Art-iculate

ART FOR VCE UNITS 1-4

SECOND EDITION

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Contents

Units 3 and 4

About the authors

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About the cover

Nicolette Phillipson, *Who am 1?,* 2015, 59.0 x 88.0 cm (sight) (image), 63.0 x 93.0 cm (framed)

Nicolette Phillipson is a first-year student at RMIT University, studying for an Associate Degree in Fashion Design and Technology. In 2015, she completed her VCE at Frankston High School, Victoria. As well as winning the Acquisitive Art prize at Frankston High, her work was selected for exhibition for *StART Up: Top Arts 2016*. Nicolette is a passionate dancer, taking workshops in London and Hong Kong, but is now focusing on a career in vintage fashion design and garment construction, with an emphasis on sustainable practices.

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Artwork acknowledgements

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Introduction

Congratulations on choosing *Art-iculate Second Edition*. This book has been purpose written to meet the requirements of Units 1–4 of the VCE Art Study Design (2017–2021).

Art is a fundamental part of everyday life – a visual language that enables experiences, ideas, cultural values and beliefs to be communicated in a multitude of ways.

The VCE Art Study Design encourages students to analyse and interpret a diverse range of art forms and artists, while taking part in a process of personal art making. This approach is designed not only to help students understand how artworks reflect the values, beliefs and traditions of the artists who made them, but also to provide inspiration for personal art making. VCE Art also provides the opportunity for students to investigate the role of art in the world through a study of historical and contemporary cultures.

Throughout *Art-iculate*, students will learn the key knowledge and skills to critically evaluate and respond to artworks, ideas and concepts – using the Analytical Frameworks – while developing personal ideas and a creative visual language through investigation and experimentation in artmaking. Through exploration and experimentation with various art forms, materials, techniques and processes, students progressively develop their own aesthetic awareness of artworks.

Guide to icons

Structural Framework (formerly called Formal Framework)	The Structural Framework is used to analyse the style, symbolism and structural elements of an artwork and how they contribute to the meanings and messages conveyed.	Structural
Personal Framework	The Personal Framework is used to interpret how an artist's experiences, feelings, thinking and personal philosophy can be reflected in an artwork. It can also be used to gain awareness of the effect of the viewer's cultural background and experience on the interpretation of the artwork.	Personal
Cultural Framework	The Cultural Framework is used to identify the influences on an artwork of the time, place and cultural and political settings in, and purpose for, which it was made. These influences may include historical, political, social, socio-economic, artistic, technological, environmental and religious contexts as well as aspects of ethnicity and gender.	Cultural
Contemporary Framework	The Contemporary Framework can be used to interpret an artwork, irrespective of when it was created, by looking at it from a current viewpoint. The Contemporary Framework is used to examine art ideas and issues originating from the late twentieth century onwards and apply these ideas to artworks in a range of periods of time and cultures. Contemporary art and ideas can relate to the use of new media and technologies, to contemporary art elements and to diverse and alternative approaches to making and presenting art.	Contemporary

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By the end of Unit 2, you will have gained experience in the analysis and interpretation of artworks and in developing a visual language through the exploration of ideas, materials, techniques and art forms.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- research artworks and artists, and their processes, to prepare for assessment tasks
- understand how to apply art terminology in your writing and discussion
- understand what art commentaries are and how they are used in writing and discussion about art
- apply the four Analytical Frameworks (Structural, Cultural, Personal and Contemporary) to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of artworks

- form your own understanding of and opinions about artworks
- create your own folio of work by researching visual stimulus, materials, techniques and ideas.

Through the study of artistic practice, you will gain an understanding of the way artists work and how artworks are conceptualised, created, presented and viewed. Artistic practices have a range of characteristics that vary, dependent on the beliefs, structures and values of the time, period and culture in which the artist is working. Artistic practice can also be based on styles and aesthetic considerations from different periods and cultures.

SCOPE OF STUDY –
VCE ART STUDY DESIGN 2017–21

1.1 Artistic practice

artistic practice includes use of the art process; critical, creative and reflective thinking, visual language and analysis using the Analytical Frameworks.

visual language the way in which images, the elements and principles of art, materials, techniques, processes and art forms can be used to communicate concepts and ideas

analysis the separation of the parts of a subject for individual study, in order to find out their nature, function and meaning. To analyse an artwork, the viewer breaks the artwork into simple elements in order to interpret the ideas and meanings expressed. The fundamentals of art analysis include studying the art elements and art principles, techniques, style, symbols and metaphors included in the artwork.

art criticism the analysis, evaluation, interpretation and judgement of works of art. Art criticism can vary in degrees of positive as well as negative remarks, and critical methods vary considerably in their approaches to considering the forms, content and contexts of works of art.

Art is an integral part of people's lives. It is a powerful means through which to communicate personal experiences, cultural values, beliefs, ideas and viewpoints on experiences and issues in contemporary society.

Throughout your study of VCE Art, you will be investigating the role of art in the world through a study of contemporary and historical cultures. By researching artists and artworks, you will be able to articulate the meanings and messages of artworks and how these relate to the viewer of the artwork. You will study a range of artists and the place of their work in historical, cultural and contemporary contexts. There is an important interplay between research and art making, and you will use the knowledge you gain through the study of other artists to assist your own artistic practice.

The study of art involves the development of skills in research, **analysis** and **art criticism** to interpret and debate the ideas and issues raised in artworks. Art study fosters inquiry. It also provides you with the ability to develop your own personal ideas and concepts. You will undertake a visual investigation that will draw upon the expression of your personal ideas on a range of social, emotional and physical experiences. You will therefore be responding to the artworks you have researched through the exploration of and experimentation with art forms, materials, techniques and processes to develop your own artworks.

This first chapter of this second edition of *Art-iculate* will provide you with the tools you will need to commence your study of art in both the research of artworks and the development of your own art making processes and skills.

Figure 1.1 Jan Vermeer van Delft, *The Art of Painting*, c. 1666, Kunsthistories Museum (120 x 100 cm)

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1.2 Researching artworks

Beginning your research

You can use a number of resources to research artworks. Your school or local library will have relevant books in its art section. Your next stop is the internet. Most importantly, though, you need to visit art galleries and exhibitions. You can visit large public galleries or commercial galleries in major cities. Some larger regional towns have regional galleries with exhibitions and some suburbs have community galleries. Art magazines are also a good source of information on contemporary artists. There is also a variety of media available on artists' processes and practices that will be helpful.

Organising your research

When you are researching artworks, it is best to organise your information and have a plan for how you will approach your research. You can group your findings in several ways, such as:

- *the **art form** that the artist uses* – for example, three-dimensional works such as sculpture, ceramics and constructions; two-dimensional works such as painting, drawing, print-making, collage, photography – both analogue and digital; and four-dimensional works including multimedia works such as performance-based works, video works, works that involve sound and time, and installations
- *the **materials** from which the artwork has been made.* With today's wide range of contemporary art forms, it is important to consider materials outside those traditionally used in art forms. As well as pencils, charcoal and paint, an artist may use textiles as an art form. An artist may use recycled or natural

materials in construction work. In video and performance work, the artist may use props to express their ideas. Photography can now include the use of digital software to create works and the images can be printed on a wide range of forms.
- *the ideas and meanings behind the work* – this is usually the main idea or concept being explored in the work
- *the period of time or culture in which the artwork was produced.*

Generally, in your art study, you will be researching artworks from a range of times and cultures that may all have similar ideas or meanings.

The starting point is to find your images and then keep a record of your research in a folder with a copy of the images and the following information:

- *The **empirical** data,* such as:
  - the title of the work
  - the date it was produced, including the period of art from which it originated (e.g. Egyptian, Surrealism, contemporary)
  - the materials from which the artwork is made
  - the size of the work
  - where the work is located currently – which gallery, museum or location.

- *A description of the work.* This is a written summary of the artwork. Look carefully at the work and write a list of the things you can see in the work. Imagine you are describing the work to someone who cannot see it.

art form how a work is presented and what materials have been used, including whether it is two-, three- or four-dimensional, and what materials and techniques have been used (e.g. painting, sculpture, multimedia works)

materials what an artwork is actually made of (e.g. paint, charcoal, video or plaster); not to be confused with 'technique', which is how the materials are used

empirical observed or factual information about the artwork, such as the title, artist, date of execution, medium and where the artwork can be found. This is not information that relies on opinion or interpretation.

Figure 1.2 Jeffrey Smart, *Central Station II*, 1974–75, synthetic polymer paint on canvas (86 x 100 cm), purchased 1976, collection Art Gallery of New South Wales © Jeffrey Smart, photograph by Brendan McGeachie

ACTIVITY 1.1

Find five artworks that you think you would like to investigate further. Put each artwork at the top of a page and then write the details below, including materials, date, size and location of the artwork. What appeals to you about each artwork?

In each unit of the VCE course, you will be asked to research artworks and apply the Analytical Frameworks to interpret them. This chapter will go through the frameworks with you and provide examples of how to apply them.

ACTIVITY 1.2

The artwork in Figure 1.2 is by Jeffrey Smart. Research any background information you can on the artist, such as the period of time when and location where Smart painted this image. Find out where the work is located. Research and list any other works by Jeffrey

Smart you can find and list the materials, size, location and date of the works. Write a description of three of the images and explain why you selected these images. What do you think the work is about? What appeals to you about the images? Consider the subject and the ideas that Smart is conveying.

ACTIVITY 1.3

Go through this textbook and see whether you can make a list of terminology that you think would be appropriate for discussing art. Look up the definition of the words in the glossary. Write the definition next to the word.

Terminology

Throughout the VCE Art course, you will be asked to use terminology and vocabulary in your writing and research that is appropriate to writing about art. Many of the tasks that you will do will involve the use of art terminology in analysis and interpretation of artworks and in the annotation and documentation of your own art making. Artists frequently use notebooks to document their inspiration, the development of their ideas, their processes and evaluations of their work.

Like many other subjects, art has its own language and terminology. These words and expressions are unique to art. There are specific words that we use for techniques and processes as well as art forms. Throughout this text, you will see that each chapter has definitions of some of the words that are used by artists, critics and writers. As you progress through the course, your knowledge of these terms will increase. You will also be given examples of the use of art terminology through specific examples.

Some of the areas where you will use specific art terminology and vocabulary include:

- art forms
- materials and media
- techniques and processes
- styles of artwork
- subject matter or content of an artwork
- use of art elements and art principles in an artwork
- interpretation and analysis of artworks.

Art commentaries

Commentaries (or viewpoints) are statements made about an artwork or issue by a range of people. Commentaries include information from visiting speakers, art lecturers, gallery guides or the artists themselves, film, sound and video files, online programs devoted to specific artists or styles, gallery websites, media interviews and articles, printed articles, periodicals, journals, catalogues or texts by art critics and historians.

Commentaries help us to understand artworks – why they may have been created and what other people think about them. The information from commentaries can be about the subject of the work, the artist's ideas and how they express their ideas, and the techniques artists use. They can also comment on how others have reacted to the work or issues surrounding the artwork or artist. When you select a commentary, be aware that it should be 'authoritative' – from an informed and identified source. Proper citing – author and source – should be a normal part of sourcing commentaries, and the source should be acknowledged when you use the commentary or viewpoint. An example of this can be seen in the caption for Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 Jackson Pollock, *Blue Poles*, 1952 (oil, enamel, aluminium paint & glass on canvas) © Pollock-Krasner Foundation/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

ACTIVITY 1.4

My opinion is that new needs need new techniques and the modern artists have found new ways and new means of making their statements.

– JACKSON POLLOCK

What do you think this comment is saying about the artwork in Figure 1.3? Do you agree with the comment? Find a selection of quotes by critics or artists in this book. Discuss what the commentary is stating about the artwork. Write a list of points next to a copy of the artwork and the commentary about what they are saying about the artwork. It may be the subject of the work, the ideas the artist is expressing, the style of the work, the influences on the artist or the techniques the artist has used. How does this influence your understanding of the artwork?

ACTIVITY 1.5

Select one artwork and find three acknowledged commentaries on that artwork. Discuss the differences you can see between the commentaries. What do you think is the topic of each commentary? How do they influence your understanding of the artwork?

Artistic practice

Through the study of artistic practice, students gain an understanding of the way artists work and how artworks are conceptualised, created and viewed. Artistic practices have a range of characteristics that vary, depending on the beliefs, structures and values of the time, period and culture in which the artist is working. Artistic practice can also be based on styles and aesthetic considerations from different periods and cultures.

For the purpose of the Art Study Design, artistic practice encompasses the use of the Analytical Frameworks for analysing and interpreting the meanings of artworks, both in the conceptualisation and the making of artworks. The artistic practice includes the use of the art process, critical, creative and reflective thinking, and visual language.

1.3 Analytical Frameworks

The application of the Analytical Frameworks is a means to analyse and interpret the meanings and messages of artworks. But what are frameworks? They are the tools that assist you to analyse and interpret the meaning of artworks.

If you consider the purpose of a frame that you place around a picture, it:

- separates the picture from its surroundings and reduces distraction
- helps to focus our attention on the picture.

A framework can be found in different contexts:

- When building a house, it creates a structure, support or skeleton.
- When writing a story, it provides an outline/plan.
- When speaking with a political framework, it provides background, context or a frame of reference to understand the ideas being expressed.

An Analytical Framework provides:

- a point of reference or context in which to consider the artwork
- a structure for your discussion or analysis.

In order to apply the frameworks to analysis, you need to select the most relevant aspects of each Analytical Framework, then raise certain questions linked to the framework that should to be considered when exploring and discussing each artwork. In this study, you are required to apply four Analytical Frameworks to the analysis of artworks and to discuss your own art making.

The four Analytical Frameworks are:

1 the Structural Framework
2 the Personal Framework
3 the Cultural Framework
4 the Contemporary Framework.

The Structural Framework

This framework is used to analyse how the style, symbolism and structural elements of artworks contribute to the meanings and messages conveyed by them. It is the most important framework, and it provides links between the other frameworks.

When applying this framework, you must consider the following questions:

- How has the artist applied the art elements and principles in the creation of this artwork, and what effect does it have on the work? How do the art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages of the work?
- What materials, techniques, processes and art forms have been used by the artist? How do these contribute to the meanings and messages of the work? Is this due to the inherent qualities of the materials or to their application by the artist?
- What is the distinctive style of the artwork and how does it contribute to the meaning/s of the artwork? How does the work relate to other works in a similar style or from the same philosophical, historical or cultural context? Does the style of the work impact on its meaning?
- What aspects of imagery, use of materials, techniques and processes, or use of art elements and principles contain symbolic meaning?

ART ELEMENTS AND ART PRINCIPLES

Using the **art elements** and **art principles** to analyse the meanings and messages of the artwork is a bit like baking a cake: the elements are the ingredients and the principles are the way these ingredients can be put together in an artwork. The combination of the art elements and art principles in an artwork is also called the **composition**. An artist may choose certain art elements and combine them with the principles to express their ideas. This framework focuses on how the artwork is structured.

art elements line, shape, colour, tone, texture and form; contemporary artworks can also have additional elements such as sound, light, time

art principles emphasis (focal point), balance, movement, unity, variety, contrast, rhythm, repetition (pattern), scale, proportion and space

composition the arrangement of the objects and the way the art elements are structured in the format

ACTIVITY 1.6

Using a range of artworks from different periods of time and different cultures, analyse the use of the art elements and principles. Write a description of the artwork and then discuss the use of the art elements and principles. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for a range of additional information relating to the art elements and principles

ACTIVITY 1.7

Using the same artworks, discuss how the artist has used the art elements and principles to communicate their ideas. Use examples of the art elements and principles that have been used to communicate those ideas by looking at the wordlists in the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Structural

Use Table 1.1 when analysing the use of art elements and principles in an artwork.

TABLE 1.1 ART ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES

ART ELEMENT DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS QUESTIONS
Line – The path left by a moving point. Lines can be represented physically in an artwork or can be implied between two points in space.	Describe the types of line used in the work. What is the character of the line? What mood does the line create? How does line assist in forming the composition of the work?
Colour – The colour wheel consists of primary, secondary and tertiary colours. *Secondary colours* are achieved by mixing the three primary colours and *tertiary colours* are achieved by mixing the secondary and primary colours together. Colours opposite each other on the colour wheel are called *complementary*. The colours of the colour wheel are called *hues*. When you lighten or darken the colour you change its *value*. When you brighten or reduce the brightness of the colour you change its *intensity*.	Are the colours **objective**, **subjective**, bright, warm, dull, cool, contrasting, dramatic, natural, harmonious or complementary colours? What effect does the use of colour have on the mood of the image? Does the colour have any effect on the composition of the image? Does the use of colour have any symbolic meaning?
Tone – The degree of lightness or darkness of aspects of an artwork.	How has tone been used? Is it highly contrasted? Are a variety of tones used? Is limited tone used? Are the tones **high key** or **low key**? How does the use of tone contribute to the mood of the image?
Texture – The surface quality of an artwork. It is how things feel, or look as if they may feel, when touched. In an artwork, texture can be 'real', created by brushstrokes or the surface quality of materials, or 'implied', meaning it is simulated.	Can I identify the different surface qualities of the shapes in the image? How has the artist created texture in the work? Does the texture contribute to the composition or meaning of the image?

Shape – A **two-dimensional** area that can be drawn or cut. Shapes can be organic or geometric.	Are the shapes in the image geometric or organic? How are the shapes that are created defined? What techniques has the artist used to create the shapes? For example, are they painted? How does the sculptor create the shapes in the work? How are the shapes formed in a photograph? Do the shapes contribute to the composition of the work? What feelings are generated in the viewer by the shapes that have been used?	**two-dimensional** flat with two dimensions – height and width **three-dimensional** has three dimensions – height, width and depth **ephemeral** lasting for a very short time; an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them
Form – An element of art that is **three-dimensional**. It occupies and encloses space or volume. An artwork can have actual form or an artist can create an illusion of form	How has the artist created the appearance of form in the work? Is it by using particular brushstrokes? Has the artist used light and surface qualities to suggest form? Has the artist used particular materials, processes or art forms to create form? How does the artwork relate to and interact with the space it occupies or encloses?	
Sound – Can be heard as noise, words or music and is generally used to create atmosphere or meaning in a time-based artwork. It can be natural, mechanical or manipulated.	What is the function of sound in this artwork? Has sound influenced the mood of the work? In what way? How does sound make the viewer feel?	**new media** refers to interdisciplinary works using recently developed electronic media and recent developments in software and related hardware devices
Light – In 2D art, light is an illusion created by tone or contrast. It can also refer to the way an artwork is lit in an exhibition space. Light can be an integral, although **ephemeral**, element of a time-based artwork. It can involve interplay between object and shadow. An artwork can be created by using light as a material.	How has light been created or used by the artist? Are shadows or reflections an important part of the way in which light has been used? How does light affect the viewer's reaction to the artwork? Does the use of light have symbolic meaning?	**four-dimensional** adds time to the traditional dimensions of height, width and depth
Time – Refers to the duration of the period in which things happen. Time can be represented in an artwork. Some cultures view time as a linear path, while others view it as a circle. It is an element in a number of art forms, which requires the passage of time, such as performance, installation and **new media**, including online art, video and computer games. These works are sometimes referred to as **four-dimensional**.	Is time represented in the artwork or is time an actual element of the work? Is it essential to view the artwork in its entirety? Does experiencing only part of it affect the understanding of the work as intended by the artist? Is a digital device necessary to experience the artwork in time? Does the intervention of a device affect the immediacy of the experience?	

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ART PRINCIPLE DESCRIPTION	ANALYSIS QUESTIONS
Emphasis – Draws a viewer's attention to certain parts of a composition. A focal point is a specific spot where attention is directed. **Focal point** – The main area of interest in an artwork. The artist will arrange or use certain elements to draw the attention of the viewer to an area of the artwork. Artists can create focal points by using certain techniques, including the contrast within a particular element, and the size and placement of certain elements and by using lines and rhythm to draw our attention to something.	What elements have been used to create emphasis or a focal point in the artwork? Describe the contrast of elements that have been used to create emphasis or a focal point in the artwork. Where have certain elements been placed to create the focal point in the artwork? What impact does the focal point have on the work? Does it add to our understanding of the meaning? What effect is created if there is no obvious focal point?
Balance – Affects the composition of an artwork and the combinations of the different elements in the work. Balance can be termed **symmetrical** or **asymmetrical balance**.	How does the contrast of elements in the work create balance – for example, are some shapes larger than others, as though they appear heavier? How is the space in the artwork arranged? Does the placement of objects on the picture plane create a sense of balance? Does the artwork have a formal or dynamic balance? What feeling does this generate?
Movement – In both 2D and 3D artworks, a sense of motion can be implied by combining art elements (such as diagonal lines or repeated shapes) to create the illusion of action or to cause the viewer's eye to move over the work. In works such as performance and installation art, movement can be actual and physical.	Does the artwork have actual or implied movement, or is it static in appearance? What elements used by the artist suggest movement in the artwork? How important is the movement to an overall understanding of the aim of the artist in the artwork?
Unity – Achieved in an artwork when all the elements work together to create a strong sense of connection in the artwork. The elements may all be used in a similar way, thus creating unity. **Harmony** within elements, such as the use of harmonious colours in a work, can also create a sense of unity.	Which elements have been repeated to create unity in the artwork? Are the shapes the same size and placed in a pattern to create unity? Or are they different sizes, thus creating variety? What meaning is achieved by the unity?
Variety – Often when elements are repeated, there will be an aspect that is different to create **variety**. Generally, the contrast of a particular element will create variety.	Has the artist used contrast with the elements to create variety in the artwork?
Contrast – In an artwork, **contrast** refers to the use of opposing elements to create interest. This can be in colour, tone, line or any other element. Contrast is used often in conjunction with other art principles. Contrast can create a focal point in an artwork and is often used in conjunction with other art principles.	Which elements have been contrasted in the artwork? Why has the artist used these elements to contrast? How has the artist used contrast with the elements? Is it size, shape or colour? Does the artist create a focal point with the use of contrast? Does the use of contrast add any meaning to the artwork?

Rhythm – The **repetition** of elements in an artwork creates a sense of rhythm. The repetition of art elements creates a pattern and encourages the viewer's eye to move around the artwork. Rhythm is generally created by the repetition of art elements.	What rhythm do you see in the artwork? Which elements have been repeated to create this rhythm? Is the rhythm constant or varied?	**repetition** where elements of an artwork occur more than once, often to create unity in a work; can be repeated shapes, colours, arrangements or even sounds in multimedia works
Repetition – This involves copying and repeating an art element over and over. This may create pattern, or suggest movement or rhythm. Pattern can be used as a decorative element in an artwork. When elements are the same size and type and placed in a particular pattern, they are said to be unified through repetition.	What art elements have been repeated? Is this repetition regular or irregular? Is the use of pattern symbolic or decorative? Does the repetition suggest movement or rhythm?	**pictorial space** the space on the picture plane or surface of the artwork **vertical position** the base of an object on the ground is positioned higher on the picture plane the further away it is
Scale – The size of the object. This can be the relative size of one thing compared with another – it may be smaller, larger or the same size. Scale can be the size of various parts of an artwork in relation to each other or the size of the artwork in relation to the viewer.	What is the comparative scale of the objects in the artwork? Is there a symbolic meaning in the relative scale of these objects? Does the scale of the work result in something that is intimidating or intimate? Does the scale suggest depth?	**linear perspective** the illusion of spatial depth created by parallel lines that appear to converge as they move towards the horizon
Proportion – This refers to the comparative relationship of scale between components within an artwork. It can be the relationship of one part of an object or shape to the another parts – that is, the proportion of the height to the width of the shape.	Does the proportion of a particular part of the artwork in relation to the other parts have an effect on you? Do the proportions create balance and harmony?	**aerial perspective** the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be cooler and less intense, have less contrast and be less defined
Space – In a two-dimensional artwork, the space of the picture plane is flat. This is **pictorial space**. Some artists create an illusion on this flat plane that creates the effect of distance. It includes background, foreground and middle ground. The illusion of space can be achieved through overlapping, **vertical position**, change of scale, intensity of colour, level of detail, **linear perspective** or **aerial perspective**. In a three-dimensional artwork, the work occupies, encapsulates and interacts with space. The space between, around, above or below objects is called negative space. Often, artists creating installation works are creating the artwork in a pre-existing space.	Has the artist used pictorial space or have they created an illusion of depth? How has the artist created depth or space in the composition? Have they used lines, the placement of objects, perspective or any other element to create space? How has the artist considered the interaction of their artwork with other works, and the space in which it has been placed? How important is the negative space to an appreciation of the 3D artwork?	

surface composition the space of the picture plane – how objects are arranged within the space of the format and the space that exists between these objects. It also refers to the space around the objects and the space into the image (real or illusion).

abstract not representing outward appearances; having no recognisable subject. *Note:* this is different from abstracted, where the artist simplifies the subject but it remains figurative.

figurative representing objects from the observed world in such a way that they can easily be recognised

Composition – This is an arrangement or combination of the art elements and art principles in an artwork.

When an artist arranges the art elements in an artwork, they create the artwork in a space referred to as **surface composition**. In a two-dimensional artwork, an artist will often explore pictorial space. This is often the case with **abstract** works and works involving patterning. Note that the term 'abstract' is different from 'abstracted', when the artist simplifies the subject but it remains figurative.

What does the artist emphasise visually?

What first attracts the viewer's attention?

How does the artist emphasise this feature or these features visually?

Is there an underlying rhythm, pattern or geometric structure to the composition?

Does the composition seem unified? Do the elements appear integrated or separate and distinct from each other? How does the artist achieve this unity?

What is the viewer's position in relation to the work?

Is the composition large or small in scale? Is it horizontal or vertical in orientation? How do these characteristics affect the viewer's perception of this work?

Is the composition **figurative** or abstract?

How has the artist achieved an emotion or idea by the way the visual elements have been structured? What are the ideas suggested? How are the visual elements arranged to achieve this?

MATERIALS

Materials are used to make artworks and in this study encompass mediums like paint, dry media, inks, timber, stone, clay and bronze.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques are the ways in which the artist uses materials to create an artwork. An in-depth study of technique can include the artist's studio, the location of their work and the roles of people who assist in the creation of an artwork. You also must consider the type of artwork the artist is creating. Artists will use different techniques in painting, photography, print-making, sculpture, three-dimensional works, performance works and installations.

Questions to ask when analysing techniques in an artwork include:

- What material/s has the artist used?
- How has the artist applied the material/s?
- What effects have been created by using these techniques?
- What processes has the artist used to create the work?
- What type of emotion or symbolism was the artist trying to portray with their techniques?

ACTIVITY 1.8

Using five artworks from this textbook as your examples, answer the questions in the section on techniques above. Use examples from each artwork to illustrate your answers.

PROCESSES

Processes describe the steps taken by an artist in making the artwork. These could include sketches, using a visual diary, cartoons, models/maquettes, compositional studies or subject matter studies. Processes also include reference to which two- or three-dimensional process the artist is using. Two-dimensional processes include photography, painting and print-making, while three-dimensional processes include carving, modelling and casting.

- What processes has the artist used to create the work?
- What has influenced the production of the artwork?

ART FORMS

An art form is an activity or piece of artistic work that can be regarded as a medium of artistic expression. Art forms are the specific shape or quality taken by an artistic expression. Two-dimensional art forms include painting, drawing, print-making, collage and photography. Three-dimensional art forms include sculpture, ceramics, construction and installations. Four-dimensional art forms are those that make use of time, such as performance, sound and video.

STYLE

The style of the artwork is the end result, or objective, behind everything that the artist does with materials and techniques – the formal and expressive qualities of a completed artwork. The qualities, processes or concept of the artwork may relate to other images or artworks made during the same period of time. Style can communicate the political, religious and social values of an artwork. When a group of artists work in a common style, they are often said to belong to a particular *art movement*.

The style in which an artist works can be identified by certain characteristics. For example, if a painting makes use of emotive subject matter, and the elements and principles of art in a subjective way, in order to heighten the emotional impact of the work, you would consider the work to be expressionistic; while an artwork that represents beauty in an idealised manner and makes use of a balanced and formal composition would be considered classical in style. Contemporary art is highly eclectic and tends to reference a range of styles. Sometimes the artist will reference a particular style because the style raises particular ideas and meanings. It brings with it a history that people associate with the style. The artist can therefore add meaning to their work simply through an association the viewer has with the style.

When analysing an artwork and trying to determine the style used, it is important to consider the following questions:

- Does the work appear representational or non-representational? Is it expressionistic, abstract or figurative?
- How does the style of the artwork represent the period of time in which the artist was living?
- Are there any stylistic characteristics evident that suggest the work belongs to a particular art movement?
- What techniques has the artist used to achieve a certain style?
- Have the elements and principles of art been used to achieve a style?
- In what ways do the stylistic qualities affect your understanding of the work's meaning? Does it place the work within a historical or cultural context or does it reflect the artist's personal style?

ACTIVITY 1.9

The Spanish court painter Diego Velázquez painted the *Las Meninas*, which depicts the Spanish royal family, focusing on the young Spanish princess and her entourage, in 1656–57. The historical context of the work suggests that the painting represents the **Baroque** style. What stylistic characteristics are evident in the artwork that support this? How does the Baroque style of Velázquez differ from that of the Italian Caravaggio or the Flemish Rubens?

ACTIVITY 1.10

Write a definition of the following art movements or styles using the glossary in this book or other resources. Find an example of an artwork created in each style. Write a series of points explaining why the artwork reflects a particular style or art movement. Styles could include Renaissance, Baroque, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Surrealism, abstract or Pop Art.

Figure 1.4 Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656–57, oil on canvas (318 x 276 cm)

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ACTIVITY 1.11

Choose a contemporary artwork that references a style from the past. You could consider the Chapman brothers, Cindy Sherman or Ron Mueck. Write a series of points that explain what characteristics of the style are recognisable and outline why the artist may have chosen to work in this particular style. Explain how the style may help to convey the meaning of the artwork. Consider the subject matter, how the subject has been presented, the techniques and the ways in which the artist has used the elements and principles of art.

SYMBOLISM

Artists often make use of images, their medium, technique or the element and principle of art to convey meaning to the viewer through **symbolism**. If an artist created two sculptures of a seated figure, one from concrete and the other from ice, each would convey a different meaning purely by means of the materials used. While concrete suggests permanence, ice represents impermanence and could symbolise our mortality and the fragility of human life.

In Renaissance paintings, the Virgin Mary is often depicted holding or being presented with a lily. The white lily is an image that symbolises both the purity of the virgin and also death, referencing the prophecy that her child would die for our sins. The elements of art are also often used to symbolise ideas. Colour is a particularly powerful symbol but can mean different things to different people. The colour red, for example, can symbolise love, lust, danger or power. The symbolic meaning of colour is usually clarified by the context in which it is used.

Throughout different times and cultures, artists and artworks have displayed symbols in different ways. The artist may use the art elements and principles in a certain manner or the subject matter of the work may represent an idea. Some artists deliberately include visual symbols in their work to give the viewer a clue about what the meaning of the artwork may be. The artist may choose a particular art form to convey their ideas or use techniques in a particular way. The style of the artwork may also convey ideas.

symbolism representing something abstract – an idea or concept – with something concrete, visible or tangible

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Questions you can ask when analysing symbolism in an artwork include:

- What art elements and principles has the artist used as symbols? Describe what these are and explain the ideas they represent.
- How has the composition of the artwork been arranged to provide symbolic meaning?
- What images or objects in the artwork are symbolic?
- Is the artist's choice of medium symbolic? Why has the artist selected a particular art form to create their work?

- Are the techniques the artist has used symbolic? Describe how the artist has used the techniques to suggest a particular idea.
- Is the style of the artwork symbolic? If the artwork comes from a particular period of art or is created in a particular style, it may convey a particular idea of the time, context and culture in which it was produced.

In *The Arnolfini Portrait* (Figure 1.6), which shows Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife, the artist has used significant symbolism.

There are many symbols in the work. The wooden clogs, for instance, may be a reference to the quote in the Biblical Book of Exodus: 'Put off the shoes from thy feet …', signalling the sacred nature of marriage. This is also partially confirmed by the single candle burning in the chandelier, which symbolises the presence of Christ, the light of the world, but can also be seen as a symbol of the 'one body' of the husband and wife. Fertility is alluded to by the wooden carving on the back of a chair, visible underneath the chandelier. The carving represents St Margaret, the patron saint of childbirth, signalling a wish to have a healthy family. To ensure a successful marriage, a dog is included at the couple's feet. This is a symbolic reference to faithfulness. Finally, three oranges can be seen on the table behind the groom. In Bruges, where the painting was created, oranges were symbols of love and marriage, and doctors recommended that oranges be carried in order to stave off the plague.

Figure 1.6 Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, oil on oak board, National Gallery, London (82 x 59.5 cm)

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THE STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK APPLIED TO CONTEMPORARY ARTWORKS

Analysing contemporary artworks using the Structural Framework can be challenging, as the artists often present their ideas through non-traditional art forms using new technologies and media. Contemporary art elements of *sound, light and time* will often be integral to the artwork.

Some questions to use when analysing contemporary works using sound, space, light and time are:

- Does the sound have an impact on the atmosphere of the location where the artwork is presented?
- How does the sound work with the visual aspects of the work, if there are any? (Note that some artworks are only sound based.)

Edwin van der Heide's, *Impulse #6* (2000) is a sound installation, where the sound material is electronically generated and spatialised using custom **wave field synthesis software**. To view this installation, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

How is light used in the artwork? What impact does it have on the messages the artist is trying to convey? Is time used as an element of the artwork? Does it contribute to the meaning of the artwork?

The Personal Framework

The Personal Framework can be used to interpret how an artist's personal feelings, thinking and life circumstances can be exhibited in an artwork. When using this framework, you are looking at the personal ideas that the artist is exhibiting in the work – the symbolic elements, aesthetic qualities or techniques they may have used in the work that are relevant to their personal ideas. When analysing an artwork using the Personal

Framework, the viewer's cultural background and experiences can also be used to interpret the artwork. We must consider how we relate to the artwork and what meaning we place on it. We all bring different backgrounds and experiences to the viewing of artworks, and this is often reflected in our interpretations.

When applying this framework to your interpretation, you should consider the following questions:

- What evidence in the artwork reflects aspects of the artist's life and experiences? Has the artist used a specific practice in creating the artwork that may reflect their personal philosophy and ideas?
- Has the artist included any personal objects or symbols in the artwork that may reflect their personal philosophy and ideas?
- Has the artist depicted an image that relates to their personal feelings, thinking, aspirations, beliefs, desires or preoccupations, or to memories, dreams or a personal world of fantasy?
- Are the ideas of the artwork a reflection of the gender of the artist? How do male and female artists explore different ideas in their work?
- How do your personal experience and background, as a viewer, affect the interpretation of the artwork?

ACTIVITY 1.12

Investigate the works of one of the following artists: Frida Kahlo, Artemisia Gentileschi, Edvard Munch, Vincent van Gogh, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Gordon Bennett. Discuss an example of an artwork by each artist using a personal interpretation.

wave field synthesis software this system uses specially designed loudspeakers that provide listeners with an immersive sonic experience. This technology allows sound to appear to emanate from any desired area of the space, and then move through the area in spatial pathways or patterns within and outside the formation of the loudspeakers.

PERSONAL SYMBOLISM

Symbolism can be both personal to an individual and connected to a philosophy or belief.

Piet Mondrian, the Dutch De Stijl painter, only used the three primary colours, black and white in his mature style. The three colours represented specific meaning in the **Neo-Platonic** philosophy of Schoenmaekers in which Mondrian was interested. Schoenmaekers wrote in his book *The New Image of the World*:

The two fundamental complete contraries which shape our earth are: the horizontal line of power, that is the course of the earth around the sun, and the vertical, profoundly spatial movement of rays that originate in the centre of the sun. The three principle colours are essentially, yellow, blue and red. They are the only colours existing. Yellow is the movement of the ray, blue is the firmament, it is line, horizontality. Red is the mating of yellow and blue. Yellow radiates, blue recedes and red floats.

Mondrian explored these ideas in his abstract paintings from 1921 until his death in 1944.

Some artists use personal symbolism that only becomes clear to us once we have the information to decipher their code. Franz Marc, for instance, applies meaning to colour that is not generally used by everyone. To him, blue represents the masculine, robust and spiritual, while yellow conveys comfort and represents the feminine, gentle, serene and sensual. The third of the primary colours, red, symbolises the brutal for Marc. It is heavy and represents matter. He uses it for the land in his paintings.

Neo-Platonic
a philosophical system that originated in the third century. Founded by Plotinus, it was based chiefly on Platonic doctrine and Oriental mysticism, with later influences from Christianity. It holds that all existence consists of emanations from the One, with whom the soul may be reunited.

