, stance and expression. The way in which the works are taken dislocate the subjects and create a bizarre feeling of alienation and the audience is left to create meaning and relate to the image themselves, which is one of my aforementioned objectives.

Through lighting, colour and location I want my works to be highly emotive and aesthetically stimulating. I will be employing dramatic, almost theatrical, lighting. Though I wish not to prescribe specific meaning to my works, the ambience of the photographs will be completely under my control. Ambience and mood through lighting will play a large role in my body of work.

Figure 0.6 A student's analysis of their work using the Subjective Frame.

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo created a rich diary containing over 300 images, as well as doodles, poetry, prose and recollections of dreams. It has been reproduced and is available for purchase as a book. Kahlo's diary gives an insight into the artist's inner world.

Conceptual Framework

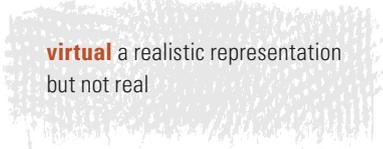
It is useful to record in your VAPD how you see your work relating to the artworld. Explore the relationships between you as an artist, the world around you, your work and how you think others may view your work.

Frames analysis

Reflections on your artmaking in progress should be recorded in your VAPD. As you have learnt, the four Frames – Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern – provide four unique viewpoints for thinking about and examining your work.

The art student in the artworld

You are an artist. Take every opportunity to see what other artists are doing. Visit galleries in your local area, and read newspapers to see what exhibitions are showing. Make time to read about art in books, journals and newspapers and online. Remember that art is also being produced **virtually** on websites and in blogs.



virtual a realistic representation
but not real

Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973

Art is in the world around you. Don't think of it as something to be found only in museums and galleries. Look for it in other places, such as in architecture, public sculpture, graffiti, fashion, jewellery, music videos, animated films and comic books. If you relate this understanding to your study of art history and art criticism, you will more fully understand the aesthetic decisions being made around you. Be mindful that not everything you see in the world can be called art, looked at as art or studied as art. But then again, artists are always pushing the boundaries.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Art provides a way to relate to life and improve your experience of it.
- As a Visual Arts student you will always be pushed for space. Be creative and access the art classroom as often as you can. Also try to make a small studio space in or near your home. Ensure it is a safe environment for yourself, your visitors and your artworks.
- Your body of work is an artwork or series of artworks that will demonstrate the development and intent of your practice as an artist.
- The Visual Arts Process Diary records your development, research and artmaking processes as well as critiques and other information relating to your body of work.



SECTION 1

ARTMAKING

A piece of white paper with a deckled, torn edge is positioned diagonally across the frame. The paper is set against a dark, textured background that resembles a book cover or endpaper. The text on the paper is arranged in three lines, with the third line enclosed in a black rectangular box.

PRACTICE

CHAPTER 1

EXPRESSIVE FORMS

1.1 Drawing

Drawing is the honesty of the art. There is no possibility of cheating. It is either good or bad.

Salvador Dalí, Surrealist painter 1976

Drawing has always been used to express ideas and record observations. Drawings can be **representational** or **abstract**, small or large in scale, and detailed or erratic in nature.

Through drawing, an artist can get down to the basics of a subject and briefly represent something about their world; what they see, experience or feel.

representation the presentation of something again in the form of an artwork

abstract art in its truest form, an artwork with no recognisable subject matter

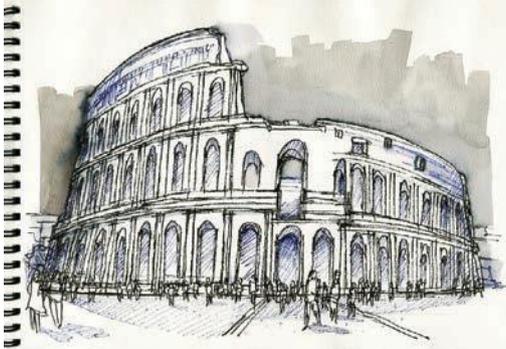


Figure 1.1 Artist's sketchbook.



Figure 1.2 Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Acrobats at the Cirque Fernando (Francisca and Angelina Wartenburg)*, 1879. Oil on canvas, 131.2 × 99.2 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, USA, Chicago collection.



Figure 1.3 Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *At the Circus: Entering the Ring*, 1899. Black and coloured pencils on paper, 31 × 20 cm. The J. Paul Getty Museum, California, USA.

Materials

Examples of drawing materials are given below. Don't be limited by this list; use your imagination to think of other materials to use.

Drawing paper

Many types of commercial drawing papers and cardboards are available. Some very expensive papers are made with cotton. Also consider using unusual papers, such as brown paper bags, pages from old telephone books, pages from a newspaper, corrugated cardboard or tissue paper.

Dry drawing materials

Lead (graphite) pencil

Most lead pencils have a marking that indicates the hardness or softness of the lead. H stands for hard and B stands for brittle. For H pencils, the higher the number the harder the pencil lead. For B pencils, the higher the number the more brittle the lead.

Use a sharpener to shave off the lead onto a drawing. This fine powder is wonderful for shading.

The eraser is a great drawing tool. It can be used for smudging or rubbing back into areas of dark shading. Blotting paper can also be used for smudging.

Charcoal

Charcoal is carbonised wood. It can be a messy drawing material but it is versatile, capable of giving dense, powerful blacks through to the softest, lightest shadows. It is available in many forms: as compressed blocks, pencils and sticks. Compressed charcoal will give the darkest dark. It is easily erased and reworked. Always spray your finished charcoal drawing with fixative.

Fixative

Fixative is a spray that stops dry drawing materials (such as charcoal) smudging. It works like hairspray and holds all the particles of drawing material together. Use a workable fixative spray to continue to work a number of layers over the top.

Wax crayons and pastels

Wax crayons have bright colours. Pastels are blocks of intense, pure pigment. Both oil and chalk pastels are available and come in a wide range of colours. Pastels are excellent for layering or blending. Water can be used to smudge and blend chalk pastels.



Figure 1.4 Liang Kai, *Immortal in Splashed Ink*, circa 1140–1210. Album leaf, ink on paper, 48.7 × 27.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan.

Wet drawing materials

Ink

Inks are water based and available in a wide range of colours. Chinese ink gives an intense black and can be watered down to make a grey wash.

Chinese brushes

Chinese brushes are used to 'draw' using ink. To achieve a fine line, hold the brush upright (vertical) and lightly touch the tip on the paper. Press a little harder and the line will thicken. Traditional Chinese artists first create a diluted wash and use that to put the base layer on the drawing surface. They then work over the top with the dense, undiluted black.

Felt-tip pens

Felt-tip pens are excellent for creating detailed, fine lines and dots. They are used by many cartoonists and illustrators. Felt-tip pens are often expensive and the tips are easily damaged.

Aquarelle paints

Aquarelle paints are thin water-based paints that have colour pigments added. These paints can be quite translucent.

1.2 Painting

The act of painting involves placing fluid colour (that is, paint) on a surface. Paint can be used in many different ways and can be transformed into many states. An artist needs to consider the painting style, technique, materials and equipment that they use.

Lucian Freud

Full, saturated colours have an emotional significance I want to avoid.

Lucian Freud, painter 1922–2011

Painter Lucian Freud applies oil paint so thickly that it takes months to dry. He leaves his paintings unvarnished as he wants the viewer to see the raw quality of the paint.

We can see in Freud's painting *After Cézanne* a series of contrasting relationships. The way Freud has painted the male figure contrasts sharply with the way the two female figures are painted. The male figure is darker, and more detailed, sharp and accented than the female figures. The seated female figure in particular is softer and smoother in treatment than the male. This emphasises the differences in gender and power between these figures and the uneasy relationship between them. The same difference is apparent in the depiction and treatment of the floorboards and walls in relation to the smoothness of the sheets and the velvet of the padded chair.



Figure 1.5 Lucian Freud, *After Cézanne*, 1999–2000. Oil on canvas, 214 x 215 cm. National Gallery of Australia/Bridgeman Art Library.

After *Cézanne* by Lucian Freud was inspired by **Post-Impressionist** Paul Cézanne's painting *An Afternoon in Naples*. In turn, Cézanne's painting was influenced by French **Impressionist** Édouard Manet's painting *Olympia*. Similarly, Manet was inspired by the Italian **Renaissance** painting *Venus of Urbino*, which was painted by Titian in 1538. Painters always copy!

Materials

Pigment is what colours the paint, binder is what holds it together, and the medium is what changes its original state.

Acrylic paints

Acrylic paints work on any **ground**. Acrylics are water based and extremely versatile. Depending on the medium, acrylic paint can act in a similar way to either oils or watercolours.

Post-Impressionism meaning after Impressionism, this art style developed the principles of **symbolism**, analytical and exaggerated colour, and uninhibited brush strokes introduced by the Impressionists

Impressionism an art movement where the artist captured the image of an object as someone would see it if they just caught a glimpse of it

Renaissance French word for rebirth; the period in the arts from the beginning of the fifteenth century until the late sixteenth century when artists' work was informed by the art and architecture of the Ancient Greeks and Romans and the study of nature

symbolism the use of symbols and figures to represent an idea or meaning

ground a surface or prepared area to which paint is applied



Figure 1.6 Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538.
Oil on canvas, 119.2 × 165.5 cm.
Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.



Figure 1.7 Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863.
Oil on canvas, 130.5 × 190 cm.
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Gouache

Gouache works on any ground. It is water based and produces a strong, flat, opaque colour.

Oil paint

Oil paints can be applied to canvas or board, never paper. The surface should be prepared with gesso. This will seal it and prevent the first layer of paint from being soaked up by the ground. Instead, the paint will lie on top of the surface.

Oil paints provide bold colours and firm textures. Dilute the paint with thinners and apply the first layer of underpaint. When that is dry use thicker paint to develop the next layer. The key rule to remember is start with layers of thin, diluted paint and add thicker paint as you go.

Tempera

Tempera can be used on canvas or hardboard. Prime the surface with gesso, then sand it smooth. Tempera has a strong, flat, opaque colour.

Watercolour

Watercolour can be used on paper that is either stretched or unstretched. Create your image from many transparent layers or washes. Watercolour has a subtle, flat colour and is water based.

Brushes

Different brushes have different uses. Use a soft synthetic or sable brush for watercolour, tempera and transparent layers. Flat bristles are used for oils and thicker paints. Round pointed brushes are used for fine, detailed work.

Points to consider

When preparing to paint it is helpful to develop sketches and drawings and collect visual references.

Also, answer the following questions:

- What colours (palette) will I need?
- What shape and size will my painting be?
- What will I paint on?
- How smooth is the surface?
- What painting style will I use?
- How will I apply the paint?
- Could I add other materials to the work?
- What final surface treatment will I use?

DID YOU KNOW?

Manet's *Olympia* (see page 5) was considered scandalous by the French Salon in 1866 and had to be raised out of reach of members of the audience who kept attempting to attack it.

1.3 Printmaking

Printmaking offers a wide range of methods that can be employed as the basis for **conveying** specific ideas and concepts to an audience. It allows images to be transformed and repeated numerous times.

Printmaking methods range from the simple through to the highly technical. Techniques that can be used include block printing, etching, drypointing, collagraphy, silkscreen printing, lithography and monoprinting.

For example, in the aquatinting method, powdered resin is applied to a metal plate to resist the acid, allowing for the development of areas of subtle tonal gradation. Coloured inks can be used when preparing the plate for printing.

convey communicate or express something



Figure 1.8 Screen printing equipment.



STUDENT TASK 1.1

Investigate the different printing techniques listed opposite. For each technique, write a short description and find an illustration.

Printmaking in the digital age

As an artform, printmaking in the age of digital technologies does not always rely on traditional craft processes. The photocopier, laser printer, inkjet printer and fax machine are all potential tools for the production of multiple images. With the advent of the 3D printer-copier, there is a range of new techniques to explore.

Experiments with printmaking

Printmaking, as with all expressive forms, is only limited by the imagination of the artist. Abstract mark making and interesting combinations of techniques can lead to exciting results.

Printing does not always involve creating a series of prints. Some forms of printing challenge the idea that printmaking is concerned with the creation of multiple images. Monoprinting (single, one-off prints) is an example.

As in all expressive forms, when making prints a balance between technical mastery and **conceptual strength** is essential. Many artists use printmaking techniques as a jumping off point, combining it with other media, including painting, drawing, photography and digital media.



Figure 1.9 Screen printing.

conceptual strength the extent and depth of artistic ideas and concepts



Points to consider

Printmaking requires prior planning and the organisation of resources. It can be time-consuming and, in some instances, the materials can be very expensive. Some materials need to be handled with care, as they may be toxic when used without proper safety precautions. Careful storage and cleaning-up processes need to be observed. And remember:



Figure 1.10 An example of a digital print.

1.4 Photomedia: Photography

There is a considerable amount of manipulation in the printmaking from the straight photograph to the finished print. If I do my job correctly that shouldn't be visible at all, it should be transparent.

John Sexton, fine art photographer 1979

Basic principles of photography

With the help of a lens, light particles are focused onto light-sensitive film. The light burns the film and the image that results is called a negative. In a negative, what is white is dark and what is dark is light and everything is upside-down and back to front.

You can see in the image opposite how the light from the window has burnt the film. This is the earliest surviving negative in existence. It was created using a camera obscura by William Henry Fox Talbot in 1835.

Ut and Gursky

The camera has recorded the best and worst of human activities. Ut's Pulitzer Prize winning photograph opposite shows Phan Thi Kim Phuc (centre), her burning clothes torn off, fleeing with other children after US planes mistakenly dropped napalm on South Vietnamese troops and civilians during the Vietnam War.

In *99 Cent* (shown opposite), Andréas Gursky has captured an everyday scene in the United States: a large supermarket with millions of cheap consumer items for sale at the ridiculously marked-down price of 99 cents. In this photograph Gursky makes a statement about the consumerist values of US society.

DID YOU KNOW?

A camera obscura is an optical device that was used for drawing. It is the origin of the present-day camera.

Can photographs be trusted?

We no longer believe that what the camera tells us is the truth. Novelist Susan Sontag warns us not to automatically believe what we see in a photograph:

Photography implies that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it. But this is the opposite of understanding, which starts from not accepting the world as it looks. (Cioran 1987, p. 7)

The perspective shown in a photograph relies on the choices made by the photographer: what to shoot and, perhaps more importantly, what not to. Also a photograph may be altered or digitally enhanced.



Figure 1.11
William Henry Fox Talbot,
Latticed Window (negative),
August 1835.



Figure 1.12 Andréas Gursky, *99 Cent*, 1999. C-print, 207 × 336.9 cm.
Courtesy Monika Spruth Galerie, Köln. Photograph: CNAC/MNAM, Dist, RMN.
© Philippe Migèat. © Courtesy: Sprueth Magers Berlin
London/Bild-Kunst. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 1.13 Nick Ut, 1972. Photograph: South Vietnamese forces follow after terrified children as they run down Route 1 near Trang Bang after an aerial napalm attack during the Vietnam War.

Points to consider

The twentieth century ended with the incredible rise of new digital photographic technologies. When taking digital photographs, follow these tips:

- At first, keep the settings on auto. Manual focus, **aperture** and shutter speed are very hard to adjust using camera settings. Also, often the settings are inaccurate and it is difficult to focus accurately using a digital camera's viewfinder or screen.
- Every camera has its strengths and weaknesses. Be prepared to experiment.
- Take as many images as your memory stick will allow.
- Use the highest resolution that your camera will allow.
- Do all the cropping and colour editing using your computer.
- When in doubt, read your camera's instruction manual.

aperture in photography, an adjustable opening that allows light to pass through the lens

DID YOU KNOW?

Rhein II (1999) is the world's most expensive photograph. It was purchased for \$4.3 million in 2011.



Figure 1.14 Arnold Genthe, *Looking down Sacramento Street, San Francisco, April 18, 1906*, 1906. Black and white photograph after earthquake.

1.5 Photomedia: Digital media

Computers offer artists enormous possibilities for generating and manipulating images. You can use one or a combination of different software packages to build, manipulate and finalise artworks. Using scanners and digital cameras, objects can be captured and brought into the digital environment where they can be transformed.

Techniques

Digital artworks don't have to be high-tech. The student work below was created with the basic Windows Paint program. By building up the image **pixel** by pixel the student created an image that referenced early computer games. Photographs can be enhanced and altered and the impossible made believable.

Many students get very excited when they discover a **filter** that can create eye-catching results quickly and they tend to overuse them. Use restraint when working with special effects such as these; sometimes less is more.

pixel in digital imagery, the smallest square or dot that is the basis for an image; pixels are combined optically to create an artwork or text

filter in computer graphics programs, a range of tools used to manipulate or distort an image

Try no-tech

Remember that the computer is not the only tool at your disposal. Try spending time away from the keyboard experimenting with making marks with inks and paint. Even potato prints can create interesting shapes and textures that you can scan and build into your digital work. Don't be afraid to scan the unusual. Crumpled foil or fabric can provide interesting textures. Cover the scanner with clear film if you plan on scanning anything messy.

Points to consider

Plan

When creating a digital artwork, you will often save time and heartache if you spend time working out the **composition** with pencil and paper. A few quick, rough sketches can prove to be very helpful.

composition the arrangement of elements in a work of art

Save alternative versions

One of the most exciting aspects of working digitally is being able to save different versions of your work. Make the most of it and take some artistic risks. If you make a mess of it you can always go back to a previous version. Your painter and sculptor friends can't press Ctrl Z to undo what they have done. Remember to save alternative versions using different file names.

Consider file formats

Become familiar with the different types of file formats. Compressed formats, such as JPEG, lose information every time you save them. Try to work with the native format of the software you are using.

Choose the correct resolution

An image that looks good on your computer screen doesn't always print well. Make sure your images are at least 300 pixels per inch (ppi) if you intend to print them. If you are downloading images from the Web, make sure the pixel dimensions are large enough for the intended use.



Figure 1.15 Digital artwork using large pixels to reference the basic graphics of early computer games.



Figure 1.16 High-resolution digital artwork is capable of showing a lot of detail.

Keep records

Because of the ease with which digital images can be downloaded and manipulated, it can be difficult for teachers to know how much of the work is that of the student. Remember to keep a document listing where you got source images from and how you have used them. Your VAPD is the place to record this information.

Use a graphics tablet

If at all possible use a **graphics tablet**. Students sometimes find them difficult to use initially, but once you train your eyes to look at the screen while your hand is moving the stylus you will have much more control over the image. You can easily alternate between mouse and pen at any time.

graphics tablet in computer technologies, a panel onto which the operator can draw with a stylus, transferring their work directly into a computer program



Figure 1.17 A graphics tablet.

1.6 Graphic design

Content precedes design. Design in the absence of content is not design, it's decoration.

Jeffrey Zeldman, Web designer 2008

A simple way to understand graphic design is to think of it as images that are combined with text to communicate an idea. Graphic design images are all around us in a wide variety of forms, such as posters, packaging, magazines and books.

Take the time to study the graphic language around you. Notice things such as the relative amount of space given to text and images. Also look at the use of space between letters, words and sentences and the overall composition of the design. Are there links between a particular subject matter and certain styles of illustration and typeface? Can you tell who the intended audience of something is just by looking at its design?

Artists around the world are continually finding ways to use recognisable visual language to provoke thinking. For example, in the artwork on the right, the artist has combined the simple graphic style of children's book illustration, which was so common in the 1930s, with an environmental message creating a strong political statement. The artist cleverly uses this decorative style to address not only adults but children too, giving people of all ages responsibility for the environment and making it child's play.



Figure 1.18 Work Projects Administration Federal Art Project, *Enjoy. Don't Destroy*, 1937. Colour silkscreen poster. Ohio.

Developing a design brief

The most effective graphic designs are created by artists who have clear intentions. They know what they are trying to say and to whom they are saying it. Before you start designing, take the time to develop a personal design brief.

Define what it is that will be communicated. It is often helpful to place a few restrictions on yourself, such as limiting the use of colour or setting the proportions of the image. You can always revise the brief later if you find yourself at a dead end.

Using software

Contemporary graphic designers use a variety of computer software. They usually develop different sections of an artwork in different programs and then import the separate elements into another program to bring it all together into the final artwork. Don't be restricted by the software. There are always creative solutions. Try turning pixel-based images (raster graphics) into **vector** graphics and vice versa. Remember that type doesn't always need to be horizontal and in a straight line.

vector an image that can be scaled indefinitely without degrading

Typography

Typography is the art of designing and arranging letter shapes. Graphic designers are very aware of the personality of fonts (typefaces). Serif fonts are generally easier to read than sans serif fonts, whereas sans serif fonts have a cleaner, more modern feel. It is critical to choose the right font for the message that you want to convey. Different fonts have a different feel. Consider the fonts used below.

Fonts
Fonts Fonts
Fonts Fonts

Figure 1.19 Examples of some fonts (typefaces).

Try to see how far you can manipulate type while maintaining readability. You may be surprised by how far you can go before it is no longer legible.

Above is the design for the front cover of *Mecano* magazine, a **Dada** publication printed in 1922. The design shows the Dada artists' creative use of typography and their desire to shock. They:

rejected the dignified purity of the classic page, with fragments of letters and punctuation strewn about like debris after a bombing. Typography has never been quite the same since. (Dair 1982, p. 130)

1.7 Sculpture

I say that the art of sculpture is eight times as great as any other art based on drawing, because a statue has eight views and they must all be equally good.

Benvenuto Cellini, sculptor 1547

Processes

A number of processes are used in sculpture, either independently or in combination.

Carving is a subtractive process. It involves carving from a solid block. This process is used particularly with wood and stone.

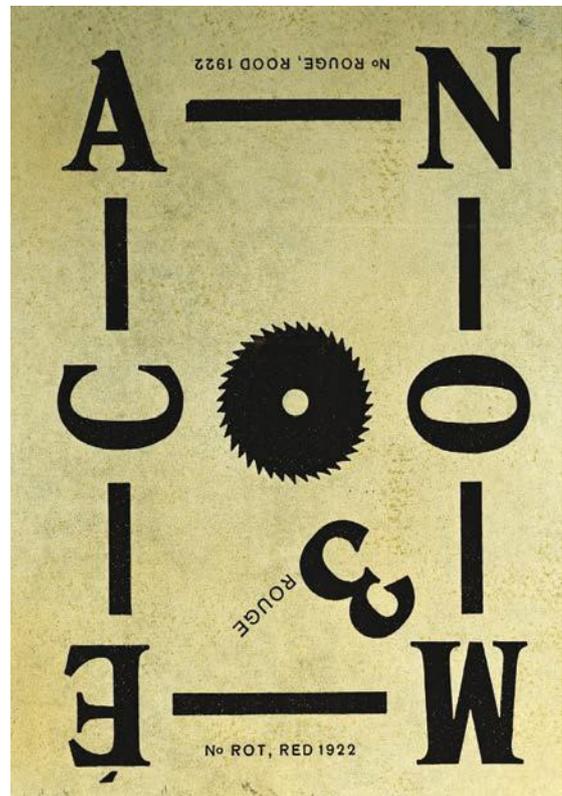


Figure 1.20 Cover of *Mecano* magazine, Holland, 1922.

Dadaism an international art and literary movement that went against traditional artistic and acceptable social norms

Casting involves using a mould to create a form. This is a common process for sculpting in metal. Modelling involves shaping material into a chosen form. This is used with clay sculpture.

Assembling is an additive process. It involves joining together separate, often diverse elements into a single sculptural piece.

Materials and techniques

The expressive form of sculpture encompasses a wide variety of materials and techniques. You could work with traditional sculpting materials (such as stone, metal, wood or clay), but the range of materials that may be used is only limited by your imagination. Many sculptural materials are heavy and difficult to transport. You should take this into account when making decisions about which media to use. In creating your sculpture, be sure that your construction and joining techniques are strong enough to survive transportation and exhibition.

Contemporary sculptors combine innovative materials and techniques to create artworks that challenge the audience. When planning to make a sculpture you will need to consider a number of questions, including the following:

- Will your work be freestanding or stand against a wall?
- Will it move and/or be interactive?
- Will the materials in the work be on show or be disguised through the addition of surface treatments or paint?

Look at the work *Natural Object 1* by Cherry Hood. The artist is renowned for her paintings; she is a past winner of the Archibald Prize for portraiture. Hood has used her painterly techniques to treat the surface of this sculpture:



Figure 1.21 Cherry Hood, *Natural Object 1*, 2001–05. Mixed media sculpture, life size.

Crossing over into the well-worn territory of realism allows the artist to inhabit the world of the apparently knowable. Described by the generalising, translucent, watery marks, Hood's figures are there and not there, masquerading as flesh and bone. (Barrington 2005)

In his sculpture *Megaferal* on page 16, Ben Eason-Piggott has used a wide range of materials, including timber, ceramics and wire. He even used glass marbles and animal fur. With reference to mythical minotaurs, centaurs and chimeras (creatures with the body parts of different animals), *Megaferal* explores the threat to the Australian environment caused by introduced pests, such as rabbits, foxes, goats, horses and buffalo. The introduction of foreign flora and fauna species upsets the ecological balance of the animal and plant world in Australia. *Megaferal* is a hybrid of different materials, reflecting the artist's concern that Australian species will become a hybrid, just as the chimeras were in Ancient Greek mythology (see page 16).



Figure 1.22 Ben Eason-Piggott, student, *Megaferal*, 2000.
 Timber, ceramic, wire and wire armature, plastic bubble,
 glass marbles, animal fur, 86 cm (w) × 53 cm (d) × 59 cm (h).
 Artist's collection.



Figure 1.23 *Chimera of Arezzo*, circa 400 BC.
 Lost-wax casting/bronze, 129 × 78.5 cm.
 National Archaeological Museum, Florence.

Points to consider

When analysing your practice as a sculptor, consider these three distinct factors:

- *The physical qualities of your work.* How have you used positive and negative shapes? What materials have you selected and how have you manipulated them? What is the scale of the work and what message are you trying to communicate?
- *The meaning of your work.* What is it of and what is it about? Is the work focused on a social, political, cultural or spiritual point of view? What signs and symbols have you incorporated into the work?
- *How the audience will respond to your work.* How will it make them feel? How could it relate to their experiences?

meaning in art, something that is conveyed by an artwork or that the artist intends to convey; what the work is about

1.8 Ceramics

Ceramics are artworks and other objects made when clay bodies are permanently hardened using high temperature. This process is known as firing.

Ceramic items include tableware and bathroom fixtures as well as sculptures. Australian artist Deborah Halpern works in sculpture, mosaic and ceramic artforms. Her most famous work *Angel*, which is a Picasso-inspired surreal sculpture, sat for many years in the front moat of the National Gallery of Victoria, in Melbourne (it has since relocated to Birrarung Marr). The sculpture is 10 metres high and incorporates more than 4000 individually cut and hand-painted tiles that are fixed to a steel and concrete armature.

Fabrication methods

For all methods, when joining two pieces of clay together ensure that the surfaces are fused. To achieve this, use a **slip** and add texture to the surfaces by cross-hatching them. Work the two surfaces together.

slip a mortar made by mixing clay and water into a smooth paste



Figure 1.24 Deborah Halpern, *Angel*, 1988. Ceramic, steel, concrete. Birrarung Marr, Melbourne.

Pinching

Pinching involves using only your fingers to form and shape. The clay can be dried out by the heat from your hands and from overworking the clay. When this happens, it can create cracks in the form. To keep the clay moist, occasionally mist it with water using a mister/atomiser.

Coil building

Coil building involves joining together short rope-like lengths of clay. Take off any rings when coil building. Work with small quantities of clay. Coils should be no thicker than 2 cm. Before joining the lengths, cut off the rough ends.

Slab construction

To use the slab construction technique, roll out a large, flat area of clay. Large slab works need to be supported. Consider using a mould of paper or cardboard underneath to assist in supporting your forms. Works can be supported internally using combustible materials (such as newspaper) or by creating permanent clay supports or buttresses.

Materials

Different clays, glazes and firing methods can be used. Ask the advice of a pottery supplier or other expert before starting a ceramic.

Clays

Earthenware and paper clays are soft, gritty clays that are easy to shape and form. When fired, they are very porous; that is, they will not hold liquids. They are also lightweight and fragile.

Stoneware is rough to touch and hard to form. When fired, the surface feels like stone. These ceramics are heavy, dense and strong and will hold liquids.

Porcelain is firm, smooth and creamy white clay that is difficult to shape and form. It cracks easily during construction. When fired, it is dense, strong and translucent.

Glazing and oxidation

A glaze is a silica-based substance that is painted on bisqueware. It melts at high temperatures, forming a glass-like surface.

Oxidation is a process where elements in the clay, such as iron or copper, produce different colours. The colour depends on the amount of air allowed into the kiln during the firing process.

Tools

When making ceramics, anything that will cut, shape, score, pattern or decorate clay can be used as a tool.

A spoon is wonderful to use to **burnish** the surface of your work. Burnished ware is usually fired at a low temperature.

burnish polish with a smooth stone or tool to make a surface shine

Firing

Ceramic kilns are large, insulated ovens with controlled temperature gauges that can reach temperatures in excess of 1350 degrees Celsius. They are hot enough to fire clay and ceramic glazes to melting point. In schools, kilns are usually placed in special rooms or even outside classrooms as they are dangerously hot when in operation and give off toxic fumes.

A clay body will only become a ceramic when it has been through the firing process. When a clay object is bone dry it is brittle and can break very easily. This is because the clay has dried and there is very little moisture to hold together the clay particles. When the clay body is bone dry it is ready for **bisque firing**.

Bisque firing occurs at about 1000 degrees Celsius and makes the ceramic piece very hard but still porous. House bricks and flowerpots are bisque fired. After being bisque fired the piece can be painted with glazes and is ready to be **glaze fired**.

bisque firing the first firing of ceramicware, without the addition of glaze

glaze firing the last firing of glazed works

WARNING: Use ceramic materials and equipment safely. Special care must be taken when using glazes, oxides and kilns.

Points to consider

Before starting to make a ceramic work you will need to determine:

- how the ceramic work will be used; for example, whether it will be sculptural and/or functional
- what it will look like; for example, its shape and size
- what materials and equipment are available.

Use ceramic materials and equipment safely. Special care must be taken when using glazes, oxides and kilns.



Figure 1.25 A large kiln called a 'car' kiln that has a moveable bottom which allows ceramic objects to be rolled in and out. After being fired ceramics are the most heat-resistant human-made items.

1.9 Textiles and fibre

Paintings (by modern artists) have spilled from their frames to our clothes and our walls.

Raoul Dufy, artist 1877–1953

Does art only appear in frames on walls or can it also be used or worn? Exhibition curator Vivienne Thwaites wrote of textile arts:

Textiles are the oldest and most ubiquitous of humanity's expressive media ... Familiarity, and their long shared history with people, is what makes textiles such an effective medium for artists. Contemporary artists have used the intimacy and familiarity of textiles to make some of Australia's most interesting recent art. (McIntosh 2006, p. 21)

While traditional processes are highly valued in the expressive form of textiles and fibre, you should break the boundaries and move beyond sewing, weaving and embroidery. Your textiles and fibre artmaking does not have to produce a flat object. What is important is the materials that you are using.

As with all work created in Visual Arts, make sure you demonstrate your exploration of the media in a way that sustains interest and engagement. Approach these materials and the conventional techniques for working with them from a different perspective. For example, you may decide to produce a textile, manipulate an existing textile or fibre, decorate an existing textile, or do all three.

The HSC Notes from the Marking Centre for Visual Arts emphasise the diversity of materials and practice evident in past works submitted by HSC students in this expressive form:

Students showed a strong awareness of exploring the following materials in traditional and non-traditional ways.

- appliqué and quilting
- digital manipulations
- photographs
- printed fibres and purchased fibres

Student submissions reflected an approach to contemporary art practice.

Submissions in the expressive form of textiles and fibre need to be considered on the same basis as all other bodies of work. There must be a strong integration of conceptual strength and material practice.



Figure 1.26 You can create beautiful and useful artistic pieces with textiles and fibres.

Manipulating textiles and fibres

A textile material can be cut and then pinned, sewn or glued together into various shapes. A common way to manipulate textiles is to make clothing from a length of fabric.

Decorating textiles

Lengths of textile materials or even constructed pieces can be decorated in various ways. For example, they can be dyed in different colours; embroidered with beads, shells and coloured yarns; or printed with designs.

DID YOU KNOW?

The expressive form textiles and fibre should not be confused with the HSC subject Textiles and Design.

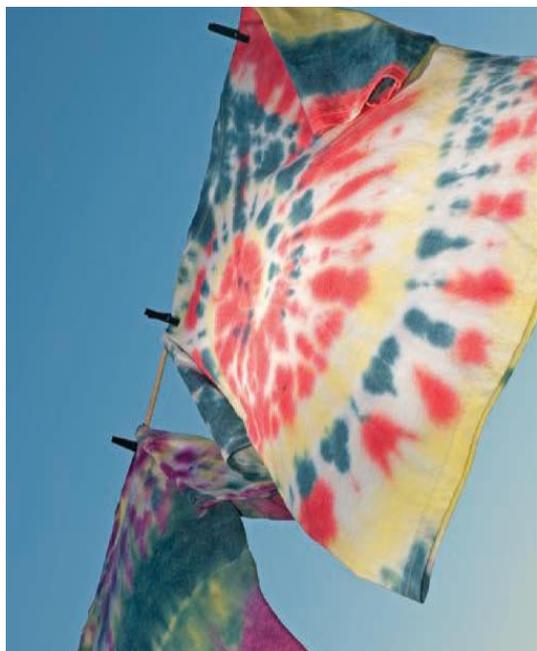


Figure 1.27 The art of tie-dye involves dipping fibres into different coloured dye to create unique patterns. This artform is believed to have originated in Peru and examples of these date back from AD 500 to 810.



Figure 1.28 Hooks are used to pull fibres through the canvas for creating decorative rugs.

1.10 Designed objects

Fashion is architecture: it is a matter of proportions.

Coco Chanel, fashion designer 1883–1971

The expressive form of designed objects is diverse. It can include such areas as jewellery, costume design, wearable art, architectural design and model making, and product design. The common factor in all these areas is that the artwork produced serves a function; that is, it can be used in some way.

In 1896, the US architect Louis Sullivan made the now famous statement that 'form ever follows function' (more often written as 'form follows function'). He was commenting on the intrinsic link between what an object is meant to do and what it looks like. The appearance of a designed object should, Sullivan believed, reflect its function.

In working in the expressive form of designed objects, the functionality of the artwork need not be your strongest concern. If, for example, you are making wearable art, remember that it is just that: an artwork that can be worn. It need not be practical or potentially marketable. It can function in a similar way to outlandish creations that fashion designers often present on the catwalk, which are items that clearly are not garments for everyday use.

The art of Paula Coulthard and Ursula Dixon, of Auckland, New Zealand, is a clear expression of the way in which conceptual strength and meaning can be conveyed through what essentially becomes wearable sculpture. Their work *Rattle Your Dags*, which was the Supreme winner of the 2007 Montana World of Wearable Art™ Awards in Wellington, New Zealand, comments on the way in which we are fashion victims blindly following the flock.

Similarly, the jeweller Roseanne Bartley uses her work to make comments on issues of disposability and recycling:

Objects that have had a prior use or come from an interesting place are like souvenirs: they are a document of time and place and have the potential to suggest an interesting story. It may be subtle, a fragment of a whole, an imprint on a surface, a distortion of the form from exposure to the elements. (Barber 2006)



Figure 1.29 Paula Coulthard and Ursula Dixon, *Rattle Your Dags*, 2007.

In the area of designed objects, you are limited only by your imagination. In your designs you can look to the past or you can experiment with new materials and technologies. This model of the Sydney Opera House was created in 1966 by Bill Lambert, who used the then new material of Perspex to create the intricate shapes of architect Joern Utzon's designs.

Remember that what seems to be an outlandish design at the time it is made can quickly enter the mainstream. In 1943 the then chairman of IBM, Thomas J. Watson Jnr, said, 'I think there is a world market for maybe [about] five computers'. How wrong was he?



Figure 1.30 Roseanne Bartley, *Sign of Life (Melbourne)*, brooch, 2006, from the 'Fragments and Souvenirs: The Home and Away Series', 2004–06. Painted metal, sterling silver, stainless steel, 8.0 × 8.0 × 0.5 cm. Collection of the artist, Melbourne, Australia.



Figure 1.31 This architectural model of the Sydney Opera House was made by Bill Lambert in 1966. The Opera House was constructed during 1959–73 and its architect was Joern Utzon.

1.11 Time-based forms: Film and video

A film is a petrified fountain of thought.

Jean Cocteau, novelist and filmmaker 1961

Creating a film or video is the process of recording a series of individual images (frames) and showing them together in a rapid sequence. The speed with which these images follow one another gives the viewer the **illusion** of movement.

illusion something that creates the appearance of reality, that tricks the eye

The key difference between film and video is the materials and technology used to capture images. Traditional film uses technology similar to non-digital cameras, in which light is exposed to light-sensitive film. With a film camera, a series of still images are exposed to a long strip of film that moves through the camera. The film is then carefully removed and developed in a darkroom using a series of chemical processes. Video, on the other hand, records images electronically. With digital video, images are converted into a series of numbers (digits), which can be recorded with a variety of mediums, such as a memory chip or hard disk.

You don't need a cast of stars, a crew of hundreds and a few million dollars of other people's money to make a great film. Instead, you need a strong idea, talent, planning and hard work.

Consider the story you want to tell with your film. What visual codes will the audience understand? If you were to make a horror film, for example, you would need to consider the use of lighting and how to create suspense.



Figure 1.32 A video editing desk.

Preproduction

When asked what he thought the three most important things in filmmaking were, the famous director Alfred Hitchcock replied, 'The script, the script, the script'.

There is no substitute for a good idea. Once you have written your script, the most important part of preproduction is to plan how you are going to shoot your film given the practical restrictions that exist, such as time, and access to equipment, cast, costumes and locations.

If your script has an exciting battle scene with a thousand monsters, exploding buildings and flying dragons, you might need to write an alternative scene or find a person who is an expert in special effects.

Think about lighting and the composition of each shot. Poor lighting can make a film look cheap.

Drawing up a **storyboard** (a little comic strip), even a very rough one with stick figures, is a useful way to plan your camera angles. Each type of shot (such as a long shot or close-up) has a different use. Have an idea of what shots you need before filming begins. Remember that you don't need to shoot the scenes in the order in which they appear in the script.

storyboard in filmmaking, a set of sketches and technical details, arranged in sequence, outlining the scenes that will be filmed

If you have two or more actors who are talking to each other, needing several camera shots, imagine an invisible line between them. This is often known as the 'line of interest'. The established **convention** is that the camera does not cross this line. If you do, you run the risk of confusing the audience. If a very tall person talks to a small character, the camera angles should reflect this. Use a low angle shooting up at the tall person, and a high angle looking down at the small character.

conventions the customary ways in which things are done; in art, the rules or structures of an artform

One rule of screenwriting: does the reader want to turn the page?

Leslie Dixon, screenwriter and producer 2012



Figure 1.33 3, 2, 1. Action ...

Production

Filming can be fun, but you need to be flexible. The weather can change, people can run late; go with the flow and remember to be very appreciative of the help others give you. Consider providing food for your cast and crew.

Post-production

The final critical stage in the film and videomaking process is putting it all together. Ensure the soundtrack is great. Also, if dialogue was poorly recorded when shooting, consider revoicing it.

You may need to edit the film so that the shots appear in the correct sequence. Many students get carried away with the effects and transitions that editing software offers. When editing, always think about what you are trying to convey to the audience and ensure you view the film as a whole. Sometimes a great scene needs to be cut to make a better film.

Always pay attention to the running time of your video or film. You may need to use careful editing to ensure it comes in under the prescribed time.

1.12 Time-based forms: Digital animation

Animation is an illusion of movement created by a series of still images. Creating animation is very time-consuming. There are 24 frames per second in a film. A five-minute film requires 7200 still images, so it is crucial to plan. Establish a strong idea for your animation before you start. Then develop the design and look of the characters and backgrounds.

Digital animation can be created using the wide range of 2D and 3D animation software that is available. Some of these programs have a steep learning curve, making them time-consuming to learn. When choosing a program to use, be realistic and consider the time you have available.

Storyboards and shots

The storyboard is where your ideas take form. It records the shots you will use. Types of shots include close-ups and wide shots. Consider which types of shots will best convey your ideas to the audience. Animator Peter Lord asks:

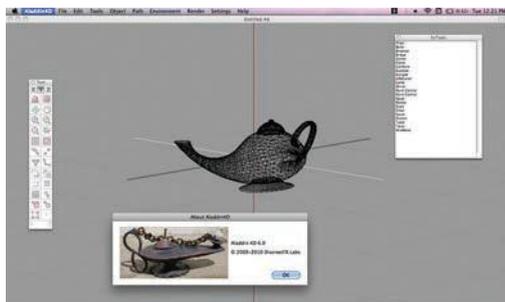


Figure 1.34 There are various software programs designed for generating three-dimensional graphics and animations.

Is loneliness conveyed better in a soulful close-up, or a wide shot which shows that there is nobody and nothing else around? Or both? And in which order? It seems to me that such questions – half artistic and half practical – are the main business of storyboarding.
(Lord and Sibley 1998, p. 158)

The length of each camera shot is also important. Fast cutting gives a sense of energy. A dull six-minute film can sometimes be edited into a great three-minute work.

Movement

In animation, many movements can be built up by creating cycles that can be repeated. For example, once you have animated a character walking two steps you have a cycle you can repeat. Rather than animating each single step, the original sequences can be reused. This is easier and saves time.

The movement of your characters will need to match the design of your animation. Simple, stylised graphic figures can move in a 'cartoon way' whereas realistic-looking characters should move in a more natural and subtle way. If they don't, the audience will quickly notice.

Different movements happen at different speeds. A hunter may creep slowly but their head and eyes may move quickly. In animation there is a principle called 'slow-in, slow-out'. This is where a movement starts out slowly, then gets faster and then slows before stopping.

Sound design

Think about the storytelling possibilities of sound.

Sometimes it is more effective to hear something than to see it. Imagine a simple figure with a totally black background. Add the echoing sound of water dripping and it will suggest an environment with a certain mood. Good sound design can carry the story in a subconscious way; it can also save time building sets.

Figure 1.35 A computer-generated image made in Blender, a 3D computer graphics software product.



DID YOU KNOW?

Professional character designers and animators know the value of a clear **silhouette**. If the basic shape of a character is clear, the audience will quickly understand the meaning of the character's pose.

silhouette an outline or shadow; a form shown as a shape only, without internal detail

1.13 Documented forms

With reference to contemporary art, the sculptor Scott Burton discusses the way in which the relationship between an artwork and its audience has been altered:

It will place itself not in front of but around, behind, underneath (literally) the audience—in an operational capacity.
(Artforum 1980, p. 158)

Since the 1960s and 1970s, art has come down from the walls and has been created as part of the environment or the experience of the audience. Yves Klein made artworks by painting naked women while an orchestra in dinner suits played classical music. Jean Tinguely created sculptures that were designed to self-destruct. (See the photograph at right.) The audience were able to take home pieces of the destroyed sculptures.

The concept of art as an event or 'happening' questioned its status as an enduring physical object. Documentation allowed the artist and audience to have an enduring record of an ephemeral (short-lived) event.

In its broadest sense, the expressive form called documented forms refers to the recording of concepts or events that, through scale, location or time-based constraints, cannot be submitted within any of the general guidelines of the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus. It recognises that, as an artist, you may prefer to explore the boundaries of art practice.

The following two images are stills from interactive performances. The image below is of *The Katy Wallace Caravan Project*, where the artist plays with the concept of mobile living and of families and individuals who



appear and disappear. The image on page 26 is from a poetry performance by Jim Allen, which was first performed in Auckland, New Zealand, in 1976 and most recently performed in 2007. In this performance, Allen used Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl*, a poem that was considered very risqué at the time it was written (1956–59).

Figure 1.37 Katy Wallace, *The Katy Wallace Caravan Project*, 2003. Caravan and mixed media. Photograph: Eimi Tamua.



Figure 1.36 Sculptor Jean Tinguely in the Nevada desert trying out his self-destruction sculpture.

Means of documentation

Submissions in documented forms employ a wide range of strategies to document artistic intent. The HSC Notes from the Marking Centre for Visual Arts emphasise that student submissions showed a wide range of interpretations of the documented forms. Furthermore, the context of both virtual and actual sites were explored with regard to performance and time-based works and representations of installations.

While the first impulse might be to use photographic or moving image technologies to document artmaking practice, this is not essential. All forms of visual and verbal communication can be employed to make clear the intent of the submission.



Figure 1.38 Jim Allen, *Poetry for Chainsaws*, 1976/2006. Performance. Photograph: Michael Lett.

1.14 Time-based forms: Interactives

The digital revolution is far more significant than the invention of writing or even of printing.

Douglas Engelbart, engineer and inventor 1997

When the Web became popular in the mid-1990s, it opened up creative possibilities for artists and designers. By combining eye-catching graphics with text, animation, video and sound, artists have found ways to create multimedia art with which the audience can interact.

In the **context** of producing a physical artwork to be assessed in the school environment, an interactive work can be developed as a single CD-ROM or DVD-ROM disk to be used on a variety of computers.

context the circumstances or events that form the environment within which something exists or takes place

Engage your audience

The very heart of this artform is the dynamic between the user and the work. Give the user choices. Put them in the driver's seat. A good interactive should enable extensive user navigation and manipulation of buttons, images, animations and sounds.

Surprise your audience where you can. Unexpected moments can keep your audience interested. If the work is totally predictable it's going to seem dull and boring.

Be creative with the screen layout. The trick with designing what appears on the screen is to find a balance between ease of use and creative expression. You want the work to be visually and **sonically** inspiring and also allow intuitive navigation.

sonic relating to the use or production of sound

Try working with more than one program. Consider creating 3D elements in an animation program. Find ways to create motion graphics and video that excite the audience.

As you explore the possibilities that various software provide, think about what you are trying to say as an artist. Can you make your idea stronger? Reflect on your work from different perspectives by using the four Frames: Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern (see Chapter 5). Can you find ways to add layers of meanings?

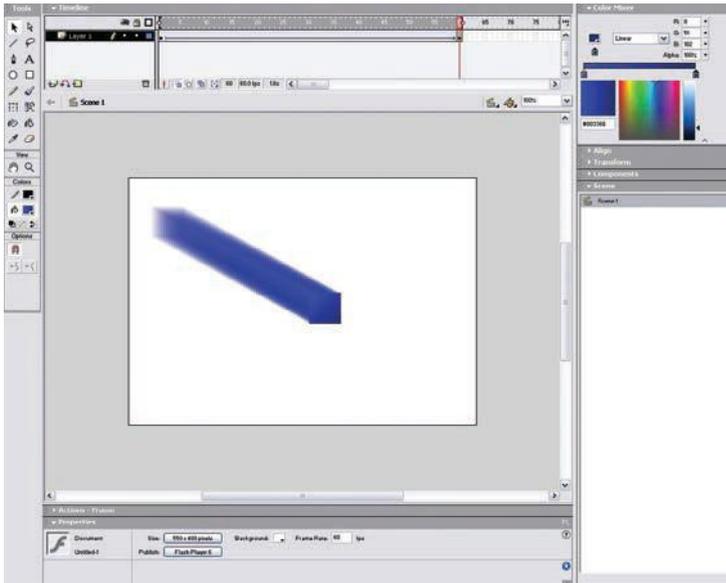


Figure 1.39 This is a simple example of what can be seen on a computer screen when using Adobe Flash to create animation.

Look at the work of other artists creating interactive sites. How do the interactive experiences feel to you? What can you learn from them?

Test as you go

It can be very useful to find people who have no prior knowledge of what your work is about and are willing to spend time interacting with your work while it is being developed. Observe how they interact with and respond to your work. Can you think of ways to make the experience richer and more engaging?

Ask them about their understanding of the interactive. You may discover that their interpretation of the meaning of your work may be different from your own.

Consider the user's computer

Speed of interaction is important. If the user's experience is stopped while a component loads, they will lose interest and disengage. Try to think 'modular'; create smaller files that appear to load instantly. Anticipate the limitations of the computer that may be the platform. Run the interactive on an older computer to see how well it runs.

The finished product may not run as you intended on a different computer. Test the disk on a separate computer from the one used to create it. Also make sure it can run on a computer that does not have the particular authoring program installed.

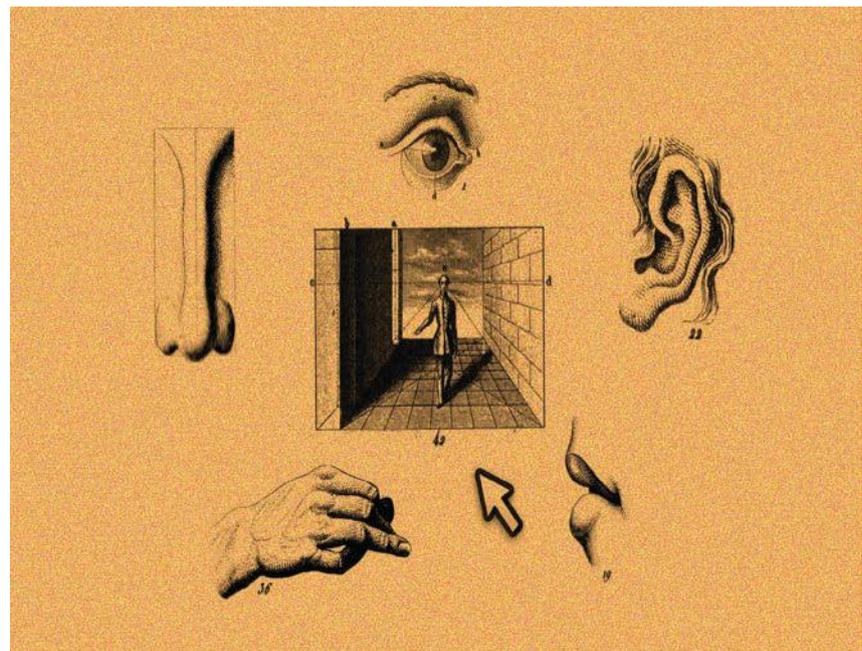


Figure 1.40 This screenshot of a student's work is an example of how an interactive screen can be designed.

1.15 Collection of works

It matters little how much equipment we use; it matters much that we be masters of all we do use.

Sam Abell, photographer 2009

The Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus describes a collection of works as a collection or series of works carried out in different media, materials or techniques. If you decide to create a collection of works you will be in good company. Pablo Picasso drew, painted, sculpted and made prints and collages. John Olsen draws, paints, makes prints and decorates ceramics. Tracey Emin makes quilts and collages and creates **installations**. Artists rarely work only within one medium, and there is no expectation that as an artist you will do so.

installation an artwork that is designed for a specific space and is installed into that space

Submission considerations

If your practice is not directed primarily towards a single media area and you choose to combine or use a range of artmaking techniques then you are creating a collection of works. Exploration of two or more expressive forms within a body of work is usually a prerequisite for your submission to be considered as a collection of works.

You should consider the primary focus of your artmaking. For example, if your submission consists of a diverse collection (such as My Le Thi's work, shown on these pages), it is expected that the focus of your collection of works will be on your practice as an artist. You can demonstrate this focus by a thorough and consistent investigation into a particular theme.

Not all pieces in a collection need to be related conceptually. You could, for example, investigate and experiment with a specific medium. Then, the medium used becomes the recurring theme.

Be certain that, while entering your artmaking as a collection of works, you still make rigorous judgements when selecting what best represents your practice to the examiner. More is not necessarily better, and you should not, for example, hand in prints of a lesser quality just to increase the range of media presented.

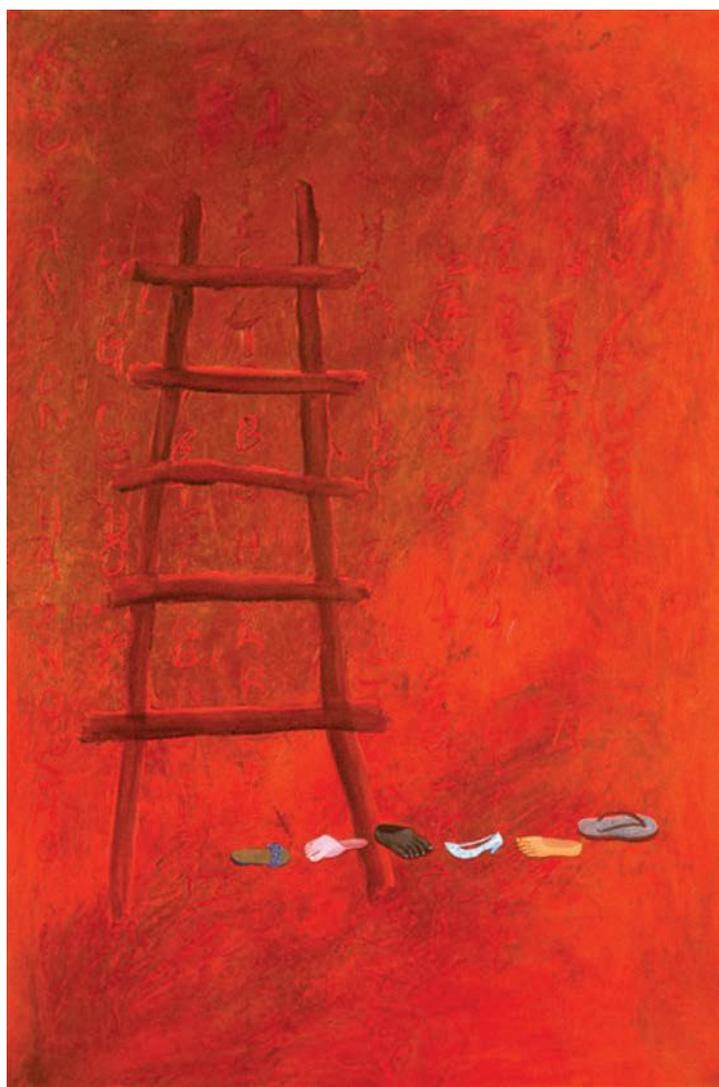


Figure 1.41 My Le Thi, *Transformation 2*, 2001.
Acrylic on canvas, 107 × 72 cm.

The diverse works of My Le Thi

My Le Thi is an artist who has a diverse practice. She is a painter, sculptor, performance artist, installation artist, photographer, filmmaker and musician. Some examples of her work are shown here.



Figure 1.42 My Le Thi, *Naked Artist*, 2001. Mori Gallery, Sydney.



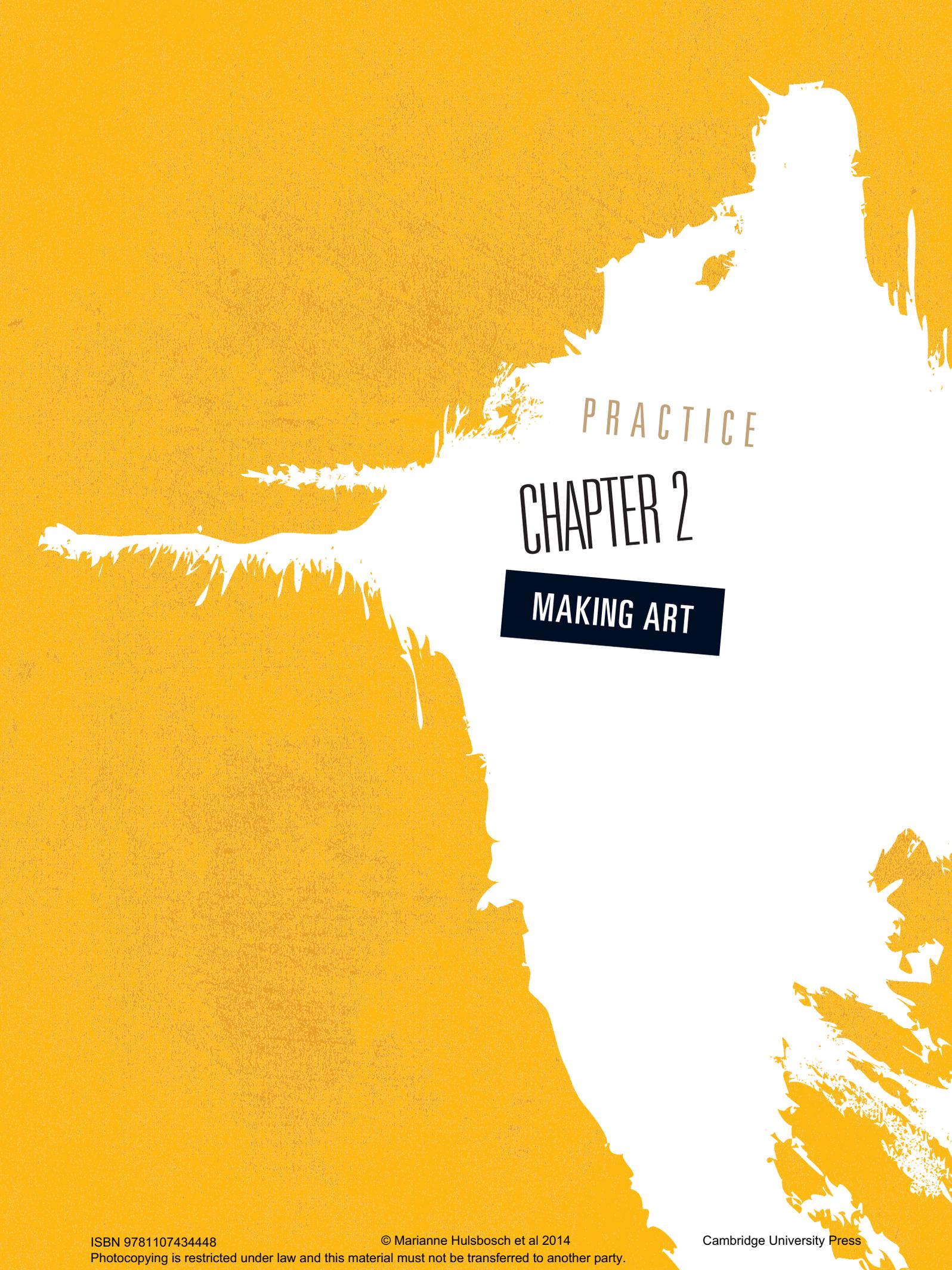
Figure 1.43 My Le Thi, *Non La*, 2005. Art and About Festival, Government House, Sydney.



Figure 1.44 My Le Thi, *Beautiful Peoples*, 2004. Mixed media, dimensions variable.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The Conceptual Framework is a system that allows you to understand an artwork as well as the artist who made the work, the time and place in which the work was created, and audience responses towards the work.
- Each agency of the Conceptual Framework is interrelated.
- The four agencies of the Conceptual Framework can be used to categorise information you gather about artists and artworks so that they can be analysed and evaluated.



PRACTICE
CHAPTER 2

MAKING ART

2.1 Assessment of student work

Inspiration does exist but it must find you working.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973

Art practice is the way artists go about creating art. It is how artists work. When we study an artist's practice we look for an understanding of the artist's creative intentions and actions. As a Visual Arts student you will develop an understanding of how you go about making art. You will discover that your art practice is influenced by your beliefs and values and your ideas about the world around you.

When teachers and examiners assess your artwork they look at two important aspects of your work: the ideas and concepts expressed in your work; and the creative and technical qualities of your work.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word practice, spelt with a 'c', is a noun. Practise, spelt with an 's', is a verb. 'To practise' means to develop a skill through repetition and exercise. The value of this is often forgotten in the artworld; especially among art students, who commonly need to practise the most.

Remember, practise drawing to improve your art practice.

Ideas and concepts

Your artwork must clearly show your ideas, intentions and concepts and the artistic choices that you have made. All these need to be elaborated on, justified and sustained coherently in the form of the work. The meaning of your artwork has to be logical and clearly link your personal, political, historical and sociocultural position.

Where do great ideas come from? Most often they start out as vague thoughts that are developed through time spent thinking. Different artists develop their own processes for developing ideas. Some artists will try to imagine what their artwork will look like before working out how to make it. Other artists prefer to 'think on paper'. These artists will draw many versions of an idea in order to explore the possibilities. Some artists develop their ideas as they work with materials.

Ideas can be 'slippery': one idea can suggest another idea, which leads to another and so on. When an interesting idea for a work pops into your head, write it down. Life at school is busy and ideas can slip from your mind as easily as they arrived. Some artists find inspiration from their dreams and will write or sketch as soon as they wake.

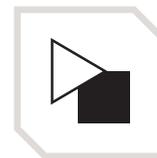
The world around you is a rich source of ideas. Learning to see, to really see, is an ability that will help you progress as an artist. Even commonplace objects can provide inspiration.

What moves men of genius, or rather what inspires their work, is not new ideas, but their obsession with the idea that what has already been said is still not enough.

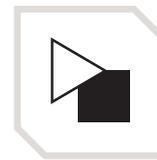
Eugène Delacroix, artist 1798–1863

Great art picks up where nature ends.

Marc Chagall, artist 1887–1985

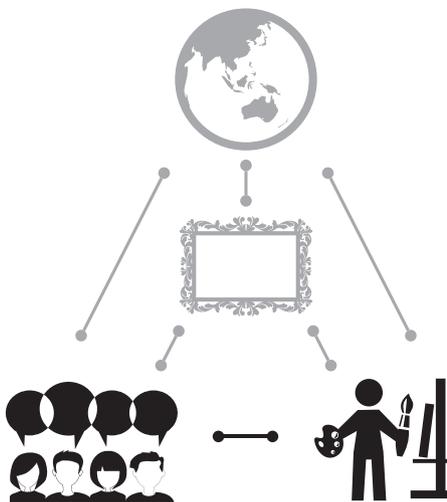


Sometimes to have a new idea you have to let go of old ideas. Maybe your idea for an artwork will be stronger if you change some aspect of it. Perhaps the idea you are expressing as a drawing might work better in three dimensions. It could be that you are trying to express a range of emotions and you may need to consider dropping that idea and instead explore a single emotion. Of course, if you constantly change your mind you will get nowhere. On the other hand, taking the time to rethink some of your ideas can lead your work in exciting new directions.



One way to know whether your ideas for an artwork are any good is to be brutally honest in your evaluation of them. Do those ideas excite you? Do you feel inspired by them? If not, you will need to rethink them.

When you know what you want to say, the next question that automatically arises is 'How are you going to say it?' In other words, how are you going to communicate your ideas to an audience?



To be an artist is to believe in life.

Henry Moore, sculptor 1898–1986



STUDENT TASK 2.1

Tonight, place a piece of paper and a pen beside your bed before you go to sleep. When you wake up tomorrow, draw scenes from your dreams.

Creative and technical qualities

Your artwork should display technical skill and the most appropriate materials. Furthermore, your work must recognise the constraints of the materials and incorporate the specific conditions set out by the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) for the Visual Arts course.

As important as it is to express your ideas, your work must also display your skills as an artist. In this age of conceptual art and mechanical reproduction, the artist's skill in the choice and use of materials and equipment is highly valued.



There are many subjective ways to describe the quality of an artist's skill and technique. They include:

- sensitivity – demonstrating awareness and understanding of materials and techniques
- refinement – possessing well-developed skills that allow the artist to display delicacy, elegance and sophistication in their works
- discrimination – making suitable and appropriate choices
- moderation – control and restraint.

Each expressive form has its own rules, customs and traditions and if you choose to use a particular form, you must familiarise yourself with these and practise using the form. The best place to learn about expressive forms is through study and observation of the way artists work. Look at the techniques, materials, rules and processes that practising artists use.

As practice makes perfect, I cannot but make progress; each drawing one makes, each study one paints, is a step forward.

Vincent van Gogh, painter 1853–1890



Figure 2.1 Student drawing in the style of graphic artist M.C. Escher.

As a student of art, observe and learn from artists. You will notice that many of the works submitted by HSC Visual Arts students display a clear reference to the works of other artists and that those works have provided inspiration. So, as an art student learn from artists, but don't be a clone. Instead, stand on your own artistic feet.

You must first learn the rules before you can break them. For example, **postmodern** architects, such as those who designed the hall of the National Museum of Australia, need to have a thorough understanding of architectural principles before they can push the boundaries of their artform and break the rules.



postmodernism a movement of wide-ranging ideas and theories that reacts against modernist traditions and questions ideas about originality; characterised by references to other artworks, appropriation and **parody**

parody to humorously imitate or poorly represent the work of another

2.2 Process and planning

Don't plan, prepare.

Walter Darby Bannard, abstract painter

Even if you have brilliant ideas for artworks, if you don't act on them, they will stay just that: ideas. Each year, many Visual Arts students put off starting their artworks until it is too late. In the last-minute panic there is no time to make good decisions or to show sensitivity or delicacy in artmaking. With a whole year ahead, there is no need to rush.

Artmaking involves a process rather than a production line. You will need time to continuously learn, experiment, develop, organise, refine, evaluate and reflect on your creations. There is no doubt that the quality of your work is dependent on the amount of time you put into it.



Figure 2.2 A student creating art in an artroom.

Artrooms are used by many students and you will need to work around the daily running of your art department. Ask your art teacher whether you can access the artroom outside lesson times. Most students have room in their timetable where they can study or complete creative works. Use this time well by going to the artroom. Lunchtime is often a wonderful opportunity to work in the artroom. Spending time in the company of your fellow art students and your artworks will stimulate exciting conversation and fresh ideas.

You may have difficulty finding a space to work. Most artrooms are full of art materials and other students' works. Major projects can be produced and completed in other departments at school rather than the art department; for example, in Textiles and Design rooms or in the design and technology labs. Some schools even have students working from tool sheds or equipment stores. This is especially the case when students attempt large sculptures or work with unusual materials. You will need to find a place to store your works while they are in progress and after you have completed them. Discuss this with your teacher. They may be able to give you access to a storeroom that has space for your works.

Remember to be patient when using the artroom and completing your artwork. Keep a positive relationship with your teacher and be considerate of others.

DID YOU KNOW?

Frida Kahlo, Auguste Renoir and Henri Matisse planned their artmaking meticulously and were not disheartened by their inability to paint through ill health. Kahlo had a mirror placed on the ceiling and a special easel built so she could paint self-portraits from her sickbed.

Renoir suffered from debilitating arthritis that completely gnarled his hands. Although in a lot of pain he devised a clamp so he could still hold on to his brushes. Matisse was bedridden and ended up cutting shapes from coloured paper to develop his famous collages.

It is good practice to have a log book or a log sheet in the back of your VAPD where you can record the time spent on your artwork. This will be useful if your work requires further examination and you need to prove that the work is your own and that you have been working consistently throughout the year. One way to record this information is to date all your VAPD entries and create a log sheet. An example is provided below. Use the log sheet to give an account of what you did and to reflect on how it went.

Put together a calendar for Visual Arts. In the calendar, record what work needs to be completed and when. Also include other key dates for the subject, such as:

- assessment dates
- holidays
- due dates for important pieces of homework
- due dates for case studies
- completion date and deadlines for your body of work
- completion date and deadlines for the BOSTES
- school exhibition date
- packing date for your works to be sent to the examination centre.

Also mark what is showing at major and local galleries and museums. Try not to miss important exhibitions, because you will probably be able to write about them in your final exam.

The calendar below is an example of how your calendar may look. When you have completed a certain task, insert a tick in column 2 for that row.

Try to end a day's work on a picture knowing how to proceed the next day.

Irwin Greenberg, artist 1922–2009

SAMPLE LOG SHEET

Date	Class	Home	Account	Reflection
3/5	X		Started blue underpainting	Dripped everywhere. Use less thinner.

SAMPLE VISUAL ARTS CALENDAR

Term 4 Year 11		
Week	Done	Description
1	✓	Preliminary work and concept development
2	✓	Case study 1
3	✓	MCA: sculpture exhibition
4	✓	Visit to local artist
5		Opening exhibition in local art gallery
6		Artwork 1 completed

7	In class essay/submission: case study 1
	Case study 2
8	Holidays
	Artworks 2 and 3 completed

Term 1 Year 12

Week	Done	Description
1		Submission: body of work proposal
2		In class essay/submission: case study 2
		Case study 3
3		AGNSW: Archibald Prize, Sullman Prize, Wynne Prize
4		Artwork 4 completed
5		Visit to local historical buildings in town
6		Submission: progress report – head of department
7		Exams: assessment 20%
8		Exams
9		Holidays
		Artwork 5 completed

Term 2 Year 12

Week	Done	Description
1		In class essay/submission: case study 3
		Case study 4
2		Assessment: body of work progress mark 20%
3		Local watercolour exhibition
4		In class essay/submission: case study 4
5		Artwork 6 completed
6		Sculpture by the Sea exhibition
7		Holidays
		Resolution: finishing up – framing works

Term 3 Year 12

Week	Done	Description
1		Visit by local art critic and art writer
2		Assessment: body of work in progress 30%
3		Trials: assessment 30%
4		In class essay/submission: case study 5
5		HSC body of work deadline

2.3 Accessing equipment, expertise and services

It is often difficult to access school equipment and other resources at a time that best suits you. Discuss with your teacher whether you can work outside of lesson times and/or access equipment in other departments, such as design and technology.

Be careful when using dangerous equipment. You must follow safety regulations and school procedures regarding operation of equipment and supervision requirements. Always check with your teacher before using electrical or mechanical equipment.

Sometimes teachers other than your art teacher will have particular experience, knowledge and skills that will help you with your work. Consider also the other members of your school community and whether they can assist you. You may be surprised by how many parents of students at your school are painters, photographers, designers or business owners. Ask your principal or the school's enrolment officer whether they know anybody who could help you with your artwork.

Don't be limited by the resources provided by your school. Not every school is equipped with all you will need. At times you may require the resources and expertise of people outside the school. For many of the expressive forms you may need to use printers, welders, framers, ceramic kiln operators or even plastic fabricators.

Here are a few practical tips to help you when considering the cost of your body of work:

- Work out your budget before you begin. Certain aspects of your work could be very costly.
- Ask your teacher whether the school allocates students any funds from the Visual Arts budget.
- Look for alternative, cheaper ways to get the work done. For instance, you may not need to have your photographs printed using archival inks on acid-free paper.

When using the services of a business keep these suggestions in mind:

- Before committing to any work being done, always ask for a quote and talk with your teacher and parent/guardian.
- Check for student discounts. Perhaps the school could make an arrangement with the business in exchange for a cheaper deal. For example, it may offer the business advertising space in the weekly school newsletter.
- Do not be pressured by the business to adopt their ideas. Ask your teacher or parent/guardian to act on your behalf if the business is not providing you with what you want.

2.4 NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards limitations

You need to know what size limitations the BOSTES places on student works. These are summarised below. Consult the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus for further guidelines.

- A body of work must not exceed 6 m² when displayed for marking. You cannot just stack your work up for measuring if it won't be marked that way.
- Three-dimensional works cannot be any larger than 1 m³. This includes positive and negative space, i.e. you must also count the air around and in the sculpture.
- If you are submitting a Collection of Work, where there are flat and three-dimensional components, all components must fit within 1 m³ as displayed for marking. You cannot have 6 m² of flat work and 1 m³ of sculpture.
- A body of work in its entirety must not exceed 35 kg when packed for marking.
- A body of work must not exceed 6 minutes running time, including credits.
- The maximum number of screens for the simultaneous viewing of time-based works is two screens.

Format for film and video and digital animation submitted works:

- DVD-R 4.7 GB capacity disk. Works should not be submitted on DVD-RW disks.
- VHS videotape.

The work may be converted to a QuickTime™ format and submitted on DVD-R in a standard PAL DV format codec. If these formats are unavailable, the work may be transferred and presented for playback on high-quality videotape.

The work should be cued to the beginning of the submission.

Format for interactive submitted works:

- Interactive works must be submitted on a single CD-R or DVD-R that has been formatted and developed for either a Microsoft Windows Operating System or an Apple Macintosh Operating System. They must not require any program downloads.
- Any number of interactive screens, frames, links and branches can be developed but the total time required to view and interact with the work should not exceed 6 minutes.
- Work produced in the form of an original website must be transferred and submitted as an interactive CD-ROM that must be able to be operated directly from the CD-ROM, without the use of the internet. The work should be thoroughly tested for appropriate playback and operation before submission.

Two-dimensional works

One single work cannot be larger than 2 m², if it cannot be rolled up. A work that is 2 m² could look like one of the examples below. If your work can be rolled up, it can be up to 6 m². None of your works may be larger than 6 m².

Use the following formula to calculate how many square metres your work is:

$$\text{Height} \times \text{length} = \text{XX m}^2$$

Individual works must not be framed under glass or rigid plastic sheeting.

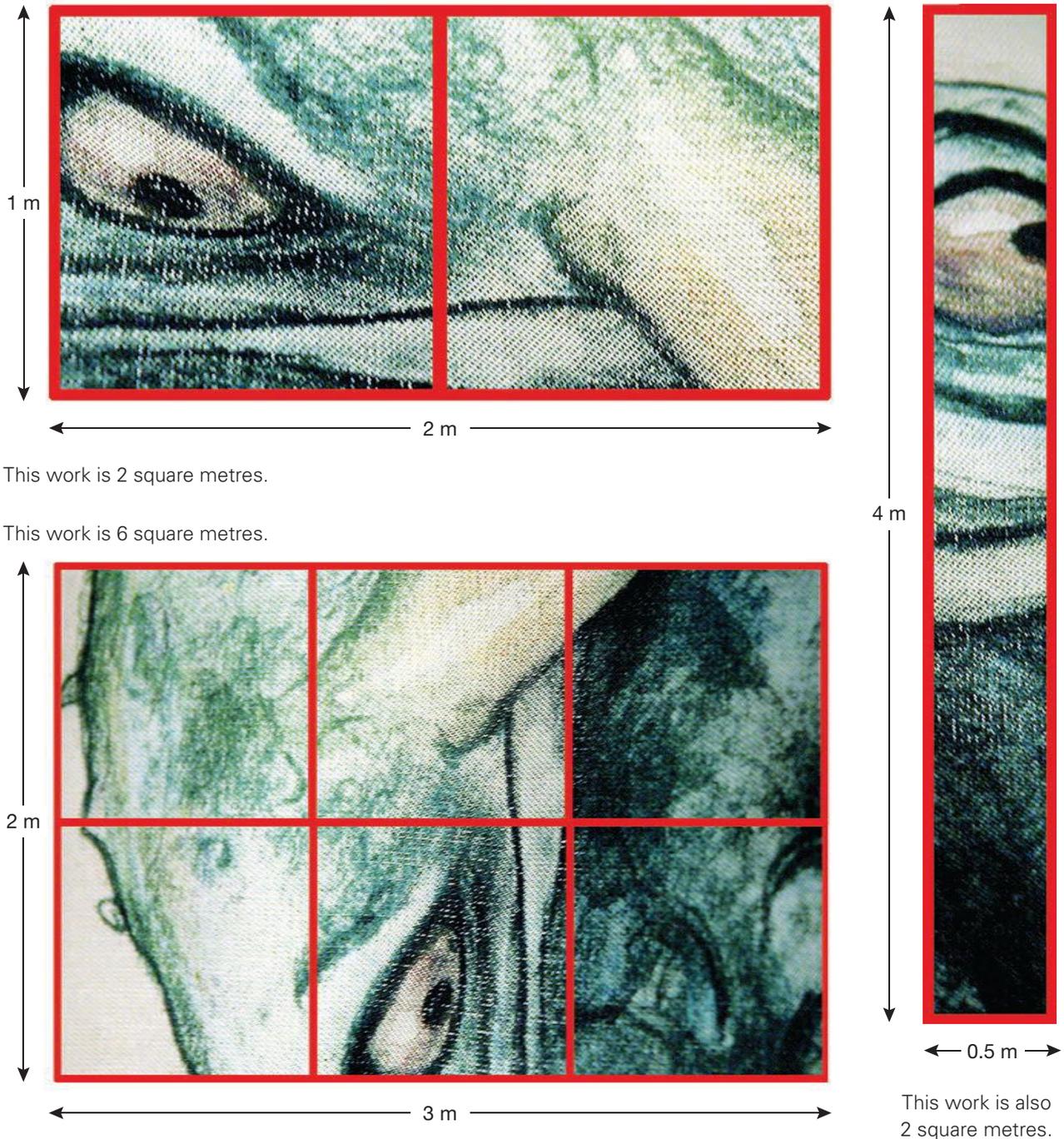


Figure 2.3 Examples of varying dimensions of two-dimensional works.