Figure 1.7 Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow*, 1930
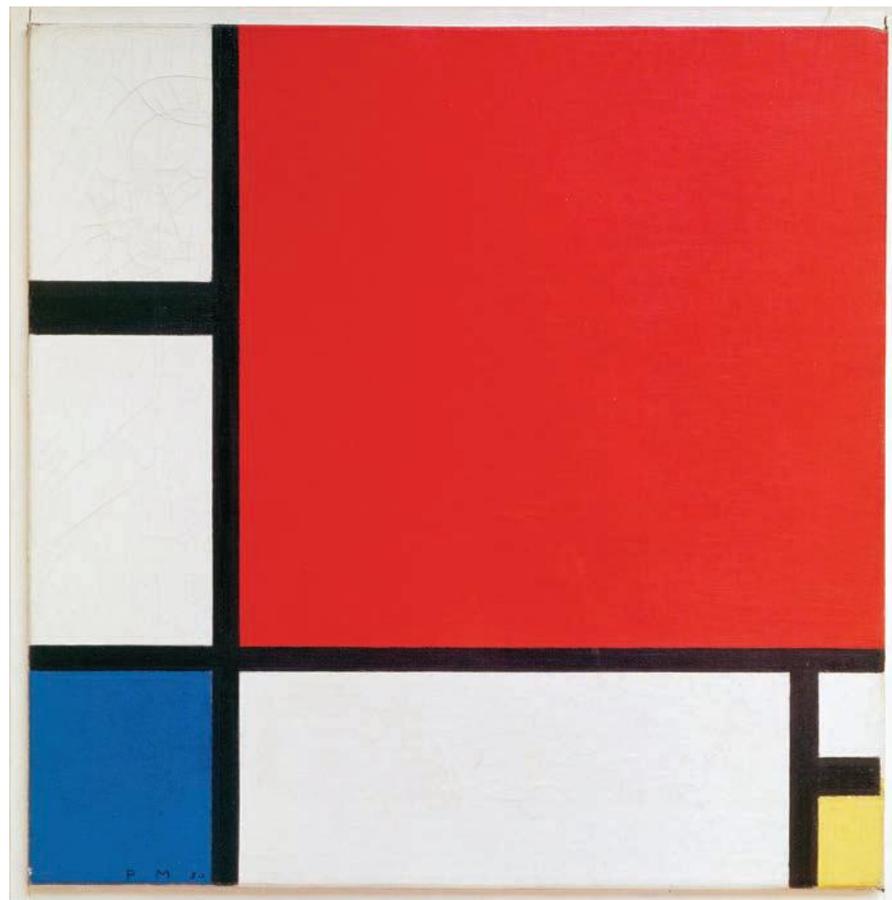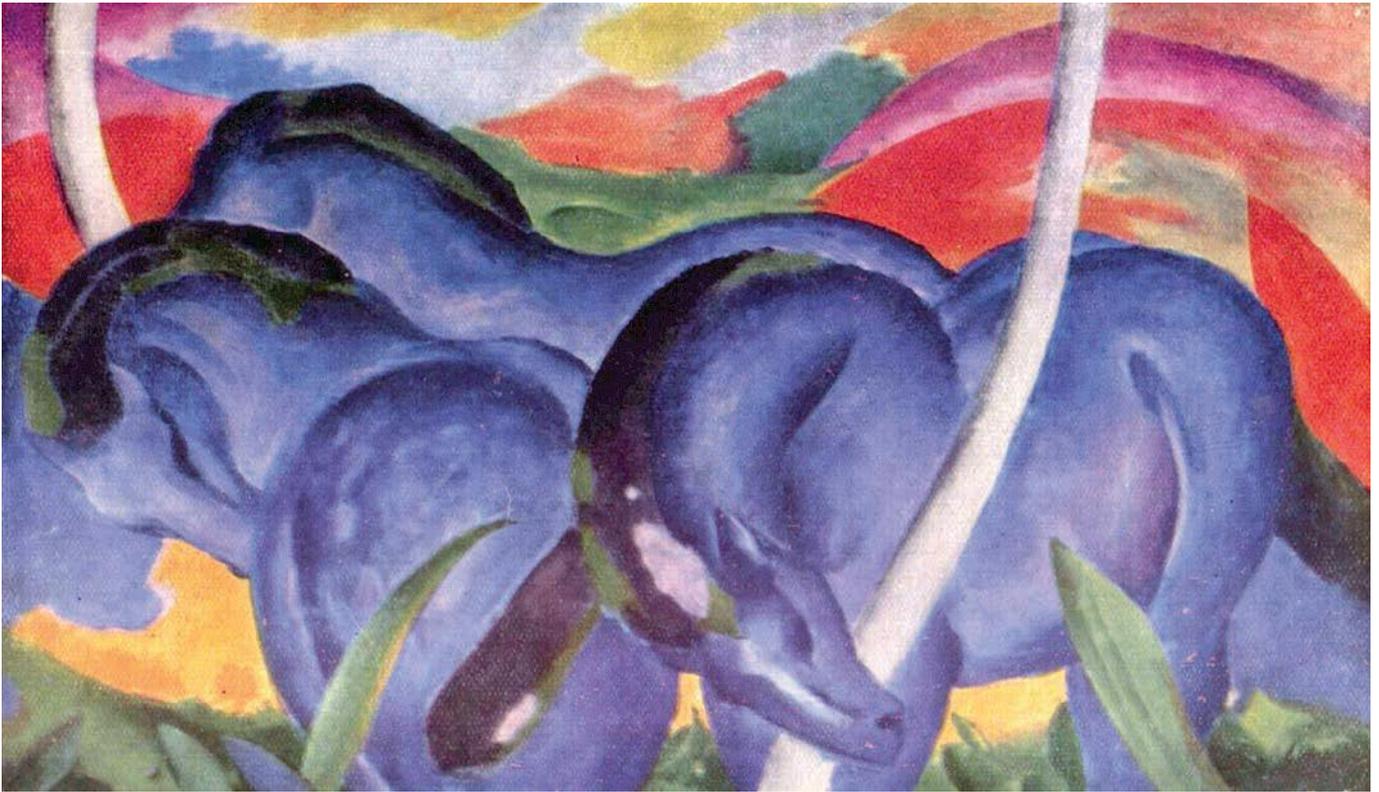
The Cultural Framework

The Cultural Framework can be used to interpret the influences of the time, place and society in which an artwork has been produced. The viewer can also interpret the purpose of the work and the cultural, historical, political, religious and social setting in which it was made. This is often referred to as the context of the artwork. Many artists produce artworks that respond to the time and circumstances in which they work. The influences on an artist may include historical, political, social, socio-economic, artistic, technological, environmental and religious contexts, as well as aspects of ethnicity and gender.

When applying this framework to your interpretation, it is important to consider the following questions:

- Why did the artist produce this artwork? Was it for a festival or event, to make a political statement, to express an idea about their culture or to record a particular event?

- What aspects of the artwork reflect the culture in which it was made? This might be the subject matter of the artwork, the use of techniques or the ideas the artist is expressing.
- How does the social, political, cultural, artistic and/or religious context in which the artwork was made contribute to its meaning?
- How have historical or contemporary events shaped the intention of the artist or our understanding of the artwork's meaning? Investigate the background of history or culture in which the artwork was made to see whether you can obtain evidence about the artwork.
- How do the values, beliefs and attitudes reflect the social context of the time when the artwork was produced? How do these values, beliefs and attitudes compare with the values of today? How do these answers impact on our understanding of the artwork's meaning?
- Is there evidence of cultural symbolism in the work? Cultural symbolism could include the representation of subject

Figure 1.8 Franz Marc, *The Large Blue Horses*, 1911, oil on canvas

matter, the use of techniques in the artwork, the choice of art elements and principles, or the style of the artwork. How does this reflect the ideas behind the work?

- How does the placement or location of the artwork affect your interpretation? If the work is now in a different context and location from the one in which it was produced, such as a gallery or museum, how does this location affect the interpretation of the work?
- How was the artwork received by critics and/or the public during the time when it was made? Was the work considered challenging or innovative? Has this perception changed with time?

As the viewer, you will bring your own interpretation to the work – particularly if you are investigating a work that is from a different period of time or culture. You may consider the following questions to enhance your interpretation:

- How does your cultural background as the viewer influence your interpretation of the artwork?
- How does the intention of the artist differ from your view? What meaning did the artist give to the work? Are you interpreting it in the way that was intended? This applies particularly to works that may have been produced from another period of time. Do you gain a different interpretation from that of the artist because of cultural, social, political, historical and gender differences in ideas?

CULTURAL SYMBOLS

Artists will often use symbols to express specific ideologies and social structures, and to represent aspects of their specific culture. These symbols carry meaning that is often specific to the cultural of the artist. The meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the symbol itself, but is culturally learned. People who are not part of a culture may see no meaning at all in something that is very

significant to a particular culture, or may have a different understanding of a symbol than the intended cultural meaning.

An example of a cultural symbol in Western culture includes the cross as a symbol of Christianity. The crane is a symbol of longevity and auspiciousness in the Chinese culture. A swastika in an artwork will have different meanings for people from different cultures. Most Western people will identify it with the evils of Nazi Germany. It does, however, have a long history and was used at least 5000 years before Adolf Hitler designed the Nazi flag. The motif (a hooked cross) appears to have been used first in Neolithic Eurasia, perhaps representing the movement of the sun through the sky. The word *swastika* comes from the Sanskrit *svastika*, which means 'good fortune' or 'well-being'.

The Contemporary Framework

The Contemporary Framework can be used to interpret artworks from both the past and present by applying contemporary ideas and issues – that is, ideas and issues originating from the late twentieth century onwards. Irrespective of when they were created, artworks are interpreted from a current viewpoint. These issues and ideas can relate to the use of new media and technologies, and to diverse and alternative approaches to making and presenting art. Many contemporary artworks take non-traditional forms, and include installations, performance works, video, photography, interactive art, street art, sound installations and digital projections. Many contemporary works are also based on **postmodern** ideas.

Contemporary artworks are often conceptual in nature, meaning that there is an emphasis on the ideas of the artist rather than the subject matter of the work.

When applying this framework to your interpretation, you will need to consider the following questions:

postmodern an eclectic style of art that came about as a reaction to modernism, which had dominated art theory and practice since the beginning of the twentieth century. It challenges traditions and the ideas of originality by using non-traditional materials and art forms, appropriation or humour.

- How does the interpretation of an artwork of the past differ when interpreted from a contemporary point as opposed to the way it was interpreted when it was made?
- Has the role of the viewer changed when viewing and interpreting contemporary artworks compared with the past?
- Does the interaction of the viewer with a contemporary artwork affect their interpretation?
- What new media or technologies has the artist used to make or produce the artwork, and does this impact on the viewer and the meaning of the artwork?
- Has technology changed the way the artworks are presented, viewed and interpreted?
- How have collaborative approaches to art making changed the way in which the role of the artist is seen?
- What contemporary political concerns and social issues, such as globalisation and the environment, are expressed in the artwork? How do these concerns challenge and influence the viewer's interpretation of artworks?
- How are the postmodern ideas of parody, irony and satire used to question and challenge traditional understandings of art?
- Does the artwork challenge artistic or social traditions or traditional notions of art?
- How do contemporary art forms challenge the importance of artworks based in a museum or gallery?
- How have contemporary art ideas and issues challenged traditional understandings of artworks and their significance?
- What are the symbols or metaphors from contemporary culture utilised in the artwork and how do they contribute to its meanings and messages?
- How does the location of the artwork impact on its meaning and value?
- Is the artwork in its intended location?

Figure 1.9 Dan Flavin, *Untitled (To Don Judd – Colorist)*, 1987 © Dan Flavin/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Find a range of contemporary artworks in this book, such as the one shown in Figure 1.9.

After researching the works, analyse the meaning of each artwork by considering the following questions:

1 What contemporary political concerns and social issues are expressed in the artwork?
2 What is the impact of the non-traditional art forms?
3 How have contemporary elements and principles of art, including sound, time and light, been used in the artworks?
4 Do the artworks question and challenge traditional understandings of art?
5 What is the impact of the location of each artwork on its meaning and value?

Applying the Analytical Frameworks

It is important to remember that the artists you are studying did not use the Analytical Frameworks to generate meaning in their work. You, the viewer, use the Analytical Frameworks to analyse and interpret meaning in the artist's work. When analysing an artwork, some aspects of the Analytical Frameworks may overlap with others.

The Analytical Frameworks can be applied to all artworks, although some are more appropriate to the interpretation of one artwork over another. In some cases, some aspects of the Analytical Frameworks may not be applicable to a specific artwork that you are studying. Use the frameworks that you believe will be the most effective in interpreting the messages and meanings of your selected artworks.

The Analytical Frameworks are also used to reflect upon artistic practice when you are conceptualising, developing, making and resolving your own artworks. Using the frameworks to annotate the meaning behind your folio is one of the criteria that will be assessed.

1.4 Creating a practical folio

The art process

Creating a folio of artwork is very different from completing the individual, teacher-directed tasks that you may have had to undertake previously. Developing a folio of work will require you to use the art process to create visual responses as you develop a visual language to explore issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination.

The art process includes the following elements:

1 *An exploration of ideas through a conceptual and practical investigation.* You may have to respond to concepts that are provided by your teacher or explore ideas of personal interest. The exploration of these ideas may come through observation or from your imagination. These ideas can be based on the exploration of concepts or come about as a result of practical investigation. Sometimes the results of your practical experimentation with materials and techniques can suggest ideas for further exploration.

2 *An experimentation with art elements and art principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms.* Exploring various art forms and experimenting with different techniques and processes for the application of your materials will allow you to establish the best way to visually communicate your ideas and concepts. This experimentation will present you with options for further exploration and also develop your skills.

3 *A development of ideas, concepts and visual language.* Manipulating and combining the elements and principles of art; using your materials, techniques and processes; and choosing to produce figurative or abstract artworks will allow you to achieve a personal visual language. These strategies will also allow you to use your selected art form to achieve a visual representation of your concept or ideas that is personal.

4 *A refinement of materials, techniques and processes, and the skill in applying each of these.* A broad and focused exploration of your selected materials, techniques and art forms will allow you to gain a knowledge of these materials and their characteristics, particularly how to manipulate them to achieve your desired results and to develop your skill in their application. You will be able to make informed decisions about the direction you will take with your artwork.

5 *A resolution of ideas, directions and concepts through the production of final artworks.* You will produce final artworks that you consider fully resolve your intentions. These finished artworks should clearly reflect your personal visual language, and can be figurative or abstract, refined or expressive, and of any scale and art form. The art form, technique and materials that you use in your finished artworks should not be a surprise. The final artworks must be the result of your art process, and reflect the progressive development of your **conceptual** and practical investigation.

The Study Design refers to the art process as **iterative**. It is not a linear process, but rather one that is cyclic and repetitive as you constantly return to your original concept and explore different ways of exploring these ideas. During the art process, you must explore a varied application of the art elements and principles as you develop a personal visual language. Underpinning the process is ongoing reflection and annotation of your **thinking and working practice** and the application of the Analytical Frameworks to explain the meaning of your work.

Visual language

A language is a system of codes of communication, made up of certain sounds or symbols. As it is used in the Study Design, the term 'visual language' refers to the communication of ideas through experiences, images and objects. A visual language is the way in which images, the elements and principles of art, materials, techniques, processes and art forms are explored and developed to communicate concepts and ideas in a resolved artwork.

Katherine McCoy, an American graphic designer and educator in art and design, said, 'I am convinced that abstract form, imagery, colour, texture, and material convey meaning equal to or greater than words.'

Any artwork is a form of visual language; however, the style and type of artwork and the processes that the artist uses are their own unique form of visual language.

This chapter provides you with some of the basic tools to explore both teacher-directed tasks for Unit 1 and your own ideas and selected art forms for Units 2–4. These include:

- developing a visual language with which to communicate
- starting your practical folio
- finding and creating your own visual and conceptual stimuli

conceptual based on or relating to ideas or concepts

iterative the act of repeating a process, either to generate a range of outcomes or with the aim of approaching a desired goal, target or result

thinking and working practice your art practice – what you are trying to achieve, the conceptualisation of your ideas – is your thinking practice. How you create a visual representation of these ideas, by exploring materials, techniques, processes and art forms, is your working practice.

- using mind maps and extended written brainstorming to explore and interpret your ideas
- undertaking visual brainstorming using thumbnail sketches
- researching your ideas and possible ways in which you can visually represent them
- dealing with reference material, plagiarism and appropriation – a practical approach
- exploring, experimenting and investigating materials, techniques and processes
- documenting and reflecting on your exploration and resolutions
- using safe practices.

If I create from the heart, nearly everything works; if from the head, almost nothing.

– MARC CHAGALL

A folio of practical artwork

The VCE Art Study Design emphasises the link between theoretical research and investigation, and your own art making. With this in mind, the study has been structured so that the theory component is Outcome 1 and your practical folio exploration is Outcome 2. You are encouraged to recognise how you can be inspired by the work that you cover when studying theory. The theory component provides you with an informed context in which to work and inspiration for your own art making. In turn, the discoveries you make in your art making can provide you with greater insight into the works of artists and the impact of their use of symbolism and subject matter. They can also give you an understanding of the impact the application of materials, techniques, processes and art forms has on meaning.

You are required to develop a visual language by combining a focused study of artworks and your own practical art making.

ACTIVITY 1.14

Choose five artworks and briefly discuss how they function as visual language. What idea or concept does the artwork communicate? How is this communicated through the:

- subject
- art form
- application of the elements and principles of art
- materials, techniques and processes used?

Your practical folio

You will explore a range of materials, techniques, processes and art forms as you apply your skills of observation and imagination to the development of a folio of visual responses. This folio will develop in response to a selection of tasks set by your teacher or as a means of exploring personal ideas or concepts. Your teacher may set specific tasks to direct and facilitate your investigation and experimentation, but you will explore this in a personal way, developing your own style and approach.

You will learn to document your artistic practice. You will reflect on your own art making and examine how you have used art elements and principles, materials, techniques and art forms to develop a visual language. You will reflect on how your experiences, feelings and thoughts are evident in your trials and finished artworks.

ACTIVITY 1.15

List the things that you would like to achieve in your folio. List any ideas, concepts or issues that interest you. Which of these is most important to you?

Getting started

Before you begin your exploration, it is important to decide what you would like to achieve in your folio. Consider combining a number of the following suggestions:

- Develop a folio of aesthetic exploration.
- Develop a folio that visually interprets ideas or concepts.
- Make a statement about an issue that is important to you.
- Explore the elements and principles of art.
- Explore a particular subject matter that appeals to you.
- Create art that references your experiences.
- Work in a particular style or take a particular approach to making art.
- Work in a specific medium or art form.

Whatever you choose to do, it is always best to work from your personal experience, as this makes your work more real and authentic. Henry Ward Beecher said, 'Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.' You will find that it is a lot easier to create a more meaningful and effective image if you work from your own experience, irrespective of whether the image is factual or imaginative. Work with what you know. As Jackson Pollock said, 'Every artist paints what he is.' In order to achieve the most effective artwork possible, immerse yourself in the subject, medium or approach.

A treasure box

Once you have established what you want to achieve in your folio, begin to collect visual stimuli. If you are unsure about what you want to achieve or what approach you are going to take, gathering visual stimuli can generate ideas or clarify your thoughts. This should not only be something you do to get ideas going at the start of your folio;

Figure 1.10 It is important to collect a range of visual stimuli

Figure 1.11 Visual stimuli can help you to generate ideas and clarify your thoughts

it should continue all year. This is valuable to help you generate ideas and find solutions for problems that you may encounter as you develop your folio.

Stimuli can come from a range of sources. Don't only use magazines or the internet to collect images. Look around – you may find it useful to create a treasure box in which you collect many different visual stimuli. The treasure box can literally be a box for three-dimensional items and even a storage area for two-dimensional stimuli. You could also place all the two-dimensional images into your visual diary.

ACTIVITY 1.16

- Collect 10 human-made or natural objects that are unrelated to any specific idea.
- Using these objects as stimulus, document two ideas that you could explore through art for each of the objects.

Each object could be the subject, the surface the artwork is created on, or have a texture or pattern that suggests a creative response.

Found stimuli

Images can be found in books, magazines, brochures, postcards or on the internet. Avoid copyright issues, and do not use these images to copy for your artworks, although you can use them to inspire ideas for subject matter, composition, art forms, techniques, approaches or effects that you would like to explore. They may suggest interesting applications of the elements and principles of art. If you include images in your folio as inspiration, you must fully reference these. Providing the source of the image as 'Google images' is not enough. As in the caption for Figure 1.3, complete source material should include information such as: 'Jackson Pollock, *Blue Poles*, 1952 (oil, enamel, aluminium paint & glass on canvas) © Pollock-Krasner Foundation/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016'. Do not rely on sourced images as reference material, but rather take your own photographs, inspired by the images you find.

Found stimuli are not limited to imagery; they can also include textures, objects and surfaces on which to work, or they can be things of interest for future exploration or items that could be included in your artworks. You may find a piece of driftwood that provides you with a visually interesting object to use in a drawing or for symbolic value. It may represent something discarded or discovered. The driftwood could even evolve into an environment for a surreal painting. The form and construction of a feather may be explored for its pattern, be used as a tool for painting, be embedded into an artwork as a symbol of flight or used to add texture to an artwork. A piece of textured paper could be drawn on, constructed with or inspire you to experiment with your own paper-making. Phoebe Garrett, a VCE Art student, was inspired by fossils of an ammonite and a nautilus shell. She explored the forms and patterns though drawing. The pattern and spiral reminded her of fingerprints, which she then explored as pure pattern (Figure 1.12).
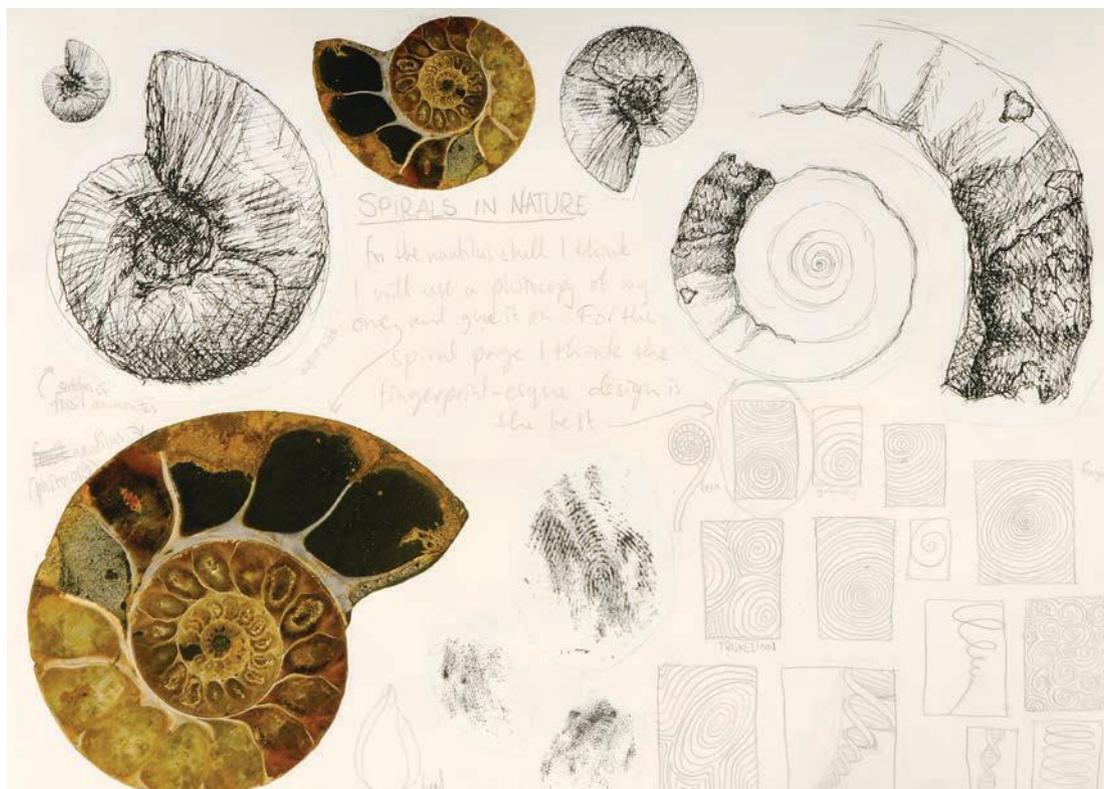
Figure 1.12 Phoebe Garrett exploring the potential identified in found stimuli
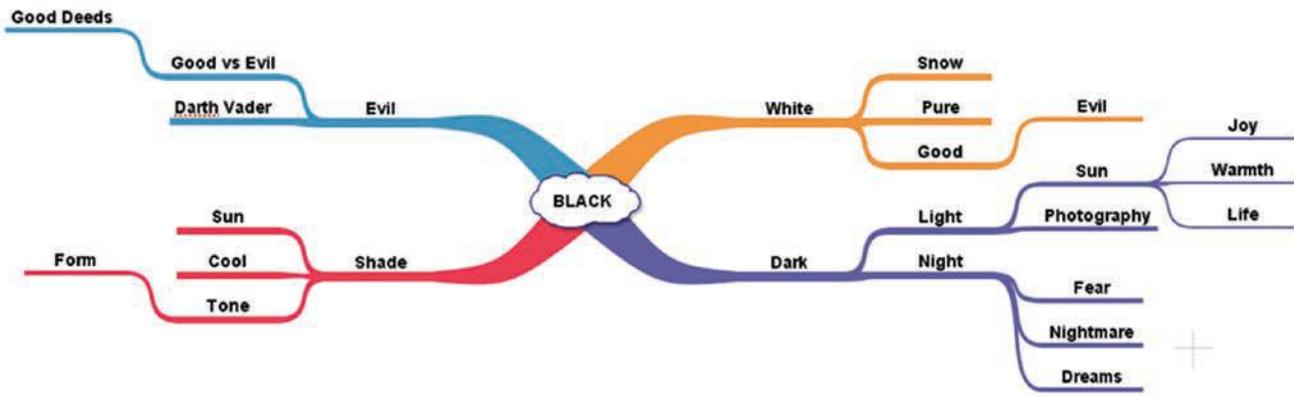
Figure 1.13 Example of a mind map created using Inspiration software. This mind map uses 'black' as the central idea or concept.

Personally created stimuli

Do not only rely on found images. You can create your own stimuli by drawing, painting, modelling or using photography. It is helpful to have a small sketchbook, smartphone or tablet, and/or a digital camera with you at all times. Always be aware of interesting images in your daily life. Look at the way people or objects relate to one another in the environment: how unusual colours form pleasing combinations; how light falls on a person or scene. Be aware of patterns and textures that you could later introduce into your artwork.

Your drawings may be detailed tonal studies of objects or scenes that catch your eye, but they do not have to be. You can do very rough sketches to record something you see, and add annotations that detail aspects you don't wish to spend time drawing, such as colour and light direction if only working in line. Sometimes you see something that stimulates an idea and, instead of recording what you see, having a sketchbook allows you to sketch the idea the scene stimulated. You can then make notes about the idea before you forget it. Some students keep a sleep diary, as many ideas can grow out of dreams that, if not recorded, are soon forgotten.

ACTIVITY 1.17

Using a digital camera, photograph 10 unrelated images that catch your attention. Observe:

- the way people or objects relate to one another in the environment
- how light falls on a person or scene
- the patterns and textures around you.

Go and make interesting mistakes, make amazing mistakes, make glorious and fantastic mistakes. Break rules. Leave the world more interesting for your being here. Make. Good. Art.

– NEIL GAIMAN

Mind map/brainstorm: Interpretation of the central idea

Coming up with ideas is often the most difficult thing to do in an art folio. The problem is much like starting a painting and being faced with a stark white canvas. Coming up with an idea is similar to making the first mark with your brush: once you have the first idea, others will flow. Start with any word, concept or idea that interests you.

To explore the potential of this point of departure, you may find it useful to make use of a mind map or extended brainstorm. This will allow you to open your mind to a

range of possibilities, unencumbered by concerns about how you would approach them as a painting, print or sculpture. When developing a folio that explores a concept or idea, it is important not to think in terms of finished artworks. If you have a clear idea of what you want to paint, draw, sculpt or photograph, you will limit your creativity. Don't discard this idea, but rather hold onto it as one possible interpretation. Explore various interpretations of your concept. Brainstorming ideas and writing down the first thing that comes to mind is an effective way to do this. Remember that your artwork does not have to be an obvious reflection of the central idea. Be creative with your ideas and think outside the box.

Example of a mind map

Begin by interpreting your idea or concept, and put these ideas down on paper. You can begin by undertaking a written brainstorm in the form of a list or mind map. A mind map is a useful tool for stimulating higher-order thinking, as it is unlimited. Ideas can be generated randomly and by association with a word that you have written down.

If, for instance, you are exploring the concept of black, words that come to mind might include dark, scared or white. Each of these can be explored further using the mind map: black – dark; light – sun, joy, and so on. You could end up exploring joy as one of your interpretations of black. Once you have explored your initial idea as broadly as possible using a mind map, highlight the ideas that most interest you as points of departure for your exploration through a particular medium or media. You can approach your mind map in a number of different ways. Some students find that a handwritten mind map allows for a quick and more spontaneous development of ideas, whereas others prefer a more ordered approach. The Inspiration program allows you to develop mind maps on the computer.

Figure 1.14 Example of a handwritten mind map

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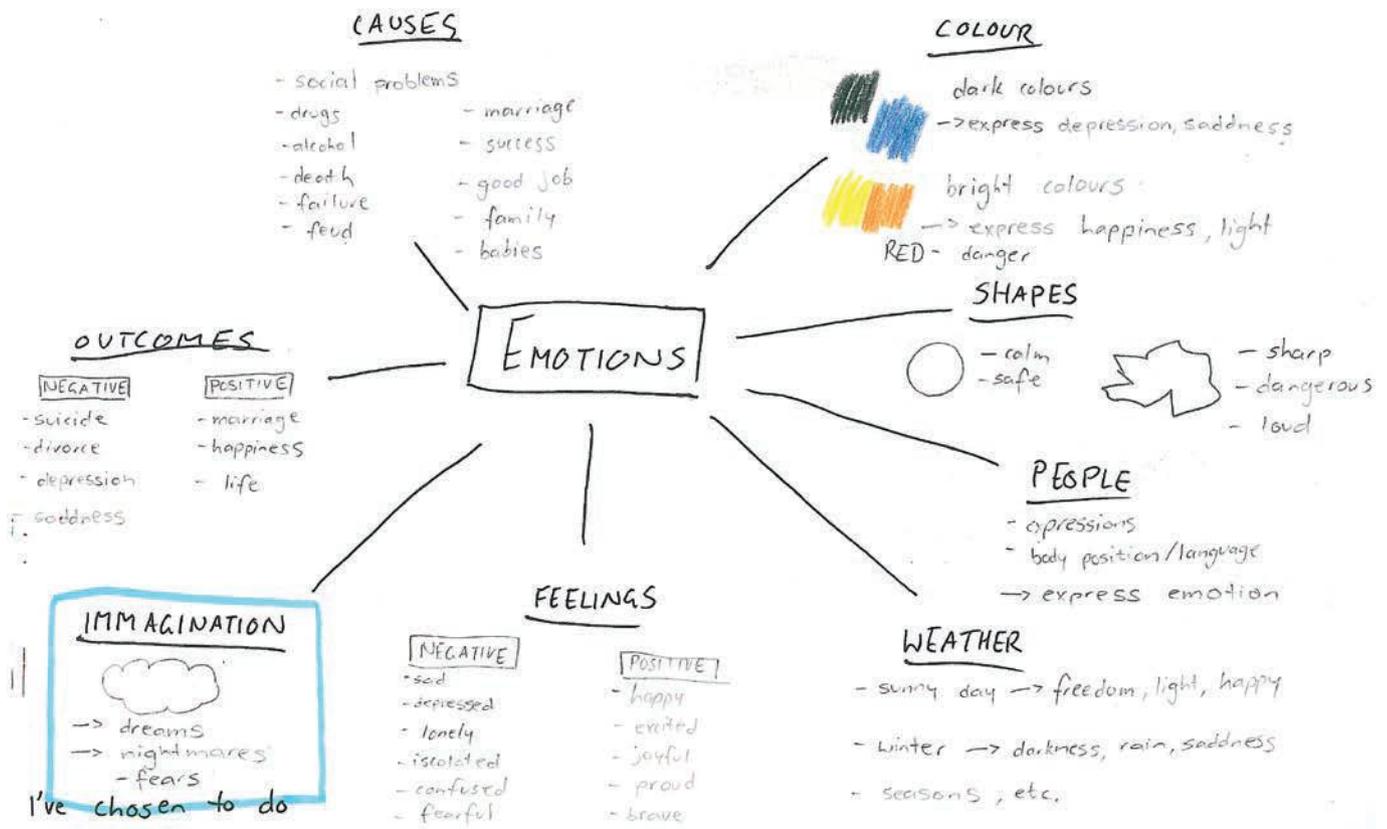
Visual brainstorm

It is very useful to begin thinking visually as soon as possible. Some students like to include images that come to mind as they are mind mapping their idea or concept. This can be seen in Phoebe Garrett's mind map exploring the mechanics of flight in Figure 1.15. These drawings do not have to be detailed, but will provide you with something concrete to develop at a later stage. If you have an idea for a visual solution to a concept, it helps to put it down on paper before you forget it. Inspiration also allows you to insert images into your mind map. These could be clip art or your own images.

Figure 1.15 Phoebe Garrett's visual brainstorm
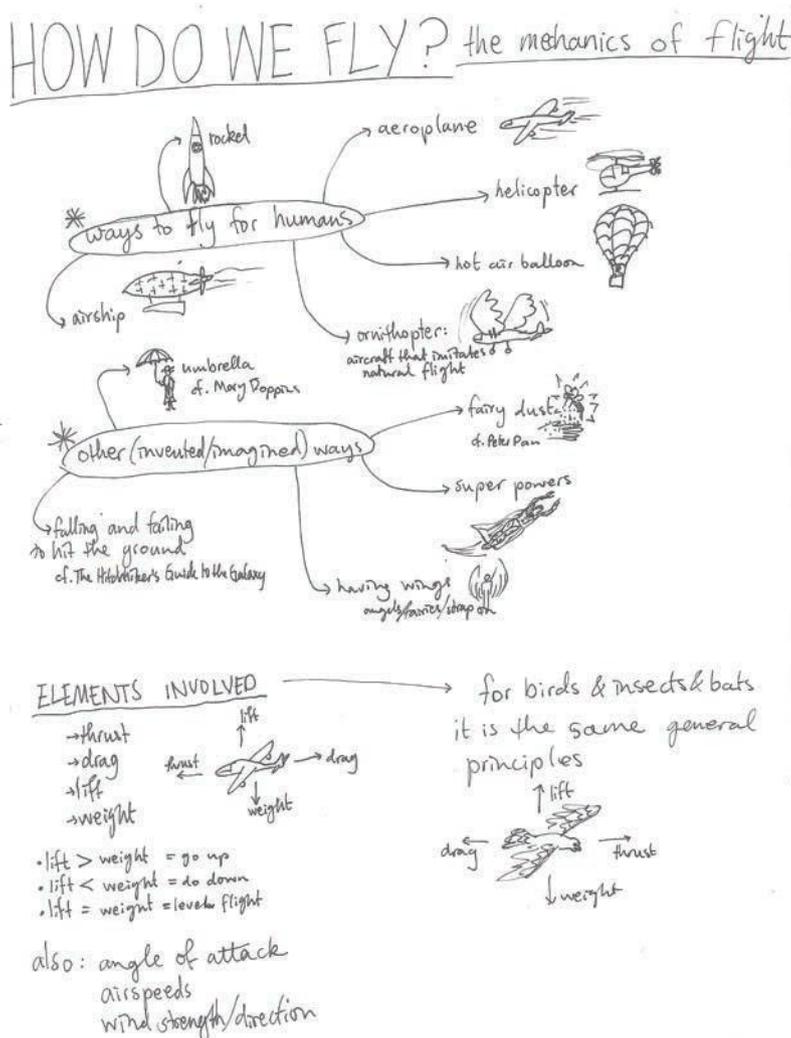
Researching your idea

Now that you have established a number of possible interpretations for your idea, spend some time looking for examples of images or artworks that explore similar ideas, or are examples of a particular approach that you are interested in taking in your own folio.

Research can include finding ways in which artists have presented a visual solution that dealt with your concept or issue. This may inspire further ideas of your own or may inspire you to explore a specific medium or technique. Look at the artist's work and identify the techniques and materials the artist used in their art that you could adapt to create your own work. The images you research should inspire your own creativity. They could provide potential subject matter, compositions and techniques, or suggest appropriate lighting or even effective and unusual viewpoints. Research artists and artworks that you or others consider relevant to your concepts and ideas. Document examples of their work and make notes regarding their subject matter, techniques, materials and use of the elements and principles of art.

Select a range of artworks or images, and paste photocopies of them into your visual diary. Include any relevant information that you need to remember regarding materials, working method or ideas that were generated when you saw the image. The artworks you include do not have to be in the medium you are considering using. A sculpture could inspire a print or painting, and vice versa. If you include inspirational images that you have collected from magazines or books, limit repetition. Remember that this research
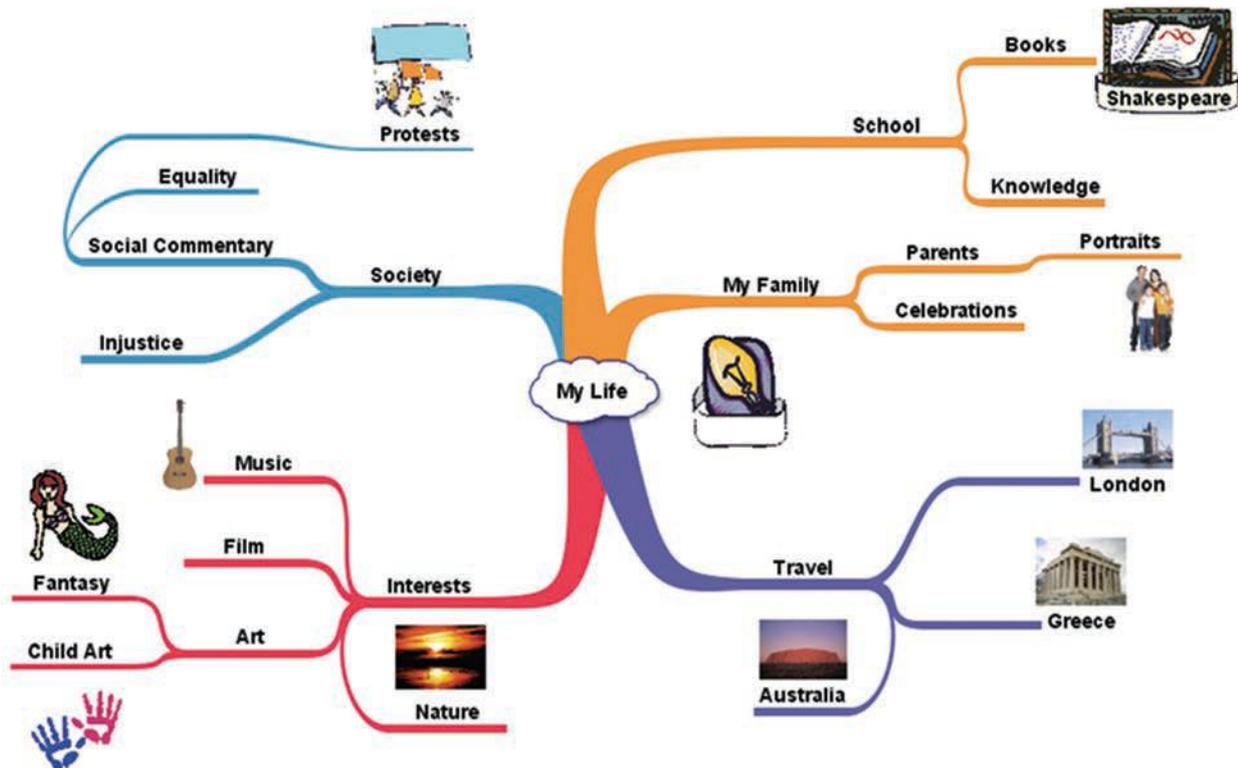
is just a stimulus for your own creativity. The emphasis in your folio is on your own artwork. While research can be very valuable stimulus for your own exploration, excessive research is often seen by assessors as a student padding their folio.

Structural When annotating the selected works, note how the artists have used the structural qualities to create successful compositions, and how they have used a particular style or conveyed messages and meaning. This can help you to apply the elements and principles of art more effectively in your artworks.

When researching, collect images from a range of sources such as books, magazines or the internet, and visit galleries to see how artists have approached and presented concepts or ideas similar to those that interest you. Read about the work of artists and thinkers relevant to your concept or idea. You could research the work of philosophers and writers to gain an understanding of the points of view that other people hold about your concepts or ideas. Lyrics of songs and poems are people's responses to ideas and issues, while musicians often write music

in response to events and concepts. You could create a visual response to a piece of music to which you have listened that relates to your concept. If you are aware of anyone who has worked with similar concepts or ideas, or has experience with an issue in which you are interested, you could interview them. This can provide you with a different perspective on how to approach your folio.

ACTIVITY 1.19

Find five artworks that reflect a common idea or issue in a unique way. Note the different ways in which each artwork deals with the idea.

- Has the way in which the artist has used the techniques, media or art form helped to convey their message?
- Has the way in which the artist has manipulated the elements and principles of art helped to convey their message?

An exploration of ideas through a conceptual and practical investigation

thumbnail sketches small, rough sketches outlining the elements in a proposed artwork, useful for exploring multiple ideas quickly

annotate write brief notes about your ideas and observations, and communicate your artistic practice

Establishing your ideas, and exploring possible interpretations and approaches to these ideas, are just the first part of your exploration. Once you have established your area of interest, it is important that you begin to generate a range of visual interpretations of these ideas and concepts. You need to establish ways by which you can communicate your ideas and concepts in a visual way. One approach is to use **thumbnail sketches**. Doing thumbnail sketches is a very effective method of experimenting with images that could visually represent your ideas. How would you, for instance, interpret thought in a drawing? You could draw someone thinking,

you could include Rodin's famous sculpture *The Thinker* (Figure 1.17) in a still life or you could represent an image of a particular thought. You could even represent the thought process as an abstract image that combines random and structured elements representing the different ways we think.

The benefit of thumbnail sketches is that they provide a quick means of creating a range of images. Thumbnail sketches are quick, abbreviated drawings. Usually, they are done very rapidly and with no corrections. You can use any medium, although pen or pencil is the most common.

It is useful to **annotate** your thumbnail sketches if the idea that you are exploring is not immediately obvious. You may have a general idea of how you could visually interpret your idea, but may want to note a few things that need to be considered if you choose to continue with this train of thought. You will later explore ways of representing your ideas visually to successfully communicate your ideas.

The thumbnail sketches illustrated here are examples of two students' use of drawing to explore potential visual representation of their ideas. Figure 1.18 shows Bethany Cherry's exploration of a range of ideas exploring silence, while Figure 1.19 shows Elena Gunston using thumbnail sketches to explore options for a single idea. Elena also makes notes about things that she has considered as she draws. 'I started to brainstorm different ideas of what the body should hang on … I elongated the body a little … with machinery and gears visible. I've decided to leave the face completely blank as I have come to the conclusion that a blank face creates a more manufactured feel to it.'
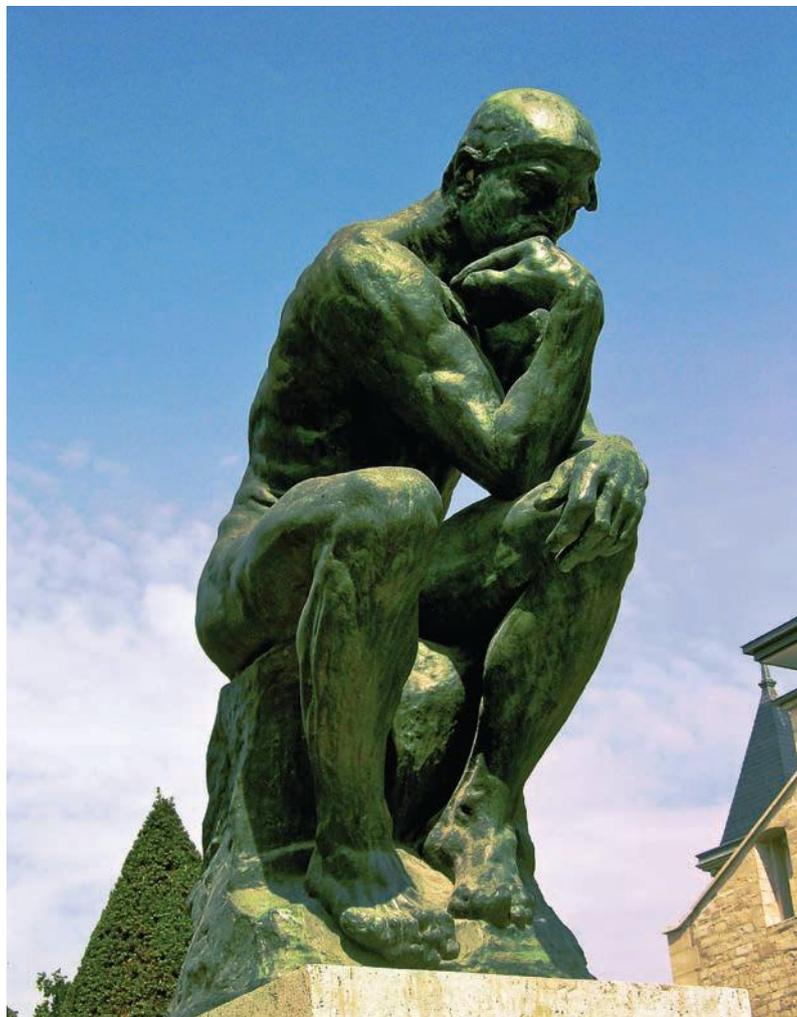
Figure 1.17 Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, 1902, bronze and marble, Musée Rodin (71.5 x 36.4 x 59.5 cm)

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Cambridge University Press

Figure 1.18 Bethany Cherry's exploration of ideas

Figure 1.19 Elena Gunston's thumbnail sketches
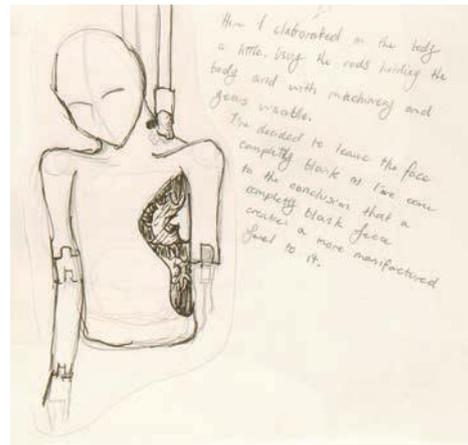
ACTIVITY 1.20

Select an idea that you wish to represent visually. Using a pen or pencil, create a series of rectangles and squares approximately 5 centimetres in size over a page in your sketchbook. At the top of the page, you could list the ideas or concepts you want to explore and then begin sketching images that come to mind when you think of these. Don't over-think the image. Do not be overly concerned with the quality of the drawing and don't get bogged down in detail. The point of this exercise is to generate as many images as you can in the shortest time possible. A quick sketch can be just as effective as a beautiful drawing to establish a concrete visualisation of an idea before you forget it. These sketches are not works of art but merely a method of generating ideas.

As an alternative to thumbnail sketches, you could use a digital camera to record a range of images that interest you. These are not necessarily images that you would consider as final photographs. Again, do not over-think these images and do not be overly concerned with planning your composition, worrying about the perfect lighting and depth of field. The quality of the image is not the objective; rather, you are focused on the idea it portrays. Your photographs are a means of collecting images that clarify some of the thoughts you have generated, and that will help you to begin your visual exploration. They could serve a range of purposes, including:

- recording a scene that suggests a narrative you want to paint
- capturing a particular light quality or shadow that conveys a mood you are thinking of communicating

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P0106001.JPG　P1010802.jpg　P1010805.JPG
P1010812.JPG　P1010825.JPG　P1010980.JPG
P1011000.JPG　P1014664.JPG　P1014809.JPG
P1016341.JPG　P1018839.JPG　P2007083.jpg
P2007121.jpg　P2007251.jpg　P2007258.jpg

- showing an object you consider symbolises a concept you would like to express
- producing an image such as an emotive portrait that establishes the feeling you wish to show.

These images may be explored in a folio of photography, but could become the inspiration for a folio exploring any art form/s.

One way to present these thumbnail photographs is to produce a contact sheet using Photoshop (Figure 1.20). To do this, you must place all your photographs into a folder. Open Photoshop, click on File – Automate – Contact Sheet II. The contact sheet window (Figure 1.21) opens and you can select the number of photographs you would like to place on a page by choosing the number of columns and rows in your document.

The number you place on the page will depend on the size of the page, but an average of 20 images on an A4 page will give you a series of good-sized thumbnail photographs. The other advantage to this process is that you can choose to include the file name of each photograph beneath it for easy identification. Remember to deselect 'rotate for best fit' to ensure all your photographs are correctly orientated.

Collecting reference material

Once you have established some ideas that you can use as a starting point, you can now collect visual reference materials. Source material is an important aid to developing your image and to help you to accurately draw, paint or model the objects/images that make up your artwork. This source material could be your own sketches, paintings, photographs and so on. If you choose to use a photograph not taken by you, it must be referenced, and even then you may only use elements from this image. The total image must be modified.
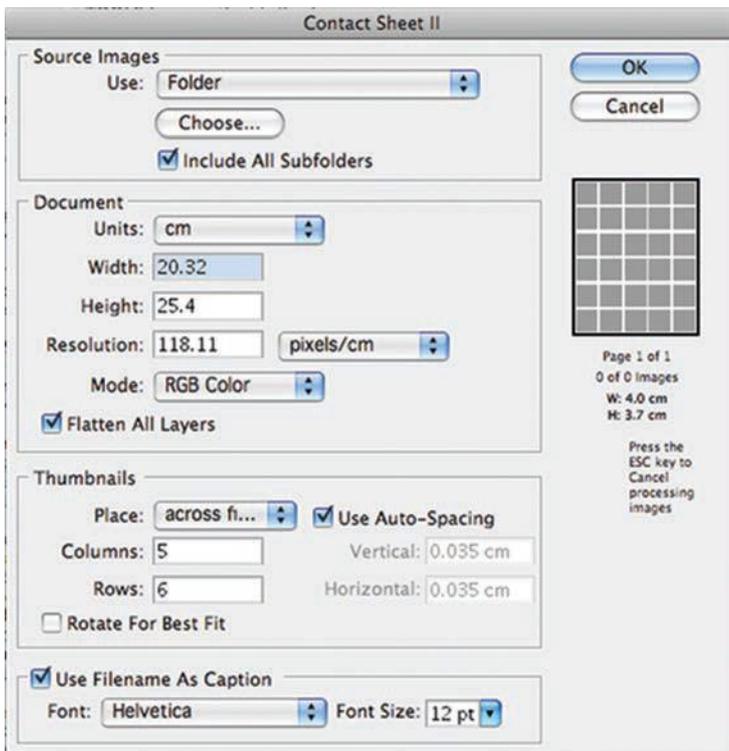
Figure 1.20 An example of thumbnail photographs

Figure 1.21 Screen dump of contact print through Adobe Photoshop

AVOID PLAGIARISM

Although there are many reasons why you should look at other people's art, it is important that you use their work as inspiration, not to copy from. Direct copies are valuable exercises, but you should be moving beyond this and beginning to create your own unique works. Many great artists have learnt by observing the work of their predecessors, and even sitting in galleries and making direct copies of paintings. This, however, is simply an exercise in learning about composition, colour mixing or developing technique. These works were tools for learning and were not presented as original artworks. Copying someone's artwork in your folio as part of your exploration can have value, but copying their work for your final is plagiarism – nothing short of stealing. This is not limited to copying works of fine art. Many students find inspiration in books and magazines, and some copy directly from these photographs. Remember that the photographs are the property of the photographer or the publisher that bought them, so copying these is still considered plagiarism. Besides that, it is important that you develop your own images. Your art should be the culmination of your creative exploration.

Sometimes students include elements from other people's work in their own because it is difficult to source their own reference. If you want to draw a picture of an astronaut pushing a penny-farthing bicycle through the Australian outback, it may mean that some of the imagery will be difficult for you to find without access to a space suit or a museum with old bicycles. It is acceptable to produce this drawing by combining reference from books with your own photograph, or direct study of the landscape. You are combining a number of sources into your own composition. It is always preferable that you take your own reference photographs or work from life, but sometimes this is not possible.

When combining a number of images into one picture, whether the images are sourced or your own, it is important to consider that if you are producing an image portraying natural space with a logical and realistic interaction of the objects within the environment, you must ensure that all the parts work together. That includes making sure that the scale of items from different sources works in terms of perspective. If the environment is lit with natural light, you will have to ensure that all parts of the picture have a common light source. The other difficulty when creating a composite image is to make sure that everything in the image is seen from the same viewpoint.

Creating images based on comic styles is often popular. Some students are inspired by their interest in *manga*, and it is often difficult to tell from their folios what is copied and what images are the students' own *manga*-inspired works. To clarify this, you should show evidence of your original source material, such as photographs of friends, landscapes and various environments. Using these, apply the techniques and characteristics of *manga* and create your own characters and scenes.

It is important that, whatever your approach, you acknowledge your source material and show evidence of how you developed the idea. Remember that it is not just the image that you must consider in terms of copyright. If you are working with video or creating an installation that makes use of music, you must take care to use your own music compositions or source a soundtrack using copyright-free music. You may want to investigate the Royalty Free Music website for suitable music you could use in your video or installation. You may also wish to check with your school's resource centre. Some schools subscribe to a Screenrights licence that gives their students access to images, text and music.

Some students will use **appropriation** to create an artwork. When referencing another artwork, it is important to remember that the emphasis in your folio is on your artwork. It is appropriate to reference existing artworks, but the assessors want to see your skill, creativity and ideas.

manga a style of Japanese comic books and graphic novels, aimed at adults as well as children

appropriation using an image from another artist, usually without permission, and placing it in a new context that changes its meaning
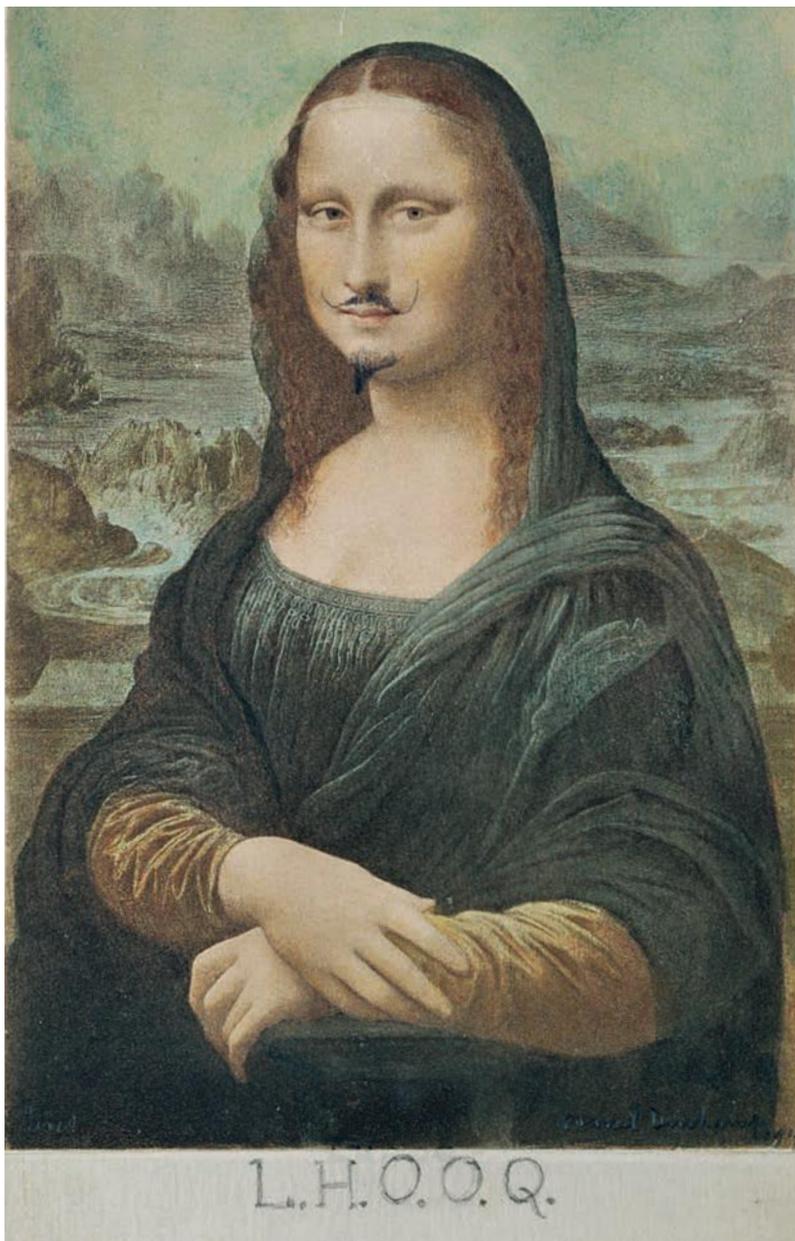
Figure 1.22 Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, postcard reproduction, 1919 (19.7 x 12.4 cm) © Succession Marcel Duchamp/ADAGP, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Appropriation is when an artist recycles, borrows, references or quotes an existing artwork. This is a typical postmodernist approach, which attacks the tradition of originality and the uniqueness of a work of art, and had its origins in the ready-made works of Marcel Duchamp, such as *L.H.O.O.Q.* (Figure 1.22). The use of appropriation generally creates a different meaning from that of the original. Works that make use of appropriation are often playful in their interpretation.

Artworks use appropriation as a tool for commentary. The original artwork has a history and a context that is recognisable. This meaning is placed on the new work by its presence, but the meaning is usually altered in the new context because of how it is used and what else is used to create the artwork. An example of appropriation can be found in the work of the Chapman brothers (Figure 1.23). Refer to Chapter 5 for more information and discussion on the works of Jake and Dinos Chapman.

An experimentation with art elements and art principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms

If you are exploring a range of media and art forms, it is helpful to decide on a medium that you feel would be suitable for the depiction of one of your ideas. Experiment with this medium in terms of its capabilities and limitations. Many of these experiments will aid you in deciding how best to resolve your idea. Some of these experiments may even become minor completed works.

All exploration of media and ideas is valuable, and should be kept as part of your body of work. Even experiments that are not successful for your current idea could generate ideas for further exploration. You could also refer back to this experiment at a later stage as a resolution to a different idea. As the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840–1917) said, 'Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely.'

You should continue with ongoing personal exploration, reflection, analysis and evaluation as you progressively develop and refine your ideas and media. Your annotation is not to be done after completing your practical work, but should be done in real time. As you complete an experiment, analyse the result in terms of the effect created by this use of the medium, what you have learnt and how you can use it, or what you should avoid doing. You should also note whether the meaning you want to present is achieved through a particular technique

or combination of techniques, methods or processes. Your folio must document your process of trialling and refining styles and art forms by experimenting with the application of the elements and principles of art, symbolism, materials, techniques and processes in the development of your artworks.

Reflect upon finished artwork/s

On completion of your folio, it is a good idea to write a short statement evaluating the degree to which you feel you have succeeded in conveying your idea or concept in your body of work. You can do this at the end of each area of exploration or before submitting your folio for assessment. Using art terminology, you should make observations about your work and apply the Analytical Frameworks to the discussion of the messages and meaning of your artwork. In this evaluation, you may want to explain what you were trying to achieve and how you have used the art form/s, media and techniques to achieve this. Explain how effective your application of the structural qualities was and any symbolism that you employed to visually represent your idea/s.

ACTIVITY 1.21

Select an artwork that you have created to represent a concept or to reflect on an issue. Use art terminology to evaluate the degree to which you feel you succeeded in conveying your idea or concept. Explain what you were striving to achieve. Evaluate your use of the elements and principles of art, symbolism, materials, techniques, processes and art forms.

Figure 1.23 Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, 1994, mixed media (277 x 224 x 152.5 cm), White Cube Gallery, London

1.5 Safe practices

As you explore and experiment with a variety of techniques and materials throughout the year, it is important that you develop an awareness of the impact of safe practices and the effects of your art making on yourself and your environment. It is always important to read the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for any equipment or materials you are using for the first time. For more information on safety practices, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By the end of Unit 1, you will have gained experience in the analysis and interpretation of artworks.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- use the Structural Framework to analyse how the style, symbolism and structural elements of artworks contribute to the meanings and messages conveyed
- consider the Personal Framework and the ways in which artworks can reflect the interests, ideas, experiences and intentions of the artist
- use the Personal Framework to consider how the experience and background of the viewer can affect the interpretation of an artwork

- form personal opinions about artworks and their meanings
- substantiate your opinions with reference to the artworks and related references
- use appropriate art terminology
- explore ways in which artists express ideas relating to their identity
- look at dreams and nightmares as examples of the expression of an artist's personal concerns and fears.

No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did, he would cease to be an artist.

– OSCAR WILDE

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Cambridge University Press

2.1 Introduction

Art is part of our lives. It records what we see. It expresses, and sometimes challenges, how we feel. It records beauty. It enables us to communicate our thoughts, fears and beliefs.

Interpreting art is one of the aims of the VCE Art Study Design. It encourages you, the viewer, to observe artworks closely and to identify and respond to what you see. All art is a form of communication and contains visual messages. While these messages may be straightforward, sometimes they are shrouded in mystery and symbolism. Your task as a viewer is to gain an insight into messages that an artwork contains. This will depend to a certain extent on where you view the artwork and what you bring to the experience – your background, values and interests. The art study encourages you to be an active viewer and to observe art on a number of levels.

Whenever you analyse or interpret an artwork, you must examine its surface appearance: its physical and visual properties. All artists manipulate the structural qualities of their artworks by controlling the manner in which they apply the art elements and principles, and use materials, techniques and processes. Their work also reflects a distinctive style, sometimes on a very personal level but sometimes as a result of their philosophical, historical or cultural contexts, or their values and beliefs. The Art Study Design calls this the Structural Framework, and you will use it to begin your investigation of the meanings and messages contained within an artwork.

The Art Study Design encourages inquiry to help you do this. It is not enough to describe what the work looks like – although this is obviously a consideration. It is more important to try to understand how the appearance of the work communicates a message from the artist. Ask questions such as, 'How has the artist manipulated the colours, tones and details to present us with a message?' and 'What physical qualities of the work draw the viewer's attention to the focal point?' You can also ask, 'What effect or mood has been created?', 'How has the artist achieved this?' and 'How have symbols been used to enhance the meaning?'

To provide a convincing interpretation, you must refer to visual evidence to support your opinions about meanings and messages. Discuss the art elements and principles, and the techniques and processes that are relevant to the effect created in this particular work. You will need to use art terminology to discuss the **visual language** of the work.

In order to recognise more than superficial interpretations of a work, you need to investigate deeper than just its appearance. Understanding the input of the artist is as important as interpreting the surface. You will use the Personal Framework to help you to investigate what artists are expressing in their artworks, including their distinctive personal style and ways in which they use symbolism.

In this chapter, you will look at the influence of an artist's life experiences and beliefs on their work. Artists may create a mood that reflects their own frame of mind or reflects their feelings about personal experiences or issues that are important to them. You will ask questions such as, 'What issues concern the artist?', 'How has the artist's background influenced their work?' and 'Has the artist manipulated the content of the work to emphasise the message for the viewer?'

This framework also encourages you to consider how artworks might be perceived differently according to the experiences and background of the viewer. While artists are making comments in their artworks, viewers also take an active role in the conversation by interpreting the message.

Henri Matisse, an early twentieth-century French artist, acknowledged that the interpretation of an artwork resides with the viewer when he said:

> *A painter doesn't see everything that he has put in his paintings. It is other people who find these treasures in it, one by one, and the richer a painting is in surprises of this sort, in treasures, the greater its author.*
>
> *– HENRI MATISSE*

The way you interpret an artwork is influenced by who you are and the experiences and background that you bring with you. Your age and cultural background, your interests and skills all shape how you 'read' the visual language of an artwork.

In this chapter, we will consider two major areas that reflect an artist's interests and preoccupations. *Identity* is central to our existence. It is both a reflection of the world in which we find our ourselves and a means of moulding the way we are perceived by others. We will also see that *dreams and nightmares* often reflect an artist's deepest fears and concerns. Self-portraiture is another theme (not covered in this book, but touched upon here) that is closely linked to the artist's personal life and experiences.

In Unit 2, you will use two further Analytical Frameworks to help you to interpret the meanings and messages that an artwork holds. These are the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks. You will notice that icons for these frameworks have also been included in the margin notes for Unit 1. Using these frameworks is not necessary in this unit, but the icons have been placed here so that you can begin to understand their relevance as you read the text. They will also be helpful if you wish to refer to these artworks as you are completing work for Units 2, 3 or 4. *Remember – you are only required to use the Structural and Personal Frameworks for Unit 1.*

2.2 Identity

Identity: who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others.

– CAMBRIDGE DICTIONARY

The definition of identity is who we are, the way we think about ourselves, the way we are seen by the world and the characteristics that define us. On the most basic level, our name identifies us. So do our fingerprints but, more than anything else, identity is an abstract concept, impossible to fully grasp in any physical way. Our understanding of ourselves as distinct beings develops largely through our relationships with other people – especially significant others, such as parents and family members, in our formative years. Identity is co-created, multi-layered and complex.

But while identity does contain aspects of our physical appearance, more importantly it is formed by shared values, beliefs and rules of conduct, and it shapes how we perceive, believe and act. We all have cultural identities such as race, nationality, gender and religion. These aspects of our identity can influence the decisions we make – for example, the way we choose friends, wear fashion and decide on our political affiliations. Being part of a group makes us part of a community, and generally enhances our self-esteem. We modify our appearance – our bodies, hair and clothing – and our behaviour in response to social conventions and to align ourselves with those groups we feel share our identity.

Identity can also refer to our occupations or a situation in which we find ourselves, such as being an immigrant or a refugee. Some people prefer to think of identity in the plural sense, as it changes over our lifetime, influenced by our experiences and circumstances.

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Many artists use their work to question issues about their identity. Self-portraits can be a way for artists to explore not only their physical likeness but also their psychological reality. About one-third of Frida Kahlo's paintings were self-portraits for this reason (Figure 2.3). Many of them reflect her mixed cultural heritage, inherited from her Spanish/indigenous Mexican mother and her German father. English artist Gillian Wearing (Figure 2.5) used disguise to draw attention to family similarities in her series of self-portraits wearing the features of family members.

Understanding the social dimensions of identity is essential to understanding the fifteenth-century *Portrait of a Lady* (Figure 2.1) by an unknown artist. Paintings such as this one, with its rich and detailed clothing and hairstyle typical of its time and place, aimed to emphasise the status and beauty of the sitter. Probably painted as a marriage portrait, it would have been shown to prospective suitors at remote locations.

Symbolism is often used by artists as a very powerful tool. It is visible on many levels in Louise Bourgeois's autobiographical

IDENTITY TIMELINE

Figure 2.1 Unknown Artist, *Profile Portrait of a Lady*, c. 1465–75, tempera and oil on poplar panel (38.0 × 25.0 cm), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Figure 2.2 Nidha Mal, *Jharokha Portrait of Muhammad Shah Holding an Emerald and the Mouthpiece of a Huqqa*, c. 1730, opaque watercolour and gold on paper (12.4 × 8.5 cm), San Diego Museum of Art

Figure 2.3 Frida Kahlo, *The Two Fridas*, 1939, oil on canvas (173.5 x 173 cm), Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City

Figure 2.7 JR and Marco, *28 Millimeters, Face2Face*, 2007, installation, photo courtesy of the artist

Figure 2.6 Ah Xian (b. 1960), *Dr John Yu AC*, 2003–4, glazed ceramic; collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; commissioned with funds provided by Marilyn Darling AC 2004

Figure 2.5 Gillian Wearing, *Self-portrait as My Uncle Gregory*, 2003, photographic print (114.3 x 73 cm), courtesy Albright-Knox Art Gallery

Figure 2.4 Louise Bourgeois, *Cell (Glass spheres and hands)*, 1990–93, glass, iron, wood, linoleum, canvas, marble (219.5 x 218.8 x 220 cm installation), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, purchased with the assistance of the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest, 1995 (S8.a- m-1994) © Louise Bourgeois (The Easton Fnd.)/VAGA, New York, licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney

Figure 2.8 Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Cannonball Heaven*, 2011, installation, size varies, courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery

Figure 2.9 Marc Quinn, *Self*, 2011, blood (artist's), stainless steel, perspex, refrigeration equipment © Marc Quinn, courtesy of Saatchi Gallery

Figure 2.10 Grayson Perry, *Modern Family*, 2014, glazed ceramic (44.5 x 26 cm diameter), courtesy the Artist and Victoria Miro, London © Grayson Perry

Cell (Figure 2.4) as she used it to refer to childhood relationships. Tellingly, she includes a self-portrait in the form of a pair of clasped hands. Ah Xian's portrait of *Dr John Yu AC* (Figure 2.6) revels in the sitter's cultural connectedness to his Chinese heritage, again, shown through cultural symbolism with the inclusion of the children climbing over the sitter, a reference to the Laughing Buddha.

In his photo installation on the barrier wall between Israel and Palestine (Figure 2.7), French **photograffeur** JR pasted up images of Jews and Palestinians with similar facial expressions in order to emphasise the similarities between these two groups of people and at the same time show that constructed identity can be quite artificial.

Related artworks

- Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Self-portrait from the Gates of Paradise*, Baptistery of San Giovanni, Florence, 1425–52 – created at a time when artists were generally anonymous
- Russell Drysdale, *Sunday Evening*, 1941 – an image that suggests the identity of outback Australia
- Sydney Nolan, *Ned Kelly*, 1946 – an icon of Australian identity
- Charles Meere, *Australian Beach Pattern*, c.1940 – typical Australian beach scene in the 1940s
- Anne Zahalka, *The Bathers*, 1989 – a photographic version created 50 years later
- Anne Zahalka, *The New Bathers*, 2013 – a more culturally diverse version created a further 25 years later
- Mariko Mori, *Birth of a Star*, 1996 – reflecting elements of contemporary Japanese cultural identity
- Peter Drew, *Aussie*, 2016 – a series of paste-ups installed in the streets of Australia that reflect the cultural and racial diversity of the nation

ACTIVITY 2.1

1   How do you wish to be identified? By your physical appearance, dress or the objects by which you choose to be surrounded? As a member of a subculture? What sort of image would you create to express your own identity? What would you 'say' about your life, your experiences, your concerns, your beliefs and your hopes for the future? Working in your visual diary, brainstorm possibilities – both written and visual. Write down 10 words that are central to your identity, listing terms that you associate with your personal, social or cultural identity. Consider a range of materials, techniques and processes – for example, 2D, 3D, new media. Make a page of drawings that reflect your thoughts about your own identity. Create an image that depicts your identity (or an aspect of it).

2   The Macquarie Digital Portrait Prize is an annual event supported by the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. It aims to extend the traditional understanding of portraiture by encouraging artists to use contemporary screen-based technologies. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for the website link. Research the prize and make a **storyboard** that suggests ways in which you might use digital technology to create a self-portrait that explores elements of your own identity.

photograffeur a term coined by JR to note the link between his photography and the genre of graffiti or street art (*graffeur* means graffiti artist in French)

storyboard series of sketches depicting the sequence of scenes and action of a planned film or video production

Nidha Mal

Many portraits reflect the cultural identity of the sitter and the time and place of creation. Sometimes this is done through the use of symbols to signify social class and wealth. In a formal portrait, this usually reflects the way the sitter wishes to be seen and the identity they wish to share with the viewer.

This is true of Nidha Mal's portrait of Muhammad Shah, the emperor of the Mughal empire in India between 1719 and 1748 (Figure 2.11). The art of this period was generally **secular**, and a fusion of Persian miniatures and Indian painting traditions. Subject matter included historical works, scenes from court, events such as hunting and battles, as well as plant and animal studies. Only royalty, and later the wealthy upper class, could afford to have their portraits painted, a situation similar to that in Renaissance Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.11 Nidha Mal, *Jharokha Portrait of Muhammad Shah Holding an Emerald and the Mouthpiece of a Huqqa*, c. 1730, opaque watercolour and gold on paper (12.4 × 8.5 cm), San Diego Museum of Art

Cambridge University Press

Muhammad Shah, although not an enlightened military leader – during his reign the Mughal Empire fell into its final decline – was an active **patron** of the arts. He encouraged the intellectual and cultural life of Delhi at a time when political intrigue was rife. This portrait was painted by the celebrated artist Nidha Mal, one of the artists he supported. Muhammad Shah can be seen framed by what is known as a *jharokha*. As an architectural feature, it was an overhanging balcony from which people could watch the world outside, but in paintings it became a symbolic frame that mimicked the idea of a window. Here it is suggested by fabric hangings and gold leaf.

The portrait appears to be a likeness rather than an idealised figure, judging from other paintings of Muhammad Shah that have survived. He wanted it to reflect his power, wealth and refinement – for him, these were very important elements of his identity. For us in the twenty-first century, it also places him in the context of his time and place, which are also important elements of his identity. He holds a *huqqa* in one hand and an enormous emerald in the other. His portly figure, heavily embroidered clothes, luxurious cushions and the jewels that also adorn his chest and his turban tell us that he led a comfortable and somewhat self-indulgent life. While the **halo** in Western art is usually a symbol of holiness, here the one encircling his head symbolises his position as ruler.

The composition is simple: it is static and calm and feels complete within itself. We call this a **closed composition**. The colours are rich but muted, enhanced by the brilliance of the gold. The gentle tonal rendering on the face and figure suggests three-dimensional form, in contrast to the flat floral pattern in the shallow two-dimensional background. Without the shapes of the cushion behind the figure, there would be no indication of space. The painting itself is **linear** in style – the edges are defined and often outlined.

Nidha Mal has used opaque watercolours and fine brushwork, and the love of ornamentation is typical of such works and the Persian miniatures that inspired them.

OTHER MUGHAL PORTRAITS
- Chitarman, *Shah Jahan on a Terrace Holding a Pendant Set with His Portrait*, 1627–28
- Payag, *Shah Jahan on Horseback*, 1630

ACTIVITY 2.2

Mughal artists generally worked on a small scale, in miniatures or illustrations to be bound in books. The portrait of Muhammed Shah is smaller than an A6 sheet of paper. Fold a sheet of A4 paper in half, then in half again. The painting in Figure 2.11 is smaller than this.

1 Engage in a detailed brainstorm of ways in which you could show your identity (or someone else's if you prefer). The form of the work is up to you – it could be a drawing or a painting, a sculptural work or a time-based work such as video or performance. Consider the importance of symbolism, colour and detail.
2 Look at the portrait of Muhammad Shah by Nidha Mal. Compare your ideas with this work – think about medium, symbols, use of space, exploration of identity.

patron person who supports the arts, especially financially

halo a circle of light, generally placed around the head of a saint or holy person to symbolise their holiness

closed composition a composition in which there is a clear focal point and all the elements are kept within the frame

linear representing shapes and details by using clearly defined lines and edges

Yinka Shonibare MBE

A lot of people come from elsewhere, the idea of an authentic singular culture is a modern myth.

– YINKA SHONIBARE

Yinka Shonibare's sculptural installations are thought-provoking and challenging, commenting on ideas from a new perspective. They address profound issues but do so in a seemingly light-hearted manner by using humour and the unexpected.

Shonibare was born in London, but spent his childhood and adolescence in Nigeria. His father was a lawyer and his great-great-grandfather a tribal chief. He has dual nationality and describes himself as a 'post-colonial hybrid'. He understands identity to be made up of a combination of personal, cultural, economic and politic influences on an individual.

Shonibare is known for photography and filmmaking, as well as for his sculpture and installations. His work is concerned with underlying themes of **colonialism** and **postcolonial** African identity – issues of power and class – as well as globalisation and, more recently, consumerism and the environment. He uses wit, humour and fantasy as he explores the tangled relationships between Europe and Africa, questioning the reality and validity of cultural and national identities. Shonibare's work is neither criticism nor celebration; in fact, he enjoys its ambiguity.

Cannonball Heaven is a life-sized *tableau* of two headless men wearing elaborate costumes and firing cannonballs from a cannon in a bright red gun carriage. Symbolism abounds on all levels – the headless figures, the cannon itself, the period costumes and the ornately patterned fabric from which they are made. Shonibare has chosen to make the figures headless because this suggests a loss of identity, or at the very least an ambiguous identity – he doesn't want them to be seen as either black or white. Their headlessness is also a reference to the French Revolution and the guillotine, which rendered many aristocrats headless in the late eighteenth century. The reference to the aristocracy is also visible in the period costumes, which have been draped over specially constructed mannequins.

Figure 2.12 Yinka Shonibare MBE, *Cannonball Heaven*, 2011, installation varies in size, courtesy the artist and Stephen Friedman Gallery

One of the most identifiable elements of Shonibare's work is the distinctive brightly coloured and patterned **batik**-type fabric that he has used since the early 1990s. Originally made in Dutch Indonesia, this style of fabric was later mass-produced in Dutch and British factories and introduced to West Africa, where it has become a powerful symbol of identity. Thus the fabric itself has a cross-cultural meaning strongly linked to colonisation. It is one of the dualities in Shonibare's work. Another is the realisation that the beauty of the image hides the ugliness of the history and culture to which it alludes.

In *Cannonball Heaven*, Shonibare also reflects on contemporary issues of global conflict in our post 9/11 world while using imagery from the past. The bright red and black cannon is an actual replica of one used on Admiral Nelson's British flagship HMS *Victory* – a subtle reminder that Nelson's naval victories paved the way for British colonialism around the globe. The 600 soft cannonballs covered in the distinctive brightly patterned fabric contradict the reality of war and violence. Their vivid colours lend a playful air to a **tableau** with violent undertones. The placement of the figures in the gallery allows the viewer to walk around and between them and the soft cannonballs, which heightens their physical experience of the work.

Like many contemporary artists, such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst, Shonibare takes a collaborative approach to his work. He conceptualises his figures and installations, then relies on assistants and fabricators to produce his designs under his direction, at the same time allowing them a certain amount of creative input in a dynamic creative process. Much of his work is fabricated by contractors off-site, such as costumers, sculptors and filmmakers.

Yinka Shonibare is paralysed on one side of his body, and confined to a wheelchair. Although in many ways he has overcome his disability, it is also part of his identity. Although invisible in his finished artworks, his practice of **collaboration** is linked to his physical limitations. In 2004 he officially added 'MBE' to his name when he was awarded the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire for his contribution to the arts. He now uses it professionally as part of his artistic identity.

OTHER WORKS
- *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 2008 – a set of five photographs inspired by Goya's etching of the same name
- *Food Faerie*, 2010 – a sculptural figure referring to global food issues
- *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, 2010 – a ship with historical references, installed on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London
- *Revolution Kid (Fox Boy)*, 2012 – a taxidermied fox wearing human clothes

ACTIVITY 2.3

The Fourth Plinth is a unique exhibition space. Found in London's Trafalgar Square, it is a platform originally intended to display an equestrian statue, but it has remained bare for over 150 years. Since the last years of the twentieth century, it has been the site of temporary sculptural installations, now supported by the Mayor of London. *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* by Yinka Shonibare sat atop the plinth from May 2010 until January 2012. Go to the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to get access to the Yinka Shonibare MBE: *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle*, Art21 video.

Research Shonibare's installation, or another temporary work from this site, and write a report that explains how it reflects on aspects of identity – personal, cultural or historical. Include a discussion of symbolism and the importance of the particular site to enhance the interpretation of the work. Two of the other sculptures that have occupied the space on the Fourth Plinth are Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, 2005 and *Hahn/Cock*, 2010–13, by Katharina Fritsch.

batik a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to fabric

tableau a static grouping that forms an image or picture; plural – *tableaux*

collaboration two or more artists/artisans working together to create an artwork; in some contemporary artworks, the viewer is also a collaborator

Ah Xian

As I am weary of, and question globalisation and the inundation of 'international art', I therefore devote myself to following with interest and introspection the ancient art and culture of China, which has been in existence for thousands of years.