Three-dimensional works

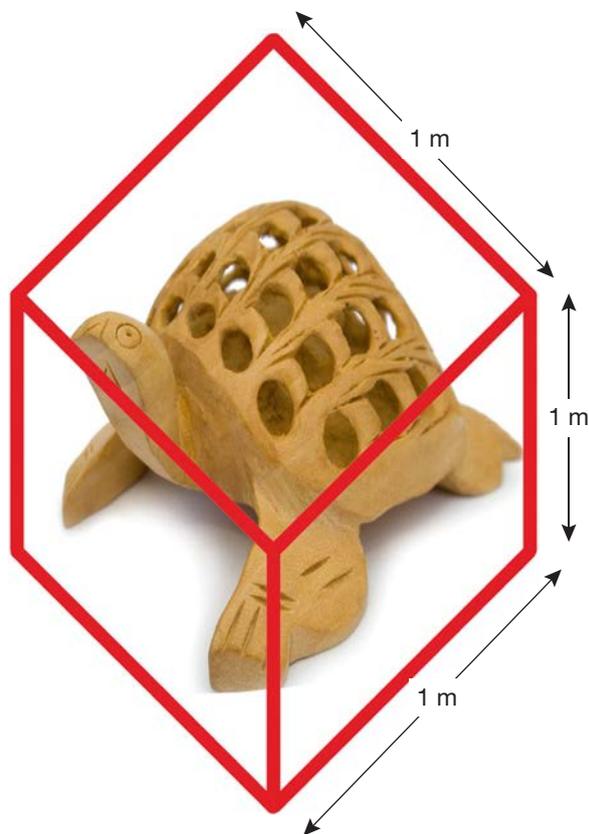
One single sculpture cannot be any larger than 1 m^3 . A work that is 1 m^3 could look like either of the examples below.

Use the following formula to calculate how many cubic metres your work is:

$$\text{Height} \times \text{length} \times \text{depth} = \text{XX m}^3$$

Sculptural works should not include a flat fixed area larger than 2 m^2 in area.

Your lead-up work in your VAPD, together with any other lead-up work and other work produced and not submitted as the body of work, must be available if required in the HSC Examination and in the event of appeals, to verify and provide further evidence of your artmaking.



This work is 1 cubic metre.



This work is also 1 cubic metre.

Figure 2.4 Examples of varying dimensions of three-dimensional works.

Prohibited materials

- Hypodermic syringes must not be included in any submitted works. This includes new or used syringes, with or without needles.
- Bodily secretions and blood products must not be included in any submitted works.
- Food and/or perishable materials and objects must not be included in any submitted works.
- Liquids in any form must not be included in any submitted works.
- Medications in any form, including tablets and capsules, must not be included in any submitted works.
- Glass in any form must not be included in any submitted works. This includes unbroken glass such as bottles, mirrors or any other form.
- Any materials that have sharp or jagged edges (barbed wire, fish hooks, corrugated iron, broken machinery etc.) must not be included in any submitted works.
- Electrical wiring that has not been certified by an electrician must not be included in any submitted works.
- Submissions requiring a high voltage electrical current (e.g. 240 volts) must have a certificate for electrical safety attached. Any electrical wiring necessary for artworks should be undertaken by a qualified electrician. Details and records of such work should be noted in students' diaries.
- Mannequins cannot be submitted to display clothing or wearable art.

Artist statement

Some students feel the need to include an artist statement to explain their work to the examiners. At the heart of this is a mistrust in the examiners and a lack of confidence that others will 'understand' your work.

Your artworks need to communicate effectively and be able to speak for themselves. Your works will be examined by trained art teachers who do 'understand' your art and can see exactly what you are trying to say!



STUDENT TASK 2.2

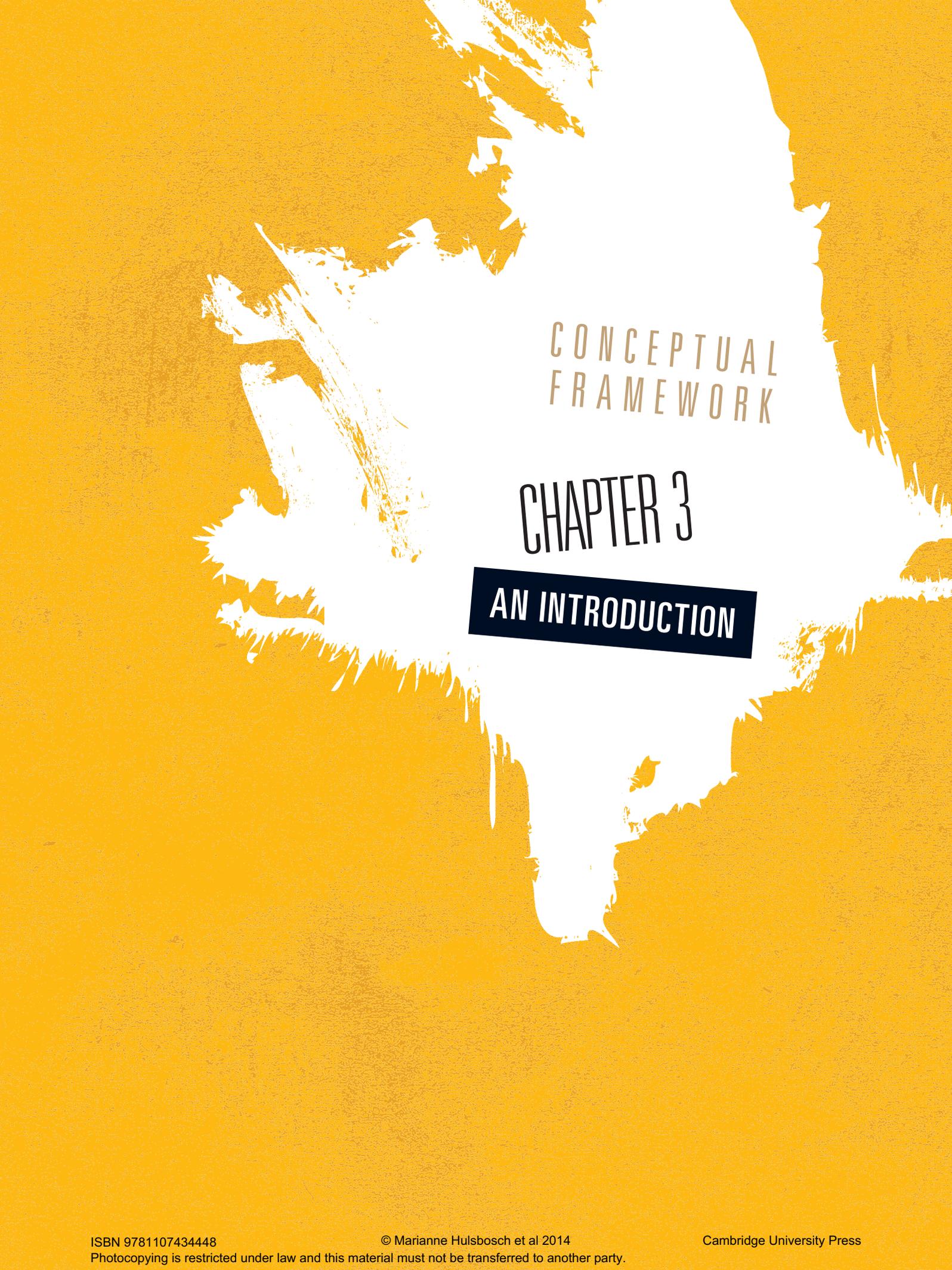
In this task you will write a proposal for a body of work. Remember that the proposal is a starting point. By imagining the end point you actually create a starting point. However, the end point is not set in concrete. Creating a work of art is a journey, and the best artworks always have a number of surprises.

- 1 Find an artist whose work relates to your work or ideas.
 - a What techniques and materials did they use?
 - b Select one of their works that you can use to create a **study** of the work.
 - c Organise the equipment and materials you will need to create the study.
 - d After completing the study, reflect on your learning and record these reflections in your VAPD.
- 2 Over ten or more double pages in your VAPD, draw, paste, explain and document your exploration of ideas for your artworks. Use images, text, clippings and drawings that inspire you. These may be from the internet or magazines, for example. Include artworks and other creative images that you admire, such as postcards and advertising images. You may also collect objects or place images on a CD or DVD to accompany your VAPD.
- 3 Write the proposal. Using text and small sketches, set out on one double page what you intend to create for your artworks. Be as descriptive as possible. Discuss the subject matter and expressive form of the works as well as the size and number of works.
- 4 Write an artist statement. Explain in no more than 200 words your artistic intentions, beliefs and perspectives. Consider what you want to say about your world through your artwork.

study an artwork that is done as preparation for a later work

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Art practice is the way artists create art.
- As an artist you need to be observant and investigate your world.
- Record your ideas. Reflect on your ideas. Then let go of ideas.
- Learn to experiment, develop, organise, refine, evaluate and reflect on your work.
- There is no doubt that the quality of your work is dependent on the amount of time you put into it.
- As important as it is to express your ideas, your work must display your skills as an artist.
- Know the rules and artistic conventions of a form before you set out to break them.



CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 3

AN INTRODUCTION

A conceptual framework is a visual model of a concept or idea. Conceptual frameworks exist in many areas of study and allow complex ideas to be shown in a simple diagram or model. There are conceptual frameworks of the universe, the water cycle and molecular biology, for example.

In the Conceptual Framework of the artworld, we see the key agencies (or components) of the artworld and how they relate and are linked to one another. The Conceptual Framework shows the nature of the relationship between artworks and audiences – between ourselves and artworks. It considers how we and others relate to artworks, what art means to us as viewers and as fellow artists.

The Conceptual Framework is a wonderful tool that allows us to examine artworks, art movements and artists created by different cultures and different times.

Look carefully at the Conceptual Framework diagram below and consider each agency separately. Also think about how they are interconnected.



Figure 3.1 A conceptual framework used in the study of molecular biology.

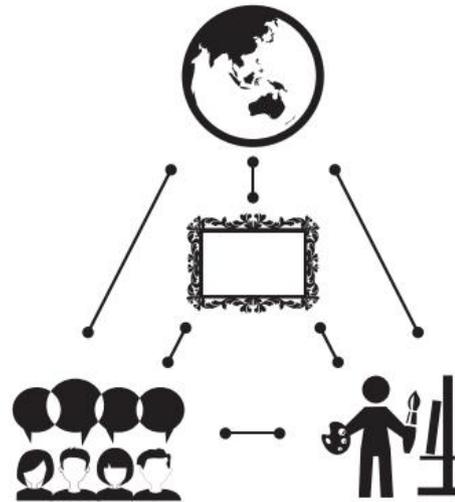


Figure 3.2 The Conceptual Framework used in Visual Arts.

3.1 The agencies of the artworld

Important relationships exist in the artworld between the agencies of the artworld. These agencies are artists, artworks, audiences and the wider world.

Shown on page 46 is a student's drawing of the Conceptual Framework diagram. They have included each agency of the artworld and mapped out the links between them.

World

The Conceptual Framework helps us to understand how interests in the world are represented in art. We need to consider how art is affected by and represents experience, class, ideology, age and significant historical events. This agency also encompasses the cultural setting in which the art is made and the changing social values within and outside that culture.

Artworks as real objects

Artworks include art, craft and design as two- and three-dimensional works (including architecture) and **time-based works**. Artworks represent ideas. They reflect personal responses, cultural views and symbolic interpretations. An artwork can also present a critical reinterpretation of another idea.

time-based artworks
such as film
and animation

The role of the artist

The Conceptual Framework encourages us to consider the role of the artist: who they are, what they do, and how and why they do it. Artists include painters, photographers, sculptors, craftspeople, designers and architects. The artist is commonly thought of as an individual but can also be viewed as a group or movement, for example.

The role and value of the audience

We need to consider how art critics, historians, collectors, patrons (benefactors) and the general public respond to art. Different audiences will experience, understand and value artworks differently. As a Visual Arts student you are also represented here.

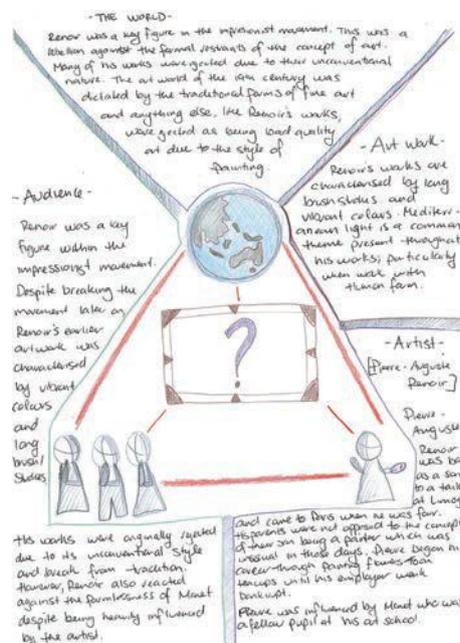


Figure 3.3 Sample of the Conceptual Framework drawn in a student's VAPD.

3.2 Using the Conceptual Framework

If I could say it in words, there would be no reason to paint.

Edward Hopper, realist painter and printmaker 1882–1967

In Visual Arts, you can use the Conceptual Framework to arrange your research, notes and ideas. It will help you to consider the relevance of the information you gather.

When making your own artwork, you can use the Framework to develop a deeper understanding of the artworks you create.

The world

Consider the events that have shaped your artworks.

Artworks as real objects

Think about the artworks that have inspired, intrigued or excited you. These are the works you are likely to refer to and draw on in the creation of your own work.

The role of the artist

Consider the artists who inspire, intrigue or excite you. Think about who they are, what they do and how and why they do it. This will give you a better understanding and appreciation of the artworks they produce.

The role and value of the audience

Different audiences will experience, understand and value your works differently. Consider how various people will experience your works. These people could include your parents, classmates and those who don't know you. Also gain an understanding of how art critics, historians, collectors, patrons and members of the public respond to the works, artists and world of the artists to which your artmaking relates.

3.3 Considering what art means to you

There are many definitions of art; perhaps as many as the people who call themselves artists. Trying to understand what art is can be an exciting and rich journey of discovery. It is important to develop an understanding of what art is for you. This will ultimately shape how you view art and how you will practise as an artist.

A helpful way to think about art is to consider first the big universal human themes that have inspired artists to create throughout history. These themes cut across culture, history and geography, and include love, death, joy, pain, birth, compassion and hatred. These are the things that are common to all of humanity.

Second, consider your own unique experiences: those that nobody but you has experienced. Your life is individual, special and valuable. Only you have seen the world through your eyes. What insights or perspectives into life and the world can you share with others through your art?

3.4 You as the artist

Artists are often social beings: working in groups, studios and schools; belonging to art movements; and forming lifelong friendships with other artists. However, not all artists are actively working with other artists. Indeed, many prefer to work alone. Regardless of how often artists collaborate or meet with other artists, all artists are part of the artworld. As artists, they are connected with artists of the past and their contemporaries. As an art student you are part of this tradition. The Conceptual Framework recognises the important relationships that exist between you as an artist, your artworks, other artists and other artworks, audiences and the wider world. It also shows the relationship between you as an artist and the culture and traditions you work in and the historical time in which your artworks are created.



STUDENT TASK 3.1

On a double page of your VAPD, or on a large sheet of paper, create your own Conceptual Framework in the form of a mind map.

- 1 Start by drawing a little picture of yourself in the centre, then place all the aspects of your life around the picture. You will be creating a little image of you in your world.
- 2 Fan out from the centre and add your family, friends, interests and experiences and the places you go to.
- 3 Brainstorm your thoughts, feelings and intuitions. Record these in your mind map. Include what is going on in your life at the moment and what you have been reading in novels or newspapers. Switch on the TV: see what is going on in the world. What do you wish you could do something about? What programs do you like? What movies do you love? Where do you go on the weekend and what do you do with your friends?

3.5 Creating and using original source material

When starting your investigation into the work of an artist it is best to begin by collecting images that show the workings of the artist. For instance, you could photograph or sketch examples of their artworks. You can use this research as a stimulus to develop your own works of art.

As well as images of their artworks, you might also find information about the artist. This could include quotes by the artist as well as articles, TV programs or books describing the artist and their works. You can also investigate which works inspired the artist.

The material you source can be sorted and filed under each agency of the Conceptual Framework. For example, the images of artworks will be filed under the agency 'artwork', while information about the artist is filed under 'artist'.

Slowly but surely you will amass a lot of information that you can link together to give you a more complete idea of the artist and their intent (or message). You will be able to see the various views expressed about the artist and their works by different sections of the audience. The information you gather will also give you an understanding of the place and time in which the artist is or was working.



STUDENT TASK 3.2

In this task, you will use the Conceptual Framework to develop a case study of an artist of your choice. This exercise will ultimately assist you in your own art practice because if you can develop a case study about another artist you can develop a case study of yourself as an artist. This will help you to better understand your ideas and concepts and to assess and critically evaluate your own body of work in order to improve it. Follow the steps below.

- 1 Find an artist who interests you or with whom you connect in some way.
- 2 Collect as much information as possible about that artist.
- 3 Sort each piece of information according to the predominant agency it explores; that is, artwork, artist, world or audience.
- 4 Try to find information for all four agencies of the Conceptual Framework.
- 5 Explore the links between the agencies.

3.6 Victoria: a personal conceptual framework

In the rest of the chapter we will journey with Victoria Innell, a Year 11 student. Victoria used selected agencies of the Conceptual Framework to help develop her artmaking and to improve her understanding of her artmaking process.

Victoria: I know it's a little clichéd, but I have always loved the ballet. Degas loved looking at people and I can understand how he was drawn to the spectacle of the dancers. I knew that in Year 11 I wanted to develop my painting skills and explore something close to my heart: ballet.

The world

Understanding the context of your own work can be an important part of your artmaking. It is all too easy to let your artmaking exist in isolation from the world around you. Instead, let the contemporary world influence and inform aspects of your work. Your artwork is your response to today's society. This can be a complex and challenging concept, but understanding your world and how you have responded to it artistically allows you to see the important relationships between you and your works and other artists and works as well as audiences.

You may want to consider other artists who are currently creating work similar to your own or who have drawn on themes and issues that are similar to those expressed in your works. What is the context for the works created by these other artists? Do you know what issues surround the works they have created? Seeing the way other artists are working can give your artworks a new direction and new meanings. This process will also give you a different perspective on your own ideas.

The artist

*One must do the same subject over again ten times, a hundred times.
In art nothing must resemble an accident, not even movement.*

Edgar Degas, painter 1834–1917

Victoria began by studying the painting techniques of Edgar Degas. Degas used an Impressionist style, which is commonly characterised by expressive, painterly brushstrokes and unfinished areas. You can even see the canvas in some Impressionist works. In many of his paintings Degas used awkward views and perspectives. He was more interested in the movement of the figures than with accuracy and detail.

Victoria: The painting at right is my first Year 11 work. It is a study in oils based on a photograph that I took.

Victoria: I have chosen to look at the works of Degas, a French Impressionist who created a whole body of work on ballet dancers. Degas's paintings are of more than just the clichéd pretty ballerinas. They show many different sides to their lives: performing, practising, dressing, warming up, working hard and having fun. I loved the colours, movement and drama that Degas captured. His paintings were so much more real than the ballet posters I had on my walls as a child.

Victoria: Degas's *Ballet Rehearsal* appealed to me because of the colours. I just love the exciting atmosphere of the work created by the colours, light and shadow.

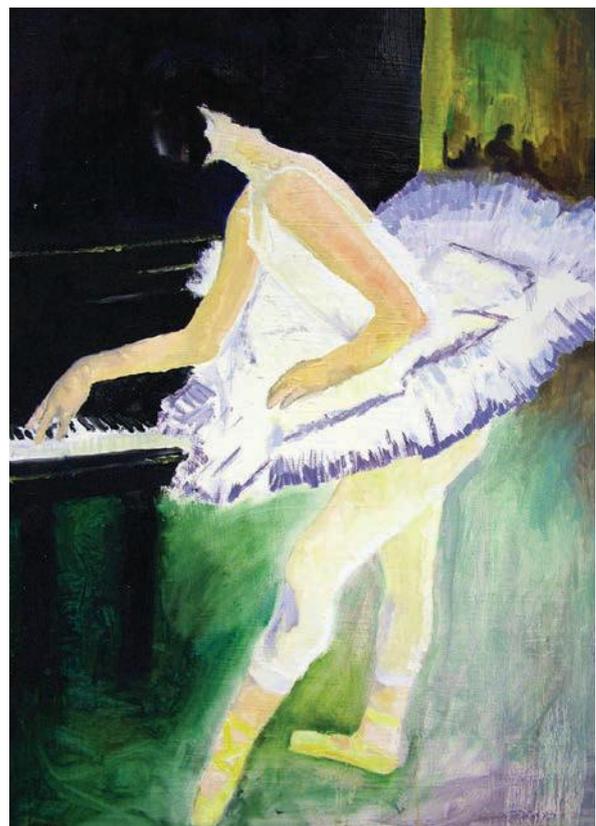


Figure 3.4 Victoria Innell, *Year 11 artwork I*.
Oil on board, 100 × 70 cm. Artist's collection.



Figure 3.5 Edgar Degas, *Ballet Rehearsal*, 1875. Gouache and pastel, 53 × 68 cm. Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, USA.

The artwork

Most art and artists can be seen as belonging to a particular social or cultural group. When you look at an artwork, whether created by you or someone else, you might consider the following questions:

- How do you respond to the issues facing you or your particular sociocultural group?
- What cultural symbols are used in the work? What styles, themes or issues have informed or inspired the work?
- What were the foundations, movements and developments of the artmaking that was engaged in?

Victoria: My Art teacher introduced me to Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which was painted in 1912. It tied in so well with what I wanted to show through my own paintings.

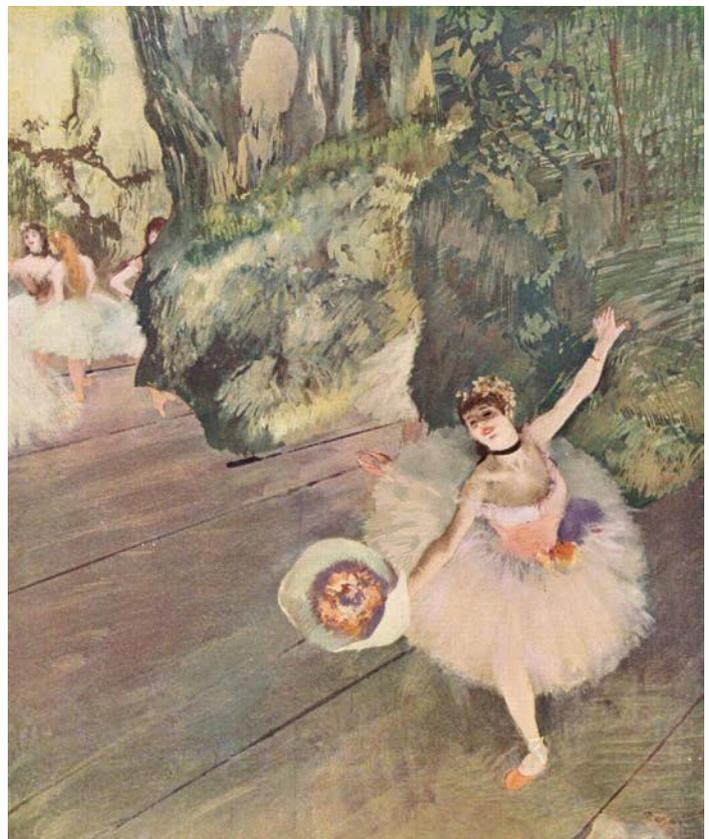


Figure 3.6 Edgar Degas, *Dancer Taking a Bow*, circa 1878. Pastel and gouache on paper, 81 × 66 cm. Getty Center, Los Angeles, California, USA.

Victoria: I realised that my first painting [Year 11 artwork I, page 49] didn't show everything about the dancer that I wanted it to. So I revisited one of my early sketches and developed its abstract qualities. I referred to Duchamp's **Cubist** artworks *Nude Descending a Staircase*, *King and Queen with Swift Nudes* and *Sad Young Man on a Train*. Using the style of these works would allow me to create even more of an 'impression' of a dancer and emphasise their powerful and dynamic movements. I am going to practise some Cubist styles and take them through from a sketch to a small oil painting.

Drawing I is the early sketch that Victoria revisited. The later sketch and paintings that Victoria developed are drawing II and paintings I and II.

Cubism an art movement that used lines, shapes, tones, text and mixed media to represent the solidity and volume of objects through fractured planes and multiple perspectives



Figure 3.7 Marcel Duchamp.



Figure 3.8 Victoria Innell, Year 11 student, *drawing I*, 2006. Pencil on paper, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

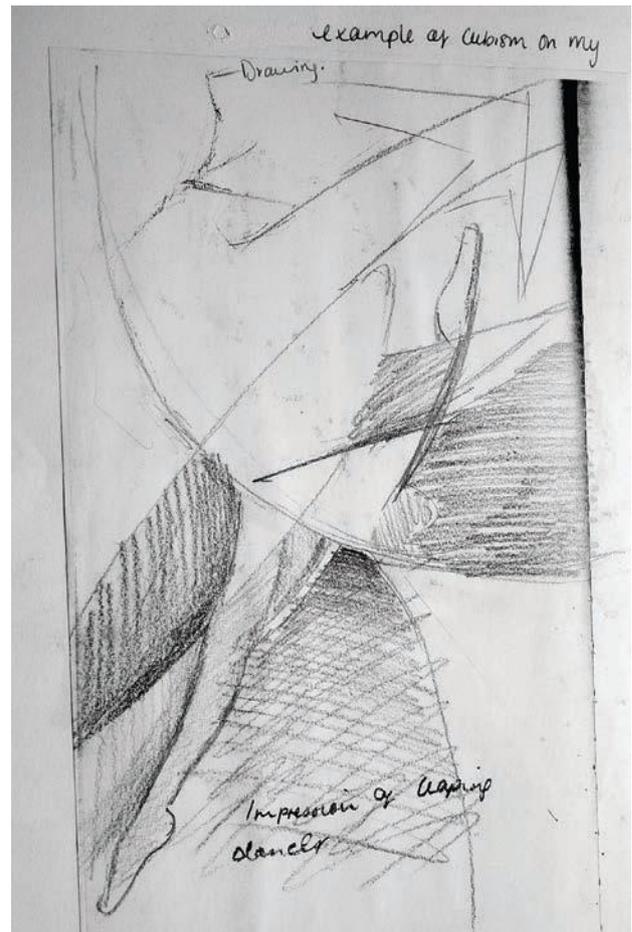


Figure 3.9 Victoria Innell, Year 11 student, *drawing II*, 2006. Pencil on paper, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

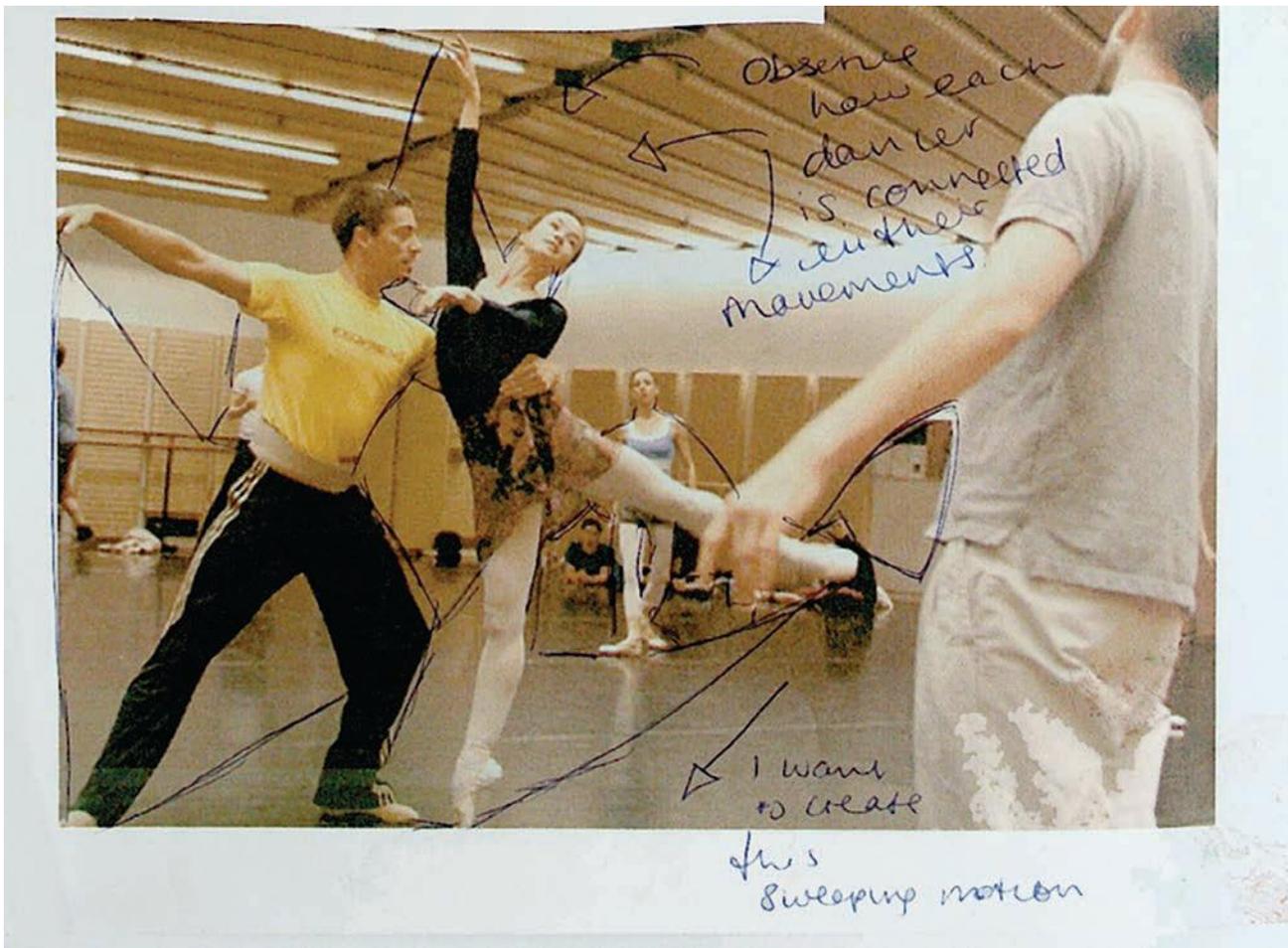


Figure 3.10 An extract from Victoria Innell's VAPD.

Victoria: I found an image in a magazine and explored the Cubist shapes and lines. The lines helped me to explore the representation of movement. Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* shows a figure moving down a staircase. You can see the figure as she moves from the top down to the bottom. It is a representation of a figure as it moves through space and time; very cubist but also very **futurist**.

The magazine image Victoria refers to is shown above.

Victoria: Degas drew and painted from life. He worked alongside the dancers as they practised rather than from memory or imagination. So I approached a number of ballet and dance companies and asked them if I could photograph some of their dances for inspiration, but they wouldn't give me permission to do that. My Art teacher suggested I ask around to see if I could find someone to model for me. Success! Eventually, I spent an afternoon with a girl in Year 12 who does ballet. I took a series of photographs of her in ballet poses. I used one of the photographs to do a painting in the style of Degas.

Cubism came about because, in the process of analyzing form, something that lay in the form, a plane, could be lifted out to float on its own ...

Joseph Plaskett, painter 2008

Futurism an art, design and architectural movement that emphasised speed, movement and mechanical forms as positive symbols of modernity; a futurist is someone who is forward-thinking

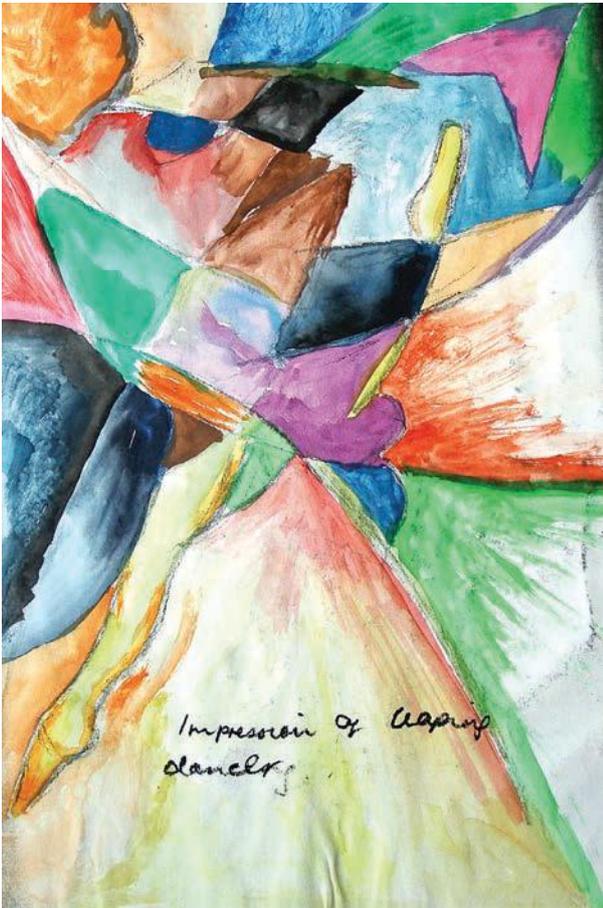


Figure 3.11 Victoria Innell, Year 11 student, painting I, sketch for *The Dancer*, 2006. Watercolour on paper, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.



Figure 3.12 Victoria Innell, Year 11 student, painting II, *The Dancer*, 2006. Oil on canvas, 100 × 70 cm. Artist's collection.

Victoria: I have learnt that Duchamp's painting *Nude Descending a Staircase* was not appreciated when it was first created in 1912. First, his Cubist artist group rejected it because they thought it looked like a futurist work and thought it was mocking Cubism. When it was exhibited in 1913 it was not well received by the general public. It was described as 'an explosion in a shingles factory'. I imagine there will be people who will not understand my paintings as they didn't understand Duchamp's. But I want people to see more than just a visual representation; I want to show the movement of the dancer.

Victoria: I want the audience to follow the movement of the dancer. I hope that the immediate experience the audience will gain when looking at my artworks will be colour and movement, and perhaps as they look deeper, to contemplate the different perspectives. I want them to take a long time observing the forms of the dancers in the pieces and identifying the strong and elegant ballet movements. I hope that my artworks will capture the viewer's imagination and become caught up in the transformation of the human figures into the swirling masses of movement, tulle and colour and even look beyond the dancers into an abstract world.

Victoria: In order to explore the views, values and beliefs of the society that surround ballet, I investigated a series of photographs that were created using dancers from the Australian Ballet. This image was used to promote the Australian Ballet. Justin Smith, the photographer, has used low lighting and a slow shutter speed to ensure we can clearly see the blurring of the moving dancer's limbs. This emphasises the movement of the dancer.

In Victoria's artist statement below, she reflects on her body of work.

Victoria: My work explores the elegance, energy and beauty of the ballet dancer's movements. I was first inspired by the work of Edgar Degas. Degas seemed to effortlessly capture the beauty of the dancer, immortalising them using his Impressionist style. I had previously painted oils of ballet dancers, yet I felt there was something lacking. There was no explosion of energy and the image was obvious; you didn't need to explore its concept or appreciate the angle taken in the presentation of the subject matter. So I sought to express my idea through Duchamp's use of Cubism. It would add a layer of both sophistication and meaning to my body of work. Cubism is the **deconstruction**, or breaking down, of objects in space. It pulls apart the rules of perspective and, as curator and art historian Bernard Blistene asserts, 'establishes a syntax that overturns conventional imagery'. Thus, I began to explore how my work could hold the appearance of eternal recurrence. I used strong colours and thick oils to express the energy of the dancers, the explosions of their movements. My creative process and my final body of work have sustained my fascination with the dancer. There have been so many ways to portray them, so many attempts in history. Degas and Cubism have allowed me to capture their movement, the beauty of the dance frozen in time.

deconstruction reordering of the natural composition to show different viewpoints and thus create new meanings

Victoria's final body of work is titled *Composition of Dance*. It consists of five oil paintings, which are shown on pages 55 and 56. Victoria was influenced by the two artists Degas and Duchamp. She was clearly inspired by Degas's exploration of new perspectives and the importance of lighting in his works. Duchamp was another artist whose work demonstrated to Victoria how to show movement and the abstract qualities of dancers.



Figure 3.13 Marcel Duchamp, *The King and Queen Traversed by Swift Nudes*, 1912. © Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 3.14 Victoria Innell, Year 11 body of work:
Composition of Dance I.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm. Artist's collection.

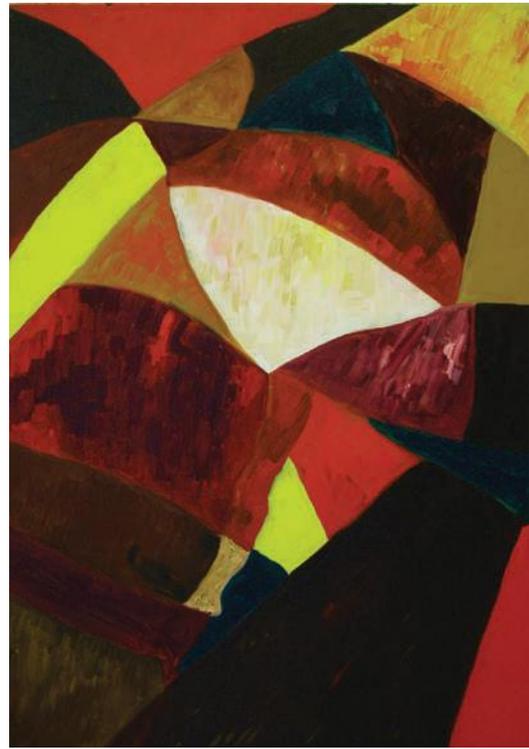


Figure 3.15 Victoria Innell, Year 11 body of work:
Composition of Dance II.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm. Artist's collection.



Figure 3.16 Victoria Innell, Year 11 body of work:
Composition of Dance III.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm. Artist's collection.



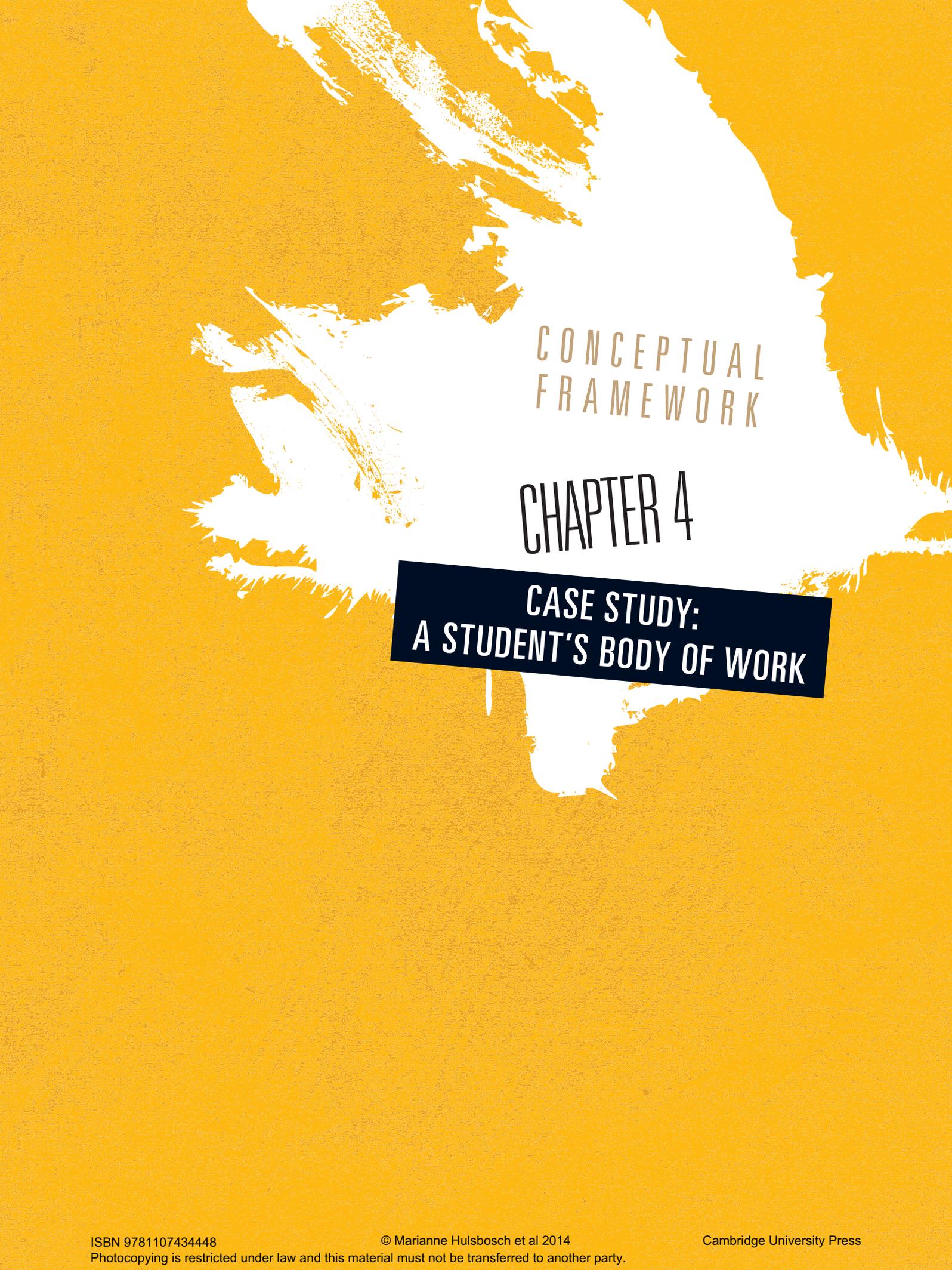
Figure 3.17 Victoria Innell, Year 11 body of work:
Composition of Dance IV.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm. Artist's collection.



Figure 3.18 Victoria Innell, Year 11 body of work:
Composition of Dance V.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm. Artist's collection.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

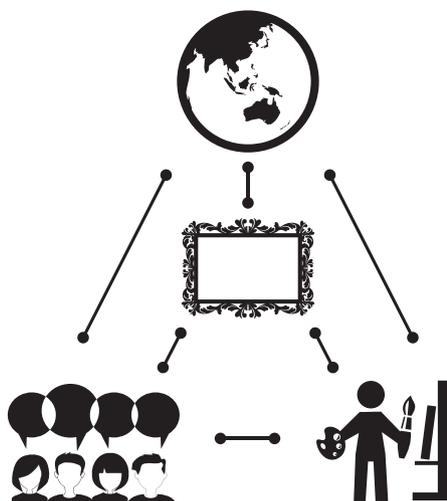
- The Conceptual Framework is a system that allows you to understand an artwork as well as the artist who made the work, the time and place in which the work was created, and audience responses towards the work.
- Each agency of the Conceptual Framework is interrelated.
- The four agencies of the Conceptual Framework can be used to categorise information you gather about artists and artworks so that they can be analysed and evaluated.



CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 4

**CASE STUDY:
A STUDENT'S BODY OF WORK**



According to the NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, through the Conceptual Framework, students learn about:

- the role of the artist – the who, what, how and why. The concept of the artist encompasses **practitioners**, such as artists, craftspeople, designers and architects. The artist can be thought of as an individual or as a group, school, movement, etc.
- the role and value of the audience as a body of critical consumers. The concept of the audience includes art critics and art historians as well as teachers, students, **entrepreneurs**, patrons and other members of the public. Audiences for works change over time and bring different meanings to artworks, artists and interpretations of the world.
- artworks as real objects, as material, physical and virtual objects. The concept of artworks includes art, craft and design as two- and three-dimensional works (including architecture) and time-based works. Artworks also exist as representations of ideas that reflect such things as personal responses, cultural views, symbolic interpretations and critical reinterpretations of other ideas.
- how interests in the world are represented in art (e.g. art as a representation of experience, class, ideology, age, events of significance).

practitioner someone who practises a particular profession, such as art or architecture

entrepreneur someone who recognises an opportunity and organises resources to take advantage of that opportunity

4.1 Tymon: a personal conceptual framework

In this chapter we will use the Conceptual Framework to explore the highly successful HSC body of work submitted by a student named Tymon. This student received a high HSC mark for Visual Arts and his works were nominated for ArtExpress. We will consider examples of Tymon's work by exploring each of the agencies of the Conceptual Framework. We will investigate how Tymon, as the artist, related to the world around him and how he expressed his feelings through his artworks. We will also see how he prepared his work for a specific audience: his fellow students, his teachers and the HSC marking team.

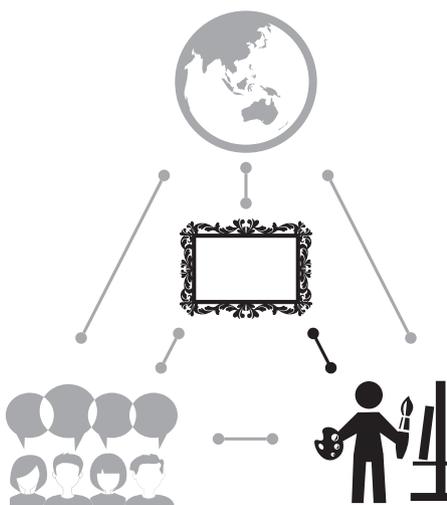
Tymon and the world around him

In order to create a purposeful and meaningful body of work, Tymon considered his work in the context of his own life. To begin with, he asked himself the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What are my likes and dislikes?
- What are my passions, fears, worries and dreams?
- What do I care about?
- What am I concerned about?
- What do I enjoy doing and what am I good at?
- What are my relationships with others: family, friends and peers?
- What is my experience of the physical world around me?
- How do everyday events, people, objects and places in the world affect me?

By answering these questions, Tymon was able to locate himself in society and determine the issues that concerned him. His answers made it clear that he was interested in and cared about people and their relationship with natural and built environments.

Once Tymon realised this, he decided to look around his local area to see what the old buildings there told him about the history of his suburb. As it happened, he also explored his immediate surroundings for one of his school assignments.



Tymon: At the start of Year 12 for Visual Arts we were to explore our own environment; for me that meant the suburb of Gladesville. Over a number of afternoons, I sketched various places, like parks and ovals, the Parramatta River and some historical buildings. I kept returning to one particular place: Gladesville Hospital. This is now partially closed but for many years it was a hospital that cared for many of Sydney's mentally ill. It has vast grounds with wonderful old sandstone buildings.



Figure 4.1 Tymon Langford, student, *Gladesville: By the Bay 1*, sketch 1, 2006. Pen and ink, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

Tymon: I have lived in Gladesville all my life. A big part of my life in Gladesville has been Gladesville Hospital. It was once a large hospital for the mentally ill. Today it serves this role in a somewhat limited sense. It also serves administrative purposes. The Cochlear Implant Centre is also based there.

But to me Gladesville Hospital is much more than this. I know it as a public space. It is open to the public all the time. It's somewhere you can go when you need to clear your head or just want to watch the sun set over the Parramatta River. It really is a beautiful place, with an incredible history, and it's time I did it justice, which is why I am making it the subject of my major work.

Tymon developed a personal conceptual framework (or mind map) to explore his thoughts about the Gladesville Hospital. It is shown opposite. Tymon made a conscious decision to use drawing as the art practice for his body of work. It was his favourite artform, and his strongest. Although he investigated several other expressive forms, Tymon decided to stick to the artform he was most familiar with and in which he was likely to achieve the best results.

Tymon: I just know that for my HSC work I would continue to work with drawing as my preferred medium.

During his expeditions to Gladesville Hospital, Tymon took his camera and sketchbook and further explored the hospital grounds. As you can see from the sketches on this page, Tymon explored his thoughts, ideas and feelings about the hospital and the specific subject matter for his works slowly started to develop. As Tymon explored the hospital grounds, he was drawn to its history, its current uses and the people who once stayed there. He wondered what had happened to those people and where they are now. He was quite intrigued by this and investigated further. This research led him to learn about why the mental asylum section of the hospital was closed and he found out about significant changes in government policy regarding the care of the mentally ill.

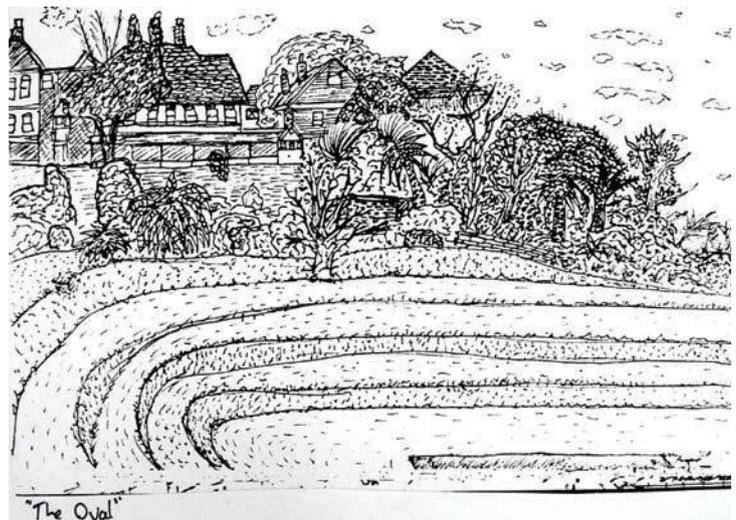


Figure 4.2 Tymon Langford, student, *Gladesville: By the Bay 1*, sketch 2, 2006. Pen and ink, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

Tymon learnt that the recent trend in various countries is for the government to close down such places as Gladesville Hospital and integrate mental health patients into the community. As well meaning as this policy may be, it has left many mentally unstable people without the care and supervision they require.

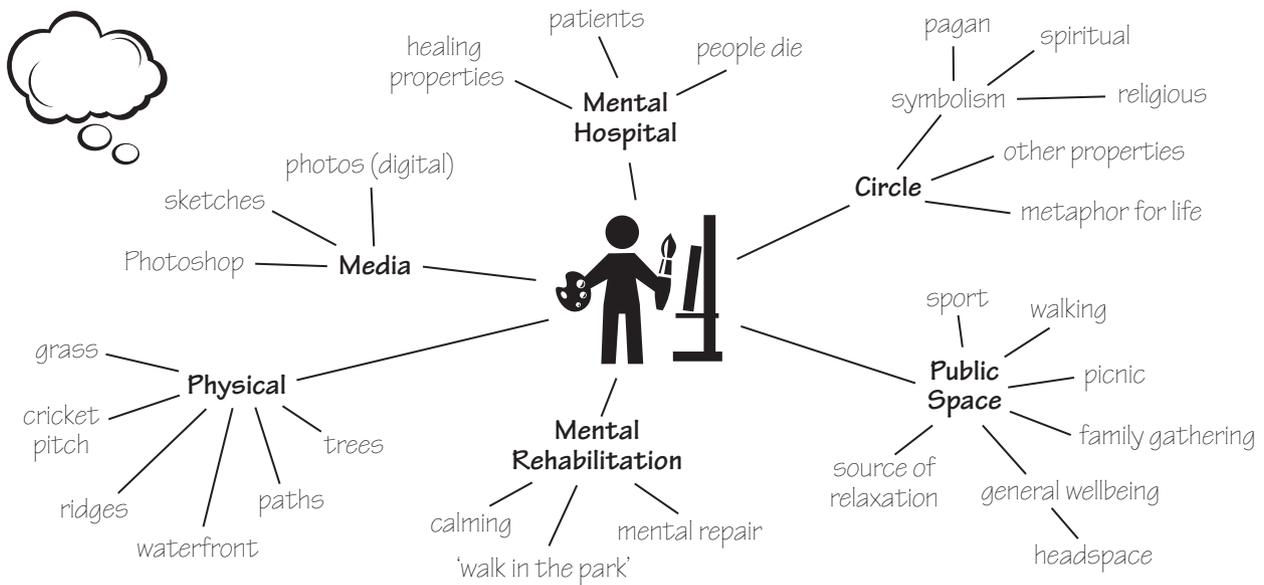


Figure 4.3 Tymon's personal conceptual framework (or mind map) about Gladesville Hospital.

Tymon's relationship to Gladesville

Tymon: I discovered a transcript on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's website of a 2005 *Four Corners* documentary that looked into the issue of mentally ill patients who need constant supervision, but receive little care. I was greatly disturbed by the stories *Four Corners* presented.

An extract from the *Four Corners* transcript that Tymon read appears below:

More than 20 years ago, governments across Australia had a humane vision: to close mental asylums and rehabilitate the mentally ill back into the community. In practice, the policy has been a disaster. Thousands were released from the asylums, but the houses and carers meant to settle the patients back into our communities were never fully funded. Each day, hundreds of mentally ill people roam our streets looking for a bed. (Carney 2005)



Figure 4.4 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital*, 2006. Digital photograph, dimensions variable. Artist's collection.

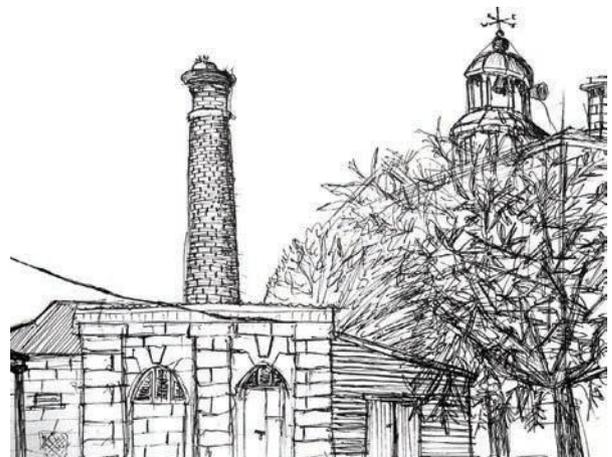
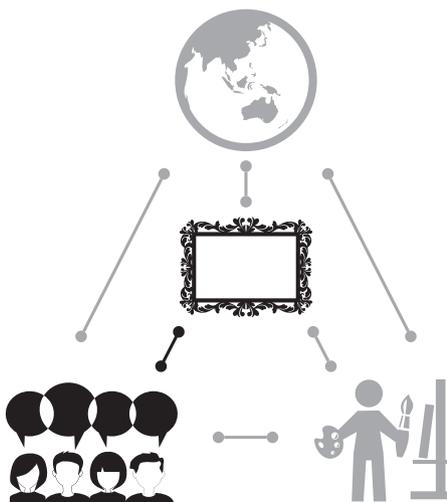


Figure 4.5 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital*, sketch 1, 2006. Pen and ink, 30 x 20 cm. Artist's collection.

Tymon was deeply touched by the plight of these former patients and he believed that their presence was still strongly felt in the hospital grounds.

Tymon: I learned about human reality by wandering through the hospital grounds. I was touched by the many sorry stories of how the mentally ill suffered needlessly in our community and I really wanted to feature this in my work.

Communicating feelings through artworks



Tymon found early photographic images of the patients, often showing them on the oval playing and exercising. The contrast between the once lively hospital grounds and Tymon's experience when he was walking through the grounds was stark. He carefully considered what he found so unnerving about the hospital grounds. Tymon realised it was the echoes and shadows of previous patients that seemed to 'speak' from the walls and corners of the old hospital buildings. It was the fact that once this was a place for care and now it resembled a collection of old, empty buildings. This was foremost in Tymon's mind when he decided to represent through drawing, the human side of the closure of the mental facility at Gladesville Hospital.



Figure 4.6 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital, sketch 2, 2006*. Pen on paper, 100 × 80 cm. Artist's collection.

Tymon closely examined the work of other artists who depicted human suffering. He studied their techniques, including their selection of colour, scale and the overall presentation of their subject matter.



His research and experimentation resulted in a series of drawings of the hospital's oval where the patients once spent time. In his drawings, Tymon shows the oval as it is today: empty and with no sign of those who once lived at the hospital. His drawings show the featureless and hauntingly vacant space. Tymon resolved this complex and emotive issue in his drawings, but felt that he could perhaps more fully capture the essence of humanity.

Tymon: I am very pleased with my drawings, but perhaps they could more clearly communicate the human element of the space and the stories that need to be told. Once I came across a flight of stone steps that led up to a door set into the wall. I could see the symbolism of this architectural feature: steps to freedom or escape. I developed this theme over a series of drawings, using a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces to make reference to the now missing patients.

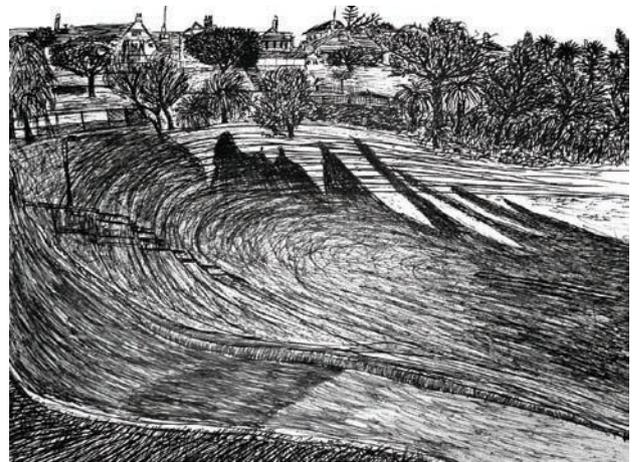


Figure 4.7 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital, sketch 3, 2006*. Pen on paper, 100 × 80 cm. Artist's collection.

Preparing the artworks for an audience

Tymon developed a series of large-scale drawings of the hospital and surrounding areas. These works were labour intensive and dozens of felt-tipped pens were used on each work. The works were also very large, raising the question of how to prepare these works for exhibition and final HSC marking. Rather than hanging the drawings, Tymon reviewed different methods that other artists used to present their works to the audience.

Tymon: I investigated other artists and revisited the work of Marcel Duchamp. I came across a later work by Duchamp where he miniaturised all his important works and placed them in a suitcase: *Boite-en-valise* (Box-in-a-Suitcase). I recognised Duchamp's use of a suitcase as a wonderful way to present a range of work in a smaller, manageable and intimate exhibition space. Furthermore, the suitcase added a symbolic layer of meaning emphasising the personal stories of the patients who packed up their own cases and left the hospital.

Tymon was intrigued by the idea of presenting artworks in a box or suitcase. As he stated, it suited his subject matter and added more poignancy to the overall work. Tymon purchased three old suitcases in a second-hand store. One afternoon he took the cases to Gladesville Hospital and photographed them in situ. The images were printed on proof sheets and placed in Tymon's VAPD, and nothing more was said about them. Weeks went by, with Tymon working on the drawings and planning the suitcases.

One day Tymon and his teacher were looking through Tymon's VAPD and the photographs simply stood out. The significance of these images and their symbolic nature and effectiveness was clearly recognised.



Figure 4.8 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital, sketch 4, 2006*. Pen and ink, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

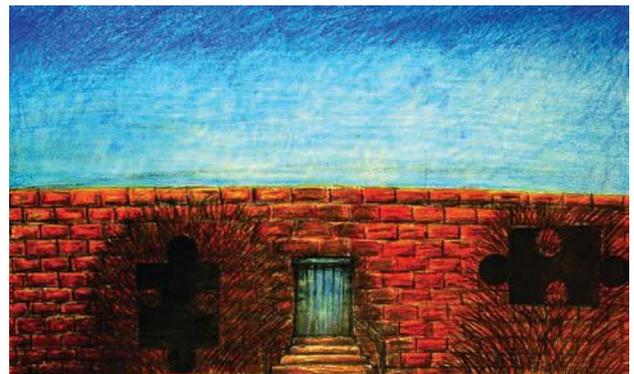


Figure 4.9 Tymon Langford, *Gladesville Hospital, sketch 5, 2006*. Pen and pastel, 30 × 20 cm. Artist's collection.

Tymon could see that even in these small test prints the images captured and represented the many layers of meaning Tymon wanted to show in his drawings.

Without the investigation into Duchamp, Tymon would not have utilised the suitcase as an important symbolic element in the overall work and they would not have become a defining feature of his work. However, there was one problem with the suitcases: the idea that the drawings would finally be folded to fit inside the suitcases was a big concern for Tymon. After spending so much time on each drawing, how could he bring himself to simply fold them up?

To resolve this dilemma, each photograph was re-shot and the colours were carefully graded using Photoshop. When Tymon saw the end result of the photographs he decided not to continue with the *boite-en-valise* (box-in-a-suitcase) concept; he could never have brought himself to fold up his beautiful drawings anyway.

With each image carefully composed and the colour corrected using Photoshop, they were finally printed on an equal scale to the drawings and submitted as his final body of work.



Figure 4.10 Marcel Duchamp, *Boîte-en-valise* (Box-in-a-Suitcase), 1935–40. Leather valise containing miniature replicas, photographs and colour reproductions of works by Duchamp and one 'original', 69 items, overall 40 × 38 × 10 cm. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA. © Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

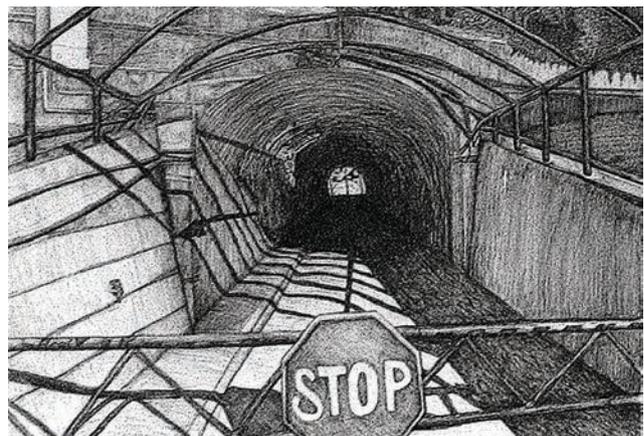


Figure 4.11 Tymon's drawings.

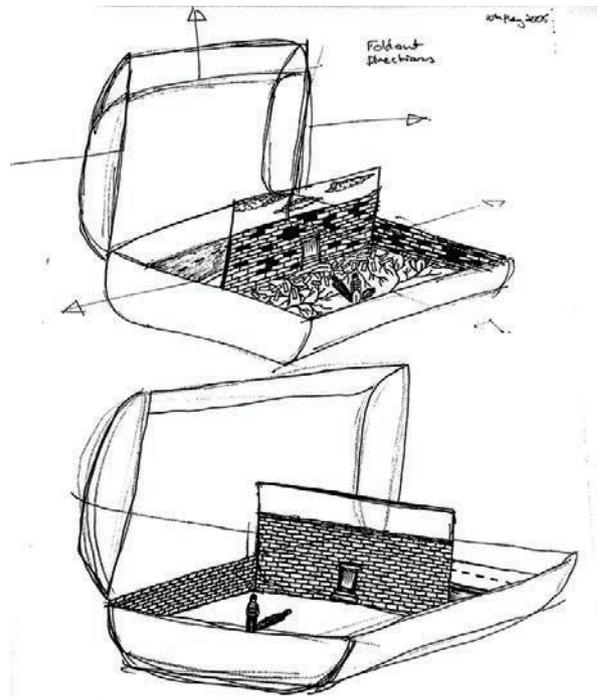


Figure 4.12 Tymon's concept sketches for his suitcase ideas.

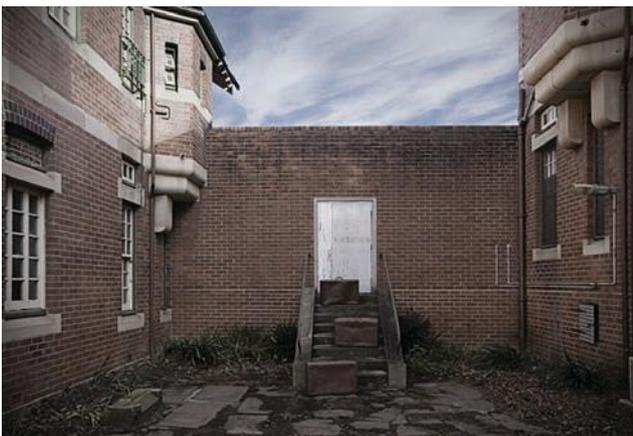


Figure 4.13 Tymon Langford, *Body of Work, Leaving the Asylum: 1978, 2006*. Digital photographic prints, 100 × 60 cm each. Artist's collection.

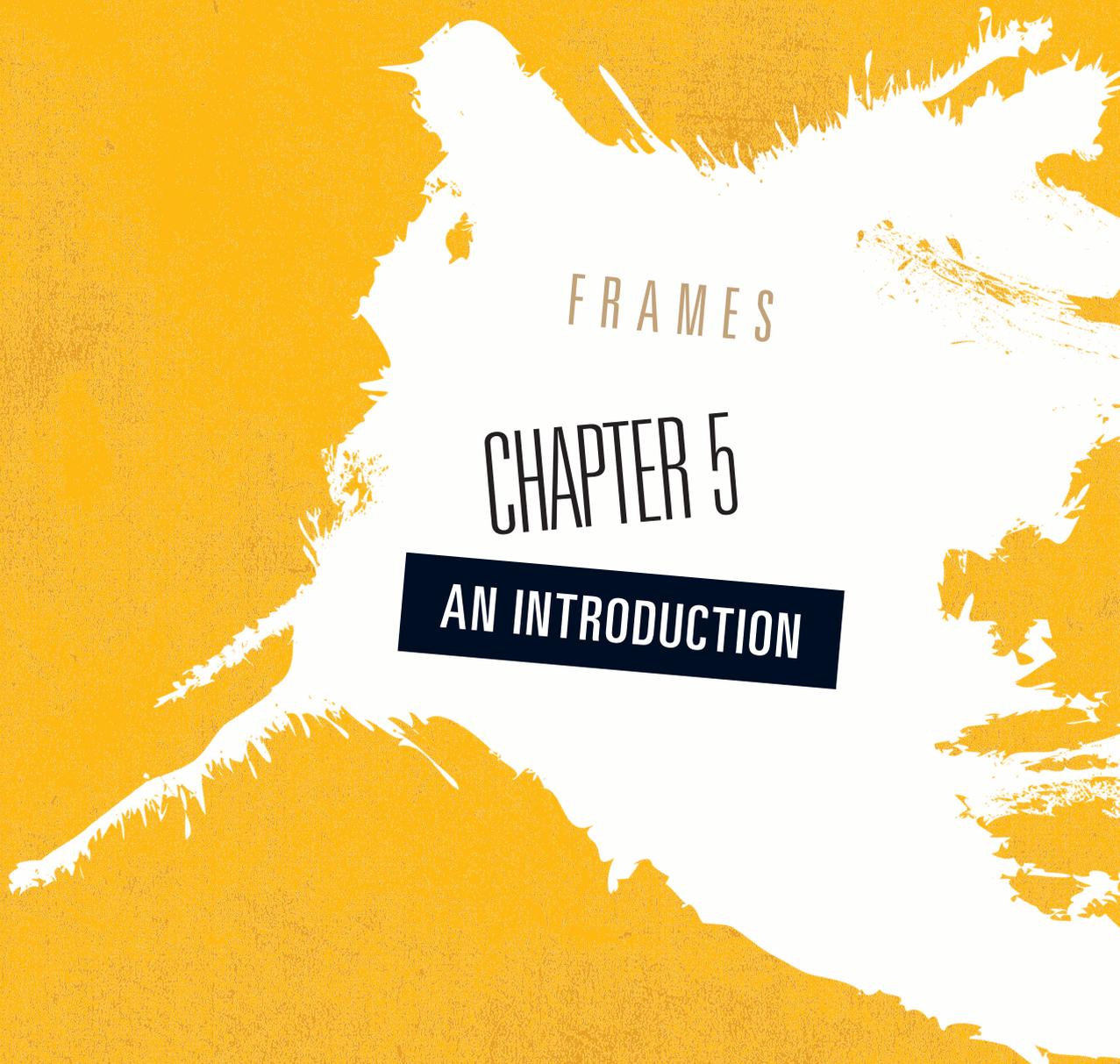


STUDENT TASK 4.1

In a 1000-word essay, analyse and evaluate your own body of work by using all the agencies of the Conceptual Framework. Using the Frames, discuss the significance of the artwork in relation to yourself as the artist, the world around you and the audience who will view the work. All four agencies are interrelated and this should be evident in your writing.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The Conceptual Framework is a system that allows you to clarify the important relationships between you (the artist), the world around you, your art, and the audiences who view and experience your work.
- All the agencies of the Conceptual Framework are interrelated. This can be clearly seen when the Conceptual Framework is used to analyse and evaluate art.
- Each student needs to consider the wider context of their body of work. The Conceptual Framework enables you to think about your work from a number of perspectives:
 - the world – consider how your work is engaging with the world around you and whether you are aware of people, places and events that have shaped you, your artworks and those who will view your work
 - the artist – consider yourself as an artist, setting out to create a work of art and being influenced by other artists
 - the artwork – consider your artistic strengths, experiences, likes and dislikes
 - the audience – consider how your work will be read or understood by others, including your immediate family, friends, school community and examiners. Remember that the examiners are your most important audience members.



FRAMES

CHAPTER 5

AN INTRODUCTION

There is more than one way to approach the making of art. Artists throughout time have found different and varied ways of working. As an art student making art, it can sometimes be overwhelming to consider all the creative possibilities and choices before you.

The four Frames can be a helpful tool for organising your thoughts. They are the Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern Frames. The challenges for any artist are working out exactly what they are trying to create, finding the best way to express their ideas and evaluating their work as it develops. By using the Frames as 'windows', a student can look through each Frame and examine their artmaking, and the artmaking of others, from particular points of view. In this way, the complexity of artmaking can be broken down into manageable segments.



5.1 Subjective Frame

From the viewpoint of the Subjective Frame a student can examine physical, psychological and even spiritual experiences. As artmakers they can explore their own and others' feelings and their relationship with the world around them.

The idea of **subjectivity** has kept philosophers busy for many centuries. René Descartes (1596–1650) famously said, 'I think therefore I am'. This means that the only thing you can be really sure about is your own existence. Later, Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) said 'Look at things for yourself'. In other words, create your own meanings by investigating things for yourself. Ask yourself, how do you experience things?

subjectivity judgement based on personal impressions, feelings and opinions rather than external facts

The physical

We all experience the physical world around us through our bodies. We have senses: sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. We feel movement, temperature and gravity. We experience sensations from within: hunger, fatigue, energy and pleasure. Certain artworks can **evoke** these basic human experiences.

evoke to bring to mind a memory or feeling, especially from the past



Look at the painting at left of a boat caught in a violent storm. Can you get a sense of the movement, the wind and the sounds of waves crashing?

Figure 5.1 Andreas Achenbach, *A fishing boat and a steamer in rough seas*, 1869. Oil on canvas, 71.5 × 101 cm.

The psychological

Imagination

We also make sense of the world around us through our minds. Human beings could be described as 'embodied minds'. Our minds have the capacity for imagination, an ability to visualise images beyond our solid world. As an artist you are free to explore fantasies and desires. These could be either conscious or unconscious as in dreams and nightmares. In the painting below you can see how Hieronymus Bosch used imagination to create a strange and complex work.

Dream worlds can be brought to life through time-based artworks such as animation. If you can imagine it, you can animate it. Using computer-generated images, an artist's inner world can be rendered realistically and can directly engage an audience.

Emotions

The Subjective Frame also focuses on moods and emotions. In your own artmaking practice you can tap into your personal well of deeply felt experiences and use them to inform your work. Feelings such as joy, sorrow, love and fear can all be communicated to others through art. People may experience these differently yet artists can find ways of provoking emotional responses by touching on universal themes.

Personal significance

Approaching artmaking through the Subjective Frame, an artist will often start by exploring what is meaningful for them. You may wish to consider subject matter such as your friends, family, self-image or the world around you. Once you have identified a few areas of personal interest, you can dig a little deeper. For example, ask yourself what it is about your family that has shaped your view of the world.



Figure 5.2 Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1504. Oil on panel, triptych, centre 220 × 195 cm, each wing 220 × 97 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



STUDENT TASK 5.1

Consider one of your own artworks and answer the following questions in relation to it:

- 1 Does your work evoke any physical sensations?
- 2 Does your work trigger feelings within yourself and how do you think others will respond to it?
- 3 How have you drawn on your own personal experiences?
- 4 How are your beliefs and values expressed in your work?
- 5 Can you use images from your dreams or nightmares in your artmaking?

5.2 Cultural Frame



The position of the artist is humble. He is essentially a channel.

Piet Mondrian, painter 1872–1944

When we consider art and artmaking from the viewpoint of the Cultural Frame, we become aware that everything and everybody exists in a network of relationships. An artwork does not appear out of a vacuum. Artworks will reflect some part of the wider world around them, the culture in which they were created. Culture can be thought of as ideas and values that are shared by groups of people. These ideas and values shape how art is created and understood.

Thinking about culture

The philosopher Georg Hegel (1770–1831) wrote: ‘Truth and human worth exist through the state.’ In his view, people build knowledge through the social power structures around them, rather than directly experiencing the world through their senses. Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) argued that the most powerful people dominate our society’s beliefs and values. Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), a cultural anthropologist, argued that the way we understand ourselves as individuals is shaped by community values and ideas. She wrote: ‘The “personality” of a culture defines its individuals as successes, misfits or outcasts.’

As an artist, you can explore the different cultural values surrounding you. Consider how the beliefs and experiences of the society in which you live are reflected in your own works of art. Ask yourself how you are influenced by other people’s ideas about gender, class, race/nationality and religion. No man or woman is an island.

Examine the digital image at right. The work was created by a student who wanted to express something about his own cultural heritage and community. The student used traditional religious imagery to build up a rich, multi-layered vision of his local Greek Orthodox priest.

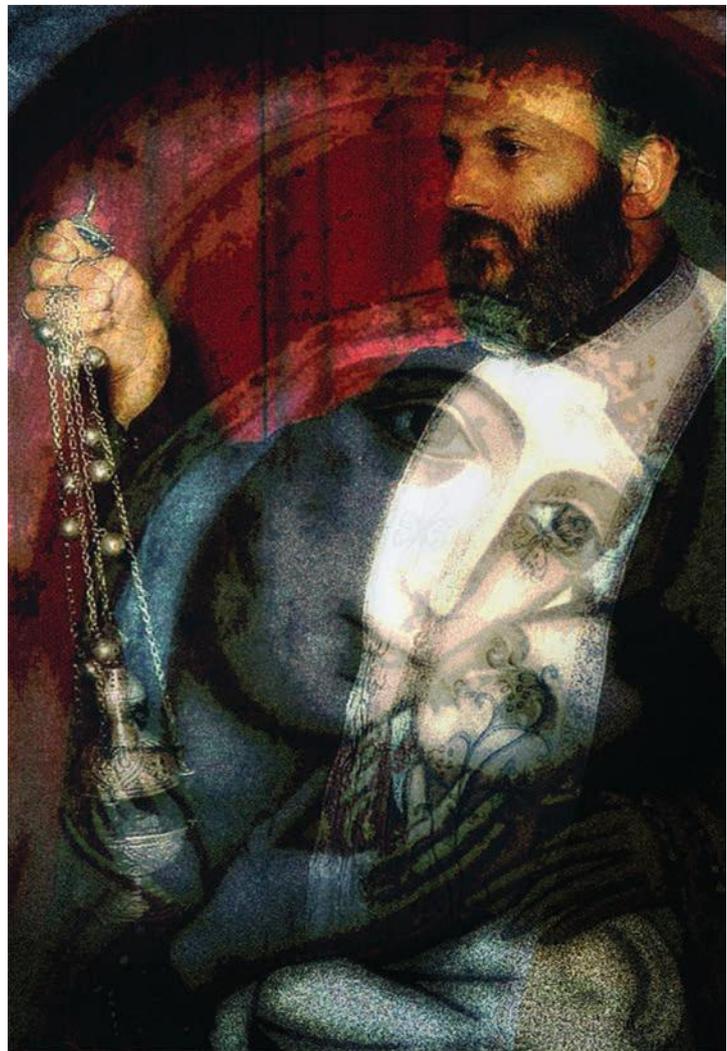


Figure 5.3 Dimitri Tzabazis, student, *untitled*, 2006.
Digital image, 42 × 30 cm. Artist’s collection.

The image below was created by Chinese-born Sydney-based artist Guan Wei. By looking at the way the mountains, plants and rivers are painted, you can see that his playful graphic style is informed by traditional Chinese art.



Figure 5.4 Guan Wei, *The Great Southern Land* (detail), 2006.

Courtesy of the artist, Powerhouse Museum and Sherman Galleries. Photograph: Jean Francois Lanzarone.