– AH XIAN

artisan a skilled craft worker who makes objects by hand

bust a sculpture of a person's head, shoulders and chest

celadon glaze a grey-green glaze used on ceramics, especially from China; pottery made with celadon glaze

juxtaposed placed side by side to create contrast

Figure 2.13 Ah Xian (b. 1960), *Dr John Yu AC*, 2003–4, glazed ceramic; collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; commissioned with funds provided by Marilyn Darling AC 2004

Cultural identity is a central issue in the sculptural work of Ah Xian. He explores cultural belonging and heritage, as well as the concept of cultural displacement, based on his own experience of leaving China, his motherland, and settling in his new home, Australia. Ah Xian was born in Beijing but sought political asylum in Australia after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1990. His quest for

residency was prolonged and difficult. He worked for eight years as a house painter to support himself and his family, and spent five years fighting for asylum. He now lives in Sydney but also spends much time in China working on projects with Chinese **artisans**. His work can be seen as an exploration of the experience of living between two cultures.

Ah Xian's portrait of *Dr John Wu AC* (Figure 2.13) reflects the cultural heritage of both the artist and the sitter. It is a moving tribute to an eminent Sydney paediatrician, based on the popular Chinese character of the Laughing Buddha. Traditionally, this figure symbolises prosperity and happiness, and is often seen with children – usually five of them – climbing over him. Ah Xian has based his life-sized portrait **bust** of Dr Wu on this cultural image. His eyes are closed, and there is a stillness about him, an apparent unawareness of the miniature children who are clambering playfully over him. This is happily appropriate for a doctor whose professional life has been involved with children's health and who says that they give him happiness because of their honesty and exuberance.

Ah Xian has used a simple **celadon glaze** on the figure of Dr Wu. For centuries, celadon ware was very highly regarded in the Chinese imperial court. It is still valued today for its subtle colour and is a further link to the sitter, who is a keen collector of Chinese ceramics. The only tonal variation on Dr Wu's bust lies in the shadows and highlights that play across its surface and the slight intensity of colour where it pools in the grooves of the sitter's face and neck. Ah Xian has **juxtaposed** the brightly coloured and patterned clothing of the children against this subtle colour, which adds to the vibrancy and appeal of the work.

Dr John Wu AC has been created in the Western tradition of portrait busts that can be traced as far back as ancient Rome. At the same time, it

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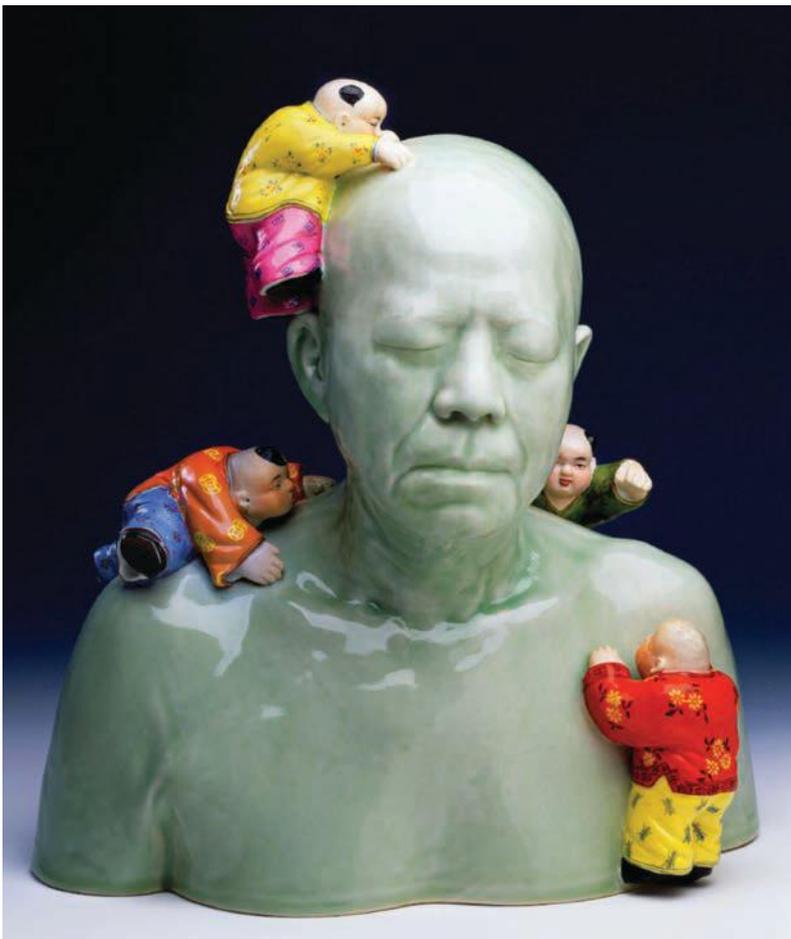
owes much to the sculptural forms of the Ming and Qing dynasties that stretch back to the fourteenth century and even the Terracotta Warriors of China's first emperor in the third century BCE. This tradition was reinvigorated in twentieth-century China with public sculptures of political leaders. Ah Xian believes that his reference to these Chinese traditions is a way of maintaining a vital part of his heritage.

The sculpture is valso based on age-old methods of Chinese craftsmanship. Ah Xian has maintained links with traditional artisans, and regularly travels to work with the ceramic craftspeople in the town of Jingdezhen, the long-established centre of China's fine **porcelain** production. While there he collaborates with skilled craftspeople who cast, fire and **glaze** works such as this portrait. While the cast of Dr Yu's head and shoulders was made in Sydney, the porcelain was cast in Jingdezhen. This sharing of artistic authorship is an integral part of the artist's practice.

Ah Xian has explored a number of traditional materials and techniques over the past 25 years, often in partnership with Chinese artisans. He has worked in red lacquer, cloisonné, jade and bronze sculpture, and has also created more non-traditional concrete body casts. *China, China, 1999–2002* is a series of life-size ceramic casts of people who remain anonymous – their identity lies within the culture, via the decorative treatment of the surface, rather than in the individual.

Metaphysica, a further series of life-size busts – this time cast in bronze – was created in 2007. Each figure has an object resting on its head, purchased at antique and craft markets in Beijing or from roadside stalls. Some of these objects are associated with mythology and traditional tales, while others relate to religious imagery and still others were found by happy chance and have no deeper significance. These objects are described by the artist as 'auspicious symbolic objects which reflect what people believe, love, appreciate and enjoy'. Like all of Ah Xian's work, this series reflects his exploration of his cultural background and identity.

REFERENCE
- Were, I. (ed.) 2003, *Ah Xian*, Queensland Art Gallery

OTHER WORKS
- *Human Human – Lotus Cloisonné Figure 1*, 2000–2001 – life-sized enamelled figure
- *Concrete Forest, 2008–2009* – 36 life-size busts cast in concrete, imprinted with delicate foliage

ACTIVITY 2.4

1 Look at *Jharokha Portrait of Muhammad Shah Holding an Emerald and the Mouthpiece of a Huqqa* (Figure 2.11). Like *Dr John Wu AC* (Figure 2.13), it follows traditional methods of working and includes details that reflect the cultural traditions of the artist and the sitter. Make a list of ways in which these two portraits reflect the identities of the sitters. Consider the presentation of the subject matter, the techniques and materials, the use of the elements and principles, and the meaning of any symbols that can be identified.

2 *Dr John Wu AC* was developed from a body cast of a live person. It uses a similar method to that used when creating a death mask, such as the one taken from Ned Kelly in 1880. The same method is also used by Marc Quinn each time he makes a version of *Self*. In what ways are the portraits by Ah Xian and Quinn similar and how do they differ? Go to the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to get access to the videos for *Blood Head* and an interview with John Yu for background information. Refer to the appearance of the works as well as the materials, techniques and processes.

porcelain a fine white ceramic ware, sometimes called china

glaze (ceramic) a glass-like substance fused on to the surface of pottery to form a waterproof decorative coating

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Figure 2.14 Marc Quinn, *Self*, 2011, blood (artist's), stainless steel, perspex, refrigeration equipment (208 x 63 x 63 cm) © Marc Quinn, courtesy Saatchi Gallery

ephemeral an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them

Marc Quinn

> *[Using blood as a medium] makes the portrait more alive. Like a person, there is an impermanence about it which I like. I don't make things to shock people. I didn't make it to get a reaction; I made it to have an emotional contact with people, and everybody's going to have a personal reaction.*
>
> *– MARC QUINN*

On a biological level, nothing says more about our identity than our blood. It is symbolic of life itself. British artist Marc Quinn (1964–) has been making a self-portrait every five years using his own blood. *Self*, 2011 (Figure 2.14) is the fifth. It raises questions about identity in contemporary culture as well as issues of permanence and mortality. Together, these works are a record of his physical identity and how it changes with time. They are an ongoing self-portrait, inspired by the extensive series of self-portraits painted by Rembrandt that record his appearance from youth to old age. Quinn is said to be planning a final version of *Self* after his death, using blood drained from his body.

In preparation for casting one of his self-portraits, Quinn visits his doctor every six weeks, for five sessions, to give blood until he has collected nearly 5 litres. Meanwhile he has his head cast in plaster and then uses this as a mould for the blood. This process calls to mind the death masks made by the Romans to remember the spirits of their ancestors. In the late nineteenth century, a death mask was taken of our own Ned Kelly to record his features. *Self* has been made in this tradition, but has been cast using blood, which is an **ephemeral** medium that is well placed to remind us of our human fragility and the vulnerability of our identities.

Quinn's use of blood as a medium is at odds with traditional notions of sculpture, which is usually made from permanent materials and is thus durable. Quinn says that using blood as the medium, 'makes the portrait more alive. Like a person, there is an impermanence about it, which I like.' In this way, *Self* is unconventional in its vulnerability and its impermanence. Each version is exhibited inside a glass cabinet built above a specially constructed refrigeration unit, which maintains it at a steady –16°C. Its continued existence depends on technology, which reminds us of the relationship between art and science in the twenty-first century. The bland surgical precision of the cabinet contrasts the visual warmth of the cast head. The human scale assists the viewer to identify with the subject. It is not until the viewer becomes aware of the materials Quinn has used that a more emotional element enters the dialogue. His images are quite beautiful – it is his concepts that can be unsettling.

Self, 2006 was bought by the National Portrait Gallery in London, which has extensively researched the issue of display logistics and

permanence. As this was the fourth version to have been made by Quinn, there is a protocol for its continued existence. Provision has been made for it to be melted and later recast and refrozen should it need to be moved.

During his career, Quinn has been preoccupied with exploring concepts of self, identity and mortality. In his effort to create a likeness, he has used a wide range of media, from painting and drawing to sculpture, in both traditional and non-traditional forms. Many of his most thought-provoking works have used bodily fluids to challenge our understanding of the fragility and transience of life. Quinn's interest in science is unsurprising, given his inquiring mind and the fact that his father was a scientist.

In 2001, he created *A Genomic Portrait: John Sulston* – Sulston was the man who won the Nobel Prize for sequencing the human genome. Quinn used bacteria containing Sulston's own DNA, suspended in an agar solution. Thus the portrait is an exact representation of the subject, a type of biological photograph – although not an image with any visual similarities to the sitter. What is visible is a silver frame containing colonies of bacteria that look like a mist under glass. Quinn also created *DNA Garden* in 2001. This work is an installation containing DNA samples of 75 plant species and two humans, who represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on a cellular level.

REFERENCES
Marc Quinn, *Marc Quinn*, 2000
Germano Celant (ed), *Marc Quinn Memory Box*, 2013

OTHER WORKS
- *Cloned DNA Self Portrait 26.09.01 (2nd perspective)*, 2001 – cloned DNA on an agar plate, framed
- *Chemical Life Support*, 2005 – life-sized wax figures of people whose life is supported by medicinal drugs; the drugs are mixed with the wax
- *Alison Lapper Pregnant*, 2005 – a 3.5 metre figure of artist Alison Lapper, installed on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square, London
- *Zombie Boy (Rick) Cu Pb Mn Fe Mg Si*, 2011 – a life-sized cast of a tattooed figure

ACTIVITY 2.5

Writing a response to a statement is often a good way to think through your opinions. Consider these two statements in relation to Marc Quinn's *Self*. You can find links to the source of these statements by accessing the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

- *Statement 1:* 'The head-shaped plasma ice-lolly has novelty appeal, and that is about it.'
- *Statement 2:* 'The concept is more important than the artwork.'

Select one of these statements and debate it. Consider the subject matter, materials, techniques and processes used in the artwork in your response. Use evidence from the artwork or from further **commentaries** to support your opinions.

commentaries
statements by artists, critics, historians or the public about an artwork or an issue

Grayson Perry

The most beautiful and complex artwork that we can make is our identity.

– GRAYSON PERRY

graphic novel a novel in comic-strip format

coiling a technique of building pots by rolling coils or ropes of clay and layering them to build the walls

linear representing shapes and details by using clearly defined shapes and edges

incise to cut into

sgraffito a form of decoration made by scratching through a surface to reveal a lower layer of a colour. In painting, this technique is often done with the handle of the brush while the paint is still wet.

photographic transfer a process that transfers a photographic image onto a new surface

firing a process of applying heat in a kiln to harden or glaze ceramics

What fascinates Grayson Perry are the layers within our identities. He is something of an 'identity' himself – a British ceramic artist well known as a transvestite, often seen and interviewed dressed as Claire, an integral part of his flamboyant personality.

Perry's arts practice is broad and varied. Not only does he create pots, but he is also a sculptor and print-maker, a tapestry designer, a TV presenter and an articulate cultural critic and social commentator. Furthermore, he has written and illustrated a **graphic novel**. The subject matter of his artworks revolves around issues of identity and those things that affect our behaviour, often without us realising it – gender, religion, politics and social circumstances. He looks at hypocrisy, social injustice and inclusiveness. He speaks openly of his difficult childhood and the imaginary world he created. Perry began to cross-dress as a young teenager, and has great empathy with people who struggle to fit into society's concept of what is 'normal'.

The ceramic pot *Modern Family* (Figure 2.15) was created as part of a three-part television series called *Who are You?* which looked closely at a range of people who Perry believes represent facets of contemporary British society, from evangelical Christians to a disgraced politician and a single mother who converted to Islam – not simply 'the norm'. The series was accompanied by a solo exhibition of portraits, in a range of media, of the people he interviewed. *Modern Family* shows a same-sex couple and their adopted son. The artist is highlighting the fact that the definition and identity of 'family' is changing – there is no longer only one accepted way of 'being' family.

Perry's ceramic forms have been inspired by a range of art styles and periods. His work is a dialogue with times and cultures as diverse as ancient Greek pottery and traditional folk art. His large-scale pots, such as *Modern Family*, are made using the low-tech method of **coiling**. **Linear** designs are **incised** into the surface of the clay using a **sgraffito** technique. Colour and detail are added with glaze and **photographic transfers** that require several **firings** in the studio. These three-dimensional forms are the 'canvas' for the stories he tells, and they contain detailed, multi-layered images of contemporary culture with their decorative, joyful, sometimes whimsical but often provocative images.

The incised figures of the two fathers and their adopted son in Figure 2.15 show them sitting on an armchair made of clouds, floating above their home town of Kent, complete with people moving in the streets below. They are framed by a rainbow that arcs across the top of the pot. This is a symbolic reference to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) community, and can also be read as a wish for a 'happy ever after' ending. There are photographic transfers on the sides and back of the pot – some are visible at the top and the bottom left in Figure 2.15. They are the types of photographs that are found in family albums and show that, while it may be different, this unconventional family follows a long line of traditional happy families.

Details abound. The boy is playing with toy cars, a simple hobby that endears him to us. A simply drawn winged devil waves from the roof of one of the houses below the family – a hint that some people might not approve of this family's arrangements. Such details help the viewer to engage with the work and consider the stories behind it.

OTHER WORKS

- *Jesus Army Money Box*, 2013 – ceramic form in the shape of a Mediaeval chest that would have held a holy relic
- *The Vanity of Small Differences*, 2012 – six large-scale tapestries
- *Map of an Englishman*, 2004 – a self-portrait in the form of a map

ACTIVITY 2.6

Grayson Perry uses colour, pattern, detail, symbols and often humour to help his work communicate his message to the viewer. Find another example of an artwork by him and discuss how these qualities have been used to 'tell the story'. Consider *Jesus Army Money Box*, 2013 or *The Adoration of the Cage Fighters*, 2012. Consider relevant elements and principles, materials, the inclusion of symbols and the use of

techniques, and think about how these are used to appeal to the viewer. Often Perry's techniques and materials refer to an art form with historical significance (for example, tapestry). Access the Saatchi Gallery website via the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to assist you.

REFERENCES

Jacky Klein, *Grayson Perry*, 2013, Thames and Hudson

Grayson Perry, *Playing to the Gallery*, 2014, Penguin

Rachel Kent et al., *Grayson Perry – My Pretty Little Art Career*, 2015, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

Figure 2.15 Grayson Perry, *Modern Family*, 2014, glazed ceramic (44.5 x 26 cm), National Portrait Gallery, London, courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery

2.3 Dreams and nightmares

Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create.

– *MARIA MONTESSORI*

Dreams and nightmares hold a magical place in our **psyche** because they are so mysterious. In them, the rules that control reality are suspended. Details may seem **photoreal**, but the depiction of time, place and space lacks the visible truth of our daily world. Symbolism abounds in both dreams and nightmares, but it is often difficult to interpret. While the details of dreams seem illogical, psychologists tell us that there is sometimes an inner logic to our dreams and they can be fertile ground for expressing personal fears and desires.

In 1899, the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In this book, he explained his belief that emotions are buried in the unconscious mind and come to the surface in disguised form during dreaming. The remembered fragments of dreams may help uncover these buried feelings. Such images in dreams are often not what they appear to be, and need deeper interpretation. He called nightmares 'anxiety dreams'.

Dreams have a pictorial language and, according to Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung, contain **archetypal** images. Jung's theory states that there is a collective unconscious that all people share and that contains universal images. We are all born with these images in our minds but they vary from person to person and culture to culture according to our life experiences. These archetypes can be found in myths, fairy tales, religion and art. The incubus in *The Nightmare* by Henry Füseli (Figure 2.17) represents the demon that is common to all cultures in one form or another.

Such obvious symbols found in dreams and nightmares suggest similar things to all of us, and may reflect deeply rooted psychological problems or unresolved traumas. The nightmare visions of Bosch and Goya (Figures 2.16 and 2.18) hint at unconscious and universal fears, although they may also reflect personal horrors. In his performance work *Close the Concentration Camps* (Figure 2.22), Mike Parr presents the audience with a scenario that contains universal fears about acceptance and survival. In a similar way, Jenny Saville's *Red Stare Head IV* (Figure 2.24) shows us an intimate nightmare via the traumatised gaze of the injured child. Sometimes the symbols and metaphors are more personal and can be ambiguous for the viewer. The use of snow suggests silence and emptiness, hinting at a post-apocalyptic nightmare in Peter Booth's *Untitled*.

The details of dreams can also reflect beauty and other positive and healthy values. There is a gentle quality to dreams that can be seen in Brancusi's softly slumbering *Muse* and Seungmo Park's *Maya 942* (Figure 2.25). Dalí's dream landscape (Figure 2.20) has a **surreal** quality that is reminiscent of the unreality of dreams.

RELATED ARTWORKS

- Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, 1483
- Matthias Grünewald, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, c. 1515
- Goya, *The Bewitched Man*, c. 1798
- Paul Gauguin, *Vision After the Sermon (Jacob's Fight with the Angel),* 1888
- Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893
- Marc Chagall, *I and the Village*, 1911
- Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931
- Pablo Picasso, *La Rêve*, 1932
- Peter Booth, *Painting*, 1981

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES TIMELINE

Figure 2.16 Hieronymus Bosch, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, oil painting on central panel of triptych, c. 1501 (131.5 x 119 cm), Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon

Figure 2.17 Henry Füseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas (101.6 x 127 cm), Detroit Institute of Arts

Figure 2.18 Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1799, etching, aquatint, drypoint

Figure 2.22 Mike Parr, *Close the Concentration Camps*, 15 June 2002, six-hour performance, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, photograph courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz

Figure 2.21 Peter Booth, *Untitled*, 1999, oil on canvas (207.5 x 269.5 cm), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2001 © Peter Booth, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 2.20 Salvador Dalí, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, 1946, Musée Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels © Salvador Dali, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dali/VEGAP, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 2.19 Constantin Brancusi, *The Sleeping Muse*, c. 1910, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 2.23 Jill Orr, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya*, 2002, photographers: Bruce Parker and Joanne Haslam, Jill Orr video production in collaboration with Steve Bell, sound, and Pete Brownstein, video

Figure 2.24 Jenny Saville, *Red Stare Head IV*, 2006–11, Oil on canvas (252 x 187.5 cm), courtesy of Gagosian Gallery © Jenny Saville/ DACS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 2.25 Seungmo Park, *Maya 942*, 2014 (2500 x 300 x 3600 mm), stainless steel mesh, courtesy of the artist

ACTIVITY 2.7

The theories of Freud and Jung, and their understanding of the deep-seated symbolism in the unconscious mind, influenced the dreamlike compositions of the Surrealists, such as Salvador Dalí, René Magritte and James Gleeson. Their paintings often involve a change of scale and objects that have been taken out of context, and thus bring to mind the state of dreaming. Select a painting by one of the Surrealist artists listed above and explain the dreamlike or nightmare-like qualities it contains. This may involve subject matter, technique, symbolism and the use of art elements and principles.

triptych an artwork in three panels or parts

didactic teaching or giving instructions

Figure 2.26 Bosch, *The Temptation of St Anthony* (central panel), c. 1505, oil painting on wood panels (131.5 x 119 cm), Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon

Hieronymus Bosch

Bosch created 'a world of dreams [and] nightmares in which forms seem to flicker and change before our eyes'.

– WALTER GIBSON, ART HISTORIAN

The Temptation of St Anthony by Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1450–1516) is a scene from a nightmare, a vision of the horrors of Hell, peopled by hybrid creatures and showing, in graphic detail, the torments that demons wait to inflict on the unrepentant sinner. It reflects the pessimism, anxiety and religious turmoil of the troubled times in which the artist lived and represents a vision of what the artist imagined Hell to be.

Bosch worked in the tradition of late Gothic art, as was seen in the gargoyles of cathedrals and the fantasy figures painted in the margins of illuminated manuscripts. *The Temptation of St Anthony* was created as the central panel of the **triptych** that makes up the now famous Isenheim Altarpiece, and would have been well placed to fulfil its **didactic** function in a religious setting. It is a warning to the public of the horror and the punishment awaiting sinners should they not repent their evil ways.

The painting conveys a convincing sense of deep space. St Anthony is being tortured by the creatures of his nightmares. We see winged demons, surreal combinations of humans and animals, armoured dogs, a rat-headed

preacher reading from a prayer book and a pair of monkeys sitting in the boat-like body of a fish. We see bizarre exaggerations and distortions of form and scale rendered in an extremely detailed and highly realistic style.

Bosch worked almost exclusively *alla prima*, meaning that he completed sections of his paintings in single sittings rather than the more common method of working in multiple fine layers of transparent **glazes**, waiting for each layer to dry. His colours are rich and his powers of observation were so well developed that his creatures look as if they truly existed. A number of writers have noted the similarities of his paintings to the twentieth-century style known as Surrealism, and consider him a precursor. Like the Surrealists, his paintings seem to come from the unconscious mind and the details appear to be intensely real.

In 1500, when it was painted, the symbolism of *The Temptation of St Anthony* would clearly have been understood by the viewer. St Anthony is surrounded by devils who symbolise temptation; toads and owls symbolise witchcraft and heresy. Many of the small details also relate to proverbs of the time, but knowledge of the symbols has largely been forgotten. We can, however, still appreciate the horror of the scene and the message of fear of eternal damnation emphasised by Bosch's painting.

The fire in the hellish background of *The Temptation of St Anthony*, with its flying demons circling the village, lends an eerie light to the scene surrounding St Anthony as he kneels in prayer in the centre of the composition. It is thought that Bosch may have witnessed a catastrophic fire in his hometown of 's-Hertogenbosch when he was young and the terror of the occasion was thus easy for him to render so vividly.

The end of the Medieval period was a time of great social and political change in Europe. Bosch was a lay member of a conservative religious group and most of his paintings were commissioned for the church. His paintings show that he was preoccupied with the sinfulness of humanity and the punishment that was inevitable according to the religious beliefs and the late Medieval morality of his community in Flanders. There was public hysteria against heresy and sorcery, and executions and torture were not uncommon. The moral of this story is optimistic, though: St Anthony remained steadfast in his faith, resisting the temptations that were sent to try him.

OTHER WORKS

- *The Last Judgement*, right panel, 1500–02 – bizarre creatures and activities symbolising the punishment of the wicked
- *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, right panel, c. 1504–10 – the torments of the wicked in Hell

ACTIVITY 2.8

1 Early in his career, Australian artist James Gleeson was inspired by the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. Select a painting by each artist and note those qualities in Bosch's work that may have influenced Gleeson's painting. These may include subject matter, style, level of reality vs fantasy, use of colour or painting technique.

2 Compare *The Temptation of St Anthony* by Bosch to an artwork of the same name by one of the following artists: Martin Schöngauer (an engraving, c. 1480), Lucas Cranach (a woodcut, 1506), Matthias Grünewald (painted in 1515), Pieter Breugel the Elder (painted in 1563), Max Ernst (painted in 1945) and Salvador Dalí (painted in 1946 – Figure 2.20). Compare the different approaches to the subject matter and the ways in which the artists applied the art elements and principles to create an image that had meaning for the viewer.

alla prima Italian for 'the first time' or all at once; a method of painting in which sections of the painting are completed in one sitting, rather than using the traditional method of building up layers

glaze (painting) a translucent layer of oil paint that can be either thick or thin; a glaze medium can be mixed with the paint or diluted with a mixture of 50 per cent linseed oil and 50 per cent turpentine

Henry Füseli

One of the most unexplored regions of art are dreams.

– HENRY FÜSELI

Figure 2.27 Henry Füseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas (101.6 x 127 cm), Detroit Institute of Arts

In *The Nightmare,* Henry Füseli (1741–1825) has painted both the dreamer and the dream. There is a sense of drama in the strong contrasts, rich colours and mysterious shadows that surround the woman. Her twisted body, with the head thrown back over the side of the bed, melodramatically suggests disturbed sleep. Her figure has been elongated to emphasise her pose but, while it is distorted, there is strangely little emotion on her face. Füseli used *chiaroscuro* to draw the viewer's attention to the focal point of the painting and the **high key** tones emphasise

the woman's restlessness and lead the eye to the cause of her nightmare.

The diagonal lines of the woman's arms draw the viewer's eye to the malevolent creature glaring out from the shadows as it sits perched on her chest. This character is known as an incubus, a demon that visits women during the night, a symbolic representation of the nightmare itself that would have been well understood by Füseli's contemporaries. The strange figure of the horse in the background is thought to be a visual pun on the word night*mare* in the title.

The Nightmare is rife with qualities we associate with the **Gothic Revival**. It was primarily a style of architecture, known for its sense of fantasy and whimsy. The Gothic novel of the eighteenth century revelled in adventure, terror and the supernatural. It was often set against a Medieval backdrop and the stories

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were sensational in their excesses of sentiment and fantasy. Masculine heroes, fainting maidens and grotesque creatures in nightmarish situations formed a large part of Füseli's *oeuvre*. He often referred to literary subject matter such as the plays and poems of Shakespeare, Milton and Blake.

Füseli was born in Switzerland, into a family of painters. He was an ordained minister but did not practise his ministry. Instead, he spent most of his career in England as a painter and writer, and later as a professor at the Royal Academy. The year before *The Nightmare* was painted, London experienced riots more violent than those that would accompany the French Revolution in Paris 10 years later. Anti-Catholic feeling led to fire and bloodshed, and rampaging mobs destroyed buildings and scarred the city. The violence is said to have expressed the anxieties of the people at the time, and to fuel the desire for grand and emotional gestures in literature and painting. This would have been a recent memory for Füseli as he worked on his painting.

He was known to be an enthusiastic theatregoer; perhaps this contributed to his fondness for strong, somewhat artificial, lighting effects and the exaggerated gestures and poses of the figures in his paintings. He was also preoccupied with dreams and psychological states, and what they suggested about the troubled mind. In his paintings of the works of Shakespeare, he often selected scenes of dreams or visions of terror.

A number of art historians have noted sexual overtones in the positions of the figures in *The Nightmare*. In fact, at the time it was first exhibited it was considered to be scandalous. Füseli painted it not long after he fell madly in love with a woman but was rejected. Some believe that the painting represents a personal portrayal of the erotic aspects of unrequited love. In this scenario, the incubus is interpreted as a dream symbol of male lust.

OTHER WORKS

- *The Shepherd's Dream*, 1798 – figures escape from a dream
- *Titania and Bottom*, c. 1790 – a fantasy scene inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare

oeuvre French word describing the collected works of an artist

ACTIVITY 2.9

Füseli was a friend of the poet and painter William Blake. Their works are similar in their references to literature and storytelling, and in the dramatic use of *chiaroscuro*. Compare *The Nightmare* with Blake's *The Great Dragon and the Woman Clothed in Sun* or *The Number of the Beast is 666*. Make two lists: one for similarities and another for differences. Consider subject matter, use of colour and tone, symbolic detail, contrast and mood. Undertake research to discover what techniques and materials the artists used and how they differ. Use evidence to support the similarities and differences that you see.

Chapter 2: Artworks and meaning 59

Jill Orr

*I wanted to work with the real stuff
from which we are made as an antidote
or reality check from the mediated
depictions of the most horrific human
situations that are witnessed on screen
and in print from our peaceful lounge.*

– JILL ORR

Performance art refers to live events that
usually use the body as the artist's
medium, although often they are
discussed with reference to film or
video recordings of the experience. When
discussing performance art, the questions
you need to ask yourself are different from
those you would ask when approaching a
static artwork. Consider questions such as,
'How is the body being used to
communicate with the audience?', 'How has
the artist used the performance space and
the passing of time to communicate the
meanings and messages of the work?' 'Is
sound an integral part of the performance?'

*The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters
– Goya* was a live performance, enacted over
eight hours by Jill Orr in 2002. It takes its
title from the etching of the same name by
Goya, created more than 200 years earlier
(Figure 2.18). Both artists comment on their
contemporary worlds and the horrors that
happen when reason is abandoned:
Goya during a prolonged period of
violent unrest in the Spain of his
time and Orr in the post-9/11 world and the
subsequent War on Terror.

These events are the stuff of nightmares.
It is important to Orr that her performances
communicate with the audience
– she wants those viewing to be
reminded of the realities of war, of
death, of madness. She wants to make the
viewer see the reality of flesh and blood and
destruction left in the wake of war.

During the performance, the audience
was free to move in and out of the darkened
space. The low lighting cast strong shadows,

but the figure of Orr, wearing a butcher's apron increasingly smeared with blood, remained the focal point. A tonne of meat bones had earlier been delivered to the gallery and, as she moved around the space, Orr used strips of fabric to tie together disarticulated bones to create vertical sculptures that she then suspended from meat hooks hanging from the ceiling.

Orr's performance embraced elements of improvised movement that occurred as each sculpture was suspended. This was emphasised by the use of sound. A series of panels that created a false wall were painted earlier in the day with light-sensitive pigment that reacted to strong light, which cast powerful shadows. When the light was turned off, the shadows of Orr and the columns of bones remained an other-worldly green. The intense contrast – strong light versus deep shadows – became a dramatic symbol of ignorance and 'the sleep of reason' referred to in Goya's original title.

As well as the senses of sight and sound, the audience's sense of smell was also engaged by the growing stench of raw meat and bone, which intensified as the performance continued. This, combined with the reality of the real meaty bones, bloody and raw, not only emphasised the message of pain and death but also reached out in a way that the media are unable to because we usually read about and watch the horrors of war while sitting comfortably in our lounge rooms. Orr was trying to combat our desensitisation to such horrors.

Like all **time-based art**, what remains afterwards is the documentation. The performer's **staccato** movements were captured on film and enhanced by editing and sound. Orr works collaboratively with photographers and videographers to record her performances. She worked closely with Steve Bell, who created an eerie **soundscape**, and Pete Brownstein, who produced the video.

OTHER WORKS

- *Southern Cross – To Bear and Behold*, 2009 – performance captured by photographs
- *Antipodean Epic – a Trilogy*, 2015 – an investigation of humanity's dependence on seed, shown through symbolism and photography

ACTIVITY 2.10

1   Compare Orr's performance of *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya* with Yinka Shonibare's five photographs entitled *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* by accessing the Yinka Shonibare website, available via the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

    Make a list of the ways in which they use Goya's etching of the same name (Figure 2.18) as inspiration. Consider the use of the human figure, symbolic details, medium and technique, and the importance of time in an appreciation of the work. In what ways do the different art forms (performance and photography) affect the viewers' responses?

2   Imagine that you have been asked to use Goya's etching as inspiration for an artwork. Brainstorm ideas for what you might create, considering the message and the experience that you would like the viewer to have.

time-based art depends on the passage of time – for example, performance, video and sound works and much technology-based art

staccato short and disconnected, jerky

soundscape an immersive environment created by a combination of sounds

Seungmo Park

The right display can create connections between the artist and the audience, bringing the audience closer to understanding …

– *SEUNGMO PARK*

Seungmo Park is a Korean sculptor who works in both Seoul and New York. For him, the relationship between the viewer and the work is a very important element of his practice. His works do not deliver answers; rather, they expect viewers to look closely and respond in their own ways.

Maya 879 (Figure 2.29) is an installation work from a series which takes its title, *Maya*, from a word derived from Sanskrit, meaning 'nothingness' or 'illusion'. Its subject is a woman from a dream of the artist's, and it references his concern with reality, illusion and existence. This makes the title particularly apt because the work itself seems to be almost an hallucination, a merging of shadows.

Park has created this work by cutting into layers of fine steel mesh, a non-traditional and normally inexpressive material. Using a **subtractive** technique, he snips sections of one layer after another and then overlaps them. The layers are rotated slightly so that the grid-like quality of the mesh is softened, and each one is set a few finger widths apart from the next. In this way, each layer interacts with those in front of and behind it and the image is the sum of its many parts when the layers are viewed together. It also varies according to the lighting in the exhibition space and the position of the viewer in relation to the work. At the same time, the layers mean nothing when viewed separately or too close up; as the artist says, the image is in that case 'scattered to nothingness'.

The softness of the figure in *Maya 879* belies the hard, grid-like lines of the wire mesh. This network of overlapping layers creates an effect not unlike **cross-hatching**: the more layers, the higher the density of wire and the greater the depth of tone. The complete lack of colour – the work's **achromatic** quality – focuses the viewer's attention more fully on both the gentle tone and the strong contrast. The focal point is created through the juxtaposition of light and dark. The shadow behind the figure and the highlights on the face draw the viewer's eye to the left-hand side of the work.

To create each image in this series, Seungmo Park began with a photograph. The model was photographed underwater in a large swimming pool, her gown softly billowing around her. The light filtering into the pool was gentle and diffused, which helped to create a floating, dreamlike form. The artist later projected the image onto the mesh and snipped areas through each layer to create the areas of light. To produce stronger light – for example, the highlights on the cheekbone and nose – he cut through more layers.

Each over-lifesize image by Seungmo Park has been time-consuming and painstaking to create, and reflects his skilled craftsmanship and attention to detail. Park has also created a series of wire sculptures, called *Human*, by tightly wrapping aluminium wire over fibreglass figures, one row beside another, creating a softness through the flowing lines of hair and the folds of clothing.

OTHER WORKS

- *Maya* series, 2011–14 – installation works using cut and layered wire mesh
- *Human* series, 2008–12 – sculpture made from aluminium wire wrapped around fibreglass forms

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ACTIVITY 2.11

Find an image on the internet of *Nostalgic* by Thai artist Uttaporn Nimmalaikaew. The artist painted this image on layers of fine netting and, like Park's *Maya 869*, it is only when the viewer is standing in a certain position that the image is visible. Go to @sofles on Instagram and scroll back to 12 December 2015. You will find a short video showing *In Perspextive*, an installation with separate layers that have been painted on perspex and can only successfully be 'understood' from a certain position.

Select one of these installation works and write a paragraph about the importance of the viewer to such installations. Refer to the physical constraints of the exhibition space, the scale of the work and the height at which it is displayed, issues of transparency and lighting, as well as any way in which the symbolism of the image can affect the viewer.

ACTIVITY 2.12

Make a small artwork using layers of transparent material, such as tracing paper or overhead transparency film. Select subject matter that is relevant to you and the ideas you are exploring in your folio. Experiment with visual language and how it can communicate these ideas by exploring ways of applying art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes.

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

While studying Unit 1, you will learn how to use the art process to develop your own visual language. You will develop confidence in your own artistic practice through the exploration of techniques, materials and processes using imagination and observation in a range of tasks. During your work in this unit, you will experiment with a range of materials and art forms, and use a visual diary to document and reflect on your ideas and experimentation. When you have completed this unit, you should be able to use the art process to create visual responses that demonstrate your personal interests and ideas.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- produce visual creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests in a unit of teacher-directed tasks
- develop 'A Sense of My World' as a possible idea to explore in your Unit 1 folio

- brainstorm ideas
- interpret a concept in a range of creative ways
- begin to interpret your ideas visually using thumbnail sketches
- discover the qualities and characteristics of your materials and art forms
- use the qualities and characteristics of your materials and art forms to present concepts
- trial materials, techniques, processes and art forms
- manipulate the elements and principles of art to establish a visual language
- apply the Structural and Personal Frameworks
- annotate your artworks.

To create one's own world takes courage.

– GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

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There is no one right way to make art, and this textbook is not meant to be prescriptive. It is, rather, an interpretation of the VCE Art Study Design and a suggested approach that provides you with a framework to explore your art while meeting the requirements of the Study Design. This chapter will suggest ways in which you can interpret the requirements of the study as you develop a folio of practical artwork.

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

— ALBERTO GIACOMETTI

personal meaning ideas, concepts, images and issues that are significant to you or that are of personal interest

Figure 3.1 An example of a mind map

Unit 1 is a guided exploration of techniques, materials and processes. You must provide documented evidence of the art process that you use to develop a range of visual responses to set tasks. You will produce visual creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests. You may select a particular medium or your teacher may set specific tasks to direct and facilitate your investigation and experimentation. The way in which you do this should reflect your interests, creativity and imagination.

The important thing in Unit 1 is to explore different ways of working. If possible, you should experiment with a range of art forms and media. The art forms you are able to explore may be determined by your school, or could be personal choices. They can be two-, three- or four-dimensional art forms. If you are limited to one art form or medium, then you should trial various techniques and approaches to using this art form.

3.1 Folio of visual responses

In your folio, you should use the art process to create visual responses as you develop a visual language to explore issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination.

Art process 1: **Exploration of ideas**

You are required to complete a number of art tasks this semester, which will facilitate your exploration of issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination as you develop a visual language. The VCE Art Study Design requires your practical exploration of art to be informed by the theory component. In Unit 1, you will create a folio of exploratory works based on **personal meaning**. With

this in mind, an appropriate idea to explore is 'A Sense of My World'.

An effective starting point for any art folio is the collection of relevant images relating to the idea/s you wish to explore. These can be found, or made from direct observation or imagination using drawing, painting or photography. But what can you draw or photograph? What sorts of images could you look for? You may find it useful to use a mind map or brainstorm to open your mind to a range of possibilities, unencumbered by concerns about how you would approach them as a painting, print, photograph, digital image or sculpture.

Working from a concept or idea like 'A Sense of My World' should not limit your options. The point is not to have a concrete idea of what you are going to produce right away, but rather to explore various interpretations of what exemplifies your world and to come up with diverse ideas and possible visual interpretations that you believe explore who you are. Brainstorming ideas and writing down the first thing that

comes to mind is an effective way to do this. Remember that your artwork does not have to be an obvious reflection of the central idea. This is a personal reflection, and the viewer could therefore find it quite obscure. Part of your folio will be discussing the meaning of your work, which will allow you to inform the viewer about the ideas and concepts with which you are dealing. Be creative with your ideas and think outside the box.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE CONCEPT

A sense of your world could be interpreted as those things that best reflect your world and, by extension, who you are. An obvious interpretation of who you are is your physical appearance. This could be shown by means of a self-portrait. Self-portraiture has always been a popular subject matter for artists to explore their art form, as can be seen in the work of Rembrandt (Figure 3.2). His self-portraits allow us to study his experimentation with the medium, and to

Figure 3.2 Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, *Self Portrait*, 1630 (49 x 39 cm)

Figure 3.3 Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait*, 1889, oil on canvas (55.5 x 45 cm), National Gallery of Norway, Oslo

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follow the changes in his technique and style of painting. They also provide us with the opportunity to observe the changes to his physical appearance as he ages.

The representation of your physical appearance can, however, be coloured by your personal circumstances. Van Gogh is a good example of an artist whose paintings spoke as much about his mental condition as his physical state. He achieved this through the effective application of the elements and principles of art in his self-portraits (Figure 3.3). His works, when viewed in chronological order, allow us to observe the same changes as Rembrandt's, but also represent a clear picture of his emotional state of mind at any given time.

Two VCE students explored self-portraiture in response to 'A Sense of My World'. Each established her own visual language. Brodie Lowe took a more traditional approach in her realistic oil on canvas (Figure 3.4). She tried to capture her physical portrait while also representing her personality. Imogen Wilkinson was inspired by the simplification typical of Pop Art and stencil art (Figure 3.5). She used this to achieve a painting of her physical identity and her interest in street art.

The Australian photographer and sculptor Anne Ferran explored the technique of **photograms** in her series *Flock* (1999), where she used period clothing to create delicate, melancholic portraits of the past. In 2001, she created photograms of christening robes that suggest someone who is no longer there (Figure 3.6). The absence of the body and the ghost-like appearance of the photograms hint at death and the tragedy of loss. These become portraits of children who are no longer with us. Ferran said:

I am interested in clothing, because there is that very strong association with human presence and absence. There is a space where the body would be rendered in the photogram.

You are not only represented by your physical body. When exploring who you are, you could consider things such as your beliefs, your interests, your fears and the things that are important to you.

photogram image created in the darkroom without the use of a camera: objects are placed onto photographic paper and then exposed to light; the silhouette of the object appears on the paper; objects that combine interesting positive and negative shapes as well as those that have areas of transparency are often used

Personal

Structural

Figure 3.4 Brodie Lowe, *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas.

Figure 3.5 Imogen Wilkinson, *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas.

Aristotle said:

> *The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.*

The word 'sense' could read as a feeling for or an understanding of your world. You could create an image or images that will give the viewer a sense of your world, things or people, or issues that are important to you, such as your friends and family. A simple still-life of objects could become a self-portrait, in that the objects have symbolic or personal meaning to you. They represent who you are and what you like.

The super realist still-life airbrush paintings of Audrey Flack (Figure 3.7) are examples of this. Flack's depictions of a woman's dressing table and all the associated trappings of makeup and perfumes could be seen as a self-portrait or portraits of femininity. They could also be considered a portrait of society's expectations or view of women.

You could keep a visual journal for a period of time in which you collect written and visual information about your experiences, conversations and responsibilities. At the end of this period, reflect upon the information you have collected and use this to generate ideas about a sense of your world. When exploring 'A Sense of My World', you could look at what is meant by 'sense'. This could refer to the senses that you use to explore your world, such as sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste.

Figure 3.6 Anne Ferran, *Untitled (christening gown)*, 2001 silver gelatin photogram (127 x 90 cm), unique print © Anne Ferran/ licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 3.7 Audrey Flack, *Chanel*, 1974, acrylic on canvas (213 x 152 cm), Louise K. Meisel Gallery
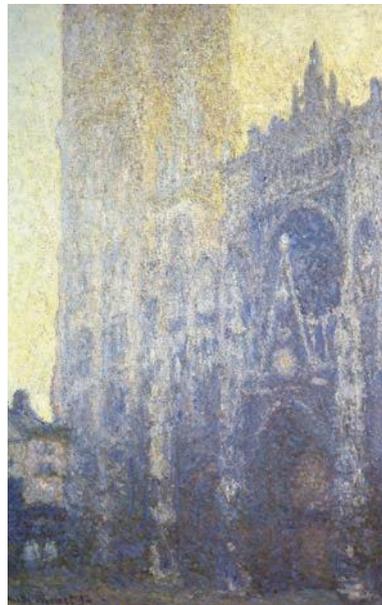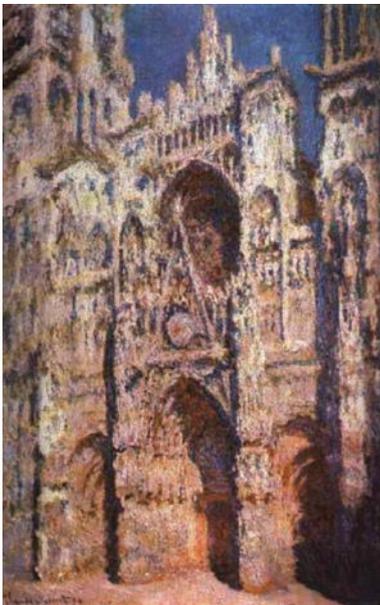
Figure 3.8 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade (Morning)*, 1893, oil on canvas, Folkwang Museum, Germany

Figure 3.9 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade (Sunset)*, 1893, oil on canvas (100 x 65 cm), Musée Marmottan, Paris

Figure 3.10 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade*, 1893, oil on canvas, Pola Museum of Art, Japan

Figure 3.11 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral*, 1893 (107 x 73 cm), oil on canvas, Musée d'Osay, Paris

Figure 3.12 Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, Façade and Tour d'Albane*, 1893, Museum Beyelaer, Switzerland

SIGHT

You could explore images of things you like to look at in your world, like a beautiful seascape. You could deal with the concept of sight or the way we see. We need light in order to see, so you could explore the way in which what we see is altered by the light that falls on it. This is something Monet explored in his series of paintings of Rouen Cathedral (Figures 3.8 to 3.12). The way we see things can also be affected by our perception of something or our point of view.

TOUCH

Texture fills our world, and artists have often explored texture in their artworks through the skilful application of their medium. Jan van Eyck was able to create the illusion of various textures in oil paint (Figure 3.13). You could experiment with the aesthetic qualities of actual textured materials and surfaces like Rosalie Gascoigne (Figure 3.14). Touch and sight are closely linked when we think about Braille. You could consider a sculpture for the blind or works that comment on sight and vision impairment.

SMELL

Personal

We all enjoy certain smells, so you may consider a painting of a bowl of flowers or you could take photographs or draw pictures of a factory as commentary on pollution in your world and smells you do not enjoy.

HEARING

Structural

A work incorporating sound can provide the opportunity for a four-dimensional work of art, such as an installation using video or a PowerPoint presentation. You could use sound that you enjoy or dislike, depending on the impact you wish to make on the viewer. Some sounds are tranquil and leave us feeling calm. A visual representation of this could take the form of a painting of a gentle stream. You may enjoy a particular type of music or musical instrument that can be the subject of your exploration. You may simply choose to depict a person listening. What they are listening to may be evident or may be subject to the viewer's interpretation.

ACTIVITY 3.1 ━━━━

1 Create a mind map based on the idea of 'A Sense of My World'.

2 Highlight the ideas you are most interested in exploring.

Figure 3.13 Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, oil on oak panel (82 x 59.5 cm), National Gallery, London

Figure 3.14 Rosalie Gascoigne, *Grassfest*, 1999, weathered painted wood on composition board (106.5 x 101 cm), Queensland University of Technology Art Collection, Brisbane, purchased 1999 © Rosalie Gascoigne Estate, administered by VISCOPY, 2009

TASTE

When depicting taste, our thoughts generally turn to food: things we like the taste of, or foods we avoid. Images of food have often been found in art, from early Roman murals (Figure 3.15) to works in oil paint by Penny Siopis (Figure 3.16) who depicted tables weighed down with food. However, Siopis's paintings don't only deal with eating. The over-abundance of food in her work comments on waste, decay and *vanitas*. Your exploration of taste may even deal with personal taste or aesthetic taste and the concept of **kitsch**.

Figure 3.15 Unknown Roman artist, *Still Life with Peaches*, found at Herculaneum, c. 1 CE (34 x 35 cm), Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples
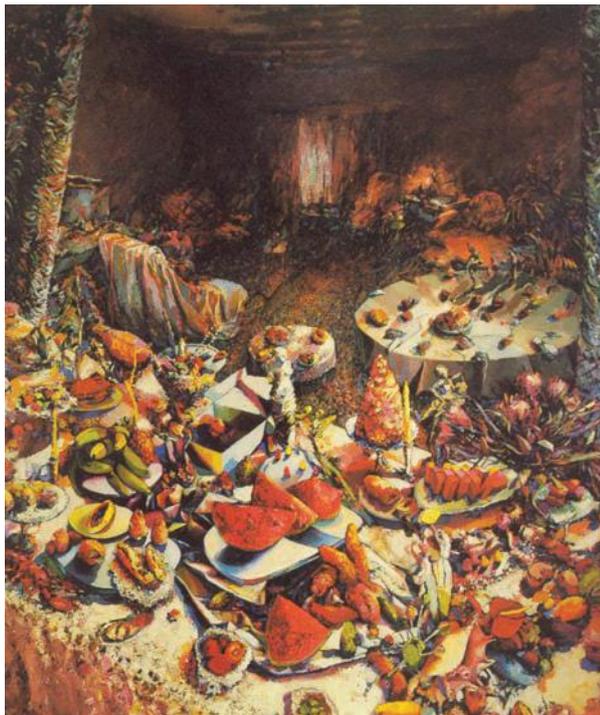
Figure 3.16 Penny Siopis, *Still Life with Watermelon and Other Things*, 1985, oil on canvas (242.2 x 180.5 cm), Rembrandt van Rijn Museum, South Africa

Art process 2: Experimentation with art elements and art principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms

Once you have established your area of interest, establishing your ideas and exploring possible interpretations and approaches to these ideas is just the first part of the visual exploration of issues of personal interest. It is important to begin to generate a range of visual interpretations of these ideas and concepts through observation and imagination. You need to establish ways by which you can communicate your ideas and concepts in a visual way. One approach is to use **thumbnail sketches**.

An alternative method for communicating your ideas and concepts in a visual way is starting to explore your medium using a range of techniques. Begin exploring marks, creating textures, layering your medium and experimenting with different surfaces as you generate possible ways to visually represent your ideas or concepts. This is an opportunity to explore your materials, techniques and the elements, and also the principles of art, without being restricted by a visual image. Sometimes art is just about having fun, trying different things and seeing where your medium takes you. As Richard Prince said, 'A lot of it's experimental, spontaneous. It's about knocking about in the studio and bumping into things.' The important thing is to realise when you bump into something useful for your art so that you can use it.

ACTIVITY 3.2

Select the three ideas you are most interested in exploring for 'A Sense of My World' and, using a pen or pencil, draw 10 thumbnail sketches that visually interpret each of these ideas in a completely different way. Your interpretation could be literal, symbolic or abstract. You could create a narrative with a single image or a series of images. Be creative in the use of your visual language.

Colour was a major consideration for the VCE student Jess Maguire when she was developing her painting folio. As part of her exploration, Jess looked at different aspects of colour as a stimulus for her paintings. Figures 3.17 and 3.18 show how she made use of a number of different methods to explore the element of colour. This included researching the symbolism and psychology of colour, and finding evidence of her selected colour in the world around her, as well as in artworks.

thumbnail sketches small, rough sketches outlining the elements in a proposed artwork, useful for exploring multiple ideas quickly; thumbnail sketches are a good way to work through an idea, or to try out different configurations

Figure 3.17 Examples of Jess Maguire's exploration of blue
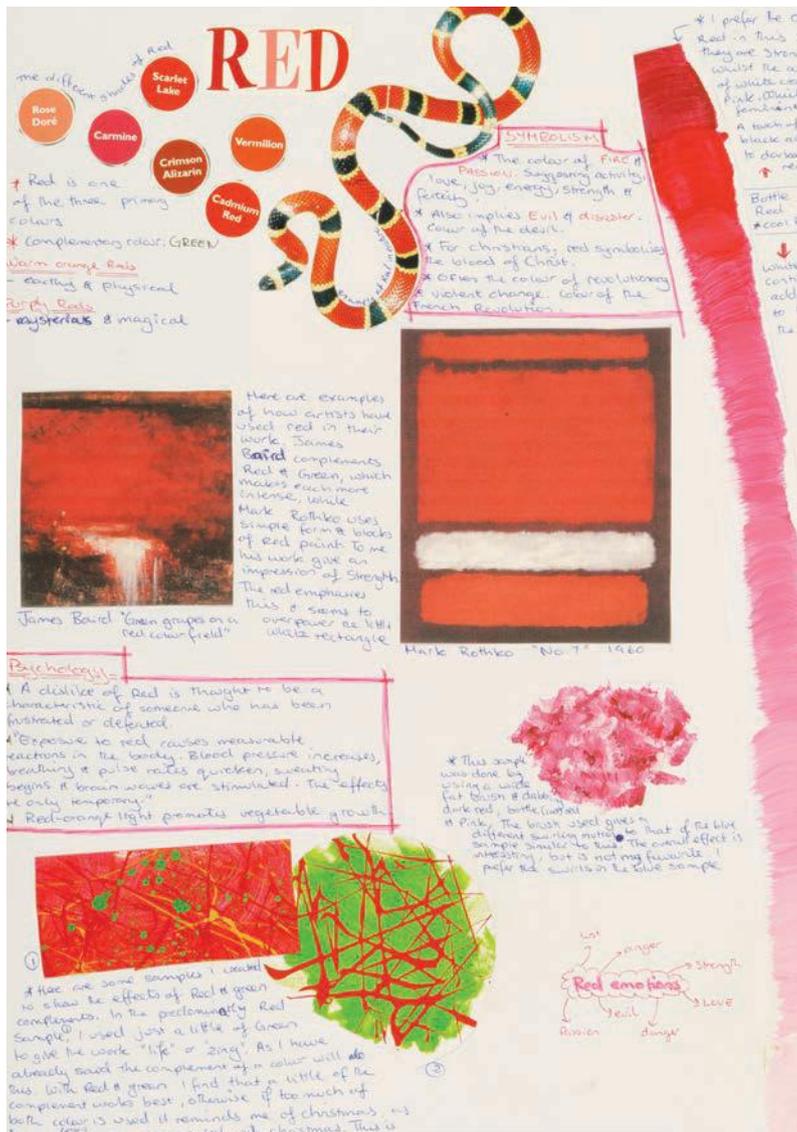
Figure 3.18 Examples of Jess Maguire's exploration of red

This type of exploration, and observations or discoveries like these, will provide you with the tools to develop an effective visual language (see Chapter 1 for definition). It will allow you to use your media to achieve a visual representation of your concept or ideas.

Personal

Jess Maguire also explored a range of techniques and media to create textures. She wrote:

I find it extremely difficult to resist touching a highly textured surface. I gain more information when I use another one of my senses. Textures can evoke different moods and could combine with my colour to enhance mood.

This is a more intuitive and abstract approach that will result in possible techniques, surface qualities, colours and textures, which you could then use to enhance a more figurative approach to your concept. Although it was not her intention when she set out to explore texture using a range of techniques and media, Jess Maguire could have used the results of this experimentation (Figure 3.19) to provide her with the means with which to produce a realist painting based on the photographs of an old rusted wreck that she saw (Figure 3.20).

Jess wrote:

Structural

Red symbolises revolution; it is the colour of fire and passion. Red implies evil and disaster. For Christians red symbolises the blood of Christ.

Psychology – Exposure to red causes temporary, but measurable reactions in the body. Blood pressure increases, breathing and pulse rate quicken, sweating begins and brain waves are stimulated.

Red and green are complementary colours. A little green used on a predominantly red area gives the work 'life' or 'zing'.

ACTIVITY 3.3

Structural

Select one of the ideas you are most interested in exploring for 'A Sense of My World'. Explore – through research, observation and experimentation with media and techniques – how the elements and principles of art, the qualities associated with particular media and the effect of various techniques can suggest meaning with reference to this idea. Be creative in your use of visual language. The meaning may be obvious or it might require you to explain the symbolism using written annotation. Apply the Structural Framework to the annotation of your exploration and also to the analysis of your final artwork.
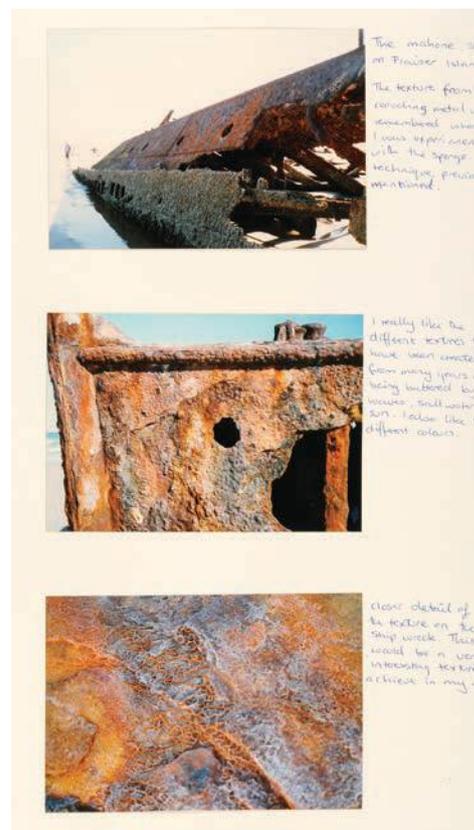
Art process 3: Development of ideas, concepts, style and visual language

Once you have ideas and considered what approach you might take with your exploration you need to discover the qualities and characteristics of your selected materials and art forms, and how they may be used to present concepts and images. Unit 1 will provide you with the opportunity to develop a visual language as a means of achieving a particular outcome. You will learn how to use the elements and principles of art to explore issues and ideas.

In *Green Coca-Cola Bottles*, 1962 (Figure 3.21), Andy Warhol presents repeated rows of Coke bottles, similar to a display on the supermarket shelves. By doing this, he is not only commenting on the consumer product, but also on the way the product is presented and sold. By using repetition, he is commenting on American society, mass production and consumerism.

You will also be able to explore the expressive application of the medium and the symbolic meaning that can be expressed by various media, techniques and approaches to art making. Artists have often used particular art forms for an artwork because of the meaning that these art forms can give to the work.

Andy Warhol produced *Marilyn Monroe* (Figure 3.22) using the silkscreen process. He made this artwork just after Marilyn's death, to create a sensation of this tragic event – just like the mass media. Marilyn's face is represented with no emotion and little symbolism. He has used silkscreen as a means of eliminating a personal style. Warhol initially created an image of a single face using publicity photographs, rather than portrait photographs of the person behind the public image. This made Marilyn an icon rather than a person. Instead of stopping with the single portrait, he also chose to exploit the idea of duplication that is characteristic of silkscreen printing, and created an image made up of

Figure 3.19 Examples of Jess Maguire's sponge texture

Figure 3.20 Jess Maguire's photo of a rusted wreck

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multiple prints of Marilyn's face. All forms of advertising or packaging are endlessly reproduced on high-speed printing presses, and the printing process and repetition transform Marilyn into a mass-produced consumer item: a product of our society rather than a person.

As you explore different art forms, you should be aware of what **Structural** meanings are associated with the medium, process, techniques and style. Penny Siopis, for example, chooses to work with very thick impasto oil paints because when the paint dries, the top layer of paint forms a skin and, as the paint below continues to dry and contract, the top layer wrinkles. The effect is similar to that of the wrinkled skin of an elderly person. This conscious use and application of a medium adds to the meaning of her paintings, which explore age and decay using food as the subject matter (see Figure 3.16).

With this in mind, approach your exploration of art with an open mind and an awareness of how the subject matter, medium, and techniques and style can provide you with an effective visual **Personal** language to communicate with the viewer. VCE Art student Emily Livy was inspired by the style of Pop Art, in particular Andy Warhol's *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962, featuring synthetic polymer paint on 32 (50.8 x 40.6 cm) canvases.

Figure 3.21 Andy Warhol, *Green Coca-Cola Bottles*, 1962, synthetic polymer, silkscreen ink and graphite on canvas (209.2 x 144.8 cm), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchased with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Photography by Geoffrey Clements © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 3.22 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe*, 1962, oil, acrylic and enamel on canvas © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Although *Campbell's Soup Cans* resembles the mass-produced, printed advertisements by which Warhol was inspired, his images were hand-painted. Emily chose to create her work using Illustrator, and printed the final artwork using an inkjet printer. Like Warhol's silkscreen prints, this allowed Emily to deny her personal mark on the work. The digital process suggests the machine-made, mass-produced items on the supermarket shelf that she represents. In this work, like Warhol, she mimics the repetition and uniformity of advertising by carefully reproducing the same image across each individual canvas. She has only changed the label on the front of each bottle, distinguishing them by their variety.

Like Warhol, who said of Campbell's Soup, 'I used to drink it. I used to have the same lunch every day, for 20 years', spices were a part of Emily's everyday experience when she helped her mother to prepare the family meal.

Using the ideas you have generated though your brainstorm/mind map and thumbnail sketches and/or photographs as a starting point, you should begin to develop a folio of creative visual responses that presents your own understanding of your world and who you are. Ideally, this should be done in a variety of materials, techniques and processes. Create a series of visual responses to your ideas. These are not finished works, but rather explorations of your ideas and art form/s. This exploration will allow you to trial different techniques and get to know your medium.

ACTIVITY 3.4

Annotate why you have used particular materials, techniques and processes to represent your chosen subject matter. Apply the Structural Framework to explain how these have added to the meaning of your artwork.

Figure 3.23 Emily Livy, Illustrator – inkjet print (42 x 60 cm)

ACTIVITY 3.5

Find 10 examples of artworks. Apply the Structural Framework to write a brief explanation next to each image about how you feel the media, techniques and approaches to art making and the selected art forms have added to the meaning of the work. (Do not use any of the examples mentioned in the text above.)

3.2 Approaches to trialling materials, techniques, processes and art forms

double exposures can be used to create a complex image that combines elements from more than one negative or repeats aspects from the same negative in one print

hand-coloured gelatin silver prints black and white prints that are coloured using watercolour paints or drawing inks

Making art is not only creating your oil painting on canvas, constructing your installation or printing your silkscreen; it is the process of arriving at that point through experimenting and trialling ideas, materials, techniques and processes. If possible, use this opportunity to explore a range of media. If you are restricted to one medium by the facilities available, school policy or personal choice, then push the boundaries of that medium. If painting, try different techniques and painting media, work on a range of surfaces or add various media or textures, such as sand, to your paint. If working in the darkroom, consider photograms, **double exposures** and **hand-coloured gelatin**

silver prints. It is important to hand colour subtly by patiently layering transparent layers of colour into the light areas of the print

ACTIVITY 3.6

Select a particular art form or medium you are interested in exploring. Find at least 10 different techniques and combinations of media that you can apply to your selected art form. Also explore a range of surfaces onto which you can apply your chosen medium.
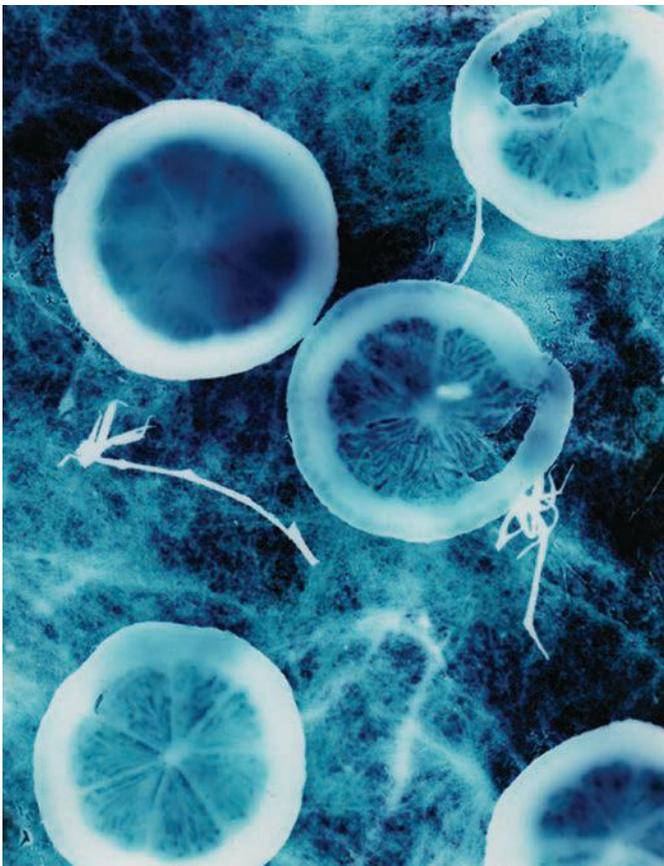
Figure 3.24 Example of a photogram: *Lemons*

Figure 3.25 Example of a double exposure print: *Slam Dunk Action Shot 3*

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Figure 3.26 Adolfo Farsari, hand-coloured albumen silver print, 1885–1890, Musée Nicephore Niepce, France

If you are unsure about how to proceed with the exploration of your materials, techniques, processes and art forms, it may help to turn to an artist for inspiration. Select an artist whose style, technique or treatment of the subject matter you admire. Use one of their artworks as the basis for your own exploration of a particular art form. Use the style of the selected artist, and trial their technique and use of the medium to develop your own visual solution exploring a sense of your world. Observe how the artist uses selected combinations of formal elements, the way they compose the image and how they use their technique to express themselves.

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3.3 Using art elements and principles in artworks

One way in which you could approach Unit 1 is to explore your ideas visually by focusing on a particular art element or principle. See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of these. All artists rely on the elements and principles of art to create art. Without them, a visual image could not exist. Many artists emphasise one or more of these to draw attention to an area of their work or to alter the mood or add symbolic value to a scene. Other artists, like Wassily Kandinsky, who was concerned with the spiritual rather than the material (Figure 3.27), rely only on the elements and principles to convey their ideas with no reference to the world around them. For Kandinsky, this interest in the spiritual influence as opposed to the external vision resulted in art without subject matter. He produced the first non-objective, abstract paintings, which comprised colour, line, shape and their relationship, to create an abstract pattern – an image of spiritual conflict.

Structural

Kandinsky said:

Colour is the keyboard, the eyes are the harmonies, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand that plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.

Two VCE Art students, Juliette Wood and Imogen Craddock, each explored abstract painting in different ways. Juliette created a structured composition that relied on shape and the value of colour to create a successful geometric abstract composition (Figure 3.28). Imogen, on the other hand, relied on contrast and expressive paint application to represent her response to the song 'Cut the Cord' by Shinedown (Figure 3.29).

How you manipulate and combine the various elements of art, and the relationships you establish between these, will determine how effective your visual language is, irrespective of whether your art is objective or non-objective. Amelia Peart

Figure 3.27 Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition IV*, 1911, oil on canvas (159.5 x 250.5 cm), Kunstsammlung Nordrhein–Westfalen, Germany
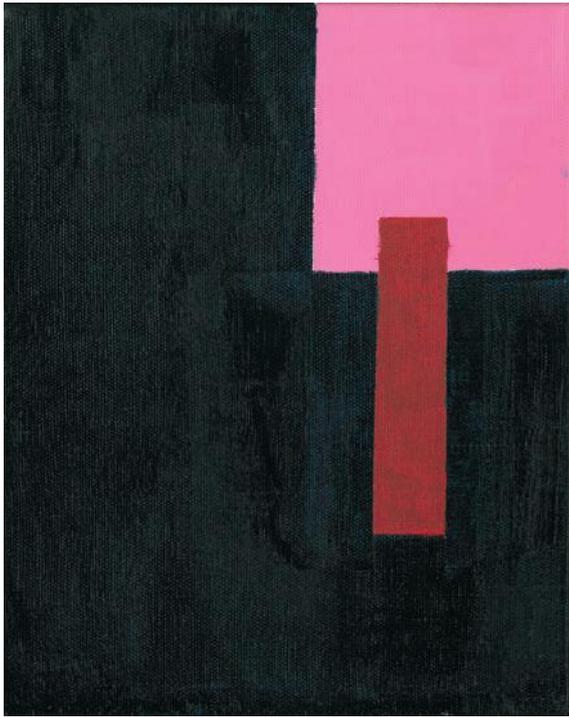
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used a fineliner to create a continuous line drawing of a portrait (Figure 3.30). Joyce Chung explored the ability of line to describe shape, form and detail in a pencil contour line drawing of a crumpled-up piece of paper (Figure 3.31). Using what she had discovered about line in Outcome 1, Joyce considered the quality of line. She varied the pressure on the pencil to place emphasis on certain areas of the drawing and also to manipulate the spatial quality of line to emphasise the three-dimensional form of the paper. Another student, Elise Webb, explored the beauty of continuous line drawing. This time, rather than relying on pencil or fineliner, she used armature wire to create the drawing with florist wire to hold the structure of the drawing (Figure 3.32). The wire portrait presents a freestanding drawing that can be viewed from different views. The student also incorporated a contemporary element, light, to project the shadow of her wire drawing onto the surface behind the work, introducing another way of seeing the artwork.

Shape is an element that was explored by VCE student Amy Tye, who created a three-colour riso print, which is an alternative to silkscreen (Figure 3.33). The same results can be achieved with photographic silkscreen or by creating three individual hand-cut stencils.
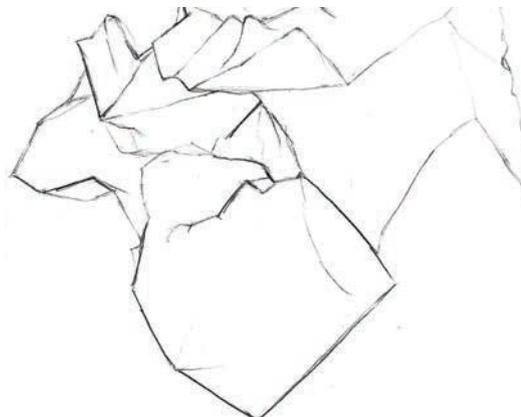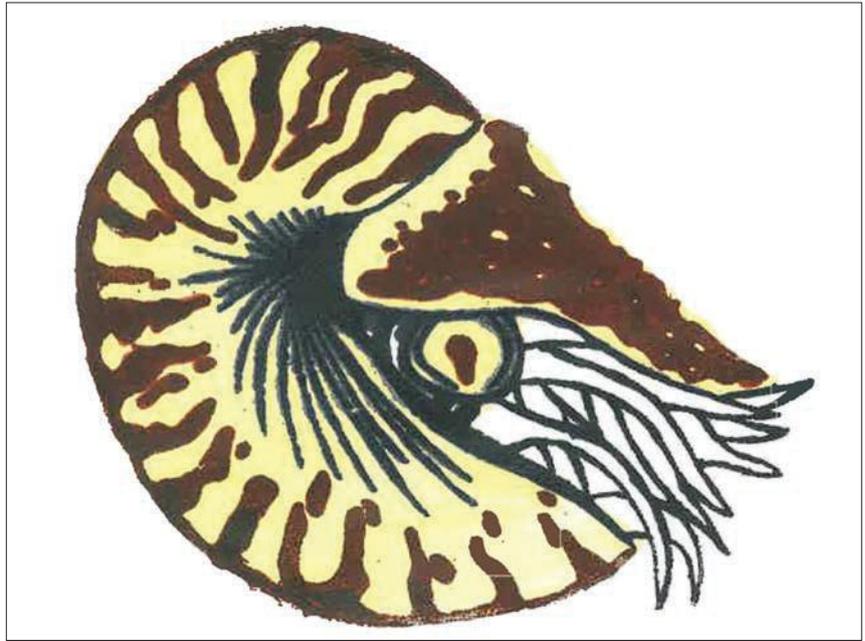
ACTIVITY 3.7

Choose an artwork you admire that relates to the concept you are exploring. Annotate it. What is it about the artwork that you like? How is the concept represented or expressed in the work?

Reinterpret this artwork in a personal way using the same media, techniques and style. You could use a similar composition, but the subject matter must be your own. Work from life or from your own photographic reference if required.

When using the structural elements in your art, consider whether the art element and/or principle is:

- achieving the mood or atmosphere you want to convey
- drawing the viewer's eye to the focal point and holding the viewer's attention
- creating the desired feeling of peace, discomfort or even fear in the viewer
- enhancing the message you want to convey in the artwork
- producing a work that is aesthetically pleasing.

ACTIVITY 3.8

1 Using the list of art elements and principles in Table 1.1, explore how effective they are in establishing a visual language. Apply the element or principle to:

- achieve a particular mood or range of atmospheres
- convey a message (Structural Framework)
- achieve a balanced composition, a dynamic composition and a composition that leaves the viewer feeling uncomfortable
- draw attention to a particular focal point.

2 Apply more than one structural element to each task to determine how each can work independently, or in combination with other art elements or principles, to achieve the desired results.

3.4 Using the Structural and Personal Frameworks to support reflective annotation

You must apply the knowledge you gained about of the Structural and Personal Frameworks in Outcome 1 of your study to provide reflective annotation about your own art making. As part of this unit, you must begin to annotate and evaluate your own work. You are required to analyse and discuss the meanings and messages in your artwork, and to assess how effectively you have developed and used your own visual language. This will allow you to critically evaluate your work and make informed decisions about the path that your own exploration will take. It allows you to clarify your thought process and communicates your art practice thinking and working practice to the person viewing your folio.

Structural Framework

When applying the Structural Framework to the analysis of your work, you will look at how you have used the traditional art elements – line, shape, colour, tone, texture and form – as well as the contemporary art elements – sound, light and time. You will also discuss how you have applied these to achieve emphasis (focal point), balance, movement, unity, variety, contrast, rhythm, repetition (pattern), scale, proportion and space within the composition. In analysing these, you will have to consider how they conveyed the messages of the artworks.

You should use this analysis to determine what is effective and what is not, so that you can plan your approach. A VCE student, Elisa Bongetti, was exploring light and its effect on the meaning of her portrait photographs. She discovered through experimentation that 'natural light creates a more uplifting and less dramatic mood than studio lighting'. As light is an element of art that conveys

a particular meaning when used in her artwork, Elisa would discuss this in terms of the Structural Framework. She applied this understanding to a photo shoot where she used her grandmother as the model (Figure 3.34) and placed her in natural light.

She analysed a photograph she took of her grandmother and wrote:

I like the composition of this photograph because of the way it frames her and creates an intimate atmosphere.

There are colours in the background, which harmonise with the hues of her skin and the colours of her shirt. I like this relaxing effect because it facilitates her joyful expression and the uplifting mood of the image.

Figure 3.34 An example of Elisa Bongetti's annotation of the elements and principles in her photograph of her grandmother
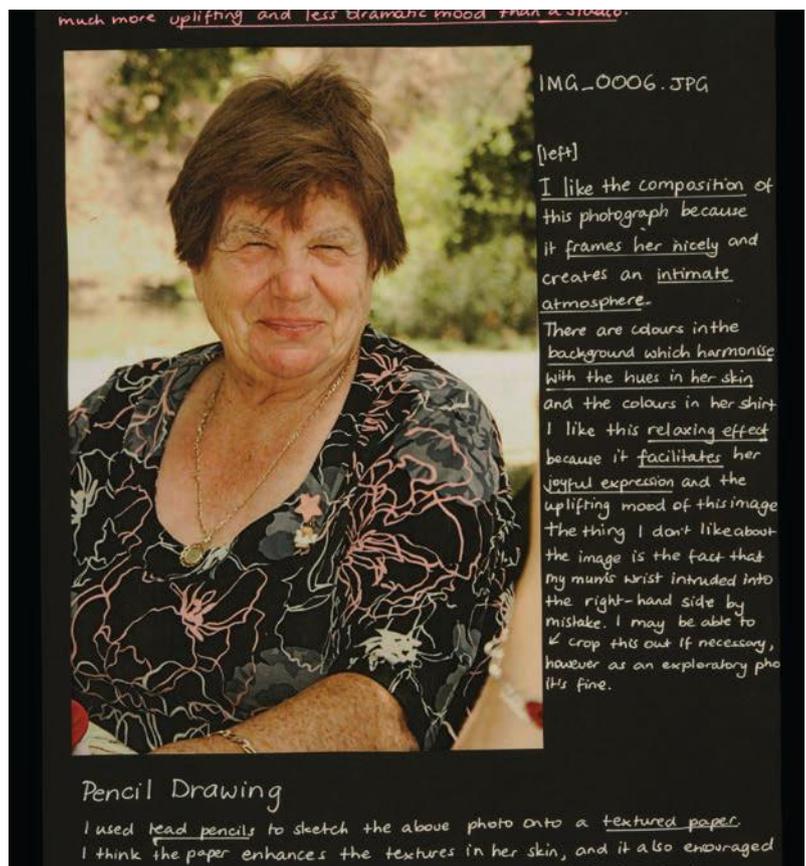
While commenting on her oil sketch of a seascape at sunset (Figure 3.35), Elisa also wrote:

I have intentionally exaggerated the colours in order to draw attention to the warmth and intensity of the sunset.

Texture is another element I focused on because I feel it enhances the life and rugged nature of the scene. I added touches of orange to the water to link the sky and water and to assist the viewer's eyes in moving around the image.

I like this painting and am pleased with the result, but I think it lacks a focal point. Perhaps the inclusion of people would solve this problem.

Personal Framework

You will use the Personal Framework to explain to the viewer and the assessor (your teacher) how your experiences, feelings and personal philosophy are reflected in your artwork. Construct your response around the central concept or narrative, if you have depicted one. Explain what the artwork is about and discuss how you have conveyed these ideas visually in the artworks. The application of the Personal Framework does not only apply to the subject matter, but also to the application of the structural elements and your use of materials, techniques and processes. Some of the things you should consider discussing in your annotation are:

- How does my art making reflect the Personal Framework?
- What specific aspects of my art making, use of the materials, techniques and processes, etc. reflect my personality, thinking, values and who I am?