'Hey, Hetero!' (at right) was a public art project created for the 2001 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras festival. The project appeared as a series of illuminated public advertising spaces in Sydney streets and train stations, billboards, magazine pages, street posters and postcards. Viewers of the artworks were invited to consider that heterosexuality is a culture, with customs, costumes, rituals and exclusive rights. Think about what the artists were trying to say about society's attitudes towards sexuality.

Being a heterosexual member of our society means that when you get married, you get hoards of wonderful presents ... It's a pretty good deal, isn't it?'

Tina Fiveash, photographic artist 2004



STUDENT TASK 5.2

- 1 What cultural groups do you identify with?
- 2 Do your artworks reflect values and beliefs shared with others?
- 3 Do you want your artworks to comment on parts of society?
- 4 Do you have views on social issues and can they be incorporated into your work?

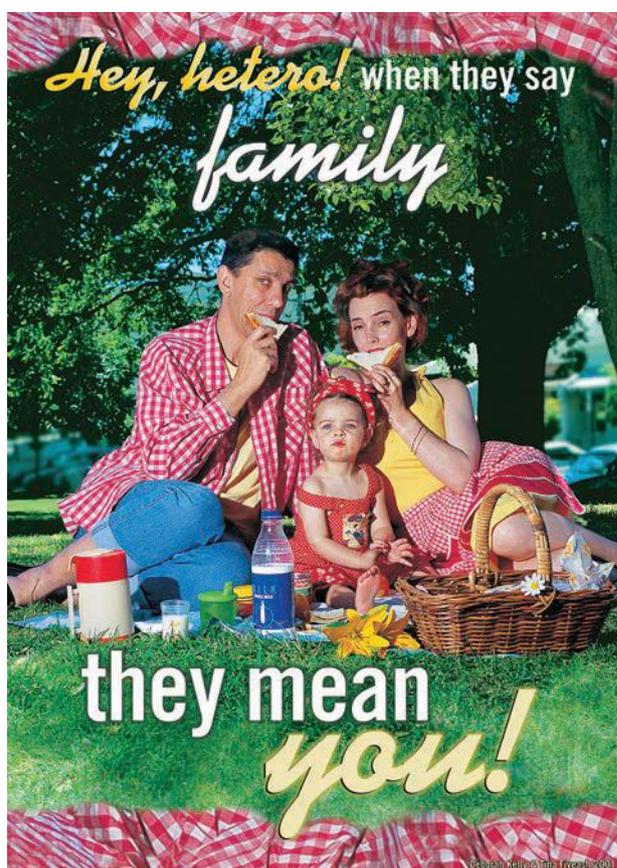


Figure 5.5 *Hey Hetero! When They Say Family They Mean You!* from the series 'Hey, Hetero!'.

Photograph: Deborah Kelly and Tina Fiveash, 2001.

5.3 Structural Frame



From the viewpoint of the Structural Frame, a student can examine how artworks communicate ideas, both to the artist and to audiences. These ideas can be expressed through the use, or rejection, of artistic conventions and by using a visual language of signs and **symbols**.

symbol something that is used to represent or stand for something else

Artistic conventions

Artistic conventions may be thought of as established ways of doing things. Examples include the way a classical sculptor approaches a block of stone, how an abstract painter handles oil paint, or how an installation artist works with a gallery space. Each medium has its own set of rules and traditions. Artists can also choose to go against established practices, in the way that the Dada artists did in the early twentieth century, and create their own artmaking practices. By understanding the significance of artistic conventions, artists can apply knowledge, skills and values to their own artmaking practice.

Physical properties

The Structural Frame also focuses on the physical nature of artmaking. It asks us to think about what the artwork is made of, how big it is, and how it is put together. Consider how different materials can express different ideas. For example, consider the physical properties of the 5-metre sculpture *Boy* by Australian artist Ron Mueck. The careful handling of materials to create a realistic image and the imposing size are key expressive elements of this work.

Signs and symbols

Using the Structural Frame you can think about how art uses a visual language; a language that can be thought of as a system of signs and symbols.

The study of signs and symbols is known as semiotics. In semiotics, an image is called the signifier and the concept attached to that image is the signified. Together they create a sign.



An artist can use the rich visual language of signs to **convey** meaning. For example, if in your artmaking you used the image of a heart shown on the opposite page on the left, what would it say? If you instead represented the heart in a different way, such as the one on the right, would the meaning be the same?

convey
communicate
or express
something

Figure 5.6 Ron Mueck, *Boy*, 2000. Fibreglass, resin, silicone, 500 cm tall. On display at the 49th Venice Biennale.

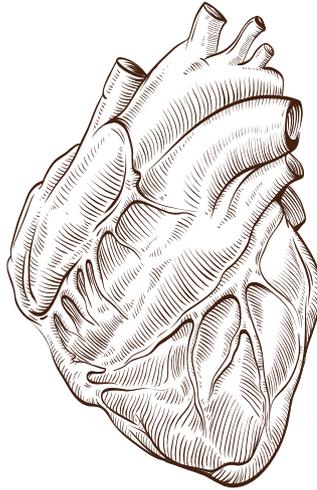


Figure 5.7 Two very different images, both depicting a heart.

Visual elements

Even the simple idea of drawing a line across a page opens up creative choices for an artist. The artist needs to consider what quality of line would best express their idea. It may be a smooth, jagged or curving line. By exploring the aesthetic properties of visual elements (such as line, colour, shape, texture, lighting and three-dimensional space) an artist develops an understanding of how they can be best used to communicate their ideas.

In the digital **rayograph** below, a student has created a composition of shapes, textures and tones. By experimenting with different combinations of objects and relationships between them, the student was able to organise the individual elements into a harmonious (well-balanced) whole.

With a time-based work, such as a film, a student can use the Structural Frame to consider how quick the edits should be. Fast cutting between shots generates a feeling of energy, while long-held shots convey a reflective or peaceful mood. Choices that the artist makes contribute to the success of the finished artwork.

rayograph a photographic image created by placing objects directly on photographic paper then exposing to light in a darkroom before developing; a term used by artist Man Ray



Figure 5.8 Student artwork, *untitled*, 2006. Digital rayograph, 21 × 30 cm. Artist's collection.



STUDENT TASK 5.3

Think about an artwork that you are still developing, and answer the following questions in relation to it:

- 1 Could I use the conventions of a particular art style?
- 2 What materials are best suited to my idea and why is that so?
- 3 What techniques do I need to explore and master?
- 4 How can I organise visual elements to convey meaning?
- 5 What symbols or signs could I use to add layers of meaning?

5.4 Postmodern Frame



Of all the Frames, the Postmodern Frame is usually the one that art students find the most difficult to understand. The Postmodern Frame takes its name from postmodernism, which is a movement of wide-ranging ideas and theories that have influenced literature, politics, philosophy and art. There is no single, definitive definition of postmodernism.

Postmodern thinkers reject the idea of absolute truths and universal laws by sometimes turning these on their head. For instance, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), the radical German philosopher, famously declared in the nineteenth century, 'God is dead'. To question the relevance of God was a radical concept at that time, and representative of postmodern thinking.

Postmodernism challenges historically held values concerning culture and what is good taste. It also questions what art is. Painter Roy Lichtenstein, for example, challenged the concepts of 'high art' and 'low art' when he reproduced comics as paintings. Lichtenstein's work is explored further in the online chapter Case study: Roy Lichtenstein at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2chapters.

Historically, the dominant view was that oil paintings were culturally valuable and were to be hung in galleries and palaces or at least in the homes of the wealthy. Comics, on the other hand, were seen as childish, mass-produced entertainment for the undiscerning. Postmodernism challenged the established ideas of what is valuable and significant and what is not. A postmodernist would question whether an opera by Mozart is any better than a three-minute rap from Jay-Z. They would also challenge who has the authority to make this judgement.

Artists who work in a postmodern way often **appropriate** images from other sources such as Lichtenstein did when he copied comics. In doing so, they change the context in which the image is viewed; they **recontextualise** the image and create new meanings. In the example in the online Chapter 21 Case study: Roy Lichtenstein, the original context of the image would have been a small picture mechanically printed surrounded by similar images in a comic book. Lichtenstein changed the context and the image is now reproduced as a large oil painting in an art gallery watched over by security personnel to ensure nobody touches it.

appropriation use of borrowed elements in the creation of new work

recontextualise place an artwork or image into a different social, historical or literary context and, in doing so, alter the meaning that it conveys to an audience

In the image on the opposite page, a student has appropriated an image of Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and added a barcode sticker. What do you think the artist is trying to say? The image also refers to the artist Marcel Duchamp, who controversially drew a moustache on a copy of this famous Da Vinci painting.



STUDENT TASK 5.4

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 Does my work question **mainstream** values?
- 2 How can I use humour or satire to make a statement?
- 3 How can I change the context of an existing image and create a new meaning?

mainstream typical; ordinary; in art, the dominant or accepted art practice of the time

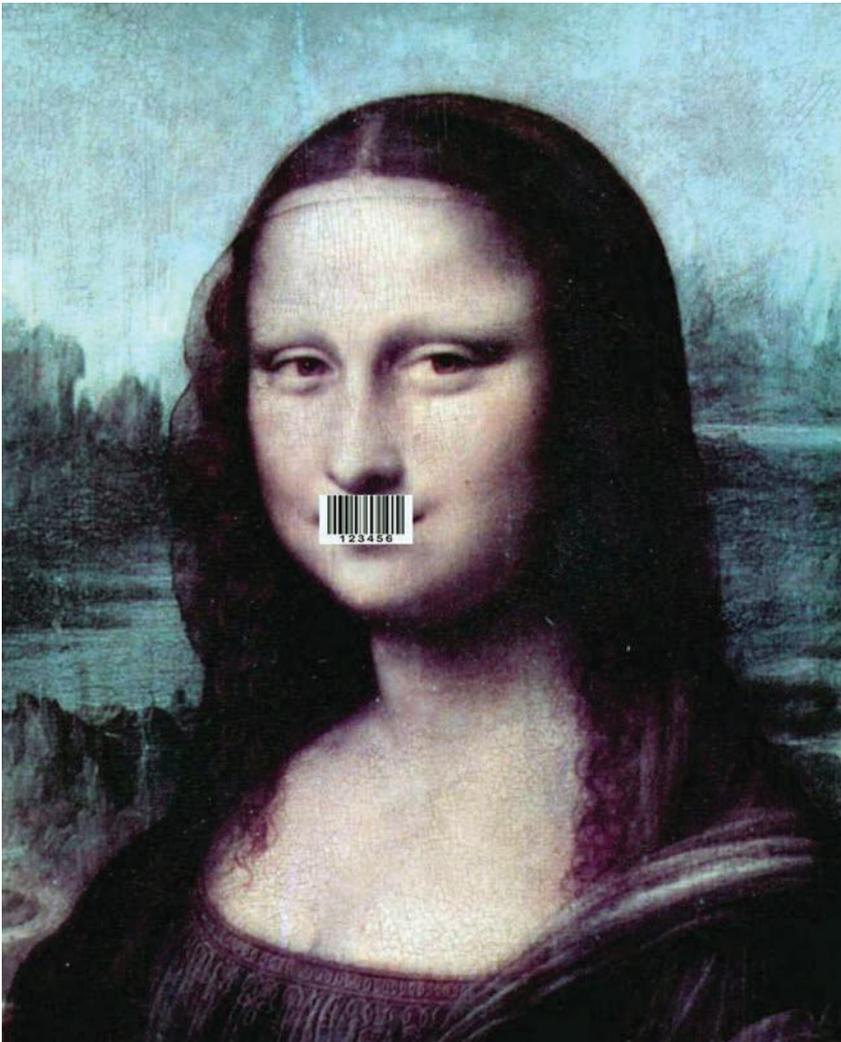


Figure 5.9 Student work, *She has a Hot Price*, 2007.
Digital print, 34 × 26 cm. Artist's collection.



STUDENT TASK 5.5

- 1 What is subjectivity?
- 2 How do social ideas influence the making of artworks?
- 3 What does the term semiotics mean?
- 4 Is there such a thing as 'good art' or 'bad art'? Discuss.

If you use appropriation in your artmaking you could be tempted to think of all art history as one giant supermarket of goodies to plunder. The important question to ask yourself is 'What am I trying to say?' With digital media it is extremely easy to copy images. The challenge for an artist is to use an image in order to say something new or meaningful.

Art is making something out of nothing and selling it.

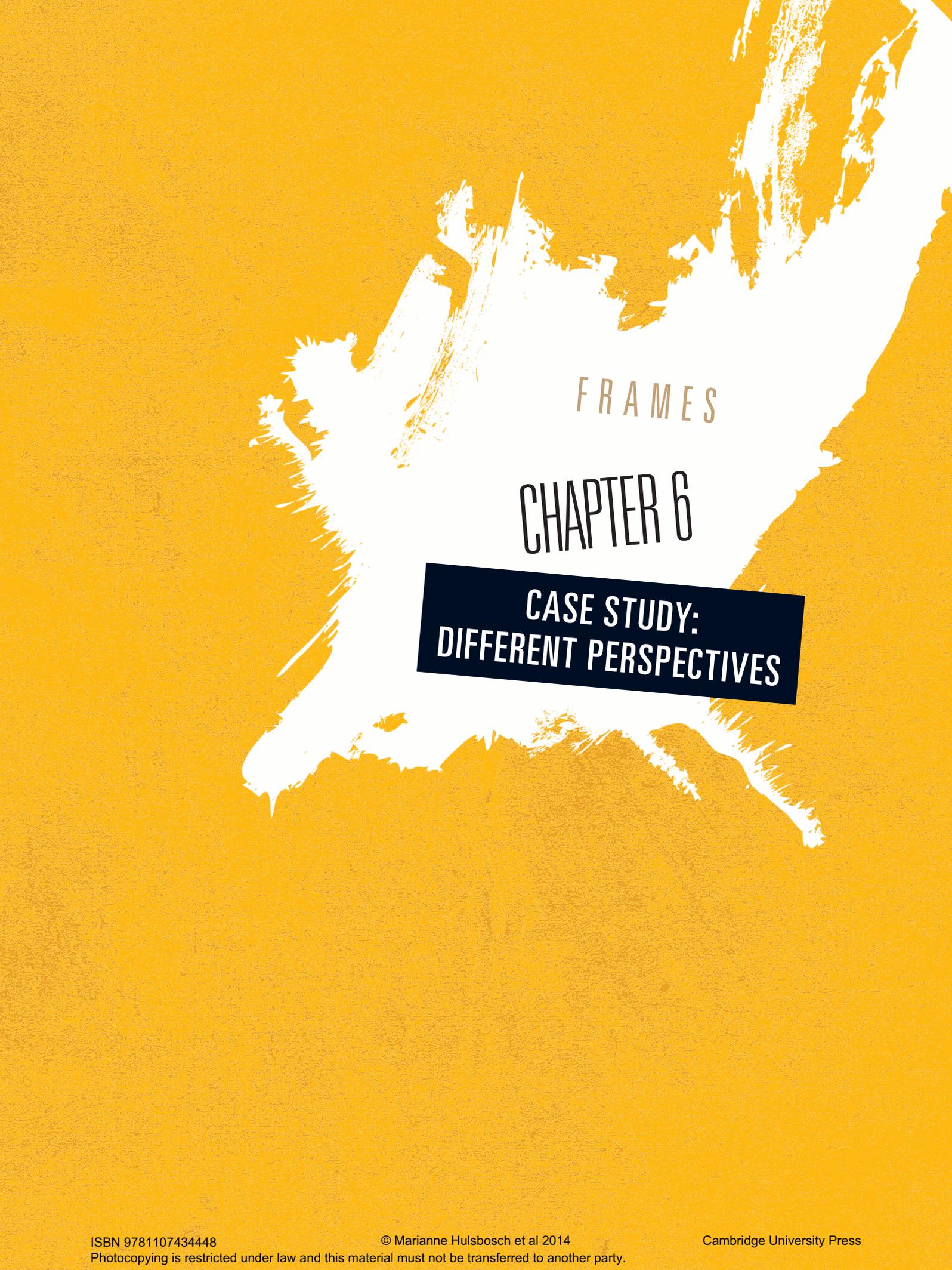
Frank Zappa, singer and songwriter 1940–1993

The Postmodern Frame raises questions of power and authority, and focuses on ideas that challenge dominant values and views of history. As an artmaker, the Postmodern Frame encourages you to release your inner rebel, tear down the structures that define everything, and question authority, to subvert the dominant **paradigm**. But remember, a representative of the dominant paradigm will critically evaluate your work: a teacher will mark it.

paradigm a community of common values, languages and practices; paradigms shift when values, languages and practices shift to accommodate social, cultural or technological change

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The four Frames – Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern – can be used as a helpful tool for considering your ideas, concepts or work from different perspectives.
- A student can look through each Frame and examine their artmaking, and the artmaking of others, from particular points of view.
- The Subjective Frame emphasises imagination and physical, psychological and spiritual experiences.
- From the viewpoint of the Cultural Frame, we become aware that everything and everybody exists in a network of relationships.
- The Structural Frame emphasises artistic conventions, physical and visual properties and the visual language of signs and symbols.
- The Postmodern Frame raises questions of power and authority, and focuses on ideas that challenge dominant values and views of history.



FRAMES

CHAPTER 6

**CASE STUDY:
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

The creation of an artwork is a journey. You start with a rough idea, and then you begin to explore how to best express it and give it form. Along the way, you may find it useful to stand back from your work and look at it with 'fresh eyes'. Trying to evaluate your work from more than one viewpoint can be very helpful. The four Frames – Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern – are four viewpoints that you can use to examine your art in progress.



6.1 Subjective Frame

To use the Subjective Frame to examine your artwork in progress you can begin by concentrating on feelings. Ask yourself whether you like your artwork. Try not to get too intellectual about it; you can do that through the other Frames. The Subjective Frame is about experience: your experience and others' experience of your artwork.



Figure 6.1 Chris Kearey, student, *Portrait of Courage*, 2007. Oil on canvas, 102 × 152 cm. Artist's collection.

Physical and emotional reactions

Consider the student painting above. Does this work suggest to you a physical sensation? Maybe you feel a tingling in the spine when you view this artwork or perhaps you feel numb or warm. How do you react to this painting emotionally? Does this artwork make you feel happy, sad or indifferent?

The canvas is large and the paint is applied thickly with a knife. The subject looks directly at you and his face is bleeding. The student is hoping people looking at his work will respond in an emotional way. By creating an image of a human face that may be in pain and is looking directly at the viewer, the artist hopes the audience will empathise with the subject. Can you imagine yourself in the same situation?

Personality

Every good painter paints what he is.
Jackson Pollock, painter 1912–1956

Every person is unique. We are individuals with personal beliefs and values. No two artists are exactly alike. Consider what it is that makes you different, even in a small way, from the people around you. Is there something special about you that you can bring to your art practice? In other words, how can your personality be expressed? Look at the work of your fellow art students.

Try to see whether you can make a connection between their artwork and their personalities. Can you also see in their artworks how their personalities are expressed? If you can, is it through their technique, choice of material or choice of subject? Can you think of an artwork that clearly expresses the artist's personality?

Emotions as inspiration

Are there strong emotions that you have experienced in the past that you can use when creating your artworks? For example, if you are trying to create a joyful image, think back to an experience when you felt joyful. Like an actor who draws on their emotional past, as an artist you can call on remembered feelings and find ways to express them.

Subconscious mind

Reproduced here is a series of images from a student film. The series shows the transition from one image to another. The student created hundreds of drawings in notebooks. The images were drawn intuitively. He let the images flow from his subconscious mind while his thoughts were elsewhere, watching television or sitting at the back of class. These 'doodles' or seemingly random pictures have a relationship to each other yet their meaning is unclear, much like a strange dream. When they were imported into a filmmaking program and brought together as a movie they created a hypnotic and highly personal piece of work.



Figure 6.2 Nicholas Beeby, student, sketches. Artist's collection.

Imagination

The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place: from the sky, from the earth, from a scrap of paper, from a passing shape, from a spider's web.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973

One of the most useful questions a creative person can ask themselves is 'What if ...?' What if I used a different medium? What if I do the opposite of what I had originally planned? What if my sculpture of a cat had wings and three heads?



STUDENT TASK 6.1

Think about your own body of work and critically view it from the Subjective Frame. Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 How are your feelings and emotions expressed in your body of work?
- 2 How imaginative have you been in developing your concepts and ideas?
- 3 How did you express your beliefs and values?
- 4 How will an audience view and understand your work?
- 5 Will an audience be able to empathise with the feelings you express?

6.2 Cultural Frame



The artist's world is limitless. It can be found anywhere, far from where he lives or a few feet away. It is always on his doorstep.

Paul Strand, photographer and filmmaker 1890–1976

The Cultural Frame draws our attention to the social world, a world where ideas and values are shared by groups of people. These ideas and values will in some way be reflected in artworks; after all, art is not created in a vacuum.

Think about the artwork you are creating. Can you see how ideas from the world around you have influenced your art?

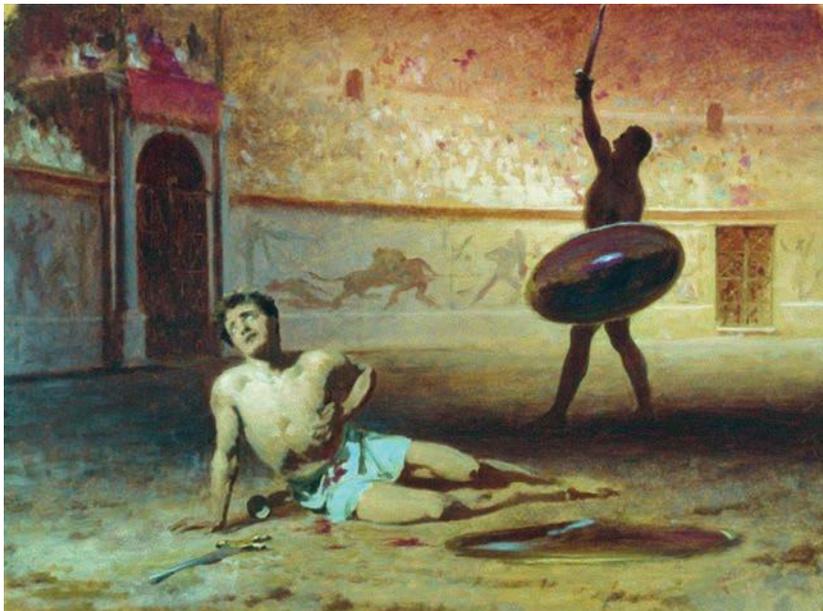


Figure 6.3 Fyodor Andreyevich Bronnikov, *The Dying Gladiator*, 1856.

Rome, where men would face injury and death to entertain the masses. The more Chris explored aspects of violence the more he realised its cultural significance. Consider, for instance, the number of movies and television shows, including those intended for children, that feature violence.

The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity.

Alberto Giacometti, sculptor and painter 1901–1966

Chris also researched how other artists represent ideas of masculinity. Chris was particularly influenced by Australian artist Ben Quilty, who has explored the cultural landscape of his generation of young Australian males. The strong and aggressive strokes in Quilty's painting *Khe Sahn* suggest the raw masculine energy of a rock singer screaming the words at the top of his lungs. Quilty's practice is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.

Violence within contemporary culture

Portrait of Courage is part of a series of works called *Faces of Courage*. In this series, Year 12 student Chris Kearey has drawn on the violence within contemporary culture. Responding to images of violence from television, film and the internet (such as gladiator movies and boxing), Chris tapped into the idea of the wounded hero.

Using the Cultural Frame, Chris explored the idea of violence as entertainment in a wider cultural context. Historically, he saw that there are links between boxing and the gladiators of Ancient



STUDENT TASK 6.2

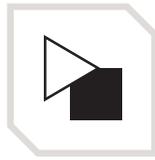
Think about your own body of work and critically view it from the Cultural Frame. Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 How do the overall ideas and concepts of your body of work reflect the world around you?
- 2 Have you represented your views and attitudes towards gender, religion, politics or society?
- 3 Are your signs, symbols and visual codes specific to your cultural background?
- 4 How will audiences from other cultural backgrounds view and understand your body of work?



Figure 6.4 Ben Quilty, *Khe Sahn*, 2006. Private collection.

6.3 Structural Frame



Art is not what you see, but what you make others see.

Edgar Degas, painter 1834–1917

When we look at artmaking through the Structural Frame we try to understand how a work is put together. By studying a work and the practice of the artist we can develop an understanding of the underlying 'structure' that holds the work together. We can begin by asking whether the work belongs to a particular art style or genre (type).

Conventions of practice

Over the years, groups of artists have established particular ways of working in a certain style and with certain materials. These styles and techniques then become artistic conventions. Each style of artmaking and each medium has its own set of rules and traditions that have developed over time. Even when artists intentionally break or reject the conventions, they draw attention to the rules and traditions and create a new structure.



Figure 6.5 Alex Mackenzie, *Suburbia* series, 2006. Photograph, 29 × 21 cm. Artist's collection.

Order and placement

The human brain is designed to recognise order and pattern. We are hardwired to respond to structure. As an artist you can experiment with ways of arranging and placing different elements. While too much order can be boring, no order results in a mess. In this student photograph, the image is dominated by horizontal and vertical shapes. The careful placement of the elements creates a balanced composition.

Symbols

The Structural Frame also focuses on how images can function as a language. For example, we consider whether an artwork uses symbols and signs to communicate ideas. In the ceramic sculpture opposite, a Year 11 student set out to create a primitive-looking figure representing the Ancient Celtic nature god Cernunnos.

After researching different representations of this horned god, the student discovered the meanings behind the symbols that were used to depict him. Cernunnos is usually portrayed as a mature man with long hair and a beard. His most distinctive feature are the stag's horns. These antlers symbolise masculinity and are associated with fertility. The twisted ornament around his neck and sometimes shown in his hand is a torc, which symbolises authority and power. After determining which were the most important symbols associated with this particular god, the student made hundreds of sketches of them, trying to incorporate them into a plan for his sculpture.

Choice of materials

The Structural Frame also looks at how the physical qualities of a work convey meaning. The student also wanted to convey the ancient quality of the subject. His challenge was how to make his new sculpture look old. When his teacher suggested researching different commercially available paint finishes, the student discovered a metallic paint that could be aged with acid and salt. Although the sculpture was made from clay, which was kiln fired, the final finish has the appearance of a metal sculpture that has been exposed to the elements for hundreds of years. The green patina on the metallic surface communicates the idea of age.

A colour is as strong as the impression it creates.

Ivan Albright, painter 1897–1983



STUDENT TASK 6.3

- 1 Research two artists who work with the same materials you are using but who use them in very different ways.
- 2 Try to discover something about the medium that you previously did not know. Can you use this knowledge in your own art practice?
- 3 Think about your own body of work and critically view it from the Structural Frame. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - a Does the body of work express your individual art style?
 - b What are the established conventions associated with the artworks you are developing?
 - c What signs, symbols and visual codes (such as colour, shape and texture) will you use to express your intentions? How will the audience understand these?
 - d What can you learn from other artists working in similar ways?
 - e How can the practice of other artists assist you in developing your own body of work?



Figure 6.6 Student work, *Cernunnos*, 2005. Ceramic with copper and patina finish, 220 cm high. Artist's collection.

6.4 Postmodern Frame



Many of the contradictions in postmodern art come from the fact that we're trying to be artists in a democratic society. This is because in a democracy, the ideal is compromise. In art, it isn't.

Brad Holland, illustrator 1972

Using the Postmodern Frame, students can explore how meanings in their work can shift. This Frame looks at how artworks do not have a single, fixed meaning. Meaning in an artwork is thought to be built or constructed by the viewer looking at the work. There is a suggestion in postmodernism that the way an artwork is interpreted is more important than the artwork itself. This implies that the audience is more important than the artist. From the viewpoint of this Frame, one artwork can be interpreted in many different ways. Also, one meaning may be no more true or valid than another.

Art critic Benjamin Genocchio comments on this phenomenon: 'What I like so much about contemporary art now is its **ambiguity**, its uncertainty. It is precisely this quality that engages and unsettles us'.

While developing a series of photographs, Year 12 student Tim Playford examined his work through the Postmodern Frame. He consciously tried to create images that were ambiguous, leaving the meaning open for people to interpret. In fact, he described his photographs as 'open artwork'.

In his VAPD, Tim reflected on photography from the perspective of the Postmodern Frame.

Tim: *History shows that photography has been used in documenting events and people as an attempt to show things as they are or were. Through symbols, framing, subject matter, an image is given a meaning. In my body of work I hope to remove this 'prescribed meaning' structure and leave meaning and relevance open to an individual audience.*

The figure in the photograph seems to be idle, as if something is going to happen. This is what engages me, makes me question what is actually going on. The figure seems to be in transit between one moment and the next and it is up to the audience to decide what these moments are.

Tim researched artists who create ambiguous photographic images. He looked at the works of Philip-Lorca diCorcia, which he felt drawn to because they suggested a story. Tim also discovered references describing diCorcia as being 'cinematic'. Tim considered incorporating an element of theatrical staging of figures in his work, exploring the tension between the natural and the artificial. Tim took hundreds of photographs of a single human figure in dramatically lit night-time scenes. From these he chose images that seem to suggest that something is about to happen or has happened.

Tim also discovered that when certain images were placed side by side, the combination evoked new meanings. When you look at the sequence of images on the page opposite you will see that they suggest a story. Playing with the postmodern idea that meanings can shift, Tim experimented with different combinations of photographs to create a variety of possible **narratives**. Tim worked in a manner described by artist Brad Holland as follows: 'In **modernism**, reality is used to validate media. In postmodernism, the media validate reality. If you don't believe this, just think how many times you've described some real event as being "just like a movie".'

ambiguous vague, indistinct; can have more than one meaning; can be interpreted differently by different audience members

narrative a story or an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened; a non-linear narrative does not place events in chronological order

modernism the revolutionary ideas and styles in art, architecture and literature that developed in the early twentieth century as a reaction to the traditional forms of these



STUDENT TASK 6.4

Think about your own body of work and critically view it from the Postmodern Frame. Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1 Does your body of work challenge history in any way?
- 2 Have you constructed new meanings using established signs, symbols and visual codes?
- 3 Have you reinterpreted conventional artworks and used wit and irony to parody their original message?
- 4 Will your body of work confront audiences in any way? If so, why and how?

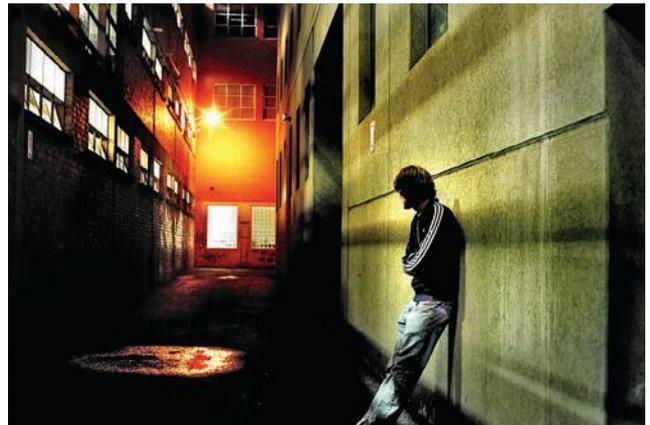
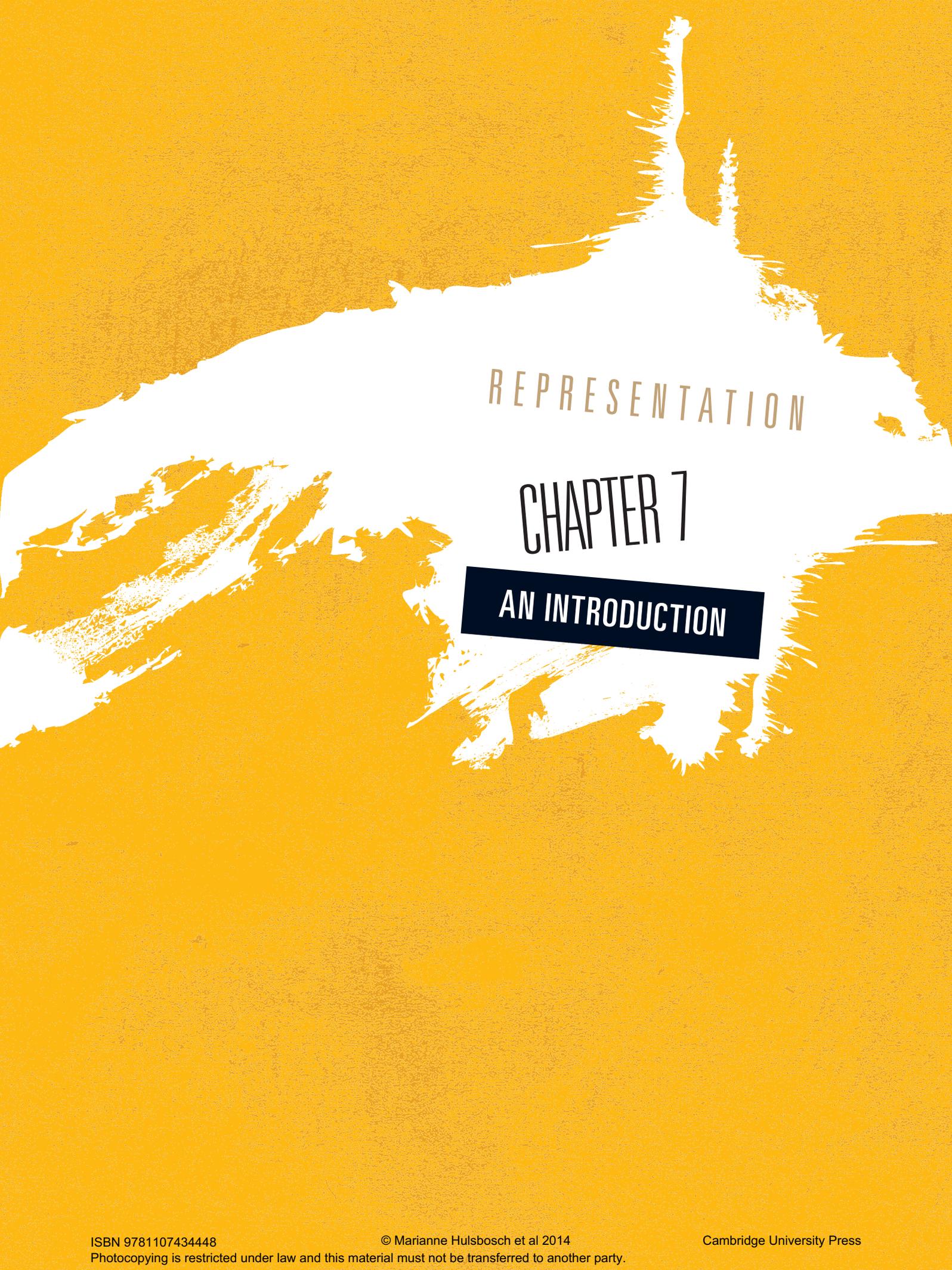


Figure 6.7 Tim Playford, student, *Suburbia*, 2007.
Photographs, variable dimensions. Artist's collection.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The creation of an artwork is a journey. Along the way, you may find it helpful to stand back from your work and look at it with 'fresh eyes'.
- The Frames are four viewpoints that you can use to examine your art in progress.
- The Subjective Frame is about experience: your experience and others' experience of your artwork.
- The Cultural Frame is about a reflection of ideas and values of the social world.
- The Structural Frame gives us an understanding of how a work is put together.
- One of the most useful questions a creative person can ask themselves is 'What if ...?'
- Using the Postmodern Frame, students are able to explore how meanings in their work can shift.

A dark blue background with a large, irregularly torn piece of white paper in the upper right quadrant. The paper has a rough, fibrous edge. On the white paper, the word 'REPRESENTATION' is printed in a light blue, sans-serif font. Below it, 'CHAPTER 7' is printed in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the white piece, there is a black rectangular box containing the text 'AN INTRODUCTION' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER 7

AN INTRODUCTION

Representation in artmaking refers to what is shown to the viewer of an artwork, either as subject matter or as an object. Even the most realistic painting is, in fact, just paint on a surface. It is not the 'real thing', it is a representation of an idea. A more detailed discussion of the concept of representation of images can be found in Chapter 18.

This chapter will investigate how you can approach representation in your artmaking through a study of the most commonly represented form in artmaking, both historically and in contemporary practice: the human body. By studying portraiture and images of the human form, and completing a series of practical exercises, you will explore different aspects of **figurative representation**. You will examine the role of **portraiture** in the arts, and the way in which artists show aspects of both themselves and their subject when they make artworks.

figurative representation

representation in artmaking that has the human form as its theme or basis

portrait

an art image that portrays a likeness, usually physical, of a specific individual

The human image has been represented in art since the earliest times; it remains the most common subject for artistic representation. If you flip through this book you will see that the majority of the artworks contain images of people.

Photographic and moving image technologies have radically altered the role of the artist, and also the way in which the human form is represented.

Author and playwright Oscar Wilde wrote of the way in which individual artists, in creating a portrait, also reveal something of themselves: 'Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter'. The work is a result of the artist's learning and of their social and cultural environment and their practice as an artist.

7.1 What is a portrait?



In their representations of people, artists may create likenesses or they may create images that are more universal. Not all representations of people are portraits. To function as a portrait, a work must have the specific purpose of representing a particular person. While it is not always essential that a portrait presents the physical appearance of a person, it must in some way demonstrate unique aspects of the appearance or character of its subject.



Figure 7.1 Frederick McCubbin, *On the Wallaby Track*, 1895.
Oil on canvas, 122.0 × 223.5 cm. Purchased 1897, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

In his iconic painting *On the Wallaby Track*, Frederick McCubbin strives for a realistic depiction of the human form. However, this work is not a portrait. We are not told who the people in the work are. McCubbin has used them as models; they represent a celebration of pioneering endeavour and stoicism rather than the individual achievements of those depicted. They are used as symbols and therefore their individual identity is unimportant to McCubbin or to the audience for his work.

Marc Quinn's work *Self*, as well as being far more confronting than McCubbin's, is a portrait. Quinn created his work from almost four litres of his own blood, which approximates the amount of blood in a human body at any time. This work is cast from the artist's own image and is kept frozen to maintain the sculptural form.

Writer Sarah Kent has described *Self* as follows:



Figure 7.2 Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991. Blood, stainless steel, Perspex, refrigeration equipment, 208 × 63 × 63 cm. Private collection.

The piece is fundamentally unstable, dependent on a life support system: unplug the refrigeration unit and the work would melt into a formless pool. Rather than conferring immortality on its maker – as, by proxy, stone or marble would – it emphasises the fragility and transience of life. Being made of the same substance as the artist, the sculpture blurs the margins between art and life. (Kent 1994, p. 73)

7.2 Forms of representation



Portraiture in its many forms continues as an important genre (type). It is supported, to a large extent, by the fascination, particularly in Western society, with celebrities and the notion of fame.

Portraits often do more than represent the physical appearance of the sitter. While they may be objective representations of the human form, they can also function as historical documentation, status symbols, **propaganda**, objects of affection and psychological studies.

propaganda information that is spread for the purpose of promoting some cause



Portraits as objective studies of the human form

Some artists approach the human form as they would any other object that they are representing. Their interest is in its formal qualities: the problem-solving aspects of trying to represent reality. Therefore, they are not interested in trying to communicate the emotions and feelings of the person. Instead, they are more interested in representing the objective, or physical, form of the body.



Figure 7.3 Sir Peter Lely, *Oliver Cromwell*, circa 1653.
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

The common saying ‘warts and all’ has been attributed to Oliver Cromwell, arising from his instructions to Sir Peter Lely concerning Lely’s portrait of Cromwell:

Mr Lely, I desire you would use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and not flatter me at all; but remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts, and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it.
(Cromwell circa 1657)

While it is questionable whether Cromwell actually made this statement, comparisons between Lely’s portrait and the death mask cast from Cromwell’s face do indicate that the portrait was ‘realistic’.

DID YOU KNOW?

Death masks are wax or plaster casts of people’s faces made upon their death. Prior to photography, this was a common way of creating a keepsake of an individual. During the eighteenth century, death masks were made of unknown corpses in order to help identify them.

Portraits as historical documentation

I do not paint a portrait to look like the subject, rather does the person grow to look like his portrait.

Salvador Dalí, painter 1904–1989

Portraits have been used to record the appearance of famous or important people. Often these people were depicted in the setting or taking part in the event that made them famous. Photography has, for the most part, taken over from painting and sculpture as the medium most commonly used for portraiture of this kind.

Mervyn Bishop’s photograph on the opposite page depicts an important event in the history of Australia. The then prime minister, Gough Whitlam, is pouring soil into the hand of Aboriginal elder Vincent Lingiari. This gesture symbolises the return of land at Wattie Creek to the traditional owners, the Gurindji people. The work is powerful, and the gravity of the event is emphasised by the low viewpoint adopted by Bishop.

The ceremony shown in Bishop’s photo was a restaging of the initial event. It was first conducted indoors but, as the light was poor, Bishop asked those involved to pose for a second set of photos. This allowed him to improve the technical qualities of his previous images.

While Bishop’s photograph is a record of an actual event, it also recognises the grand theatricality of the prime minister’s gesture. It is a record of the outward display of reconciliation and repatriation, rather than of the social and political struggle that preceded it.

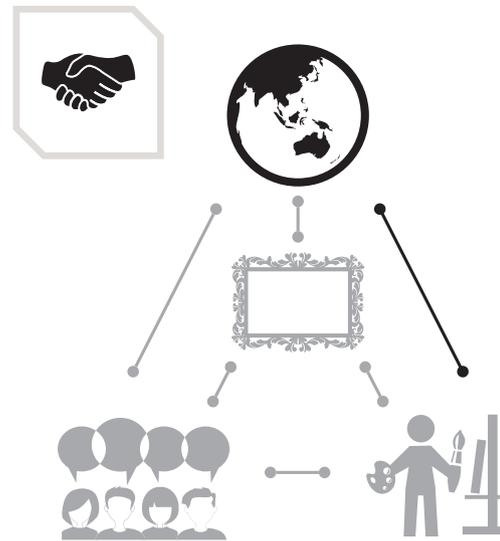
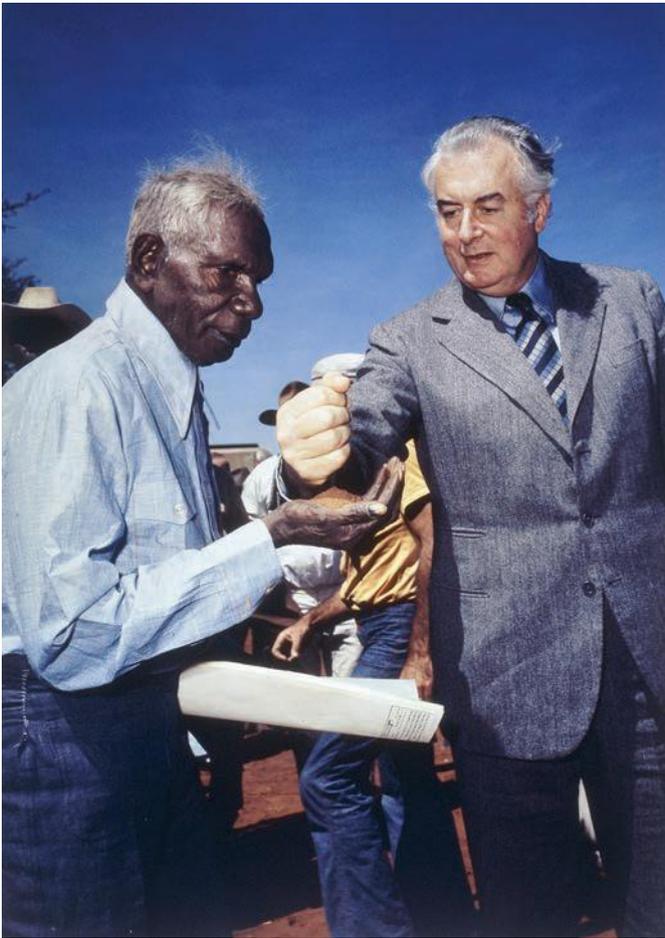


Figure 7.4 Mervyn Bishop, *Gough Whitlam Pouring Sand Into the Hands of Traditional Land Owner Vincent Lingiari*, 1975. Cibachrome photograph, 30.6 × 30.5 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Portraits as symbols of status

Many people have had their portrait recorded as a way of telling the world that they are wealthy or noble. Before the advent of photography, when a person had their portrait painted it signified that they were wealthy, having both the money to pay the artist and the leisure time to sit for the portrait. These **commissions** provided artists with valuable income, but also placed potential restrictions on them with regard to the veracity (truthfulness) of the representation. Commissioned portraits tend to be flattering, with reduced emphasis on the less attractive aspects of the subject's appearance or character.

Thomas Gainsborough was commissioned to create portraits for the aristocracy and the landed gentry in England during the eighteenth century. His artworks present the sitter or sitters at their best: elegantly dressed and surrounded by the trappings of wealth or influence. In his work *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, Gainsborough placed his subjects in the landscape, depicting Mr Andrews as 'master of all he surveys'. His land is rich and there is evidence of a successful harvest. Even his hunting dog looks up to him.

commission to order a work from an artist; also, in commercial galleries, the amount taken by the gallery owner for organising the sale of an artist's work

DID YOU KNOW?

Gainsborough's portrait of Mr and Mrs Andrews is incomplete. It is believed that a pheasant was meant to be included on the unfinished area on Mrs Andrews's lap, with the pheasant providing evidence of Mr Andrews's skills as a marksman and provider.



Figure 7.5 Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, 1748–49.
Oil on canvas, 70 × 119 cm. National Gallery, London.

Portraits as propaganda

History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.

Napoleon Bonaparte, French military and political leader

Portraits can be used not only to document history, but also to selectively record appearances or events. They can be used to prove a particular point of view, emphasising those aspects that the artist or patron feels to be important. The artwork, therefore, is intended to influence the feelings or beliefs of the viewer.

Many artworks that depict the French emperor Napoleon (1769–1821) functioned as propaganda pieces. Jacques-Louis David, in his epic painting *Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon I and Coronation of the Empress Josephine in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris on 2 December 1804* shown on the opposite page, created a work of art that had the sole purpose of enhancing the legend of Napoleon's nobility.

David's artwork is selective in its imagery and also distorts the truth of the event. Napoleon crowned himself emperor, but David elects to avoid the potential of this image to evoke notions of egotism. Instead, he depicts Napoleon crowning his empress. Behind Napoleon, David has depicted the emperor's parents who, in reality, disapproved of the ceremony and did not attend. David considered that it would enhance the image of the emperor if his parents were shown attending the event. In this way David attempted to defuse possible unrest among the citizens of Napoleon's empire.

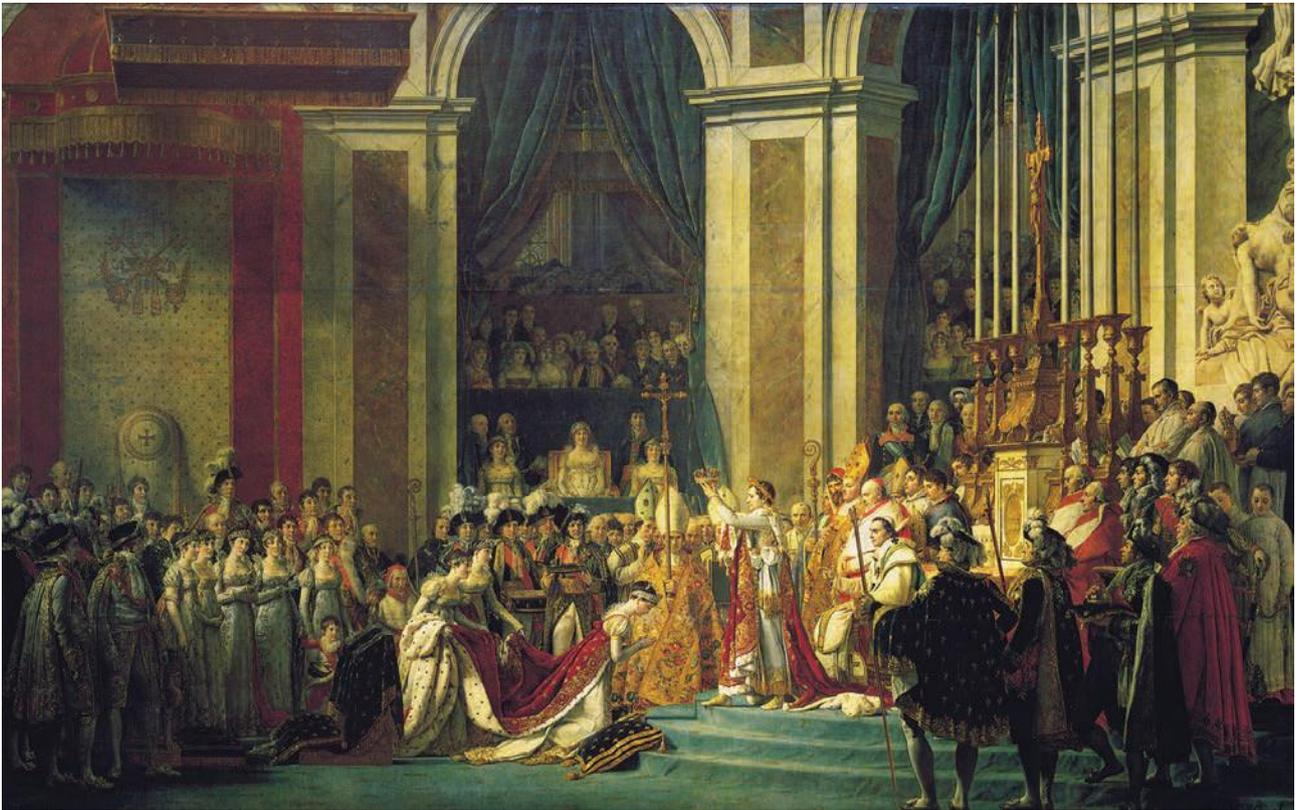
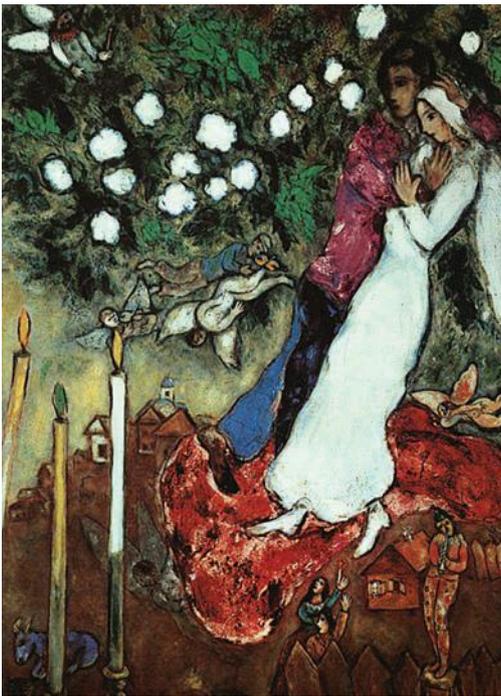


Figure 7.6 Jacques-Louis David, *Consecration of the Emperor Napoleon I and Coronation of the Empress Josephine in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris on 2 December 1804, 1806 and 1807*. Oil on canvas, 621 × 979 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Portraits as objects of affection or veneration



Portraits of loved ones can be completed as a means of showing love, respect and affection. Religious images can be used as items of adoration and veneration (displays of worship). When painting a religious icon, the artist may see the very act of painting as a form of prayer or an act of devotion.

The Russian/French artist Marc Chagall celebrated his wedding anniversary each year by creating a painted portrait of his beloved wife, Bella, and himself. His work expresses his love in a way that is both surreal and whimsical.

Figures defy gravity, floating and challenging the norms of pictorial space. Chagall said, 'If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head, almost nothing'. His 1938 work *Three Candles* shows the couple clutching each other fearfully. As Jews living in France at the onset of World War II, the couple had reason to feel afraid.

Figure 7.7 Marc Chagall, *The Three Candles*, 1938–40. Oil on canvas. Private collection. © Marc Chagall/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

Portraits as expressive or psychological studies



Many portraits, particularly those produced in the contemporary era, aim to describe the nature of the subject rather than their appearance. This can involve expressive use of materials and distortion of form to give an alternative version of the 'truth' of the person depicted.

The difficulty confronting Lucian Freud in painting a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II arises from the understanding that the audience will greet the work with a critical response if they consider the portrait to be unflattering. The audience know who the Queen is and will have seen her face in a vast array of media images and earlier portraits. Freud saw it as important to present more than the physical appearance of the Queen, and has used his paint expressively to evoke her fleshy, lined face. The intimate scale of the work (23 × 15 cm) demands close inspection from the viewer. The artist, however, retains a sense of scale by closely cropping the image and giving the background minimal space and detail.

7.3 Manipulation and distortion in portraiture

Manipulating setting

The setting for a portrait is the environment or context in which the subject is placed. This can denote ownership (of the objects or of the surrounding landscape), complement the personality of the sitter or establish a mood.

Manipulating adornment

The way in which a person presents themselves to the world, or is represented to the world by an artist, can be influenced greatly by what they are wearing. This can indicate the sitter's social status, profession (through a uniform or a judge's wig, for example) or taste.

Experimenting with distortion



Artists often change, distort or exaggerate colours and shapes in their artworks to alter the way in which the subject is represented. This can tell the audience about the sitter's personality or about their internal responses to the world.



Figure 7.8 Lucian Freud, *Her Majesty the Queen*, 2000–01. Oil on canvas, 23.5 × 15.2 cm. Presented by the artist to HM The Queen, The Royal Collection. © 2007, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Egon Schiele's artwork *Nude Self-portrait, Grimacing* (below) demonstrates clearly the way in which distortion of the human form can be used to convey emotion to the audience. The artist has revealed himself both physically and emotionally, creating in the twisted, oversized limbs an image of pain and anguish. There is no attempt to idealise the image or even, through the use of a background, locate the figure or give it context. The emotion is raw and exposed.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some of the earliest portraits that have survived are funeral portraits of the Egyptians who lived in the Fayum district during the first century. These portraits were painted on wooden boards and then tied onto the mummy's head.



STUDENT TASK 7.1

In this task you will look at some of the ways in which you, as an artist, can represent to the audience more about the sitter than just their physical appearance. In each of the task components you will create artworks using a **mediated** image of a person. When developing the artworks, consider how you can evoke a subjective response in the viewer through distortion and manipulation. You could elect to use computer graphics programs, such as Adobe Photoshop, to create these images. Think about the expressive use of line and shape as you work.

mediate to act or bring about through an intervening agency; in art, to source images and use them in artmaking

- 1 Select an image of a person. You could use your own photograph or you could source a copy of an image from a book or magazine. You could also use a copy of a famous art image, such as *Mona Lisa*, giving your images a postmodern edge. You will need four copies of the image you choose.
- 2 Using two copies of your selected image, create two collages. Each collage should have a different background. You could draw or paint the backgrounds or you could use images from magazines. Next to each collage, write briefly about how its background informs the way in which the person is represented.
- 3 Again, using two copies of the same image, make two artworks where the clothing, jewellery or other adornments change the way in which the subject is represented. Provide brief written explanations of the decisions you have made.

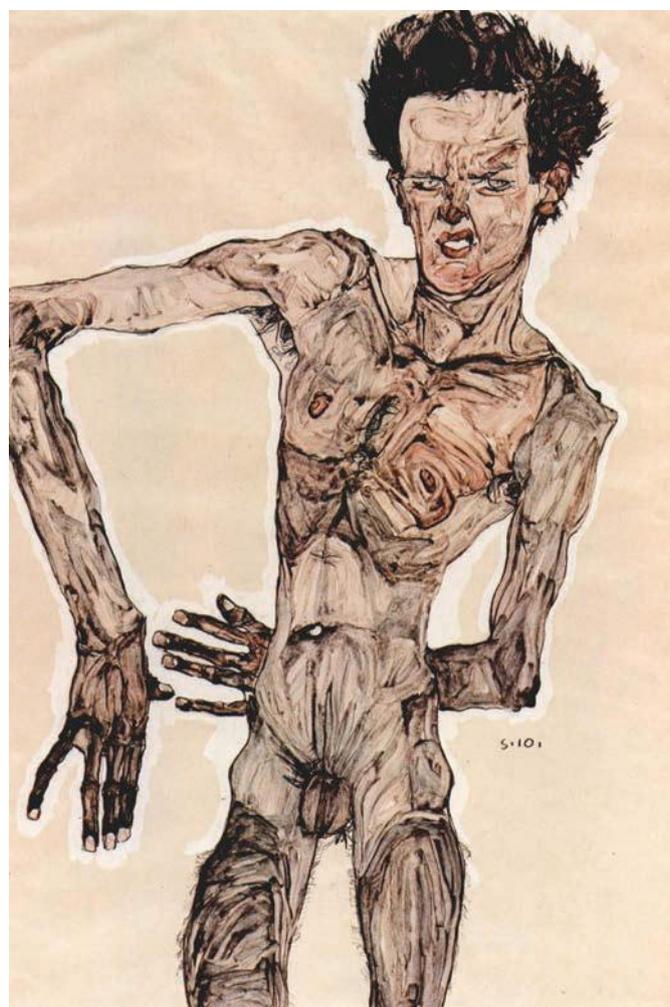
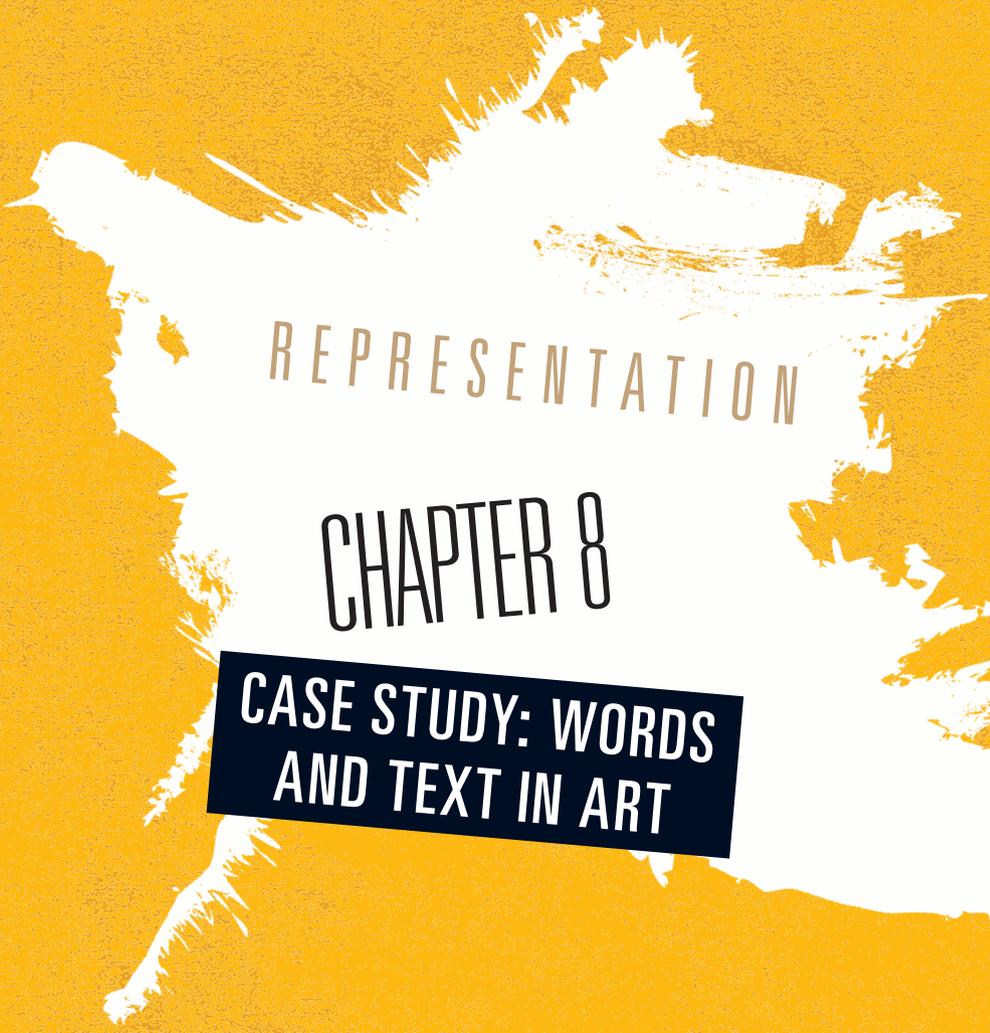


Figure 7.9 Egon Schiele, *Nude Self-portrait, Grimacing*, 1910. Pencil, watercolour and gouache, 55.8 × 36.9 cm. Courtesy Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Representation in artmaking refers to what is shown to the viewer of an artwork, either as subject matter or as an object. It is not just concerned with what is presented, but also with how the artist has chosen to present it to the viewer.
- The human form has been the most prevalent subject for artmaking throughout time. It is used as a portrait image and also as a means of expressing themes and ideas.
- As an artist you can employ a variety of means to make your artworks tell the audience more than what a person looks like. Through the use of structural and subjective manipulations, you can describe both the personality and psychology of your subject.



REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER 8

**CASE STUDY: WORDS
AND TEXT IN ART**

8.1 The power of words in art

A word is dead when it's been said, some say. I say it just begins to live that day.

Emily Dickinson, poet 1830–1886

In this chapter we will explore representations in artmaking and consider how artists have creatively and effectively used text and letters in the development of subject matter and artworks. Traditionally, representation in art has focused on the visual image. In contemporary artmaking there has been a significant shift to the use of text in artworks and as artworks. Text or letters can be used as a design element in artworks, or it can be used more specifically as a direct way of informing an audience about the intent of an artwork.

Of course, through their titles all works use text. Exhibited works include **citations** that tell the audience what the artwork is called and often, through that title, what the artist hopes it will convey to the audience. This text can change dramatically the way in which an artwork is represented to the viewer. Andres Serrano's photographic work *Piss Christ* (1987), for example, might have caused little offence without its provocative title and the additional list of the materials Serrano used. The work consists of a small plastic crucifix that is submerged in a glass of the artist's urine. Some people accused Serrano of blasphemy, while others applauded it as an expression of artistic freedom.

The inclusion of words in a work of art can allow for direct, unambiguous (clear-cut) communication of meaning. It can also create a **duality** of representation. The viewer of an artwork expects to engage with pictorial conventions and with visual symbolism.

With the written word there is a different, more precise form of **codification**. In the Western tradition we expect to read text from left to right and down the page. When words are included within an artwork, we intuitively begin to read the painting in the same way.

Text is much more explicit than signs and symbols. Using letters or words in an artwork physically changes the way a work is viewed and understood. When viewing a visual image the audience constructs an understanding of the message that the artist has communicated. When words are used it is not the visual appearance of the text that sends a clear message to the viewer. Instead, it is the way that the letters and words are arranged; for example, in a sentence. When using text, the artist directly connects with the audience by using language. In this way the artist creates a literal link between representation and meaning.

The use of text or letters in an abstract artwork has a different meaning. In a work that does not attempt to **mimetically** represent objects from the world, the words and/or letters in the work assume a more concrete role than the abstract shapes in the work. In such a work, the meaning of the text becomes the recognisable object.

citation the information provided with an artwork that is on display in a gallery or a publication that informs the viewer of details about the artwork, such as the artist's name, the artwork's title and the year of its production

duality a condition where there are two states or parts that are opposed to each other

codification the act of arranging laws, rules or codes of behaviour into an organised system



mimetic imitating or mimicking

When did the visual arts become so encrusted with words? ... this whole dense verbal screen, like a mass of aggressive kudzu through which the visual tries to peep ... Which words help, and which words hinder, the making and experiencing of art? (Barnes 2011)

The statement by Barnes above may seem obvious, but it does reinforce the fact that text in artworks never loses its essence as a symbol of written language.

The viewer initially searches for the meaning of the text in an artwork. This is even the case when letters are randomly used in a work of art, as shape and form rather than as words that clearly indicate meaning. The ways in which the text or letters are presented give them a different meaning altogether.

Words have both **denotations** and **connotations**.

The denotations are the direct or explicit meanings, while the connotations are the subjective or emotional associations that the words imply.

Some words, particularly in the context of an art exhibition, can be employed for their power to shock or challenge. Words that are considered obscene, blasphemous or racist are often used in this way.

Artists who have used 'loaded' words in their art include Tracey Emin, such as her work *Mad Tracey from Margate*, and Gordon Bennett, such as his work *History Painting (Excuse My Language)*.

Another way in which text differs from mimetic images as a form of representation is that text is culturally specific. We can only read text that is written in a language that we understand and uses letter forms that we recognise. This can mean that when an artwork is placed in another cultural setting it will be understood differently by that audience.

For example, most Australians cannot read Chinese calligraphic script. We respond to it as a visual image – considering the shapes, patterns and rhythm that we no longer notice in modern Latin-based English script – but we cannot read it. Examples of artists who use non-English text in their works are Shirin Neshat in her work *Speechless*, Zhang Huan in his work *Family Tree* and Wenda Gu in his work *Forest of Steles: Retranslation and Rewriting of Tang Poetry*. Artist Xu Bing, whose works include *A Book From the Sky*, takes this a step further, creating works that appear to use traditional Chinese calligraphy but the symbols are, in fact, without meaning.

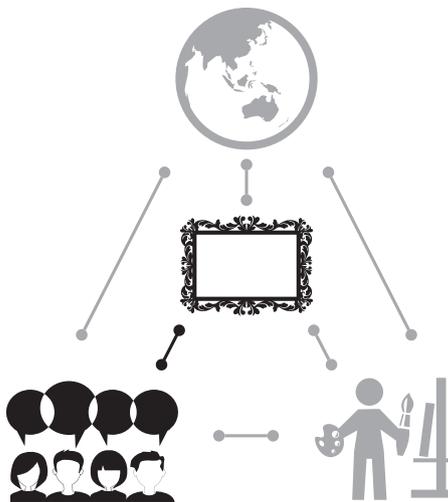
denotation the most specific or literal meaning of a word, as opposed to its connotation

connotation a suggested additional meaning for a word or phrase apart from the explicit meaning



DID YOU KNOW?

ASCII text art programs can turn digital images into a pattern of letters, numbers and symbols. Various internet sites are dedicated to the creation of *these* images. If you type 'ASCII art' into a search engine you will be directed to a number of sites that present art that has been reinterpreted in this style.





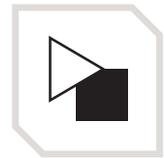
STUDENT TASK 8.1

In this task you will create a poem using an existing text and use it to develop a visual image. Follow the steps listed below.

- 1 Take a pair of scissors and a newspaper, magazine or other item that displays text.
- 2 Decide on approximately how many words you want your poem to consist of. Choose a piece of text that has approximately that number of words.
- 3 Cut out the text. Then carefully cut out the words or lines that make up the text and put them in a bag.
- 4 Shake the bag gently. Then take out each cutting, one after the other.
- 5 Using the words or lines in the order in which they left the bag, construct your poem.
- 6 Now develop a visual image that complements your poem.

8.2 Stanley Donwood: artist and graphic designer

In the cover artwork for the Radiohead CD *Hail to the Thief*, Stanley Donwood used text to represent landscape, aerial photography and road maps. You can view the album cover online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks. He set text within a grid, changing the scale and colour to work within the format. Donwood wanted the text to be read, keeping it 'right way up' and clearly defined. He also presented the text in a way that encourages the audience to see it as a number of lists in columns. The words read like media grabs. They are **didactic** and represent not just this media element, but also the multifaceted urban landscape in which they are placed.



Donwood has had a long artistic involvement with Radiohead, designing artworks for many of the band's CD covers and posters. He works closely with the band, using their music and lyrics as inspiration for his work. He aims to represent visually the 'feel' of the music.

didactic tending to give instruction or advice, sometimes when it is not welcome or needed

Donwood described this process in an interview with Nigel Dennis:

I listen to a record a lot whilst it's being made and I'm making the artwork that will accompany it. It's hard to make art in silence. Well, it is for me, anyway, and the music has a pronounced influence on how the images end up, the sort of energy used to create them, composition and so on. My hope when making artwork for a record is to create something that weirdly enhances the music, something that affects the way you hear it. (Dennis 2007)

Donwood's art for Radiohead has also affected the work of the band, including the sometimes **apocalyptic** lyrics of Thom Yorke, the lead vocalist: '... Stanley's artwork and short stories have permeated Radiohead culture, providing reference points for Thom Yorke's lyrics and the sort of introspective moods you might assume of the band'. (Philpott 2000)

apocalyptic warning about or predicting a disastrous future or outcome; imagery that presents a negative future scenario

As a designer, Donwood needs to consider how his art can be used for a specific purpose. The most immediate restrictions for CD artwork design relate to issues of scale. The image must work on a small scale and within a square format. As a product for sale, it must be easily recognised and clearly labelled. As well as the artwork itself, cover designs convey information through typography, which is the appearance of printed characters.

Donwood uses his art to convey a message to his audience. In his design for *Hail to the Thief*, the message is clear: the landscape appears to be damaged and the text gives a clue to the reasons for this damage. View the artwork from an **aerial perspective**. We can see that the black appears to be leaking from the land into the water.

In 2011, Donwood made a different use of text, collaborating with Radiohead to publish and distribute a free newspaper called *The Universal Sigh*. It contained artworks, poetry, prose and articles.

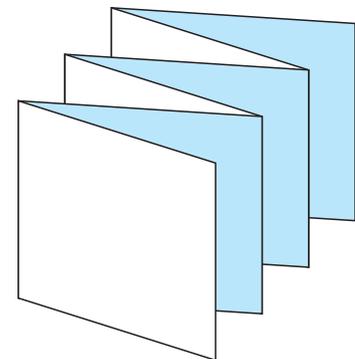
Donwood describes it as follows:

It was the biggest art project I'd ever engineered really. To persuade a lot of people that doing it was a good idea in the first place, and then following it up and making sure that it happened. I think it happened in 61 cities around the world in roughly the same 24-hour period. (Williams 2011)

As a further part of his practice as an artist, Donwood produces limited edition prints of his CD covers and other artworks. (A limited edition print is a print from an edition that consists of only a set number of copies of the print. Only a limited number of the prints have been made.) Donwood sees this as a process for altering the way in which his designs are represented to an audience: 'It's a way of getting pictures out in the way they should be seen; not as four-colour litho on cheap paper, but as real pieces of artwork that have a much greater visual impact' (AntiMusic website 2006). The printed version of Donwood's *Hail to the Thief* cover design has the title *Pacific Coast: White*. It is a nine-colour screenprint and was released in an edition of 200.



aerial perspective a bird's-eye view of a place or object; looking down from above



STUDENT TASK 8.2

Select an artwork from your developing body of work.

- 1 Think of how this artwork could be used to represent a piece of music.
- 2 How could the image be transformed into a cover for a CD for the music?
- 3 What restrictions would the shape, size and use of a CD cover place on your practice as an artist?
- 4 How could the ideas you developed for the design of the CD cover be developed into a body of work submission in the expressive form of designed objects?

8.3 Richard Tipping: poet and artist

Richard Tipping creates what are referred to as 'art signs' and 'word sculptures'. He describes himself as 'a poet who works in the artworld'. His 'artpoems' are described on his website (www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks) as '... a hybrid, made between word and image, between text and context, between verbal graphics and signs, a mix of poetry and art'.

Tipping uses text as the basis for his artworks. He often appropriates signs and images from everyday life. Informed by his practice as a poet, Tipping uses words in a way that is succinct, ironic and humorous. He recontextualises signage, often **subverting** its meaning or taking it off in **absurdist** directions.

Tipping uses words to represent concepts, and thus his work could be termed **conceptual**. His material practice is often simple, changing road signs or recreating them using the same materials as the original designer or manufacturer.

Because Tipping's signs are so graphic and easy to reproduce to any scale, it is easy to overlook the fact that they were, initially, designed to be site-specific. They have their strongest resonance (significance) when placed in the same setting as those objects they take as their starting point. When they replace the original signs, they encourage the audience to reconsider what those signs asked of them. Signs, by intent, are didactic.

They often tell the reader or viewer what to do. This can be in the form of an imperative: they are not asking people to do something; they are commanding a certain response. Signs also work on ease of recognition, using specific graphics and colours to create meaning. For instance, red is universally used to denote a negative direction, such as 'do not proceed' in the case of a 'stop' sign.



Figure 8.1 Richard Tipping, *Go*, 1998. Reflective tape on aluminium, 90 × 90 cm. Artist's collection.

DID YOU KNOW?

English **Pop artist** Richard Hamilton was known for his complex and colourful artworks. When asked to design a cover for the self-titled ninth album for The Beatles, he came up with a completely white cover with the words 'The Beatles' embossed onto it.

Hamilton suggested that this would stand out from other albums at the time. It did.

The album is often referred to as 'The White Album'.

subvert undermine or overthrow, often traditional beliefs or methods of working

absurdist the idea that the universe is without meaning or rational order and that human beings, in attempting to find a sense of order, will fail

conceptual coming from or belonging to the concepts, ideas or principles upon which something is based

Pop art an art movement that arose in the United States and Great Britain in the 1950s. Pop artists use mass reproduction techniques and popular images of cultural artefacts to make political statements about capitalist societies and mass consumption. It is an artform that can be readily understood by the masses

Tipping referred to the importance that letters and text have in our life and how they take on even more importance when placed in artworks when he said: 'Giving weight to words, and seeing letters as sculptural forms, opens up the way we make thought concrete'.



Figure 8.2 Richard Tipping, *3 Hour Barking*.



Figure 8.3 Richard Tipping, *Airpoet*.



Figure 8.4 Stop signs from (clockwise from top left) China, Germany, Canada and Thailand.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals specifies that the format for stop signs should be the same worldwide. All member countries of the European Union use the English word 'stop' on their stop signs.



Figure 8.5 Richard Tipping, *No Understanding*, 2001. Reflective tape on aluminium galvanised steel pole, metal base, 300 × 90 × 15 cm.

Tipping uses existing signs to represent different, more imaginative ideas; often ones that ask the viewer to contemplate concepts far less concrete than the original text. Street signage functions by being precise and unambiguous. Tipping changes this so that the viewer is asked to think and interpret.

Tipping also recognises that existing **design templates** for signage can give a duality of meaning to new images. The work can represent an idea, but continue also to have the 'trace' of the original graphic. For this reason, a positive message on a red sign can create visual confusion.

In his work *Thank You for Noticing This New Notice*, Tipping's text takes on a more sinister meaning, representing the idea of being under surveillance. While still presented in a humorous manner, the image has an edge that can disconcert the viewer. Tipping's work remains true to its strong conceptual base.

design template a plan or blueprint that acts as a model for the structure and general layout of further design pieces; patterns that can be followed to repeat an initial idea

Public signs entice us with their promises and infuriate us with their constant reminders of the rules. We ignore all of them but those we need. Every visual ploy is used to make us take notice, get interested and obey. This makes de-signing the language of the footpath and the road a rich art vehicle. (Tipping 2000)

Recent works by Tipping have made clearer use of his practice as a poet. For his exhibition 'Imagine Silence', Tipping commissioned the carving of his poems into stone, a theme he had used in earlier works, such as *Classical Dilemma* and *Sounding Silence*. The eight pieces in the series, through their materials, represent a sense of permanence and a seriousness of intent that is sometimes not aimed for in his street signs. Weighing in excess of 150 kilograms each, the pieces have the monumental scale and sombre appearance of headstones. The gravity of their appearance in some senses contradicts the **contemplative** qualities of the written word.



contemplative calm and thoughtful



I would like these poems to be seen and read as a kind of contemplation. The basalt crystals have an intense sculptural presence, giving the words a ground for being heard. They are so solid, so permanent, the words needed to be carefully chosen, placed and balanced. It has taken me more than fifteen years to write the poems, which are meant to work independently but also to gain from each other as a sequence, which can be read in any order. (Tipping 2000)

Figure 8.6 Richard Tipping, *Thank You for Noticing This New Notice*. Installed at New Farm Powerhouse as a permanent artwork.