Figure 3.35 Elisa Bongetti's oil sketch of a seascape at sunset
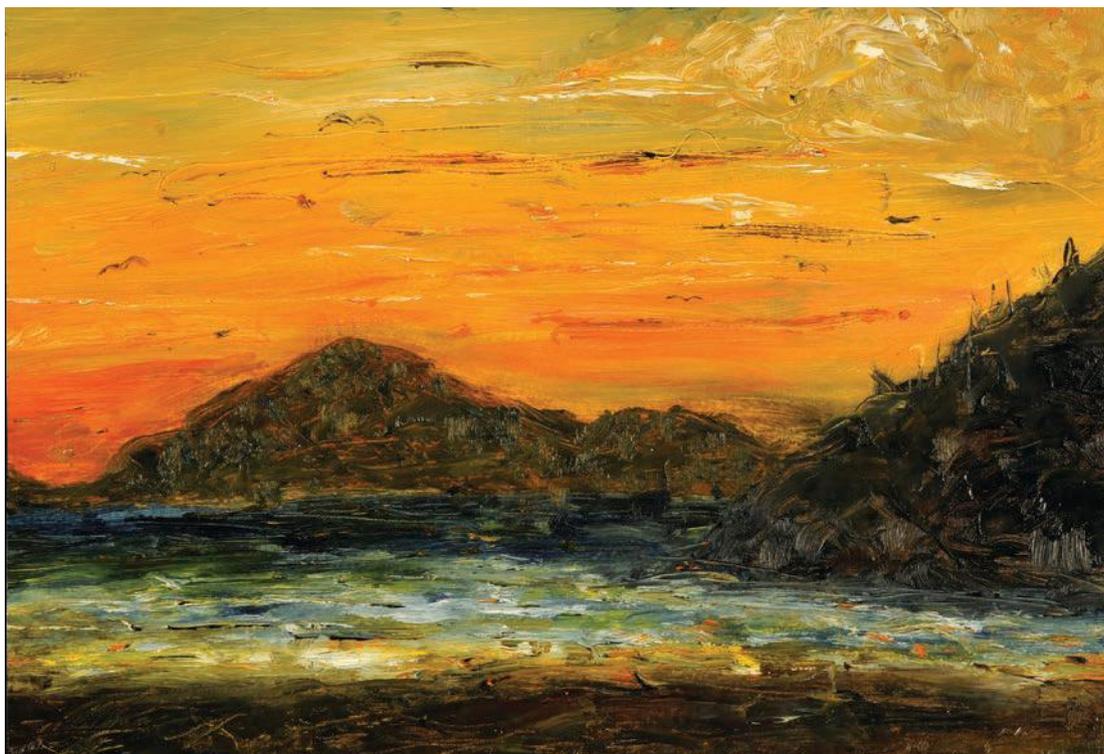
- What symbols, if any, have I used to explore my identity, beliefs or experiences?
- What specific aspects of my art practice, the way I work and how my artworks are conceptualised, created and presented reflect my thinking and what I am trying to achieve?
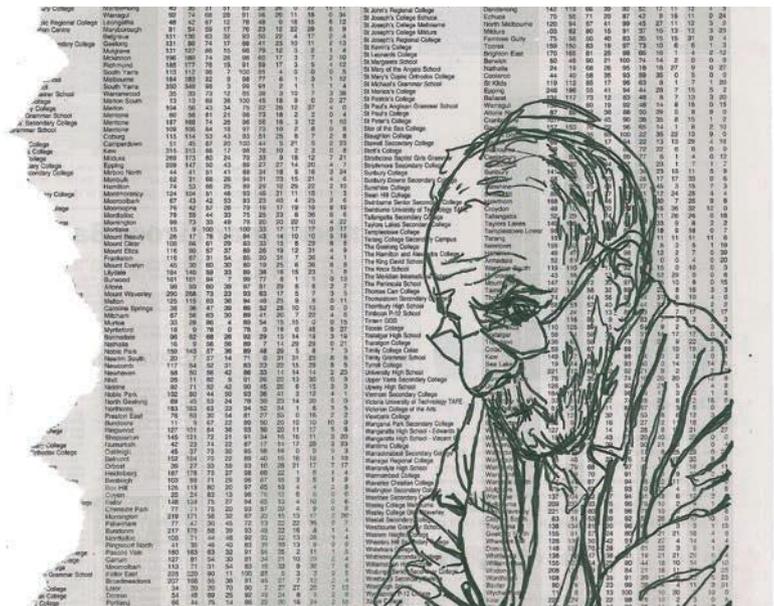
EXPLAIN:
- what you have done and what decisions you have made about the subject matter, materials, technique, process or art form
- the symbolism you have chosen to use, as well as the elements and principles you have used in creating your art
- how this affects the meaning of the work
- why you believe this is true in terms of the Analytical Framework.

Personal

A VCE student, Nicky Purser, was exploring a person very important to her: her grandfather. She had taken a number of photographs of him, many of which captured a feeling of contemplation as he reflected on his past. Nicky explored these digital images as photographs, but also began using some as reference for drawing. When she saw an example of a charcoal-drawn portrait on a page of text by the artist and filmmaker William Kentridge (see information on this artist on pages 224–6), Nicky thought the interaction between text and imagery, and the contrast between the structured black writing and the loose organic black line of the charcoal drawing, established visual interest. She thought that this was an approach she would like to use. Using a torn page of text, she did a quick contour line sketch of her grandfather with a Texta (Figure 3.36). She was happy with the result, but she wanted the surface to have a greater personal or symbolic link to her subject matter. Realising that the text was not only a visual texture but could be read and thus add further meaning to her artwork, she sought text that would link directly with her grandfather.
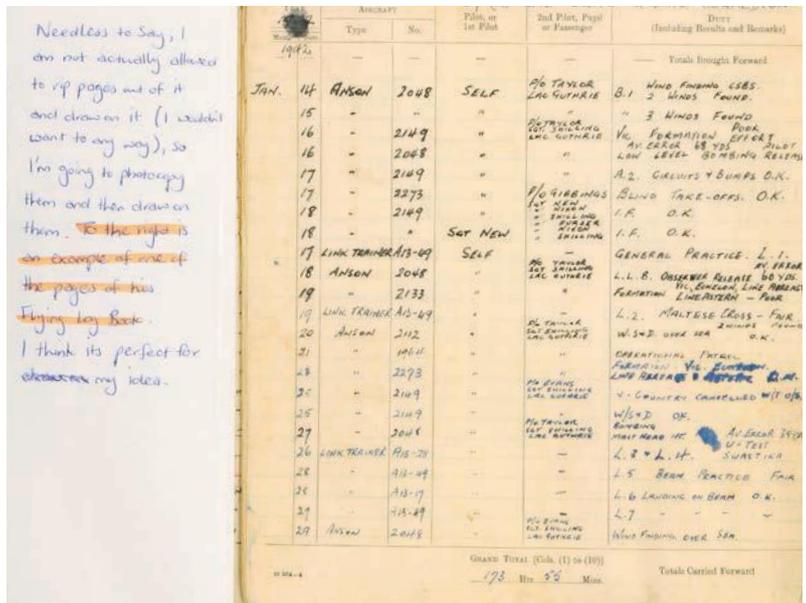
Figure 3.36 Nicky Purser's marker drawing on paper with text
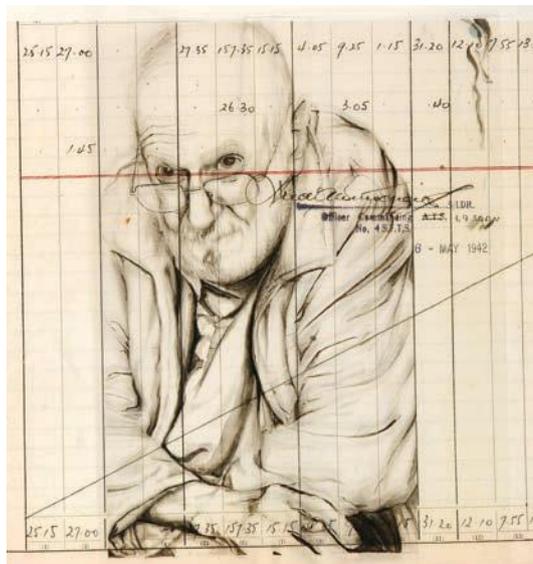
Figure 3.37 The old flying logbook belonging to Nicky Purser's grandfather

Figure 3.38 Nicky Purser's ink drawing of her grandfather on a photocopy of the flight log

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Nicky wrote:

I needed a book with old pages ... I found my Granddad's old flying logbook when he flew Catalinas in World War II. This was perfect, not only because it is old and has text, but because it was my Granddad who wrote in it. It is a part of his past, a record of his experiences and thus perfect for the contemplative atmosphere I am trying to achieve.

ACTIVITY 3.9

Structural   **Personal**   Write a brief analysis of one of your artworks. Apply the Structural and Personal Frameworks to a discussion of the meanings and messages in your artwork. Evaluate how effectively the visual language you have developed is used in your artwork.

Art process 4: Refinement of materials, techniques and technical processes to provide visual strength to artworks

During the art process, you will begin to refine your use of materials, techniques and processes in your selected art form. The development and refinement of your skills will enable you to provide visual strength to your artworks. In order to do this, you will need to experiment with your materials and techniques to find the most effective way of presenting your ideas. Continued trialling is important, but you do not have to redo your entire image multiple times in different ways. You can select a part of the image to trial a particular technique before using different parts or even different images to explore further techniques.

Nicky Purser had taken a number of photographs of children playing on the beach and knew she wanted to use them in some way as part of her folio. She began drawing them, but soon decided that she wanted to attempt an oil painting of them. She began by trialling different techniques to apply her paint, working with oil on paper. She then began to refine her technique and style using different images before selecting her final image and moving to canvas. None of the trials are completed paintings, but show a progressive development and refinement of technique, style and skill.

Part of your refinement process is to communicate what you are learning. Merely presenting visual evidence shows that you have achieved a particular outcome or developed a skill, but does not explicitly demonstrate understanding of or insight into the decisions you make. By writing about what you are doing, why you are doing it and what you have learnt from this process, you will provide a clear indication of your understanding. Providing written annotation is an important part of the art process.

These annotations allow you to apply the tools you have been provided with in the theory section to communicate your thinking
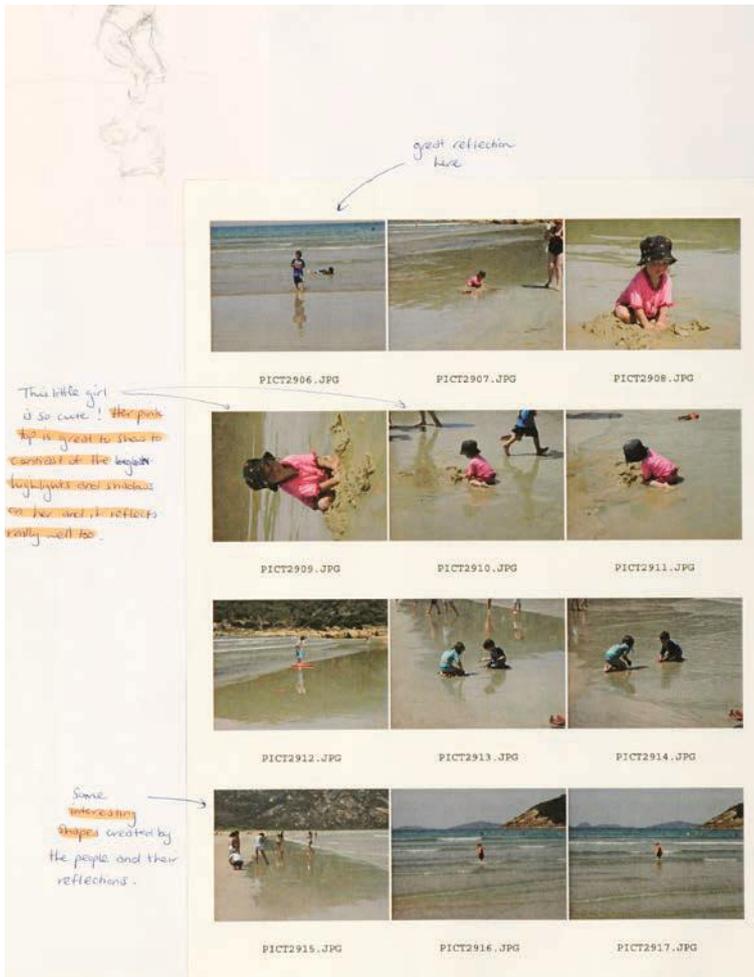
and working practices. They will help you practise your writing and interpretive skills and use correct art terminology, which will benefit you in your written assessment tasks. They will also enable you to better evaluate your own work, in order to make informed decisions about the directions in which you take your concepts and images.

Nicky Purser provides a good example of how she documented her art practice during her exploration of the photographs:

This little girl's pink top is great to show contrast of the highlights and shadows on her and results in interesting reflections. [Figure 3.39]

Pen is easier to sketch in because it flows across the page more easily and I am not tempted to rub lines out. It is stronger too. I am getting better, this is more detailed than the other one and

my line is more confident. With so much detail, I think it gets too static though. Maybe it will have more movement with less detail. [Figure 3.40]

I've simplified this one a lot more, sticking to the main lines that define the form, for example the half circle on the elbow and the shadow line on the leg simply but effectively portray the form. This sketch would be a good starting point for a painting. [Figure 3.41]

I've decided to try painting some of my pictures of kids on the beach in oils, using the contour line sketches as a guide. I thought it would be interesting to try using a palette knife because the texture you can get is really good … My trial is quite terrible. I found it hard to apply the paint in the right places. Adding extra colours as highlights in the sand really didn't work. It is not easy to

Figure 3.39 Nicky Purser's thumbnail photos

Figure 3.40 Nicky Purser's biro sketch

Figure 3.41 Nicky Purser's biro contour sketch

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be accurate with a palette knife [Figure 3.42].

I used a contour line drawing to start my oil painting [Figure 3.43] as it gives a clear and simple indication of form, tones and highlights. I used a very small brush to achieve the detail and am pleased with the result. I did not have any white paint so had to use Naples Yellow instead. Although the highlights in the photo look white, I think the warmth of the yellow works well. I used Payne's Grey for the shadows because I find black deadens the colours. The last thing I want when studying the light on a figure and the life it gives it, is to have dead shadows.

Overall I think my next oil sketch [Figure 3.44] turned out fairly well, but there are some things I need to work on.

The shadow from the hat needs to darken at the edges to make the figure rounder; it tends to flatten the form.

The highlights in the top need more tonal variation as they flatten the image a little.

The skin tone is good, but I shouldn't use so much Payne's Grey in the shadows because it makes it look dirty – rather use brown. The Payne's Grey works well for the pink though.

In the previous sketch my brush marks were very tight and detailed, which worked well but was a bit tedious. So I've decided to try painting this little girl using a broader and less detailed approach [Figure 3.45] … I've done it and it was so much quicker than my last one! I forced myself to use a bigger brush so that I couldn't go into too much detail. I worked faster, making sure I had the essential highlights and shadows.

Figure 3.42 Oil experiments

Figure 3.43 Oil sketch

Left: Here I've painted a back
a palette knife the foreground
little girl in the pink shirt
reflection). Its qu
the paint in the rig
extra colours as b
didn't work. Its
be accurate with
palette knife.

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Figure 3.44 Oil sketch on paper

Figure 3.45 Oil sketch on paper
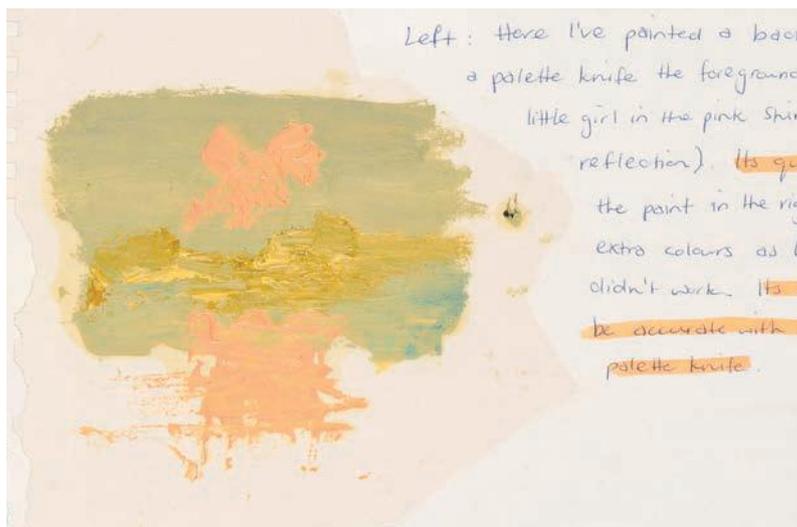
ACTIVITY 3.10

1   Write short annotations documenting a process you have used to explore an art form, material, medium or technique. Use the annotations to document your art practice. Think about:

- how you did things – the process
- why you did things – evaluate the success of what you did and comment on where you will go from here; show your thinking.

2   Apply the Structural and Personal Frameworks to explain the ideas you were trying to express and discuss how the refinement and choice of materials impacted on this.

Personal   **Structural**

Art process 5: Resolution of ideas, directions and concepts.

There are many different ways of resolving ideas or concepts. A single idea can take many directions through an individual's art practice. There are even different ways of exploring the representation of a single art principles. For example, a group of VCE art students was give the task of representing movement. They each presented alternative approaches and produced various resolutions of their ideas. Julia Triantafillou explored the use of contour line drawing and the juxtaposition of imagery to produce sequential movement (Figure 3.46). Emily Whinfield chose to represent movement through the use of a gestural mark of colour combined with a repeated image indicate a passage of time (Figure 3.47). Bethany

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Cherry wanted to express the power and grace of a horse in movement.

Bethany explored a range of options before resolving her idea. She used the pose of the horse, the elements of art and her technique to enhance the suggestion of movement. Initially she looked at the pose of the horse, concentrating on the shape of its silhouette (Figure 3.48): 'The pose suggested movement but the flat shape was static and needed detail and directional lines to enhance the movement.'

Bethany then tried scraperboard, but 'the directional lines of the cross-hatching clashed and distracted from the movement of the horse' (Figure 3.49). After trialling coloured pencils (Figure 3.50) she noted that, 'the pencil lines create energetic movement.'

While she noted that 'the pen and ink lines create movement' (Figure 3.51) she identified that 'the introduction of brushmarks enhanced this further.' Exploring watercolour (Figure 3.52), Bethany observed that 'the medium can lack control and the quick application and freedom of the medium reflects movement.'

In order to resolve her idea of movement, Bethany combined many of the ideas explored to produce a horse with

Figure 3.46 Julia Triantafillou, *Movement*, fineliner on paper, layered photocopy on transparency

Figure 3.47 Emily Whinfield, *Movement*, riso-print on paper
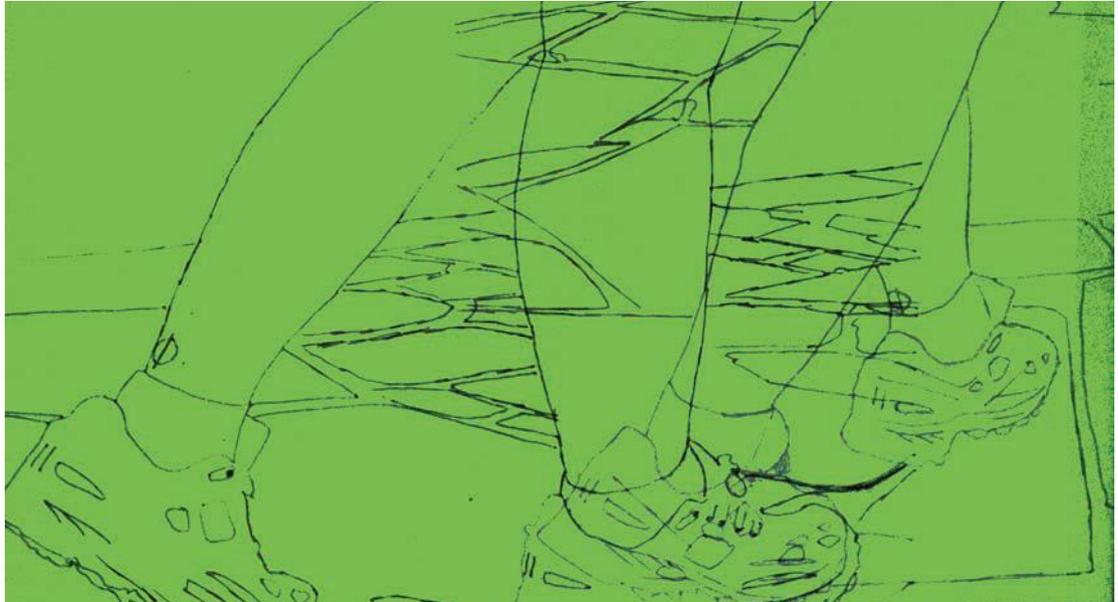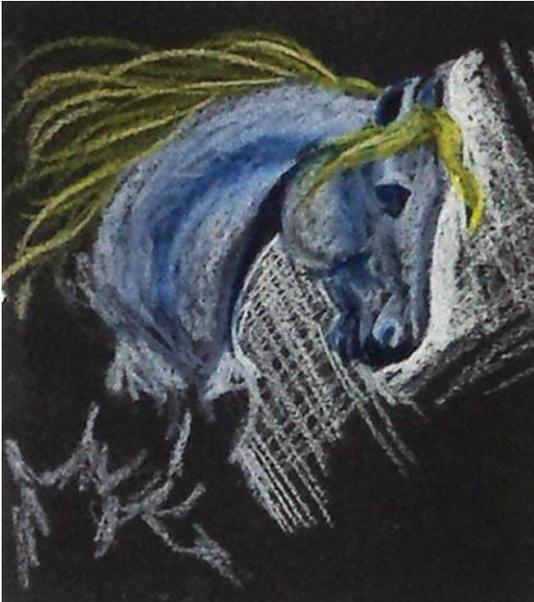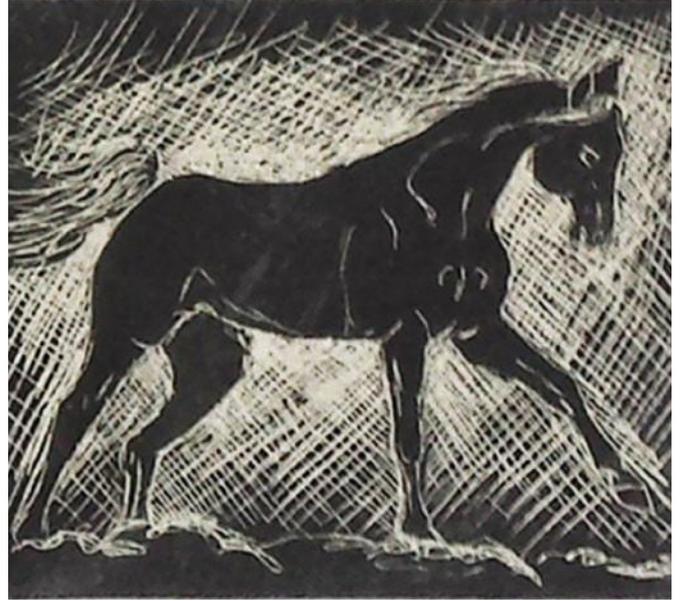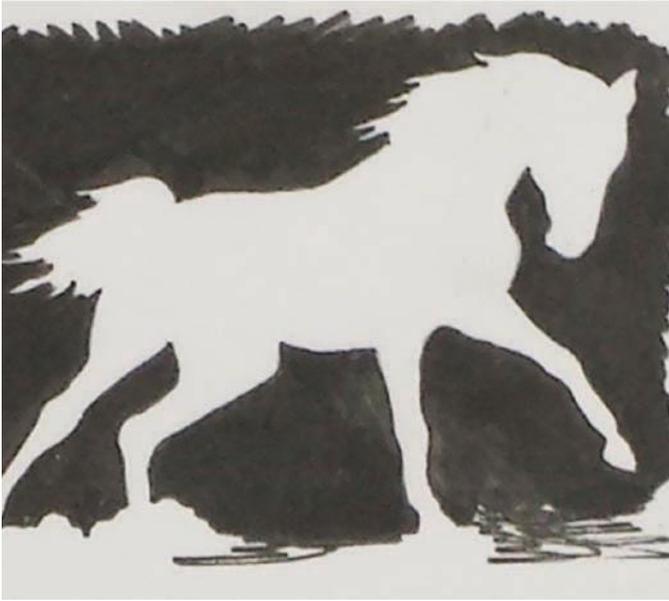
Figure 3.48 Bethany Cherry, *Movement* trial, ink

Figure 3.49 Bethany Cherry, *Movement* trial, scraperboard

Figure 3.50 Bethany Cherry, *Movement* trial, coloured pencils on paper

Figure 3.51 Bethany Cherry, *Movement*, trial pen and ink wash on paper

Figure 3.52 Bethany Cherry, *Movement*, watercolour on paper

Figure 3.53 Bethany Cherry, *Movement*, watercolour on paper

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rippling muscles kicking up sand as it runs (Figure 3.53). She wrote:

The flowing movement of the brushmarks are gentle, capturing the grace of the horse's movement. The freedom of the movement is enhanced by the uncontrolled movement of the watercolour across the page as the pigment flows into the water that I added to the paper. The most intense blue is used in the flowing main and tail that draws attention to the forward momentum of the horse. The repetition of both controlled and spontaneous brushmarks layered over each other adds to the idea of movement.

Just as Bethany was aware of how the natural fluidity of the watercolour could enhance her depiction of movement, it is also important to consider the issues that you have encountered while working in a specific medium. How has this improved your understanding of that art form? For example, you may have applied a **glaze** over an area of thick oil paint and discovered that the glaze cracked after a while. This happened because oil paint contracts when it dries. The thin glaze dried quickly and

contracted while the thick paint, although touch-dry because of the skin that had formed on the top, continued to contract as it dried. This caused the already dry glaze to separate and crack. As you refine your technique, you may annotate this and indicate that you should avoid working 'lean over fat'. On the other hand, you may see potential in using this chance occurrence for its symbolic value. The cracking glaze could represent age, drought or something similar. As Scott Adams said, 'Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.' You may want to use this discovery to add meaning to your work. 'Mistakes' can help refine the direction of your work and help you resolve your idea.

glaze a translucent layer of oil paint that can be either thick or thin; a glaze medium can be mixed with the paint or diluted with a mixture of 50 per cent linseed oil and 50 per cent turpentine

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Figure 3.54 Bethany Cherry, abstracted figures in fired terracotta clay

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, you will read how assessment will reflect your understanding and application of:

- the Structural Framework
- the Personal Framework
- the factors that influence responses to artworks
- personal opinions
- art terminology
- creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests and ideas through experimentation with art elements and principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms.

You will find:

- tips for completing tasks for Outcome 1 and Outcome 2
- assessment criteria sheets
- sample responses for Outcome 1 with margin notes that highlight assessment.

Art is born of the observation and investigation of nature.

– CICERO (106–43 BCE)

4.1 Introduction to Outcome 1

To successfully complete Outcome 1 in Unit 1, you will need to analyse and interpret at least three artworks by different artists. For each artwork, you will need to consider the ways in which artists express their social and personal interests, experiences, ideas and intentions. You will apply the Structural and Personal Frameworks to help you examine the appearance and meanings of the works. You will also become more aware of your personal response so that you are able to formulate opinions and use evidence to support them.

You will be asked to submit one or more assessment tasks to successfully complete Outcome 1. Refer to the sample criteria sheet on page 97.

4.2 Tips for completing assessment tasks

SHORT RESPONSES SUPPORTED BY VISUAL REFERENCES
- Read the question carefully, underlining key words before you begin.
- Keep your responses brief and to the point.
- Refer to specific details about the artworks to support your responses.

VISIT A NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS AND RESPOND TO SHORT RESPONSE QUESTIONS
- Make notes when you are in the gallery.
- Ensure that you address the specific questions set by your teacher.
- Take advantage of the fact that you are seeing original artworks and move close so that you can see the surface. Comment on the physical properties, the texture of the surface and the artist's technique.
- Note the scale of the works and how this affects your response and interpretation.
- Make a note of the space in which the artwork is viewed and the impact this has on your appreciation.

ANNOTATED VISUAL REPORT
- Work directly from images of your selected artworks by ensuring you have a coloured image in front of you while you write.
- You may choose to write on the illustrations as you work, using arrows to clearly explain the relevance of the points you are making.
- Use the criteria sheet you have been given by your teacher as a guide to help you make a list of the points you need to address.
- Write about each of these points in turn, referring to the artwork to supply evidence for your opinions.

ANNOTATED VISUAL REPORT IN THE FORM OF A TIMELINE

Complete dot point notes or short paragraphs for at least three artworks using the following points as a guide:

- The name of the artist, the title of the work, the date it was created and the medium the artist used.
- The style, symbolism and structural elements of the artworks, including the elements and principles, the materials, techniques and processes.
- Any symbols and your interpretations of them.
- Your knowledge of the personal interests and concerns of the artist.
- Any way you feel your interpretation is influenced by your own personal experiences and background.

EXTENDED WRITTEN RESPONSE

- Organise the points you wish to make into an essay plan.
- Use the Structural Framework to analyse the works in terms of elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes, distinctive style and symbolism.
- Use the Personal Framework to acknowledge the impact of the artist's life, experiences, feelings, thinking, beliefs and personal philosophy.
- Refer to how the viewer's experiences and cultural background can affect their understanding and interpretation of the artwork.
- Refer to relevant symbols and how they contribute to the meanings and messages of the artwork.
- Use visual evidence from the artwork to support your personal opinions.

A RESPONSE USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Use any appropriate digital software to present a project that addresses your interpretations of selected artworks using the Structural and Personal Frameworks.

- Consider the layout and the links between pages, and the ways in which you can take advantage of the multimedia format, such as hyperlinking, integrating presentation formats and the manner in which you will present your work to the teacher or the class.
- Prepare an oral presentation supported by documented evidence.
- Submit a digital presentation on the work of an artist, addressing the Structural and Personal Frameworks and the criteria set by your teacher.

IN ALL RESPONSES

- Select your artworks carefully. They should reflect varied personal motivations, interests and experiences of the artists. Alternatively, they can reflect the artists' personal and cultural identity through self-portraiture or self-reflection.
- Refer constantly to the criteria sheet you have been given. This is how the marks will be allocated. Ensure that you deal with each assessment criterion in sufficient detail to gain the allocated marks.
- Keep your responses short and relevant. Do not supply detailed information about the artist's life, for example, unless it is directly relevant to the works you are discussing. In this case, make the link clear.
- It is advisable to organise a structure for longer responses in order to address the set criteria successfully. Make a list of the important points and place them in a logical order.
- Read about the artists and artworks you are studying. Background knowledge is essential, especially when you are considering the personal influences on the artists and their artworks.
- Analysis and interpretation of artworks require close and perceptive observation. You will need to refer to coloured images of the artworks in order to examine them accurately.
- Visit exhibitions as often as possible. Viewing original artworks allows you to

appreciate the scale, the surface and the artist's technique. It also allows you to gauge your reaction to the work in a physical environment rather than via the pages of a book or your computer monitor.

- Avoid obvious comments about superficial qualities of the artwork. Delve below the surface and consider what effect is created and what impact this has on the interpretation.
- Refer to good-quality source material while researching.
- Refer to Chapter 1 for notes about selecting research and reference material.

No matter which task or tasks you complete, you must analyse and interpret your selected artworks. To do this well, you will need to use appropriate art terminology correctly. The Glossary at the back of this book contains a range of relevant art vocabulary. Undertaking research from reputable art books, journals and websites will also enhance your use of art language. When you see a new word, ensure that you understand its meaning and context. You may need to look it up in a dictionary or art glossary to do this.

4.3 Assessment criteria: Outcome 1

VCE ART UNIT 1 OUTCOME 1 ASSESSMENT SHEET

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE				
		1–2 (Very low)	3–4 (Low)	5–6 (Medium)	7–8 (High)	9–10 (Very high)
Unit 1 Outcome 1 Analyse and interpret a number of artworks using the Structural and Personal Frameworks	Analysis of artworks using the Structural Framework	Very limited understanding of how to analyse artworks using the Structural Framework	Limited analysis of artworks using the Structural Framework	Some evidence of analysis of artworks using the Structural Framework	Detailed analysis of artworks using the Structural Framework	Detailed and perceptive application of the Structural Framework
	Analysis of artworks using the Personal Framework	Very limited understanding of how to analyse artworks using the Personal Framework	Limited analysis of artworks using the Personal Framework	Some evidence of analysis of artworks using the Personal Framework	Detailed analysis of artworks using the Personal Framework	Detailed and perceptive application of the Personal Framework
	Interpretation of artworks with reference to the Personal and Structural Frameworks	Very limited interpretation of artworks	Limited interpretation of artworks	Some depth of interpretation of artworks	Meaningful interpretation of artworks	Detailed and perceptive interpretation of artworks
	Formulation and substantiation of personal opinions	Very limited evidence of personal opinions or research about artworks	Limited evidence of personal opinions or research about artworks	Some evidence of personal opinions, supported by evidence from the artworks and related resources	Meaningful personal opinions, supported by evidence from the artworks and related resources	Formulation and substantiation of insightful personal opinions with clear evidence from the artworks and related resources
	Application of research and use of art terminology	Very limited research and understanding or use of art terminology	Limited research and understanding or application of art terminology	Some evidence of research and general accuracy in the use of appropriate art terminology	Evidence of relevant research and clear and consistent use of appropriate art terminology	Excellent research and highly effective and sophisticated use of appropriate art terminology

Please note that this is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from the VCAA.

4.4 Student sample responses

Task: Analyse and interpret artworks using the Structural and Personal Frameworks

You will need to write about at least three artists and at least one artwork by each. These two responses were written by Jessica Zuk.

Appropriate terminology has been highlighted in blue.

The student introduces the work through a description, and begins the discussion of its meaning and messages by referring to the inspiration taken from an earlier artwork.

Analysis of the artwork which reflects the writer's personal responses and opinions about the appearance and symbolism evident in the performance. The Personal Framework is related here to the experience of the viewer.

Mood and symbolism have been discussed as they refer to the Structural Framework.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSE 1

The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters was an eight-hour performance artwork by Jill Orr in 2002, inspired by Goya's satirical engraving of the same name. In it, the artist moved in an animal-like manner through a dark room, interacting with a pile of bones on the floor and assembling them into sculptures, which she hung from the ceiling. Every 60 seconds, the lights would turn out and the walls would glow with photosensitive paint, leaving a silhouette of the artist and the room on the wall when the lights turned back on. Like Goya's work, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* was aimed as a critique of current society.

The most confronting aspect of the artwork is the use of bones – large and bloody with pieces of flesh and cartilage still attached, conjuring images of death and violence. Being unprecedentedly non-traditional, they are almost as much art itself as they are a medium, carrying a meaning of their own through forcing the viewer to look at a scene they would not usually want to confront. By reminding the viewer of their own flesh and blood, they connect the viewer to the artwork in a visceral way. The connection is also underscored by the way the white bones harmonise unnervingly with the white clothing of the performer, her skin tones and the red of blood. The forms of the bone sculptures are contorted and angular. Although they are not representative, they are disturbingly suggestive of animals and body parts – a distorted and disintegrating spine; a grotesque alien life form.

Deep dramatic shadows create a *chiaroscuro* effect, lending a sinister and sombre mood to the artwork. The largely empty space surrounding the areas of light simply fades into blackness, allowing the viewer no reprieve and

Figure 4.1 Jill Orr, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya*, 2002, photographers: Bruce Parker and Joanne Haslam, Jill Orr video production in collaboration with Steve Bell, sound, and Pete Brownstein, video

forcing them to watch the unfolding performance because there is nothing but the art itself to see, like a nightmare from which the sleeper cannot wake. At the same time, the audience's passive role arouses an uneasy sense of complicity in the viewer. The darkness also suggests symbolic meanings of ignorance, nightmares and fear. Light also carries symbolic meanings, of truth and knowledge, and by contrasting the black silhouettes of the bone sculptures so starkly with the light of the green luminescent wall it is as if the artist intends the viewers to understand that the message has been very clearly defined for them to see.

The original artwork was documented by photograph and video. It would have demanded the attention of all the senses – not just sight, and smell (through the probable stench of decaying meat), but also hearing. The hypnotic sound that can be heard in the background of the short video clip strengthens the unsettling, dream-like quality of the performance. The repetitive vocalisation reflects the movement of the performer – animal-like, almost human but not quite. Her jerky movements and tense, contorted limbs give the impression of something small and creeping, like an elf or goblin in her pointed ears and cap, perhaps a literal representation of the monster within human nature described by the title of the work.

Throughout, the performer remains the focal point of the work, her movement disturbing the rhythm and symmetry of the bones hung from the ceiling. The bones

The Structural Framework has been applied through a discussion of the contemporary art elements and principles of sound and movement, and how they contribute to the viewer's understanding of the meanings and messages of the work.

mark a growing order from the chaos of the pile on the ground – as time progresses and they are strung up in rows the focus of the artwork shifts from the floor to a more balanced arrangement in mid-air, a systematic and calculated manipulation of the products of violence and death. In a reverse process, the performer's white apron becomes increasingly messy and bloodstained as she becomes more a part of her environment.

Jill Orr describes various viewpoints for interpreting the work – the then looming Iraq war, the events of 9/11, the detention of refugees on Australian shores. She talks of the relationship between the hunter and the hunted. The work seems essentially to be a savage condemnation of human violence and cruelty, towards other humans and towards animals; a dire warning of the inhuman monster we are capable of unleashing in modern times if we abandon our reason and allow fear to control our actions. The silhouettes on the walls form a haunting symbolic record of the acts we have already committed.

– Jessica Zuk

Assessment

In her response, Jessica has used the Personal Framework to note not only the concerns of the artist but also the responses of the viewer, both at the time of the performance and now, via video and photographic documentation. She has supported her reading of the work by referring to the Structural Framework, using the visual and aural clues embedded in the artwork and its documentation and using highly effective art terminology. She also refers to the influence of the past through reference to Goya's work and to symbolism in Orr's performance. Her responses are insightful and personal and reflect close observation of the artwork and well-focused research.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSE 2

Maya 7624 (from Sanskrit for 'nothingness'), created by Seungmo Park in 2013, uses overlaid sheets of wire mesh, carefully cut to let light through in certain areas, to depict a woman with her eyes closed and hands clasped.

The subject is tightly framed, the hair and arms creating a loop which, guided by the subject's eyeline and the strands of hair she pulls, are followed by the viewer's eye. The asymmetrical composition gives the artwork a balanced and harmonious feel, and creates a mood of

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Using the Personal Framework, the student identifies the artist's beliefs about war and violence as a basis for interpretation.

The artwork is introduced via a short description.

Visual analysis of the work is an integral part of the Structural Framework and is used to interpret the mood and to support the student's opinion.