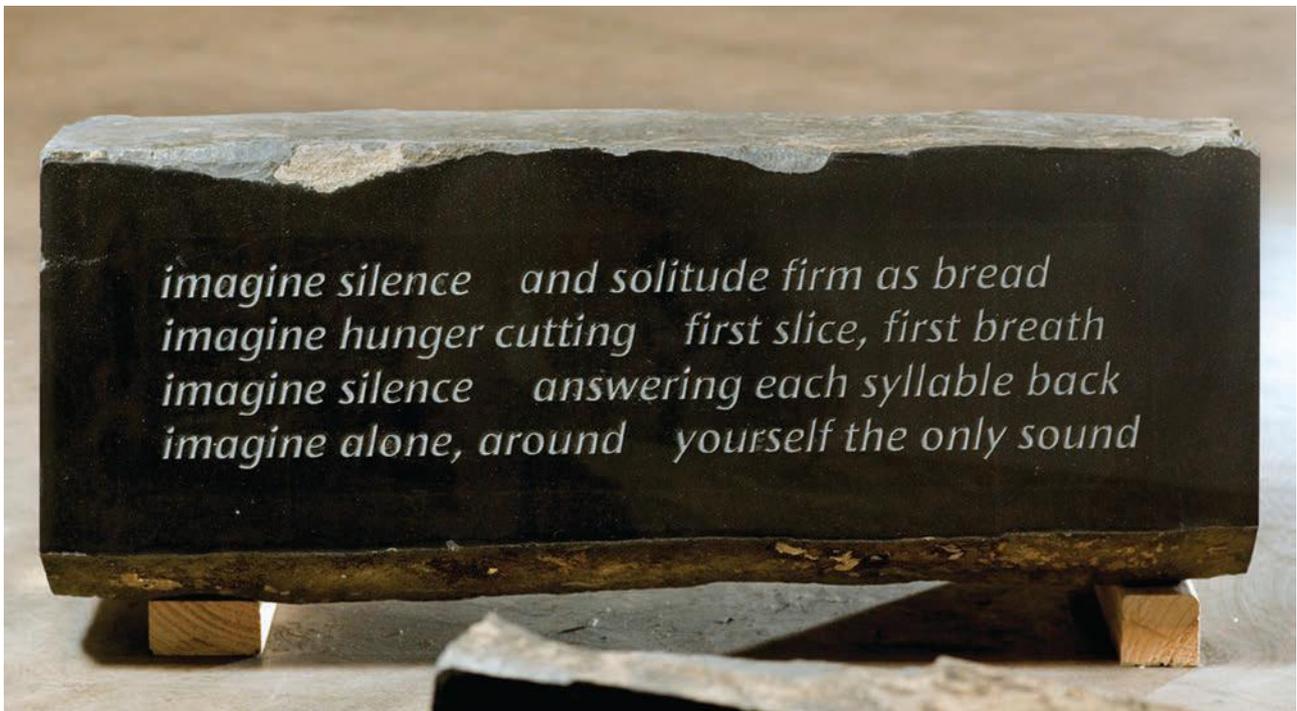


Figure 8.7 Richard Tipping, *Imagine Silence*, 2006. Basalt crystal block, 70 cm wide.



STUDENT TASK 8.3

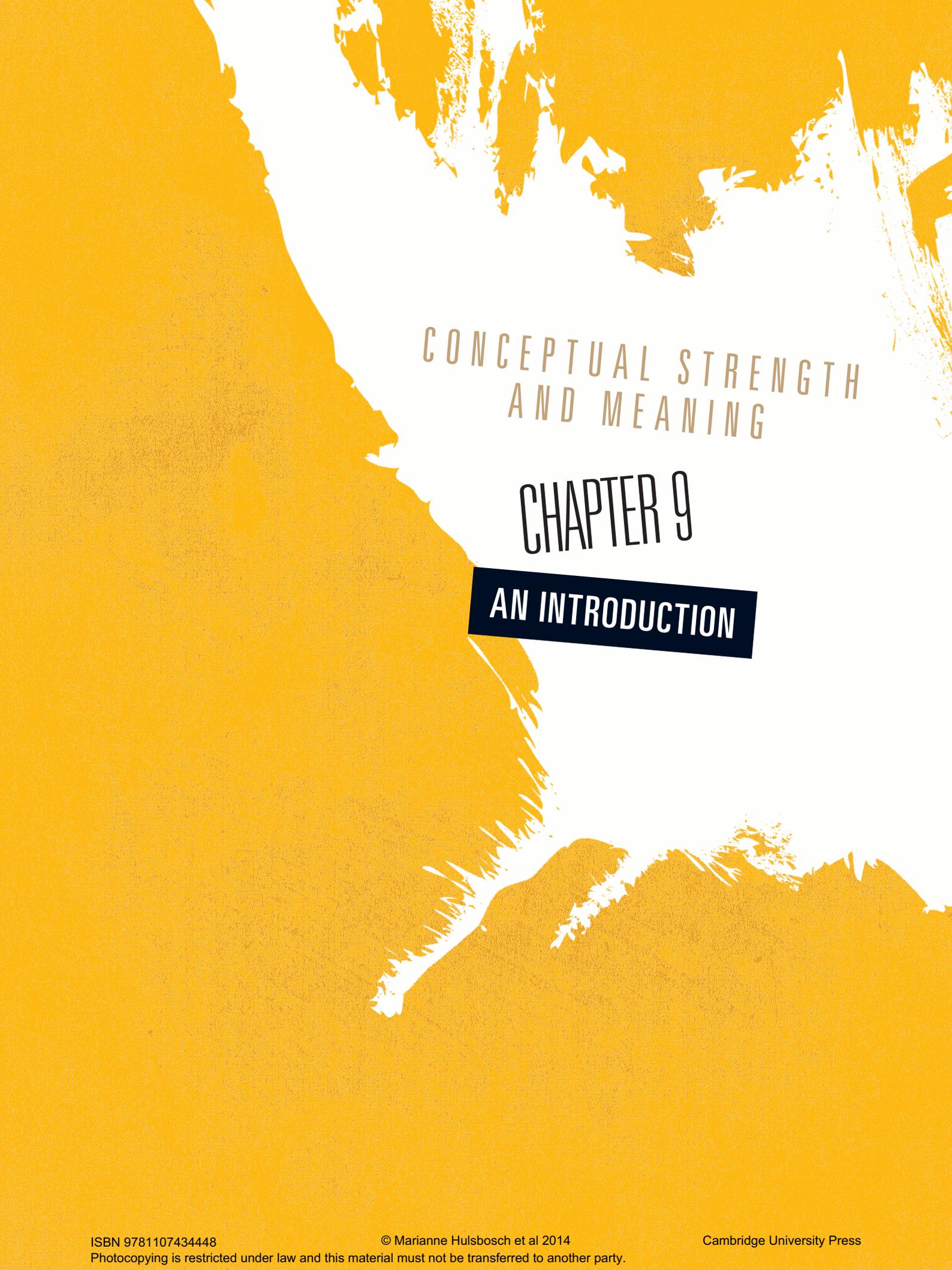
Use Tipping's *Imagine Silence* and Carlo Carrà's visual poem *Interventionist Demonstration* (viewable online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks) as inspiration to complete the following tasks.

- 1
 - a Write a short poem about yourself using no more than 40 words.
 - b Transfer the text to pieces of decorated cardboard.
 - c Assemble the pieces of cardboard to create a three-dimensional structure so it becomes a visual poem.
- 2 Select one of your peer's works. Write a 300-word critique of the work, taking into consideration its literal and visual aspects.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Text, as words and as letters, is often used by artists to directly represent their ideas to the viewer. Some artists use text as a visual element only, rather than to convey meaning.
- Some artists include text as an element in their practice, while others make artworks solely using text.
- The viewer responds to text differently than they do to the visual image, for it needs to be read rather than understood from a first impression.
- Many contemporary artists use text as a major component of their art practice.





CONCEPTUAL STRENGTH
AND MEANING

CHAPTER 9

AN INTRODUCTION

Those who do not want to imitate anything, produce nothing.

Salvador Dalí, painter 1904–1989

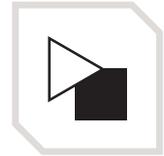
Conceptual strength and meaning in artmaking means considering not only what you are trying to do in your work but also what it is about. These are not necessarily the same thing. Conceptual strength shows the extent and depth of artistic ideas and concepts. Conceptual meaning relates to the power of an artwork to convey meaning to an audience, through the use of conceptual strength.

As an artist, it is important to consider what issues you are trying to explore in your work and what your work is about (conceptual strength) and how you communicate this (meaning). How coherently (systematically, logically and effectively) your visual image conveys that meaning to others will determine its success.

This chapter will look at what artists are trying to say and how they do that through their artmaking; how they achieve both conceptual strength and meaning in their works. It will explore the ways in which artists engage the audience through what the audience see and understand when they look at the work.

It will also look at how artworks can be interpreted through a critical examination of two artworks: *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder* by Nike Savvas and *Torana No. 4* by Ben Quilty.

Wherever possible, the chapter will consider how the artists themselves have explained their artistic intent.



9.1 Nike Savvas

What the audience brings to an artwork through their own experiences and background knowledge helps them to interpret what they see.

Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder is an installation of painted polystyrene balls, strung on nylon wire, and intermittently made to move by the use of electric fans. It was installed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2006 as part of the Balnaves Foundation Sculpture Project. At first the work appears to engage the audience on a purely sensory level, working with colour and movement in a manner similar to the **Op art** painters of the 1960s. However, there are clues to the many layers of meaning that inform the installation.

The images shown opposite are by the Op art artists Victor Vasarely and Jesús Soto. It is clear that this style of art has also inspired the work of Nike Savvas.

As the famed British artist Damien Hirst said: 'It's good to have a title that's not just one word. If you're gonna title it, you might as well try and say something.' The title *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder* creates a number of allusions for the audience. The suggestion of atoms – the most fundamental component of matter – reinforces the fact that this work, at a subjective level, can be reduced to its most basic unit: a repetition of spherical shapes. The title indicates a level of **figuration**, with the work referencing scientific models and simulations. The title also encourages the audience to feel warmly towards the work: to be full of love and full of wonder.



Figure 9.1 Australian artist Nike Savvas stands in her installation *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder*, 2005. Polystyrene, nylon wire, paint, electric fans. The work was installed at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney.

Op art a twentieth-century school of abstract art that uses geometric patterns and colour to create the illusion of movement; also known as optical art

figuration giving form to something abstract, especially by using human or animal figures

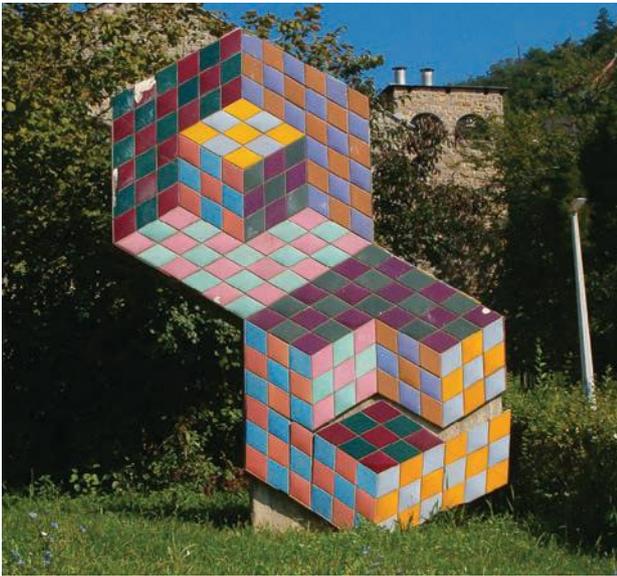


Figure 9.2 Victor Vasarely, an optical illusion in Pécs, Hungary.

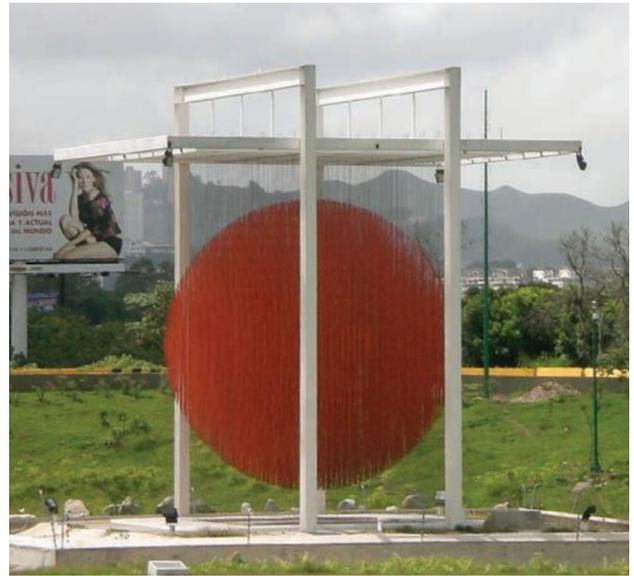
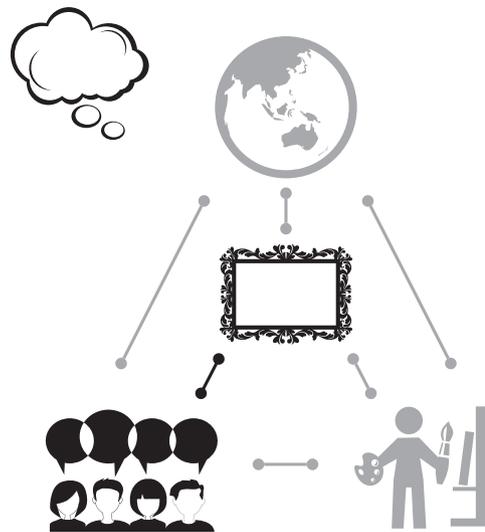


Figure 9.3 Jesús Soto, *Soto Sphere*, Caracas, Venezuela.

I'm up to my eyeballs in balls.

Nike Savvas, artist 2005



It is not necessary for the audience to identify in Savvas's work any objects or elements from the real world to gain enjoyment from it. Nor is it necessary for such references to exist for a work to have meaning. Peter Fischer, in his introduction to the book *Abstraction, Gesture, Ecriture*, describes the process of interpreting meaning in abstract art as follows:

Even though an abstract painting does not show immediately recognisable objects and situations from our real, visible world, it does convey meaning, like any other communicative statement. It creates the formal framework for its content, and that content consists of a network of references which the viewer reconstructs or recreates in an act of interpretation. (Bois 1999, p. 13)

Thus, abstract art does not show objects in the natural world. Instead, it uses colour and form to represent feelings, moods or concepts.

In discussing her work, Savvas indicates the level to which her practice is informed by a study of artists and artworks, and the different ways in which a viewer can respond to the work.

In interviews conducted at the time of the 2006 exhibition, Savvas indicated that the work can function as a landscape and be viewed almost in the same way as a painting: 'In London, you start becoming a little stir-crazy and start pining for the bush – you miss the smells and the sensations', she said. 'I wanted to create an **iconic** landscape 'painting', based on **Pointillism** – and here it is'.

Fischer does not consider abstract art to be depictions of objects from the natural world. Instead, he sees it as forms and shapes, as well as colours that represent feelings, moods or concepts.



iconic relating to or characteristic of somebody or something admired as an icon

Pointillism a late nineteenth-century style of painting in which a picture is constructed from dots of pure colour that blend, at a distance, into recognisable shapes and various colour tones

You view it like a painting. But it's nice to get up close for a different viewing position; it's very kind of galactical.

Nike Savvas, artist 2005

This is how Savvas describes how she views her work as an audience member:

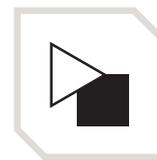
When you do stand back, like really far back, it flattens out and it all becomes quite tame, it becomes like a flat painting of the Australian desert. As you come in closer, you start becoming a lot more disorientated. So, there are a few viewing positions of this work, right up close, when you look through it, it just becomes another world. (Schofield 2006)

Just as with a single line drawn across a white page, we instinctively, subconsciously recognise in the colour arrangement of *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder* a reference to landscape. The work shows a definite horizon line, which is placed one-third from the 'top' of the work (mimicking the proportions of a conventional landscape painting). This serves to bring a reassuring order to the work. Both the composition and colours of the installation are intended to help create the illusion of a landscape.

Savvas's 'landscape' also reflects the sense of confusion that can be experienced in the work of landscape painters Fred Williams or William Robinson. In their works, multiple viewpoints and the absence of a horizon line challenge the **stereotypical** view of the landscape. Ryan Johnson (2003) describes this quality in Williams's artmaking as follows: '... perspectival logic breaks down in some areas of Williams's compositions, or entirely in the case of others, resulting in a literal 'unreadability' or disorientation'. The same can be said of Nike Savvas's *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder*, especially when viewed from close up, when it disorients the viewer.

Savvas also cites as an influence the work of the nineteenth-century artist Georges Seurat, and his Pointillist style.

stereotype popularly held belief about a type of person or a group of people that does not take into account individual differences



I was trying to recreate the shimmer of a Seurat painting, and it doubles up as the heat shimmer in the desert landscape. It's halfway between representational and abstract, halfway between painting and installation. (Higson 2006)

Savvas describes how further references and layers of meaning became apparent as planning and development of her installation proceeded:

The idea came originally from wanting to do a three-dimensional Seurat painting but the work has since transformed and morphed into something a lot, lot more than that. It kind of references Aboriginal dot painting, it references Byzantine churches. It's funky, psychedelic. It's cosmic. It's like, you know, the stars and the universe. It's molecular as well. It's a giant abacus. It just makes so many references. (Schofield 2006)



Figure 9.4 Nike Savvas, *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder*, 2005.
Courtesy of Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Photograph: John Brash.

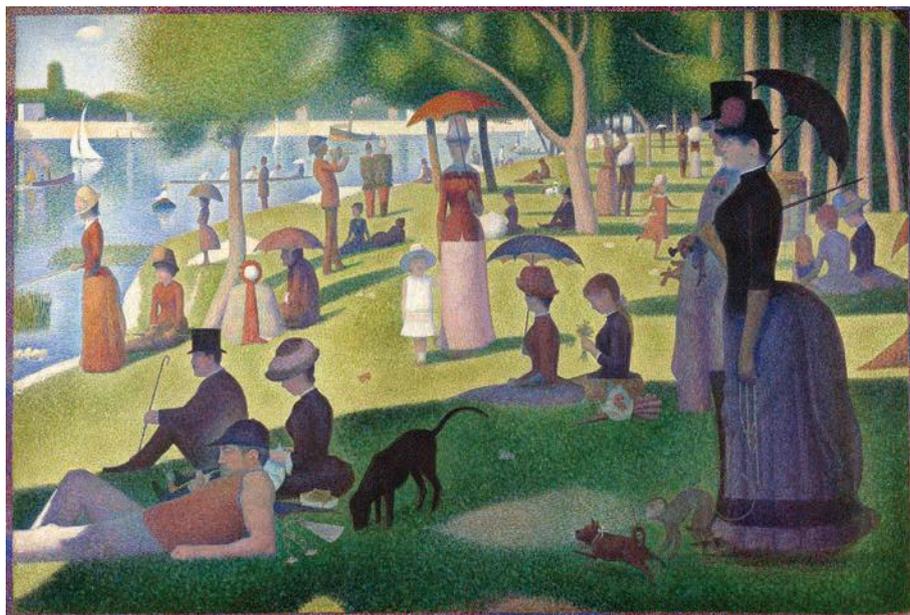


Figure 9.5 Georges Seurat, *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte*, 1884–1886.
Oil on canvas, 207.5 × 308.1 cm. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago.



STUDENT TASK 9.1

Your body of work must comply with the overall prescribed dimensions for HSC submitted artworks in Visual Arts Stage 6 in terms of overall limitations on size, weight, volume and duration. These limitations are described in the syllabus.

- 1 If you were to contemplate creating an installation similar to *Atomic: Full of Love, Full of Wonder* as your HSC body of work, what issues in terms of the syllabus's course prescriptions would you face?
- 2 By what means do you think you could best present your conceptual intent to the marker without breaking the rules set out in the syllabus?

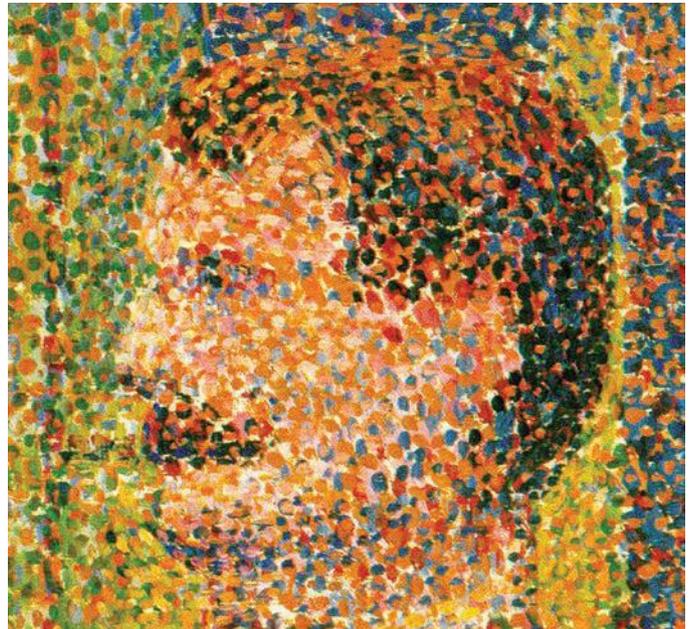


Figure 9.6 A detail of Georges Seurat, *The Side Show*, 1888. Oil on canvas, 101 × 150 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

9.2 Ben Quilty

I've had Valiants and Commodores but the Torana has become a bit of a favourite.

Ben Quilty, artist 2004

The critic John McDonald described Quilty as being:

... like a man who was once locked in a room for a year with a shovel, paint and canvas and told to prepare for an exhibition. Years later, he is still using the shovel, but with more dexterity than most artists with a brush. (Low 2007).

In doing so, McDonald was clearly making reference to the loose, **Expressionistic** paintwork Quilty uses to represent his subject matter. For Quilty, this 'quick and thick' style is an important part of his practice and also part of the meaning of the work itself. The idea for an artwork can be represented with great speed, allowing for an immediate, intuitive response.

Quilty compares his method of painting to aspects of the real world. In drawing a parallel between the subject matter of his work and the way in which it has been produced he said: 'I guess, in some way, it mirrors the attitude of the young male as well'. Quilty explains:

We used to go out and get into fights and drive like absolute maniacs and knock things down as we drove along and that application of paint represents those kinds of ideas in another way. (Low 2007)

Expressionism an artistic movement that flourished in Germany between 1905 and 1925 whose supporters often distorted colour and form and sought to represent feelings and moods rather than objective reality



Figure 9.7 Ben Quilty, *Torana No. 4*, 2003.
Oil on canvas, 120 x 120 cm. Jan Murphy Gallery.

In the artist statement about his Torana paintings, Quilty clearly explains his reasons for choosing the car as a symbol for life's experiences:

For us, initiation was performed inside a car. Beer in hand, we became valued members of society – and as the motor screamed, the dizziness of expectation awakened the adult in us.

These are part of a series of paintings of a car, a 1972 LJ Torana with a 3.3 litre blue motor, stage three head, extractors and cam, electronic ignition and a three-speed floor shifter: standard weapon for a young man's Australian suburban life.

The icon of Sydney's Western suburbs is a metaphor for the Western world. As the production line continues to make tanks and Toranas, we men behave badly and with conviction. The car is a fragile dimension of an Australian culture 'under siege'.



Figure 9.8 Holden LJ Torana.

At the same time, Quilty reminds us that his technique involves both spontaneity and control.

'People say how thick and free it is and gestural but the marks are put in the right spot', he says. 'Even though it has that appearance of being slapdash, the further back you get from the works the more realistic they become.' (Low 2007)

Quilty's painting is a representation of a car. More accurately, it is a 1972 Holden Torana. The fact that the work is of a specific make and model of car is a very important part of the conceptual strength of this particular work. The image is multilayered: it represents speed and freedom, and makes visual reference to a specific masculine subculture of suburban Australia.



DID YOU KNOW?

Quilty still owns the white Torana that was used as the subject for his work. It is housed in his workshop and is rarely driven. His paintings of the car are now worth far more than the actual vehicle. Quilty has his own website, containing images, essays and biographical information at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks.



Quilty likes to challenge people and he has quite a radical streak.

In talking about some of his self-portraits, Quilty reinforces the rebellious aspect of his practice: 'And people buy it. People buy these really ugly heads of me. Seriously, I make myself look as drunk and off my face as I can and it's collectable.' (Low 2007)

In 2011, having achieved a much higher profile after winning the Archibald Prize with his portrait of artist and mentor Margaret Olley, Quilty travelled to Afghanistan as an Official War Artist. The portraits he produced as a result reveal a more serious purpose. While still exploring the notion of 'rites of passage', these works are more profound and moving. Quilty has described his experience as follows:

These pictures will be far more serious. Afghanistan was a new awakening for me, a deepening of my thinking about life and humanity, and how the world's people relate to each other. (Hawley 2012)

Quilty's portrait of Air Commodore John Oddie is deeply respectful – conveying an immense sense of empathy and sorrow for what the subject has experienced. The artwork, and the others created as part of the exhibition 'Ben Quilty – After Afghanistan: Australian War Memorial Touring Exhibition', operates as a psychological exploration of the effects of war on those who have experienced it firsthand.

You can't take the experiences out of your head / You can't take the damages out of your heart.

Air Commodore John Oddie
(quoted in exhibition citation) 2012

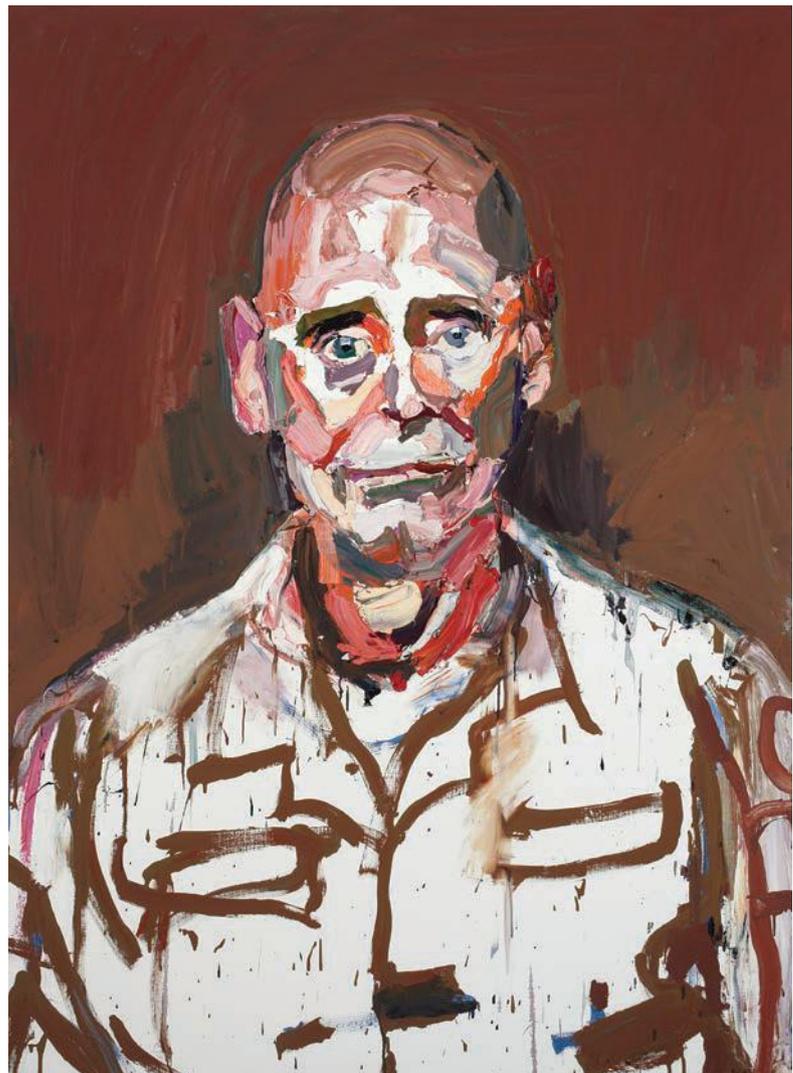


Figure 9.9 Ben Quilty,
Air Commodore John Oddie after Afghanistan, no. 3, 2012.
Oil on linen, After Afghanistan: Australian War Memorial
Touring Exhibition.



STUDENT TASK 9.2

'Barry Pearce, the head curator of Australian art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, championed Ben Quilty, a young Melbourne-based artist, as painting's "knight in shining armour". Quilty, the 29-year-old winner of the Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship, was described by Pearce as someone keeping painting's flame alive. Weeks later, after returning from the Melbourne Art Fair, Pearce remains disappointed about the health of painting.' (Low 2002)

- 1 Why do you think that Pearce would think of Quilty as a 'knight in shining armour'? What is it about Quilty's practice as a painter that could warrant such praise?
- 2 Using paper, maybe on a small scale on a page in your VAPD, experiment with the thick, painterly style of Quilty's work. Try to use the paint in a way that helps the work's surface texture give structure to the forms you are representing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ben Quilty studied Visual Arts for the Higher School Certificate. His body of work was included in the 1991 ARTEXPRESS exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW.

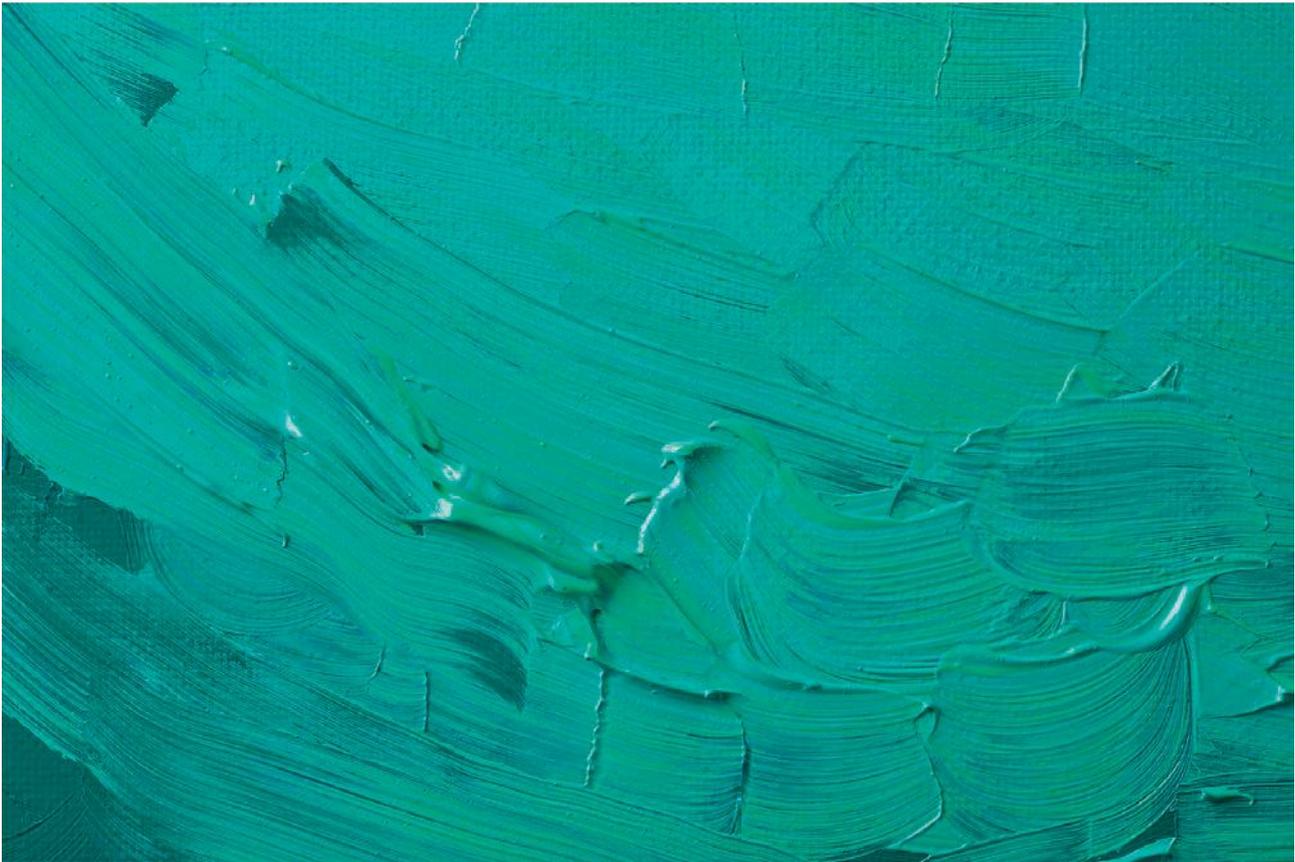
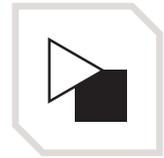
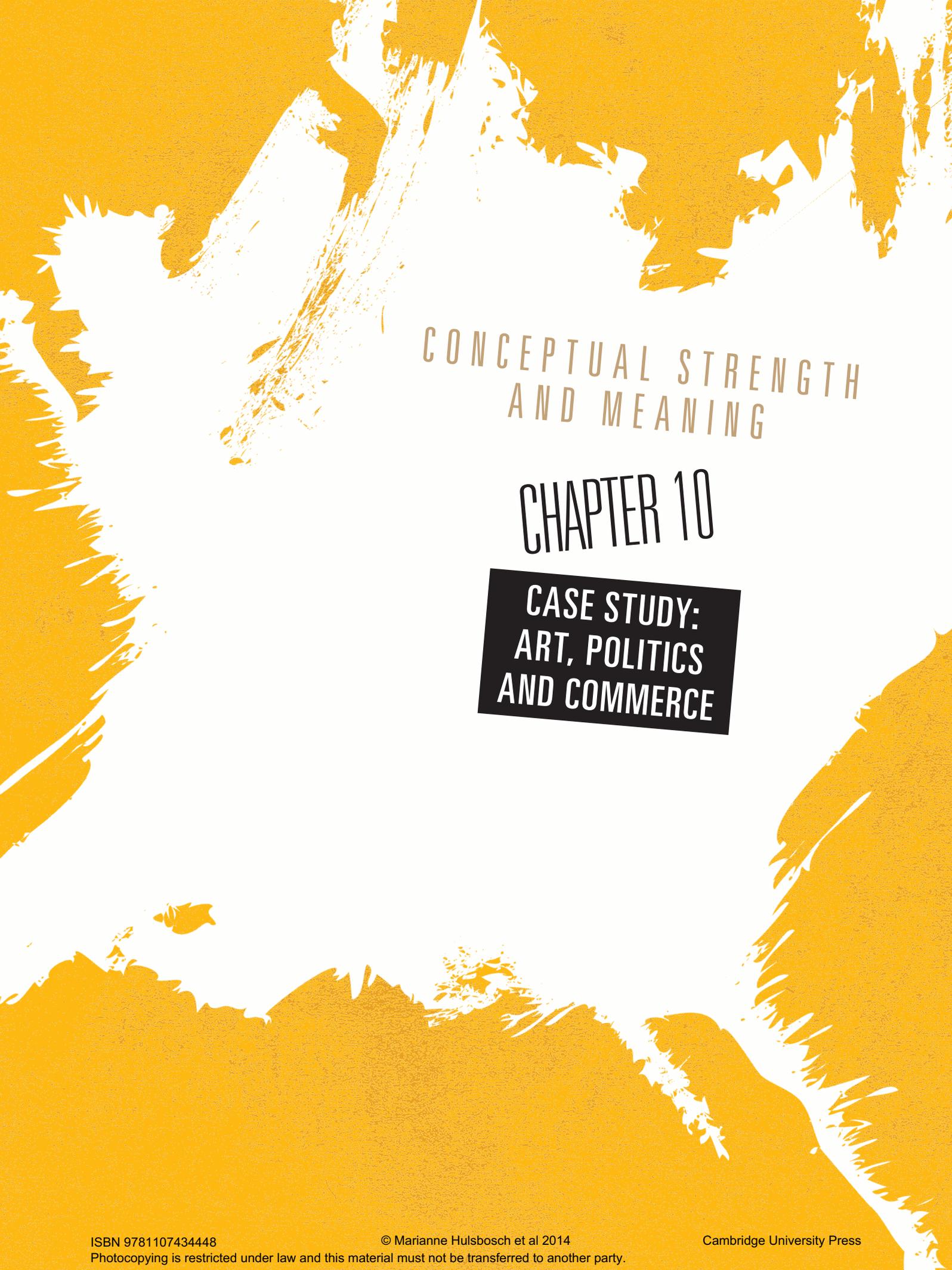


Figure 9.10 Example of a thick, painterly style.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Conceptual strength shows the extent and depth of artistic ideas and concepts. Conceptual meaning relates to the power of an artwork to convey meaning to an audience, through the use of conceptual strength.
- Artworks that are abstract (not depictions of objects in the natural world) can have conceptual strength. This strength can be developed with materials and techniques and by using colour, texture and form only.
- Artworks are often about more than what they physically represent. Both Savvas and Quilty have created artworks that, through their layers of meaning, sustain the interest of the audience on a number of levels.
- An artwork's title and the artist's statements about their practice often help the audience to decipher an artwork.
- Critical and historical writings about a work help the viewer to more fully understand the conceptual strength and meaning of the work.



CONCEPTUAL STRENGTH
AND MEANING

CHAPTER 10

**CASE STUDY:
ART, POLITICS
AND COMMERCE**

It is a widely accepted notion among painters that it does not matter what one paints as long as it is well painted. This is the essence of academicism. There is no such thing as good painting about nothing.

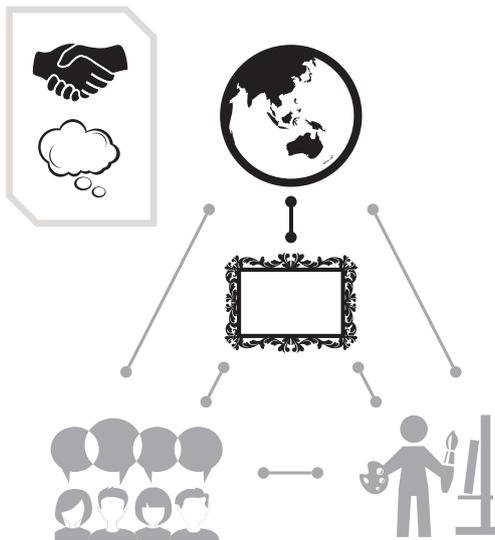
Mark Rothko, painter 1903–1970

In this chapter we will study two very different series of student artworks, those by Carmel Murtagh-Ralph and Rachel Symons. We will look at how these students developed conceptual strength and **conceptual meaning** in their work, and how they achieved a sense of **coherence**.

conceptual meaning the power of an artwork to convey meaning to an audience, through the use of conceptual strength

coherence clear, logical and consistent connections between parts

10.1 Art and politics



Carmel Murtagh-Ralph, in her series *Dreaming Possum Dreaming*, has chosen a strong personal and political viewpoint for her artmaking. The work has a strong narrative quality, successfully blending the personal and the general in both concept and imagery.

To analyse Carmel's work, and to recognise its layers of meaning, it is not necessary to agree with the political statements that she makes. Rather, it is important to determine how she makes these statements and how she controls the impact they will have on an audience.

In the first panel, Carmel looks at the way in which issues of dispossession and displacement have affected the **Indigenous** people in her home town of Kempsey. She presents the stereotypical, negative images that the media conveys when reporting on Indigenous people. The composition of the work, with its fragmented imagery and short snippets of text, echoes the sense of confusion and incompleteness felt by the Indigenous people. The text varies between didactic slogans and quotes from the local media and is an integral aesthetic component of the work, layered throughout the visual imagery. It complements, through colour and scale, the representation of an Indigenous child who stares solemnly at the audience.

Indigenous relating to people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and are accepted as such by the community in which they live

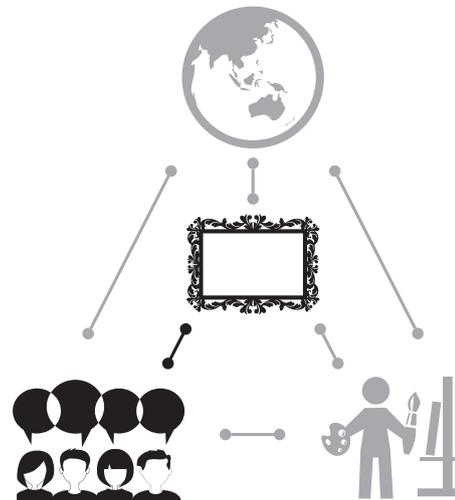




Figure 10.1 Carmel Murtagh-Ralph, student, *Dreaming Possum Dreaming*, 2000. Three postcards with box: computer graphics, Perspex, timber boxes, electrical circuitry, paper, 88 × 66 × 20 cm. Collection Department of Education and Training, Sydney.

The first panel remains backlit at all times, symbolising the clear exposure within the media and the community of the problems facing Indigenous people.

The second panel furthers the narrative, and introduces a wider perspective to the issues. Carmel has included the obvious image of former Prime Minister John Howard, symbolising the political aspects of the plight of Indigenous people. Included also is the representation of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, referencing Sydney and the Walk for Reconciliation that took place there in May 2000. Carmel participated in the walk and has used her own photographs in this artwork. The use of text in the second panel is more prescriptive: it has the qualities of a poster in demanding some form of action. It relates, in its directness, to works such as *Dispossessed*, a poster for Garage Graphix by Alice Hinton-Bateup.

Like the first panel, the image in the second panel is backlit, but in this instance with a flickering light. This effect symbolises the fading hope that something positive will be done for the Indigenous people of Australia. In the *Education Kit for Artexpress 2001* published by the NSW Department of Education and Training, Carmel describes this flickering backlight as, '... revealing the hopes of the people's movement for reconciliation short-circuited by political intransigence [inflexibility]'.

The third and final panel again blends the personal and the public. The artwork contains representations of four generations of one Aboriginal family. They include Jimmy Djungarrayi; Djungarrayi's son, artist Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri; Tjapaltjarri's daughter, artist Michelle Possum Nungurayi; and Nungurayi's five children. It is through her association with members of this family that Carmel gained access to images (including her own photographs of the children) and information about the older members of the family. The family allowed her to appropriate Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's paintings for her work.

In this third artwork, there is no backlighting. A frayed electrical cord hangs from the box for this panel, symbolising the failure of the government to achieve reconciliation with the Indigenous people. In the *Education Kit for Artexpress 2001*, Carmel describes

this lack of illumination: 'The call for a treaty and the incompleteness of this country's quest for reconciliation is emphasised by the fact that the wiring does not allow the images to shine through for Michelle's family or for Australia'.

Each panel has an electrical cord that carries the tag of an electrician, certifying that the circuitry is safe or, in the case of the third panel, unsafe. This gives the false impression that the artist has circumvented the Course Prescription. This adds another level of symbolism to the work but is also a conceit (artistic device). The Course Prescriptions for HSC submitted works cautions students that any submission that includes a high voltage electrical current must be inspected for electrical safety. Students must ensure that they note this down in their diary and their final submission must carry a certificate for electrical safety.



Figure 10.2 Stamp featuring Jimmy Djungarrayi.



Figure 10.3 Former prime minister John Howard.



Figure 10.4 'The Art of Islam' exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

The final component in Carmel's series was a small wall shelf holding postcards. These are based on the third work in the series, and were available for the audience to take, with the request that they send them to the Prime Minister or their local member of parliament. Through this process, Carmel was hoping that her work could become a direct catalyst for change.

Carmel's work operates on a number of levels to create conceptual strength and meaning. She has explored both personal and political issues through the manipulation of text and materials.



STUDENT TASK 10.1

Below left is an image used to promote the 'The Art of Islam' exhibition held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Previously the objects included in the exhibition would have been shown in a museum. Now they are displayed in an art gallery. Why did this change take place? In a 500-word essay explore the reasons why Australian society now has a different view of objects from other cultural backgrounds.

DID YOU KNOW?

Jimmy Djungarrayi is more widely known as 'One Pound Jimmy'. His image, from a 1935 photograph by Roy Dunston, was used on two Australian stamps issued in the 1950s. Djungarrayi is not named on the stamp. Rather, he is referred to as 'Aborigine'. His face, though not his name, became very well known. It is estimated that as many as 85 million 'Aborigine' stamps were sold.

Reko Rennie has created images incorporating a spray stencil version of the stamp for his artwork *Rekospective* in 2011.

10.2 Art and commerce

We used to build civilizations. Now we build shopping malls.

Bill Bryson, writer 2006

There has always been a strong relationship between art and commerce. Art is, for the most part, a commodity – something that can be bought and sold. The media reports regularly on the sale of artworks, particularly when record prices are achieved. Galleries exist not just to display artwork, but also to sell it to customers.

Artists have also recognised that the world of advertising and product design can be a rich source of imagery and inspiration. In the 1960s, US Pop artist Andy Warhol produced artworks based on common consumer products, including Coca-Cola bottles. In his work *Fountain*, artist Marcel Duchamp encouraged the audience to look beyond the visual image to the underlying concept. Warhol challenged the audience in a similar manner and forced people to view such ordinary items as soup cans in a different light. Duchamp made the following comment about Warhol's art practice:

If you take a Campbell's Soup can and repeat it fifty times, you are not interested in the retinal image. What interests you is the concept of putting fifty Campbell's Soup cans on a canvas. (Constable 1964)

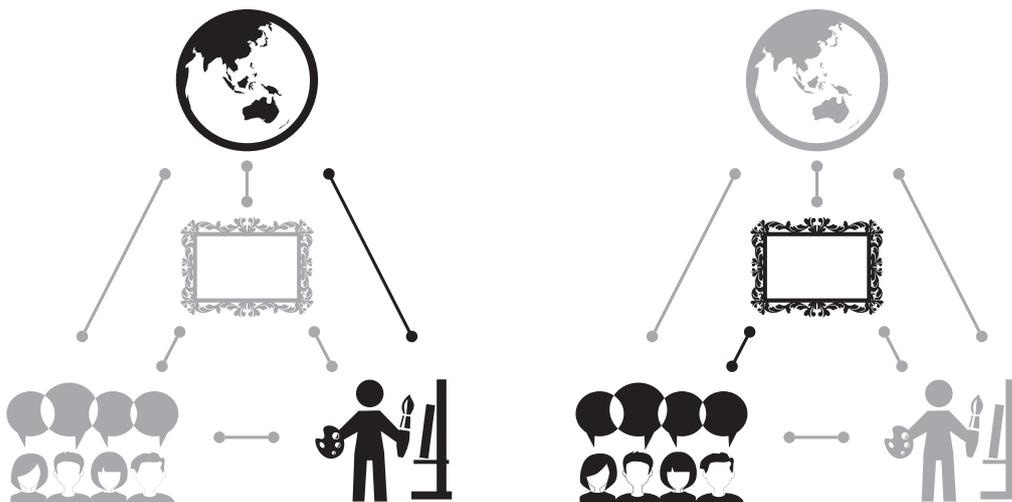
Warhol showed that he recognised the close links between art, retailing and consumerism when he said:

All department stores will become museums and all museums will become department stores.
(Twitchell 2004)



Figure 10.5 Andy Warhol, *Brillo Box*, 1964. Plywood, 43.2 x 43.2 x 35.6 cm. (At left). Pontus Hultén, [copies of] *Brillo Box*, 1990. (At right).

When Warhol made art out of everyday commodities, he forced his audience to look at the commercial world in new ways. He was not necessarily asking them to see beauty in his Brillo boxes, but rather to look at them afresh.



Liz Jobey refers to the way in which shopping and **curatorial** selection for an exhibition work on the same principles as one another:

curator someone who prepares and mounts an exhibition

DID YOU KNOW?

Brillo is the brand name of a range of US household cleaning products.

In some ways, putting together an exhibition must be a bit like shopping. You make a wish list, you find out where you can get the items on it, you check the prices to see if you can afford them, then you acquire those you can, and work out where to put them to best effect. (Jobey 2003)

The graffiti artist Banksy has taken his art out of the commercial system and made his reputation by painting onto walls of buildings in the community. He is disdainful of the way in which art is bought and sold, saying:



It's all gear at the end of the day. Nine times out of ten, people will buy your work because it goes with the colour scheme in the kitchen and bathroom. It's shopping. (Arendt 2004)

Banksy's work *Sale Ends Today* showcased the ultimate consumer experience – a shopping sale – as a deity to be worshipped. Another of his controversial works, *Material Jesus*, showed a crucified Christ with shopping bags.



Figure 10.6 Banksy, *Shop Until You Drop*, Mayfair, London.



Figure 10.7 Banksy's *Flower Thrower* on a wall in the disputed Palestinian territories, Bethlehem.

DID YOU KNOW?

Banksy's political statements about the ethics and values of modern culture, presented in the postmodern artform of graffiti, have now become part of mainstream art consumerism. His work currently fetches high prices on the international art market. In 2008, one of Banksy's works entitled *Keep it Spotless* sold for \$1 870 000 in New York.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1965, a group of Pop artists (including Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns and Claes Oldenburg) collaborated to create an installation entitled *American Supermarket*. The installation looked like a supermarket but functioned as a gallery. All its contents were artworks that appropriated mass-produced consumer items.

Figure 10.8
Anti-consumerist stencil art.

Shopping is increasingly being conducted online, eliminating the need for the customer to visit stores and engage in the traditional discourse with merchants. Money, in common with the store itself, becomes a virtual commodity.

Online stores seek to provide the purchaser with some sense of familiarity. The web designer must allow the user to feel as if they are shopping in a store, so they incorporate the understood rituals of shopping. This often includes the use of a shopping cart and phrases such as 'proceed to checkout'.

In her work *Shopping*, Year 12 student Rachel Symons has taken the image of the supermarket trolley as a basis for her artmaking. She has looked not at glamorous high-end retail shopping, but at the stresses of everyday supermarket shopping.



Symons examines the anguish that can be provoked by the hype of advertising, by **product placement** and by the way that consumers are encouraged to add endless items to their supermarket trolley. Her work considers the way in which the shopper is controlled by the environment, as suggested by US humorist and author Erma Bombeck: 'The odds of going to the store for a loaf of bread and coming out with only a loaf of bread are three billion to one.'

product placement a marketing strategy that involves placing a product in a way that encourages consumers to buy the product

Rachel's technique is loose and expressive. Her paintings retain evidence of the quick, **schematic** drawings that underscore her ideas. She ignores or subverts the rules of pictorial perspective, creating images that remain 'off kilter' and slightly disorienting. Her palette is garish, with flesh sometimes painted with a greenish pallor that emphasises the queasiness of the shopper. The imagery in Rachel's body of work is **surrealistic**, designed to symbolise the anguish of the shopper. In the top panel, the shopper spews up the images of consumerism: actual packaging and recreations of fruit and vegetables. This spreads across the bottom section of the artwork and breaks the frame. Its 'realness', including the painted minced meat, further confronts the viewer.

schematic a diagram that shows the basic form or layout of something

Surrealism a twentieth-century movement in art and literature that tried to represent the subconscious mind by creating fantastic imagery and juxtaposing elements that seem to contradict each other; literally means 'super-real'

Rachel's image of the devilish child riding in the supermarket trolley symbolises the experience of parents with demanding, tantrum-throwing children in the supermarket. With its grasping hands, the child becomes the central element in the artwork, reflecting the way in which it commands attention from its parent. The woman in Rachel's artworks is based on sketches of her mother. Throughout the series of artworks the woman remains an image of a harried, reluctant shopper.

This is the postmodern desert inhabited by people who are, in effect, consuming themselves in the form of images and abstractions through which their desires, sense of identity, and memories are replicated and then sold back to them as products.

Larry McCaffery, literary critic 1991

Rachel has achieved a high level of conceptual strength and meaning in her work. Each individual panel informs the others, adding to the narrative and to the complexity of the work. Rachel uses her materials expressively to support her artistic intent.



STUDENT TASK 10.2

Today, it seems that art is inextricably linked to commerce. Art can be about commerce and can also hold commercial value. Consider the artwork *Iris* by Vincent van Gogh shown opposite. When Australian Alan Bond purchased this painting in 1987 he paid the almighty sum of US\$49 million. Now it is owned by the Getty Museum in California. Using the internet and additional articles, write a 500-word essay about the commercial value of this work. Consider what this work was worth when Vincent van Gogh painted it. Why did Alan Bond pay so much money for it? What do you think are the reasons this work is deemed to be so valuable today?



Figure 10.9 Rachel Symons, student, *Shopping*, 2000. Paint, felt pen, collage, assemblage on canvas, each 110 × 825 cm. Artist's collection.

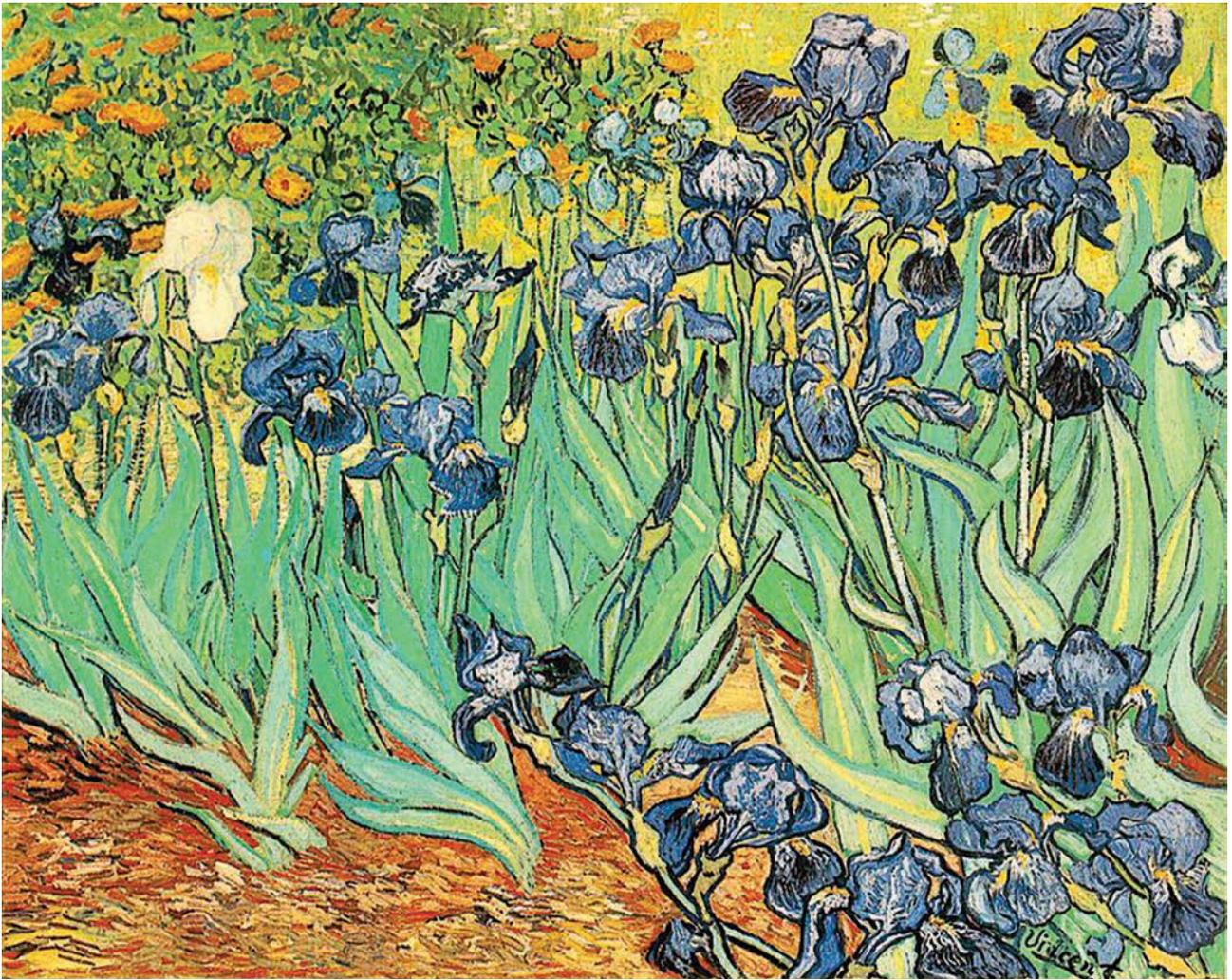


Figure 10.10 Vincent van Gogh, *Irises*, 1889. Oil on canvas, 71 × 93 cm. Getty Museum, California.

10.3 Conceptual strength and meaning and your body of work

Don't think that your body of work has to bring about world peace. Your work does not have to be about a big issue. It can deal with the personal and the intimate. It can also be about art, such as an exploration of themes and techniques in artmaking.

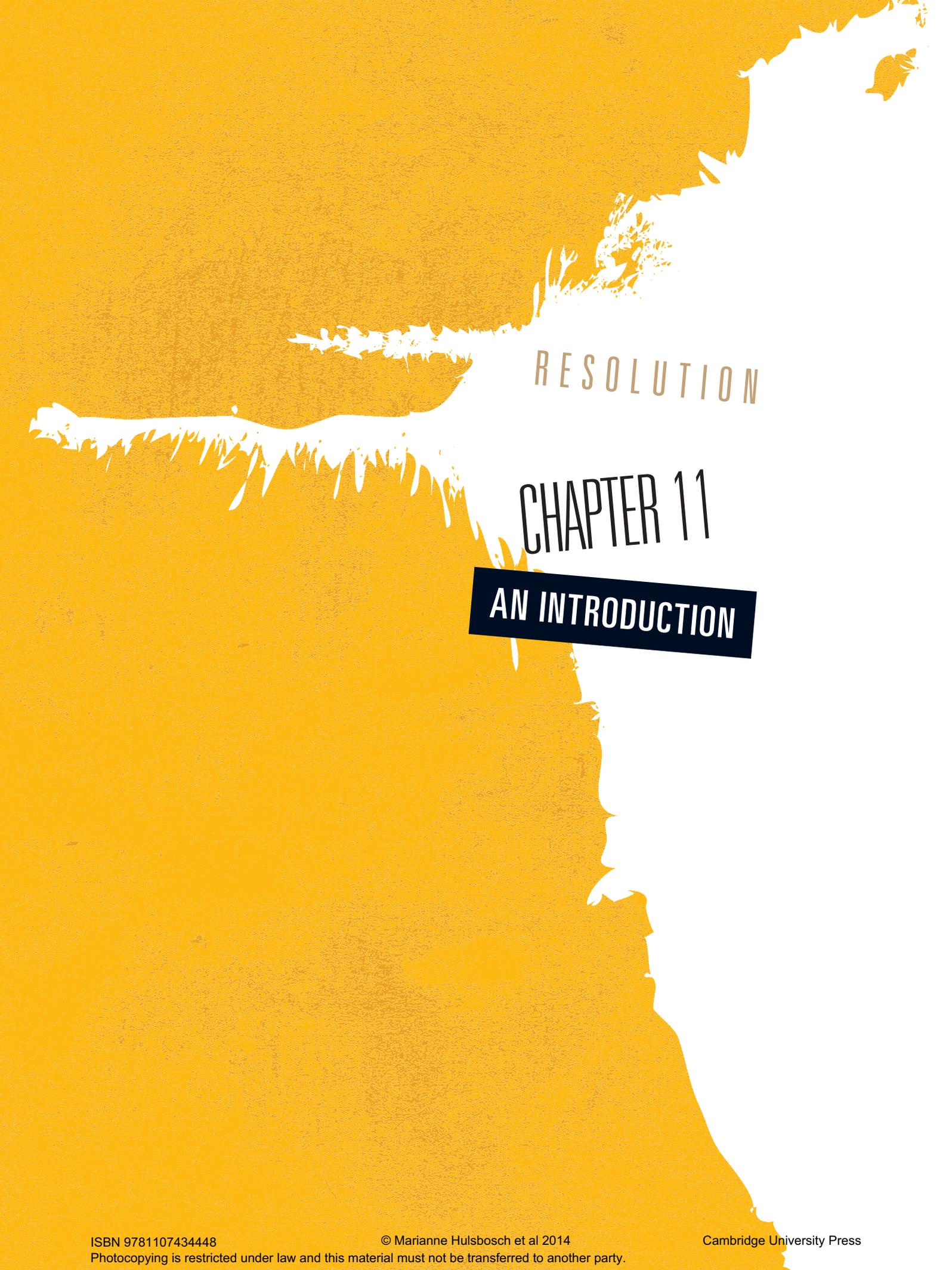
Look at the development of your emerging body of work. Try to consider what themes or ideas are apparent in your artmaking. Make a list of these in your VAPD. Now try to determine how you have incorporated these into your work. Is it through subject matter? Is it through the structural elements of your work?

Now consider your audience. How do you think they will respond to the ideas in your work? Will they get what you are trying to say or do? Take the opportunity to put your work before an audience who have not seen it before. This could be one person or a group. Ask them to tell you what your work is about. Ask adults as well as your peers. Document their responses in your VAPD.

Think also about the final audience for your work: the HSC Visual Arts examiners. Do you think they will recognise the signs and symbols in your work? Will they understand the references it contains, for example, to youth culture and popular music?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Conceptual strength is the extent to which artists are able to define their artistic ideas and concept.
- Conceptual meaning is the power of an artwork to convey meaning to an audience. This can be achieved through the use of conceptual strength.
- To understand the meaning of an artwork and the intent of the artist, it is important to critically analyse and evaluate the way the artist engages the audience. The artist can communicate meaning in a number of ways, including through imagery and the use of signs and symbols.
- Meaning can also be communicated through the expressive use of media. The materials used convey an artist's conceptual intent.
- Conceptual strength and meaning can be found in all forms of artmaking. Abstract art is no less 'deep' because it does not deal with social or political issues.



RESOLUTION

CHAPTER 11

AN INTRODUCTION

*The longer you look at an object, the more abstract it becomes,
and, ironically, the more real.*

Lucian Freud, painter 1922–2011

Resolution in artmaking refers to the way in which a work is created: the selection and exploration of materials, techniques and processes to support the concept or intent of the artist. When we think of the term ‘resolution’ we might think of it in terms of resolving a conflict.

When you successfully resolve a conflict you have managed to strike a balance between various and sometimes opposing factors. Equally, to resolve in artmaking means that you have managed to effectively communicate your concepts and ideas using the right art practice, materials and skills.

resolution in art, the selection and exploration of materials, techniques and processes to support the concept or intent of the artist and the successful communication of these in an artwork

11.1 Developing and communicating ideas and concepts

Resolution in art is always linked to the development of concepts and ideas to enhance conceptual strength and meaning.

It involves working out the best way to demonstrate these concepts and ideas. Your views, thoughts, dreams and impressions form the basis of your artwork and these concepts need to have strength and meaning. You need to thoroughly investigate your ideas and thoughts and consider how you can best express them through art and successfully communicate them visually to others. Thus, there is an inextricable link between the conceptual strength and meaning of your concepts and ideas and how you intend to resolve those concepts and ideas.

Artists represent their ideas and concepts by deciding to creatively respond to the world around them. They experiment with different images and concepts. They imagine, sketch, draw and talk about their ideas. They continually review the way they respond artistically to their ideas and regularly experiment with alternative ways to work through to the essence of their concerns.

I invent nothing, I rediscover.

Auguste Rodin, sculptor 1840–1917

11.2 Exploring and selecting materials and practices

Artists do not only resolve their ideas and concepts, they also make decisions to select the most appropriate materials and artmaking processes to resolve their artistic intentions. They weigh up how they can best represent their ideas and make art that has merit and meaning. Artists can choose to further develop their practice or experiment with new practices. Some artists combine unusual practices or different materials in order to convey their message. Throughout this process they continually evaluate and reflect on every step they take and every decision they reach. Experimentation with a range of expressive forms may ultimately lead to a whole new direction in their art practice.

11.3 Knowing when to stop

One of the biggest issues in artmaking is knowing when enough is enough. How do artists know when to stop? How do they determine whether they should do more or less? At what point in their artmaking process do they know that they have expressed their ideas, elaborated on their concepts and constructed meaning?

Sculptor Saul Baizermann felt that making artworks drained him completely as he transferred all his feelings, passion and ideas to the work. He knew when the work was finished because he believed that, by then, he was completely drained and felt weak and empty; the work had sapped his strength and became more powerful than he was himself.

Even famous artists struggle with knowing when to stop and they each have a different approach to determining when enough is enough. Artist Henri Matisse described how he determined this moment as follows: 'Then a moment comes when every part has found its definite relationship and from then on it would be impossible for me to add a stroke to my picture without having to paint it all over again'. Artist Hans Hoffman said, 'To me a work is finished when all parts involved communicate themselves, so that they don't need me'.

Some artists may decide to add a few extra strokes, shapes, colours or lines. Others might, in the end, decide to move sections about or even remove them altogether.

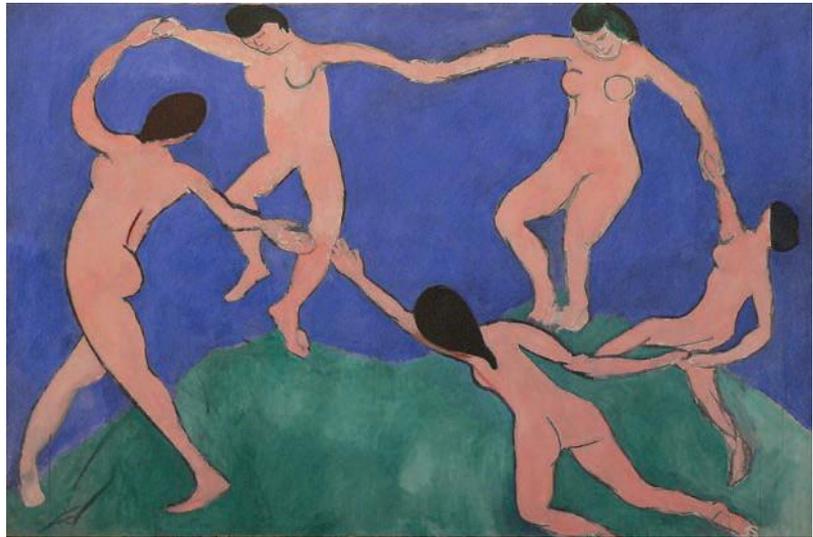


Figure 11.1 Henri Matisse, *La danse* (first version), 1909. Oil on canvas, 259.7 × 390.1 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

11.4 How specific artists resolve their works

Let's consider two distinct ways that four artists have resolved the dilemma of conveying their ideas and concepts in the best possible manner.

Pablo Picasso

For Picasso, the bull represented Spain and the Spanish people. As a Spaniard, Picasso treated the image of the bull with special care, because traditionally it is the bull that tries to protect the 'madre' (mother), which is represented by Spain's capital, Madrid. He often portrayed the bull as a strong mythical figure, as in his painting *Guernica*. Picasso made the bull accessible to the ordinary person by developing a sculpture from parts of an ordinary item that most Spaniards use: a bicycle seat and handlebars.

Picasso's artmaking process was different from the norm of adding layer upon layer of materials and meaning. Picasso believed that his artmaking was the reverse: it involved reducing or deducting the meaning, layer by layer, until the essence of his idea remained.

It is clear that by reducing, by taking away, Picasso might have stripped a layer but in fact gained strength of meaning. He discovered a new way of telling his story. In this case, less is more.



STUDENT TASK 11.1

- 1 How does Picasso perceive his own artworks?
- 2 How does Picasso resolve his artworks?
- 3 How do different audiences understand Picasso's work?

Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.

Vincent van Gogh, painter 1853–1890



Figure 11.2 Pablo Picasso, *Bull's Head*, 1943. Height 41 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris. © Pablo Picasso/Succession Picasso. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

Piet Mondrian

Piet Mondrian, a Dutch artist, found that by reducing and simplifying his paintings he could show colour and spaces to their greatest intensity. Later in his career he eliminated three-dimensionality and representation in his works and used only abstract grids of horizontal and vertical lines. He even reduced his colour palette, using only primary colours and black, white and grey.

In his use of extreme abstraction, Mondrian was making a political statement about materialism and consumerism. Through his work he showed that it is not necessary to use an excess of colour or shape in order to evoke emotion.

His resolve resulted in works that are simplified and balanced and visually very strong. In 1988, the arts writer for the *New York Times* Michael Brenson said of Mondrian that he 'took on everything, forced nothing and simplified. Struggle was concealed. No modern artist made noise more quietly'.

The artist Hannah Höch said of Mondrian:

Everything in his life was reasoned or calculated. He was a compulsive neurotic and could never bear to see anything disordered or untidy. He seemed to suffer acutely, for instance, if a table had not been laid with perfect symmetry. (Roditi 1989, p. 58)

Not all of Mondrian's compositions seem so neurotic or calculated. His painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* is a lively, happy work and reflects his love for dancing under New York's bright lights. The work was painted when Mondrian was 70 years old.

Mondrian's crisp, linear paintings have been one of the most pervasive influences in twentieth-century design. He inspired a generation of architects and furniture and fashion designers.

The famous architect Renzo Piano referred to Mondrian's geometric layout when he designed the Pompidou Centre in Paris. So did Gerrit Rietveld when he designed a chair. Even fashion designer Yves St Laurent was inspired by Mondrian's simple but effective lines.



DID YOU KNOW?

Mondrian even reduced his name; it was originally Mondriaan.



STUDENT TASK 11.2

- 1 What did Mondrian want to convey with his art?
- 2 How did Mondrian resolve his intent and ideas?
- 3 Where did Mondrian's ideas come from?

Abstraction demands more from me than realism. Instead of reproducing something outside of me, now I go inward and use everything I've learned thus far in my life.

Susan Avishai, artist 2013

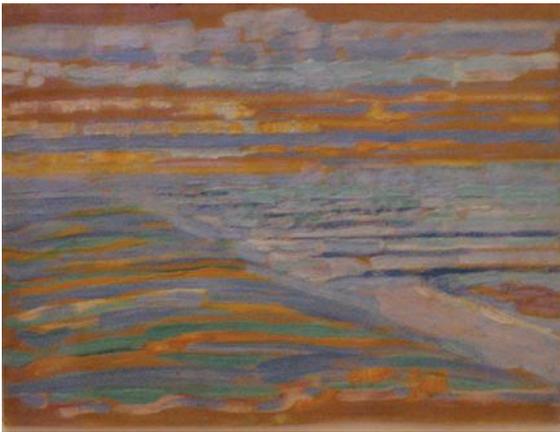


Figure 11.3 Piet Mondrian, *View from the Dunes with Beach and Piers, Domburg*, 1909. Oil and pencil on cardboard. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

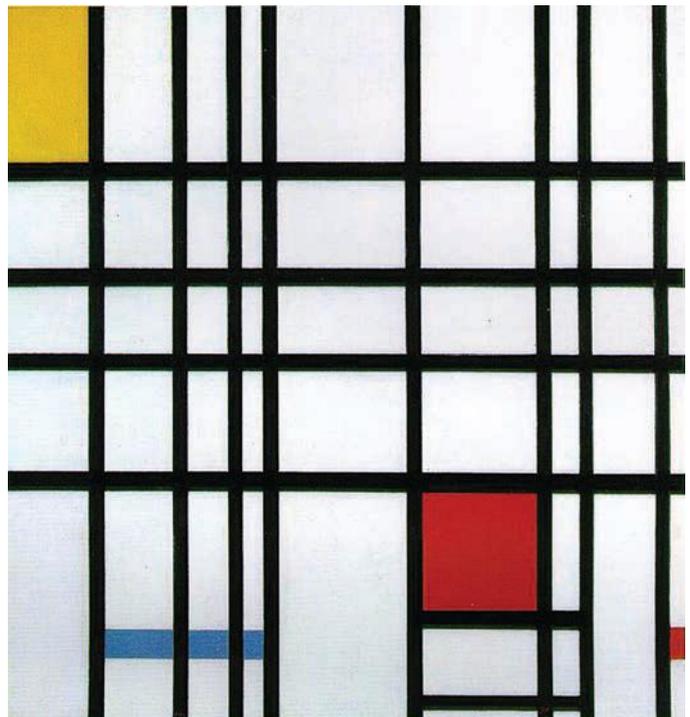


Figure 11.4 Piet Mondrian, *Composition in Red, Blue and Yellow*, 1937–42. Oil on canvas, 60 × 55 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection.



Figure 11.5
Chair designed by Gerrit Rietveld, 1917.

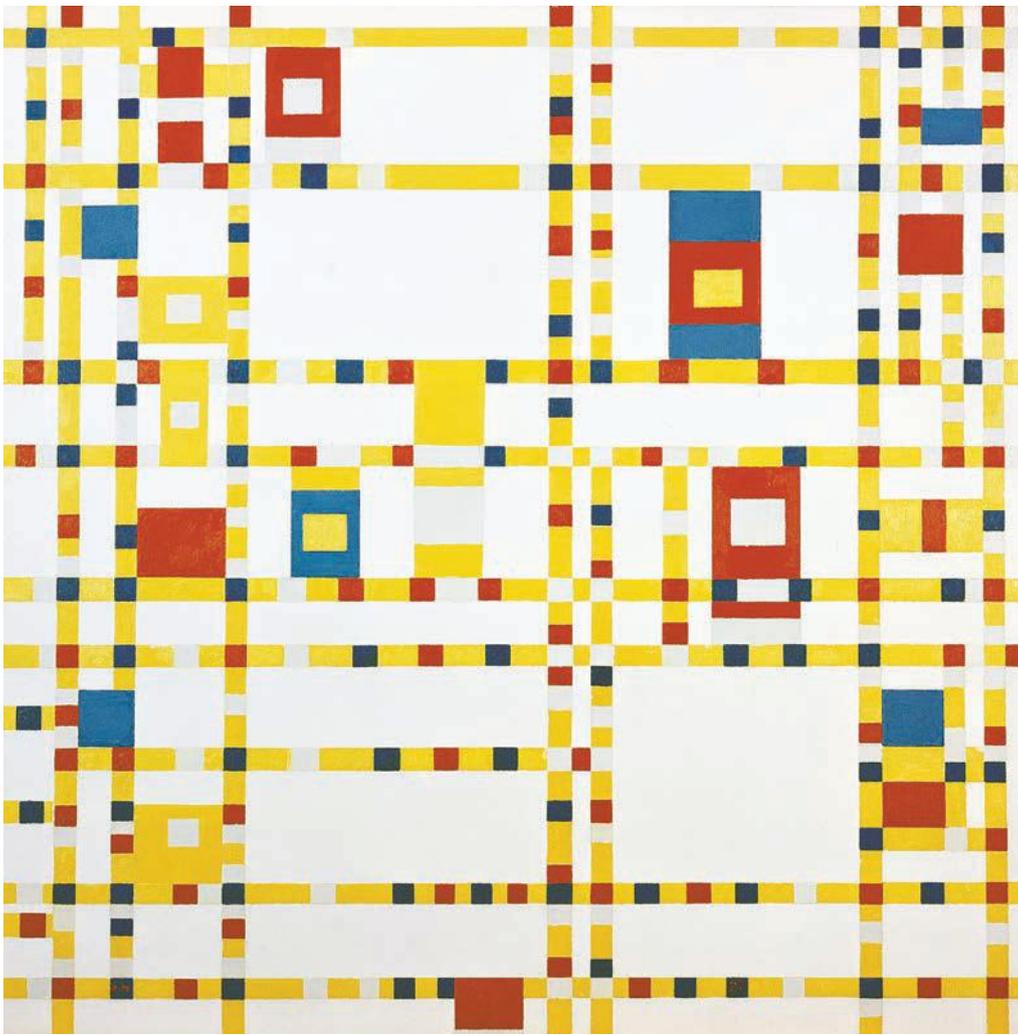


Figure 11.6 Piet Mondrian, *Broadway Boogie Woogie*, 1942–43. Oil on canvas 127 × 127 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. De Agostini Picture Library/The Bridgeman Art Library.



Figure 11.7 A ladies trouser suit designed by Yves Saint Laurent.



Figure 11.8 Renzo Piano's Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, constructed 1971–77.

Jackson Pollock

Other artists took another approach to resolve their creative dilemmas and instead of reducing, they developed an entirely new technique.

Jackson Pollock's famous drip paintings show how adding layers of colour and texture create a mystery and density on the surface of the painting.

By adding layer upon layer a pattern starts to emerge that can be regular and repetitive or dynamic and wild. Pollock said: 'I have no fears about making changes, destroying the image, etc. because the painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through'.

Jackson Pollock was also known as 'Jack the Dripper', after the English murderer Jack the Ripper, because people felt that he had 'murdered' the noble art of painting. His painting tools consisted of sticks and little paint containers. Unlike regular paintbrushes, his tools never touched the canvas.



Figure 11.9 Inspired by Jackson Pollock – Glen Josselsohn, *Into The Light*, 2011. Drip technique. Personal collection.

Michael Johnson

In common with Jackson Pollock, Australian artist Michael Johnson uses thick, heavy layers of paint to build up his artworks. His work might appear to be chaotic when you first look at it but you will quickly notice that it has rhythm and balance. Michael Johnson mixes sand and other materials in the paint to give it extra texture. In Johnson's works, meaning is conveyed through the quality of the pure colour and the thickness of the paint.



Figure 11.10 Michael Johnson, *After Sirius*, 1987–88.

Oil on Belgian linen, 213.0 × 457.5 × 4.0 cm. Purchased with assistance from the Moët and Chandon Art Acquisition Fund 1988. Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales. © Michael Johnson. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

11.5 Comparing means of resolution

In essence, the four artists considered in section 11.4 want to convey the same ideas: the need to reduce life's excesses and reveal a core of pure love, trust and being. Mondrian and Picasso resolve these ideas by reducing shape and colour, reducing layers. The artistic resolve of Pollock and Johnson is exactly the opposite of that of Picasso and Mondrian. Pollock and Johnson build up thick layers of pure colour with natural, flowing lines. In doing so, they explore time and the rhythms of life without the need for overindulgence and commercialism.



STUDENT TASK 11.3

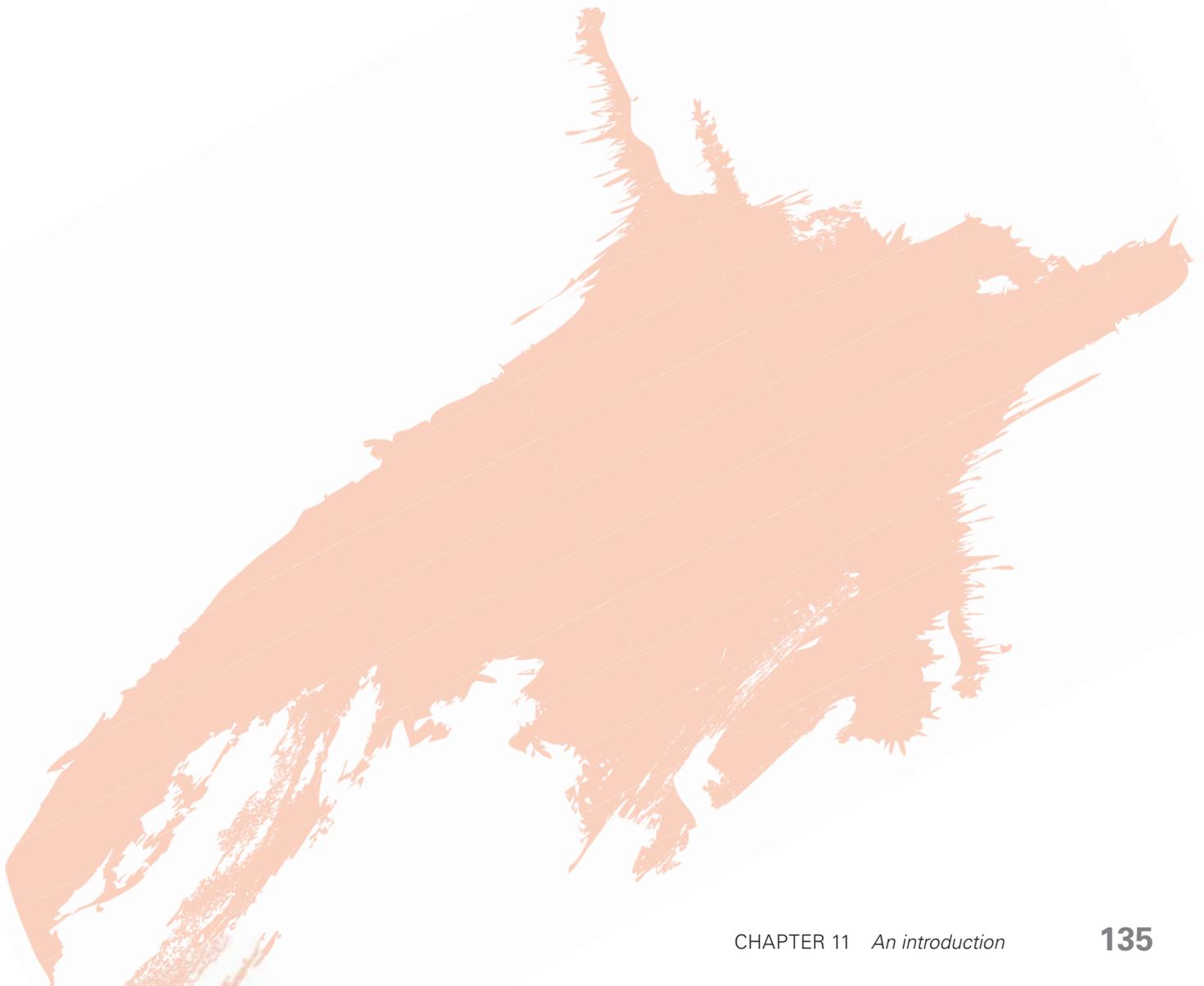


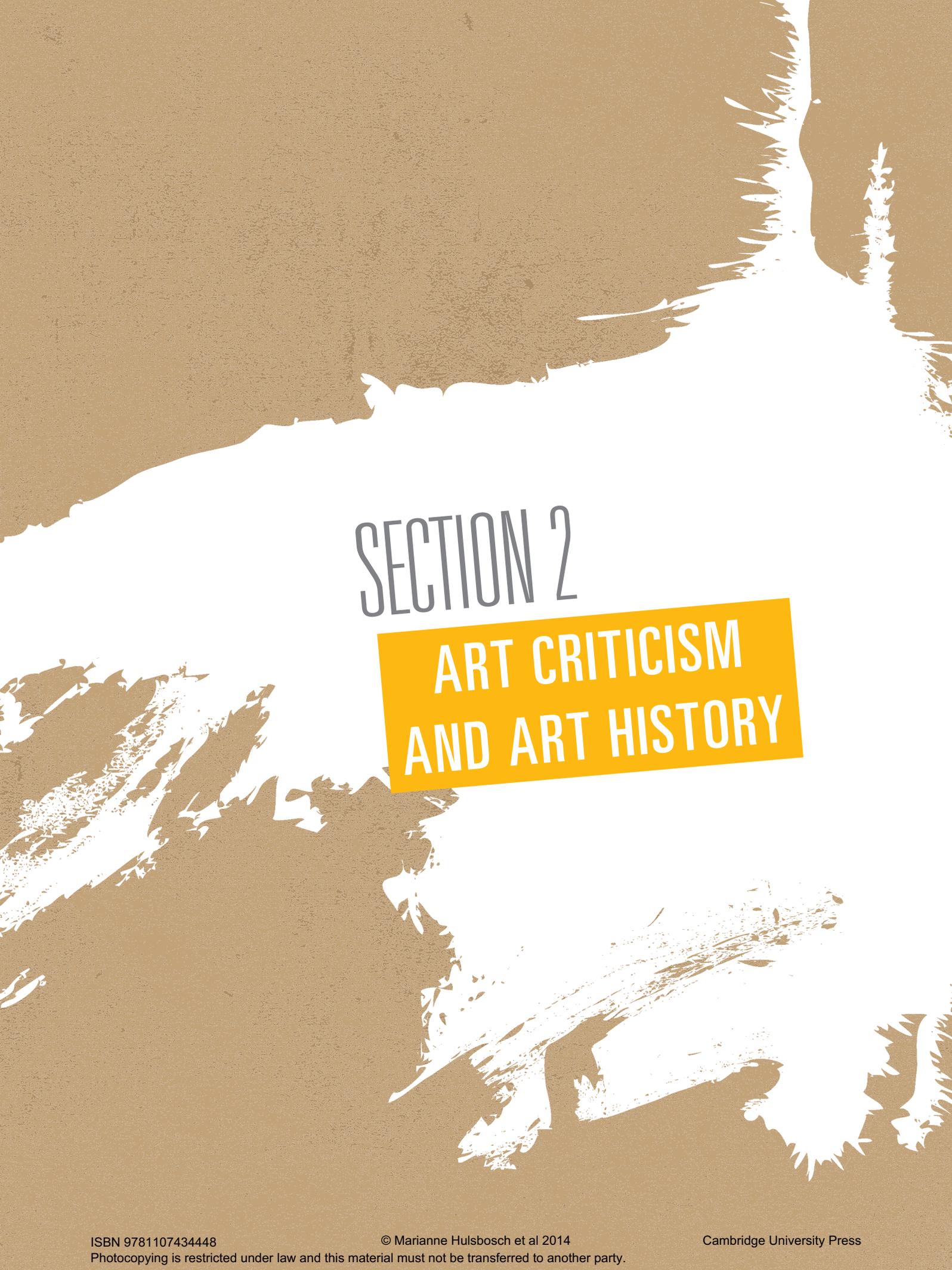
- 1 Name two other artists who have resolved their ideas in a similar way to Mondrian and Picasso.
- 2 Name two other artists who have resolved their ideas in a similar way to Pollock and Johnson.
- 3 The four artists discussed in this chapter belong to art movements. Explore these art movements and, for each artist, locate samples of similar artworks by other artists.
- 4 Investigate an art movement that arose in reaction to a specific large world event.
 - a Explain how that event gave rise to the new art movement.
 - b Explain how the audience initially viewed this art movement.
- 5 Choose two artists discussed in this chapter. From the text in this chapter and your own research on the chosen artists, compare and contrast the following aspects of the artists' practice:
 - a the conceptual strength and meaning they convey
 - b their technical accomplishments
 - c their selection of materials
 - d the development of their art practice
 - e the conditions that shaped their practice.
- 6 Find samples of two artworks that in your opinion are unresolved. Explain why they are unresolved.
- 7 Give two examples of how non-Western cultures have inspired an artistic response that resulted in a new art movement.
- 8 Select one of your own artworks and in your VAPD explain how you have used all the agencies of the Conceptual Framework to develop your ideas and concepts. Indicate how you could tell when you had resolved your artwork.



CHAPTER SUMMARY

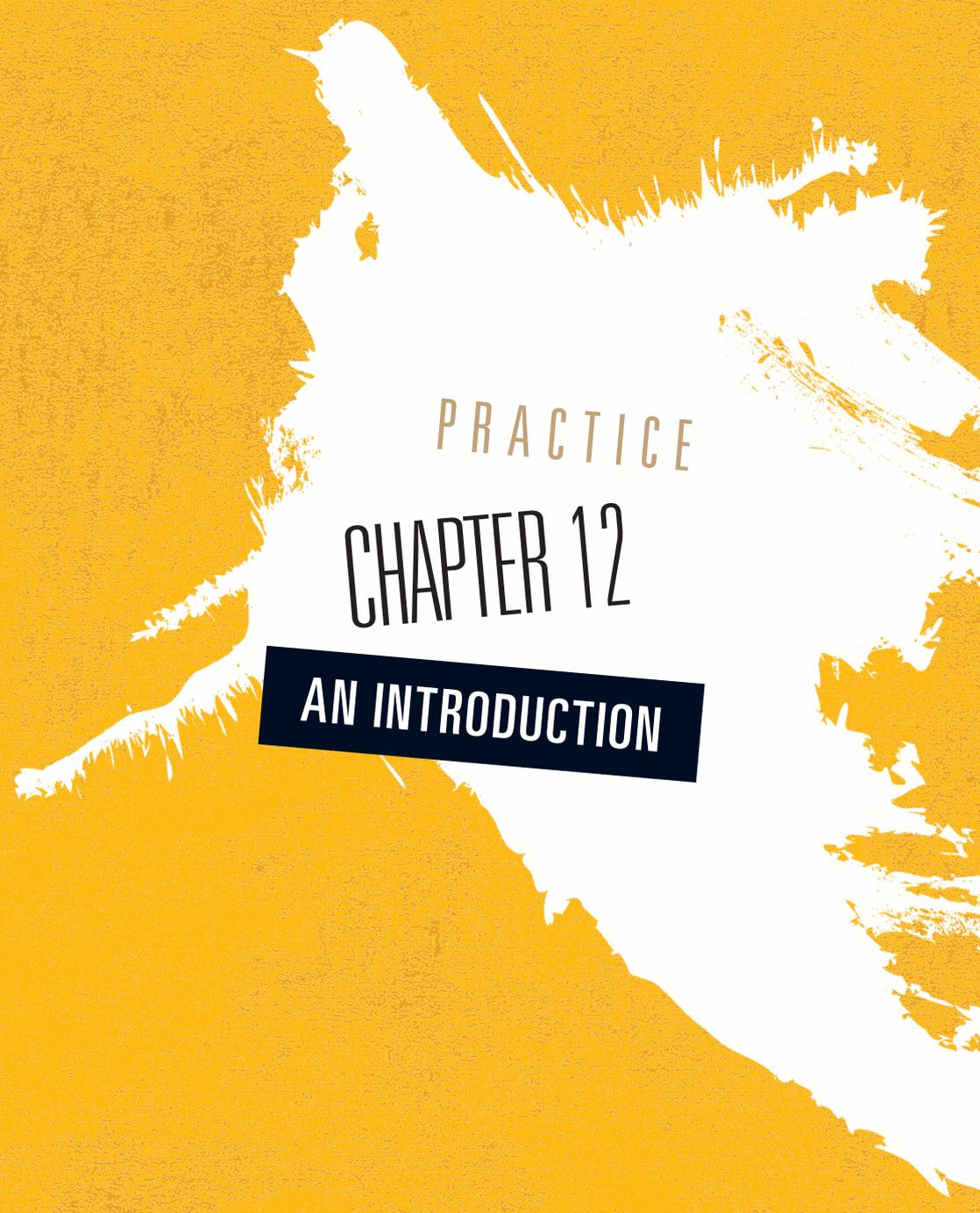
- Resolution in artmaking refers directly to the way in which a work is created. It is the exploration and selection of materials, techniques and processes to support the concept or intent of the artist.
- Resolution in art is always linked to the development of concepts and ideas to enhance conceptual strength and meaning. It involves working out the best way to demonstrate these concepts and ideas.
- Artists must decide when a work is resolved, which will be when the material practice and conceptual strength are successfully balanced.
- There is no single way to resolve an artwork. Through experimentation, artists can arrive at different ways of conveying the same message to their audience.





SECTION 2

ART CRITICISM AND ART HISTORY



PRACTICE
CHAPTER 12

AN INTRODUCTION

Artists, art historians, art critics and art theorists all offer insight and explanation into the meaning of art and each does so in their own way: the artist produces artworks, the theorist develops theories about what they think art is, the historian analyses artworks and the critic evaluates artworks. What they all have in common is their passion for art and a need to let the rest of the world know about it.

The best captains steer ships from the shore.

Old Dutch proverb

The proverb above comments on how much easier it is to advise someone (an artist, for example) about how they should have done their work than to do the work oneself. Many people will pass judgements about artworks, including their own. How do we know whether their critique is honest, valid and worthwhile?

Often it is a work's aesthetic qualities that determine whether it appeals to you. When exploring an artwork as an artist and art critic you will need to do more than simply pass a verdict on whether or not you like it.

12.1 The practice and processes of artists

An artist's practice is the way they go about making their art. It is much more than simply the methods or materials they use. Artists creatively question and then interpret the world around them. Think of practice in artmaking as a broad idea that places how an artist works in a wider context. The creative and practical decisions that artists make as they work are influenced by many factors, such as their ideas about what makes good art. The way other people value the work of artists might also impact on the way artists work. To apply the practice of art, you need to be more than a good artist. You also need to be a good art historian and art critic.



Figure 12.1 An artist working.

12.2 The practice and processes of art historians

Certain items of evidence of human history remain. These include:

- cultural knowledge
- scientific and technological understanding
- the arts; for example, architecture, art and craft objects, music and literature.

Investigating this evidence helps us to understand human history. It provides insight into the changes that have taken place in a wide range of areas, such as philosophies, technology and gender roles. It also sheds light on historical events, such as wars, and different areas of life, such as politics, religion and culture.

An art historian's practice is to try to extract meaning from art. Art offers a window on the history of the world and art historians explore the past through the lens of art. They do this by placing artworks and those who produced art in a wider context. They carefully check artists' intentions and the connection between art and different historical events and through this they are able to conclude how meaning in art relates to the community and the times in which the art is produced. The art historian articulates the links between artists, artworks, the artworld and different audiences. Does this sound familiar? By using the four elements of the Conceptual Framework (see Chapter 3), art historians help us to better understand art, history and humankind.

Art needs to be socialised, and you need a lot of context to understand that, and that doesn't mean having read a few art history books.

Peter M. Brant, industrialist 2011

Art historians have developed and use various theories and each has different styles of working and writing. What they all have in common is the fact that they work as art detectives and try to paint a complete picture of the artwork, the artist and the time and place it was created. They might also place the art in a different context; for example, by analysing how the art would be viewed, experienced and understood by a different culture in a different historical time.



STUDENT TASK 12.1

Find ten pieces of historical evidence concerning your family. Examples include photos, letters and heirlooms. Determine when each piece of evidence dates from. Draw a three-column table with the following column headings:

- description of item
- what this item reveals about my family
- what this item reveals about major events and changes in history.

Enter the information from your research. In column 3, consider events and changes that occurred around the time when the evidence was created. Consider, for example, technological developments, culture, politics, religion, the position of women, artists and/or art movements, fashion fads and health.

12.3 The practice and processes of art critics

Art critics present their evaluations of art in various contexts, including books, internet blogs and social media, reviews in newspapers and scholarly presentations at art conferences. Some critics teach about art at universities, art colleges and schools. Others plan and curate art events such as exhibitions, art shows and fairs, and television programs.

Art critics interpret art and explain its meaning and significance. They do this through detailed analysis of the cultural, historical and structural merits of art, the intentions of artists and the historical period in question.

There are different kinds of art critics. Some critique by discussing and writing about art. They might, for example, develop a philosophy about what art is or question and theorise about the value of art to society. Others make critical statements about art by selling and/or collecting works or curating art for galleries, museums, exhibitions, art books, films and documentaries. They critique, for example, through their choice of what artworks they select, recommend or discard.

What all art critics have in common is that they attempt to explain what art is and how they 'value' art and give it a label of quality. This value might be in economic terms, decided by curators, art dealers, art auctions and so on. Alternatively, it may be in terms of cultural value. For example, some art critics evaluate the cultural, historical and social value of artworks, artists or art movements by using the art theories developed by those people who have attempted to define what art is.



Figure 12.2 Art curator Anne Pontégnie at Kelley Walker's exhibition.



STUDENT TASK 12.2

1 Find two examples of each of the following:

- art historian
- art critic.

For each person you name, find a sample of their writing. Read the writings carefully, then discuss how each group writes about art.

2 Based on your findings in task 1 above, how can each of the following help you to understand the meaning and significance of artworks, artists and the world in which artworks have been created?

- a art history
- b art critiques.

3 a Find the names of two well-known artists and, for each, find an extract that reveals how they view their own work. This may be an article or artist's statement, for example. Also research the lives of the two artists.

b How do the artists write about their artworks?

c How can the artist's life story help you to understand the meanings and significance of their artwork?

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1961, Henri Matisse's *Le Bateau* (The Boat) was accidentally hung upside-down in the Museum of Modern Art, New York. It stayed that way for two months and during that time none of the 116 000 visitors noticed that it was hung incorrectly. You might wonder if any of these visitors questioned or critiqued the meaning, merit or validity of this artwork.

*Pointed criticism, if accurate, often gives the artist an inner sense of relief.
The criticism that damages is that which disparages, dismisses, ridicules, or condemns.*

William Ernest Henley, poet 1849–1903

Qualities of effective art criticism

A good art critic will analyse an artwork from a technical perspective. They will also consider the cultural aspects of the work by determining its context in terms of time and place. More importantly, a good art critic evaluates the artist's intention and the meaning of the work.

They will present an informed, considerate, independent and objective discussion about the political, cultural, social, moral and economic significance of the work. An effective art critic also explores the long-term effect of a new artistic style. Sometimes they even place certain artworks within a different (or opposing) historical or cultural context. Remember, a good art critic uses all the Frames and discusses all links between the agencies of the Conceptual Framework.

Of course, professional art critics who work within the constraints of their employment have specific audiences in mind when they prepare their critiques. Their audience may be the readers of a newspaper or book or visitors to an art gallery.

These audiences often determine how the critic develops their work. For example, writing an art essay for *Time Magazine* requires a different approach from writing informative text panels and brochures for an exhibition.

All art critiques (including those you write for your HSC paper) should be suited to their purpose and include text that is informative, appropriate and, above all, unbiased. It should focus on explaining the cultural and historical meaning and significance of art.



STUDENT TASK 12.3

Australian art critic Robert Hughes firmly believed that an art gallery owner or collector should not act as an art critic. He did not believe in mixing the cultural value of art with the financial value of art. Discuss this opinion in your VAPD.

Developing your skills as an art critic

As with the practice of making art, the practice of critiquing art can be both exhilarating and stressful, especially when you critique your own work. However, there are simple, uncomplicated ways of starting to critique. To begin with, you need to be knowledgeable about artmaking, art history and critical writing. You also need to have a thorough understanding of how to use the Conceptual Framework and Frames successfully. It may also assist you to use some of the art theories developed by art philosophers and art theorists.

12.4 Exploring Robert Klippel

Let's explore the world of the artist Robert Klippel. We'll use the Conceptual Framework and Frames to explore how art historians and art critics have tried to make sense of Klippel's artwork.

Robert Klippel was an artist who allowed himself to be guided by his art material rather than trying to guide the material himself. In doing so he let his intuition and unconscious ideas come to the fore. Klippel wrote the following notebook entry on 3 February 1948:



... yesterday spent the day on a small carving in stone. I found myself trying to abstract, but all the time this carving took on the organic geometric and machinery feeling of a man reclining and a bird. Strange; I just won't fight it – I will let it be what it wants to be, or what my unconscious self decides. (Klippel 1948)

Using junk to make art a hundred years ago was unheard of. It was a particular group of artists called the Surrealists who changed that. They saw the world in a totally new way and expressed this through their art. Robert Klippel became very interested in their ideas and considered that any material could be useful to make art.

In *The Art of Australia*, art critic Robert Hughes commented on the influence of the Surrealists on Klippel:

Robert Klippel, who has since become the only first-rate sculptor to work in Australia, had lived in Paris and had seen abstract-expressionist paintings, though his interests lay more in the direction of surrealism. (Hughes 1970, p. 260)

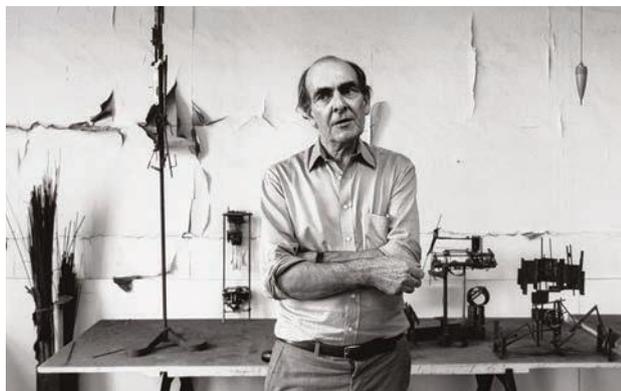


Figure 12.3 Robert Klippel (1920–2001).
© Greg Weight. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 12.4 Robert Klippel's son exploring his father's studio.



Figure 12.5 Assembling a Klippel sculpture in Sydney, 1972.

[Klippel's artwork] points to the systematic operations of chance and the possible play of the unconscious.

Christopher Chapman, art curator 2001

My unconscious self decides.

Robert Klippel, artist 1920–2001

On the ABC's *Sunday* program, in a story about Klippel, art historian Betty Churcher commented:

Robert Klippel really was one of Australia's really great artists, but he never really became the household name of Sidney Nolan or Arthur Boyd. And he should have because I think his work could take its place in the European arena ... stand comfortably beside the best of modernist sculpture anywhere in the world. (Sunday program 2002)

The following text appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 1 August 2002, the year following Robert Klippel's death:

When Robert Klippel died in Sydney on his 81st birthday on 19 June last year, the next day's headlines acclaimed his artistic achievements: 'Australia's greatest sculptor', 'a sculptor with iconic status'. As early as the 1960s, Robert Hughes was claiming Klippel as an outstanding figure of Australian art and one of few sculptors worthy of international attention. (Capon 2002)

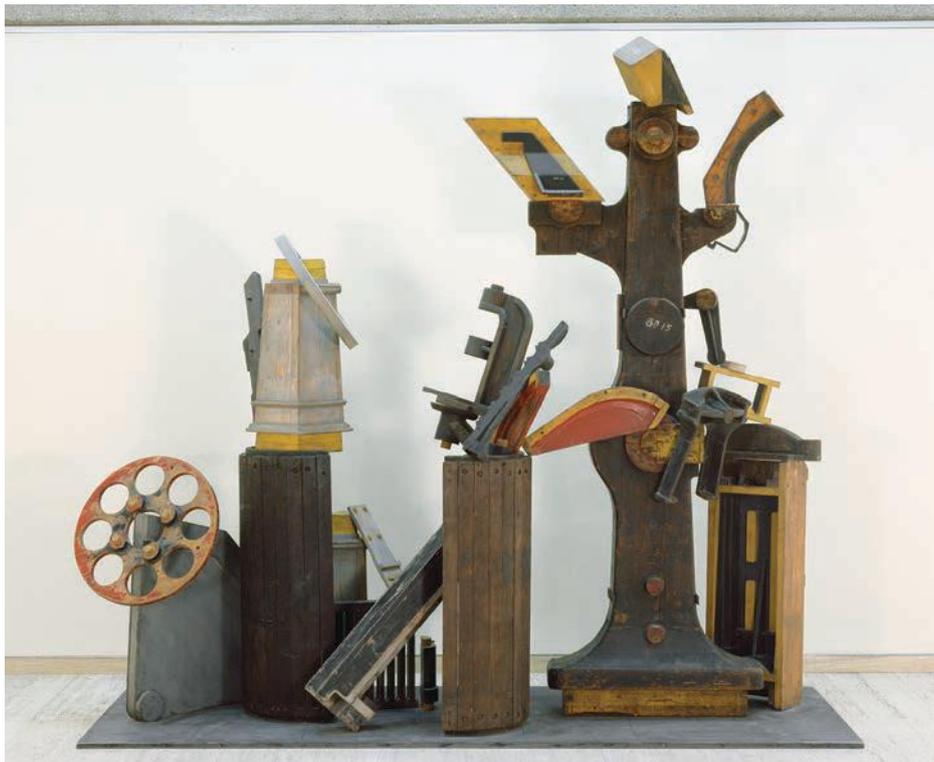


Figure 12.6 Robert Klippel, *Wooden Prototype for Adelaide Plaza Bronze*, 1988.

Wood assemblage, 300 × 350 cm. Purchased 1989, Art Gallery of New South Wales. © Andrew Klippel. Courtesy of The Robert Klippel Estate, represented by Galerie Gmurzynska, Zurich. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 12.7 Robert Klippel, *No. 202 Metal Construction*, 1966.
 Brazed and welded steel, found objects, 157.4 × 106.0 × 104.5 cm.
 Purchased 1983, Art Gallery of New South Wales.
 © Andrew Klippel. Courtesy of The Robert Klippel Estate, represented
 by Galerie Gmurzynska, Zurich. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 12.8 Rolls-Royce Merlin engine, 1941.

In 1945 Klippel visited a machine exhibition in London and upon seeing a Rolls-Royce engine pronounced it to be 'a brilliant piece of sculpture'.

In McCulloch's *Encyclopedia of Australian Art*, Klippel's sculptures are described this way:

His distinctive abstract wooden and metal sculptures are a unique blend of airy grace and solidity deriving from the discards of industrial society. Derived from disused industrial materials, their seemingly random nature is resolved by a strong sense of balance and design.
 (McCulloch 2006, p. 580)



STUDENT TASK 12.4

In this task you will be an art historian and art critic. With reference to the preceding text about artist Robert Klippel and his artworks featured above and on the previous page, develop a case study of Klippel and analyse and evaluate the artworks featured. Considering all the agencies of the Conceptual Framework, examine the works from the perspective of each Frame. You may need to carry out research to help you complete some of the following questions.

Subjective Frame

The Subjective Frame looks at personal experiences and imagination, such as how we feel about an artwork.

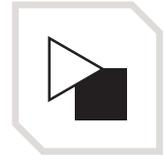
- 1 How did Klippel describe his own artistic practice?
- 2 What is the meaning of the artworks on the previous pages?
- 3 How do these artworks represent what is going on in the world?
- 4 How did Klippel use his imagination when he made an artwork?
- 5 What do artists, art critics and art historians feel about Klippel's body of work?



Structural Frame

The Structural Frame looks at how art is put together and how signs and symbols communicate meanings.

- 1 What materials did Klippel prefer to use?
- 2 Where did Klippel's materials come from?
- 3 What techniques did Klippel use?
- 4 How do artists, art critics and art historians describe the structural aspects of Klippel's work?



Cultural Frame

The Cultural Frame understands art by looking at the shared values and beliefs of the culture in which the work was created.

- 1 Which cultural group and artistic movement did Klippel subscribe to?
- 2 How is Klippel's work representative of a specific art movement?
- 3 Which themes did Klippel use in his sculpture to represent society?
- 4 Which artists influenced Klippel's work?
- 5 What large world events influenced Klippel's work?
- 6 How did artists, art critics and art historians initially value Klippel's work?



Postmodern Frame

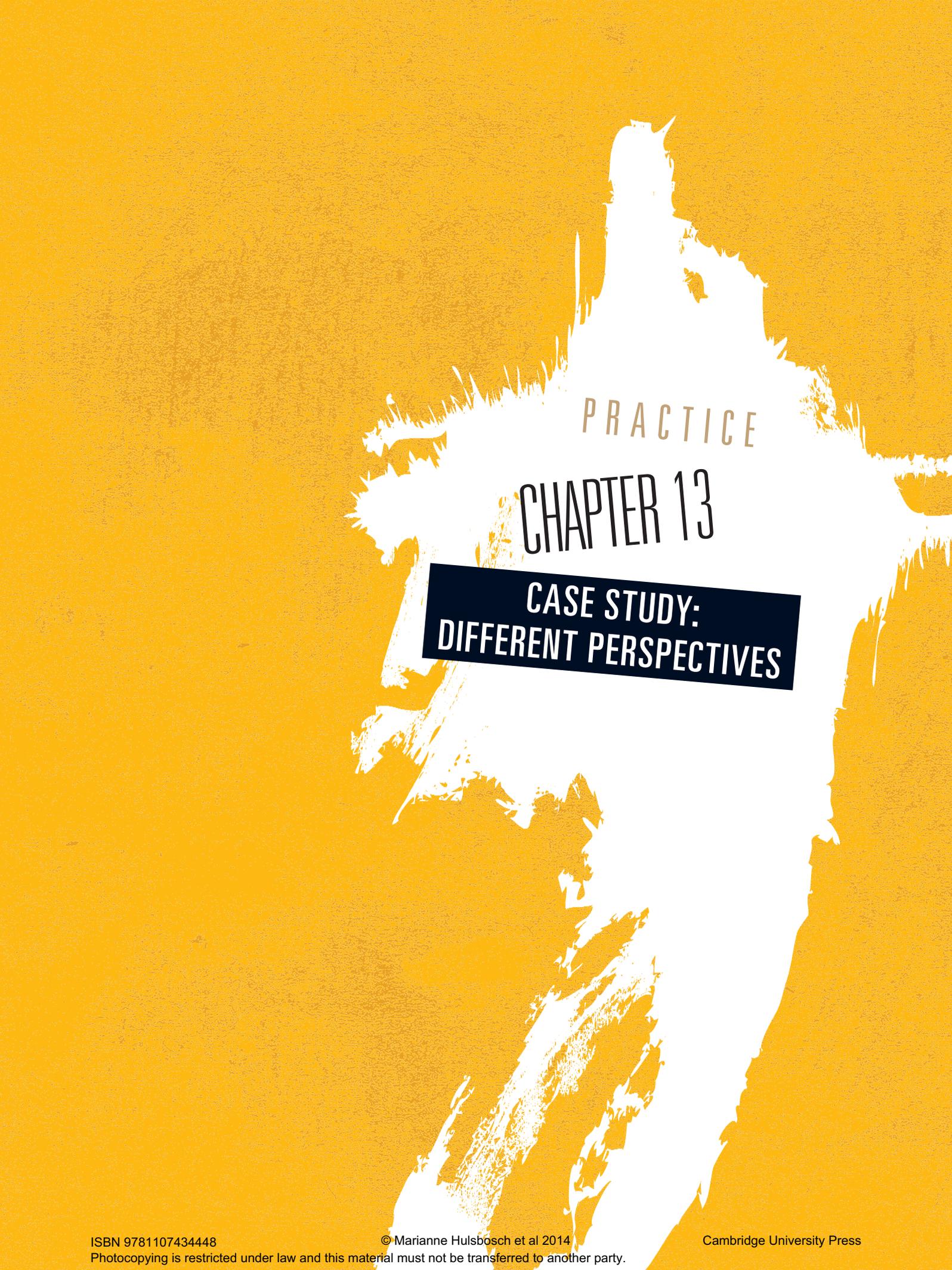
The Postmodern Frame considers artworks, movements and ideas that challenge conventional concepts.

- 1 What comments do Klippel's artworks make about his world?
- 2 Which ideals did Klippel express through his work?
- 3 Which contemporary artists are inspired or influenced by Klippel?
- 4 How do you think people in other cultures would view Klippel's work?
- 5 How did Klippel combine technology and art?
- 6 Find an example of a contemporary art critic who has commented on Klippel's work. What did they present about his work?



CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Practice in art refers to artmaking, art history and art critiquing.
- Artmaking involves manipulating art materials.
- Art history places art in the context of time and place in order to further understand its meaning and merits.
- Art critique judges the meaning and merit of art and gives it cultural and/or economic value.
- Successful art practice uses all Frames and the Conceptual Framework.

A dark blue background with a large, irregularly torn piece of white paper in the center. The paper has jagged, frayed edges. On the white paper, the word 'PRACTICE' is written in a light blue, sans-serif font. Below it, 'CHAPTER 13' is written in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the white paper, there is a black rectangular box containing the text 'CASE STUDY: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES' in white, bold, sans-serif font.

PRACTICE

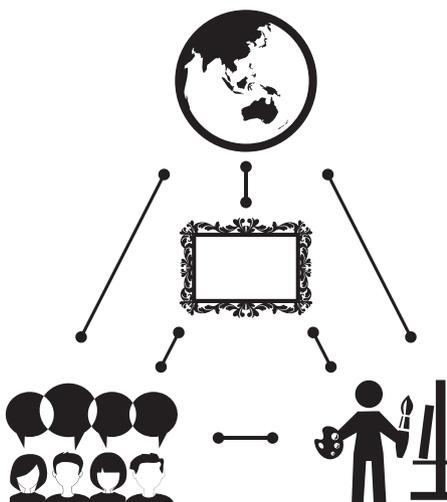
CHAPTER 13

**CASE STUDY:
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

An artist's practice is the way they go about making their art. It is more than simply the methods or materials they use. The creative and practical decisions that artists make as they work are influenced by many factors, such as their ideas about what makes good art. How other people value the work of artists will also impact on the way they work.

13.1 Different perspectives on art

When we begin to research what other people say about particular artists and their work we often find very different and sometimes conflicting points of view. To understand these differences it is helpful to explore the influences shaping people's opinions. An art dealer will place a high value on artistic practices that create works that command a high price tag. An art critic writing in an academic journal will try to make an informed assessment about art practice, taking into account theories of art and current debates. A journalist looks at the practice of art as something they can tell a story about. An art historian will analyse the time and place in which the artwork was created and places the work in the context of world events.



In our time there are many artists who do something because it is new; they see their value and their justification in this newness. They are deceiving themselves; novelty is seldom the essential. This has to do with one thing only; making a subject better from its intrinsic nature.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, painter 1864–1901

We can also expand our understanding of practice by examining the creative practices of art critics and art historians. Through their analyses of art practice and their different perspectives we can learn about the art practice of artists as well as the practices of the critic and the historian. When combined, this knowledge will give us a very good way of making meaning of our own practice in artmaking, art critiquing and considering art from an historical point of view. Studying the practices of artists, art critics and art historians and applying these to our own art practice will ultimately ensure greater success in Visual Arts.

Although art criticism and art history are two methods of studying art practice, they will overlap. One way to differentiate between the two methods is to remember that art criticism is about analysing and judging, whereas art history explores the influences of a period in time on an artist's practice and how it relates to the past and present. Both ways of studying art can and should inform each other to create deeper understanding of the ways artists work.

The art critic seeks to understand what an artwork means and makes a judgement about the value of the work. The art historian seeks to learn about the story of how the artist or an artwork became valued by others. Historians draw on a range of source material. Learning about the world in which the artist lived is an important aspect of art history. The following lists summarise the questions an art critic and art historian are concerned with when considering an artwork.

Questions an art critic considers

- How can the work's visual appearance be described?
- How was the work made?
- What is the significance of the work today?
- What does the artwork mean and how was this meaning created?
- How can the visual language used be analysed and evaluated?
- What is my judgement of the value of the work's meaning?
- What is my judgement of the work's construction?
- How may other audiences value the work?
- Who in society assigns value, meaning and significance to the artwork?
- How can I analyse, evaluate and compare the critiques of others?

Questions an art historian considers

- What events and social issues were going on in the world at the time the work was made and how did these affect the artist?
- To what extent do the physical properties and ideas and concepts of the work reflect the period and place in which it was constructed?
- Was the artist part of a school, movement or style?
- How did the artist come to be recognised and valued by others?
- Where is the artwork now?
- How did it get to be where it is today?
- How has the passing of time affected or changed the physical nature of the artwork?
- How has the passing of time changed the way in which the work is valued by audiences?
- Has the work inspired other artists in different times and in different cultural settings? If so, how?

13.2 Damien Hirst

In the rest of this chapter we will explore the artist Damien Hirst and his body of works. We will consider the practices of the artist as well as those of the art critic and art historian to give us a more complete case study of this exciting young British artist.

In 1991, art collector Charles Saatchi put together a collection of artwork by **Young British Artists**, including Hirst. Saatchi gave Hirst the funds to make whichever artwork Hirst wanted. This resulted in the work *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, in which Hirst had suspended a shark in a vitrine (glass display cabinet) filled with formaldehyde. This work toured internationally with a controversial exhibition called 'Sensation' and caused outrage in Britain, Berlin and New York. The Australian leg of the exhibition was cancelled due to public criticism. Hirst and his work rocketed to fame.

Hirst didn't stop there. Since completing this artwork, Hirst has made many more tanks containing dead animals, such as lambs and cows.

Young British Artists a group of young artists who were at the forefront of contemporary art in the 1990s; also referred to as Britart



Figure 13.1 Damien Hirst found inspiration in this piece of conceptual art – Michael Craig-Martin, *An Oak Tree*, 1973. Installation, Tate Modern, London.

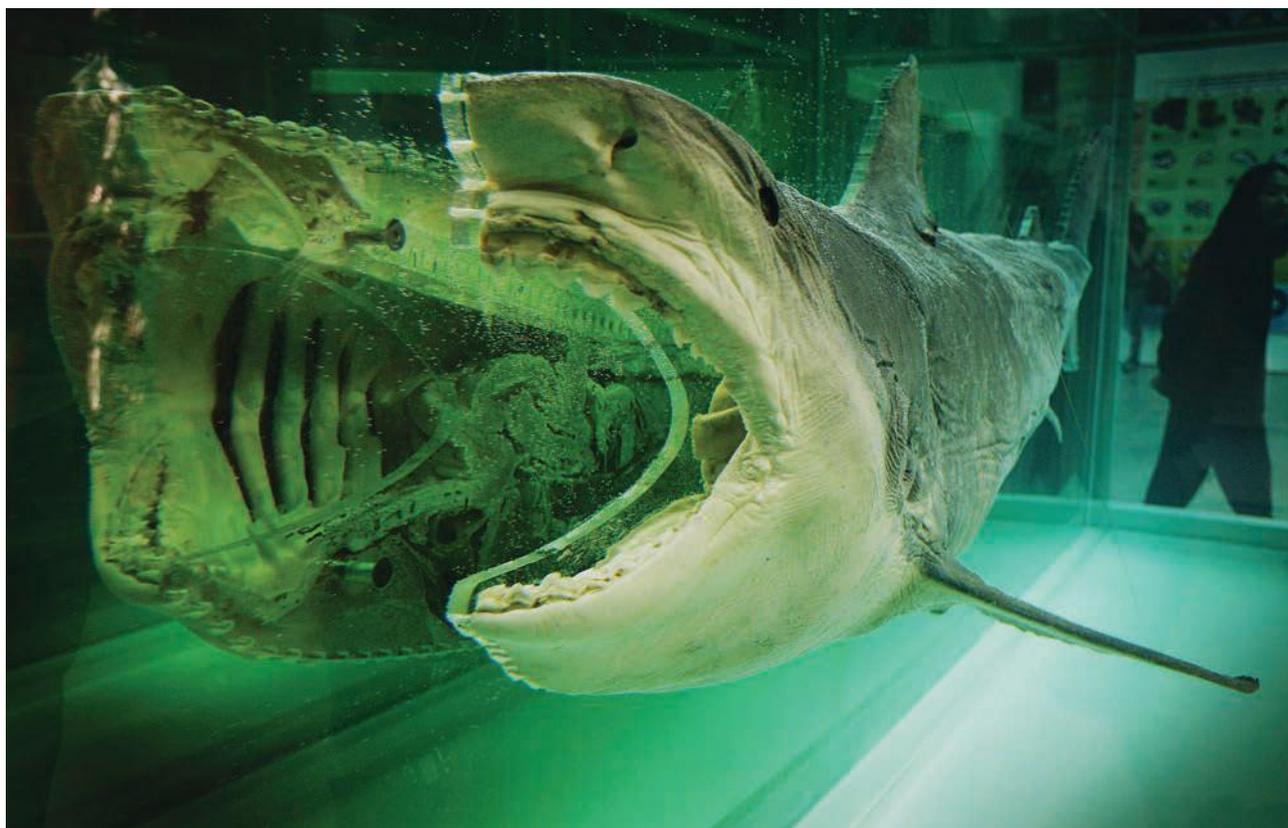


Figure 13.2 Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991. Tiger shark, glass, steel, 5% formaldehyde solution, 213 × 518 × 213 cm. Collection of Steve Cohen.

The critics' response

Hirst's work invited lively debate. Fellow English artist Billy Childish had this to say:

When Mayor Giuliani tried to ban the 'Sensation' show in New York, Damien was reported to have said that if 'New York wasn't such an important market he'd refuse to show there ever again'. This declaration is very revealing and confirms that Damien's work is not about integrity but markets, which is in stark opposition to art, the heart and soul of which is integrity. It's clear that Damien would not spend 25 years pickling sharks in his garden shed waiting for his genius to be recognised. If his 'art' didn't sell he wouldn't do it. This, for me, is the crux. If Damien Hirst doesn't even believe in his own work then why should I? (Childish 2003)



Figure 13.3 Damien Hirst, *Away from the Flock*, 1994. Steel, glass, silicon sealants, formaldehyde solution and lamb, 96 × 149 × 51 cm. Collection of Charles Saatchi.

A range of other critics and commentators had equally strong reactions to Hirst's work. Here is a selection of these views.

... brutally honest and confrontational, he draws attention to the paranoiac denial of death that permeates our culture. (Virginia Button, a curator with the London Tate Gallery)

[Hirst] circumnavigated the primary pitfall of much British art – its guilt-ridden distrust of the visual – with superbly finessed aesthetic objects. (Martin Maloney, artist)

Have they gone stark raving mad? The works of the 'artist' are lumps of dead animals. (Norman Tebbit, British statesman)



STUDENT TASK 13.1

- 1 Billy Childish describes Hirst's response to the New York mayor's attempt to block the 'Sensation' exhibition. Consider the response from Hirst and answer the following questions:
 - a What does the mayor's attempt tell you about his views on modern art and freedom of artistic expression?
 - b What does Hirst's response tell you about his views about his own artwork?
- 2 In a short paragraph, answer the following questions:
 - a Do you think Hirst's artistic practice of displaying dead animals is of any value?
 - b Who has the authority to establish the value of an artwork?

The art market's response

Many people questioned Charles Saatchi's choice of art and wondered why he would invest in the work of young artist Damien Hirst, especially in the manner in which he did so: giving Hirst complete artistic freedom and an unlimited budget to develop one artwork. Saatchi was unconcerned by the fuss. In an interview in 2009, he said:

Who cares what I'm described as? Art collectors are pretty insignificant in the scheme of things. What matters and survives is the art. I buy art that I like. I buy it to show it off in exhibitions. Then, if I feel like it, I sell it and buy more art. As I have been doing this for 30 years, I think most people in the art world get the idea by now. It doesn't mean I've changed my mind about the art that I end up selling. It just means that I don't want to hoard everything for ever ... General art books dated 2105 will be as brutal about editing the late twentieth century as they are about almost all other centuries. Every artist other than Jackson Pollock, Andy Warhol, Donald Judd and Damien Hirst will be a footnote. (Carter 2009)

Art critic Robert Hughes is critical of Hirst and the art market. Arts journalist Maev Kennedy reports:

Without naming the artist, Robert Hughes, art critic, singled out Damien Hirst's most famous work, The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living – better known as the stuffed shark – for mockery. The string of brush marks in a lace collar in a Velasquez painting could be more radical, he said, than a shark 'murkily disintegrating in its tank on the other side of the Thames' ... Mr Hughes saved his most bitter remarks not for the art but for the market. 'I don't think there is any doubt that the present commercialisation of the art world, at its top end, is a cultural obscenity.' (Kennedy 2004)

*£50 000 for Fish Without Chips. Who then writes the history books?
Is it those who have the money to?*

The Saatchi Gallery, 2006

Hirst's response

Hirst gave this response to those who said that anyone could have made *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*: 'But you didn't, did you?'

Hirst gave this insight into his view about the artworld:

When I got into the art world, I consciously wanted to change it. I found it really annoying because it seemed like a kind of club where people would sell cheaply to investors and they'd make the money. Collectors would take the art off the artists and, because they came in early and they gave the artist a little bit of money, later, when the artwork got resold, it would be the collector who made the big money in the secondary market. And I always thought that was ... wrong. I'm the artist, the primary market. And I want the money to be in the primary market. (La Placa 2007)

DID YOU KNOW?

The tiger shark used in *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* was caught off the coast of Australia.

Hirst's work *For the Love of God*

Hirst continues to challenge mainstream art and the generally accepted views on what art is supposed to be about. His work *For the Love of God*, completed in 2007, raised eyebrows overseas as well as here in Australia. View the artwork online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks. This report by Ben Hoyle appeared in *The Australian*:

British artist Damien Hirst's diamond-encrusted cast of a human skull has been bought by a group of anonymous investors for its asking price of £50 million (\$122 million). This is, by a huge margin, the most paid for a work by a living artist. Titled For the Love of God, the skull was first displayed in June at the White Cube Gallery in Mayfair, central London, where thousands of people queued for a two-minute viewing in a high-security darkened chamber. Studded with more than 8500 ethically sourced diamonds, the skull has been variously described as 'an anthropomorphised disco ball', 'the first 21st-century work of art', 'a cosmic wonder', 'the vulgar embodiment of modern materialism' – and by Hirst himself as 'quite bling'. (Hoyle 2007)

Matthew Collings, writing in *Modern Painters* magazine, has this to say about Hirst's work *For the Love of God*:

When he asks \$100 million for his new diamond skull (like Dr Evil in Austin Powers announcing his world ransom figure), which when it sells will make him the most expensive living artist and increase the sales for his White Cube show from \$250 million to \$350 million, we say yes, because we're overwhelmed. We say yes to his new million-dollar paintings celebrating the birth of his son. These pictures, with their funny, stodgy style, part amateur Photorealism and part pseudo-Old Master, tell us we're becoming more and more sentimental, more and more Victorian. Which is appropriate, since Britain has now reached Victorian levels of social division. The wealthy are now more extremely separate from everybody else than at any time since the 19th century. (Collings 2007)

Hirst's artworks are now everywhere! You can find his work on skateboards, Lance Armstrong's bicycles and even on the Mars Rover *Beagle 2*. View these artworks online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks. Like the Mars Rover, which was lost in space on 25 December 2003, has Hirst finally found a limit to his artwork? Or perhaps he has shown that art has no limits.



STUDENT TASK 13.2

Write an in-depth essay about Damien Hirst and his work *For the Love of God*. Your essay should be 1500 words in length and be either an art criticism essay or an art history essay. To assist you, refer to the relevant list on page 149. Use the information presented in this chapter, including the preceding quotes about *For the Love of God*, together with personal research. Remember, when writing your essays, always use your own words and provide detailed references giving the sources of all your information.



STUDENT TASK 13.3

Considering the Conceptual Framework, what relationship is Hirst wanting to establish between art and his audience?

I'm sure there'll be a great demand for my work out there (in space) – they'll love me!

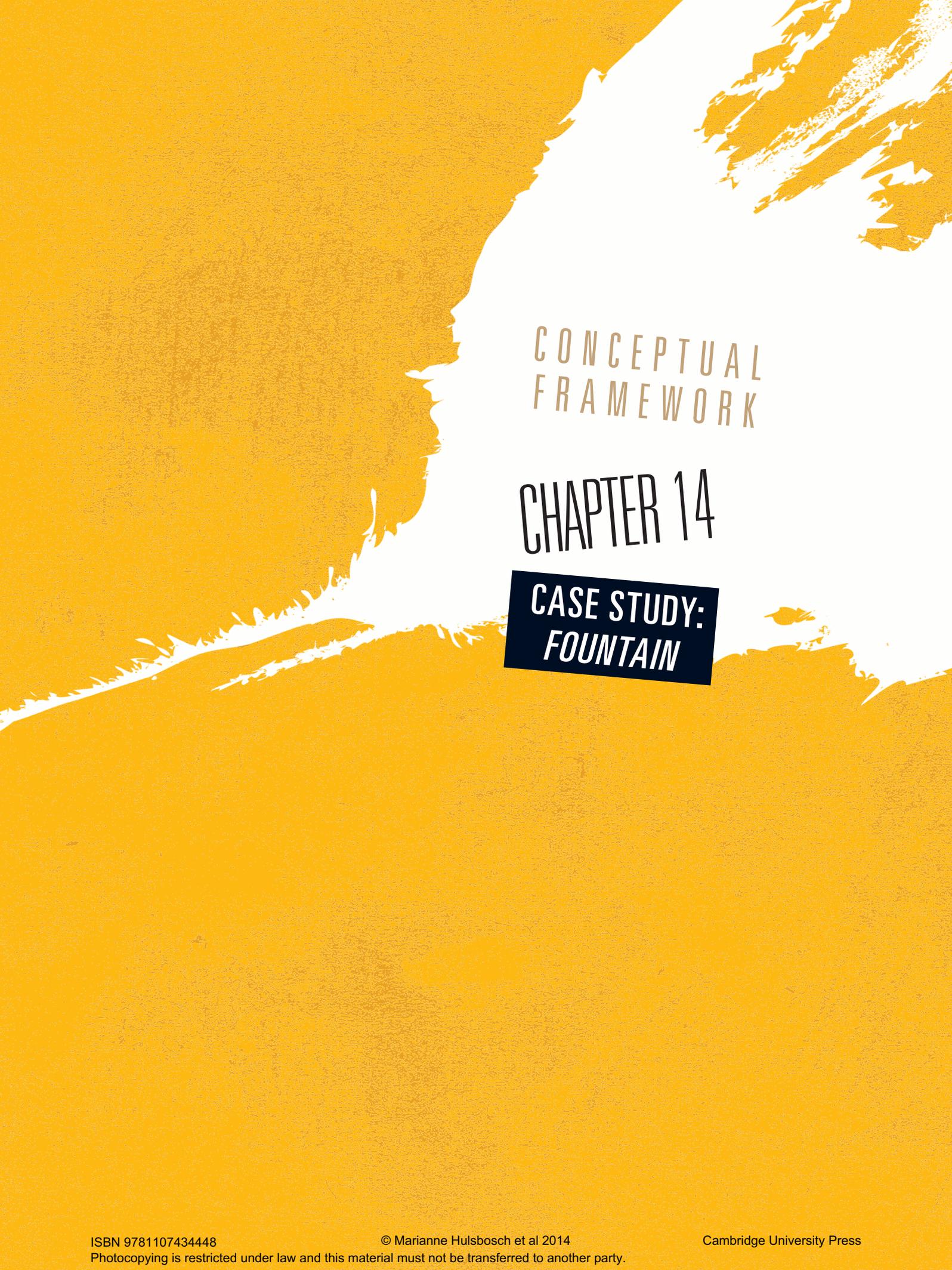
Damien Hirst, artist

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2004, art collector Charles Saatchi was offered £6.25 million for Damien Hirst's famous 4-metre tiger shark preserved in formaldehyde. The work initially cost Mr Saatchi £50 000 in 1991.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The creative and practical decisions that artists make as they work are influenced by many factors, such as their ideas about what makes good art. How other people value the work of artists will also affect the way they work.
- When we begin to research what other people say about particular artists and their work we often find very different and sometimes conflicting points of view. To understand these differences it is helpful to explore the influences shaping people's opinions.
- We can expand our understanding of the practices of artists by examining the creative practices of art critics and art historians.
- Although art criticism and art history are two methods of studying art practice, they will overlap.
- Studying the practices of artists, art critics and art historians and applying these to your own art practice will ultimately ensure greater success in Visual Arts.



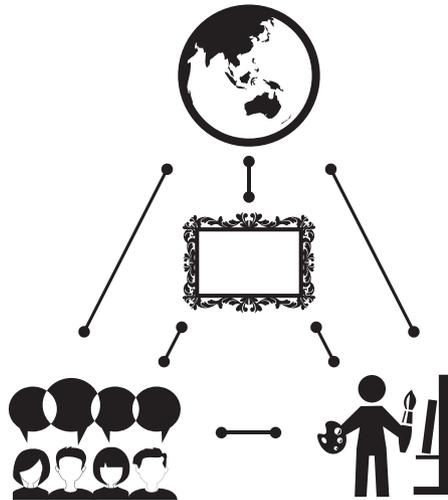
CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 14

CASE STUDY:
FOUNTAIN

As you have learnt, the Conceptual Framework provides a way to explore the roles of artists, artworks, the wider world and audiences through critical and historical investigations of art. It also helps us to understand the relationships between these four agencies.

Let's use the Conceptual Framework to explore a case study on Marcel Duchamp and his sculpture *Fountain*. We will consider the Conceptual Framework from the four Frames, or perspectives, that were discussed in Chapter 5. You will also use the Conceptual Framework when completing the student tasks in this chapter.



14.1 The artist: using the Subjective Frame



Figure 14.1 Marcel Duchamp (signed R. Mutt), *Fountain*, 1917. Urinal, estate of Mrs Marcel Duchamp. Photograph: Alfred Stieglitz, 1917. © Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

Let us first consider the artist Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* from the Subjective Frame. You will recall that the Subjective Frame emphasises thoughts, feelings, ideas and experiences. By considering this frame we gain further insights into the artist and his relationship with other agencies of the Conceptual Framework.

Duchamp emigrated from France to the United States in 1915. It was there he began to use **readymades** in his artworks. In 1917, under the **pseudonym** Richard Mutt, he submitted a urinal to an open sculpture exhibition. The Society of Independent Artists refused the piece entry, as Duchamp no doubt intended.

readymade an object that is already made and is taken by an artist and called art

pseudonym a fictitious name that someone takes in place of their real name

Marcel Duchamp wrote the following piece, 'The Richard Mutt Case', in 1917 in response to his sculpture *Fountain* being rejected:

*They say any artist paying six dollars may exhibit. Mr Richard Mutt sent in a fountain.
Without discussion this article disappeared and never was exhibited.
What were the grounds for refusing Mr Mutt's fountain:
1 Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.
2 Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.
Now Mr Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral.
It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' shop windows.
Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it.
He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title
and point of view – created a new thought for that object.
As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges.
(Duchamp 1917)*

By using readymades, Duchamp tried to demonstrate that it is the traditional art institution, not the artist, that gives value to art. The photograph opposite of the original sculpture was taken by Alfred Stieglitz shortly after *Fountain* was rejected by the Society of Independent Artists. The photograph was printed in 1917 in the second issue of *The Blind Man*, with Duchamp's commentary above.

In 1966 Duchamp recalled the events surrounding the rejection of his submission of *Fountain* in 1917:

*It was simply suppressed. I was on the jury, but I wasn't consulted, because the officials didn't know that it was I who had sent it; I had written the name 'Mutt' on it to avoid connection with the personal.
The 'Fountain' was simply placed behind a partition and for the duration of the exhibition, I didn't know where it was. I couldn't say that I had sent the thing, but I think the organisers knew it through gossip. No one dared mention it. I had a falling out with them, and retired from the organisation.
After the exhibition, we found the 'Fountain' again, behind a partition, and I retrieved it! (Cabanne 1971, p. 54)*

DID YOU KNOW?

The Blind Man is a Dadaist pamphlet that was published by Marcel Duchamp, Beatrice Wood and Henri-Pierre Roché in 1917.

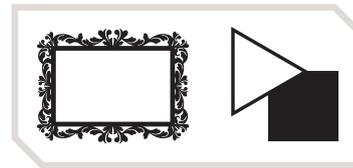


STUDENT TASK 14.1

In this task we will use the Conceptual Framework and the Subjective Frame to analyse and evaluate Duchamp's artwork *Fountain*. Remember that the Subjective Frame allows you to experience an artwork from your own understanding. It asks you to consider your emotional response to a work, how others feel about a work and what a work tells us about the artist. Look carefully at the image of *Fountain* and read the extracts above. Then answer the questions below:

- 1 What do you think was Duchamp's intention in entering the urinal in the exhibition?
- 2 What new perspective did Duchamp give to urinals?

14.2 The artwork: using the Structural Frame



Let us consider Duchamp's readymade artworks from the Structural Frame. You will recall that the Structural Frame emphasises the physical qualities of the artwork and the meanings it communicates. By considering this Frame we gain further insights into the artwork and its relationship with other agencies of the Conceptual Framework.

By 1917 Duchamp had chosen a number of everyday objects, which he called readymades. He decided to use them as sculptures. His first readymade was a bicycle wheel on a stool 'created' in 1913 and was simply an 'amusement'. He did not consider it a work of art and had no intention of exhibiting it. Duchamp later went on to create a series of objects as works of art. In New York he purchased a bottle drying rack at a market and later a snow shovel from a hardware store and called them readymade works of art. The two extracts from 'The Greenbox' below explore how to create a readymade sculpture.

The cryptic instructions give a sense of what is involved: chance meetings, overturned ways of looking and reversed ways of thinking. Use a painting by Rembrandt as an ironing board. Why not? If an object can become art why can't art become an object?

Make a
sick
picture
or a sick
Readymade

buy a
pair of ice-tongs
as a Rdymade

Readymade
↪ Reciprocal = Use a
Rembrandt as an
ironing-board —

Specifications for "Readymades".
by planning for a moment
to come (on such a day, such
a date such a minute), "to inscribe
a readymade".— The readymade
can later
be looked for. (with all kinds of delays)
then
The important thing is just
this matter of timing, this snapshot effect, like
a speech delivered on no matter
but
what occasion at such and such an hour.
It is a kind of rendezvous.
— Naturally inscribe that date,
on the readymade
hour, minute, as information.

also the serial characteristic
of the readymade.

Figure 14.2 Marcel Duchamp, extracts from 'The Greenbox' (1923); A typographic version by Richard Hamilton (1960).



STUDENT TASK 14.2

- 1 From a Structural perspective, how did Duchamp make his readymade sculptures?
- 2 Find out what became of the original *Fountain*.

14.3 The world: using the Cultural Frame



Let us consider historical and cultural events in the world surrounding Duchamp's *Fountain*. You will recall that the Cultural Frame emphasises cultural meanings, languages and values. By considering this Frame we gain further insights into the world and its relationship with other agencies of the Conceptual Framework.

This section explores the events that brought Duchamp to New York. His move to the United States was prompted by the political events taking place at the beginning of the twentieth century. Duchamp was both a product of those changing times and an instigator of change.



Figure 14.3 The 1903 Salon Exhibition in Paris.

The Salon was an important annual exhibition in France that was staged by the Fine Arts Academy of Paris from 1748 until 1890. It was considered to be the greatest art event in the world. Artworks that were submitted for showing in the exhibition were examined by a jury who had the authority to select or reject any work. The task of the jury was to determine what was good art and what was not.

Many artists did not agree with the final decisions of the jury for the Salon Exhibitions. So, during the second half of the nineteenth century, some artists formed societies and organised exhibitions outside this established art institution.



When World War I broke out in 1914, many French artists were drafted into the French Army. Duchamp decided to leave for New York and arrived there in 1915. In New York, Duchamp forged many important lifelong relationships with both US and expatriate European artists.

Figure 14.4 The Salon des Indépendants, circa 1903, Puteaux, France. Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Louise and Walter Arnsberg Collection.

Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2* is a painting about movement depicted in a Cubist style. Let's consider this artwork from a cultural perspective. The way people reacted to the work at the time it was painted gives an interesting insight into the cultural values and attitudes to groundbreaking art during the beginning of the twentieth century in Paris and New York.

When Duchamp submitted this painting to an exhibition of the Salon des Indépendants in 1912 they were outraged by the painting style and the suggestive title of the work. Duchamp had even painted the title on the canvas. His fellow artists demanded that Duchamp rename the work or remove the painting from the exhibition. When he heard the reaction, Duchamp immediately withdrew the painting.

At the time, an American art dealer was touring Europe seeking modern European artworks for an exhibition. Duchamp was invited to submit the painting to the Armory Show in New York in 1913. There the painting also caused consternation but for a different reason.

The US audiences were accustomed to seeing artworks that were much more realistic in the presentation of their subject matter. They likened Duchamp's painting to an explosion that took place in a shingles factory. Cartoonists ridiculed and mocked the work. This scandal immediately made Duchamp infamous in US society and when he arrived in New York in 1915 he found himself to be a celebrity.



Figure 14.5 Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*, 1912. Oil on canvas, 143 × 90 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York. © Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



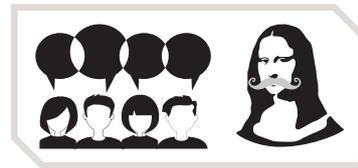
STUDENT TASK 14.3

- 1 What aspects of the traditional art world were artists such as Duchamp seeking to reform?
- 2 What role do juries play in the art world?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Salon des Indépendants was a group of independent Cubist artists that included Marcel Duchamp and his elder brother Raymond. Marcel is pictured seated on the left in the photo on page 159.

14.4 The audience: using the Postmodern Frame



This section explores the contemporary postmodern context of Duchamp and his work *Fountain*. Almost a century after it was first exhibited, Duchamp's urinal continues to inspire and provoke contemporary audiences. By considering this Frame we gain further insights into audiences and their relationship with other agencies of the Conceptual Framework.

The creative act is not formed 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, artist 1887–1968

Through the Postmodern Frame we can see the postmodern characteristics of Duchamp's *Fountain* and examine the work in its contemporary context. These gentlemen's urinals are now highly prized and valuable art objects.

Museums have million dollar insurance policies on the works. Duchamp's original intention was to challenge art institutions on the question of who determines what art is and called for artists to decide. An international art gallery buying a Duchamp urinal as an art object can be said to be missing Duchamp's point. Today galleries and cultural institutions still play a central role in determining what is art and what is not, and what is of value and what is not.

Several artists, inspired by Duchamp's original message, have recently engaged with *Fountain* in ways that again challenge the authority of the art institution.

In 1993 the French performance artist Pierre Pinoncelli urinated into *Fountain* when it was on display in France. With his direct interaction with this artwork, Pinoncelli tried to shock the audience into reassessing their own notion about its artistic merit. In a sense, Pinoncelli was trying to reverse what Duchamp had tried to achieve when he put up his urinal as an 'artwork'. Over time, the public has come to accept *Fountain* as art. By urinating in it, Pinoncelli reversed the role of *Fountain* and showed it exactly for what it is: a toilet.

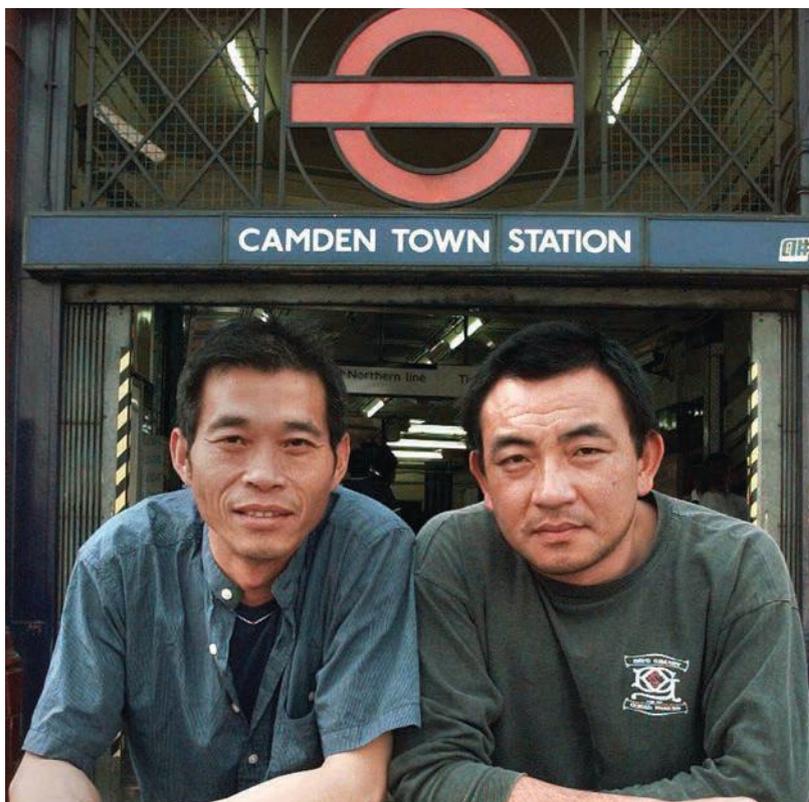


Figure 14.6 Chinese performance artists Yuan Cai and Jian Jun Xi lanjun. After urinating on Duchamp's *Fountain* while it was being exhibited in London's Tate Modern Gallery, they were branded 'guerrilla artists' by the *Guardian* newspaper.

In 2000, Chinese performance artists Yuan Cai and Jian Jun Xi lanjun also tried to urinate into Duchamp's *Fountain* while it was being exhibited in London's Tate Modern Gallery.

The following article subsequently appeared in the London newspaper *The Observer*:

Cai and Xi are keen to harvest some artistic credibility from their new-found fame. Sitting in the WKD bar in Camden, they describe themselves as 'heroes ... ahead of our time', searching for a 'new route' in art ... On 21 May, at the Tate, they made a contribution to Marcel Duchamp's seminal work, the Fountain, a factory-made urinal he chose to autograph in 1917 and call art. Cai and Xi urinated on it for over a minute, their contribution kept away from Duchamp's porcelain by the work's Perspex case. Some say they missed the point.

The Tate are not amused with Cai and Xi, choosing only to fax a terse statement about their exploits. 'The pleasure of our visitors has twice been disrupted by two artists who have threatened works of art and our staff. Tate will be taking action to protect the interests of visitors, the safety of the works of art in the collection and its employees.' They declined to say what the action would be.

Cai and Xi take their art very seriously, despite frequently collapsing into giggles when talking about it. I ask why they felt they had to add to Duchamp's work. 'The urinal is there: it's an invitation', says Cai. 'As Duchamp said himself, it's the artist's choice. He chooses what is art. We just added to it.' (Paton Walsh 2000)

Although shown in 1917, Duchamp's urinal is as topical as ever. In 2004, the white gentlemen's urinal was named the most influential modern artwork of all time.

My idea was to choose an object that wouldn't attract me, either by its beauty or by its ugliness. To find a point of indifference in my looking at it, you see.

Marcel Duchamp, artist 1887–1968



Figure 14.7 Graffiti on a toilet wall referencing Duchamp's *Fountain*.



Figure 14.8 Sherrie Levine, *Fountain (after Duchamp)*, 1991. Gilded bronze, 23.5 × 18.5 60 cm. Jablonka Gallery, Cologne.

Featured above is a work by US conceptual artist Sherrie Levine that appropriates Duchamp's *Fountain*. Levine has created a reproduction of Duchamp's urinal in polished bronze. The material has created a new way of 'seeing' the original: as an object of religious worship. The graffiti on the left is a humorous comment on the banality of the urinal as an *objet d'art*.

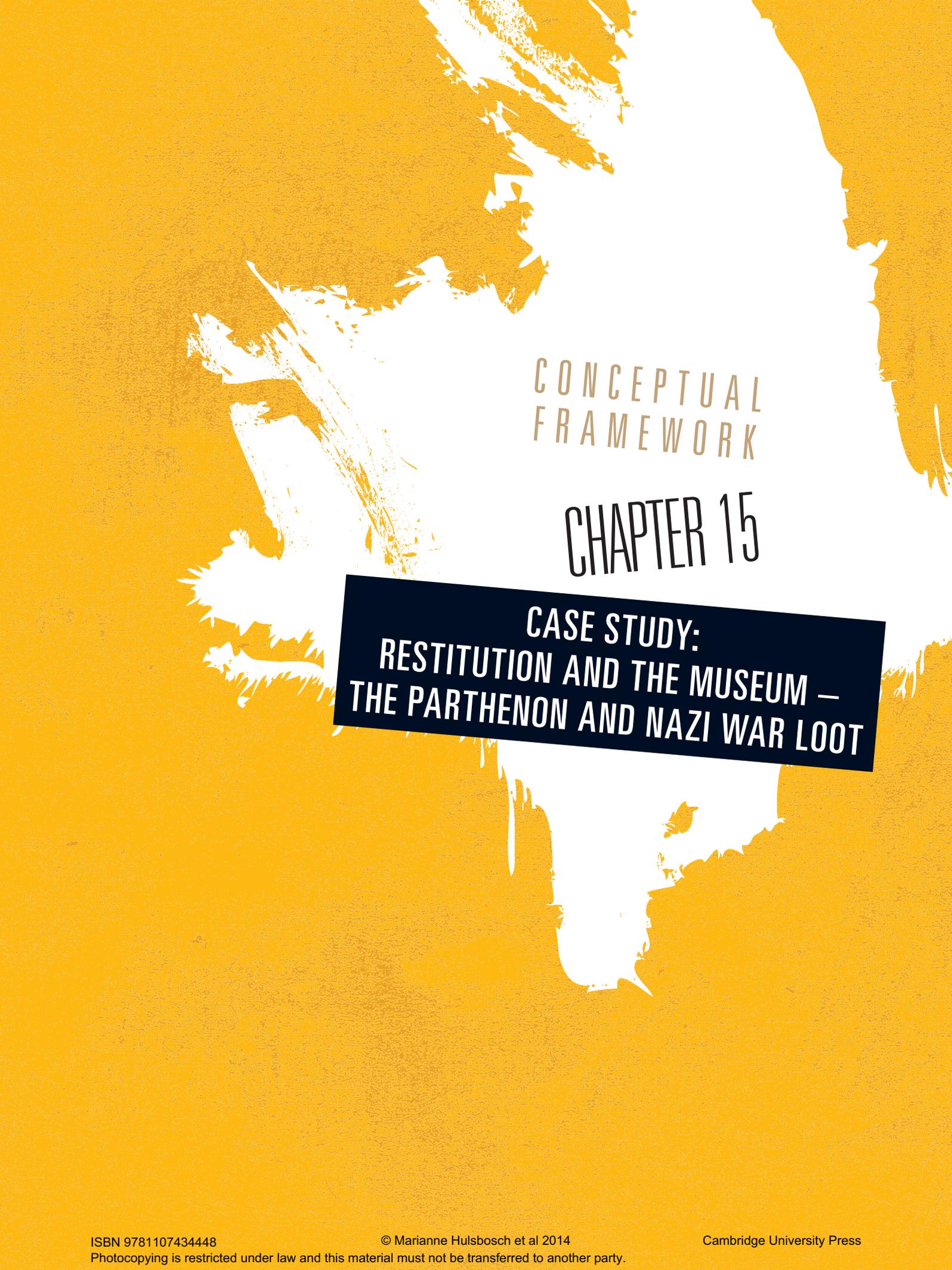


STUDENT TASK 14.4

- 1 Do you consider the actions of Cai and Xi to be in line with Duchamp's own artistic approach?
- 2
 - a Describe how Duchamp's *Fountain* has been appropriated into new artworks.
 - b What do the new works 'add' to the original?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The Frames and the Conceptual Framework can be used to gain further insights and perspectives when carrying out critical and historical investigations of art.
- Each of the Frames can be used in conjunction with each agency of the art world.
- This chapter has demonstrated how:
 - the Subjective Frame gives insight into the artist
 - the Structural Frame gives insight into the artwork
 - the Cultural Frame gives insight into the world
 - the Postmodern Frame gives insight into the audience.
- When developing and exploring a particular case study try to view relevant artworks, texts and other resources through both the Conceptual Framework and the Frames.



CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 15

**CASE STUDY:
RESTITUTION AND THE MUSEUM —
THE PARTHENON AND NAZI WAR LOOT**

15.1 Restitution

Of the many issues in the artworld, none excites global interest, raises nationalistic passions, and fills our newspapers, public halls and courtrooms more than the issue of **restitution**.

restitution the return of property to a rightful owner

What is it?

The history of the world is a story that museums and national galleries like to tell. Yet the real story is told by the objects themselves – how they came to be kept behind glass, under bright lights and the watchful eye of security cameras, and a very long way from home.



STUDENT TASK 15.1

The place of a museum (or art gallery) in contemporary society

'The story of human history can also be seen as a tragic adventure of how the cultural fabric of countries has been torn apart and spread across the globe. Works of art, sacred objects, and sometimes even human remains have been stolen, ripped off, lost, rightfully purchased or given away.'

Identify the differences between a museum and an art gallery, and then consider the above statement with reference to a museum or an art gallery you know. In your writing you can address one or more of the following:

- Explore the role of museums or art galleries and what they mean to different audiences.
- Investigate the role of museums or art galleries from the perspective of artists.
- Examine the role of a curatorial team of a museum or an art gallery.
- Consider the role of museums or art galleries in relation to the artefacts they show.
- Inspect the role of museum or art gallery collections from a cultural and historical viewpoint.



Figure 15.1 A typical museum display.



Figure 15.2 Egyptian obelisk in Paris – the Luxor Obelisk was a gift from the Egyptian ruler Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1829 to the people of France.



Figure 15.3 Wedgwood teapot dated from 1780–1790.

Small patches from every culture and civilisation can be found everywhere. Just because something is culturally out of place does not mean it is ‘wrong’. There have been times when one nation gives a cultural gift to another to symbolise their peace and goodwill. The issue of restitution is in some way an attempt to put the global cultural garment back together again. But not every cultural item should, could or will ever be returned to its original home or owner.

Let’s explore two cases where there is an overwhelmingly popular desire to see restitution realised and the economic, legal and political forces which have, up until recently, prevented it – the Parthenon Marbles and Nazi war loot.

15.2 The Parthenon



Figure 15.4 The Parthenon, temple to the goddess Athena, Athens, Greece.

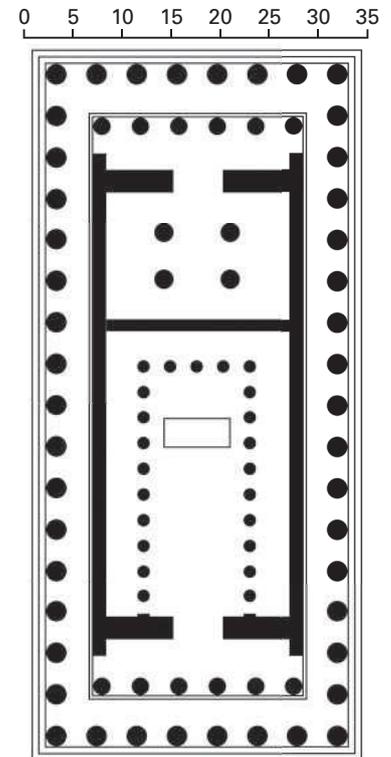


Figure 15.5 Floor plan of the Parthenon.

Quick facts

- Built – 447–432 BC
- Material – marble
- Purpose – temple to the goddess Athena
- One of the oldest buildings in the world.