Figure 4.2 Seungmo Park, *Maya 7624*, 2013, stainless steel wire mesh (240 x 25 x 280 cm), courtesy of the artist

intimacy at odds with the imposing scale and usually inexpressive medium. The subject appears to be trapped within the layers of mesh and sealed off from the world. At first glance, she seems unaware of the viewer and of reality, instead self-absorbed and meditative, captured in a dreamlike trance.

The novel and non-traditional use of mesh gives the artwork several unique qualities. Physical depth is created by the layering of the mesh. In a postmodern way, the position of the viewer can change the appearance of the artwork, as the light interacts with it differently at different angles as the viewer moves around it. The image is elusive, beginning to fade, then disappearing as the viewer comes too close or as the lighting changes, shutting the viewer out from the artwork and creating a sense of distance. The subtle tones give way to harsh and distinct mesh when close up, and the grainy texture of the mesh gives the artwork a rigidity at odds with its soft subject matter.

Overall, this creates a sense of illusion intended by the artist, who explains that the artwork explores the fact that although the mesh layers in themselves have no meaning (as can be seen up close), when assembled

The Personal Framework is used here to interpret the work as experienced by the viewer. The medium and processes refer to the Structural Framework. Focused research by the student included watching videos that explored the three-dimensional qualities of the artist's work.

The artist's philosophy is explained as part of the Personal Framework.

they form a recognisable image, even though the constituent parts have no connection to the subject or image itself. By extension, the person depicted, and by extension all humanity, is at once both just an arrangement of atoms, and a complex web of abstract influences that gives each of us a distinct identity.

The overall mood created is one of softness. The use of line is indistinct; rather, the image is formed from subtle gradations of tone that lend the work a hazy appearance. The lighting is understated – faint highlights balance the dark hair of the subject – and the work avoids bold tones or obvious contrast. This echoes the reflective pose of the subject and encourages a contemplative mood in the viewer.

The black-and-white medium, as well as the tendency towards medium tones, and the uniform repetition of the geometric pattern of the mesh, conveys a lack of intense emotion or 'nothingness' described by the title, *Maya*. The woman seems to be crying, an almost imperceptible tear squeezing from under her eyelid. This realisation changes the atmosphere of the artwork, evoking a feeling of depression and giving a new meaning to the title of 'nothingness', the grey tones and the entrapment of its subject, who is unaware of the world.

– *Jessica Zuk*

Assessment

Jessica's interpretations are insightful and supported by visual evidence from the artwork. She has used highly effective art terminology in her discussion of the Structural and Personal Frameworks and the ways in which the art elements, principles and materials have been used to create meaning, as well as the way in which the position of the viewer can contribute to its interpretation. Her research was clearly focused on the artist and the physical qualities of the artwork.

References to art elements and principles and materials are used to interpret the work.

The student uses evidence from the Structural Framework to support her interpretation.

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4.5 Introduction to Outcome 2

The award for satisfactory completion of this unit will be based on your teacher's decision that you have shown you have been able to achieve the outcomes they have specified for the unit. This decision will be based on your teacher's assessment of how successfully you completed the set tasks of this unit.

To successfully complete Outcome 2 in Unit 1, you are required to show evidence that you have experimented with the art elements and principles, and have explored a range of materials, techniques, processes and art forms. You must use the art process to develop a folio of visual responses to a variety of tasks set by your teacher in which you have explored ideas and concepts of interest to you.

Assessment

There is no requirement to produce a finished artwork in Unit 1; however, any works that *you* consider to be finished artworks will be assessed as part of your exploration. The important thing in Unit 1 is to use the art process to create visual responses as you develop a visual language to explore issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination. Enjoy the experience of 'bumping into things'. Try materials, techniques and approaches that you have not tried before. Be aware of the potential of unplanned results and chance experiences, and embrace the possibilities presented in the environment of your art studio.

Although they should not be seen as a checklist, your teacher will observe how effectively you have applied the key knowledge and key skills outlined in the study design. Use these to determine how effectively you have met the criteria of the study design. Your teacher may provide you with a list of criteria with which they will assess your folio. It may also be useful to refer to the points below and to the criteria sheet at the end of this chapter while you are developing your folio, to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of this unit.

1 COMMUNICATING ISSUES AND IDEAS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND IMAGINATION THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VISUAL LANGUAGE

- Am I using various means to explore my interpretations of issues and ideas, including brainstorming, annotation and an exploration of materials, techniques, processes and art forms?
- Am I establishing a personal visual language that effectively communicates the issues and ideas?
- Am I allowing my materials, techniques and processes to achieve a visual representation of my concept or ideas?
- Am I using visual language to document artistic practice in a visual diary?

2 DEVELOPING VISUAL CREATIVE RESPONSES FROM METHODS OF OBSERVATION AND THE EXERCISE OF IMAGINATION

- Am I generating a range of visual interpretations of the issues and ideas through both observation and imagination?
- Am I establishing ways by which I can communicate the issues and ideas in a visual way, including the use of thumbnail sketches, exploration of materials and developing a range of images?
- Am I being imaginative in the range of possibilities with which I can respond to the set tasks?

3 EXPERIMENTING WITH ART ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES, MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES AND ART FORMS

- Am I exploring my materials using a range of techniques?
- Am I considering how this exploration is communicating the issues and ideas?
- Am I allowing my exploration, observations and discoveries to provide me with potential tools with which to develop an effective visual language?
- Am I exploring the expressive application of my materials and the symbolic meaning expressed by the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes?
- Am I starting to consider the meaning associated with the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes?
- Am I pushing the boundaries of my materials?

4 USING THE ART ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES TO PRODUCE CREATIVE RESPONSES THAT ILLUSTRATE PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Am I observing how artists use and combine the art elements and principles, the way they compose the image and how they use their technique to express themselves?
- Am I considering how I can manipulate and combine the art elements and principles and the relationships I am establishing?
- Am I achieving mood or atmosphere, and enhancing the message I want to convey in my artwork through the application of the art elements and principles?
- Am I producing visual responses that are aesthetically pleasing?

5 APPLYING KNOWLEDGE OF THE STRUCTURAL AND PERSONAL FRAMEWORKS IN REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION AS THEY APPLY TO YOUR ART PRACTICE

- Am I analysing and discussing the meanings and messages in my artwork and evaluating how effective the visual language is that I am developing?
- Am I reflecting on how my experiences, feelings and thinking are evident in my work?
- Am I applying the Structural Framework and considering my use of line, colour, texture, tone, form, shape, sound, space, light and time as well as how they have been applied to achieve balance, focal point, unity, variety, contrast, rhythm and space?
- Am I considering how the structural qualities enhance the messages of the artwork?
- Am I considering how my art practice reflects the Personal Framework – how the use of the materials and so on reflects my personality, thinking, values, interests and who I am?
- Am I using a range of styles and symbols to produce responses that realise my ideas and concepts?

6 DOCUMENTING YOUR ART PRACTICE

- Am I clearly annotating and communicating my art practice?
- Am I using my analysis to determine how effective or ineffective my exploration is, so that I can plan the next step I will take?
- Am I communicating my understanding of what I am learning?
- Am I applying the tools I have been given in theory?
- Am I using art terminology in documentation and annotation?

4.6 Assessment criteria: Outcome 2

VCE ART UNIT 1 OUTCOME 2 ASSESSMENT SHEET					
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	**LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE**				
	1–2 (Very low)	3–4 (Low)	5–6 (Medium)	7–8 (High)	9–10 (Very high)
1 An exploration of issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination through a conceptual and practical investigation to develop creative responses	Very limited evidence of an exploration of issues and ideas, through a conceptual and practical investigation.	Evidence of some exploration of issues and ideas, through a conceptual and practical investigation. The scope of the investigation is narrow and the investigation of selected art form/s is not always relevant to intentions.	Evidence of informative exploration of issues and ideas, through a conceptual and practical investigation. Effective investigation of selected art form/s, relevant to intentions. Adequate and mostly relevant material communicates art practice.	Evidence of highly informative, focused exploration of issues and ideas, through a conceptual and practical investigation. Focused and effective investigation of selected art form/s, relevant to intentions. Consistent and relevant material communicates art practice throughout the body of work.	Evidence of highly informative and focused exploration of issues and ideas, through a conceptual and practical investigation. Focused and effective investigation of selected art form/s, highly relevant to intentions. The scope of the investigation is comprehensive and imaginative. Thorough and consistent, highly effective material clearly communicates art practice throughout the body of work.

2 Exploration, investigation and experimentation with art elements and principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms	Very limited evidence of satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Limited control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Limited evidence of satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Some control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Evidence of a satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Consistent experimentation leading to adequate control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Evidence of competent exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Satisfactory and consistent experimentation leading to effective control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident. Conceptually effective investigation of art elements and art principles exploring their relevance to intentions.	Evidence of highly innovative exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Satisfactory and consistent experimentation leading to effective control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident. Insightful and conceptually effective investigation of art elements and principles exploring their relevance to intentions.
3 Development of ideas, concepts and visual language	Very limited development of ideas, concepts and visual language. Very limited evidence of the development of skills in the application of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and art form to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Limited development of ideas, concepts and visual language. Some evidence of the development of skills in the application of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and art form to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Effective development of ideas, concepts and visual language. Evidence of the development of skills in the application of art elements and principles, and skilful use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Focused and effective development of ideas, concepts and visual language. Evidence of developed skills in the application of art elements and principles, and use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop an effective visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Evidence of highly informative and focused development of ideas, concepts and visual language. Evidence of highly developed skills in the application of art elements and principles, and consistent use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop an effective visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.
4 Refinement of materials, techniques and processes, and the skill in applying each of these	Little evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work.	Some evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work.	Evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A satisfactory level of technical skill is evident.	Clear evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A high level of technical skill is evident.	Clear evidence of selection and extensive and thoughtful refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A very high level of technical skill is evident.

5 The use of the Structural and Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation of their artistic practice.	Inconsistent use of the language of one or more unidentified Analytical Framework in reflective annotation of art practices. Little reference to the Analytical Frameworks evident in evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations in the body of work.	Some use of the language of at least one identified appropriate Analytical Framework in reflective annotation of working practices. Some use of the Analytical Frameworks evident in evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations in the body of work.	Satisfactory use of the language of the Structural and the Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. The Analytical Frameworks are explicitly identified. Highly informative documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations throughout the body of work.	Effective and relevant use of the language of the Structural and the Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. The Analytical Frameworks are explicitly identified and applied consistently. Highly informative and thoughtfully selected documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations is evident throughout the body of work.	Highly effective and consistent use of the language of the Structural and the Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. The Analytical Frameworks are explicitly identified and applied consistently. Highly informative and appropriate documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations is evident throughout the body of work.
6 Resolution of ideas, directions and concepts	Evidence of a limited resolution of ideas and directions. Limited skill in the application of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art to establish visual language. The artistic practice is not progressively documented.	Evidence of some resolution of ideas and directions. Some effective application of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art is evident in establishing a visual language. Some progressive documentation of the artistic practice is presented.	Evidence of an adequate resolution of ideas and directions with effective application of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art establish an effective visual language. A progressive documentation of artistic practice is evident.	An effective resolution of ideas and directions is evident in the body of work. A high level of skill in the exploration and application of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art reflect a personal visual language. A progressive documentation of the artistic practice is evident.	Evidence of a highly effective resolution of ideas and directions throughout the body of work. Outstanding skills in the exploration and application of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art reflect a highly personal visual language. A progressive documentation of the artistic practice is evident.

Please note that this is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from the VCAA.

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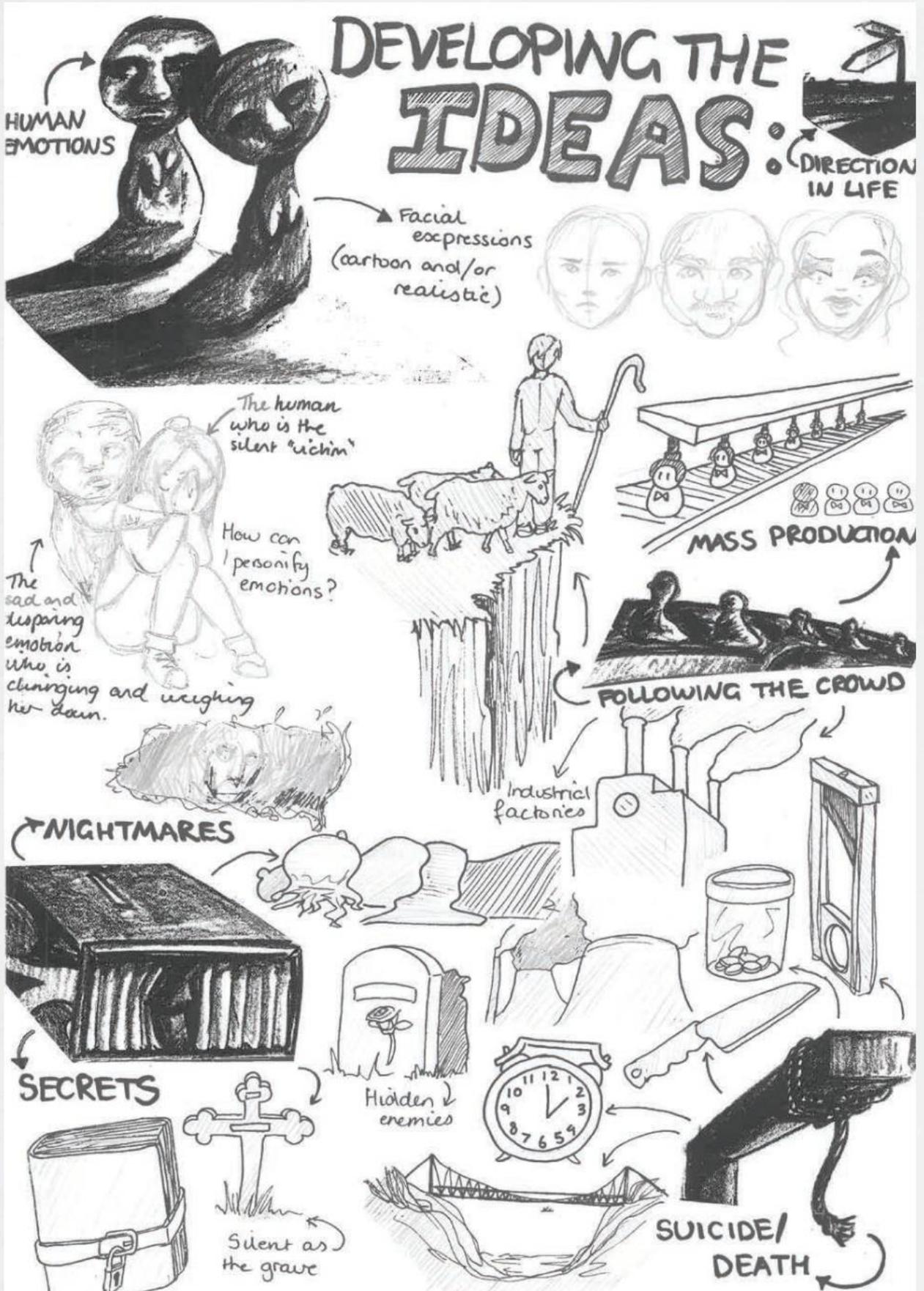
Figure 4.3 Bethany Cherry, developing the ideas (VCE)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By the end of Unit 2, you will have analysed, interpreted and compared artworks from different cultures and times. In this chapter, you will examine ways in which you can:

- discuss the role and purpose of art in different cultural contexts and times
- consider diverse and alternative approaches to making and presenting art in a contemporary context
- apply the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework to analyse, interpret and compare artworks
- refer to the Structural Framework and the Personal Framework where they are relevant

- formulate and substantiate personal opinions with reference to artworks and other resources
- use appropriate art terminology
- examine images of war and conflict; mother and child; and art in public places.

The principle of true art is not to portray, but to evoke.

– JERZY KOSIŃSKI

5.1 Introduction

appropriation using an image from another artist, usually without permission, and placing it in a new context that changes its meaning

In Unit 1, we saw how art could often be interpreted as a reflection of the artist's beliefs, feelings and experiences of the world, as well as their personal and cultural identity. As we know, art varies from culture to culture and from time to time. The focus of Unit 2 is the ways in which art and culture are intertwined, especially in our contemporary world. You are being asked to explore and discuss ways in which artworks and art practices reflect the broader cultural environment of the artist and how they may be influenced by the time, place, beliefs and traditions surrounding their creation. You will look at the role that art plays in society and analyse art's varying social functions by considering examples of how art may be made to reflect, communicate, celebrate, challenge or reinforce the values of society.

In this unit, emphasis is also placed on the influence of the contemporary world, through the use of materials, techniques, ideas and approaches. You will explore diverse approaches to making and presenting art, such as practices of **appropriation** and collaboration, and the changing role of the viewer. You will also discover that art does not need to have been created in our contemporary world to be discussed using the Contemporary Framework – it can also be discussed by using current viewpoints and approaches so as to examine it as it would have been understood at the time it was made.

To complete Outcome 1 successfully, you need to explore changes and differences across time and culture. Here we will do this by considering the different ways in which artists interpret and present themes. To successfully complete this outcome, you are asked to analyse and interpret the artworks of at least four artists and compare the ways in which they communicate (or

reject) the values of their time and place. You will use the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework when analysing and interpreting your selected artworks. You are required to base at least two artworks on a common theme, and to study at least two artworks that have been produced since 1990.

As you research and think about the artworks you have selected, you will form opinions about them and the meanings they hold. As an integral part of the Study Design, you need to use evidence to support and justify these opinions. Finding evidence will involve observing the artwork closely to identify details of subject matter, technique and style. It also means you will need to research your selected artists and their cultural contexts – the times in which they worked, their social environments and their political situations. To do this, you may refer to books, journals and reputable websites, and listen to speakers and podcasts.

In this chapter, we will look at a number of themes and artworks from a range of cultural backgrounds. They will be explored in terms of how they reflect their cultural context and elements of their contemporary culture. Many of them are examples of art in our present-day world. They will be compared on a number of levels.

In this chapter, we will explore the themes of war and conflict, mother and child, and art in public places. Many other themes could be used as starting points to link the artworks you are comparing. Other possibilities include wealth and power, religious expression, the nude, and new media and technology.

5.2 The role and purpose of art

The role of the artist is to ask questions, not answer them.

– ANTON CHEKHOV, RUSSIAN PLAYWRIGHT

Artists create art as a response to what is happening in their lives. They respond to what they see in the world around them and it, often unconsciously, reflects the beliefs, values and traditions of their culture. It varies from time to time and place to place as a result of changing values and developments in technology. It might be very personal or it might reflect broader issues of culture or politics. It can also confront society's values and assumptions, and defy its rules.

In their artistic practice, artists use what is available to them in terms of materials and techniques, although sometimes they invent. Jan van Eyck was at the forefront of artists working with the new medium of oil painting – he was highly influential because of his virtuosity and the technique quickly grew in popularity. Miguel Chevalier has been creating sound and light installations of growing scale and complexity since the 1980s, and has worked alongside developing technologies to change the way we see art. Cel Out's approach to presenting his work reflects the changing interface between artist and viewer. He speaks through the contemporary art form of street art – it is raw very much of the time in both technique and approach. Art is no longer just available in galleries. It is also on the street or on your personal device via the internet and social media.

The viewer also plays a vital role in the way that art is perceived. The knowledge, background and experiences that you, the viewer, bring to an artwork greatly influence your understanding and appreciation of its meaning. Your reading may well be different from that of the artist or the interpretation of someone living at the time when the artwork was created – or indeed from that of someone from a different cultural background.

As we saw in Unit 1, art can be a **personal expression** of the artist in their time and place, communicating their thoughts, feelings, concerns and interests. It can also convey imagination and fantasy by expressing the inner life of the artist

Figure 5.1 Francisco Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1799, etching (21.6 x 15.2 cm)

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Figure 5.2 Henri Rousseau, *The Dream*, 1910, oil on canvas (204 x 298 cm), Museum of Modern Art, New York

Figure 5.3 Pieter Bruegel, *The Peasant Wedding*, 1568, oil on wood (124 x 164 cm), Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna

genre depicts the realistic representation of everyday life; genres are also various categories of subject matter

through their dreams and nightmares. The nightmare quality of *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* by Goya (Figure 5.1) and Rousseau's exotic imaginary world in *The Dream* (Figure 5.2) – so different from his day-to-day life – reflect this quality of art making.

On the most fundamental and personal level, art can also reflect the ***creative impulse***, a desire to create beauty for the sake of beauty. This is often achieved through abstraction, such as in Rothko's *1957 #20* (Figure 5.4). The artist said, '[the] only thing I care about is the expression of man's basic emotions: tragedy, ecstasy, destiny'. He achieved this by producing starkly simple canvases with soft-edged blocks of colour that suggest emotions and encourage meditation.

Many of the roles of art can be seen as social or cultural functions. Art can ***reflect and record***

contemporary life, its daily activities, its social conditions, its traditions and attitudes. Many artists aim to represent the way they see the world around them. Often their purpose is simply to capture a fleeting moment or to please the viewer's eye. Art that depicts the small happenings of everyday life and its surroundings is known as **genre**. Such images can be as varied as presenting a detailed observation of a contemporary tradition, such as Bruegel's *Peasant Wedding* (Figure 5.3), to Shaun Gladwell's synchronised videos for *Broken Dance (Beatboxed)* (Figure 5.5), a collaborative work that showcases contemporary urban dance and music forms while reflecting on the interests and activities of young people in the twenty-first century.

Much art commemorates historical events and the identity of significant people and institutions. It may record individual

propaganda the spreading of a doctrine that reflects the views or interests of a particular group

likenesses or represent an historical moment objectively and impartially, such as Tom Roberts' *The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia* (Figure 5.6), or the artist may be personally or emotionally involved, such as the work produced by Australians commissioned as official war artists, including Jon Cattapan in Timor-Leste and Ben Quilty in Afghanistan.

Art can be an ***expression of political thought***. It may support the powerful – either the government or the wealthy – and confirm their status and prestige, and in this way, reinforce political power. Governments and rulers sometimes use art to present **propaganda** to support their political purposes, by influencing opinion and behaviour to achieve a political agenda. The *Arch of Constantine* (Figure 5.7) records the military victory of the Emperor Constantine over his political rival Maxentius in 312 in a way that glorified Constantine, and inspired awe and patriotism in the citizens of the Roman Empire. Today, it is a photo opportunity for tourists, most of whom have little knowledge of or interest in its original purpose.

Cultural

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Art may also be the voice of dissent, often through satire or subversion, and through this dissent it can undermine the ruling power. On a grand scale, Picasso's *Guernica* (Figure 5.17 and 5.27) was expressing the artist's disgust at an act of warfare by the government and its military allies against the local resistance movement. A smaller and more local example of this is *Children in Detention* (Figure 5.8), a topical image in a world unkind to refugees. Cel Out has enhanced the contemporary reference by appropriating the popular riff written on Bart Simpson's blackboard. This work was pasted up in a Melbourne laneway, a non-traditional exhibition space accessible to passers-by.

In many cultures, art presents and supports *religious and spiritual beliefs and values*. It may represent religious figures, events and concepts, and is often used as an aid for prayer. In this way, artworks make these concepts and beliefs more concrete for the members of their society. At the

Figure 5.8 Cel Out, *Children in Detention*, paste-up, courtesy of the artist

Figure 5.9 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435, oil on panel (66 x 62 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris
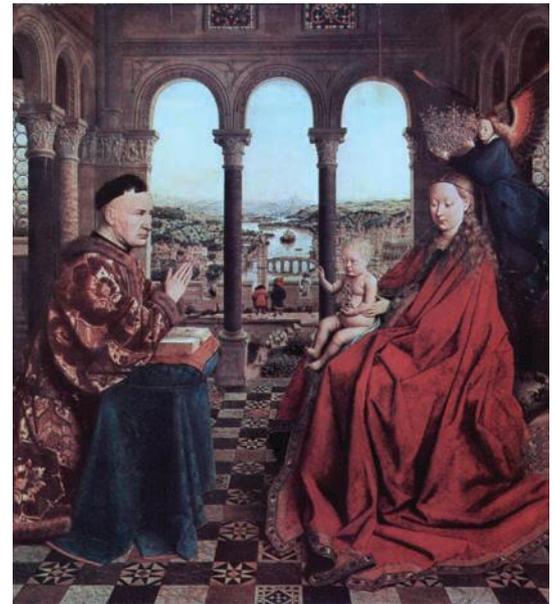
Figure 5.10 Kongo culture, *Nkisi Nkondi Power Figure*, date unknown, wood, metal, glass, mirror, Royal Ontario Museum

Figure 5.11 *Angkor Wat*, early twelfth century, Cambodia

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same time, such works often speak of the power of the patron – especially if they were themselves depicted in the works, such as van Eyck's *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* (Figure 5.9). Over time, though, the original purpose of such a work can be lost if its location is changed. Now in the Louvre, this painting is viewed for its beauty and historical reference rather than as an aid to prayer or a tribute to the patron.

The wooden *Nkisi Nkondi* (Figure 5.10), or spirit container, was invested with magical properties by the Kongo peoples who used it for a variety of purposes, from healing and settling disputes to punishing the guilty and protecting the village. The nails were added after the figure was carved, as part of ritual use. Missionaries often destroyed them as evidence of paganism and today they are objects of curiosity in museums.

Since ancient times, architects and artists have designed and constructed churches and temples where people gather to worship. *Angkor Wat* in Cambodia (Figure 5.11) is an enormous temple complex built in the early twelfth century. Some religious buildings, as well as being places of worship for priests or the general community, also fulfilled a social role. Gothic cathedrals were not only centres for worship, but were also meeting places and venues for conducting business.

An important role of art in contemporary life is that of *challenging issues and values*. Today, artists are often social critics, commenting on values they see as dubious and actively promoting change. Art can affect social and political change by focusing the public on contentious issues and provoking controversy, as we have seen with Cel Out's paste-up. This was also the aim of Jill Orr in *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya* (Figure 5.12 and see Chapter 2).

ACTIVITY 5.1

I don't think art is propaganda; it should be something that liberates the soul, provokes the imagination, and encourages people to go further. It celebrates humanity instead of manipulating it.

– KEITH HARING (1958–90), AMERICAN ARTIST

Organise a debate, using Haring's quote as your topic. One side will agree with Haring and the other will try to prove that art is propaganda. Prepare your arguments before presenting your debate to your class. Speakers will need to select artworks that support their arguments, and refer to the artists' ideas, aims, artistic practice and the effect on the viewer to support their points of view. Ask an adjudicator to assess your presentation on matter, manner and method.

Figure 5.12 Jill Orr, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters – Goya*, 2002, photographers: Bruce Parker and Joanne Haslam, Jill Orr video production in collaboration with Steve Bell, sound, and Pete Brownstein, video

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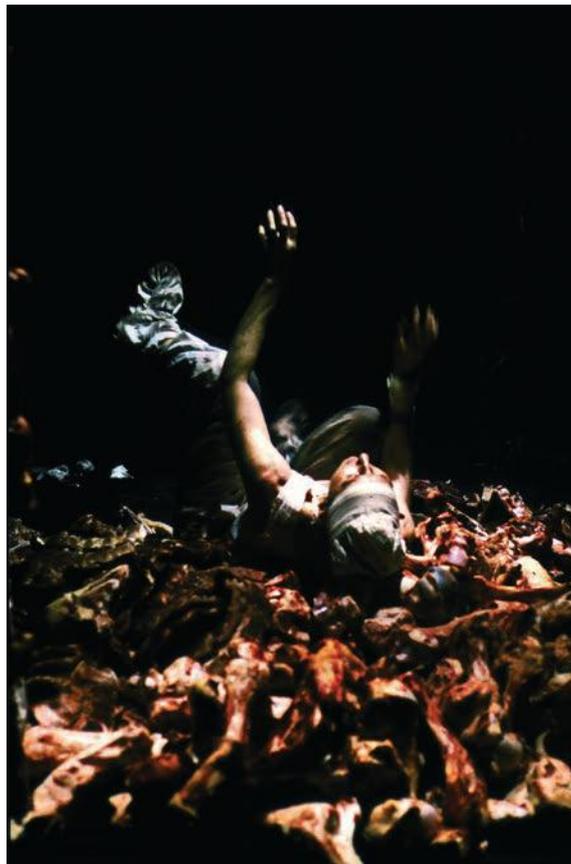
5.3 War and conflict

What a cruel thing war is ... to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors.

– ROBERT E. LEE

Cultural War is a tragic consequence of human existence. As such, it has been presented by artists throughout the ages, and has reflected the changing nature of warfare. It has been treated as history, myth, legend, fiction and symbol. Images of conflict are important documents for historians, as they provide information about military practices as well as cultural contexts.

The *Bayeux Tapestry* (Figure 5.14) records the Battle of Hastings, fought on one day in 1066. More recently, the village of Guernica (Figure 5.17) was mercilessly bombed during a short two-hour period, although this was just one event in a long civil war. Mona Hatoum's glass hand grenades (Figure 5.20) refer to the broader issue of war without reference to a specific conflict.

WAR AND CONFLICT TIMELINE

Figure 5.13 Terracotta warriors, c. 246–210 BCE, near Xian, China

Figure 5.14 *Bayeux Tapestry* (detail of war scene) c. 1070, Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux in Bayeux, Normandy, France

Figure 5.15 Jacques Louis David, *Oath of the Horatii*, 1784, Musée du Louvre, Paris

Figure 5.19 Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, 1994, mixed media (277 x 224 x 152.5 cm), White Cube Gallery, London

Figure 5.18 Eddie Adams, *General Nguyen Ngoc Loan Executing a Viet Cong Prisoner in Saigon, 1968*, photographic print

Figure 5.17 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas (349 x 776 cm), Museo Reina Sofia, Spain © Pablo Picasso/ Succession Picasso, licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney, 2009

Figure 5.16 Francisco Goya, *Great Deeds Against the Dead, plate 39 of The Disasters of War*, c. 1810, etching (15.24 x 21 cm)

Figure 5.20 Mona Hatoum, *Nature morte aux grenades*, 2006–07, crystal, mild steel and rubber (95 x 208 x 69.8 cm), Gallery Chantal Crousel

Figure 5.21 Tim Shaw, *Casting a Dark Democracy*, 2008, steel, barbed wire, black polythene, electrical cable (530 x 300 x 100 cm) + oil pool, sand, sound, light and mist

Figure 5.22 eX de Medici, *Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave*, in collaboration with Gloria Grady Design, Rob Little Digital Images, Think Positive Prints, Yanni Liangis, 2015, Australian National Gallery, Canberra

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The Australian government has commissioned a number of artists to chronicle the armed services in times of conflict, including World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War. More recently, artists have spent time recording the daily life and activities of servicemen and women stationed in Afghanistan and Iraq. Their work can be seen at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. You can find a direct link with more information via the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*. Use the internet to view the relevant work of eX de Medici (Solomon Islands 2009), Shaun Gladwell (Afghanistan 2009) and Ben Quilty (Afghanistan 2011).

Sometimes depictions of war simply record historical events, such as Eddie Adams' photograph in Saigon (Figure 5.18). More often, they take the form of propaganda by controlling the information fed to the population. They may glorify the battle and the heroes, as in *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 5.15) or they may deceive with half-truths and downright lies. Artists such as Käthe Kollwitz sometimes aim to stimulate an emotional response in the viewer by expressing their personal responses to wartime experiences (see Figure 5.33 later in the chapter). Sometimes their work criticises and passes judgement.

Just as approaches to subject matter have varied with time and place, so too have the conventions for recording battle – from the extreme reality of Qin Shi Huangdi's *Terracotta Warriors* (Figure 5.13), to the simple **achromatic** horror of Picasso's *Guernica* (Figure 5.17). Symbolism and metaphor have always been important, from the classical details and indeed the morality of David's paintings to the quality of irony reflected in Mona Hatoum's *Hand Grenades*, which have the appearance of confectionary.

Tim Shaw's *Casting a Dark Democracy* (Figure 5.21) and eX de Medici's *Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave* (Figure 5.22) reflect a contemporary blurring of the boundaries between art forms and materials. Both have **recontextualised** imagery by taking images from one context and placing them in another so that their meaning is altered. They also depend in part on their placement and the space they inhabit for their impact on the viewer.

Ask yourself these questions as you interpret artworks on the theme of war and conflict:

- What qualities of war are being represented? Personal pain and suffering? Nationalism? Patriotism? Heroism? Death?
- Does the work document the process of war or comment on its morality? Does it tell the truth? Who is the judge of this?
- Was war seen as something right and just? Or something that led to the suffering of the innocent?
- Does the artist use symbolism and metaphor to express the message? If so, how?
- Has the artist referred to earlier artworks by including elements from them in order to challenge the interpretation or suggest greater levels of complex meaning?
- In what ways might the cultural background of the viewer affect the interpretation of the work?

OTHER WORKS

- Paolo Uccello, *The Rout of San Romano*, c. 1438–40 – a fifteenth-century image of war
- Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814 – an early nineteenth-century image of the horrors of war
- Rousseau – *War – La Chevauchee de la Discord*, 1894 – the use of subjective colour by a self-taught artist
- Wassily Kandinsky, *Battle – the Cossacks*, 1910 – an abstract image using line and colour
- Roy Lichtenstein, *Whaam!*, 1963 – inspired by comic-book imagery
- George Gittoes, *The Preacher*, 1995 – an image based on conflict in Rwanda
- Ben Quilty, *Trooper Luke Korman*, 2012 – a portrait of a soldier returning from Afghanistan

achromatic having no colour

recontextualise place in a new or unfamiliar context, especially in order to suggest a different interpretation

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oeuvre French word describing the collected works of an artist

iconography symbolism that represents religious or spiritual concepts; or symbols, images and subject matter used in an artwork

Figure 5.23 eX de Medici, *Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave*, 2015, dress, of printed silk (dress 240 x 48 x 237 cm; display size 200 x 300 x 220 cm), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased 2015 © eX de Medici

eX de Medici

Questions about power and those who wield it can be found at the heart of eX de Medici's intricate watercolours and her remarkable Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave.

– NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

The **oeuvre** of eX de Medici is a dialogue between art and activism. A Canberra-based artist, her work is politically focused and reflects her protest reactions to contemporary issues such as environmental degradation, power and its abuse, war, inequality and injustice, corruption and greed.

De Medici is a highly recognised tattoo artist, but works largely in watercolour – a traditional, conservative and technically demanding medium. Her intricately detailed images are inspired by the precision of natural history illustrations, but also by her tattooing practice. As she says, 'Tattooing taught me how to be patient', a necessary quality with the type of work that she creates. Her delicate brushwork is visually seductive, but the details of her complex and multi-layered images are confronting on closer examination. She has explored a range of motifs and symbols over the last three decades – moths, logos of global corporations and Islamic **iconography**. Skulls and guns – symbols of

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mortality and death in the tradition of **vanitas** – can often be seen in her paintings.

Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave is a graceful silk gown, modelled on the one worn by Maria von Trapp at her rushed wedding in *The Sound of Music* (dir. Robert Wise, 1965) as Nazi forces were advancing. Military weapons are partially hidden behind the pleats of the dress and its train, unexpected and barely noticed at first glance. The background of the fabric holds an elegant lattice of ribbons with exotic orchids or sharp daggers at the intersecting points. There is an irony in the way that beauty and danger have been interwoven; between the idea of a wedding and the symbols of conflict and death; between the twin themes of a vintage film about love and war. There is a contrast, too, in the dark tones and harsh shapes of the weapons and the delicate lines and soft colours of the background.

When considered in detail, the title suggests a number of interpretations – this ambiguity is typical of **postmodern** artworks. 'Shotgun wedding' is a literal description of the appearance of the work, but it is also a metaphor for a wedding that is occurring under duress. The word 'cleave' means both to split or divide and to remain faithful – it is difficult to reconcile these two opposing meanings of the one word. The appropriation of *The Sound of Music* references and the non-traditional use of the garment as the medium for the artwork are further postmodern qualities.

This work is the product of a complex collaboration. The imagery was developed from a detailed painting called *Cleavin Clint Eastwood*, painted by eX de Medici in 2015. It was digitally printed by a professional printer onto fabric that was then cut and sewn by a fashion designer. It has been displayed on a custom-made mannequin produced by conservation staff at the National Gallery of Australia.

OTHER WORKS

- *Skinny Day Ambush (Superfamily)*, 2007 – extreme detail incorporating skulls
- *The Law*, 2013–14 – firearms and surveillance imagery

ACTIVITY 5.2

The *Bayeux Tapestry* (see the section shown in Figure 5.14) is a narrative that illustrates the events leading up to and including the Battle of Hastings in 1066. It was embroidered on a panel 70 metres long.

Compare it with *Shotgun Wedding Dress/ Cleave*. Consider points of similarity, such as art form, medium and subject matter. Contrast the use of the art elements and principles of line, shape, form, space, repetition (pattern) and proportion. Refer to the Contemporary Framework and consider the ways in which the works reflect the materials, techniques and processes used in their production. Refer to the Cultural Framework and consider the way they reflect the times in which they were created.

ACTIVITY 5.3

Discuss this statement: 'The level of collaboration in the creation of *Shotgun Wedding Dress/Cleave* suggests that the role of the artist is changing.' Refer to the Contemporary Framework and the involvement of a range of artisans.

vanitas Latin for 'emptiness'; refers to the transience of things of the world and the inevitability of death; in seventeenth-century still-life paintings, *vanitas* was signified by images of spoiling food, the overturned glass, the burning candle, worms and the obvious inclusion of the skull

postmodern an eclectic style of art that came about as a reaction to modernism, which had dominated art theory and practice since the beginning of the twentieth century. It challenges traditions and the ideas of originality by using non-traditional materials and art forms, appropriation or humour.

Tim Shaw

Shaw's sculptures provide a searing vision of the abhorrent and politically charged that at once demand empathy from his audience whilst pointing an accusatory finger at us all.

– AESTHETICA MAGAZINE, 14 APRIL 2014

Sculptor Tim Shaw is a storyteller. Working from his studio in Cornwall in England, he creates controversial sculptures and installations that often make political comment to protest against war, conflict and terrorism. Born in Belfast in 1964, during the Troubles – a time of conflict in Northern Ireland that amounted to civil war – Shaw became familiar with the human cost of warfare. Even though he would like to deal with 'more timeless and universal things', his work often refers back to disquieting aspects of conflict, challenging the viewer to question the truth.

Personal

In 2003, a number of human rights violations by the US military and its coalition partners in detention centres in Iraq came to public attention. The most prominent of these took place at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad – the scene of torture and abuse by Saddam Hussein's government and later by American troops. Shaw used this as inspiration for *Casting a Dark Democracy* (Figure 5.24). Journalist Jackie Wullschlager describes *Casting a Dark Democracy* as:

Cultural

Figure 5.24 Tim Shaw, *Casting a Dark Democracy*, 2008, steel, barbed wire, black polythene, electrical cable (530 x 300 x 100 cm) + oil pool, sand, sound, light and mist

one of too few works to engage unequivocally with the reality and human cost of the Iraq war

– FINANCIAL TIMES (UK), 11 NOVEMBER 2008

The hooded figure of a prisoner tortured by US soldiers is easily recognisable from the much-publicised image at the time. It can be seen as a towering figure balanced on a box, looking down, seemingly at his own reflection in a pool of oil the same shape as his shadow. The work was installed in a darkened, dirty space, filled with smoke and the rhythmic sound of a heartbeat that quickened and then slowed down in reaction to perceived threats.