Figure 15.6 The Nashville Parthenon, Nashville, Tennessee.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Nashville Parthenon is a complete and full-scale replica of the original. Builders even took plaster casts of the original Marbles from the British Museum. When visiting the Parthenon, many people express feelings of being transported back to an ancient age and are overwhelmed at the sheer size of the structures. The scale and physical achievements of the ancient builders evoke awe and wonder, though the current state of the structure harshly interrupts any illusions. Today, the Parthenon is undergoing significant restoration and reconstruction which will take decades to complete – if ever! The entire site is covered in scaffolding, cranes and many places are off-limits to tourists.

It's big and impressive, but shrouded in construction cranes and all the good stuff has been taken out of it and placed in the Archaeological Museum nearby. The view from the Parthenon over Athens is something to remember, but you really have to stretch your imagination to recreate in your mind how this city once looked or functioned in all its glory.

Katrin Sif, travel blogger 2008



Figure 15.7 The Parthenon, under reconstruction.

447 BC

The Parthenon was built when Athens was at its most powerful and prosperous. The building was a testament to the supremacy and eternal glory of the goddess Athena. The building became a symbol of triumphant nationalism of the Athenians, and has also been symbolically adopted by other nations to represent their own cultural superiority. So much so, that in many developed countries you will find a **pastiche** of the Parthenon on government buildings, national galleries, libraries, museums and many private buildings. An example is the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

pastiche imitating the style of an artist or period

The sculptures and **friezes** depict classical themes such as heroic historical military battles between ancient civilisations, mythological contests between the gods, giants and humanity. All the skills of Ancient Greek intellectuals, mathematicians, artists, sculptors, architects, labour, political and economic power needed to be harnessed for any structure of this scale to be built. The base of the Parthenon measures 69.5 metres by 30.9 metres. With your art teacher's permission, measure and mark this out on your school oval. Blocks of marble had to be excavated, cut, transported 16 kilometres, carved to exacting dimensions, fitted and polished. The building then was decorated with paint and gilded. The base or foundation is slightly curved to give a subtle inward lean to the columns, giving an illusion of height. Adding to this, each column is smaller at the top to increase the illusion of scale.

frieze a sculpted or painted wall decoration, usually situated near a ceiling



We see this type of illusion or perspective in any big city. Looking up at a tall building it appears to get smaller towards the top and be leaning inward. The illusion is that objects are smaller the further away they are from the viewer – the Ancient Greeks knew this and applied this understanding to the design of the Parthenon. It has even been suggested that the horizontal lines at the top of the Parthenon are slightly curved downwards to correct the optical illusion that parallel lines appear to curve outwards.

For the Renaissance artists of the fifteenth century, the Parthenon became the ultimate symbol of Classical perfection and truth, which they tried to emulate. You can see that the Classical style has been copied throughout the world.

Figure 15.8 Illusion of height created at the Parthenon.

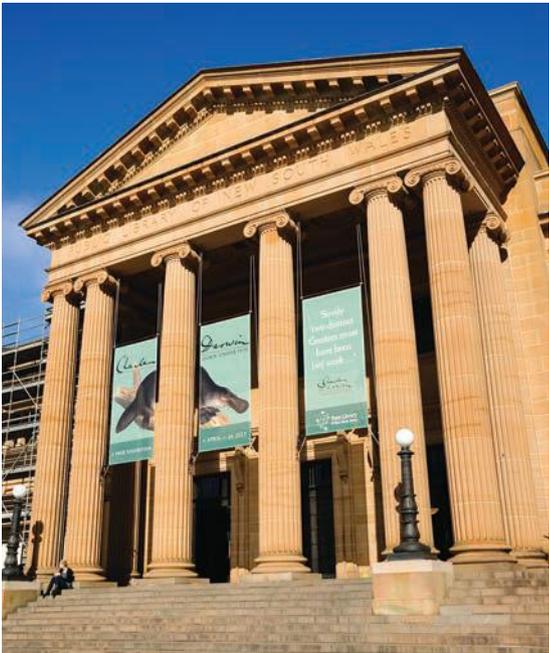


Figure 15.9 Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

DID YOU KNOW?

Pediment sculptures are those contained within the triangular section of a classical building.



Figure 15.10 The Eisner Building, Burbank, California. Architect Michael Graves. The Seven Dwarfs (as portrayed by Disney) pose in humorous but classical formation in the ultimate expression of postmodern kitsch.

Postmodern architecture draws inference or makes 'reference' to something other than itself. Charles Jencks calls this 'double coding' (*The New Paradigm in Architecture*, 2002): that the building is of its time, places, materials and construction method, yet is also connected with something else. The Parthenon offers postmodern architects many opportunities to subvert conventional architectural styles.

The Parthenon today

It is nothing but miraculous that the Parthenon is still standing today. If it was not for the warm and dry climate of Athens, the Parthenon would be a pile of rubble. No nation, no occupying army, no civilisation has done anything to protect this World Heritage site. It is only in recent years that attempts to protect the ruins have been made.



Figure 15.11 The British Museum, London.

The cause of all the damage

There are many circumstances to the slow deterioration and damage to the Parthenon. Some of these include:

- Christian Church occupation in the fifth century
- French occupation in 1204
- Ottoman Turkish occupation in 1458
- Attempted capture of Athens by the Venetians in 1687. A bomb hits the temple and the Turkish gunpowder stored inside explodes.
- Existing marble on the building slowly taken to extract lime for other buildings in the eighteenth century
- Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin strips the temple of the Marbles in 1799 (the Marbles are therefore also sometimes referred to as the Elgin Marbles)
- Acid rain and modern pollutants erode and stain the remaining ruins in the twentieth century.

Firman

After Elgin obtained a **firman** (legal permission) from the Turkish government to study the Parthenon and make plaster casts, he removed and shipped back to England over 50 pediment and relief sculptures.

firman a type of grant or permit

The only copy of Elgin's 'permission' is an Italian translation of the original Turkish document. The firman gives Elgin permission to take only a small sample. It does not give, suggest nor imply permission for large-scale 'sampling'. The sculptures which Elgin sampled were cut, sawn and chiselled from the walls, suffering irreparable damage. Some years later home in England, when Lord Elgin was broke, and the sculptures were growing mould in a back paddock, he determined to sell the sculptures to the British Museum.



Figure 15.12 Parthenon Marbles, British Museum, London.



Figure 15.13 The restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is the attempt to restore, arguably, the world's most important collection of Classical sculptures to the original owners, the nation of Greece.

Stop, thief!

The British Government was suspicious about Elgin's claim on the Marbles and in 1816 the British Parliament debated the legitimacy of Elgin's ownership. Knowing they were onto too good a deal, a parliamentary bill was passed allowing the sale to take place. The government was then satisfied that they were not buying stolen property.

15.3 The British Museum

As a global **colonialist** power, England amassed a vast 'collection' of artefacts from every culture and every historical period. The British Museum is monolithic! It has an estimated 8 million objects, many of which have never been and will never be displayed to the public.

colonialist the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker people or areas

Role of British Museum

In 1753, an Act of Parliament established the British Museum for 'all studious and curious Persons'. The British Museum's mandate is 'to illuminate the histories of cultures for the benefit of present and future generations'. The British Museum sees itself as a very important institution. It has incredible authority and a power over the millions of items in its collection. It has the power to write history, retell stories, and therefore power over the way history and culture is to be understood, stories are told and the way people are valued. It sees itself as a great protective parent of the world holding 'in trust' its collection for Britain and for 'the world'.

In fact, the museum owns 50% of all the surviving sculptures. The remainder are in the following museums: Musée du Louvre, Paris; Copenhagen National Museum; Würzburg University; Museo Salinas, Palermo; the Vatican museums; Heidelberg University; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; and the Glyptothek Museum, Munich.

Laws that govern the museum

In an Act of Parliament, 'it shall be the duty of the Trustees of the British Museum to keep the objects comprised in the collections of the Museum'. There is also a law that protects the museum from the government. If the government ever wanted to sell the museum's collections to build a new motorway, for example, it would not have the power to do so. Because of the Act of Parliament, the Marbles could not be returned under British law even if everybody, including the reigning British monarch, wanted them to. The government has made the museum independent of government and charged it with the duty of protecting the collection. So the government is unable to make the museum do something that is against what it has been asked to do. (This is called a 'Catch 22'.)

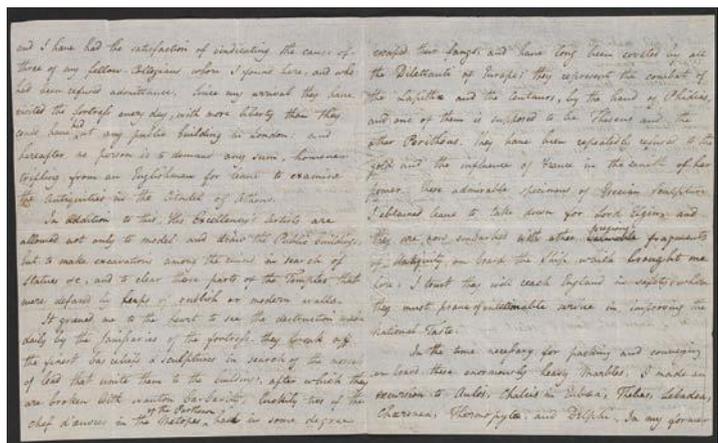


Figure 15.14 Extract of correspondence regarding Lord Elgin's study and acquisition of the Marbles.

Restitution arguments

The British Museum argues **against** the restitution, claiming:

- The sculptures need to continue to be seen within the context of the world collection of the British Museum, in order to deepen our understanding of their significance within world cultural history.
- Lord Elgin's firman from the Turkish government was a legal document that allowed for the removal of the Marbles.
- Returning the Marbles would set a precedent that other great museums' collections would need to be repatriated. Greece will not stop until they have all the remaining sculptures returned.
- The Marbles were saved by Elgin from inevitable looting or further destruction if left in Athens.
- London is the most visited city in the world. The Marbles are a critical part of the British Museum's collection which draws 6 million visitors per year.
- Greece should be proud that their nation is so richly represented by the British Museum.

Some arguments **for** restitution are:

- Lord Elgin exploited his position as ambassador and took advantage of an uncertain political situation.
- The Greek Government is only asking for the return of the Marbles, and none of the other antiquities housed in museums around the world, thus no other museum collections would be affected.
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the European Union, as well as many prominent people such as His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and former US president Bill Clinton, have endorsed the return of the Marbles as they view the British Museum's ownership as unlawful.
- The Greek Government does not recognise the British Museum to be the owner of the Parthenon Marbles. Due to this denial, the Director of the British Museum Neil MacGregor, as well as the trustees, feel they are unable to discuss even loaning the Marbles back to Greece. Greece cannot expect the British Museum to loan the Parthenon Marbles, or create an annex of the museum in Athens, if they do not admit the British Museum to be the legal owner.
- The British Museum caused irreparable damage to the sculptures through the air pollution of England's Industrial Revolution and attempts to clean the works by removing the surface with steel wool and chisels.

Perhaps the British Museum has a case to answer, but what about the Pergamon Museum in Berlin? It doesn't just have a few crumbling Marbles but an entire temple!



Figure 15.15 The Altar of Pergamon, Pergamon Museum, Berlin, Germany.

15.4 Nazi war loot

During World War II the Nazi regime committed hideous crimes against humanity, the effects of which are still being felt today. It is the responsibility of all people today to remember what occurred, to ensure that it will never happen again and where possible, to make right the wrongs. When Nazi armies captured people and occupied lands and countries, they systematically stripped them of everything of value. This included money, possessions and works of art.

It is estimated that the Nazi regime looted one-fifth of Europe's art during World War II. Works of art were collected from private homes, museums and galleries. Adolf Hitler had particular interest in art, and considered himself an artist. He insisted that any significant works of art needed to be sent directly to him. Many stolen works were sold by the Nazis to keen collectors ready to snatch up a bargain.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 2014 film *The Monuments Men* tells the story of the rescue and retrieval of the thousands of invaluable artworks stolen by the Nazis during World War II.



Figure 15.17 Max Stern studying a painting by Emily Carr at the Parliament Buildings in Victoria, British Columbia, 1951. Dominion Gallery fonds, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa.



Figure 15.16 US General Dwight D Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in World War II, inspects a hoard of Nazi looted artwork stored in Merkers Salt Mine, Germany. Photograph: US Army, 1945.

Moral implications

There is a moral need to return stolen goods. If returning the Elgin Marbles is so difficult a task, then returning all of Hitler's stolen artwork is infinitely more so. The difficulty lies in that the majority of the owners of the artworks Hitler stole he also murdered, along with their families. How can you return something when there is nobody alive to receive it?

Max Stern

Max Stern was a successful Jewish art gallery owner in Düsseldorf Germany. In 1937 a law was passed by the Nazi regime forbidding Jews to buy and sell works of art. Realising the potential danger he was in, Stern quickly sold his possessions and what artworks he could to buy passports and tickets out of Germany for himself and his mother. His gallery and hundreds of artworks were abandoned. Escaping through France to England, he was placed in an English internment camp on the Isle of Man for 'enemy aliens', as he was German.

In 1941 Stern moved to Canada where he renewed his passion for art and opened a gallery in Montreal. He became the first dealer to introduce European Modern Art to Canada. He became the exclusive dealer for many artists such as Kandinsky, Henry Moore and Rodin. It is said that Stern's influence changed the direction of Modern art in Canada and the USA. It was Stern who sold the works of Kandinsky to MoMA – the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Throughout his life, Stern would speak of the hundreds of artworks he left behind in Germany as his 'lost children' hoping one day to see them all again. Stern died in 1998 leaving no children. His estate was given to the University of Concordia in Montreal, which set up a foundation called the Max Stern Art Restitution Project, seeking to recover Stern's lost artworks. One of the challenges the project faces is the loss of all Stern's business records (vital evidence of ownership) when the building he was living in was bombed during the London Blitz in World War II.

It is known that Stern's artworks were sold off by the Nazis and are now in the possession of many galleries and private individuals all over the world. The Restitution Project aims to restore more than 400 known works to the university.



Figure 15.18 The Master of the Stern Virgin and Child, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1470–1480. Oil on panel, 33 x 23.8 cm.



STUDENT TASK 15.2

It is important for museums and galleries to research the provenance of their collections. Critically assess the implications for museums and galleries considering the roles these institutions play in the artworld. Make reference to at least two of the following in your response:

- Are issues of ownership important when understanding art? Why, or why not?
- Does the current owner affect the meaning of the artefact?
- Does the initial owner's history affect the meaning of the artefact?

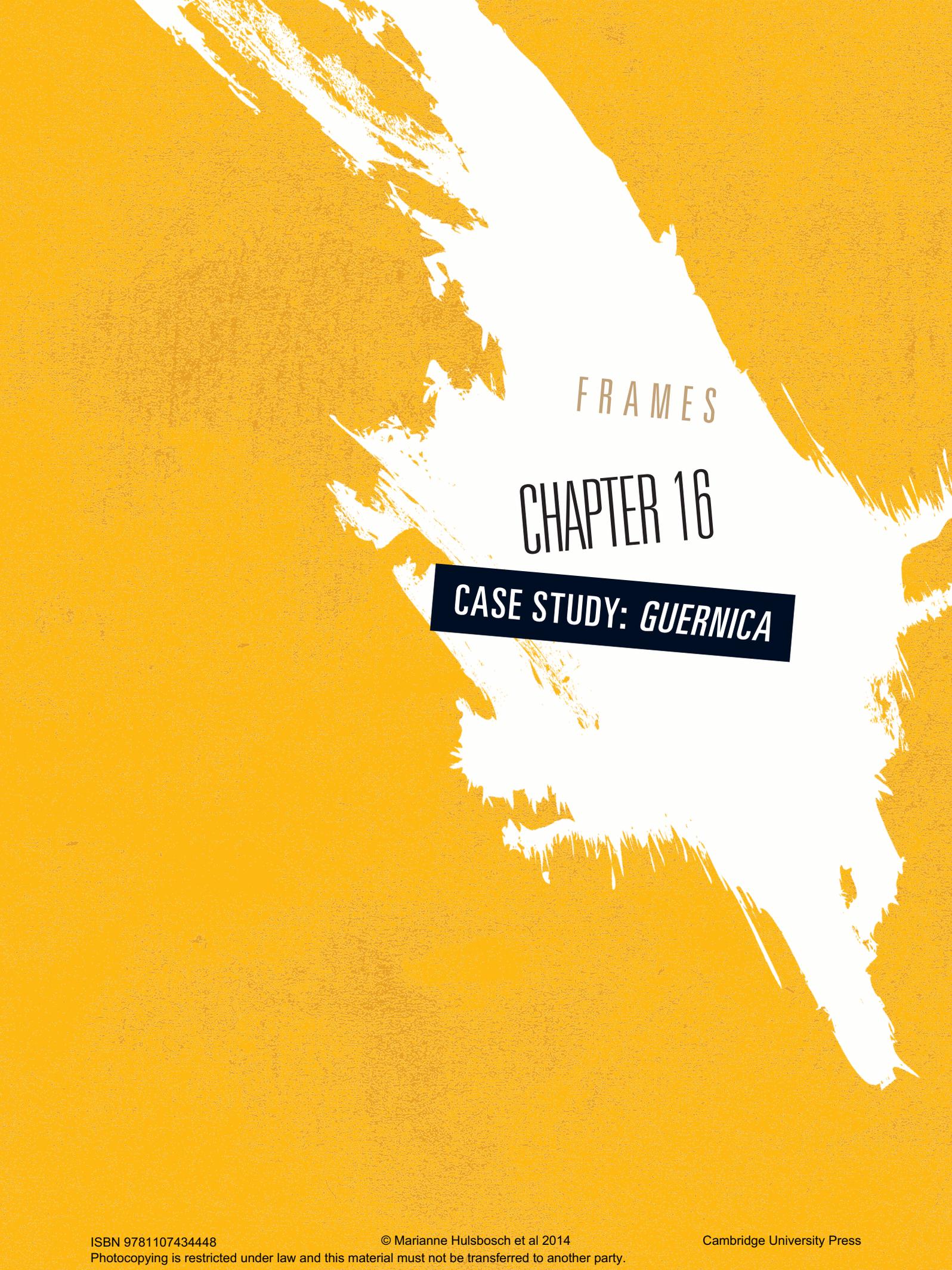


STUDENT TASK 15.3

Research a case concerning the restitution of artefacts of Indigenous Australians that were illegally removed from Australia and are currently held in overseas institutions.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The agencies of the artworld (artwork, artist, audience and world) assume different meanings when considered in the context of restitution.
- The main role of museums and art galleries is to select, acquire, conserve and display objects and artefacts.
- Museums and galleries need to be fastidious in investigating, recognising and publicising original ownership of artefacts and/or objects in their possession.
- Museum and gallery curators need to be culturally sensitive in how they display objects and artefacts from their collection.
- Museums and galleries need to consider addressing restitution of artefacts and/or objects within their collections, keeping in mind the interests of their initial owners and their cultural sensitivities.



FRAMES

CHAPTER 16

CASE STUDY: *GUERNICA*

As we saw in Chapter 5, the Frames provide four different ways of looking at art. There are four Frames: Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern. In this chapter, we will study one artwork – Picasso's *Guernica* – from the point of view of each of the Frames.

Pablo Picasso was one of the twentieth century's most famous artists. He was born in Spain in 1881 and died in the south of France at the age of 92. During his lifetime, Picasso had an enormous impact on the Western artworld. *Guernica* is perhaps his most famous painting. Created in 1937, it is a large oil on canvas measuring approximately 3.5 × 7.8 metres.

We begin our examination of *Guernica* from the point of view of the Subjective Frame and consider how the powerful emotions of grief and rage are expressed in the painting. Second, from the orientation of the Cultural Frame, we explore how Picasso's Spanish heritage informs this work. Then, from the perspective of the Structural Frame, we look at the physical qualities of *Guernica* and the language of symbols Picasso used. Finally, we examine the work from the position of the Postmodern Frame by looking at how *Guernica* questions power and authority in the contemporary world. We will also explore how artists today recontextualise the work to create new meanings.

I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973



Figure 16.1 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937. Oil on canvas, 349 × 777 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid. © Pablo Picasso/Succession Picasso. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

16.1 Subjective Frame



The artist is a receptacle for emotions that come from all over the place.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973

On 26 April 1937, the Spanish town of Guernica was bombed mercilessly by German and Italian aircraft. People fleeing the explosions were shot at by swooping planes.

An eyewitness reported that 'the bombing grew in intensity and was continuous, ceasing only with the approach of dusk at 7.45. The whole town of 7000 inhabitants, plus 3000 refugees, was slowly and systematically pounded to pieces'. (Steer 1937)

News of the massacre caused shock and outrage around the world, particularly as the town was mainly inhabited by women, children and the elderly, as men of fighting age were away serving in the Spanish republican army. When newspaper reports reached Picasso in Paris he was horrified, initially responding by adding four plates to his series of anti-war etchings called *Dream and Lie of Franco*.

He later added this emotive poem evoking the horror of the attack:

Cries of children cries of women cries of birds cries of flowers cries of wood and of stones cries of bricks cries of furniture of beds of chairs of curtains of casseroles of cats and paper cries of smells that claw themselves of smoke that gnaws the neck of cries that boil in cauldron and the rain of birds that floods the sea that eats into bone and breaks the teeth biting the cotton that the sun wipes on its plate that bourse and bank hide in the footprint left embedded in the rock. (Picasso circa 1937)

Powerful emotions of grief and rage found expression in Picasso's enormous painting *Guernica*. He said: 'In the panel on which I am working, which I shall call *Guernica*, and in all my recent works of art, I clearly express my abhorrence of the military caste which has sunk Spain in an ocean of pain and death' (Barnes 1992, p. 17). The painting is filled with fragmented figures of people and animals, all with their mouths open, most screaming. We can see a person falling from a burning building, a dead soldier with his body in pieces, a woman with a dead baby in her arms. It is an image of suffering. Events at Guernica also had a deep personal significance for Picasso. He was passionate about his homeland, his cousins were fighting in the Spanish republican army and he was in a fiery relationship with Dora Maar, a member of the French Communist Party. Picasso created many images of weeping women, perhaps reflecting his often stormy relationship with his lover.

As an artist, Picasso draws on his subjective, personal view of his subject matter. He said:

I paint only what I see. I've seen it, I've felt it, maybe differently from other epochs [periods] in my life, but I've never painted anything but what I've seen and felt. The way a painter paints is like his writing for graphologists. It's the whole man that is in it. The rest is literature, the business of commentators, or critics. (Barnes 1992, p. 20)



STUDENT TASK 16.1

- 1 Why did the bombing of Guernica have personal significance for Picasso?
- 2 How did Picasso learn about the bombing?
- 3 Read the poem by Picasso on page 179 again. Create a drawing based on your personal interpretation of these words.



16.2 Cultural Frame

*Not only Guernica, but Spain; not only Spain, but Europe, is symbolised in this **allegory**.*

Herbert Read, art philosopher 1893–1968, commenting on Picasso's Guernica

In *Guernica*, Picasso used images that connected him to his homeland, Spain. Even though Picasso was living in Paris, it was important to him that he and the images in his paintings remained very Spanish. When Jean Cassou, a Spanish-born art critic, saw *Guernica* he thought it perhaps the most Spanish artwork he had ever seen.

allegory a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning

Bulls and minotaurs

One of the most iconic images of Spain is the bull. It is regarded as a brave animal and is often used as a symbol of struggle, sacrifice, courage and victory. Bull worship permeates Spanish culture and history and the sacred bull was fought by nobility as part of their practice and preparation for war. Many Spanish cultural festivals include bulls, such as bullfighting and the running of the bulls. Cities throughout Spain have bullrings in their centre and it is believed that bull worship is linked to the legend of the mythological Greek minotaur (half man, half bull).

Picasso was only 3 years old when he first visited a bull ring. As quoted in an article in the *Guardian* newspaper, 'The brutal choreography – fierce power and inevitable tragedy – had obsessed him ever since'. As early as 7 years of age Picasso drew pictures of the struggle between man, horse and bull. The theatre of death would begin with a bull entering the ring already wounded. It would charge at the capes used by the toreros (bull fighters). Quietly, a blindfolded horse with a rider, a picador, would appear. The angry bull was free to charge at the horse as the picador attempted to spear the bull in the neck to weaken it, preparing it for the toreros to finally kill with a sword. Since his childhood, Picasso was obsessed with the figure of the bull and he used this image throughout his career.



Figure 16.2 Monument in Pamplona, Spain, depicting the annual 'Running of the bulls' festival.



Figure 16.3 Bullfighting, Spain.

The *Guardian* article also noted: ‘The goring and likely death of the horse in order to bring down the bull had compelled and fascinated the artist throughout his life’.

In many works before *Guernica*, Picasso had represented the bull as the minotaur, an ancient Mediterranean mythological creature that is half beast, half man. He often showed bulls and minotaurs charging, goring, killing and raping.

Yet he also created images of bulls as the victims of suffering. The minotaur simultaneously represents strength as well as weakness because, according to legend, the minotaur defended the labyrinth but was ultimately killed. This struggle and ultimate sacrifice appealed to Picasso and he often blended the image of a minotaur with an image of a bull.

History paintings

Picasso’s *Guernica* can be seen as belonging to a tradition of history paintings. Fellow Spaniard Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (Goya), for example, painted human suffering in his *The Third of May, 1808*:

The Execution of the Defenders of Madrid. In 1808, Spain was invaded by the forces of the French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. The local people resisted the invasion and after a bloody battle the leaders and many others were savagely punished. Arrests and executions continued throughout the night of the 2nd of May and during the following morning.

Picasso realised he could use his art as a means of inciting people to struggle against their common enemy:



Figure 16.4 Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *The Third of May, 1808: The Execution of the Defenders of Madrid*, 1814. Oil on canvas, 266 × 345 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.

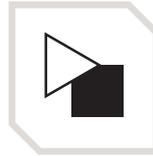
What do you think an artist is? An imbecile who has only eyes if he is a painter, or ears if he is a musician or a lyre in every chamber of his heart if he is a poet, or even, if he is a boxer, just his muscles? Far, far from it: at the same time, he is also a political being, constantly aware of the heartbreaking, passionate, or delightful things that happen in the world, shaping himself completely in their image. How could it be possible to feel no interest in other people, and with a cool indifference to detach yourself from the very life which they bring you so abundantly? No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war. (Martin 2002)

Here, Picasso is referring to his political painting *Guernica* and his ability to use graphic means to let the rest of the world know about the atrocities committed in the town of Guernica.



STUDENT TASK 16.2

- 1 Briefly outline the significance of bulls in Spanish culture.
- 2 'Guernica can be described as a history painting.' Write a brief response to support this statement.
- 3 Picasso referred to painting as 'an instrument of war'. Discuss this idea with reference to *Guernica* and Goya's *The Third of May, 1808*.



16.3 Structural Frame

Before and during the painting of *Guernica*, Picasso developed and refined his visual language by drawing. By the time the painting was completed, he had created forty-five studies in which he worked out the visual structure of the mural. Picasso used symbols and themes that he had previously developed, such as the horse and the bull. He refused to explain the exact meanings behind the images.

Picasso commented:

... this bull is a bull and this horse is a horse ... If you give a meaning to certain things in my paintings it may be very true, but it is not my idea to give this meaning. (Picasso)

Picasso did later reveal in 1945 that:

... the bull represents brutality, the horse the people. Yes, there I used symbolism ... (Barnes 1992)

Picasso described symbolism in art in this way:

Art is a language of symbols. When I pronounce the word 'man', I call up a picture of man; the word has become the symbol of man. It does not represent him as photography could. Two holes: that's the symbol for the face, enough to evoke it without representing it ... (Picasso)

Guernica is a large oil painting, measuring almost 8 metres in width. The imposing physical presence of *Guernica* contributes to the power of the scene of destruction that Picasso has delivered. The use of colour is so restrained it appears to be black and white. If you see the work in person or as a good-quality reproduction you can see that it contains subtle blues, greens and browns. To the audience of 1937, accustomed to the use of black and white in newspapers and film, the lack of colour may have suggested the objectivity and immediacy of breaking news. The short vertical scratches on the horse also evoke a sense of newsprint.

The composition of *Guernica* is held together by a simple geometric structure. In common with a Renaissance **triptych**, it has three distinct areas: a large central section built on a triangle with two vertical panels either side. The faces of most of the women and the soldier on the ground direct the viewer's eye to the top of the picture, towards the source of the destruction that lies above and beyond the picture frame: the sky.

triptych an artwork in three pieces

The broken sword in the arm of an equally broken soldier communicates defeat in battle. The small flower nearby could symbolise hope or perhaps the symbolic tree of Guernica that miraculously survived the bombing.

Dora Maar, Picasso's mistress at the time he was painting *Guernica*, photographed the painting as it developed. From these photographs, one of which is reproduced below, we gain an insight into the way Picasso refined his composition. The upright clenched fist of the soldier, a recognised symbol of the Communist Party, did not appear in the final image.

The sun evolved into a flattened oval and was finally transformed into a lamp with a light bulb, creating an uncertainty of whether the scene was outside or inside. The tiled floor and electric light suggest an interior, yet the walls and the tiled roof seem to be outside. This uncertainty seems a fitting representation of homes that had been bombed to pieces.

DID YOU KNOW?

Often altarpieces were created in the form of a triptych so that they could be folded shut.



STUDENT TASK 16.3

- 1 Describe how Picasso used symbols in *Guernica*.
- 2 What is the significance of the size of the canvas used for *Guernica*?
- 3 How did Picasso use colour to convey meaning in *Guernica*?



Figure 16.5 The progress of *Guernica*, photographed by Dora Maar, 1937.
© Dora Maar/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

16.4 Postmodern Frame



Painting is a blind man's profession. He paints not what he sees, but what he feels, what he tells himself about what he has seen.

Pablo Picasso, artist 1881–1973

In May 1937, a major international exhibition, the Exposition Universelle, opened to large crowds in Paris. With an official theme of 'Technology in Modern Life', organisers of the **exposition** wanted to present a vision of a bright future. There was much excitement leading up to the event, with many countries building pavilions to showcase their achievements and an aeronautics pavilion proudly displaying the latest advances in aircraft engineering.

exposition
exhibition or
public display

A few months before the exhibition was to open, a delegation of men acting on behalf of the Spanish Government visited Picasso at his home and studio in Paris. Picasso was then aged 56 and widely seen as one of the best living painters in the world. The men wanted to convince Picasso to paint a large-scale work to be the feature of the Spanish pavilion. Picasso was not keen on the idea but when he heard news of the bombings in Guernica he responded with outrage and agreed to provide a painting, as requested.

Guernica was a visual criticism of the celebration of 'technology in modern life'. With his depiction of the destructive power of technology, Picasso directly challenged the modern idea of the belief in progress.

UN covers up *Guernica*

A large tapestry reproduction of *Guernica* hangs outside the entrance to the United Nations (UN) Security Council. In 2003, when Colin Powell, the then US Secretary of State, was arguing a case for war against Iraq, the tapestry was covered with a blue cloth. When questioned about this, a UN spokesman said the blue curtain was a technically better background for photographs. *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd wrote:

Mr Powell can't very well seduce the world into bombing Iraq surrounded on camera by shrieking and mutilated women, men, children, bulls and horses ... The UN began covering the tapestry last week after getting nervous that Hans Blix's head would end up on TV next to a screaming horse head. (Dowd 2003)

In 2003 in Los Angeles, a group calling themselves Making Art Work created a billboard that appropriated Picasso's *Guernica*. It featured two heavy blue curtains on either side of the work. The curtains were tied back by ropes.

In the centre was the UN symbol painted in UV-sensitive ink. At night, both the curtains and the UN symbol glowed in the dark. Using the power of Picasso's iconic artwork, the LA group made a powerful statement about the war in Iraq.

Using the power of *Guernica*

In 2005, marchers used puppets to bring alive Picasso's *Guernica* before a demonstration to mark the second anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Artist Ron English has appropriated *Guernica* to comment on our world today. In his work *Grade School Guernica*, English places a young boy in a fighter plane. As in *Guernica*, a horse is still in the centre of the image, but now it's part of a merry-go-round. In this work, children are both the bombed and the bomber.

Guernica is to painting what Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is to music: a cultural icon that speaks to mankind not only against war but also of hope and peace ...

Alejandro Escalona, art critic 2012



STUDENT TASK 16.4

- 1 Consider the billboard installed by the group Making Art Work, discussed on the previous page. What do you think the artists were trying to say?
- 2 Discuss whether you think Ron English's *Grade School Guernica* could be a comment on the violent culture, toy guns and video games that today's children are consuming.
- 3 The official theme of the 1937 Paris exhibition was 'Technology in Modern Life'. Discuss how *Guernica* challenged the vision of the exhibition's organisers.



Figure 16.6 Ron English, *Grade School Guernica*, 2006. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 823 × 335 cm. Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Houston, Texas.

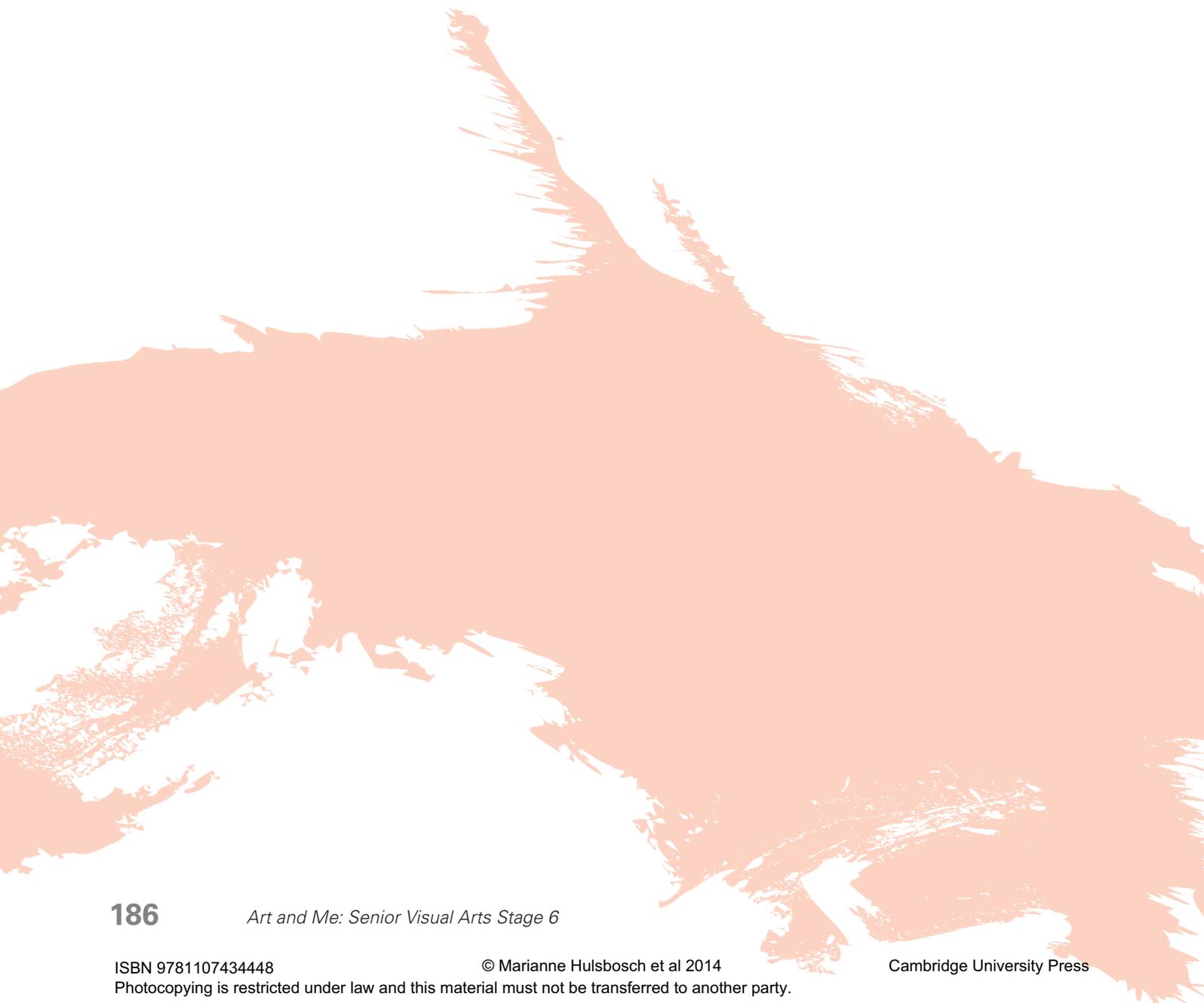
In 2013 Spanish street artist known as 'VinZ' created *La Marca España/ The España Brand* to comment on the financial and political crisis in Spain. Using collaged black and white nudes, paper and painted elements the image clearly appropriates Picasso's *Guernica* and brings the painting's subject matter of the suffering of the Spanish people into the twenty-first century.

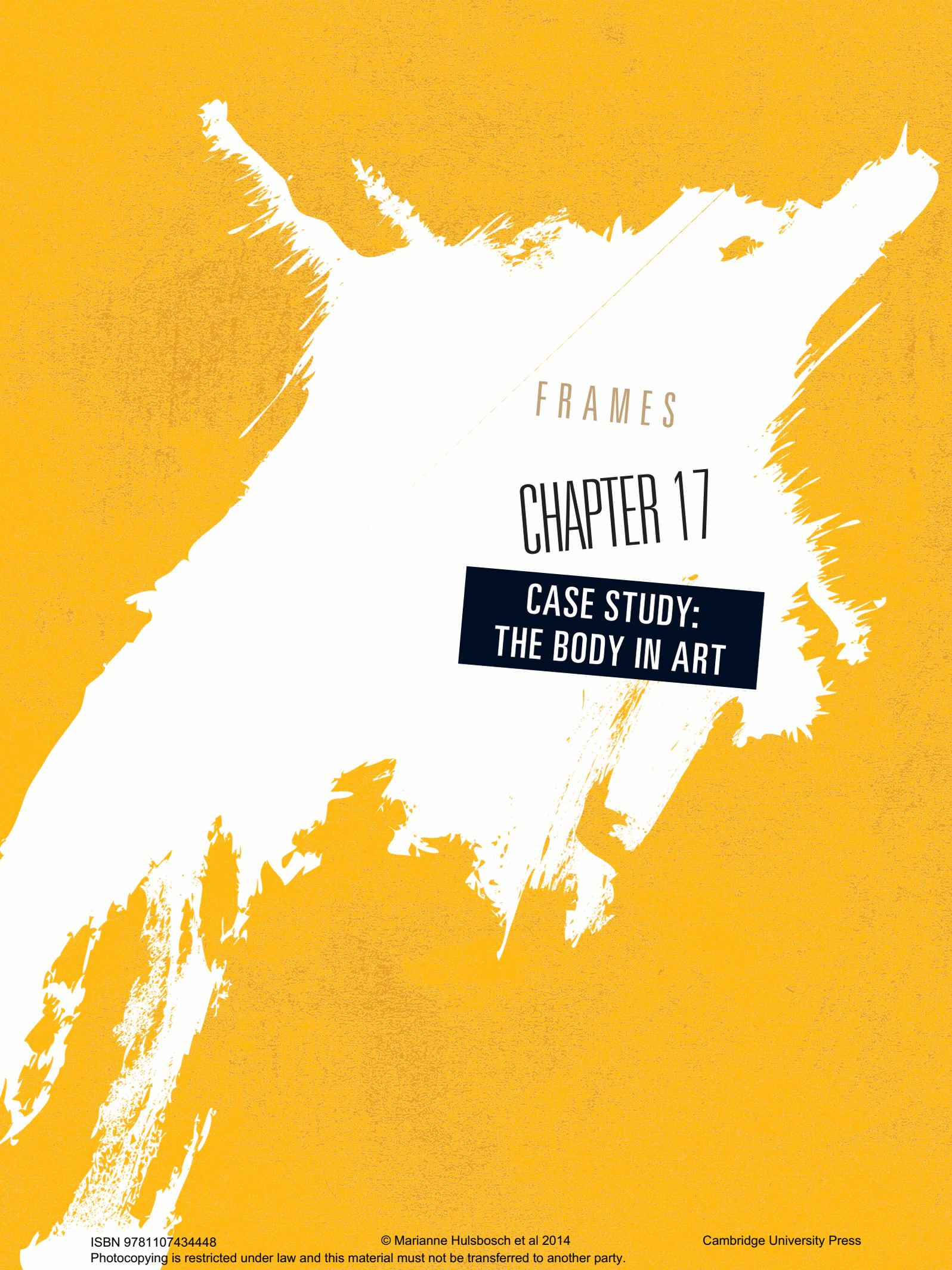
Figure 16.7 *Protesting with puppets*, 19 March 2005. Fayetteville War Anniversary Protest.



CHAPTER SUMMARY

- *Guernica* was Picasso's response to hearing news of the bombing of the Spanish town Guernica in 1937 by German and Italian aircraft.
- The brutality of Spanish bullfighting found expression in Picasso's work through images of bulls and wounded horses.
- The almost black and white palette of *Guernica* and the short vertical scratches in the horse evoke a sense of a newspaper announcing a great tragedy to the world.
- With its depiction of destruction, *Guernica* directly challenges the modern idea of the belief in progress.





FRAMES

CHAPTER 17

**CASE STUDY:
THE BODY IN ART**

17.1 The naked and the nude

Naked and nude as applied to the human figure are partly synonymous, but have somewhat different connotations. Naked tends to connote vulnerability and absence of normal clothing; nude tends to be applied to nakedness regarded in a positive or aesthetic terms, esp. in artistic contexts.

Oxford English Dictionary

The nude

The idea of the 'artistic nude' is an established subject for artists and has a long tradition. This sharply contrasts with our social conventions about the naked human body. In many societies, an unclothed man or woman is acceptable in art but rarely in public. Representations of naked bodies in art galleries are commonplace, yet public nudity on the streets of our cities is not. With a few exceptions, the nude is essentially a feature of the art of the Western world which has its origins in Ancient Greece.

In his book *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger examined the subtle difference between nakedness and nudity. He expanded on an idea by Kenneth Clark that stated 'to be naked is simply to be without clothes, whereas the nude is a form of art' to write:

To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude ... Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. (Berger 1972)

Ancient Greece

Unlike the Ancient Egyptians whose gods and goddesses were human–animal hybrids, the Ancient Greek deities assumed human shape. When the Ancient Greeks went to their temples they expected the gods to be in residence, and so there was a demand for statues of the human-looking gods and goddesses to populate the many temples. Before the seventh century bc, Greek sculptures were very small in scale. Then, the Ancient Greeks made a sudden technical leap forward to create life-sized figures. Cambridge University academic Dr Nigel Spivey writes in his book *How Art Made the World* that when Egyptian Pharaoh Psammetichus came to power with the help of Greek mercenaries, the Greeks and the Egyptians began to trade as never before. This trade led to the Greeks acquiring stone masonry skills from the Egyptians. Early Greek statues of male figures look similar to the Egyptian figures, with one foot forward and clenched fists down the side of the body. The notable difference is the absence of clothing.



Figure 17.1 *The Kroisos Kouros*, in Parian marble, found in Anavyssos (Greece), dating from circa 530 bc. National Archaeological Museum of Athens.



Figure 17.2 Egyptian standing-striding figure of a man, twelfth dynasty (1950–1900 BC). Neues Museum Berlin, Germany.

Ancient Greek society was unique in the fact that men would exercise together without clothes. The word ‘gymnasium’, a central institution in Greek cities, means ‘a place to be without clothes’. A striking feature of the Olympic games of Classical times was that athletes would compete naked. To the Ancient Greek mind, the athletic male form was seen as the ideal body. Victorious athletes were commemorated by large statues celebrating their prize-winning physiques. During the seventh century BC, standing nude figures of young men, known as **kouroi** (singular: kouros), appeared. They were life-sized free-standing figures in a rigid pose and wearing strange smiles. Korai (singular: kore), were the female equivalent of the kouroi. They were youthful women, also smiling, but unlike the naked male figures they were depicted clothed, often painted in bright colours with elaborate hairstyles. Greek sculptors of the **Archaic period** worked to create figures of increasing realism. By 490 BC, a convincing level of realism had been achieved.

kouroi Ancient Greek statues of naked young men

Kritios Boy is similar to the kouroi before him, being a static free-standing figure. However, the body appears to be much more natural with a relaxed confidence. This new level of realism marked the end of the Archaic period and the beginning of the Classical period.

The artists of the Classical period were not satisfied with a convincing representation of the natural body; their culture aspired to imagine the perfect body. One of the most prominent artists of this period was Polykleitos who developed a mathematical system to define the perfect nude. He also sought to find a balance between relaxed and tense body parts. To achieve this, the figure puts his weight on one leg and relaxes and bends the knee slightly on the

other. One arm bends at the elbow, the other hangs straight against the leg. This pose puts the shoulders on a contrasting angle to the hips. One side of the body is passive, the other side active. This formula, known as **contrapposto**, was a marked departure from the rigid poses of the kouroi of the past.



Figure 17.3 *Kritios Boy*: marble statue of an **ephebe**, perhaps an athlete. Work attributed to Kritios and Nesiotes. 116.7 cm. Acropolis Museum, Greece.

Archaic period the period in Greek history 800–480 BC preceded by the Greek Dark Ages. It is known as the ‘intellectual revolution’ of Ancient Greece

contrapposto a term used to describe the pose of a figure standing with most of its weight on one foot, putting the shoulders and hips on an angle

ephebe a young man between the ages of 18 and 20 sent off to military training in Ancient Greece



Figure 17.4 Statue of a young warrior carrying a spear, Roman copy, 100 BC–AD 100. Carrara marble, 200 cm (without plinth).

The Ancient Greeks' taste for the naked body was not shared by the Ancient Romans who associated naked bodies with slaves and defeat in war, as captives were stripped. However, statues of victorious Roman generals as heroic nudes appeared in the second century BC in the style of Greek kings.

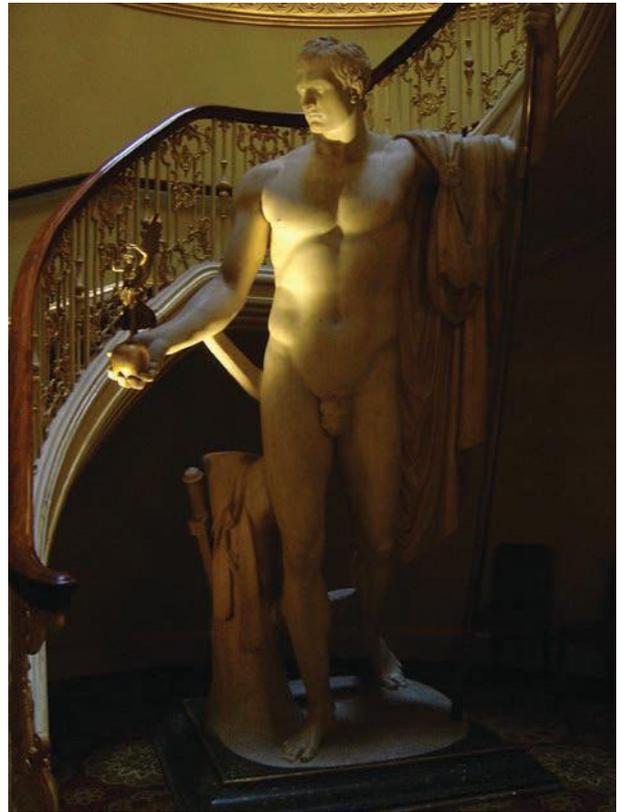


Figure 17.5 Antonio Canova (Italian, 1757–1822), *Napoléon en Mars désarmé et pacificateur* (Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker), 1802–06. Marble, 325 cm. Apsley House, London. There is a bronze copy at the Accademia di Brera in Milan made in 1811 (Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker).

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1802, French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte commissioned a nude statue of himself to be made by the Italian artist Antonio Canova. The work is titled *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker* which shows the emperor as the Roman god of war. The idealised physique is a direct reference to Classical heroic nudes. Napoleon in reality was a short man but Canova represented him as tall, larger-than-life-size (almost three-and-a-half metres tall), athletic and finely muscled. When the impressive figure was set up in the Louvre in 1811, Napoleon, by then not in his prime, was stout and round shouldered, and banned it from being displayed. And as a footnote in history, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, the British government bought the statue and presented it to the Duke of Wellington.

Venus

In contrast to the athletic male nude, the female nude embodies the divine life-giving powers of procreation. To understand the history of the female nude we can look back at early prehistoric art. Small figures of fertility goddesses from the Upper Palaeolithic period, mostly in Europe, have distorted bodies. Typically, some parts of the anatomy are exaggerated, such as abdomen, hips and breasts, where other features are downplayed or ignored. Arguably, the most iconic of these fertility figures is the *Venus of Willendorf*.



Figure 17.6 *Aphrodite of Cnidus*. Plaster cast in Moscow Pushkin Museum, after original of Roman marble in Capitoline Museum.

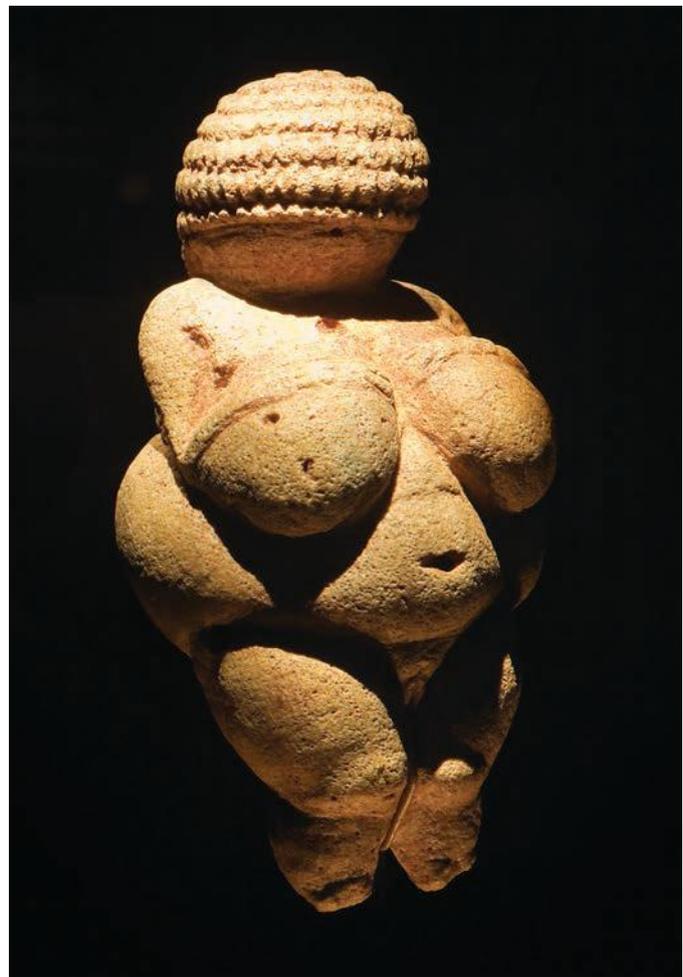


Figure 17.7 *Venus of Willendorf*, 22 000–21 000 BC. Natural History Museum, Vienna, Austria.

Later, similarly naked female figures came to represent a range of fertility goddesses such as Ishtar, a Middle Eastern goddess of fertility, love, war and sex. Ishtar has been equated to the goddesses Inanna and the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite. The name 'Venus' is the Roman name for 'Aphrodite'. The Ancient Greeks traditionally depicted Aphrodite as clothed. Around 360 BC, an artist by the name of Praxiteles produced two versions of Aphrodite for the citizens of the island of Kos – one clothed, the other nude. The citizens chose the clothed figure and the other found its way to the nearby Greek colony of Knidos. The sculpture of *Aphrodite espied while taking a bath* became notorious around the Mediterranean world. In Roman times, tourists would flock to Knidos to see the goddess of love.

A special circular temple was constructed, allowing visitors a front or rear view according to their erotic preferences.

Dr Nigel Spivey, professor of Classical art and archaeology 2006

Shame

When Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire in AD 313, attitudes towards the nude changed dramatically. Nudity was associated with a sense of shame as in 'the Fall' when Adam and Eve fell from God's grace and were expelled from the Garden of Eden, self-conscious of their nakedness. The nude was also linked to the non-Christian Classical world of multiple gods and goddesses and **pagan idolatry**. On the other hand, nude images of martyrs, saints and the resurrected body of Christ represented the spiritually glorified body as distinct from the mortal physical flesh.

pagan an individual whose religious beliefs are other than those of the main world religions

idolatry the worship of figures

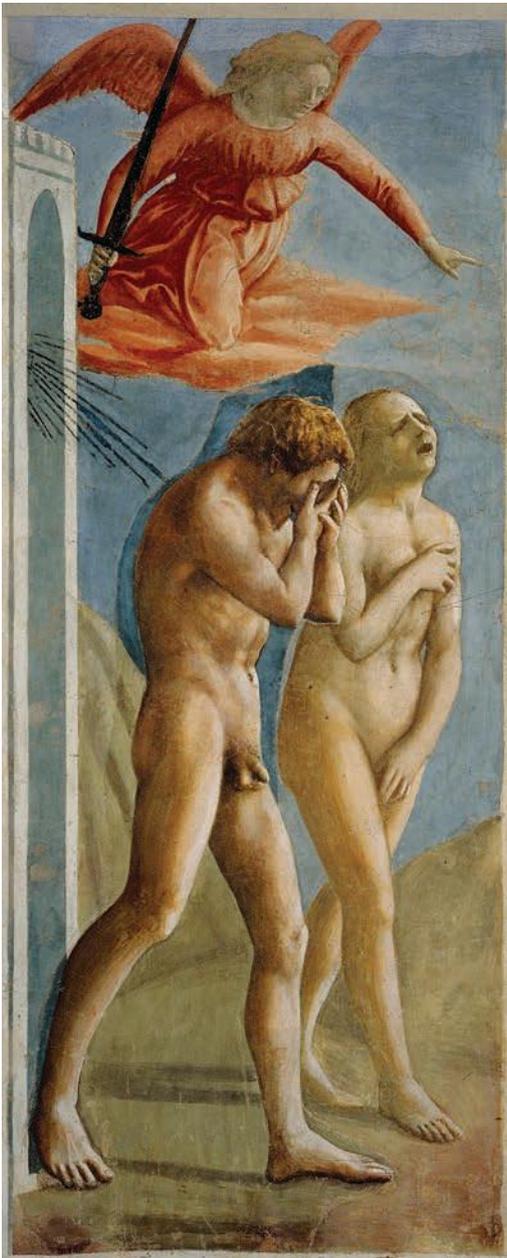


Figure 17.8 Masaccio, *Expulsion*, circa 1424–27. Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence, Italy.

In the biblical book of Genesis, Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. When they did this they realised that they were naked. When God discovered their transgression he expelled them from the Garden, signifying humanity's fall from grace. Masaccio has painted Adam and Eve as naked, which heightens the emotion of the scene. However, this is different from the biblical story where 'Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them'. In the painting, Adam covers his face rather than his body, which suggests that the pain is more internal than physical. Eve covers herself but the pain on her face is evident. Notice how different the naked figures are from the confident nudes of Classical Greece.



Figure 17.9 Michelangelo, *The Crucifix*, 1492. Santo Spirito Church, Florence, Italy.



In Renaissance art, images of Hell were often crowded with naked bodies. In Signorelli's fresco *Damned Cast into Hell*, strained figures are tormented by grotesque devils while fully clothed angels watch from above. This clearly shows the connection between nakedness and suffering.

Figure 17.10 Luca Signorelli, *Damned Cast into Hell*, 1499–1504. Fresco, approx. 7 m wide. San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto Cathedral, Orvieto, Italy.

17.2 Classical world reborn

The word *renaissance* is French for 'rebirth'. It is used to describe the period of the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries when the art of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome was rediscovered. You don't have to look too long at Michelangelo's famous *David* to see that it is informed by the ideas of Greek sculpture. Compare *Spear Carrier* by Polykleitos and *David* and you will note the Classical use of contrapposto.

Michelangelo received harsh criticism from some powerful figures in the Vatican for his use of naked figures in his *Last Judgement* fresco in the Sistine Chapel, perhaps because the righteous and the damned were both naked. Cardinal Biagio da Cesena remarked that the stew of nudes made the fresco more fit for a bath house or roadside tavern than the pope's chapel. Michelangelo took his revenge by painting da Cesena's portrait on a naked devil, gave him donkey ears and had a serpent biting the figure's genitals. A year after Michelangelo's death, a young artist Daniele da Volterra was commissioned to cover up the offending nudity. Unfortunately for da Volterra, this earned him the nickname 'Il braghettone' ('underclothes painter') and tainted his career.

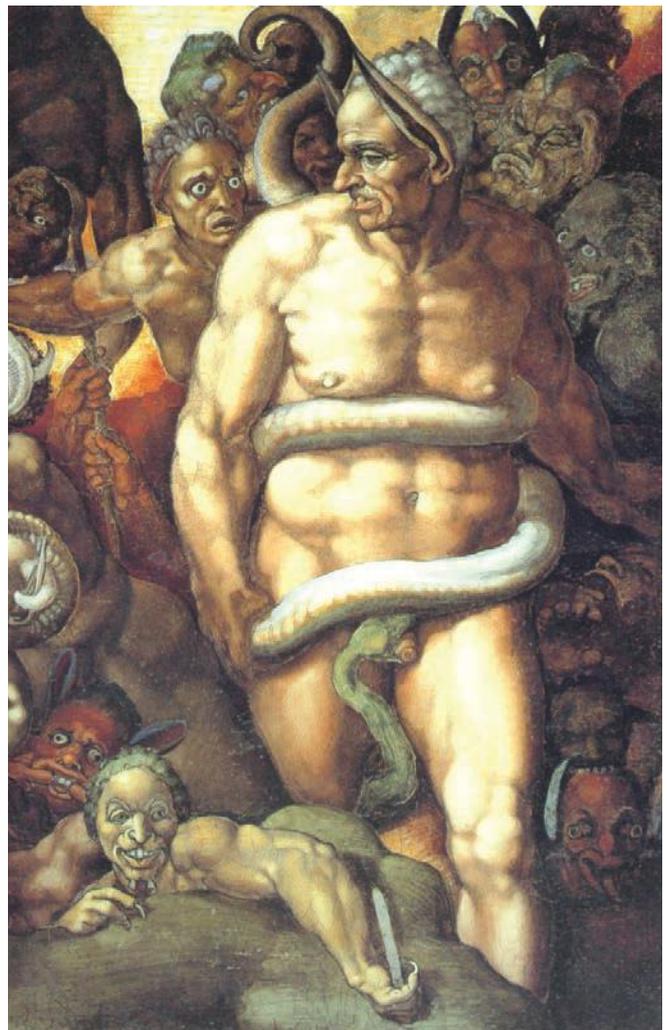


Figure 17.11 Michelangelo (Buonarroti), detail of *The Last Judgement*. Sistine Chapel, Vatican City.

The rise of the female nude

In the sixteenth century, with the return of Classical ideas of the nude depicted without a sense of shame, the female nude emerged as a prominent subject. Venetian artists Giorgione and Titian deliberately drew a link between the Classical and their contemporary worlds.

In *Fête Champêtre*, Titian places two naked women with two finely dressed young male aristocrats. The scene is an imaginary one that looks back to the Ancient Roman writer Virgil whose poems celebrated the pleasures of the countryside.

Under the pretext of representing a Classical goddess, in his painting *Venus of Urbino*, Titian paints an idealised yet sensuous reclining nude. The painting was designed to be an instruction to the young wife of the Duke of Urbino. The painting is an allegory of marriage designed to highlight the young wife's marital obligations, as Venus is the goddess of love and fertility. Symbolism is at work here. The dog on the bed is an established symbol of fidelity and the woman looking at the girl is a symbol of motherhood. The woman demurely meets the gaze of the viewer aware that she is being observed. John Berger comments on this dynamic between subject and spectator and what it suggests: 'This nakedness is not, however, an expression of her own feelings; it is a sign of her submission to the owner's feelings or demands (the owner of both the woman and painting).'



Figure 17.12 Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538. 119.2 × 165.5 cm. Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy.

DID YOU KNOW?

Manet based another famous work *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* on Titian's *Fête Champêtre*.

Confronting the male gaze: *Olympia*

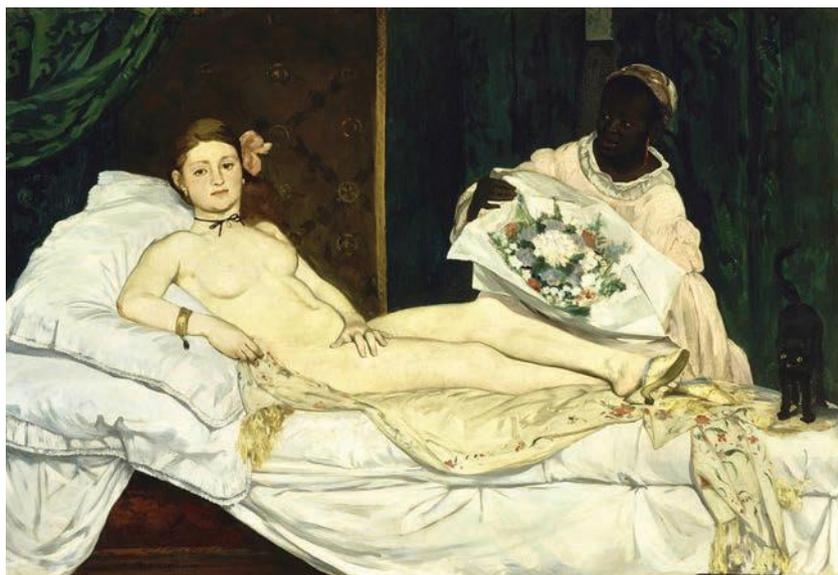


Figure 17.13 Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863. Oil on canvas, 130 × 190 cm. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

Édouard Manet's famous painting *Olympia* caused shock and astonishment when first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1863. It has numerous references to well-known paintings from history such as Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (above) as well as *Maja desnuda* by Goya and *Odalisque with a slave* by Ingres. Although there are historical references, *Olympia* is presented as a contemporary scene. In this painting, Manet did not treat the figure as an object to be spread out passively for the viewer's scrutiny. Instead of the goddess of love, the painting depicts a courtesan, a high-class

prostitute awaiting her client. Manet uses several codes to communicate that the figure is no innocent. *Olympia* was a name associated with prostitutes. The orchid, her bracelet, pearl earrings and the shawl she lies on signified her wealth and independence to the audience of the day. The black cat is in direct contrast with the faithful dog appearing in Titian's *Venus*.

What was confrontational for the audience was Olympia's defiant stare. 'Unabashed by her nakedness, she dares the viewer to be the first one to lower his (undoubtedly "his") eyes.' (John McDonald, 2011)

This subversion of the idealised nude, which had become established in the academic tradition, provoked anger. Such was the hostility of the audience, the painting had to be hung very high to be safe from physical attacks.

Questioning the male dominance of art history

Often playing the role of thief, vixen or mischievous imposter, Rrap has worked as a kind of 'trickster', literally 'occupying' the work of some of Western art's most famous paintings or pop-cultural images.

Victoria Lynn, 2007



Figure 17.14 Julie Rrap, *Untitled (after Manet's 'Olympia')*, 2002.

Bronze, Vutek print, solvent pigment inks on canvas, 58 × 135 × 55 cm;

1 bronze piece, print dimensions: 176.5 × 251 cm.

Installation view: Julie Rrap, *Fleshed Out* at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, 29 August–21 September 2002. Photograph: Greg Weight.

Since the mid-1970s, contemporary Australian artist Julie Rrap has worked in a wide range of mediums creating artworks that are concerned with representations of the body. Rrap seeks to unravel the ways in which the female body has been defined by art throughout Western art history.

In her work *Untitled (after Manet's Olympia)*, a life-sized cast bronze sculpture sits alongside a large digital print of Manet's *Olympia*. The central nude has been digitally removed from the composition. The removed figure reappears as a negative cast bronze which has been cast from the artist's own body posing as Olympia. Viewers were encouraged to place their own bodies into the negative space of the bronze object. 'In occupying this sculpture, the viewer becomes the "flesh" of the painting, entering history fleetingly as a representation.' (Julie Rrap, 2002)

Rrap's work often challenges the history of the female nude in which artworks were made predominantly by male artists for male patrons. In her series *Persona and Shadow* (1984), Rrap uses the postmodern strategy of appropriation, taking the works of Edvard Munch and inserting cut up photographs of her own body and placing them into the images. 'With the Munch images, my own figure is fragmented and displaced, squeezed into an apparently immutable outline inherited from history.'

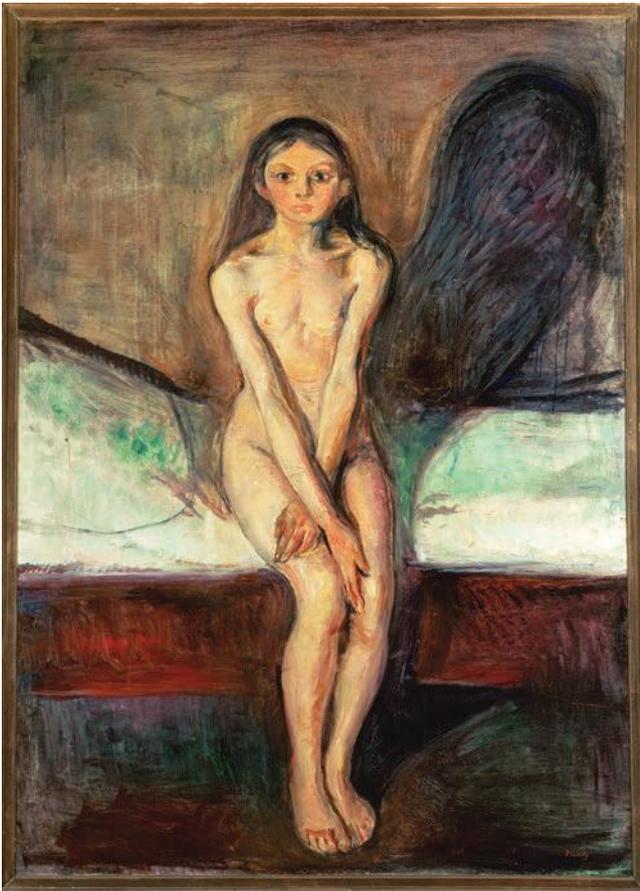


Figure 17.15 Edvard Munch, *Puberty*, 1894.
Oil on canvas, 151.5 × 110 cm. National Gallery, Oslo.
© The Munch Museum/The Munch-Ellingsen Group.
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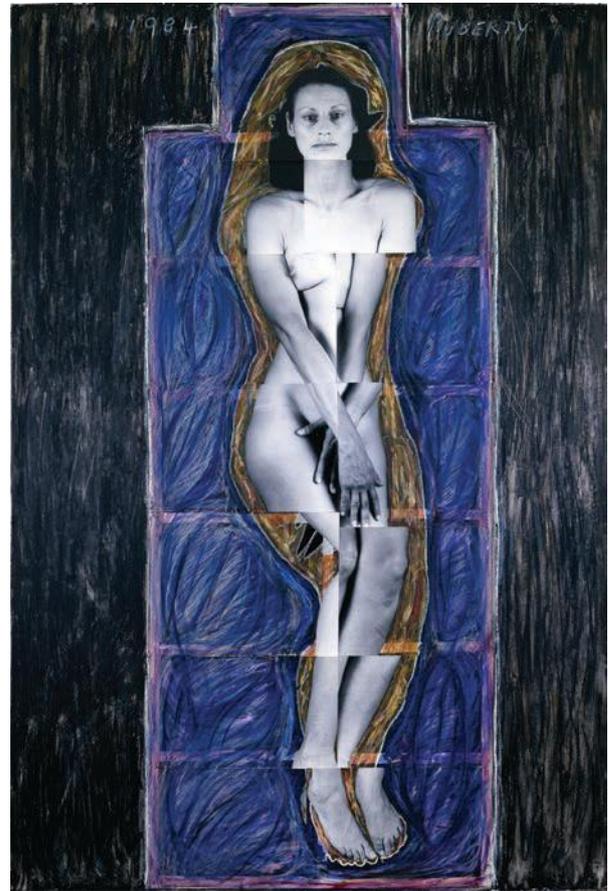


Figure 17.16 Julie Rrap, *Persona and Shadow: Puberty*, 1984. Cibachrome print, approx. 194 × 105 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, gift of Amanda Love 2011.

For female artists, using the body has been a radical act, reclaiming the female nude from art history, where she's been objectified, commodified, and composed from a male point of view.

Carey Lovelace, journalist 2004

Women as found objects

At a performance in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in 1999, a group of 20 naked and near-naked women in high heels stand staring back at the audience. The women are all beautiful, a collection of models and athletes. The audience is disoriented – do they see the figures as women standing in a room with them, or are they to be viewed as art pieces, living art pieces that return the viewer's gaze? The performance titled *VB40* staged for Kaldor Public Art Projects is by New York-based artist Vanessa Beecroft. The performances can last up to three hours. She has been known to call her performers an 'army' with nakedness as their uniform. Surprisingly, Beecroft has been quoted as saying, 'I'm ashamed of the nude body myself, and so I throw it in the face of people. This is naked!'

17.3 Beyond the body

Contemporary Australian performance artist Stelarc explores the interaction between technology and the body. The body is not only the subject but the art site. Performing since the late 1960s, Stelarc explores the interface between body and technology. Some works such as *Third Hand* (1981) use robotic attachments to the body that respond to muscle signals. Other performances have his and sometimes other bodies suspended by hooks piercing the skin, naked and vulnerable. His works sometimes push the human body to extremes. In a performance in Oslo in 2012, five naked bodies were pierced with hooks and hoisted up off the ground suspended and counterbalanced. The performers had wireless microphones stapled to their faces which recorded their breathing. Once in position, the bodies were spun, their breathing amplified and the performance was streamed live on the internet. After 21 minutes, one of the performers passed out and the performance shut down.



Figure 17.17 Stelarc, *Third Hand*, 1981.

The virtual body

South Korean artist Kim Joon works with virtual bodies created and manipulated in 3D animation software. His work features tattoos and body painting, giving the body a decorative surface. Tattoos are also associated with rebellion and various subcultures. Kim himself was deemed unfit for military duty due to his own tattoos, which the authorities saw as a symptom of deviance that would threaten the conformity of the military. Kim mixes traditional Asian tattoo designs, such as dragons, waves, fish and clouds, with iconic corporate symbols such as Gucci, Chrysler and Starbucks. The digital perfection of the computer-generated nudes seems to conform to the artificial beauty of advertising and fashion. The lack of faces also reduces the figures to objects for consumption.



Figure 17.18 Kim Joon, *Bird Land-Chrysler*, 2008. Digital print, 119.38 x 210.82 cm. Courtesy Sundaram Tagore Gallery.

On one level, the interlocking naked bodies bearing trademark emblems create the impression of an orgy in an airport duty-free store.

Rachel Baum, academic 2008

Body as brush

Brisbane-based artist Gordon Bennett created a series of body prints in the 1990s. You can view these works online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks. Unlike Yves Klein who in the 1950s and 1960s used female bodies to create prints, Bennett used his own body. In these works he covered his body with black paint then pressed himself against a white surface. His work often looks at issues of identity, history and culture.

A black body on a white page, they reduce identity, literally, to a matter of colour, a gesture that can be seen as proud and defiant at the same time as it rejects the reductionism of racism.

Gina McColl, journalist

In *Altered body print (Shadow figure howling at the moon)*, Bennett starts with a body print then extends it as a painting. You can view the work online at www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks. Binary opposites are evident with the figure having male and female characteristics, animal and human. The words on either side of the figure are also a jumbled collection of binary opposites. By using these binary opposites, Bennett draws attention to how stereotypes are constructed.



STUDENT TASK 17.1

Examine Gökalp's painting *Scratched* at right and consider the artist's statement:

Scratched is one of the eleven 'Borderline' themed paintings that I displayed this year. I believe it has a strong emotionality attached to it. I was thinking of a woman experiencing *emotional* chaos, but from outside this chaos was invisible. She was managing it through emotional self-harm, telling herself nasty things, hurting herself from inside out.

Using the Subjective Frame, imagine the thoughts and feelings of the figure.



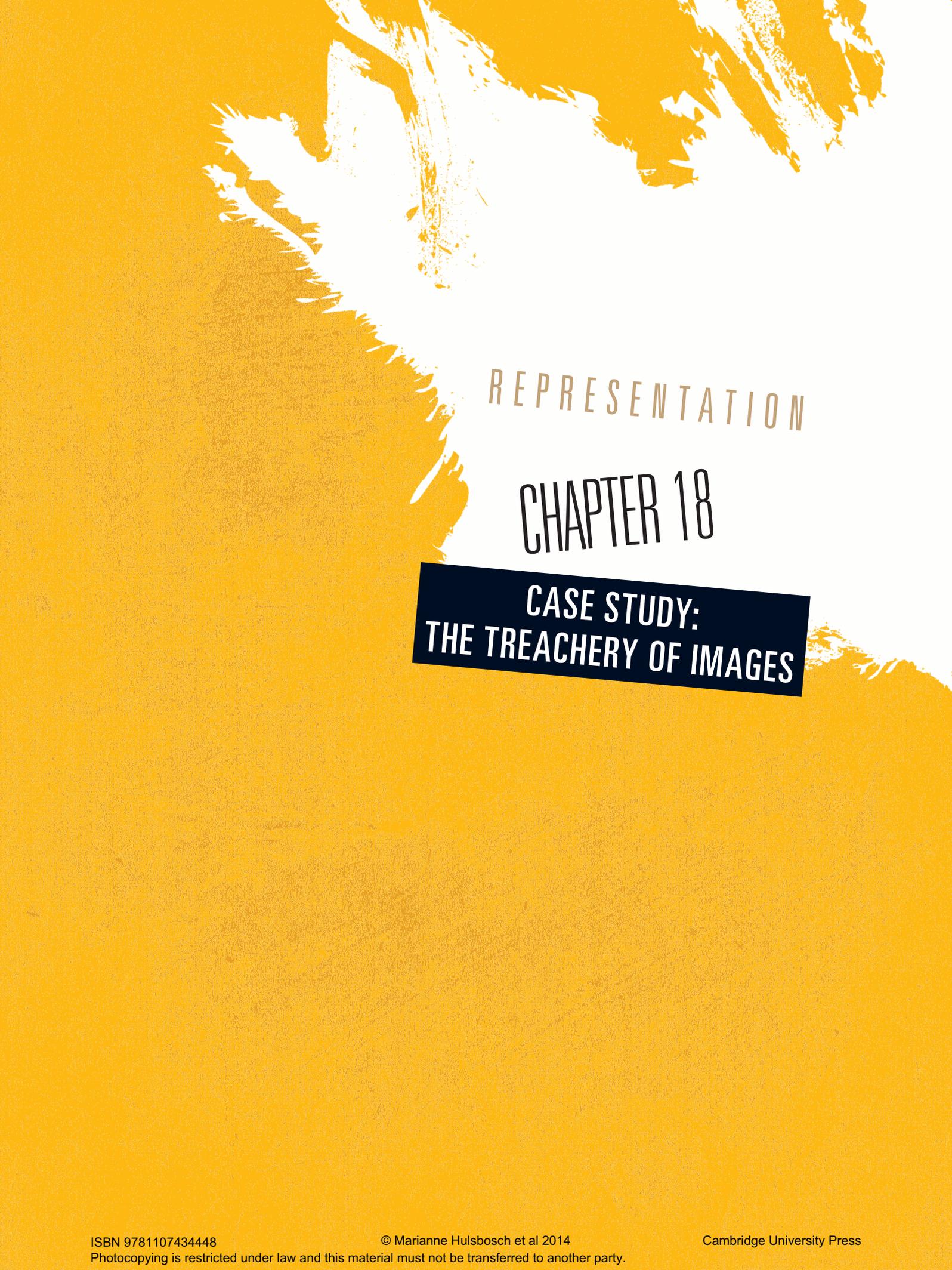
Figure 17.19 Mertim Gökalp, *Scratched*, 2013. Oil on canvas. Author's collection.

Self-harm is always associated with physical pain, however, emotional damaging can be as hurtful as the physical one. To symbolise the emotional side of self-harm, I decided to scratch the painting instead of portraying my subject with cuts.

Mertim Gökalp, artist 2013

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The history of the male nude in Western art essentially stems from the Ancient Greeks' admiration of the athletic male body.
- Early female nude figures were associated with fertility.
- Cultural attitudes to the naked body changed dramatically with the end of the Classical world and the emergence of a Christian world view.



REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER 18

**CASE STUDY:
THE TREACHERY OF IMAGES**

18.1 The treachery of images

Art is the concrete representation of our most subtle feelings.

Agnes Martin, artist 1912–2004

How do artists select ideas and subject matter for their artworks and why do they choose these images or themes? Studying the iconic work of René Magritte (1898–1967) allows for an examination of these aspects of representation.

During 1928 and 1929, the Surrealist artist René Magritte produced a painting called *The Treachery of Images*. On the artwork is the inscription, 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe', which translates as, 'This is not a pipe'.

Look at the work. If it is not a pipe, then what is it? It certainly looks like a pipe. Magritte is, in fact, telling the truth; it is not a pipe but a painting of a pipe.

As the artist said:

*The famous pipe. How people reproached me for it.
And yet, could you stuff my pipe?
No, it's just a representation, is it not?
If I had written on my picture 'This is a pipe'
I'd have been lying. (Torczyner 1979)*

A pipe is an object that we can pick up, hold, and look at from all sides. Magritte's work, therefore, is a representation of a pipe. Magritte reminds the viewer that any depiction of an object is an imitation or interpretation of that object. At another level, this is not a painting. At least what we are seeing is not a painting. It is a photograph of a painting that has been commercially printed onto paper. It is no longer the same size as the painting and is not created using the same materials. For the reader of this book, this presents another level of 're-presentation'.

You are looking at a copy of Magritte's original painting.

The painting has been mediated through the printing process, causing changes in scale, materials and context. Magritte's image has been appropriated or **recontextualised** by himself and by other artists.



Figure 18.1 René Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*, 1928–29. Oil on canvas, 59 × 80 cm. Collection: William N. Copley, New York. © René Magritte/ADAGP. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

recontextualise place an artwork or image into a different social, historical or literary context and, in doing so, alter the meaning that it conveys to an audience



STUDENT TASK 18.1

- 1 Make a list of some of the ways in which Magritte's painting differs from the original object it represents: the pipe.
- 2 Look at the images on this page and opposite. Describe some of the ways in which Magritte and other artists have appropriated or recontextualised Magritte's original painting, *The Treachery of Images*. Consider the ways in which each of the images differs from the original painting. Use the Structural Frame as a starting point for your investigations. Consider factors such as scale, materials and the intention of the artist.



Figure 18.2 Betsy Streeter, *This is not a pipe/bill/check*.
Image courtesy of Cartoon Stock.

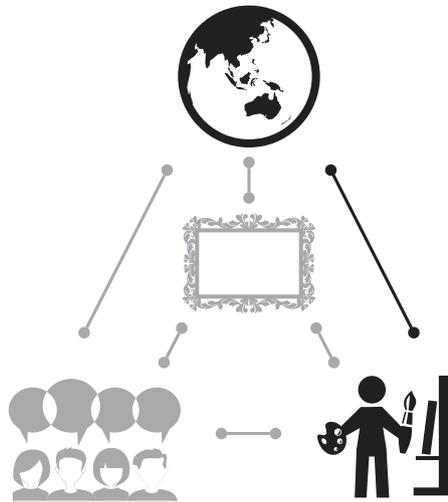


Figure 18.3 René Magritte, *The Two Mysteries T + M*, 1966.
Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm. Private collection.
© René Magritte/ADAGP.
Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 18.4 Christine Lemus, *Magritte homage*.

18.2 A chronological study of the approaches to representation



The first step in reaching an understanding of what is meant by 'representation' is to analyse the word itself. It means to re-present something – to show it again.

Throughout the centuries, artists have tried to represent the world around them. Using a range of materials in both flat and three-dimensional forms, they have tried to record what they have observed.

Among the very earliest documented visual representation is the ochre and charcoal artworks found at Nawarla Gabarnmang in the Northern Territory. Although it is likely that Aboriginal artworks here are much older (evidence shows the site was occupied more than 45 000 years ago), confirmed dating places them at least 28 000 years old – effectively twice as old as the cave paintings from Lascaux in France and from Altamira in Spain.

At Nawarla Gabarnmang, layers of imagery have been superimposed, representing, whether for sacred reasons or as a record of daily events, images of animals, birds, fish and the human form.

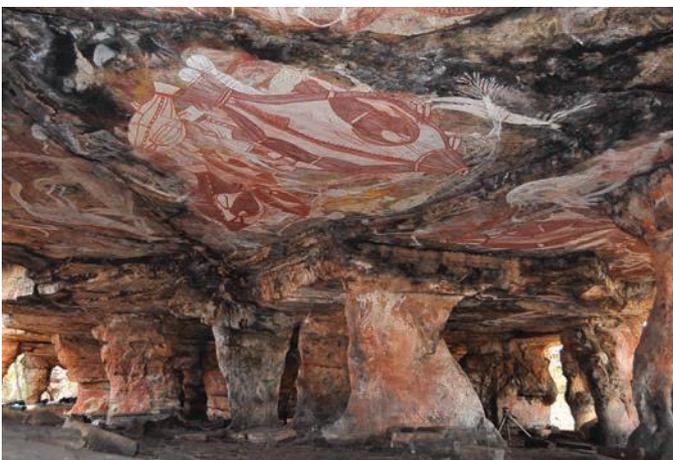


Figure 18.5 Australian Aboriginal artwork at Nawarla Gabarnmang, Northern Territory, Australia.

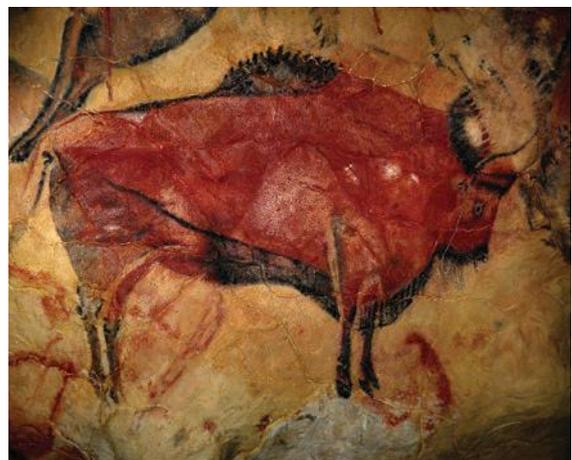


Figure 18.6 Painting of a bison in the cave of Altamira, Spain.

The emphasis in the earliest art found in Europe was on mimetic responses, those that try to accurately record a likeness of the subject. These works, including depictions of animals on the walls of caves, allowed the viewer to suspend disbelief – to not see ochre on a wall but to see a deer or a bison instead.

Representation has always been selective; working with artistic conventions that determine both what should be depicted and how it will be shown. In Ancient Egyptian art, for example, the human figure was shown in ways that conform to what we term ‘the law of frontality’ – a **stylised**, homogeneous (uniform) representation.



Figure 18.7 Stylised representation of the human form in Ancient Egyptian art.

During the Renaissance, significant advances were made in the creation of the illusion of space in two-dimensional artworks. The conventions of **perspective** were developed, allowing the viewer to believe that they were looking into an artwork rather than just at it. Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) said, ‘That painting is the most praiseworthy which is most like the thing represented’, reinforcing the primacy of mimetic art.

The realist artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries looked to the broader, everyday world as a subject for representation, questioning the idea that art must serve a higher purpose. In their art, there was a return to the idea of painting objects as they really are, unadorned.

stylised designed in a particular artistic style

realism a style of painting that shows the subject matter as it appears in reality, without distortion or stylisation

Ancient Greek and Roman artists were also selective in their approach to representation, idealising the human form. They were less interested in **realism** than in showing the figure as a typical example of humanity. The philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC) recognised that representation was about more than imitation when he said, ‘The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance’. From this view, the artist is representing an idea as well as an object.

What was deemed to be appropriate subject matter for artmaking also determined the scope of representation. Art was expensive, and artists worked on commission for wealthy patrons, painting or sculpting ‘to order’. The idea that we know as artistic freedom – the choice that an artist has to represent in an artwork whatever they wish to – is essentially a modern concept.

In a world without television, film, books or the internet, the power of pictorial representation was immense. The viewer was impressed by the ‘trick’ of mimetic art, and the artist and patron harnessed this power to create narratives that were informative, instructional and inspirational.

That art could shape beliefs and opinions was recognised and exploited by the church and by politicians and rulers. For these people, and their followers, artists could represent a ‘belief’ as well as an ‘object’.

perspective a technique used to give an illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface, mostly by giving the illusion of depth

The artist Gustave Courbet (1819–1877) described painting as, '... the representation of visible forms. The essence of realism is its negation of the ideal'. Courbet also said that, 'The art of painting can only consist of the representation of objects which are visible and tangible for the artist'. (Nochlin 1971, p. 25)



Figure 18.8 Gustave Courbet, *The Stone Breakers*, 1849.

Photograph of oil on canvas, original 165 × 257 cm. Destroyed in 1945, formerly at the Dresden Gemaldegalerie.

For Courbet, realism was also a means of representing social issues within his world. His painting *The Stone Breakers* presented a life-size image of labourers at work, and made comment on the plight of the poor and oppressed. His work served as social commentary and as propaganda promoting political change.

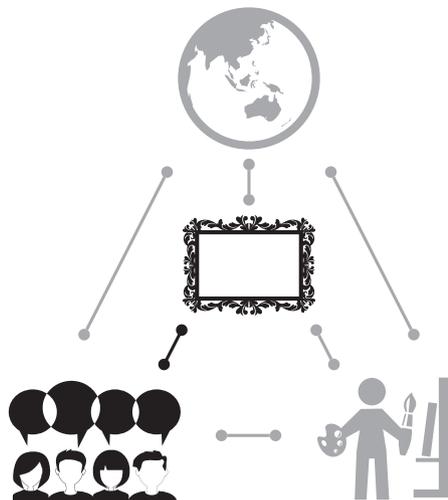


The invention of the camera in the nineteenth century revolutionised representation in art. The role of the artist as recorder of events and appearances was challenged

by the 'authenticity' of the photograph. The photograph was seen as presenting the real appearance of a subject. This, of course, did not consider the fact that the photographer was still making selections about subject matter, about viewpoint, composition, lighting, and all the design elements that the artist struggled with in painting and sculpture.

The rise of **abstraction** in the early twentieth century saw a move from mimetic representation to an artmaking practice that emphasised that artworks could be physical objects that expressed ideas or concepts. Artists realised that art did not need to be a direct copy of anything from their immediate world.

abstraction to use a recognisable form as a starting point and distort it



In 1915, the Russian **Suprematist** painter Kasimir Malevich (1878–1935) exhibited a radical artwork known as *Black Square*. The appearance of the work is clearly defined by its title. It is a square of black paint on a white painted background. The artwork was without subject matter in the accepted sense. Malevich had determined that his artworks, ‘... will not be copies of living things, but will themselves be a living thing’. The apparent simpleness of Malevich’s composition means it is difficult for the audience to make something of the work – to try to give it meaning or associations from their own subjective experience.

Suprematism a school of painting from early twentieth-century Russia where artists made geometric abstract artworks that had no recognisable subject matter

The only time I feel alive is when I’m painting.

Vincent Van Gogh, artist 1853–1890

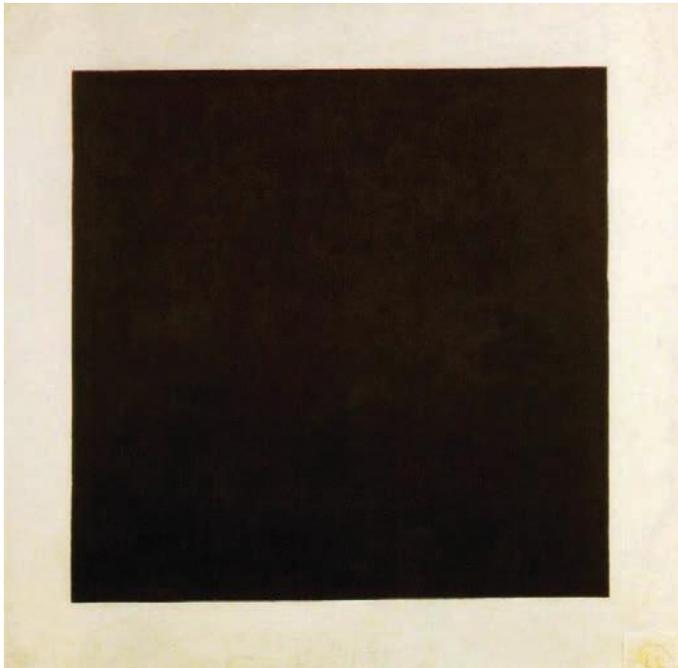


Figure 18.9 Kasimir Malevich, *Black Square*, (1913) 1923–29.
Oil on canvas, 106 × 106 cm.
State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, Russia.



Figure 18.10 Wassily Kandinsky, *Points*, 1920.
Oil on canvas, 110.3 × 91.8 cm.
Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan.

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944) also reinforced the fact that abstraction can make it hard for viewers to understand the meaning of artworks when he said, ‘Abstract art places a new world, which on the surface has nothing to do with “reality”, next to the “real” world’.

Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) explained this further in his views on abstract representation: ‘Today painters do not have to go to a subject matter outside of themselves. Most modern painters work from a different source. They work from within.’ It is interesting to compare Pollock’s paintings with Magritte’s *The Treachery of Images* (page 200). Magritte sets out to show us an image of a pipe, yet it is not a ‘real’ version of the pipe.

Pollock’s work sets out only to be a painting: paint on a canvas surface. It is in many ways, therefore, more ‘real’ than Magritte’s work. While this chapter has concentrated on painting, a look at the installation and land art of US artist Robert Smithson (1938–1973) will serve to reinforce that an artwork can be an outward, concrete representation of an idea. Smithson believes that his works exist first as ‘mental representations – ideas’ and describes the finished projects as ‘sedimentation of the mind’.



Figure 18.11 Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake, Utah, April 1970.
Mud, precipitated salt crystals, rocks, water coil, 457 m long × 4.6 m wide.
Collection: DIA Center for the Arts, New York. Photo © Estate of George Steinmetz.
© Robert Smithson/VAGA. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

When Smithson organised for the construction of *Spiral Jetty* in 1970, he did not realise that the water levels of the Great Salt Lake fluctuated over time, and that in 1970 it was at its lowest level. Shortly afterwards, the level rose and the artwork disappeared from view. It has only been visible for short periods of time since then and, when it emerges, is covered in shimmering salt crystals that change its original appearance.

Most people, therefore, know *Spiral Jetty* only from photographic representations made over thirty years ago. Does this mean that the work has returned from Smithson's 'sedimentation of ideas' to a mental representation?

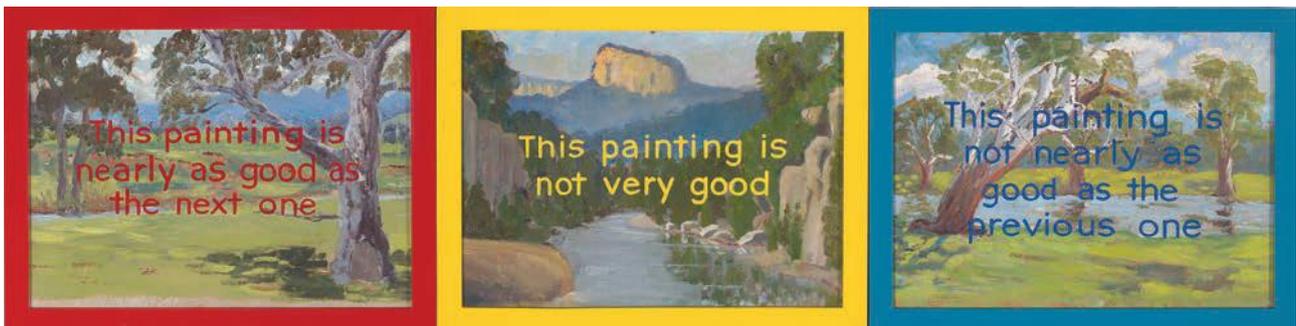
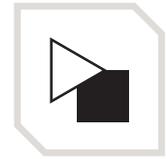


Figure 18.12 Ian Burn, *This Painting Is Nearly as Good*, 1993.
Oil, card, wood, three parts each, 29 × 38 × 45 cm. National Gallery of Australia, gift of Avril Burn.

In his series of works *This Painting Is Not as Good*, Australian artist Ian Burn (1939–1993) appropriated naive artworks purchased at garage sales and second-hand stores and added text to these paintings. He called these artworks 'value-added landscapes'. Art critic Charles Green, writing in *Artforum International Magazine*, described this process as, 'The representation of objects from amateur culture, and their unexpected recertification as art'.



Burn used the original images of rural Australia as a vehicle for ideas – to represent a concept. He looked at issues of perception and interpretation in artmaking. Burn used the words in his artworks as a different form of representation. The result is reminiscent of the philosophical question posed by the words 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' that Magritte included in his work *The Treachery of Images*.

Historically, representation was a mimetic response to the visual world. It has become, increasingly, a subjective response to the inner world of the artist. Artists now are at liberty to represent their world in freer, more expressive ways.



You must look within for value, but must look beyond for perspective.

Denis Waitley, writer 1986

Without design – you can have representation – but you cannot have art.

Kenyon Cox, artist

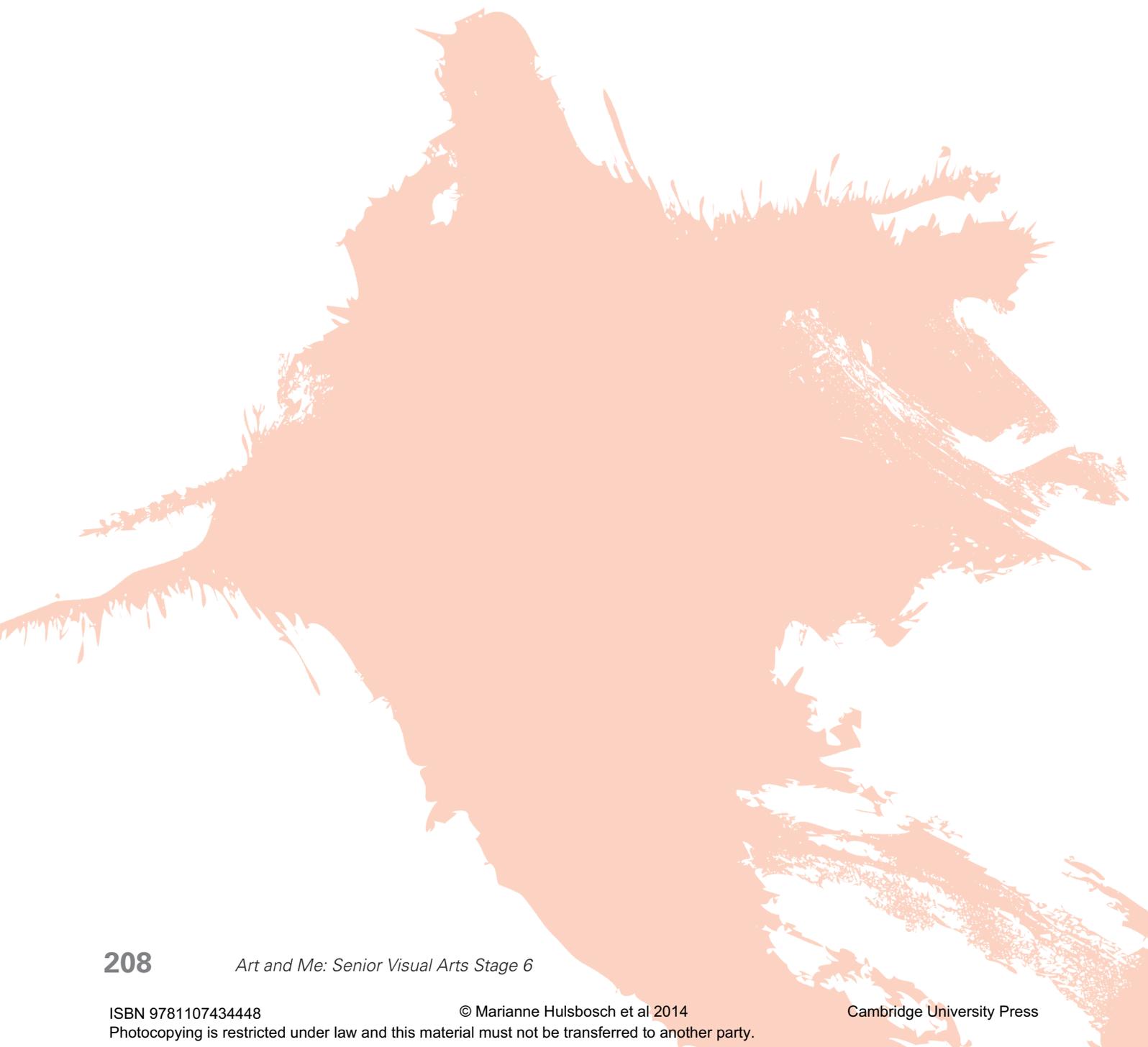


STUDENT TASK 18.2

- 1
 - a Choose an everyday object such as a chair, jug or car. Take a digital photograph of the object. In doing so, you have created a representation of the object.
 - b View the representation of the object on the camera screen.
 - c Print out the photograph.
 - d Manipulate the photograph in various ways, such as by cropping it, distorting it, using different graphics programs to manipulate it or adding drawn or collaged elements to it.
 - e In each of the manipulated images, you have created a different representation of the object. Explain how these images differ both materially and conceptually.
- 2 Compare the quote by Leonardo da Vinci on page 203 with the quote by Jackson Pollock on page 205. What differences can you see in their approach to representing the world around them?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- All artworks are representations of the subject matter or ideas being explored by the artist. Representation means to show again: to re-present.
- Artists throughout time had different reasons for what they chose to represent and how they represented it.
- The introduction of photography changed the way in which artists represented their world, as it presented an objective view of an object's appearance.



The image features a bright yellow background with a large, irregularly torn piece of white paper in the upper right quadrant. The text is printed on this white paper. The word 'REPRESENTATION' is at the top in a light brown, all-caps, sans-serif font. Below it, 'CHAPTER 19' is written in a larger, black, all-caps, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the white piece, a black rectangular box contains the text 'CASE STUDY: TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS' in white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER 19

**CASE STUDY:
TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS**

Graffiti is one of the most free art expressions of the world; you don't do it for money nor for an institution, it's free expression and it liberates yourself creatively from a lot of restrictions.

ROA, artist 2010

19.1 How we view art

Let's look at the work of artists who, through their style or approach to art, have a strong basis in graffiti art and in urban street art culture. They are artists who operate, at least initially or as an ongoing component of their artmaking practice, outside the mainstream structure of the art gallery.

Using the Conceptual Framework and exploring the agencies of the artworld we will consider the ways in which this affects, or in some cases defines, their artmaking strategies.

The general expectation is that we 'go out of our way' to view art – we enter into a physical environment (a gallery or museum) – the specific function of which is to create and manage the interface between artworks and the audience. Art is presented to the viewer in a manner that is under the explicit control of the artist and/or the curator. And it is presented to those who have specifically sought out this interaction.

As such, the gallery owner/director and curator have affected how we perceive the art displayed and more crucially, have determined what art is presented to the audience.

When art is created for display outside a gallery, it assumes both a different role and a different audience. It communicates in a more immediate way as part of the viewer's world. It is, in a sense, unmediated by the other forces within the art community.

Unlike art presented within a gallery, street art is unregulated. There is no curator to make judgements about quality, about appropriateness, or about the manner in which the work is displayed. Artists can freely create work and, as the work does not have to win audience approval or be available for sale, they have the opportunity for unrestrained experimentation.

For both the artist and the audience, the need for an immediate connection is greater for art outside the gallery. If the viewer had not intended to view art then it must, in some way, command their attention. The inverse of this is, however, also true; because the art is unexpected, it retains the element of surprise.

Graffiti is by its very nature a clandestine art practice – at times illegal – and often anonymous. Banksy who, while becoming famous, has managed to protect his identity, has described it as follows:

Graffiti is not the lowest form of art. Despite having to creep about at night and lie to your mum, it's actually the most honest art form available. There is no elitism or hype, it exhibits on some of the best walls a town has to offer, and nobody is put off by the price of admission. (Banksy 2006, p. 8)

Graffiti

Curated exhibitions of graffiti and street art often raise questions as to how the work will be perceived by the audience. Rather than the work being recontextualised, it can be decontextualised. While all street art is not site-specific, it is designed for an outside space – to be 'happened-upon' by the unsuspecting viewer. Often the element of surprise or the sense of discovery is an integral element of the artist's intent. Placing it within the gallery gives it a sense of legitimacy as art that can negate its power to subvert. In attending an exhibition of street art the viewer is *there* to see the work.

The lack of involvement of a gallery or curator also affects another key element of street art – its impermanence or vulnerability to change or destruction. Often street artworks exist only temporarily, or are modified by others – they can become part of an overlapping, multifaceted work. To determine authorship (is it a real Banksy or Basquiat SAMO?) can be problematical. Artists who create work under such conditions need to accept that the work may neither remain as a permanent art object nor continue to accurately reflect their practice as an artist.

19.2 Reko Rennie

Reko Rennie is an urban Indigenous artist from Melbourne whose style has as its basis the typical elements of graffiti art – hard-edged masking, stencilling and flat spray-painted surfaces. Rennie describes his beginnings as an artist as follows:

... but it wasn't until the early 1980s, when I was interested in hip hop, breakin' [breakdancing] and later graffiti, that I really experienced a deep personal connection to art. I wrote my name here and there, and later on I found a spray can and stencil could provide the medium for me to express myself as an Aboriginal artist. (Rennie 2009)

Acknowledging debts to artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Andy Warhol, Howard Arkley and Keith Haring, Rennie has reinterpreted traditional imagery in a contemporary, Pop art/Op art style.

Reko Rennie's family heritage is from the Kamilaroi/Gamilaraay/Gummarroi people of north-west NSW. The Kamilaroi tribe used traditional carving techniques to produce **dendroglyphs** (*mingah* in the Kamilaroi language) – the deeply incised tree patterns used to mark tribal initiation and burial sites. Sand engraving is also part of the traditional art and culture of the Kamilaroi tribe.

dendroglyph carvings made into living trees; also called arborglyphs. Sometimes separated when discussing Australian Aboriginal art into taphoglyphs (located near graves) and teleteglyphs (found near ceremonial grounds)

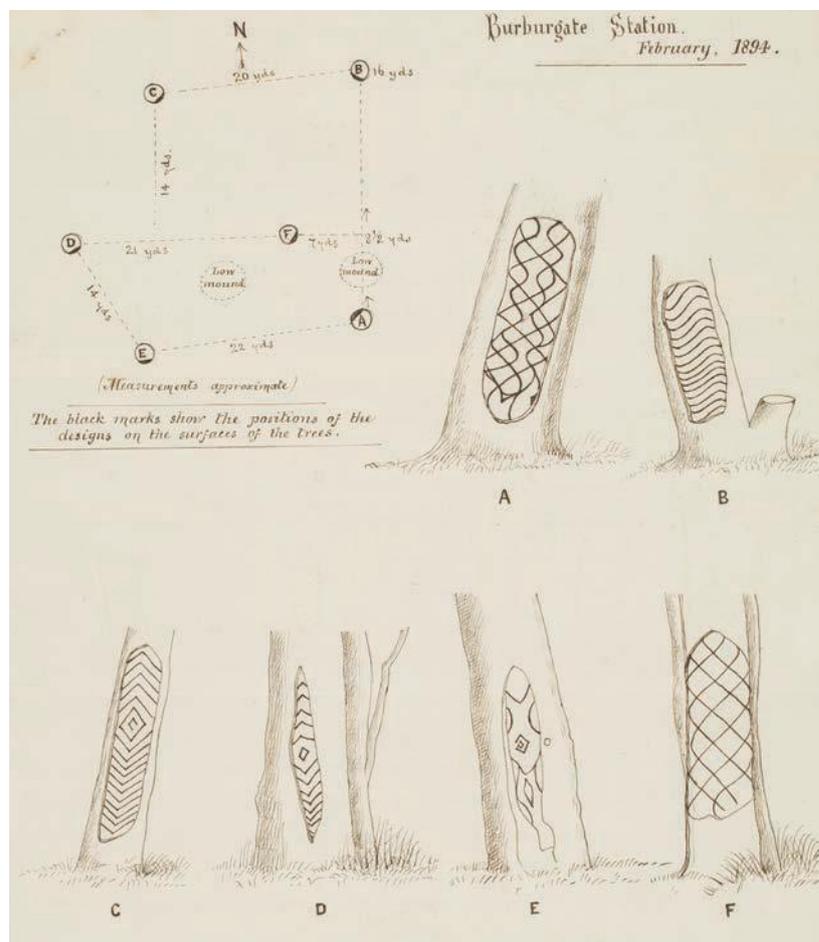


Figure 19.1 Aboriginal carved trees at Burburgate Station, near Gunnedah, NSW, including pen and ink sketches of six trees and a diagrammatic map of the site, 5 February 1894. Matthew Thomson from the papers of Alan Carroll, circa 1823–1902, ML MSS 2137. Collection of the State Library of New South Wales.

Reko Rennie uses the diamond pattern of the Murri carvings repeatedly in his work. It is a specifically male symbol that Rennie sees as part of his cultural and artistic inheritance:

I think of it a lot as a family crest: visually anyway ... It's a real buzz to be able to share some imagery from my culture, imagery that's so old, through such a contemporary medium. (Rennie 2009)

anthropology the study of human society and culture

iconography the symbols, visual images and modes of representation that can be collectively associated with a person, social group or art movement

By employing imagery from his culture, Rennie's work forms part of a cultural continuum lasting many thousands of years. He is emphasising the fact that it is a living culture rather than an '**anthropological** artefact'. Other Indigenous artists including Vernon Ah Kee have adopted similar approaches to their cultural **iconography**, with Ah Kee employing traditional Yidinji shield patterns on surfboards for his video *Cant chant* (Wegrewhere), (2007–09). Both artists contemporise their imagery.

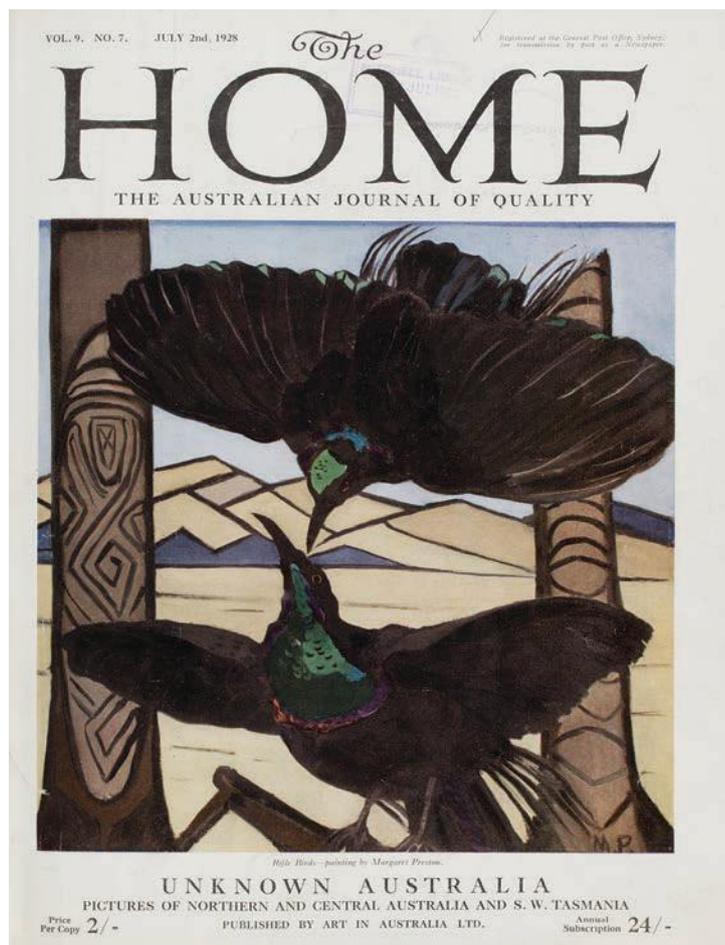


Figure 19.2 Traditional carved tree. Margaret Preston, *Rifle Birds*, cover of *The Home: The Australian Journal of Quality*, vol. 9, no. 7, 2 July 1928, ML F/243. Collection State Library of New South Wales. © Margaret Preston. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

While initially appearing to be only decorative, particularly when produced using bright, 'poppy' colours, Rennie's patterns do convey a strong message. In the work *Always was, Always will be* (2012) Rennie has applied his hard-edged diamond patterning to a prominent Sydney building. Incorporating the title in neon-lit text, the work makes a political statement about traditional land ownership. Despite the work being potentially temporary, the Indigenous custodianship of the land (in this case by the Gadigal people) is ongoing.

Always was, Always will be, through its powerful visual impact, commands audience attention. The passer-by cannot help but notice the work but may not decipher the meaning. To do so may require further consideration or research – something the casual passer-by may not always be prepared to do.

Rennie has employed the same diamond imagery in the large-scale mural commissioned in 2013 by the Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) for the exhibition titled 'Country, I Still Call Australia Home: Art from Black Australia'. The work, *Trust the 2%*, incorporates the title in **gilt** lettering. Rennie explains that the text refers directly to the percentage of the Australian population that is Indigenous. But the way

in which the text is formatted, however, also references the insignia worn by outlaw motorcycle gangs to indicate their alienation from wider society. Rennie employs this secondary meaning to draw parallels with race relations in Australia.

gilt having a thin cover of gold leaf or gold paint



Figure 19.3 Reko Rennie, *Always was, Always will be*, 2012. Acrylic paint and neon signage. 1–5 Flinders Street, Taylor Square South, Sydney. Commissioned as part of the City of Sydney’s Streetware program.



Figure 19.5 Reko Rennie, *Trust The 2%*, 2013. Acrylic, MDF and gold, 19 m x 14 m. Queensland Art Gallery’s Gallery of Modern Art.



Figure 19.4 Reko Rennie, *Murri Totem Poles*, 2013.

The placement of *Trust the 2%*, as part of a themed exhibition in a major gallery, creates in the audience an expectation that the work explores concepts of Indigenous identity and political relationships – an assumption not necessarily shared by the less-prepared audience for *Always was, Always will be*.

Other large format works completed by Rennie include: *Murri Totem Poles* (2013, commissioned by La Trobe University), *Remember Me – The Original People* (2012, Washington USA) and *Neon Natives* (2011, Melbourne).

Collaborative community projects are also a major part of Reko Rennie’s practice, working as an artist in residence or as tutor with local artists. The Mangkaja Arts Resource Agency from Fitzroy Crossing in remote Western Australia employed Rennie as artist in residence in 2013.

Rennie also creates art for more traditional gallery exhibition spaces, exploring similar iconography and imagery. He creates stencilled images that hold strong cultural reference for him – representations of traditional Indigenous warriors, kangaroos, native plants, and, again, the geometric patterning found in much

of his work. He referenced both his Indigenous culture and his background in graffiti in his exhibition entitled *Neo Geo* (2011). As well as metallic foil or neon panels of concentric diamond shapes, Rennie has created large format bronze sculptures of spray cans – the basic tool of the graffiti artist. Into these he has cast the incised panels of the traditional carved trees. Rennie describes these forms as follows:

Expanding on an exploration of the spray can as message stick, Neo Geo monumentalises the spray can, placing it above the role of a functional artist's tool, imbuing it with the gravity of a modern cultural artefact. (Rennie 2011)

For his exhibitions 'Black Diamond', 'Royalty' and 'Regalia' (all in 2013) Rennie has pared back his imagery, returning almost to a recontextualised form of tagging. In discussing the imagery in the 'Regalia', Rennie describes his three symbols as follows:

The three hand-drawn symbols – the crown, the diamond and the Aboriginal flag – are presented as an emblematic statement about the original royalty of Australia.

The crown symbol is both in homage to my graffiti roots and also pays due respect to Jean-Michel Basquiat, but most importantly symbolises sovereign status. The crown reminds us that Aboriginal people are the original sovereigns of this country.

The hand-drawn Aboriginal flag in the form of a graffiti tag pays respect to all Aboriginal people, from environments both urban and remote, and anywhere in-between. (Rennie 2013)

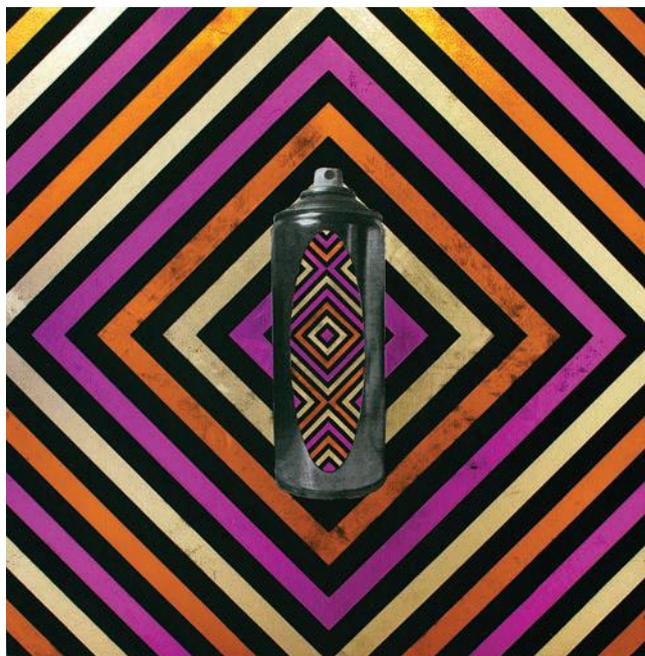


Figure 19.6 Reko Rennie, *Message Stick (Pink)*, 2011. Hand pressed textile foil screen print. 150 × 150 cm.

Figure 19.7 Reko Rennie, *Regalia*, 2013. Neon and gloss Perspex – edition of 2, 75 × 65 × 8 cm.





STUDENT TASK 19.1

Consider this statement by Rennie:

I'm an authentic Aboriginal but I'm not drawing dots. It's been really amazing to share my connection to the country, community and family through imagery and iconography. (Connolly 2012)

Rennie is asserting his identity as a contemporary Indigenous artist. Consider his statement with reference to a range of other contemporary Indigenous artists. You can explore how different artists look at issues of cultural identity, racism and politics through the use of contemporary art techniques and practices such as:

- installation
- film and video
- photography
- appropriation.

Look at the imagery and iconography employed by the artists you investigate, and consider how this is a reflection of their Indigenous identity.

You might like to research Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Brook Andrew, Richard Bell, Gordon Bennett, Bindi Cole, Megan Cope, Brenda L Croft, Destiny Deacon, Dianne Jones, Danie Mellor, Tracey Moffatt, Warwick Thornton, Christian Thompson, and Judy Watson.

19.3 ROA

In 2011, the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, staged an exhibition called 'Art in the Streets'. Featuring the work of fifty graffiti artists, street artists and photographers, the exhibition had a timeline beginning with Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring and Banksy.

Among the more recent artists exhibited was the Belgian-born ROA. ROA works with a restrained, monochrome palette, creating large-format representations of animals. The works are highly detailed and anatomically accurate in their depiction of the animal but are done free-hand onto walls. ROA's process is to draw (mostly with aerosol cans), step back from the work to view it as a whole, then continue with the rendering of detail and tonality.

The lifelike qualities of the representation add to the impact of the work, as does the lack of colour. ROA works with black spray paint, creating linear form and adding shading with lighter over-spraying.

ROA selects as his subject matter animals that are, or were, native to the area. He explains his choices as follows:

When I travel, I try to paint the local species. So I'm always interested in the little scavengers and rodents and crazy animals that live with the people in the city, animals that are survivors. (ROA 2010)

DID YOU KNOW?

Both Reko Rennie and ROA nominate the 1984 book *Subway Art* by Martha Cooper and Henry Chalfant as a seminal influence on their decision to become artists.

The works also remind the viewer that the animals have been marginalised by urban development, either learning to adapt to the changed environment or becoming extinct. ROA often selects sites for his work that are ruined or neglected; sites that could be termed 'industrial wastelands'. He considers that this adds another level of conceptual meaning to his works. The animals can be seen to be taking back or reappropriating their native habitat.

In 2011, the 'Outpost Project' exhibition was held on Cockatoo Island, Sydney. In the five weeks the exhibition was open, more than 86 000 people viewed the works, indicative of the popularity of street art as an artistic medium. One hundred and fifty artists were invited to create work for the site or exhibit existing pieces. Participants sold limited edition prints of their work, and an exhibition of framed works by prominent artists, including Banksy, was advertised as part of the program.

In his work for the Outpost Project, ROA created images of native Australian fauna including kangaroos, platypuses and cassowaries. As in many of his works, the eyes of the animals are closed, adding a disquieting edge to the image. When asked, ROA says he is uncertain whether they are dead or sleeping but adds: 'I like to think they are sleeping'.

The venue and prominent placement of this work commands the attention of the audience, in this instance without the element of surprise ROA's work often evokes. The viewer has chosen to see this and other examples of street art, taking a ferry ride to visit the site. Cockatoo Island therefore assumes the role of an open-air gallery. The industrial nature of the island with its abandoned buildings, however, does echo ROA's preference for working in areas of the city that are being reclaimed by nature.



Figure 19.8 ROA, *Mural for Outpost Project*, 2011. Cockatoo Island, Sydney.



Figure 19.9 ROA working on a mural for Manual Arts High School, South Central Los Angeles, California. Photograph: Unurth.

ROA continues to produce large-format street art around the world, often adding an additional element of audience discomfort with works that show sections of the animals in skeletal or dismembered form. While in Australia for the Outpost Festival, ROA also produced work in the Western Australian outback. His *Bilby*, on a large discarded railway water tank, demonstrates his love of placing endangered animals in their natural habitat. The rusted form of the tank adds poignancy to the image.



Figure 19.10 ROA, *A Bilby in Pilbara*, 2011. Spray paint on metal. Western Australia.

For his gallery pieces, ROA reinterprets the processes he employs in his site-specific outdoor work. With a continued reference to the animal world, ROA works on found objects, discarded materials and multiple panels, often creating works that can be reconfigured or manipulated. For example, doors open on old cabinets to reveal internal organs and skeletal detail. In *Squirrel*, the animal first appears with its eyes closed, perhaps in slumber. The artwork, through the interactivity of the panels that reveal the skeleton of the creature, in this configuration now obviously dead, maintains the element of surprise felt by the audience in first seeing ROA's outdoor works.



Figure 19.11 ROA, *Squirrel*, 2011.

China ink, charcoal, enamel, acrylic and aerosol on movable wooden cabinets.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

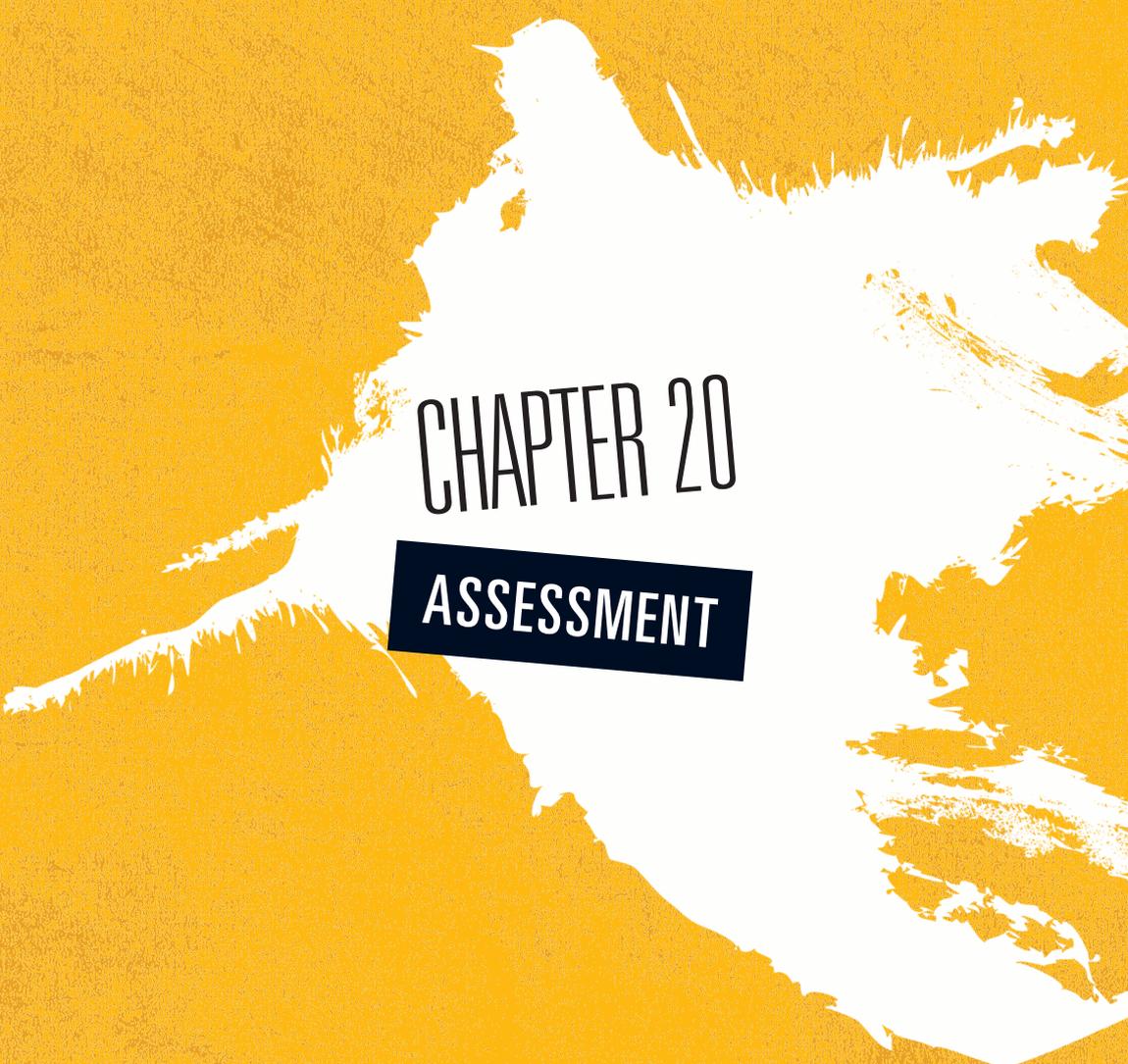
- ➔ The roles of the agencies of the artworld (artwork, artist, audience and world) assume differing interrelationships when art is displayed in the environment rather than inside a gallery or museum.
- ➔ Street art can often have an element of subversiveness or surprise. This can be lessened when it is displayed within a gallery.
- ➔ Artists who work within the environment, such as Reko Rennie and ROA, often maintain an exhibition practice where they explore similar themes and processes.
- ➔ The audience for street art includes those who are seeing it incidentally as they go about their everyday lives. The levels of audience appreciation and knowledge can change when street art is curated for display as part of an exhibition or festival.
- ➔ The placement of an artwork in the real world can allow the environment to add to or alter the meaning of the imagery on display. In the gallery, curatorial judgements can similarly add meaning to a work of art.

DISCLAIMER: While investigating graffiti, this chapter does not encourage the production of artwork in locations where it would be deemed to be illegal or inappropriate.



SECTION 3

NEED TO KNOW



CHAPTER 20

ASSESSMENT

The NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) expects you to be individual artists who, as stated in the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, 'aesthetically and persuasively represent ideas in the visual arts'. It also encourages you to enjoy making images and presenting your creative ideas to the world.

Through your studies you will appreciate how rich and diverse the visual arts are. The moment we think that art can be precisely defined, we will discover artists who challenge our expectations and force us to reset the boundaries. Visual Arts offers wide-ranging possibilities for art practice and for studying art history and art criticism.

In the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus, the BOSTES specifies that students should 'understand and value how the field of the visual arts is subject to different interpretations'. You are asked to recognise the context in which you are working as an artist. But it is also critical that you understand and abide by the rules that your practice is bound by.

20.1 Marking

As an artist, you need to follow the rules both of the Higher School Certificate (HSC) Visual Arts course and of your school. Your artworks and your understanding of the visual arts will be examined by your class teacher and by the BOSTES. The quality of your works will be assessed and allocated a mark, and your skill as an art historian and art critic will also be scrutinised.

While many Visual Arts teachers will tell students that anything can be art, they still have to critique, and eventually mark, your work. Students often struggle with this apparent inconsistency. How we value or judge art depends on the criteria we use. Often it is difficult to appreciate why a particular work is valued over another, but careful reading of the criteria will clarify this.

While art prizes and competitions can be fraught with disputes, enraged audiences and disgruntled artists when judges' decisions are announced, this is not the case with the marking process for HSC artworks. The criteria for how your works will be judged are clearly stated and widely published. It is therefore not relevant whether the person marking the work 'likes it' – they, like you, are bound by the marking guidelines.

This means you know what the examiners are looking for and the criteria and standards your works must satisfy. Just as the marker need not 'like' your work, it is not enough for you to say 'but I like it like this'. In essence, your body of work is an exam and you are responding to a set question.

You need, therefore, to consider the examiners as one of your primary audiences.

In 2013, some 9320 students were entered for the HSC examination in Visual Arts. Although the examinations are marked against criteria and guidelines, ultimately the BOSTES needs to create a ranking. Someone is placed first, another second and so on. As the marks are standards referenced, a student gaining 85% in one year has the same level of achievement as a student gaining a similar mark in another year.

20.2 Course content

Unlike most other HSC subjects, there is no set content in Visual Arts. The BOSTES does not require you to explore specific artists, works, styles or movements. In fact, in many schools, teachers allow students to nominate which artists they study. Instead, the content of the Visual Arts course is the following:

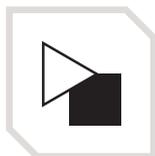
The Frames

Subjective



The thought bubble represents the Subjective Frame.

Structural



The triangle and square represent the Structural Frame.

Cultural



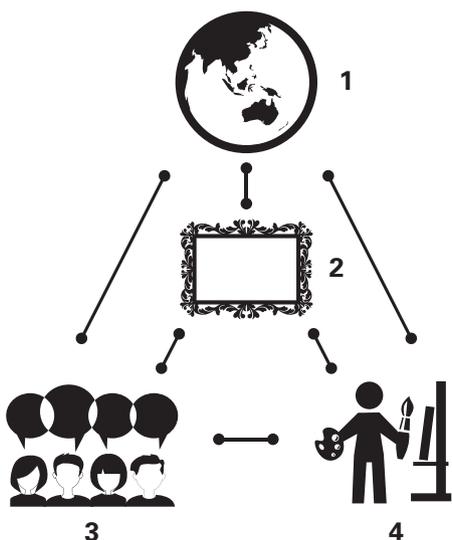
The two hands shaking represent the Cultural Frame.

Postmodern



The Mona Lisa with a moustache represents the Postmodern Frame.

The Conceptual Framework



In the Conceptual Framework diagram the following four agencies are represented:

- 1 The world is represented by the globe at the top.
- 2 The artwork is represented as an ornately framed canvas.
- 3 The audience is represented by a group of figures in conversation.
- 4 The artist is shown at the bottom right as a figure with a paint palette and brush.

You will be examined on your understanding of all aspects of the visual arts as specified in the Conceptual Framework. You are offered four different Frames (viewpoints or perspectives) that you can use when you apply the Conceptual Framework to consider the meaning of artworks, artists, art audiences and the different times and places when various art events took place.

They set out what you will learn and how you will be assessed. For further details about each of the areas in the extracts, see the relevant chapters throughout this book or consult the syllabus on the BOSTES website.

20.3 School's assessment policy

Your teacher will provide you with all the details of the assessment tasks that you will need to complete during the HSC year. This may be set out as a list and/or placed on your school's calendar. The tasks will help you to develop understanding of the content areas, and will provide experience and practice relating to either your body of work or art history and criticism. Assessments should provide you with learning opportunities and experience rather than just testing what you already know. This is called assessment for learning.

There are rules that govern the conditions in which the assessment tasks are to be conducted. You must understand your rights and responsibilities regarding school-based assessment. The BOSTES indicates that no more than five tasks and no fewer than three should be sufficient to effectively assess the course. During the year you must satisfactorily complete assessment tasks worth more than 50% of the total assessment marks and complete the course work set by your teacher.

At the end of the year, your school will give your total (cumulative) assessment mark to the BOSTES; it will show what you achieved compared to other Visual Arts students at your school. The following section sets out some of the rules that you and your school must follow.

Throughout the whole Preliminary/HSC course, you should work consistently and to as high a standard as possible, in both assessment and non-assessment tasks. The final school assessment mark will be moderated by the BOSTES according to the school's performance in that course at the HSC examination. Since the mark sent from the school to the BOSTES will be altered before it goes on the HSC, the school assessment mark is confidential and will not be revealed to students or parents.

Art criticism and art history objective: Students will develop knowledge, skills and understanding of how they can represent an informed point of view about the visual arts in their critical and historical accounts.

20.4 Reporting of HSC results

An HSC is awarded to students who have met all requirements set by the BOSTES. Results of HSC courses satisfactorily completed appear on the HSC record of achievement and on a course report. The following information is recorded for each BOSTES-developed course:

- the moderated assessment mark based on school-based assessment tasks
- the examination mark awarded for the external examination
- the HSC mark, which is the average of the HSC exam and school assessment marks
- the performance band showing the level of achievement in a course.

This information will also be included in a course report that will be issued for each course completed.

This report will include descriptors for each performance band, which provide a summary of what you know and are able to do.

20.5 Examinations

Mid-year, end-of-year and trial examinations

It is common for you to sit a mid-year examination and a yearly examination that mirror the style and format of an HSC exam. By the time you sit your HSC exam, therefore, you will have had plenty of experience writing under exam conditions. Your teachers may write their own paper, use a past paper or purchase one developed by other educational institutions.

The best way to prepare for your exams is to become familiar with the format of an HSC examination paper, understand the terminology used in the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus (practice, Frames and Conceptual Framework) and have completed and revised your Year 11 and Year 12 case studies.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can find out your school rank in the subject but not your final assessment mark. This is because the BOSTES might adjust (moderate) your assessment mark depending on how you and your school perform in the HSC.

HSC written examinations

The HSC Visual Arts exam paper is divided into two sections. Each section is worth 25 marks.

Section I

Section I contains Questions 1, 2 and 3. Ensure you answer each of these questions.

The questions can be of different mark values – although one question will be worth between 10 and 15 marks – and the paper advises you how long you should allocate to each question. Don't ignore these recommendations – there is no point, for example, committing 30 minutes to a question worth 5 marks.

The questions can only be about the content areas of the Visual Arts course:

- practice
- the Frames – Subjective, Structural, Cultural or Postmodern
- the Conceptual Framework – agencies of the artworld.

Be sure to accurately identify the focus content area of each question. Ensure that you concentrate on the key words and concepts presented. If you find some of the key words confusing, remember that they directly relate to the content areas. Practise your examination skills and go through some past papers to see whether you can identify the content areas of certain questions. It is important to demonstrate to the examiner how well you are able to implement your practical art skills and use the frames to analyse and evaluate the artworld through the Conceptual Framework.

It is reassuring to know that most of the answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3 are contained in the plates (images), information and extracts presented in the examination paper.

The information provided with each plate will give you the:

- name and nationality of the artist
- title of the work
- date it was created
- materials used to create the work
- size of the work.

The questions will ask you to identify information presented in a plate or a text extract and to apply it in accordance with the question. Once you have identified the features of the plate or extract it is important to apply them in the correct way. In your answer you will need to point the examiner to evidence in the plate or extract. For example, you could write, 'In Plate 1, we see ...'.

Extracts can come from all kinds of documents, including letters written by artists, gallery reviews and journal articles. Some extracts can be difficult to understand, as they are often not written for high school students. The important thing is to see what you can understand from a careful reading of the extract and to apply this when answering the question. Don't panic if you can't understand every word of an extract. When you are writing your answer don't waste time by rewriting the entire extract.

The following assessment marking guide appears on examination papers to help focus your written responses. This tells you what the examiner will be looking for when marking your paper:

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- write in a concise and well-reasoned way
- present an informed point of view
- use the plates and any other source material provided to inform your response.

Let's look more closely at each point above.

First, the examiner wants to see that you have provided a reasoned answer. It needs to be apparent that you have thought about how you are going to answer the question and you communicate this through a clear argument. Think about your answer before you start writing.

Second, you need to have an informed point of view. To support your argument, you need to present evidence from the plates or extracts or your case study. Too often students will only give a reasoned argument or their opinion. This is not sufficient. You must support your answer by making the appropriate references.

Third, your response must include appropriate content. Remember that the content of the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus is practice, the Frames and the Conceptual Framework and that each question in the examination paper will refer specifically to one of these areas. It is important to demonstrate to the examiner that you not only understand the focus of the question but that you can apply the content in an appropriate way.

Some students panic when answering Section I questions. Encountering works and concepts you have not seen before can be daunting. The examiners do not expect you to know everything about the images and extracts being presented.

The plates, details and extracts will give you most of the information you need to answer the question. All you need to do is to look for the information and then apply it to the question.

Section II

Section II asks that you write one extended essay response. You will be presented with six questions that will be divided into the three content areas: two for Practice, two for Conceptual Framework and two for the Frames. You must select and answer only one question. All questions are of equal value.

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- present a well-reasoned and informed point of view
- apply your understandings of the different aspects of content as appropriate (Practice, Conceptual Framework and the Frames)
- use relevant examples.

Unlike Section I, questions will refer to specific artists or artworks. You need to use one or more of your case studies to answer the question.

There are some common mistakes that students make when answering the Section II question. These include the following:

- Students may write about a content area that is different from the one in the chosen question. For example, they write a Frames analysis when the question is about the Conceptual Framework.
- They select a question that does not suit their case studies. The question may ask the student to write about architects or designers, or about art historians or theorists, but they answer using a case study about a painter. That is not acceptable.
- They forget to use a case study to support their answer. The questions may be general in nature, but the answer must be focused and specific.
- They neglect to use the quotations or statements that are presented in the question for stimulus.

In the exam, use the five-minute reading time to determine which question and case study or case studies you will choose. You can use information from more than one of your case studies to answer a question.

Essay writing advice

- Be sure to document clearly which question is being attempted.
- Only use a blue or black pen.
- Take care with your handwriting. If you have handwriting that is difficult to read, consider using double spacing (missing a line each time).
- Miss a line between paragraphs to give the reader a visual rest.
- Use the correct titles, spelling and dates for the artworks. Artwork titles should start with a capital letter.
- Take care with your language. Use specific art language when discussing works of art – it is not a ‘picture’ – it is an ‘oil painting’. Rather than writing ‘a lot’ use words such as ‘much’, ‘many’ or ‘a great deal’.
- Avoid writing ‘I think ...’ in an essay; this is understood because you are presenting your argument.
- When you have finished writing your essay, always read back over it.

Essay structure tips

Introduction

- Outline the important aspects of your answer: your line of argument, the key terms, the focus artist(s) and/or artwork(s) and key texts.
- Use the key words/aspects of the question to address how you are going to answer the question.
- Specifically state, explain and define the art educational focus of the question: Practice, Frames (state which ones) or Conceptual Framework (state which key relationships are the focus).
- Be specific from the outset; generalisations waste time and do not demonstrate specialist knowledge.
- Use the introduction to focus your essay directly and specifically on your line of argument.
- If the question presents some information or a reference or quotation, ensure this is addressed in your introduction.

Body

- Ensure your writing style is well suited to the question you are attempting.
- Use appropriate evidence, information, references and quotations to support or justify your argument and to give your writing authority and your argument credibility.
- Build strong links between each aspect of your essay by using statements such as 'This can be seen in ...', 'For example ...' and 'Furthermore ...'. This will give your argument a flow and direction.
- Reference quotations and information correctly. Ask your teacher which reference style they want you to use.
- Paraphrase and reference long quotations instead of writing them out. Draw out the key words.
- After presenting a quotation, state your understanding of it and the point you are making by using it.
- Present more than a general discussion on issues raised in the question. Give evidence from the case study being presented.
- When presenting an historical overview (chronology of events) ensure you are addressing the question.
- When introducing an artwork, always describe what it looks like; that is, its visual qualities. Bring it to life in the mind of the examiner. As before, be specific in your description. Don't say 'in her work ...' – say 'In her drypoint etching ...'.
- Place each point you make within the context of your argument. An isolated piece of trivia acts as a distraction.
- Use the language from the question throughout your essay to keep pointing the reader back to the question and to reinforce that you are addressing the question.
- Ensure your answer is more than an interpretation and reading of an artwork.
- Make connections between the question and the case studies.
- Expand on your points by taking the examiner deeper into your thoughts and argument.
- If the question presents some information or a reference or quotation, ensure this is addressed in the body of your essay.

Conclusion

- Affirm the case you have presented and state how you have answered the question.
- If the question presents some information or a reference or quotation, ensure this is addressed in your conclusion.

Some students begin by answering Section II first. You might want to consider doing this as it is the most demanding section, requiring the most planning and thought.

Writing an extended essay

Writing an extended essay is a skill that cannot be learnt overnight. Many factors will help you to give a successful response. The best approach is to work hard during the year developing and understanding each of your case studies. Ensure that your case studies are broad enough, using more than just one Frame to investigate and analyse aspects of the Conceptual Framework.

A good way to test that you have done this is to take any HSC paper and see if you can answer at least one Section II question in it. A good case study will have a completely developed Conceptual Framework, and will use the Frames as a tool to analyse the links between the agencies of the artworld. If in doubt, consult your teacher.

Essay plan

Writing an essay plan is advisable for a number of reasons:

- It allows you to record all your points so you won't forget them once you start writing.
- It demonstrates to the examiner that you have considered your argument.
- If something happens during the examination that means you cannot complete the paper you have at least indicated what you intended to present in your response.

Essay plans need to be brief and concise and demonstrate a considered argument. Always write your essay plan in the examination booklet. Write it on the lined paper provided not on the back of the cover sheet. Always start your essay on a new page.

Essay structure

There are three components of an essay: introduction, body and conclusion. The essay structure tips on the previous pages provide advice about writing each component of your essay.

20.6 HSC artmaking

When setting out to create your body of work make sure you are familiar with the rules and regulations that are set out by the BOSTES. Your VAPD, as well as the artworks you have produced, must be taken into account in your teacher's assessment of your achievement. The teacher's comments and advice will be clearly indicated in your diary or on a separate piece of paper and comments will be dated. The diary, along with other work produced and not submitted as the body of work, must be available if required in the HSC examination. In the event of appeals, these may be used to verify and provide further evidence of a student's work.

Selecting works for an HSC submission

The selection of work for a body of work is made on the basis of your demonstration of an understanding of artmaking practice. The work selected should represent a coherent point of view and indicate your intentions as an artist.

The selection should also provide evidence of the conceptual strength and meaning that exists between and within the works included in the body of work. Consider the ways an individual work may be selected as a body of work on the basis that it reveals a coherent point of view and conceptual strength and meaning. Interpret the conditions and constraints of HSC submissions for the body of work in imaginative, inventive and resourceful ways.

You should also recognise that it is not always wise to submit for marking everything that you have done in your HSC artmaking practice. The HSC Notes from the Marking Centre advise students that submissions should showcase the knowledge, intentions and understanding of the practice. Student pieces should reflect what they have learnt, and show that they have carefully considered their submission.

Selection is essential and the presentation to the marker of lesser works (those demonstrating lower levels of conceptual strength and meaning or resolution) may lessen the impact of your overall body of work.

Listening to your teacher

Your Visual Arts teacher has an important role as they will guide and direct you through your studies. Your teacher has the understandings and perspectives needed to help you achieve your best. Give your teacher the time to explain things to you and listen to their advice. If you are having difficulty understanding or relating to your teacher, you could consider seeking further meetings with them in the company of your parents or the head of department. Establishing a trusting and positive relationship with your Visual Arts teacher is essential.

External marking of bodies of work

The external marking of bodies of work is conducted itinerantly (that is, in the school) or corporately (that is, at the HSC marking centre). Works in country schools are marked itinerantly, while works in city schools may be marked either way. Works in some expressive forms, including printmaking, are always marked at the HSC marking centre. There are two reasons for this.

First, when relatively few candidates submit work in a particular expressive form, the works are kept together to ensure that clear standards can be established for that form. Second, the BOSTES recognises that certain expressive forms involve specific technical knowledge and skills, and so these are marked at the marking centre by examiners with experience working with these media areas. At the marking centre, works are assessed against set standards. These are reconfirmed each year by senior markers and all works are considered against clear, published assessment criteria.

Artworks at the marking centre or in the school are not compared with each other and are not ranked. They are assessed on their conceptual strength and meaning and on their resolution. Works are marked after critical dialogue between markers where the emphasis is on what the work does rather than on what it fails to do. Examiners will actively search for the positive qualities in a body of work. This process is conducted based on recognition of the constraints of time and experience that can impact on the resolution of a body of work. Each submission is marked independently by four examiners, all of whom are practising art educators with recent HSC teaching experience.

Works marked itinerantly are assessed using exactly the same procedures as those marked corporately. Wherever the work is marked, the process is identical.

This marking process ensures that marking is always objective: markers do not bring their own artmaking preferences or school-based assessment standards to the process.

Further details of marking guidelines can be found on the BOSTES website. Each year the BOSTES also produces notes from the marking centre, detailing the qualities that were apparent in bodies of work generally and also within each expressive form.

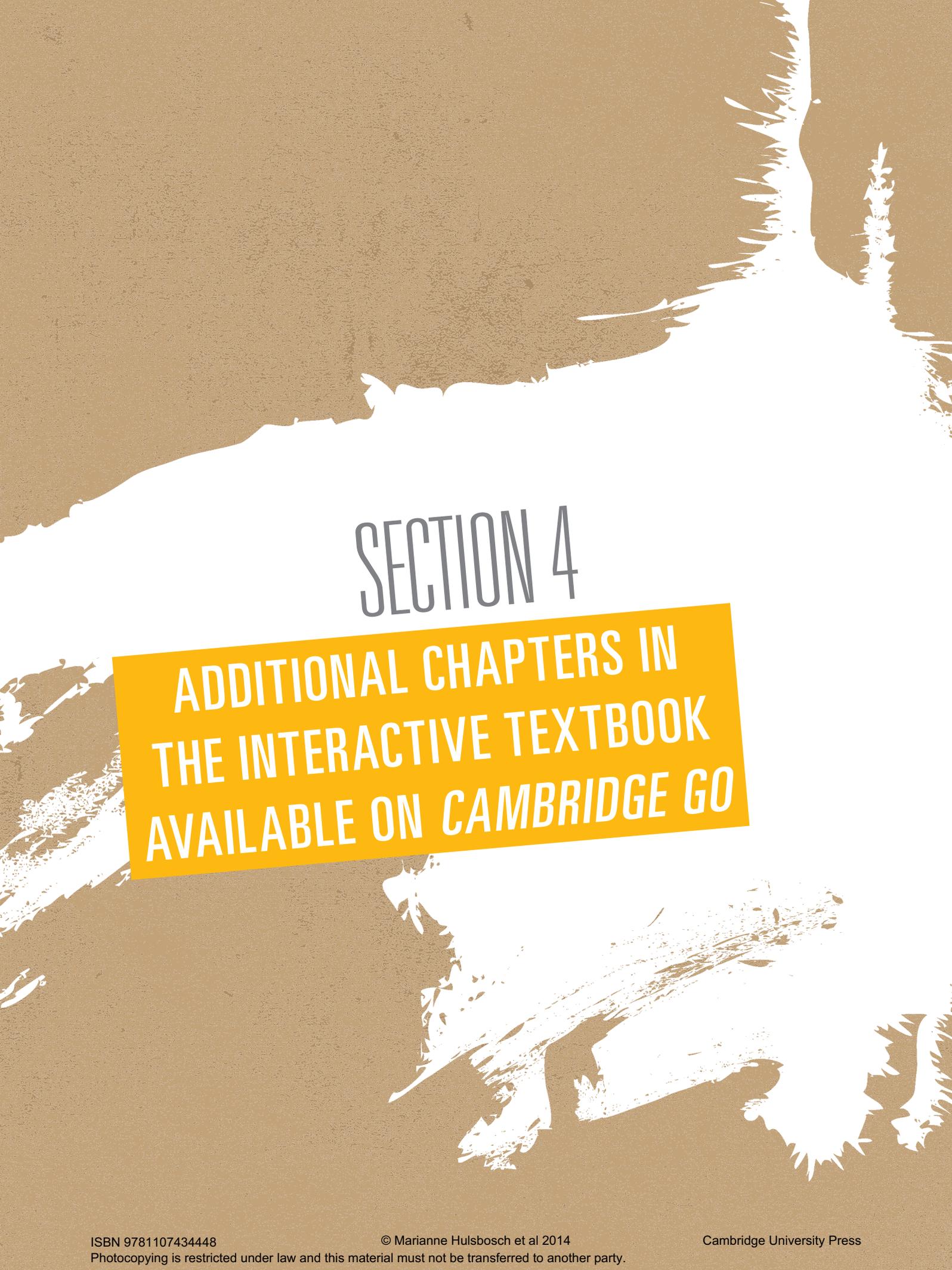
A unique outcome of HSC marking of bodies of work is the opportunity for students to exhibit their work in the annual ARTEXPRESS exhibition. This touring exhibition has become a highlight of the annual exhibition program in many parts of New South Wales. It features a selection of outstanding student artworks developed for examination and includes a broad range of approaches and expressive forms. In addition to being exhibited in New South Wales, some of the works have been displayed in New York, San Francisco and Tokyo.

The ARTEXPRESS website (www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks) is an excellent source of information regarding how works are chosen for exhibition and the final selection is an indication of the range of media submitted. The curators ascertain that the chosen bodies of work can be developed into a series of coherent exhibitions and displays. These works reflect many interesting themes, ranging from issues of political, social, cultural and spiritual significance through to aspects of personal identity and home environment.

If ARTEXPRESS comes to a venue near you make sure you visit it. The works are inspirational and you can analyse themes and techniques and scrutinise some of the students' VAPDs firsthand. Additionally, you could access the ARTEXPRESS website of the Art Gallery of New South Wales (www.cambridge.edu.au/seniorvisarts2weblinks). This site offers an excellent insight into the bodies of work and the students who created them as well as some of their diaries.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Art education is about critically investigating your world, making personal interpretations and representing them through your artworks and examination answers.
- To assist your learning in Visual Arts, your teacher develops and implements school tasks and examinations.
- The HSC examination measures your knowledge, skill and understanding.
- The NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards has an extensive website that clearly sets out the specific guidelines for examining your body of work as well as those for the HSC examination and the various tests that lead up to that exam.



SECTION 4

**ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS IN
THE INTERACTIVE TEXTBOOK
AVAILABLE ON *CAMBRIDGE GO***

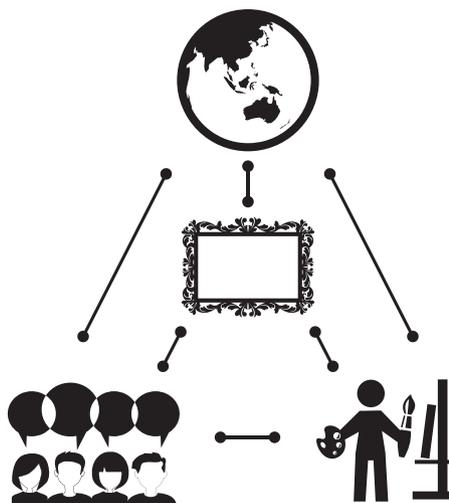
PRACTICE
CHAPTER 21

**CASE STUDY:
ROY LICHTENSTEIN**

A work of art is the unique result of a unique temperament.

Oscar Wilde, writer 1854–1900

In this chapter we will look at the role of the Visual Arts case study in the HSC course. The work of US Pop artist Roy Lichtenstein will be examined to demonstrate the different contexts within which it could be included as a component of a case study.



21.1 What is a case study?

Case studies are in-depth studies of artworks, artists, movements, styles, issues, concepts, processes or techniques in the field of Visual Arts.

A case study illustrates a point or something of significance and focuses on Practice, the Conceptual Framework and the Frames.

Case studies are an important part of your Visual Arts education as you prepare for the HSC written examination. They are designed to build a substantial understanding of art historical and art critical practice, which you can apply in answering questions in the written exam paper.

Case studies can take a number of forms, including individual research, group work and class debates. Your teacher could devise all the case studies or they may, with consultation, allow you to devise some of your own.

It is likely that some case studies will include internal assessment tasks. These tasks will be designed to support and enhance learning.

21.2 Roy Lichtenstein

In the remainder of this chapter we will explore three ways in which the work of Lichtenstein could be interpreted within the structure of a case study.

An individual artist's practice

Roy Lichtenstein was an American Pop artist working in the twentieth century, and his work is widely known and frequently reproduced. Its graphic, hard-edged quality means that it is both easily recognised

and easily copied. He was interested in recontextualising graphics and making you see these items in a different light.

Lichtenstein did not intend to solve all the problems of the world through his artworks. He was not really interested in using his art to explore social issues or convey specific messages.

Pop art is one of the major art movements of the twentieth century and draws its themes and ideas from popular mass culture, such as comic strips and advertising. Architect and art collector Phillip Johnson made this observation about Pop art and the way in which it makes us see everyday items, such as advertisements or drink bottles, in a different manner:

What Pop art has done for me is to make the world a pleasanter place to live in. I look at things with an entirely different eye – at Coney Island, at billboards, at Coca-Cola bottles. One of the duties of art is to make you look at the world with pleasure. Pop art is the only movement in this century that has tried to do it. (Strickland 1995, p. 174)

Themes and ideas that could be considered in a case study of Lichtenstein's practice include:

- the development of his style – derivations and technical practices
- issues of originality and appropriation – considering whether, given that Lichtenstein's style is so based on commercial illustration, copying of the style is copying Lichtenstein
- recognition – the ease with which the audience can tell that an artwork is by Lichtenstein
- statements by the artist and others regarding aspects of his practice
- the development of Pop art, referencing artists such as Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Martin Sharp, Claes Oldenburg and Richard Hamilton.

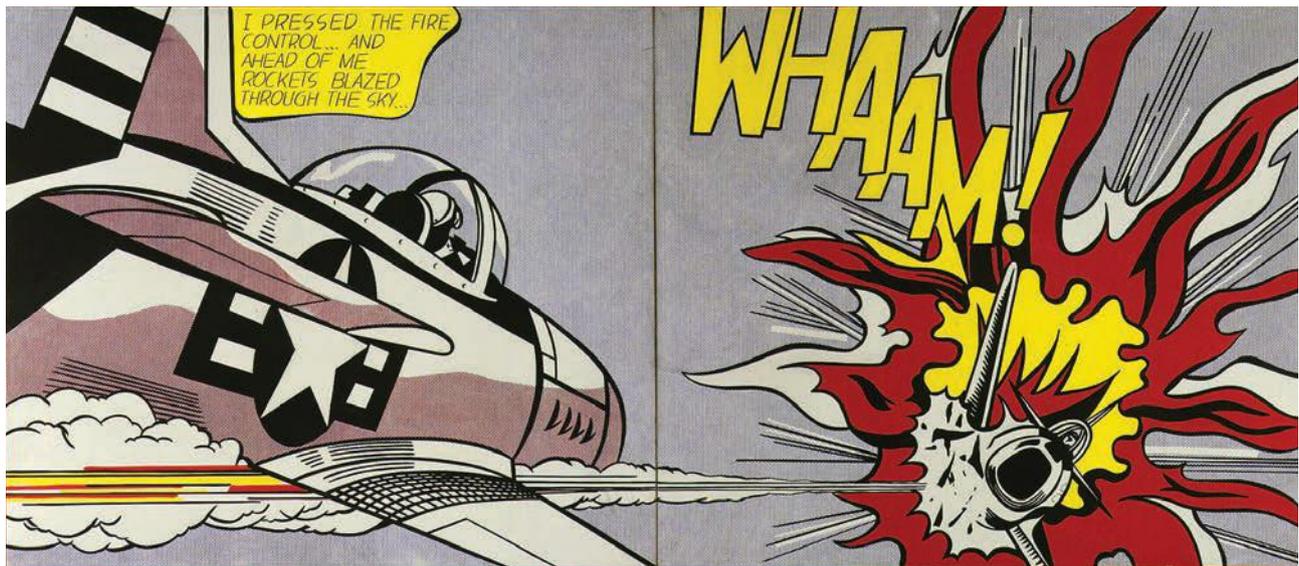


Figure 21.1 Roy Lichtenstein, *Whaam!*, 1963.

Acrylic and oil on canvas support, 173 × 406 cm (frame: 175 × 408 × 6 cm).
Tate Modern, Britain. © Roy Lichtenstein/Lichtenstein. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



Figure 21.2 Roy Lichtenstein, *Cap de Barcelona*, 1992. Mixed mediums sculpture, Barcelona, Spain.



Figure 21.3 Claes Oldenburg, *Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks*, 1969. 3D sculpture art at Yale University, Connecticut, USA.



Figure 21.4 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Ecstasy of St Teresa*, 1647–52. Marble, height 350 cm. Cappella Cornaro, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, Italy.

Expressions of emotion

I like to pretend that my art has nothing to do with me.

Roy Lichtenstein, artist

Lichtenstein presents images of great drama and angst, but does so in a way that is dispassionate and removed from the subject. His works are not invested with psychological meaning or intense emotion.

A case study could focus on the way artists, both contemporary and from the past, have explored themes of emotional intensity in their work. This could foreground the Subjective Frame, considering the way in which the artwork seeks to evoke a response from the audience. Focusing on the way in which Lichtenstein's works elicit a response from the audience, connections could be made between his works and a range of seemingly diverse works, including Gianlorenzo Bernini's *Ecstasy of St Teresa* from 1647–1652, Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* from 1937 (see page 178) and Bill Viola's *Emergence* from 2002. What these artworks have in common is the theatricality and drama they portray.

Appropriation and parody: images from popular culture

Appropriation and parody are significant devices employed in postmodern artmaking. Lichtenstein described his use of parody in this way:

In parody, the implication is the perversion [of the original source], and I feel that in my own work I don't mean it to be that. Because I don't dislike the work that I'm parodying ... The things that I have apparently parodied I actually admire. (Decker 1998)

Lichtenstein developed his style from commercial illustration, presenting the everyday world as subject matter for art. His methods broke down the barriers between what was perceived as 'high' and 'low' art. Ironically, the advertising industry has re-appropriated Lichtenstein's style for mass-produced advertising imagery. Lichtenstein's techniques have similar qualities to those found in graffiti and in tattooing: black outlines and colour in-fill.

A case study could look at the way in which artists and designers borrow images and ideas, recontextualising them in their work. It could consider the links between art and popular culture. Artists who could be examined alongside Roy Lichtenstein in this context include Pablo Picasso, Tracey Moffatt, Imants Tillers, Barbara Kruger, Gordon Bennett, Anne Zahalka, Juan Davila, Alain Biltreyst, Mike Giant and Michael Craig-Martin. These artists have a shared focus on art and advertising, art and design, and on the use of popular culture.

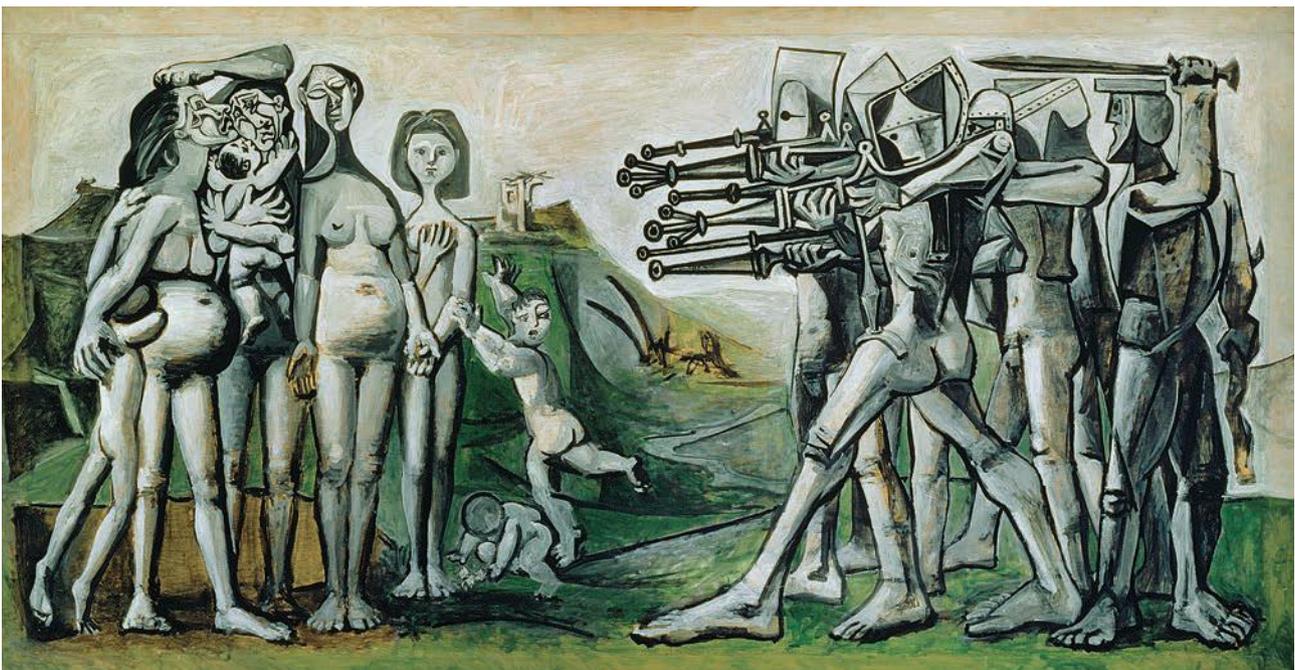


Figure 21.5 Pablo Picasso, *Massacre en Coree*, 1951. Oil on canvas, 110 × 210 cm. Musée Picasso, Paris, France. © Pablo Picasso/Succession Picasso. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

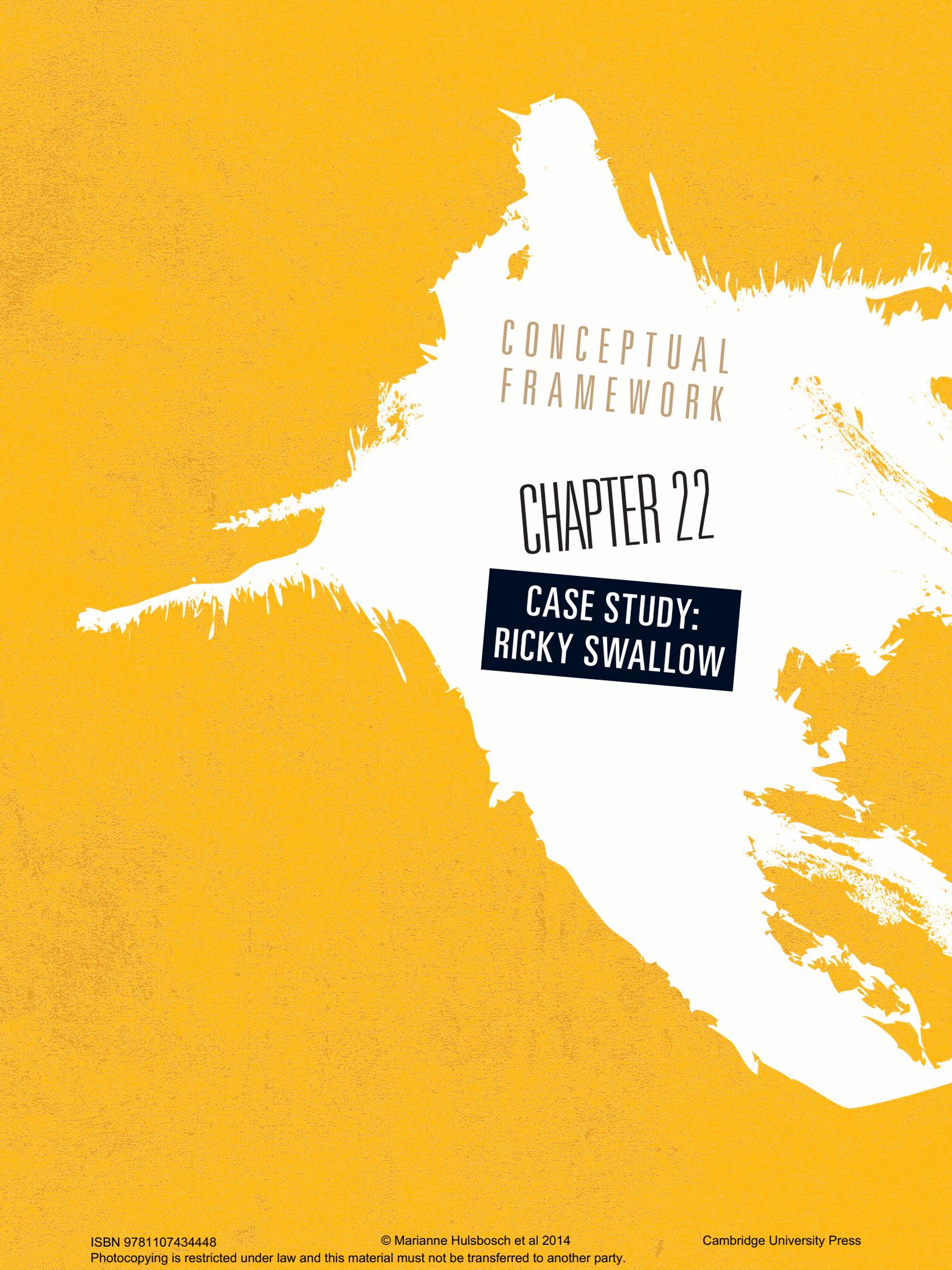


STUDENT TASK 21.1

- 1 Select an artist whose work you like or have been influenced by in your own artmaking practice. Consider different case study contexts for their work and include the following:
 - subject matter
 - technique
 - issues of culture
 - the use of signs and symbols
 - philosophical and religious beliefs.Then make lists of other artists and artworks that could be included in different case study approaches.
- 2 Look at past Visual Arts art criticism and art history HSC examination papers. Find essay questions in Section II of the papers that you could answer using the approaches you have examined in the task above.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Case studies are an important part of your Year 12 course. They involve in-depth research into topics, including artists, issues, themes and techniques. They can involve both historical and critical approaches to study.
- You must do at least five case studies during the HSC year and it is expected that some of them will have assessment task components.
- In most instances your class teacher will devise the case studies that you follow as part of your course of study. You can also choose to create your own case studies on areas of personal interest.



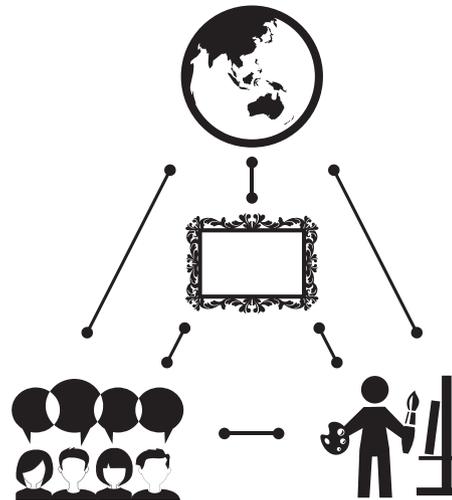
CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER 22

**CASE STUDY:
RICKY SWALLOW**

In this chapter we will explore how the Conceptual Framework can be used in the investigation of a case study, using the four Frames as different perspectives. The Conceptual Framework of the artworld serves an important role in the context of a case study. It provides a model for organising complex information, relationships and concepts. It also serves as a tool to guide your research from the perspective of an art historian and art critic and, ultimately, your exam preparation. The Conceptual Framework is the system that allows you to explore your case study in detail and in context.

You will be able to gather all kinds of information for your case study, including from books, newspapers, journals and the internet. Some of this information will be useful, but most will be either unsubstantiated or irrelevant. The Conceptual Framework will assist you in gathering only relevant, substantiated information for your case study. In any given case study you will be seeking broad, contextual information about the artists, artworks, audiences and wider world as they relate to your case study. Subsequently, you will use this information to explore, in detail, the relationships existing between these agencies of the artworld.



22.1 Case studies

Use the Conceptual Framework to organise your research, information, notes and ideas. Consider the relevance of any information you gather and what it tells of the relationships between the agencies of the artworld.

Use the frames to look at your information from a variety of perspectives. The following tables will assist you.



Analysis using the Subjective Frame

Element of Conceptual Framework	Consider the following
Artist	The artist's own thoughts, experiences, feelings, responses and reflections
Artwork	The artist's own thoughts, experiences, feelings, responses and reflections about a specific artwork
World	The artist's own thoughts, experiences, feelings, responses and reflections about wider historical and social events
Audience	A variety of thoughts, experiences, feelings, responses and reflections from viewers, including yourself



Analysis using the Structural Frame

Element of Conceptual Framework	Consider the following
Artist	The artist's use of materials, techniques, processes and visual languages
Artwork	The decisions made in the creation of an artwork (size, materials, etc.) and the visual language adopted to communicate to the audience
World	Images, objects, symbols, signs and visual languages that directly represent aspects of the world
Audience	An audience's appreciation of images, symbols, signs and visual languages that directly represent aspects of their lives



Analysis using the Cultural Frame

Element of Conceptual Framework	Consider the following
Artist	The artist as participant, responder or documenter of social, political and cultural situations
Artwork	The artwork as a product of the artist's social, political and cultural situation
World	The wider events, issues and situations that affect the artist's community
Audience	An audience's appreciation of the social, political and cultural situations represented in the artwork



Analysis using the Postmodern Frame

Element of Conceptual Framework	Consider the following
Artist	How the artist responds to, challenges, appropriates or parodies aspects of the artworld or the wider contemporary world, as well as other artists who have responded to, appropriated or parodied the artist
Artwork	How the artwork has responded to, challenged, appropriated or parodied aspects of the artworld or the wider contemporary world, as well as how other artworks have responded to, appropriated or parodied the original artwork
World	The contemporary context: current events and issues that inform, involve, affect or relate to the work or the artist
Audience	The variety of ways in which contemporary audiences read, value (in monetary terms), understand or appreciate the work or the artist

22.2 Applying the Conceptual Framework to Ricky Swallow

We will explore the Conceptual Framework through a case study on the contemporary Australian sculptor Ricky Swallow. In particular, we will look at his sculpture *Killing Time*, which was chosen to represent Australia at the **Venice Biennale** in 2005. The Conceptual Framework will be used to demonstrate views from the perspective of the art historian and art critic using each analytical Frame.

Venice Biennale an influential exhibition of international contemporary art held in Venice every two years



Subjective Frame

Justin Paton is an art theorist (audience) who published a book on Swallow's development as a sculptor. At the time of publication of Paton's book, Swallow was working on *Killing Time* for the 2005 Venice Biennale. Paton wrote about this work:

*Swallow's largest reckoning with the **paradoxes** of still life, and in particular with the marine banquettes [benches] of the seventeenth century, Killing Time is also a kind of memory sculpture, a wooden chronicle, in which every object trails a secret line of autobiography. The creatures represent every creature that Swallow (the fisherman's son) can remember catching, and the table they rest on is a carving of the wooden table that stood until recently in Swallow's family home. (Paton 2005, p. 45)*

paradox a statement or argument that is contradictory but true



Figure 22.1 Ricky Swallow, *Killing Time*, 2003–04. Laminated jelutong, maple, 108 × 184 × 118 cm (irregular). © Ricky Swallow, purchased with funds provided by the Rudy Komon Fund and the Contemporary Collection Benefactors' Program 2004, Art Gallery of New South Wales. Photograph: Karl Scherdtfeger.

The following extract is from a press release published by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, which owns the sculpture:

Swallow's meticulously hand-carved objects are remarkably lifelike and yet they also seem to be about loss and the passing of time. It is as if they are a form of commemoration for fragments of the artist's own life and experiences.
(Art Gallery of New South Wales 2003)

This is a subjective reading of the artwork for the benefit of a public audience. The world is a place from where artists draw inspiration. Swallow's work is formed from memories of experiences, specific times, actual places, living creatures and physical objects. The following comment on this appeared in *Look*, a journal published by the Art Gallery of New South Wales: '*Killing Time* portrays all the sea creatures Swallow recalls capturing and killing as the child of a professional fisherman, displayed on a carved replica of his family kitchen table'.

Swallow offered this reflection on the relationship between his artworks and the world: 'The things remembered are the things I've put an end to – turned from real life into still life'. A press release produced by the Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2005 made these further observations: '[Swallow] memorialises the lives he cut short and offers his time in return through the slow process of carving in wood, "a debt paid in time".' Swallow continued: 'Making the list of creatures we caught became a series of appendixes into different narratives ... like any recollections, the memories have been rearranged, tweaked, perfected'.



Figure 22.2 Ricky Swallow.
Photograph: Yoshihiro Makino.

I've always been interested in how an object can be remembered and how that memory can be sustained and directed sculpturally, pulling things in and out of time ...

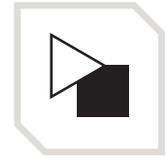
Ricky Swallow, artist 2009

In the Australian Pavilion press release, Swallow considered how the audience engages with the artwork: 'I like the idea that in re-making a memory there is the opportunity for it to attach itself or be transposed to part of other people's memories. They become indexes to a greater narrative.'



STUDENT TASK 22.1

What personal experiences or memories does Swallow explore through the sculpture *Killing Time*?



Structural Frame

There is definitely something about wanting to account for my time and my history.

Ricky Swallow, artist 2009

In 2003, Ricky Swallow's art practice made a remarkable transformation. His early works were well known for their conceptual sophistication and skilful craftsmanship but primarily for their use of signs and symbols from popular culture. These pop culture references were replaced by a fusion of traditional still life painting and a new personal visual language in wood, as shown in *Killing Time*.

Different members of an audience will see a work from very different points of view. Art critic Sebastian Smee has this to say about Swallow's hand-carved sculptures:

Ricky Swallow's painstakingly hand-carved sculptures crystallise, through ironic devotion, a sense of time running out. He puts himself to a lot of trouble to get this crystallisation to occur. And he puts the viewer to considerable trouble, too. One is required to look at his work with patience and to think it through – even to argue it through (as seems to happen regularly in galleries showing his work) – through time. (Smee 2006)

Killing Time was exhibited at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces in Victoria in 2004. The following extract appeared on the gallery's website:

The apt title of his latest work acknowledges the hours he invests in each sculpture. Killing Time is a traditional still life, the very essence of still life; here time stands still, a table laden with fish, crustaceans and other sea creatures. However, this is not a painting, it is meticulously carved from wood, made to scale; a perfect, pale monochrome reproduction. (Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces 2004)

No artist knows in his own lifetime whether what he does will be the slightest good, because it takes at least seventy-five to a hundred years before the thing begins to sort itself out.

Francis Bacon, artist 1909–1992



Figure 22.3 Ricky Swallow, *iMan Prototypes*, 2001. Moulded resin injected with colour tint, 16 × 11.5 × 18.5 cm each. Darren Knight Gallery.



Figure 22.4 Ricky Swallow, *Killing Time*, 2003–04. Laminated jelutong, maple, 108 × 184 × 118 cm (irregular). © Ricky Swallow, purchased with funds provided by the Rudy Komon Fund and the Contemporary Collection Benefactors' Program 2004, Art Gallery of New South Wales. Photograph: Karl Scherdtfefer.



Figure 22.5 Swallow with his work *Killing Time*. Photograph: Steven Siewert.

Apart from the physical aspects of the artwork (such as its size, shape and materials), the Structural Frame deals with **semiotics** and the communication of meaning through the work. Using a personal visual language, Swallow represents significant conceptual elements and explores time in relation to the traditions of still-life painting.

semiotics the study of the meaning and use of signs and symbols

Killing Time is carved from a large single block of hard wood. No object can be lifted from the sculpture. In an interview with Martin Shub, the artist offered these remarks about the title and details of this artwork:

As with a lot of my work, it sort of involves the changing of quite manual or industrial labour into artistic or personal labour. So in some sense the things that link the work is actually that exchange of processes and how I've gone about constructing the works. (Shub 2000)

To complete his artworks, Swallow works seven days a week in his studio, usually from about 10 in the morning until midnight. He generally works on one piece at a time and plans which materials and tools he will need before he begins. He does not make any preliminary drawings. In the interview with Shub, Swallow said: '[I just] go straight into it and let it grow and develop as I go. I often like to start a work before I talk myself out of it – and these are usually the best works!'



STUDENT TASK 22.2

- 1 Describe the physical properties of *Killing Time*. Consider its materials, size and colours.
- 2 Outline the processes used by Swallow to create *Killing Time*.



Cultural Frame

An artist is not paid for his labour but for his vision.

James Whistler, artist 1834–1903

This section explores the social, cultural and financial challenges faced by artists in Australia. As a young, successful artist, Ricky Swallow is in a rare and privileged position. Young artists can face a lonely, long and difficult road with little chance of recognition let alone financial stability. Ricky Swallow commented that one of the greatest challenges facing contemporary art 'is finding an increased and legitimate audience. That and being taken seriously. Art is so often in competition with more spectacular forms of entertainment'.

A major source of support available to Australian artists is the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body. Each year, audiences around the world enjoy Australian exhibitions, books and performances thanks to Australia Council support worth approximately \$130 million. The council supports contemporary dance, theatre, music, literature, visual arts, craft, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts, community cultural development and new media arts. More than 1700 grants each year are given to artists, arts organisations and community groups to create original work, perform, publish and exhibit and develop new art proposals.

The hardest thing for a young artist is to get their work noticed. A professionally run commercial gallery will bring a new artist to the attention of a wide, diverse and interested audience. This audience will include private collectors, museums, other artists, art students, the art press and the wider art-interested public. Contemporary art dealer (audience) Darren Knight helped launch Swallow's artistic career. An extract from an interview with Knight appears below:

DID YOU KNOW?

The Australian writer, critic and teacher AA Phillips coined the term 'the cultural cringe' in 1950 to describe our tendency to identify Australian literature and art as inferior to work produced overseas.

Where did you first see Ricky Swallow's work? In a shopfront window on Smith Street, Fitzroy [Melbourne], in early 1996. Ricky had made an underwater installation in the window of his brother's then residence. It was this exhibition that convinced me of the quality of his work.

What was the initial appeal of his work? His work was inventive, intelligent and original – all essential qualities in art. I was impressed with the sophistication of his ideas, especially for an artist so young in years. Ricky was 19 when I saw the exhibition and still a student. He seemed to be very sure about what he wanted to do as an artist at an age when most students are still processing their influences and searching for their true artistic voice.

How have you supported Ricky's artistic career? The gallery encourages the artists to be as adventurous as possible when exploring their ideas and to not allow commercial considerations to compromise what they make. The gallery also handles all aspects of the sale of an artist's work; freeing them up to concentrate on their studio practice. The artist is given full creative responsibility and freedom in the creation of the artworks. (Randall 2007)

Swallow experienced a meteoric rise in the artworld. In 1999, aged 25, he went from being on the dole to winning Melbourne's \$100,000 Contempora 5 Art Prize. His career took off rapidly, and he based himself in Los Angeles and then London. In 2005, he became the youngest artist to represent Australia at the Venice Biennale.



Figure 22.6 The Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale.



STUDENT TASK 22.3

- 1 What is the role of a commercial gallery?
- 2 Why do you think artists struggle to compete for funding and recognition in Australia?



Postmodern Frame

The Venice Biennale, founded in 1885, was the first regular modern art exhibition to be held every two years. The biennale has had an illustrious history as one of the major forums for showing the latest art. It has the added attraction of its stunning location in the Public Gardens in Venice, with additional exhibitions dotted throughout Venice.

The building pictured above was designed by renowned architect Philip Cox and opened in 1988.

The Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is a project of the Australia Council, which has funded and managed Australia's representation at the Venice Biennale for over 25 years.

Each year the Australia Council invites one or more artists to represent their country to the contemporary international artworld by exhibiting at the Venice Biennale. Australia first exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 1954 with Sidney Nolan, and has participated in every event since 1978 (except in 1984). Margaret Preston and Ken Unsworth are among the other Australian artists whose works have been showcased at Venice.

The biennale has contributed to the artistic development of many artists. It has provided significant opportunities for the international presentation and collection of Australian contemporary art.

Not only is Swallow's art influential within the visual arts world, his concepts, ideas and unique artworks inspire people across a range of the arts. Actor and theatre director Cate Blanchett finds inspiration in Swallow's work:

I've long believed that the various cultural practices are getting closer together and, in whatever field, excellence is excellence ... blood and guts, death, the theatre of display, the pivot point between bloom and decay. But ultimately it's all about life. Ultimately it's about looking into those corners where others don't dare to look. It's about focusing on fate. I am always looking for the dramatic. Ricky Swallow's sculptures provide it. (Higgins 2005)



Figure 22.7 Ricky Swallow, *Cup (with mounts)*, 2013. Patinated bronze, 9 × 15.25 × 12.5 cm.
© Ricky Swallow, courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney.



STUDENT TASK 22.4

- 1 'Exhibitions are constructed to represent a point of view to audiences.' Discuss this statement in relation to an exhibition you have seen or read about.
- 2 Select one or more artists who have sought to interpret the world in new ways. Explain their theories of art in relation to how they have interpreted the world in their artmaking.
- 3 'Artists are often thought of as great masters.' Do you agree or disagree with this interpretation? Give reasons to support your argument.

Ricky Swallow is always exploring new ways of working, challenging his audience by expanding his use of materials. Juxtaposed to the obvious painstaking work of *Killing Time*, *Arch Study* (2013) hides its artistry. An immediate audience reaction may be to see the work as a simple exercise an architecture student would create out of plastic core-flue sheeting. The surface of the work has all the markings and ridges found in core-flue. The artist has made some simple cuts to create a composition of forms. The audience sees this study as 'easy' and 'cheap' to create. Yet on closer inspection, and a reading of the information plaque, the work is found to be actually made from cast bronze with a patina applied to the surface. The process is complex and materials costly.



Figure 22.8 Ricky Swallow, *Arch Study*, 2013. Patinated bronze, 22.9 × 24.1 × 16.5 cm.
© Ricky Swallow, Private collection, Melbourne.

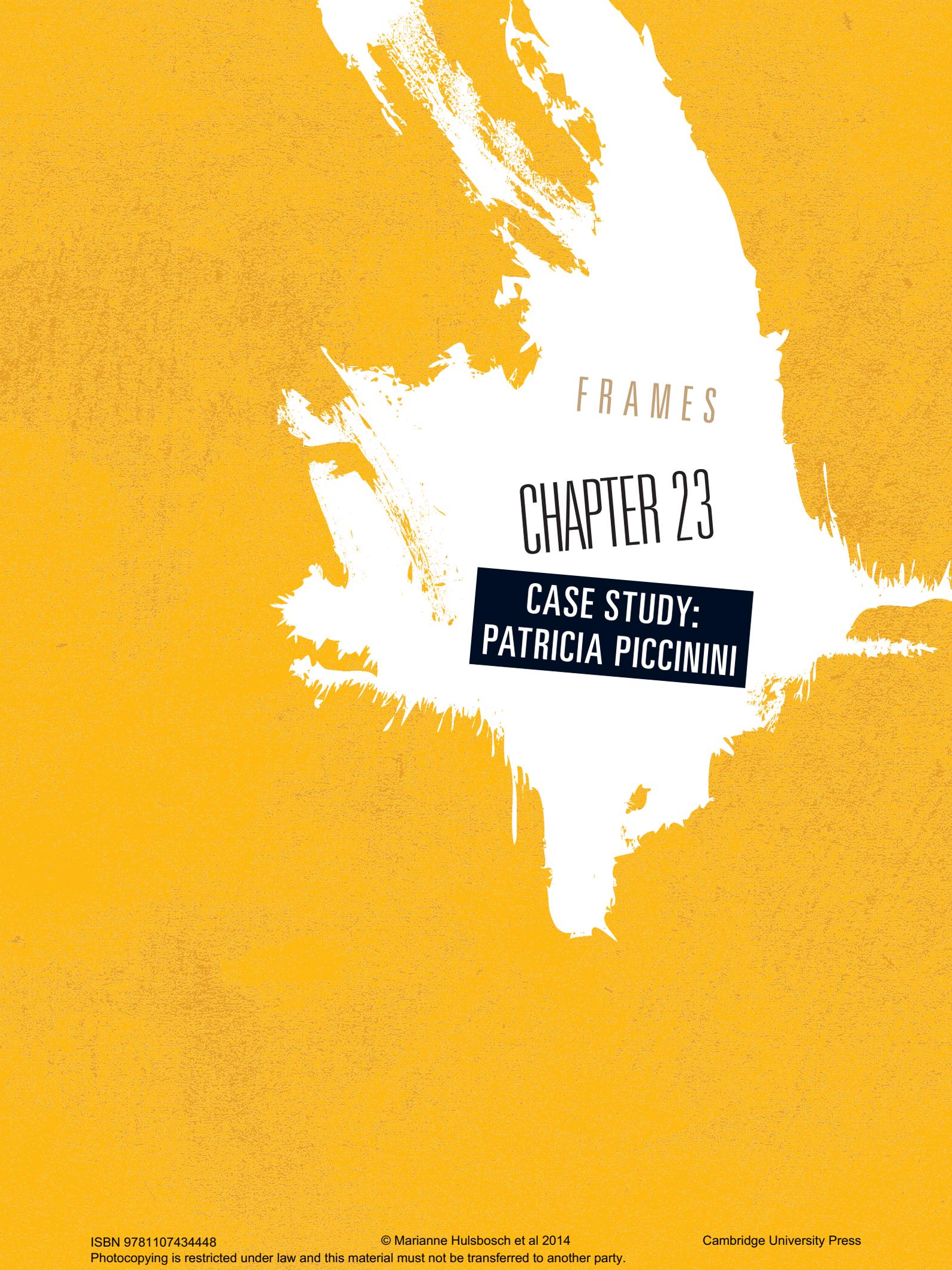


STUDENT TASK 22.5

- 1 Considering the Conceptual Framework, why would Ricky Swallow want to disguise the materials of an artwork from the audience viewing it?
- 2 How does Swallow want the audience to relate to the artwork?

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- In Visual Arts, the Conceptual Framework is a model of the artworld.
- The Conceptual Framework presents a way of understanding, conceptualising, visualising and organising information presented in case studies about artists, artworks, audiences and the wider world.
- The focus of the Conceptual Framework is to explore the relationships that exist between the agencies of the artworld.
- Use the Frames in conjunction with the Conceptual Framework to view the agencies from various perspectives.



FRAMES

CHAPTER 23

**CASE STUDY:
PATRICIA PICCININI**

In your final year of studying Visual Arts at secondary school, you will be given opportunities to use the Frames to develop informed points of view in increasingly independent ways. When you are collecting information on a specific topic, such as when you develop a case study, you will most likely find that you collect a lot of information and need to find a way to organise and interpret it. The information can be organised and understood by using the different points of view of the four Frames: Subjective, Cultural, Structural and Postmodern. You may find that information you have gathered from the viewpoint of one Frame may also fit into another. This is to be expected as the Frames will at times overlap.

23.1 Patricia Piccinini

In this chapter we will look at the artist Patricia Piccinini. We will use the Frames as if we were developing a case study.



Subjective Frame

If you type 'Patricia Piccinini' into a search engine, you will discover some striking images. An example is the sculpture reproduced below. It shows a mother lying on her side with her babies around her. The arrangement of figures suggests a big sow with a litter of suckling piglets. What feelings does this artwork evoke within you? Do you get a sense of what the mother is experiencing?



Figure 23.1 Patricia Piccinini, *The Young Family*, 2002–03.
Silicon, polyurethane, leather, plywood, human hair, 80 × 150 × 110 cm.
Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria. Photograph: Graham Baring.
Courtesy of the artist, and Tolarno and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

Every successful artist has at least one person who really believes in them.

Patricia Piccinini, artist 2006

Artist's perspective

As we begin to develop an understanding of *The Young Family*, it would be useful to find out what the artist's intentions were. In the artist's statement in the 'In Another Life' exhibition catalogue, Piccinini wrote:

Ideally these things will disturb you even as you warm to them, or vice versa. They are probably the wrong answer, but perhaps there is something special in their incorrectness. (Piccinini 2006)

How do you think Piccinini wants you to feel about her work? In a public lecture at Tokyo Art University, Piccinini discussed *The Young Family* and said she is interested in '... the distinction between human and animal characteristics, not so much her [the mother in the sculpture] humanity, but the "animalness" in us. Perhaps we share traits with her ...'

In her work *Truck Babies*, we can see that Piccinini is really taken by the fact that constructed items can appear to take on human characteristics. Equally, as is shown in *The Young Family*, animals can take on human traits. Through her work she is questioning whether humans can take on animalistic traits and technological characteristics.



Figure 23.2 Patricia Piccinini, *Truck Babies*, 1999.

Fibreglass and automotive paint, 120 × 184 × 88 cm. Lyon Collection, Lyon Housemuseum.

Courtesy of the artist, and Tolarno and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

Piccinini is considering these baby trucks as if they are indeed real babies and giving mechanical items human attributes and characteristics. This invites us to respond emotionally to these truck babies as we would to real infants:

... like any babies these cry out for us to care for them. Piccinini 'challenges' us to love these poor wee things and it is often quite a challenge. (Hennessey 2002)

Consider this text describing an emotional experience that inspired Patricia Piccinini to create the artwork *Truck Babies*:

Recently, I spent a lot of time in a car in America driving up the country on the enormous 'Interstates'. As we drove, the most amazing, most beautiful, thundering beings glided past me all the time. They were so shiny, so big, so beautifully coloured. I feared death when they were close to me but I still wanted to get closer to them; to the gargantuan trucks – trucks as big as whales. I wondered where they came from, where they were going, and especially the relationship between the families of trucks that travelled together. Slowly I started to wonder where their young 'uns were. How did they grow up? 'Where are the truck babies?', I asked myself. (Piccinini 1998)

From this quote we can see the importance of emotion and imagination, both of which are features of the Subjective Frame, in Piccinini's art practice.

Art critics

To further explore Piccinini's *The Young Family* through the Subjective Frame, we can consider comments from art critics that focus on emotional responses to this work. For example, Tracey Clement, writing in *Artlink* magazine, observed:

Piccinini's family members are not easy to be with. They ask difficult questions. But she wants us to feel love and compassion for her figures. Piccinini claims that the sculptures she creates are 'beautiful rather than grotesque'. Her bodies are subjected to an intense, almost cloying layering of detail. This hyper-reality marks a determination to combat their apparent perversity with an undeniable familiarity. We are looking at a reflection ... (Clement 2003)

Do you agree with the observations made above?

Does the '**familiarity**' of the figures reduce their '**perversity**'?

familiarity acquaintance; usualness by virtue of being familiar
perversity deliberate deviation from what is good or expected



STUDENT TASK 23.1

- 1 Consider *The Young Family*. Imagine you could hear the mother's thoughts. Write down what you think is going through her head.
- 2 Choose a machine and imagine it as a mother and child. Draw this image as realistically as possible.
- 3 Explain the significance of emotion and imagination in the art of Patricia Piccinini.



Cultural Frame

I think if people are disturbed by my work it is because it asks questions about fundamental aspects of our existence – about our artificiality, about our ‘animalness’, about our responsibilities towards our creations, our children and our environment – and these questions should be easy to answer but they are not.

Patricia Piccinini, artist 2002

The Cultural Frame asks us to focus on relationships and the ideas and values that are shared by groups of people. Therefore, to find information that fits within the Cultural Frame, we need to scan texts for the key ideas of social values and beliefs. In the quote below, Patricia Piccinini says that she sees her creatures as being part of a family that includes us:

... one of the points of the exhibition is that there is a family inside the show, and there is also a family that includes us as well as these creatures that I present. So if we are family, then how does that change our attitude, how does it determine our responsibility to the creatures we create? In my work, perhaps I am saying that whether you like them or you don't like them, we actually have a duty to care. We created them, so we've got to look after them.

(Piccinini 2003)

Is it possible that we have something in common with Piccinini's creatures?

The idea of duty is one of social responsibility. It can be defined as a moral, legal and sometimes religious obligation. With her artwork, Piccinini asks us to reflect on our relationships and our responsibilities to those around us.

As a society we respond to a new technological development by establishing rules and ideas about what is appropriate in relation to its use. For example, debates about human cloning and stem cell research are part of our everyday life. Piccinini has picked up on these issues our society is facing and responded by creating artworks that ask us to think further about these issues:

The possibilities for my creations are already amongst us, and before too long the things themselves could turn up unannounced, without our ever having had the opportunity to wonder how much we want them. (Piccinini 2006)

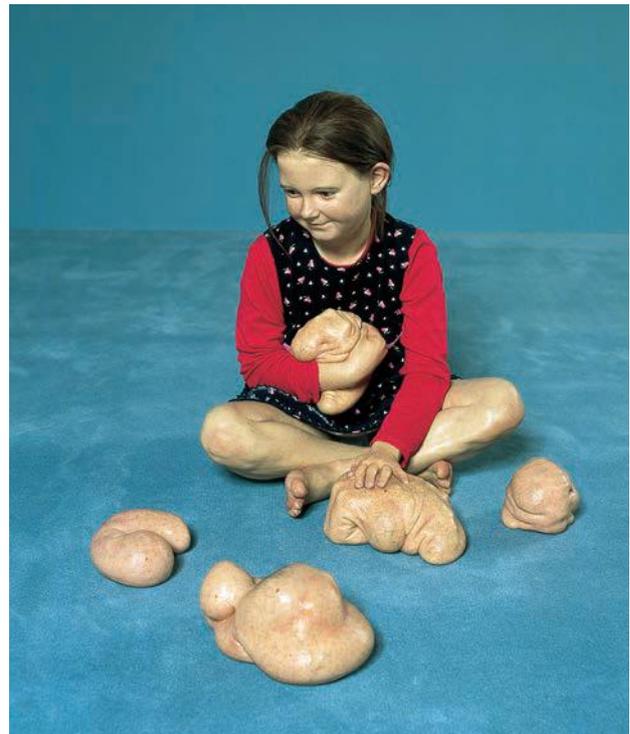


Figure 23.3 Patricia Piccinini, *Still Life With Stem Cells*, 2002. Silicon, polyurethane, leather, human hair, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist, and Tolarno and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

Throughout history, humankind has been fascinated by half-human creatures, such as mermaids, minotaurs, centaurs and fawns. More recently, we have developed stories of mad scientists creating life:

The fact that many writers have pointed to connections between Piccinini's work and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein suggests that the parallels are deep and resonant. However, the crucial point is the difference; where Frankenstein sees his monster and reviles it, Piccinini sees hers and cherishes them.' (Hennessey 2002, p. 36)

Is our reaction to non-human life forms a natural instinct or is it shaped by culture? Margaret and Christine Wertheim, in their essay 'Teratology', suggest that by placing a happy child among these mutant blobs, Piccinini helps us to become aware of our own responses: '... children do not classify anything as inherently "monstrous". Such judgements are always learned'. (Wertheim and Wertheim 2003)



STUDENT TASK 23.2

Explain how Patricia Piccinini's work is a reflection of the culture she lives in. Refer to specific artworks.

The children in my works are young enough to accept the strangeness and difference of my world without difficulty ...

Patricia Piccinini, artist



Structural Frame

Initially, a lot of people are put off by my work. I don't purposefully start out to make something grotesque ... it just ends up that way.

Patricia Piccinini, artist 2002

The Structural Frame focuses on how art can work as a visual language. 'Car Nuggets', a series of sculptures by Piccinini, is a good example of how physical qualities (such as colour, shape and texture) can communicate ideas to an audience.

The title of the series gives us a way to approach the works. What do you think of when you see the word 'nugget'? Gold? Something small and precious? Or bland, deep-fried, processed chicken served with chips? Art curator Linda Michael makes this observation about Piccinini's 'Car Nuggets': 'Like the chicken nuggets that inspire

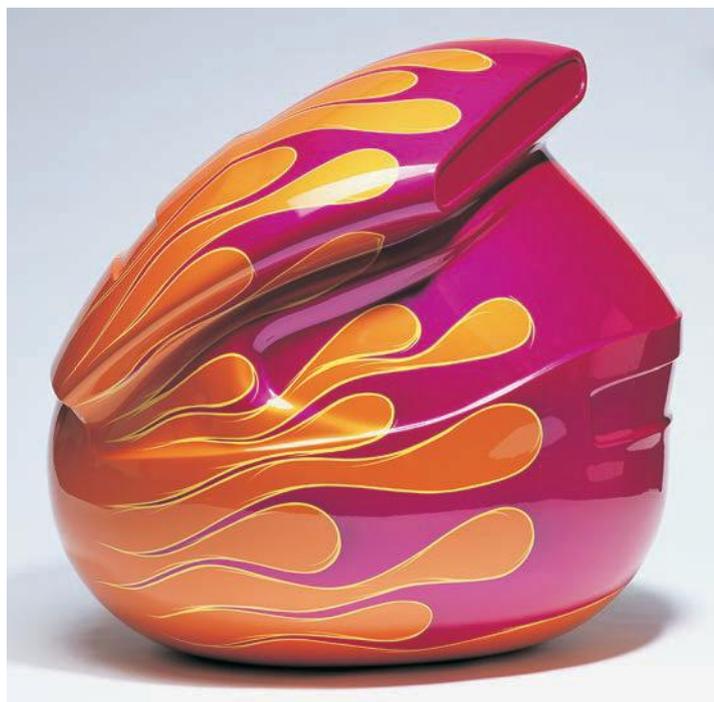


Figure 23.4 Patricia Piccinini, *Fireball*, 2001.

Fibreglass and automotive paint, 92 × 100 × 100 cm.
Photograph: Graham Baring. Courtesy of the artist, and Tolarno and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

them, the “Car Nuggets” take bits and pieces and compress them into something without bones or gristle’. Perhaps car nuggets are to cars what chicken nuggets are to chickens. Art curator Rachel Kent says of ‘Car Nuggets’: ‘Compressed into multi-coloured, nugget-shaped discs, they epitomise the fast-food nature of consumerism with its attractive packaging, ready accessibility, and standardised forms.’

Piccinini first created her prototype car nuggets in 1998 and then developed them further to create ‘Car Nuggets GL’ in 2001. *Fireball*, a work from this series, is featured on the previous page. Look at the physical qualities of the work and the materials used. The conscious use of fibreglass and automotive paint gives a visual message that these objects have unmistakably car-like qualities. In fact, she worked with professional car makers and painters to achieve the shapes and surfaces that say ‘car’. Piccinini commented:



Figure 23.5 Flame motif on a hotted-up car.

I created Car Nuggets in 1998 when I was interested in creating the abstract essence of cars, and in the same year, I made the work called Sheen with which I thought about the way to visualise speed. I was likewise attracted to the beautiful surface of cars and became interested in customised cars. (Piccinini 2003)

The yellow flames painted on *Fireball* are not simply decorative; they also have symbolic meaning. The pattern is a direct reference to customised paint work on racing cars, as described by Linda Michael:

The generic flame and skull motifs had their beginnings in WW1, custom painted onto fighter planes to assert bravery in the face of the dangers they represent. Later painted on racing cars, panel vans and hotted-up cars, the licking flames signified burning rubber, burning desire, and freedom. Here these motifs have become symbolically redundant. The objects they decorate have no speed, no fumes, no danger. (Michael 2000)

Notice how Piccinini uses the language of bright colours, shiny surfaces and simplified shapes to create her ‘Car Nuggets’. The nuggets are perfectly finished as if they have been designed to be attractive and commercially produced for mass consumption.



STUDENT TASK 23.3

- 1 Imagine a car nugget that represents a car belonging to your family or a friend. Now write a detailed description outlining its physical qualities.
- 2 Describe how Patricia Piccinini uses the visual language of consumer culture in her work.



Postmodern Frame

Before postmodernism, the dominant art theory was modernism. According to modernism, any artwork had one universally accepted meaning. In other words, there was one right way to understand a particular artwork. Since then, art theorists have begun to think about how meanings of artworks can change.

Postmodern thinkers argue that the meaning of an artwork is not just sitting there to be discovered, but is actively created by the viewer responding to the work. A viewer's ideas and life experiences will influence the way they see an artwork and, therefore, help shape the meaning. For this reason, different people with different ideas about the world will see artworks differently.

One way of approaching a case study using the Postmodern Frame is to look for evidence of different points of view. In the 'In Another Life' exhibition catalogue, Piccinini commented:

When I make a work it means a certain thing to me, and I hope that, to a certain extent, it might communicate that thing to others. Once it is out in the world, its meanings and images begin to proliferate. I have seen the same work used to illustrate both sides of an argument, which I see as a valuable independence from my own opinions. I like this, even though it is not always in ways that I would prefer. (Piccinini 2006)

With the work *Leather Landscape*, Piccinini again creates hybrid (cross-bred) creatures. This time it is a cross between a human and an African meerkat. As with *The Young Family*, she presents a transgenic creature; that is, a creature resulting from a cross between two or more different species. In so doing, Piccinini explores the ideas of constructed life forms.

Piccinini made the following comment during her public lecture at Tokyo Art University. It fits well within the Postmodern Frame because it acknowledges multiple viewpoints. Here Piccinini is commenting that different points of view can be found in current debates about the ethics of new medical technology:

There are two kinds of people who are thinking about these issues; those who are objective observers, and those that are actually affected by the issues, such as somebody who has a family member who is affected by a disease. These two viewpoints are often very different. It is impossible to be objective about these issues when you are emotionally involved, but I don't think that is a bad thing. (Piccinini 2003)

The Postmodern Frame also looks at ideas about power and authority. In her lecture at Tokyo Art University, Piccinini made the following comment about stem cell research: 'There are other questions such as: Who will have access to this technology? Will it just be the rich?'



Figure 23.6 Patricia Piccinini, *Leather Landscape* (detail), 2003. Silicone, acrylic, human hair, 290 × 175 × 165 cm. Photograph: Claudio Franzini. Courtesy of the artist, and Tolarno and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries.

Another key feature of the Postmodern Frame is irony. Irony in art is found where, through their work, the artist says something but means the opposite. Artists often use irony in a playful or satirical way. With her transgenic creatures, Piccinini appears to avoid irony and creates work that is meant to be taken at face value. Peter Hennessey made these comments on Piccinini's development of transgenic creatures:

Why would she do this? It is certainly not to be ironic. If there is one thing this work is not, it is ironic. This is warm, sincere work that more than opens itself up for charges of unfashionable sentimentality. In creating, as she does, a sort of lost dogs home for the stray and unwanted outcomes of contemporary ideas and technologies, she is both critiquing the process that creates these 'strays' and declaring her support for the strays themselves. (Hennessey 2002)

Through the Postmodern Frame we are always looking for evidence of ideas that are critical of conventions and dominant viewpoints. The Postmodern Frame allows us to consider, view or question life from a different perspective. Dominating cultures, concepts and ideas are now being questioned by reconceptualising them into different art objects or performances, such as in the work of Mark McGowan.



STUDENT TASK 23.4

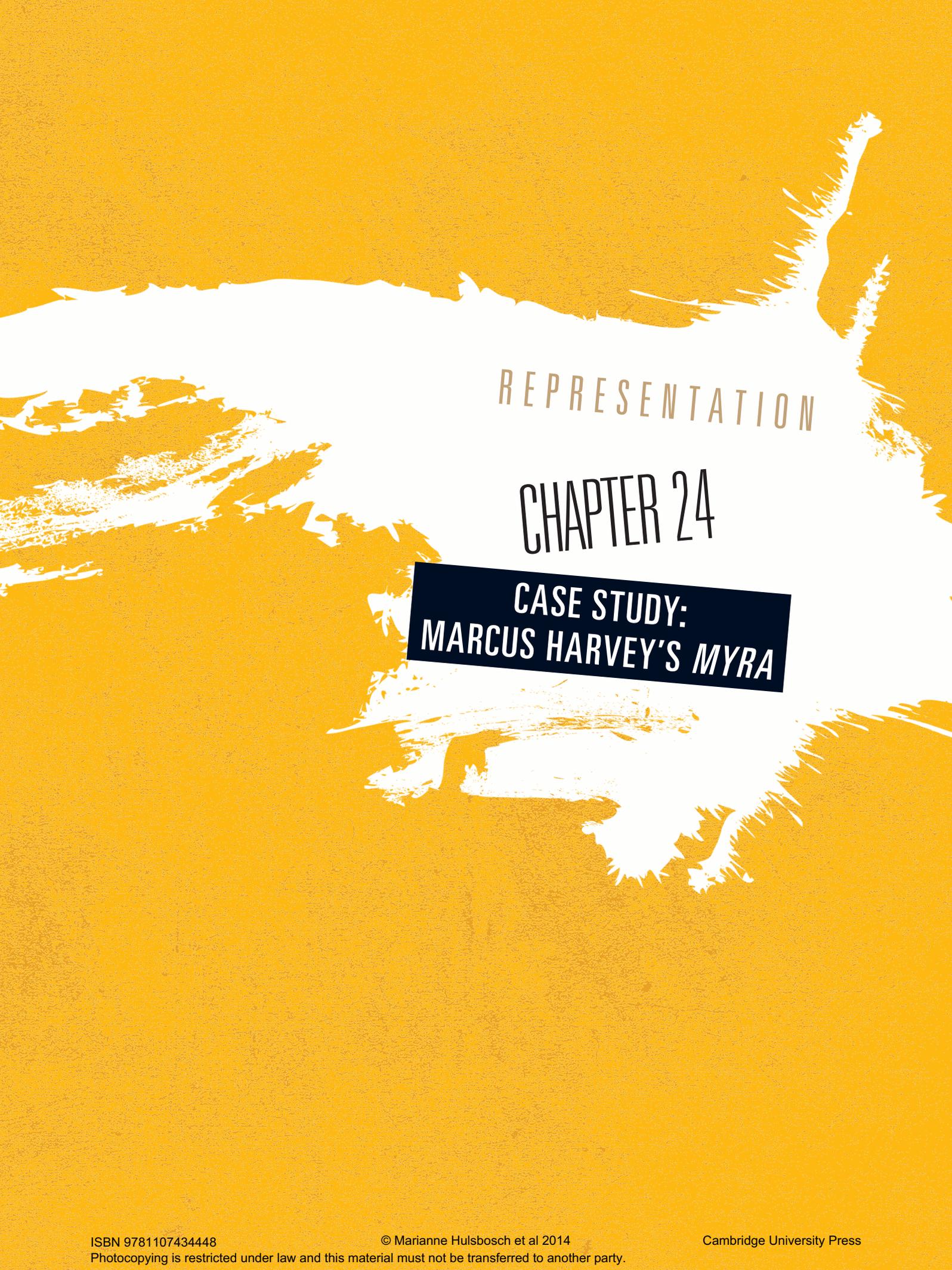
Explain how different viewpoints can construct different meanings of an artwork.

DID YOU KNOW?

British performance artist Mark McGowan sat in a bath full of baked beans for 100 hours with two chips stuck up his nose as a statement supporting British cuisine. He also put a turkey on his head and walked backwards for 17 kilometres shouting at overweight people in order to raise awareness of obesity.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- The Frames can be useful for gathering information on a case study from different points of view.
- Some information may be relevant to more than one Frame. This is to be expected as the Frames can overlap.
- Statements made by the artist and art critics provide good sources of information.
- Through the Subjective Frame we look for quotes and evidence of the emotional and imaginative responses to art.
- The Cultural Frame looks at the shared values and beliefs held by groups of people.
- The Structural Frame focuses on how art can work as a visual language.
- Postmodern thinkers argue that the meaning of an artwork is actively created by the viewer responding to the work.

The image features a dark blue background with a large, irregularly torn piece of white paper in the center. The paper has jagged, frayed edges, suggesting it has been ripped out of a book or document. On the white paper, the word "REPRESENTATION" is printed in a light blue, sans-serif font. Below it, "CHAPTER 24" is written in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the white paper, a black rectangular box contains the text "CASE STUDY: MARCUS HARVEY'S MYRA" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER 24

**CASE STUDY:
MARCUS HARVEY'S MYRA**

The enemy of art is the absence of limitations.

Orson Welles, actor and writer 1915–1985

Using all the agencies of the artworld contained within the Conceptual Framework, an artwork can be examined as being, for example, not only a physical likeness of a person, but also a representation of ideas and opinions. The Conceptual Framework can also be used to demonstrate the impact that these ideas and opinions can have on the audience. It also allows for an exploration of the intent of the artist, and of the roles of the curator and the media in either facilitating (making possible) or blocking this intent.

How artwork is presented to the viewer is determined not only by its likeness to an actual object or person but also by factors that include:

- its physical presence as an artwork
- the prior knowledge of the audience
- the curatorial decisions made by artists, museums and galleries as to how the work is presented to the audience.

24.1 Myra by Marcus Harvey

A study of the painting *Myra* by Marcus Harvey, including an examination of its role as a pivotal work in the 'Sensation' exhibition of 1997, will help to demonstrate the variable nature of artistic representation.

As with all works of art that are represented in books, in catalogues or on the internet, it is important to carefully read the citation provided for *Myra*. In this case, you will find that the work is monumental in size: almost 4 metres high. The size of the work can be gauged from the installation photograph at right.

The subject for Harvey's artwork is Myra Hindley, who is infamous rather than famous. With her partner, Ian Brady, Myra Hindley was jailed in 1966 for the brutal murder of three young children in England in a case that came to be known as the 'Moors murders'. The details of the case are horrific, with the judge at the time referring to 'three calculated, cruel, cold-blooded murders'. Throughout her time in prison, and even at her death thirty-six years later, Hindley provoked vitriolic responses from the media and from the public.

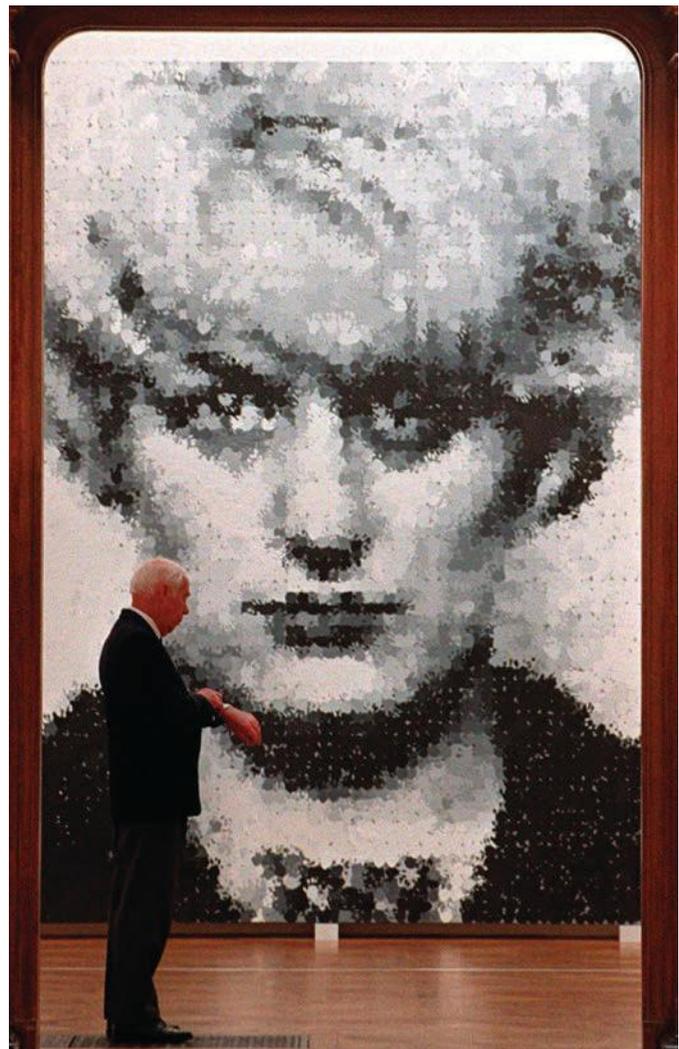


Figure 24.1 Marcus Harvey, *Myra*, 1995.

Acrylic on canvas, painted using casts of children's hands, 396 × 320 cm.

Private collection of Frank Gallipoli, Connecticut, USA



Figure 24.2 Marcus Harvey, *Myra* (detail showing hand prints).

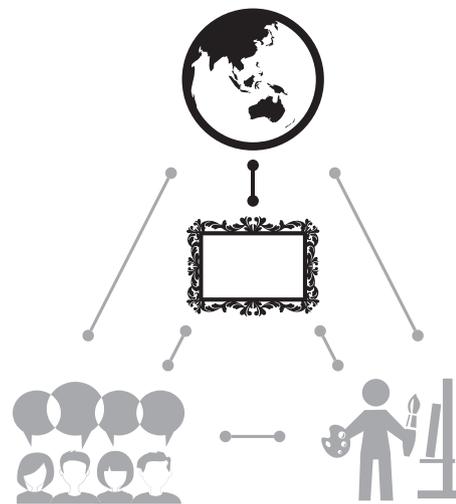
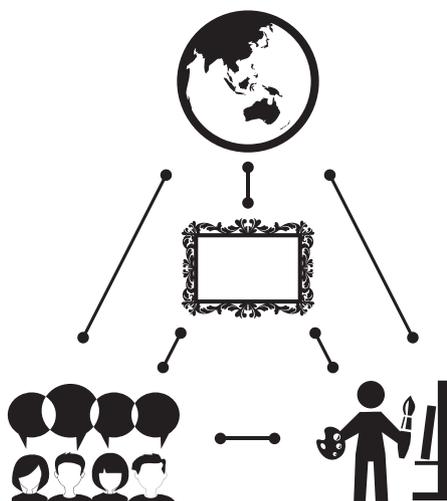


Figure 24.3 Police photograph of Myra Hindley, first published at the time of her arrest in 1965.



Myra is appropriated directly from the photograph on the previous page, and retains the monochrome nature of the original.

When *Myra* was exhibited in London as part of the 'Sensation' exhibition, it provoked public controversy and was damaged by some audience members. Eggs and ink were thrown at the work, which subsequently was protected by Perspex and security guards.

Protests were mounted outside the gallery, led by the parents of murder victims. Even Myra Hindley herself, writing from her jail cell, asked that the work be removed from display, saying that the work showed: 'A sole disregard not only for the emotional pain and trauma that would inevitably be experienced by the families of the Moors victims but also the families of any child victim'.

DID YOU KNOW?

After Harvey's painting was vandalised by protesters who used eggs and ink, conservation experts were brought in in an attempt to salvage the work. 'At the time all the restorers who were consulted said it was beyond repair', a gallery spokesman later recalled. The artist's solution? Harvey decided to clean it himself, using Ajax.

The artwork

If we look at *Myra* from a purely structural view there is nothing about the representation of the human form that would cause controversy. It is easy to recognise the subject matter, and it is a good likeness of the sitter. The presentation of the image is clear and traditional in its central placement within the picture plane.



The decision to work only in black and white is a departure from traditional portrait painting techniques, but hardly a radical one, representing as it does qualities that have been apparent in photography for more than a century.



Figure 24.4 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Diptych* (installation view), 1962.

Acrylic on canvas support, each 205 × 145 × 2 cm. Tate Gallery, London.

© The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARS. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.



The American artist Chuck Close had already produced portraits that were purely black and white. Also, as the images above and at left demonstrate, Andy Warhol had used photographic sources to produce portraits without meeting the sitter. Warhol, in writing about portraiture, suggested that he thought that his idea of a good picture was one that is in focus and of a famous person. Using this as a guideline, *Myra* is a 'good picture'.

Figure 24.5 Warhol used this film still from the film *Niagara*, 1957, to create *Marilyn Diptych*.

In relation to *Myra*, questions could be raised, as they were with Warhol, about the originality of the artwork produced. However, the appropriation of images from mass media sources is a common postmodern practice. The comparison between *Myra* and *Marilyn Diptych* is interesting also as both women are defined by an iconic representation of their appearance.



The use of the handprints as a stencil works on two levels. It represents both the breakdown of the original, mediated image, as it would have appeared in newspapers, where printing is done with dots of ink, and it is also a symbol of childhood. Marcus Harvey explained that he decided to use handprints in order to create:

The most simple image of innocence absorbed in all that pain. And that kicks the image into reality. There is an absolute realism. It's a real event. I realised that you had to break the surface of the image, so it's not just a glamorous posturing. (Burn 1997)

It is not, therefore, the method of representation that caused offence, but the choice of who was represented.

The artist

Controversy is part of the nature of art and creativity.

Yoko Ono, artist 1969

Harvey describes his choice of the photograph source for *Myra* in the following terms:

It's a terrifying image, and I realised I had been attracted to it lots of times, just pulled in by it. It's quite exciting ... I was very aware that the pull of the image was a sexual thing and that this is part of the taboo that increases its appeal. The whole point of the painting is the photograph. And I really don't want to get beyond that. (Burchill 1997)

There can be no doubt that Harvey knew that his choice of subject would provoke controversy, and that many of his public statements would only serve to inflame the press and the public.

The curator

Harvey was the painter of *Myra*, but in considering the impact of the work we should also look at the role of the curator of the 'Sensation' exhibition, Royal Academy exhibitions coordinator Norman Rosenthal. Rosenthal was instrumental in determining how the artwork would be represented to the audience.

John Molyneaux considers that *Myra* was chosen by the Royal Academy as 'the sign under which the exhibition was marketed, its logo, its shop window display, its loss leader'.

Rosenthal's curatorial placement of the large painting increased its visual impact, causing the viewer to be 'confronted' by it as they moved through the exhibition. He also recognised that the work would offend a large number of people, but argued that: 'All art is moral. Anything that is immoral is not art'. (Dalrymple 1998). Rosenthal has created an arena in which the viewer will respond to the artwork. He tells the audience how it should react.

In the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, Harvey's art practice is described by author Theodore Dalrymple as follows: 'Marcus Harvey makes disquieting, tension-filled paintings that simultaneously contain and exceed their salacious imagery'. (Dalrymple 1998) *Woman Shaving*, also by Harvey, is another clear example of an artwork that challenges audiences and makes them question what art is all about.

The audience

The English public, as a mass, takes no interest in a work of art until it is told that the work in question is immoral.

Oscar Wilde, writer and critic

An artwork does not have one audience; it has many different audiences. For each audience the work is represented differently, and represents different things.

Myra was initially shown in Britain at the Saatchi Gallery, but came to prominence when selected for inclusion in the 'Sensation' exhibition in 1997. This was a public showing of works from the private collection of Charles Saatchi. The artists represented were those who were grouped under the heading of Young British Artists, and included Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Jake and Dinos Chapman and Chris Ofili. Many of these artists had a reputation for producing artwork that was challenging to its audience.

The Royal Academy, the gallery that hosted the exhibition, placed warning signs for visitors that read:

There will be works of art on display in the Sensation exhibition which some people may find distasteful.

Parents should exercise their judgement in bringing their children to the exhibition.

One gallery will not be open to those under the age of 18.

Usually, the audience for an artwork can be divided into two categories:

- the general public
- a prepared audience – those who have a knowledge of art and are therefore able to look at a work within its historical and cultural setting. These people are often regular gallery visitors.

Where a work achieves the notoriety that *Myra* did there is a blurring of these categories. The general public was informed about the artwork through newspapers and through television reports. In Britain, this knowledge was supported by the high level of recognition of the original source photograph: the police 'mug shot' of Myra Hindley. This had two effects: it ensured that people who would not normally visit an art exhibition did so; and it ensured that people came with a mix of knowledge and preconceptions about the painting and about what it represented. In London alone, 300 000 visitors, each paying seven pounds, saw the exhibition.

That an artwork can come to represent an idea – in this case a personification of evil – shows the power of the subjective response to what is only paint on a canvas.



Figure 24.6 Marcus Harvey, *Woman Shaving*, 2002.
Oil on plywood and MDF,
238 (h) × 99 (w) cm / 94 (h) × 39 (w) cm.
White Cube, London.

© Marcus Harvey/DACS. Licensed by Viscopy, 2014.

The world

In looking at aspects of the world, we will consider three agencies that affect the way in which *Myra* is represented: the owner of the artwork; the gallery in which it is shown; and the media, in particular its role in shaping public taste and expectations.

The owner

Obviously, if you do what I do you are going to end up making people sometimes happy and sometimes unhappy. I cannot, nor would I want to, buy everything I see, so I have to make decisions about what I like. I like to keep my collecting fresh, and I think people have got the message.

Charles Saatchi, art collector and gallery owner

The owner of the works in the 'Sensation' exhibition, Charles Saatchi, is renowned as a collector of works by the Young British Artists. He also runs a commercial gallery that represents these artists and sells their works. In this role he is an active promoter of their careers, and a financial beneficiary, through commissions, of their sales.

Through the staging of the 'Sensation' exhibition, and through its subsequent high media profile, the artists were likely to have their value reassessed by the art market. This should not be regarded as a statement of criticism, for Saatchi is a highly regarded and generous supporter of contemporary art practice. Instead, it serves as a reminder that art is a commodity for sale, in common with any other product. Saatchi says of his collecting:

No, of course I'm not in it for the money. I make a lot of money from the stuff I sell, but then I pay incredibly high prices for the things I want. That's how I get what I like. The market is so insane. (Jeffries 2006)

Art needs to be advertised if it is to sell. Saatchi made his fortune in advertising through the internationally renowned agency Saatchi and Saatchi. So, he could be seen to be an expert in marketing through the mass media.

The gallery

The Royal Academy was reported to be experiencing financial problems prior to the staging of 'Sensation', making their staging of a blockbuster event particularly important for it. Its decision to hold an exhibition with the provocative title 'Sensation' and focusing on works that were controversial, could be seen as a deliberate attempt to bring in the crowds. In doing so, however, the gallery has determined for the audience a specific representation for *Myra*. They have been told that the work is sensational and it has been **juxtaposed** with other works that similarly challenge the audience. Placed in an exhibition where the artworks are expected to cause disquiet, this quality has been made the most important aspect of its representation.

juxtapose to place two or more things together, especially in order to suggest a link between them or to emphasise the contrast between them

Artists are meant to be madmen, to disturb and shock us.

Anne Rice, writer 1973

The media

Whoever controls the media, controls the mind.

Jim Morrison, musician 1943–1971

Art rarely makes the front page of the newspapers or headlines the evening news on television. When it does feature in the media it is not because it is seen to be 'good'. Art is newsworthy when it sells for high prices, or when it is controversial.

Myra attracted controversy as it represented a woman who herself was considered to be a representation of evil. In articles written at the time, there was no doubt as to what the artwork *Myra* represented: a huge lapse of judgement on the part of the artist. On a further level, it represented 'all that was wrong with modern art'.



STUDENT TASK 24.1

When *Myra* was exhibited as part of 'Sensation', the common representational link in the exhibition was the artist's status as member of the Young British Artists group and, as a consequence, a perception that the work was challenging or edgy.

- 1 Using images from texts or the internet, select works for a virtual exhibition that recontextualises *Myra*. Consider a possible theme for the exhibition, such as celebrity portraits, works in monochrome, or monumental images of the human form. Do not restrict your choices to paintings but also consider sculpture, installation, and moving image works.
- 2 Write, in the form of a catalogue essay, a 1000-word explanation for your choice of images. Remember, when you develop your essay, use the Conceptual Framework and consider the works from all four Frames.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- What an artwork represents can vary as a result of the actions and intentions of various agencies of the artworld.
- What an artwork represents to an audience is determined, in part, by the background knowledge that the viewers bring to the work. Different audiences will believe that a work represents different ideas and beliefs.
- The representational aims of the artist can be supported or altered by the decisions and actions of curators and the media.
- Various agencies of the artworld share an interest in the promotion of art as a commercial product. The generation of publicity can assist in heightening the perceived value of a work of art. It can also mean that the audience approaches a work with preconceived ideas concerning its subject matter and meaning.

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Note: n. d. means no date

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Glossary

abstract art in its truest form, an artwork with no recognisable subject matter

abstraction to use a recognisable form as a starting point and distort it

absurdist the idea that the universe is without meaning or rational order and that human beings, in attempting to find a sense of order, will fail

aerial perspective a bird's-eye view of a place or object; looking down from above

aesthetic concerning the appearance or beauty of an object

agencies the elements that make up the Conceptual Framework of the artworld: artist, artwork, world and audience

allegory a story or visual image with a second distinct meaning partially hidden behind its literal or visible meaning

ambiguous vague, indistinct; can have more than one meaning; can be interpreted differently by different audience members

anthropology the study of human society and culture

aperture in photography, an adjustable opening that allows light to pass through the lens

apocalyptic warning about or predicting a disastrous future or outcome; imagery that presents a negative future scenario

appropriation use of borrowed elements in the creation of new work

Archaic period the period in Greek history 800–480 BC preceded by the Greek Dark Ages. It is known as the 'intellectual revolution' of Ancient Greece

bisque firing the first firing of ceramicware, without the addition of glaze

body of work art piece or pieces that reflect the practice of their creator

burnish polish with a smooth stone or tool to make a surface shine

citation the information provided with an artwork that is on display in a gallery or a publication that informs the viewer of details about the artwork, such as the artist's name, the artwork's title and the year of its production

codification the act of arranging laws, rules or codes of behaviour into an organised system

coherence clear, logical and consistent connections between parts

colonialist the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker people or areas

commission to order a work from an artist; also, in commercial galleries, the amount taken by the gallery owner for organising the sale of an artist's work

composition the arrangement of elements in a work of art

conceptual coming from or belonging to the concepts, ideas or principles upon which something is based

Conceptual Framework in art, a visual model and theoretical tool used to study artists, artworks, audiences and the wider world

conceptual meaning the power of an artwork to convey meaning to an audience, through the use of conceptual strength

conceptual strength the extent and depth of artistic ideas and concepts

connotation a suggested additional meaning for a word or phrase apart from the explicit meaning

contemplative calm and thoughtful

contemporary the most current artists, artworks, practices, theories and movements

context the circumstances or events that form the environment within which something exists or takes place

contrapposto a term used to describe the pose of a figure standing with most of its weight on one foot, putting the shoulders and hips on an angle

conventions the customary ways in which things are done; in art, the rules or structures of an artform

convey communicate or express something

creator maker

Cubism an art movement that used lines, shapes, tones, text and mixed media to represent the solidity and volume of objects through fractured planes and multiple perspectives

curator someone who prepares and mounts an exhibition

Dadaism an international art and literary movement that went against traditional artistic and acceptable social norms

deconstruction reordering of the natural composition to show different viewpoints and thus create new meanings

dendroglyph carvings made into living trees; also called arborglyphs. Sometimes separated when discussing Australian Aboriginal art into taphoglyphs (located near graves) and teleteglyphs (found near ceremonial grounds)

denotation the most specific or literal meaning of a word, as opposed to its connotation

design template a plan or blueprint that acts as a model for the structure and general layout of further design pieces; patterns that can be followed to repeat an initial idea

didactic tending to give instruction or advice, sometimes when it is not welcome or needed

duality a condition where there are two states or parts that are opposed to each other

entrepreneur someone who recognises an opportunity and organises resources to take advantage of that opportunity

ephebe a young man between the ages of 18 and 20 sent off to military training in Ancient Greece

evoke to bring to mind a memory or feeling, especially from the past

exposition exhibition or public display

Expressionism an artistic movement that flourished in Germany between 1905 and 1925 whose supporters often distorted colour and form and sought to represent feelings and moods rather than objective reality

familiarity acquaintance; usualness by virtue of being familiar

figuration giving form to something abstract, especially by using human or animal figures

figurative representation representation in artmaking that has the human form as its theme or basis

filter in computer graphics programs, a range of tools used to manipulate or distort an image

firman a type of grant or permit

frieze a sculpted or painted wall decoration, usually situated near a ceiling

Futurism an art, design and architectural movement that emphasised speed, movement and mechanical forms as positive symbols of modernity; a futurist is someone who is forward-thinking

gilt having a thin cover of gold leaf or gold paint

glaze firing the last firing of glazed works

graphics tablet in computer technologies, a panel onto which the operator can draw with a stylus, transferring their work directly into a computer program

ground a surface or prepared area to which paint is applied

iconic relating to or characteristic of somebody or something admired as an icon

iconography the symbols, visual images and modes of representation that can be collectively associated with a person, social group or art movement

idolatry the worship of figures

illusion something that creates the appearance of reality, that tricks the eye

Impressionism an art movement where the artist captured the image of an object as someone would see it if they just caught a glimpse of it

Indigenous relating to people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and are accepted as such by the community in which they live

installation an artwork that is designed for a specific space and is installed into that space

juxtapose to place two or more things together, especially in order to suggest a link between them or to emphasise the contrast between them

kouroi Ancient Greek statues of naked young men

mainstream typical; ordinary; in art, the dominant or accepted art practice of the time

meaning in art, something that is conveyed by an artwork or that the artist intends to convey; what the work is about

mediate to act or bring about through an intervening agency; in art, to source images and use them in artmaking

mimetic imitating or mimicking

modernism the revolutionary ideas and styles in art, architecture and literature that developed in the early twentieth century as a reaction to the traditional forms of these

narrative a story or an account of a sequence of events in the order in which they happened; a non-linear narrative does not place events in chronological order

Op art a twentieth-century school of abstract art that uses geometric patterns and colour to create the illusion of movement; also known as optical art

pagan an individual whose religious beliefs are other than those of the main world religions

paradigm a community of common values, languages and practices; paradigms shift when values, languages and practices shift to accommodate social, cultural or technological change

paradox a statement or argument that is contradictory but true

parody to humorously imitate or poorly represent the work of another

pastiche imitating the style of an artist or period

perspective a technique used to give an illusion of three-dimensionality on a two-dimensional surface, mostly by giving the illusion of depth

perversity deliberate deviation from what is good or expected

pixel in digital imagery, the smallest square or dot that is the basis for an image; pixels are combined optically to create an artwork or text

Pointillism a late nineteenth-century style of painting in which a picture is constructed from dots of pure colour that blend, at a distance, into recognisable shapes and various colour tones

Pop art an art movement that arose in the United States and Great Britain in the 1950s. Pop artists use mass reproduction techniques and popular images of cultural artefacts to make political statements about capitalist societies and mass consumption. It is an artform that can be readily understood by the masses

portrait an art image that portrays a likeness, usually physical, of a specific individual

Post-Impressionism meaning 'after-Impressionism'; an art style that further developed the principles of symbolism, analytical and exaggerated colour, and uninhibited brush strokes introduced by the Impressionists

postmodernism a movement of wide-ranging ideas and theories that reacts against modernist traditions and questions ideas about originality; characterised by references to other artworks, appropriation and parody

practitioner someone who practises a particular profession, such as art or architecture

product placement a marketing strategy that involves placing a product in a way that encourages consumers to buy the product

propaganda information that is spread for the purpose of promoting some cause

pseudonym a fictitious name that someone takes in place of their real name

rayograph a photographic image created by placing objects directly on photographic paper then exposing to light in a darkroom before developing; a term used by artist Man Ray

readymade an object that is already made and is taken by an artist and called art

realism a style of painting that shows the subject matter as it appears in reality, without distortion or stylisation

recontextualise place an artwork or image into a different social, historical or literary context and, in doing so, alter the meaning that it conveys to an audience

Renaissance French word for rebirth; the period in the arts from the beginning of the fifteenth century until the late sixteenth century when artists' work was informed by the art and architecture of the Ancient Greeks and Romans and the study of nature

representation the presentation of something again in the form of an artwork

resolution in art, the selection and exploration of materials, techniques and processes to support the concept or intent of the artist and the successful communication of these in an artwork

restitution the return of property to a rightful owner

schematic a diagram that shows the basic form or layout of something

semiotics the study of the meaning and use of signs and symbols

silhouette an outline or shadow; a form shown as a shape only, without internal detail

slip a mortar made by mixing clay and water into a smooth paste

sonic relating to the use or production of sound

stereotype popularly held belief about a type of person or a group of people that does not take into account individual differences

storyboard in filmmaking, a set of sketches and technical details, arranged in sequence, outlining the scenes that will be filmed

study an artwork that is done as preparation for a later work

stylised designed in a particular artistic style

subjectivity judgement based on personal impressions, feelings and opinions rather than external facts

subversion undermining or overthrowing, often of traditional beliefs or methods of working

Suprematism a school of painting from early twentieth-century Russia where artists made geometric abstract artworks that had no recognisable subject matter

Surrealism a twentieth-century movement in art and literature that tried to represent the subconscious mind by creating fantastic imagery and juxtaposing elements that seem to contradict each other; literally means 'super-real'

symbol something that is used to represent or stand for something else

symbolism the use of symbols and figures to represent an idea or a meaning

time-based artworks such as film and animation

triptych an artwork in three pieces

vector an image that can be scaled indefinitely without degrading

Venice Biennale an influential exhibition of international contemporary art held in Venice every two years

virtual a realistic representation but not real

Young British Artists a group of young artists who were at the forefront of contemporary art in the 1990s; also referred to as Britart

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