Structural

The figure is imposing and powerful because of its **monumental** size and apparent bulk, but it is not until it is approached that the viewer sees that it is hollow. Its steel **armature** is visible through the ragged black polythene, long associated with garbage bags, and the barbed wire draped over it. These materials, which are essentially valueless, are symbols in their own right, as are the submissive pose of the figure and the emptiness of the armature. The figure's hands are more detailed than the body. There are wires attached to the fingers and connected to cables snaking along the sand-covered floor. There are numerous and multi-layered interpretations, further strengthened by symbolic use of oil (a factor in the war) reflected in the figure's reflection and the sand that covers the floor.

Contemporary

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to watch videos that document this **multi-sensory** installation from the point of view of the audience. The experience is claustrophobic because of the darkness, the smoke and the repetitive percussive sounds that surround the viewer.

OTHER WORKS

- *Parliament*, 2006 – installation with crow sculpture
- *Erebus (Man on Fire Version II)*, 2009 – an image of terror reflecting on the horror of death
- *Mother, the Air is Blue, the Air is Dangerous*, 2015 – an installation involving sound in a darkened space, viewed via video

ACTIVITY 5.4

1 The pose of the central figure in Goya's *The Third of May, 1808* is similar to that of the figure in *Casting a Dark Democracy*. Read about the historical context of this painting as well as the background of the Abu Ghraib scandal.

Compare these two artworks using the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks. What references are being made to historical events? How has symbolism been used to enhance the messages contained in the artworks?

2 *Oath of the Horatii* by David and *Casting a Dark Democracy* by Shaw are separated by more than 230 years. They look at war from different viewpoints – heroism and loss of power. Compare the approaches of the two artists. What comments are they making on war? Apply the Structural and Contemporary Frameworks to explain how the messages are communicated to the viewer.

monumental grand or imposing; resembling a monument

armature a skeleton-like framework that supports a figure being modelled

multi-sensory involving more than one of the senses

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Goya and the Chapman brothers

Because Goya was the first artist to reveal the gross face of war stripped of all chivalry, romance and idealism, because he captured something quintessential about modern war, all succeeding generations of artists have seen war through his eyes: they [the Chapman brothers] have recognised in The Disasters of War a template for their own nightmares.

– JONATHAN JONES, BRITISH ARTS WRITER WITH THE GUARDIAN, 1 APRIL 2003

Goya and the Chapman brothers have much in common – they make statements with their art and their work is provocative. In fact, British brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman are obsessed with Goya's work and praise him as 'the first Modernist artist; the first who had psychological and political depth'.

The *oeuvre* of Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, known simply as Goya (1746–1828), is closely tied to the political situation in Spain, a country that was at war during most of his life. His work often commented on brutality and the folly of ignorance and superstition. *Great Deeds Against the Dead* (Figure 5.25) is plate 39 from a series of more than 80 prints entitled *The Disasters of War*. The prints were created in secret under the title of *Fatal Consequences of the Bloody War in Spain Against Bonaparte* and published 35 years after Goya's death – they were considered too horrific and unpatriotic to be shown in his lifetime.

The series has been called a 'catalogue of atrocities', and it tells of macabre horrors on the battlefield and behind the front lines during the

Figure 5.25 Goya, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, plate 39 of *The Disasters of War*, c. 1810, etching (15.24 x 21 cm)

Grande hazaña! Con muertos!

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Peninsula War, waged between Spain and France from 1808 until 1814. One of the atrocities represented is the practice of dismembering and mutilating the bodies of Spanish guerrilla fighters and leaving them hanging in trees as a lesson to the Spanish people. It is unlikely that Goya actually saw the carnage he drew, but he would have known of it, and his images are a comment on war in general. In a similar manner to the statement Picasso would make in his painting *Guernica* (Figure 5.27) in 1937, Goya comments on the primitive barbarism that overwhelms society during wartime. He knew that the local resistance fighters were just as violent as the French occupiers and used terror, unpredictability and brutality as their main weapons.

Brothers Jake (1966–) and Dinos (1962–) Chapman have collaborated since the 1990s, using wit and irreverence in their frequent references to Goya and his work. Like Goya, their imagery is controversial and provocative. Their installation *Great Deeds Against the Dead* (1994, Figure 5.26) appropriated plate 39 of Goya's *Disasters of War* (1610) series and rendered it in three dimensions, using reworked fibreglass shop dummies spattered with fake blood and wearing bad wigs. The three figures are more aggressively shocking than Goya's original characters because they are life-sized – they make the scene far more realistic. They also challenge the viewer to consider the morbid fascination we have with gruesome images of death, especially because, in the twenty-first century, we are detached from the reality of wartime death, which is sanitised by the media. In 2014, the Chapmans reworked Goya's image further when they produced a painted bronze sculpture, almost life-sized, called *Sturm und Drang*. In this work, the figures have been reduced to skeletons with unexpectedly gory details. The title translates from the German to *storm and stress*, and alludes to a German literary and music movement that encouraged extreme emotion.

Figure 5.26 Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, 1994, mixed media (277 x 244 x 152.5 cm), White Cube Gallery, London

Goya's *Great Deeds Against the Dead* is an **etching**, printed in black and white. Line and contrast were the only two elements available to create form, detail and space due to the technical constraints of the medium, but Goya has used them dramatically to recreate a scene of carnage. In 1999, the Chapmans created and published a series of their own etchings inspired by *The Disasters of War*, combining Goya's imagery with cartoons and Nazi motifs in a style reminiscent of graffiti.

At great expense, they also bought a cycle of original etchings printed in 1937 from Goya's *Disasters of War* etching plates, and in 2004 they 'rectified' or 'improved' (some said vandalised) them by painting clown and puppy faces over the victims' heads. This caricatured the figures and magnified the brutality, while using black humour to

etching a printing process in which a design is scratched through an acid-resistant ground on a metal surface before being submerged in acid. Ink is pressed into the resulting grooves and printed onto paper.

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challenge taboos about war and the defacement of original artworks.

Goya's *Disasters of War* was first used by the Chapman brothers in 1993 as the inspiration for a set of 83 miniature **tableaux** of toy soldiers mimicking the gruesome scenes from Goya's etchings, each on its own small patch of grass. The small scale contradicted the barbarity of the scenes. The Chapmans later created *Hell* (1999–2000), a series of large **vitrines** displaying 5000 melted-down and painstakingly reconstructed toy soldiers acting out the barbarity of war. Their obsession with Goya continues.

tableau grouping that forms an image or picture; plural – *tableaux*

vitrine glass cabinet or showcase

OTHER WORKS

- Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814 – an early nineteenth-century image of the horrors of war
- Goya, *Saturn Devouring his Son*, 1820–23 – a gory mythological story
- Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Disasters of War*, 1993 – miniature mixed media sculptures
- Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Insult to Injury*, 2004 – paintings over a series of etchings by Goya
- Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Sturm und Drang*, 2014 – another reworking of Goya's *Great Deeds Against the Dead*

REFERENCES

Connell E. 2005, *Goya: Life and Times*, Counterpoint, Berkeley, CA

Hackworth N. 2008, *Jake and Dinos Chapman,* Tate Publishing, London

Hughes R. 2006, *Goya,* Knopf, New York

ACTIVITY 5.5

Do you agree with art writer and critic Robert Hughes when he says that Goya, 'will obviously survive these twerps [the Chapman brothers], whose names will be forgotten a few years from now'? When considering your response, view *Insult to Injury* and reflect on the ethics of reworking original masterpieces. How successfully do the Chapman brothers use Goya's images and ideas to make their own artistic statements?

ACTIVITY 5.6

Compare *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 5.15) with *Great Deeds Against the Dead* (Figure 5.25), which was produced by Goya 25 years later. Contrast the artists' approaches to the subject matter of war, the manner in which they appeal to the emotions of the viewer and the impact of the application of tonal modelling, colour and space on the message of the works.

Picasso and Mona Hatoum

A painting is not thought out and settled in advance. While it is being done, it changes as one's thoughts change. And when it's finished, it goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it.

– PABLO PICASSO (1881–1973), SPANISH ARTIST

I find it more exciting when a work reverberates with several meanings and paradoxes and contradictions. Explaining it as meaning this or that inevitably turns it into something fixed rather than something in a state of flux.

– MONA HATOUM (1952–), MICHAEL ARCHER INTERVIEW, PHAIDON, 1997

Guernica (Figure 5.27) is a powerful anti-war statement painted by Picasso (1881–1973) in five weeks as a response to the bombing of Guernica, a Basque village in northern Spain and a centre of Republican resistance during the Spanish Civil War. It was market day on 27 April 1937 and the men were away fighting in the war that was tearing Spain apart. Guernica was behind the front lines and contained mostly women and children, but in little more than two hours of bombing, sources estimate that more than 1600 people were killed and nearly 900 were injured.

Picasso's response to this event shows the brutality of warfare in contrast to the heroism represented by images such as *Oath of the Horatii* (Figure 5.15). While couched in terms of a particular bombing raid, *Guernica* can be read as a universal comment on the violence and suffering of war. It has become an icon of the anti-war movement and reflects the impact that art can have on a society's attitudes.

Conflict has also impacted on Mona Hatoum's life. She is Palestinian, born in Beirut in 1952 and now living and working in London. She was in London when civil war broke out in Lebanon in 1975 and was unable to return.

Throughout her career, Hatoum has used a range of art forms such as installations, sculpture and video, and unconventional and non-traditional materials such as human hair, wire mesh cages and grass sprouting from seed in sandbags. In *Nature Morte aux Grenades* (Figure 5.28) she has used hand-blown crystal shapes resembling grenades to represent the malignancy of war.

Many of Hatoum's sculptures show familiar domestic items transformed into alien and threatening objects, such as a carpet of pins or electrified kitchen utensils. She uses subtle humour and subversion,

Figure 5.27 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas (349 x 776 cm), Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid © Pablo Picasso/ Succession Picasso, licensed by VISCOPY, 2009

Figure 5.28 Mona Hatoum, *Nature morte aux grenades*, 2006–07, crystal, mild steel and rubber (95 x 208 x 70 cm), photo: Marc Domage Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

surreal having a dream-like quality

Cubism early twentieth-century art style in which objects were fragmented and rearranged, often using multiple viewpoints

which undermine and disrupt the superficial meaning. *Nature Morte aux Grenades* is menacing on an intellectual level. Consisting of dozens of prettily coloured grenade-shaped crystals, it is displayed on a wheeled steel table similar to those found in operating rooms or morgues. The grenades are fragile and appealing but, at the same time, they embody threat and are ominous and deadly in a **surreal** manner.

Guernica and *Nature Morte aux Grenades* are very different in form and style. Picasso's painting is **Cubist**, and typically uses multiple views to strengthen its expressive qualities while Hatoum's work is a postmodern installation that depends on wit and non-traditional materials to enhance its message.

The figures in *Guernica* are simplified and distorted to emphasise the horror, brutality and suffering of war. The work contains a sense of confusion, a visual chaos that echoes the subject matter. Rather than a single centre of interest, Picasso has created multiple focal points. The enormous scale of *Guernica* (almost 8 metres long by 3.5 metres high) increases its impact, while the intimate scale and toy-like colours of the fist-sized balls of *Nature Morte aux Grenades* contradict its deadly reference.

Picasso suppressed colour in *Guernica*, in fact removing the colour he had already painted in, preferring to allow achromatic black and white to symbolise the sombre desolation of the chaotic scene. On the other hand, Hatoum uses colour to subvert or contradict the inherent meaning of the usually lethal hand grenades.

Picasso used numerous symbols in *Guernica*. The horse is said to represent the Spanish people, suffering and in pain; the broken sword represents their defeat. The bull has been interpreted in a number of ways, but is usually thought to represent brutality or death. The lamp is a symbol of liberty and the delicate flower in the hand of the dead figure in the foreground signifies hope for new life springing from the devastation of war.

OTHER WORKS

- Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937 – a painting of a woman in extreme distress
- Picasso, *The Charnel House*, 1944–45 – a black and white painting referencing the Holocaust
- Hatoum, *Misbah*, 2006 – an immersive light work
- Hatoum, *Hot Spot*, 2006 – a sculptural work using neon
- Hatoum, *Bunker*, 2011 – an installation of stacked steel structures

REFERENCES

Bell K. 2009, *Mona Hatoum: Unhomely*, Holzwarth, Berlin

Hatoum M. 1997, *Mona Hatoum*, Phaidon, London

ACTIVITY 5.7

Describe the ways in which Picasso has represented conflict in *Guernica*. How has it been suggested by Hatoum? How are they similar or different? Compare another artwork by each artist to show their different approaches not only to subject matter but also to materials and aesthetics.

5.4 Mother and child

In a child's eyes, a mother is a goddess. She can be glorious or terrible, benevolent or filled with wrath, but she commands love either way. I am convinced that this is the greatest power in the universe.

– N.K. JEMISIN, THE HUNDRED THOUSAND KINGDOMS

The image of mother and child is central to society. The relationship is so basic to humanity that it has been a universal subject and a major preoccupation in the visual arts through the ages. The maternal bond has been represented in a multitude of forms, from carving and painting to photography and installation. It has been treated with affection, compassion and humour, as well as being an expression of religious belief. More recently, artists have challenged our understanding of this intensely personal relationship.

Until the fifteenth century, the image of mother and child was represented by the **Madonna** and Christ Child, who were pictured using a system of accepted rules and

Madonna the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus

MOTHER AND CHILD TIMELINE

Figure 5.29 *Theotokos of Vladimir*, twelfth century

Figure 5.30 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435

Figure 5.31 Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1499

Figure 5.34 Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child Divided*, 1993, glass, painted steel, silicone, acrylic, monofilament, stainless steel, cow, calf and formaldehyde solution, dimensions variable, licensed by VISCOPY 2016 © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd, all right reserved, DACS 2016, photo by Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd.

Figure 5.33 Käthe Kollwitz, *Woman with Dead Child*, 1903, Galerie St Etienne

Figure 5.32 Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1872 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Figure 5.35 Zhang Xiaogang, *A Big Family*, 1995

Figure 5.36 Tracey Moffatt, *Up in the Sky #1*, 1997, courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Figure 5.37 Ron Mueck, *Mother and Child*, 2001–03, mixed media (24 x 89 x 38 cm), Museum Brandhorst, Munich © Ron Mueck, photograph by Anthony d'Offaly, London

Figure 5.38 Del Kathryn Barton, *You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella*, 2008, synthetic polymer paint, watercolour, gouache and pen on polyester canvas (280 x 180 cm)

symbols that varied little over the period of a millennium. This can be seen in the *Theotokos* (Figure 5.29) and *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* (Figure 5.30). The maternal bond was used in the service of religion to highlight the human qualities of God, as shown in Michelangelo's *Pietà* (Figure 5.31). Images of the Madonna were created in a range of sizes, from imposing altarpieces to miniatures used for private devotions.

The introduction of **Humanist** thought in the Renaissance accompanied a resurgence of the classical belief in the importance of **secular** interests. Mythological subjects, such as Venus and her son Cupid, reflected non-Christian storytelling. By the seventeenth century, genre painting showed an interest in everyday experiences, and artworks were created that reflected the familiarity and 'ordinariness' of motherhood with images such as *The Cradle* (Figure 5.32). We also see images of the mother and child used to express profound emotions, such as love and grief. *Woman with Dead Child* by Kollwitz (Figure 5.33) is a heartbreaking example of this.

Since the late twentieth century, artists have been breaking boundaries and using non-traditional materials and imagery to shock the viewer into examining issues we take for granted. Artists such as Hirst, Moffatt and Mueck have queried stereotypical gender roles for women and have challenged our understanding of our closest relationships.

Ask yourself these questions as you interpret artworks on the theme of mother and child:

- What attitude to motherhood is visible in this work?
- How has the artist used their artistic practice to express their ideas?
- Are there religious references or mythological references? Do symbols or metaphors contribute to the meanings and messages?

- Does the work raise questions about what motherhood should 'look' like? Is there a right way to mother? How should a mother feel about her child? Does the work pass judgement on motherhood?
- Are the values, beliefs and attitudes of the time reflected in the work? Have these values changed over time? Does this affect your understanding of the work and its message?
- In what ways would the cultural background of the viewer affect the interpretation of the work?
- Are contemporary concerns or arts practices visible in the artwork – for example, social issues, appropriation, collaboration, exhibition context, new media?

RELATED WORKS

- Duccio, *Queen of Heaven*, 1311 – a Madonna and Child painted on an altarpiece
- Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia*, 1512–14 – a Madonna and Child painted on a circular panel
- Lucas Cranach, *Cupid Complaining to Venus*, c. 1525 – mythological characters and symbolism
- Georges de la Tour, *The New Born*, c. 1650 – a nativity scene with strong *chiaroscuro*
- Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, *Portrait of Marie-Antoinette and Her Children*, 1787 – a queen as a mother
- Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Portrait of Mrs Renoir Nursing Pierre*, 1885 – a simple domestic scene
- Mary Cassatt, *The Bath*, 1891–92 – an intimate domestic scene
- Yoruba, Benin or Phemba (African), statues of Mother and Child of the nineteenth century
- Barbara Hepworth, *Mother and Child*, 1934 – simple figures carved from stone
- Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, 1999 – an enormous metal spider symbolising motherhood
- Martin Creed, *Mothers*, 2011 – the word MOTHERS is written in neon

Humanist prioritises human endeavours and values rather than religious or spiritual beliefs

secular worldly, materialistic, not having any connection to a church or religion

Cambridge University Press

Figure 5.39 Tracey Moffatt, *Up in the Sky #1*, 1997, offset print from a series of 25 images (61 x 76 cm image size, 72 x 102 cm paper size), courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Tracey Moffatt

In her films and photographs, Moffatt has a way of retelling stories we think we know, shifting the point of view and undercutting our expectations ... she creates staged tableaux that hint at a storyline but leave much to the viewer's imagination.

– *JEAN DYKSTRA, 'FANTASTIC NARRATIVES', IN AFTERIMAGE, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1998*

Tracey Moffatt (1960–) is an Australian photographer. *Up in the Sky #1* (Figure 5.39) belongs to a series of 25 images with an ambiguous and fragmented narrative. Moffatt leaves it to the viewer to interpret the message, acknowledging that there is more than one reading. The desolate 'set', photographed in the harsh landscape around Broken Hill in New South Wales, with its graffiti and its damaged wall, evokes a mood of desolation.

Typical of Moffatt's work, it has something of the 'frozen' quality of a film still, which is unsurprising as Moffatt is also a filmmaker. She has been described as a director of photo-narratives. Her vision is theatrical: her images often have painted backdrops and in their static calm they have the quality of a staged *tableau*. She has said:

I am not concerned with capturing reality. I am concerned with creating it myself.

Up in the Sky #1 contains a subtle tonal range, and employs **framing** and contrast as means to identify the mother and child as the focal point of the image and the approaching nuns as a secondary centre of interest. Moffatt has used **selective focusing** as an added way to draw attention to the figures inside the house by throwing the background details out of focus and thus creating a shallow **depth of field**. There is a voyeuristic quality to this private drama; we feel

framing isolating and drawing attention to the most important part of an image by surrounding it with a visual 'frame'

selective focusing photographic term referring to focusing on a particular part of a composition and throwing other sections out of focus

depth of field photographic term to describe the distance between the nearest and furthest points that are in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph

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uncomfortable watching a scene that promises pain.

Up in the Sky #1 references Australia's Stolen Generations, and contains autobiographical elements of Moffatt's Aboriginal heritage. She grew up as a foster child in a white family, and her work often hints at memories from her childhood. Issues of identity – both personal and Aboriginal, and relating to race, gender and sexuality – are explored in many of her images, as is the popular culture of the 1960s and 1970s, especially magazines, films and television. In this photograph, the somewhat menacing figures of the nuns can be interpreted as symbolising institutional authority and the power relationship that was part of the Stolen Generations policy that dominated her own childhood.

Cultural

Personal

montage a composite produced from fragments

storyboard series of sketches depicting the changes to the scenes and action of a planned film or video production

OTHER WORKS

- *Birth Certificate*, 1962 – photographic image from Moffatt's *Scarred for Life* series, 1994
- *Night Cries – A Rural Tragedy*, 1989 – a 17-minute film
- *Mother*, 2009 – a 20-minute film

REFERENCES

Newton G. 1996, *Tracey Moffatt: Fever Pitch*, Piper Press, Sydney

Maggia, F. 2007, *Tracey Moffatt: Between Dreams and Reality*, SKIRA, Milan

ACTIVITY 5.8

Go online and view other works by Moffatt, such as *Mother's Day* and *Birth Certificate* from her *Scarred for Life* (1994) series. If possible, view her film *Night Cries – A Rural Tragedy*. Each of these works tells of a mother and child relationship.

Draw comparisons and make contrasts about the way she depicts this powerful bond. Does an overall feeling emerge?

ACTIVITY 5.9

Mother is a 20-minute film made in collaboration with Gary Hillberg. It is a **montage** of scenes from television shows and Hollywood movies about mothers and their relationships with their daughters.

Prepare a **storyboard** as if you were going to make a video, a short film or a series of photographs on this theme. Consider the composition, the angle of view and the zoom level of the camera.

How would you use costumes, props and lighting to strengthen the mood of your images?

Del Kathryn Barton

This painting celebrates the love I have for my two children and how my relationship with them has radically informed and indeed transformed my understanding of who I am.

– DEL KATHRYN BARTON

You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella (Figure 5.40) is a self-portrait of the artist Del Kathryn Barton with her son and daughter. The title suggests the love of motherhood and the pose tells the viewer that part of the mother's role is to protect, as well as to nurture, her children. The artist tells us that her art practice shifted profoundly with motherhood – the monochromatic drawings of her early career gave way to vibrant paintings using colour, line and pattern, involving changes in style, content and medium. This painting won the prestigious Archibald Prize in 2008.

As a child, Barton suffered from anxiety. Her mother encouraged her to draw, something that continued to complement her rich imaginary life. Her love of colour and pattern was enhanced by the wonderfully colourful and organic knitting done by her grandmother and echoes her appreciation of women's craft and art making.

You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella is pyramidal in composition. Kel and Arella are enclosed by their mother as they perch, with wide-eyed innocence, between her legs. All three are connected by tendrils of colour, and the pattern on their clothes and across the shallow space of the background reminds the viewer of a lush landscape, with flowers, leaves and vines.

Barton's paintings need to be seen up close to be appreciated. They are multi-layered and complex, and her technique is extremely labour-

Figure 5.40 Del Kathryn Barton, *You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella*, 2008, synthetic polymer paint, watercolour, gouache and pen on polyester canvas (280 x 180 cm)
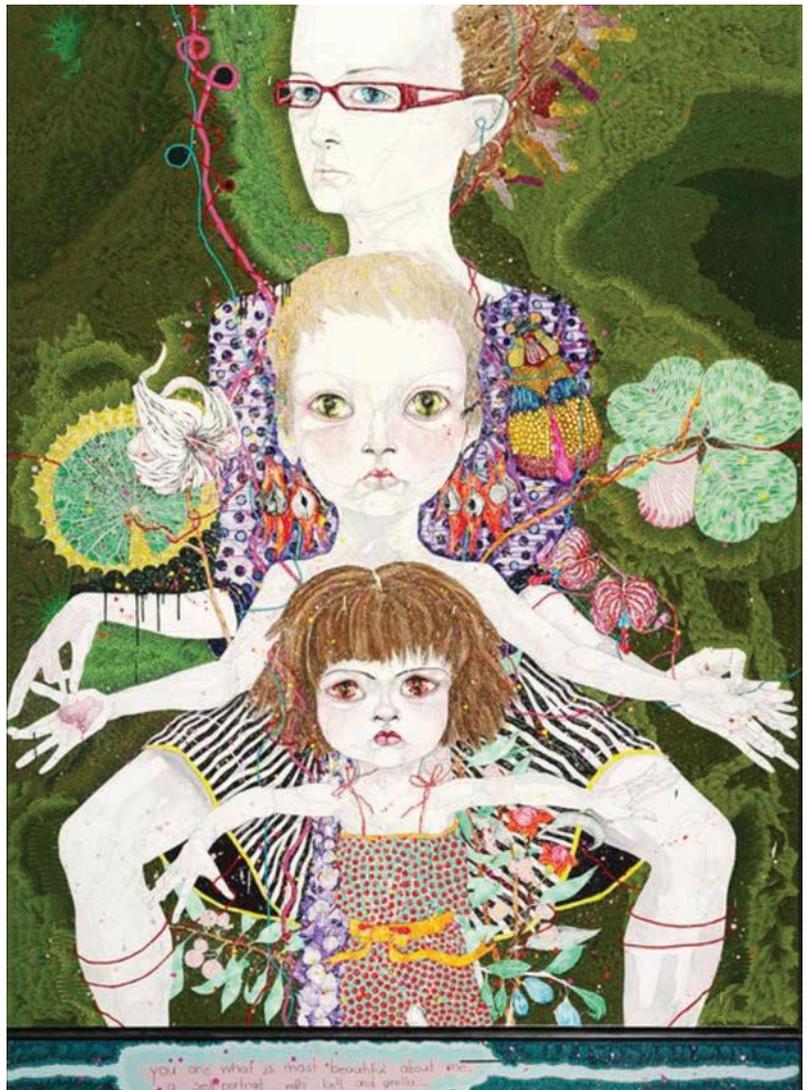
intensive. Dense patterning is made up of intricate lines, meticulous dots and detailed textures. This decorative use of line, colour and pattern in *You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella* makes the painting appear to be almost embroidered, and in fact this is more important to the artist than accuracy of scale.

If you look closely at the faces, you will see that line has been used to define what Barton calls the 'architecture' of the sitters' features – it delineates cheekbones and eye sockets, for example, as well as areas of shadow and highlight. Eyes are an important element in each of her paintings. Their size and openness have been compared to the *kawaii* quality of *manga*.

kawaii cute, in a Japanese context

manga a style of Japanese comic books and graphic novels, aimed at adults as well as children

The artist begins her paintings by drawing directly onto canvas with a permanent pen, understanding that there is no going back once a line has been drawn. When the ink has had time to set, it is overlaid by colour, added in a range of media, often in combination, including watercolour, ink, gouache and acrylic paint.

In postmodern style, Barton draws on a number of influences from the past, including the use of pattern in Indian miniatures and the paintings of Gustave Klimt, and Egon Schiele's application of line; and from the contemporary art world – the dot-filled work of Yayoi Kusama, Chris Ofili and Tim Johnson. She is also interested in the way society uses fashion to define female beauty. In fact, her collaboration with the contemporary Australian fashion house Romance Was Born blurs the line between fashion and art.

OTHER WORKS

- *Hugo*, 2013 – a portrait of Hugo Weaving
- *what i am also*, 2013 – figure, animals and patterns

REFERENCES

Barton, D.K. and Wilde, O. 2012, *The Nightingale and the Rose* (film)

Ewington, J. 2011, *Del Kathryn Barton*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane

Del Kathryn Barton is a Painter, official trailer for *The Nightingale and the Rose*

ACTIVITY 5.10

Symbolism plays an important role in Del Kathryn Barton's practice. Look closely at *You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella.* You can view this by accessing the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Make a list of the symbols embedded in the work and refer to the Personal and Cultural Frameworks to explain how they have been used to add meaning. Two suggestions are the threads that link the figures and the colour green.

How important do you think symbolism is in this painting? Refer to details of the work in your response.

ACTIVITY 5.11

Artists whose work is enjoyed by Barton because of their decorative qualities include Chris Ofili, Yayoi Kusama and Tim Johnson. Select a work by one of these artists and compare it with a work by Barton, considering the importance of line, dot, colour and pattern.

What is the role of these art elements and principles in each artwork?

What is the relevance of these decorative qualities to the subject matter of the work? Is it symbolic, decorative or purely aesthetic?

Michelangelo and Ron Mueck

Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.

– MICHELANGELO (1475–1564), ITALIAN ARTIST

Although Michelangelo's *Pietà* (Figure 5.41) and Ron Mueck's *Mother and Child* (Figure 5.42) are separated by 500 years, they have much in common. Both are three-dimensional artworks that embody very private moments in the relationship between mother and child. Both are very real: Michelangelo's in the **classical** mode of the Renaissance; Mueck's in a twenty-first-century version of hyper-reality. Both mothers appear emotionless, accepting their fate.

When we think about mother and child as subject matter, we immediately think of the bond of maternal love. We see this connection very clearly in the *Pietà*, where the Virgin is cradling the body of her dead son. However, we struggle to find it in the confronting representation of Mueck's *Mother and Child*. Perhaps this is linked to the religious function of Michelangelo's sculpture and the very personal moment shown in Mueck's installation.

Both works allow the viewer to see the reality of space and volume. Michelangelo sculpted the *Pietà* **in the round**, using a drill to create depth, then carving around these spaces to achieve detail and finally polishing it to a lustrous surface. It is pyramidal in structure, with the weight at the base as Mary convincingly supports the body of her adult son. Details are highly realistic, a result of Michelangelo's study of both classical sculpture and human anatomy.

Mueck's sculpture has been described as hyper-real, especially in its anatomical detail. The artist works from photographs, medical texts and, in this case, from memories of the birth of his children. The mother and child could be

confused with living, breathing people if it were not for their reduction in scale to half life-size.

Both works show reality in proportion, texture and surface detail. While the *Pietà* was sculpted in marble and retains the purity of the stone, Mueck used less traditional materials, casting the figures in fibreglass and silicone, and punching in each single strand of hair to enhance the effect of reality. He used traditional sculptural techniques, though, and made drawings and **maquettes** before sculpting clay figures and casting them in fibreglass and silicone.

The viewer has different experiences of the two works because of their physical presentation. The figures in *Mother and Child* lie on a plinth, so the observer is very close to the

Figure 5.41 Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1499, marble (174 x 195 cm), St Peter's Basilica, The Vatican (Rome)

classical related to the art of ancient Greece and Rome; used to refer to the characteristics of beauty, balance and unity associated with these periods of art

in the round free-standing, three-dimensional form that can be viewed from all sides

maquette small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

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voyeur a French term for an obsessive, often secretive, watcher

material reality of the birth process. They can see the umbilical cord, which still attaches the baby to its mother. In contrast, the *Pietà* is now behind plexiglass, and it is impossible to experience its three-dimensional reality as was possible when it was completed by Michelangelo.

In creating the *Pietà*, Michelangelo was guided by classical ideals and the Humanist philosophy of the Renaissance. According to the Humanist and Neo-Platonic theories, ideal beauty was equated with spiritual and intellectual worth. Renaissance society was increasingly more secular than that of the Middle Ages, but Michelangelo combined Pagan interests within a Christian context.

Mueck, on the other hand, comes from a background in children's television, animatronics and the advertising and movie industries. His work reflects the fact that, in the twenty-first century, no subject matter is considered taboo. He shows us a mother and child at the beginning of their relationship, yet to bond.

The mother is exhausted and tense, still in the birthing pose. She looks wary and somewhat startled at the appearance of her child, who is only minutes old. This is very different from traditional and more intimate representations of the Madonna and Child, where the bond of mutual affection has already been formed.

Some viewers and critics are uneasy about the forced intimacy of *Mother and Child*. They feel like *voyeurs*, watching an intensely private physical and emotional moment. Because the figures are so much smaller than life-size, the viewer feels distant. There is a psychological barrier separating us from the figures of the mother and child, both of whom seem vulnerable.

Michelangelo and Mueck approached their work with very different aims in mind, but both used the tools of realism to provide the viewer with an image that challenges their understanding of the relationship between mother and child.

OTHER WORKS

- Michelangelo, *Madonna of the Steps*, c. 1491 – relief sculpture of a Madonna and Child
- Michelangelo, *Bruges Madonna*, 1501–04 – Madonna and Child carved in the round
- Ron Mueck, *Pregnant Woman*, 2002 – 2.5 metre-high sculpture representing motherhood
- Ron Mueck, *A Girl*, 2006 – enormous sculpture of a newborn baby

REFERENCES

Greeves S. and Wiggins C. 2003, *Ron Mueck,* National Gallery, London
Hurlston, D. 2011, *Ron Mueck,* Yale University Press, Harvard, MA

ACTIVITY 5.12

In an article in *The Guardian*, Adrian Searle wrote:

> There must be much to admire about sculptor Ron Mueck's astonishingly life-like representations of the human body. But, apart from the technique, I cannot think what it is … it is all so perfect – and perfectly boring.

Write a rebuttal to Searle, explaining why Mueck's *Mother and Child* (or another work of your choice) engages your attention and challenges you to interpret its meaning. Using the Structural Framework, it may be because of the change of scale, the extreme reality or the ordinariness of the subject matter; using the Personal Framework, it could be because it relates to a personal experience; using the Cultural Framework, it could be a perceived comment on contemporary motherhood; using the Contemporary Framework, it could the unnerving use of non-traditional art materials.

Berthe Morisot and Damien Hirst

It is important to express oneself … provided the feelings are real and are taken from your own experience.

– BERTHE MORISOT (1841–95), FRENCH PAINTER

Berthe Morisot's sister, Edma, and her infant daughter, Blanche, modelled for the intimate study of a new mother that we see in *The Cradle* (Figure 5.43). The lack of detail and the loose, sketchy brushwork, in an **Impressionist** style, lend the painting a quality of freshness. The **high key** palette of the cradle and the pale colours of the background draw the viewer's attention to the deeper tones of the mother. Her gaze and the diagonal lines

Impressionism a French art movement that represented everyday scenes in an attempt to capture light, surface and atmosphere

high key composed mainly of light tones

Figure 5.43 Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1873, oil on canvas (56 x 45 cm), Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Figure 5.44 Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child (Divided)*, 1993, glass, painted steel, silicone, acrylic, monofilament, stainless steel, cow, calf and formaldehyde solution. Two parts, each (cow): 2070 x 3220 x 1090 mm. Two parts, each (calf): 1150 x 1670 x 605mm. © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2016, photo by Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd. licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

of her arm, reinforced by the line of the curtain behind her, lead the viewer's eye to the sleeping child. Thus we are drawn into the work.

We are also drawn into Hirst's *Mother and Child Divided* (Figure 5.44), but in a very different way. Because of the three-dimensional quality of the installation, the viewer is led around and through the work physically. Furthermore, the title suggests a layered meaning compared with the uncomplicated story of *The Cradle*. As Nicholas Serota said in his lecture 'Who's Afraid of Modern Art?', 'Walking between the two halves and seeing the isolation of the calf from the cow encourages deeper readings of the work.'

The separation of the mother and child is not only literal, but also symbolic. The viewer is encouraged to recognise the universality of motherhood in the bodies of the cow and calf. However, Hirst does not give us ready answers to our inevitable questions. He expects each viewer to engage with his works and

interpret them from their own position of experience and understanding. He relies on the high shock value of his subject matter to provoke a wide range of responses in the viewer, from intrigue to outrage.

Mother and Child Divided is a work from Hirst's *Natural History* series, in which animals are preserved and suspended in formaldehyde and encased in museum-style vitrines. They float, seemingly weightless, in their 'transparent aqua tombs'. A gentle light passes through the liquid, contradicting the gruesome subject matter and creating the contrast that draws the viewer's eyes towards the macabre details. The mother and child of the title *are* in fact divided. The physicality of this allows the viewer access to details that are otherwise unavailable and that force them to realise the reality of death. In this way, we are reminded of our own mortality.

Much of Hirst's work can be interpreted as an exploration of the fundamental questions of life and death. His approach

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is often unconventional and controversial, as he explores non-traditional materials and art forms. He works with a team of assistants, which sometimes causes viewers and critics alike to question the authenticity of his work. This practice follows the tradition of artists' apprentices, which was the accepted norm in Renaissance studios. Andy Warhol brought this practice into the modern world with his 'factory' of the 1960s but, like Hirst, it could be argued that he did so for reasons of convenience rather than for the education of the next generation.

Morisot also broke through boundaries. She worked in the circle of Impressionist painters and exhibited in seven of their eight exhibitions. While today a career in the arts is available to women, Morisot was only able to pursue an artistic career as well as marriage and motherhood due to the emotional and financial support of her husband and family.

Like her Impressionist colleagues, Morisot was inspired to record fleeting scenes of everyday life. She depicted the domestic lives and values of upper middle-class women by focusing on day-to-day experiences. Perhaps she reinforced the stereotypical views held at the time about the role of women. Hirst, on the other hand, challenges us to consider the broader issues of what it means to be human.

OTHER WORKS

- Berthe Morisot, *Hide and Seek*, 1873 – a mother and child playing
- Berthe Morisot, *La Lecture (Reading: the Mother and Sister Edma of the Artist)*, 1869–70 – a domestic scene
- Damien Hirst, *The Virgin Mother*, 2005 – a 10 metre-high sculpture of a pregnant woman in anatomical cross-section
- Damien Hirst, *Birth (Cyrus)*, 2006 – a series of paintings of the birth of the artist's son

REFERENCES
Adler K. 1995, *Berthe Morisot*, Phaidon, London
Higonnet A. 1995, *Berthe Morisot*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA

ACTIVITY 5.13

Berthe Morisot believed that, 'It is important to express oneself ... provided the feelings are real and are taken from your own experience.'

Do you think that it is necessary for an artist to use their own experiences and feelings as the basis of their artwork? Do you believe it is important or preferable to do so in your own work? Write a paragraph that explains your position.

ACTIVITY 5.14

'Have they gone stark raving mad? The works of the "artist" are lumps of dead animals.' So said Norman Tebbit after seeing Hirst's work in the *Sensation* exhibition in 1997.

Do you agree with Tebbit's understanding of Hirst's work? Explain your opinion and use evidence to support it.

5.5 Art in public places

Innovative and well-considered public art promises inquiry, contemplation, wonder and joy. It has the capacity to stimulate both intellectual and heartfelt responses.

– PUBLIC ART POLICY, CITY OF MONASH

Cultural

Art galleries and museums are a fairly recent addition to the civic life of towns, but public art has been around since the earliest civilisations placed statues in communal spaces. In ancient Egypt, monumental statues of the gods and pharaohs were installed in temple complexes. In the Roman era and later during the Renaissance, civic leaders were often represented as orators (public speakers) or equestrians (mounted on horseback).

Today, many local governments actively encourage public art by budgeting for and installing new artworks, or by requiring private developers to contribute a proportion of the estimated construction costs of new urban buildings to public art. An early example is *Clothespin* by Claes Oldenburg (Figure 5.46) – an incongruous

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES TIMELINE

Figure 5.45 *Augustus of Prima Porta*, first century CE, marble, Vatican Museums, Rome, Italy

Figure 5.46 Claes Oldenburg, *Clothespin*, 1976, Corten and stainless steel (13.7 x 3.7 x 1.4 m), Philadelphia

Figure 5.47 Inge King, *Forward Surge*, 1976, painted steel, installed 1981, Melbourne Arts Centre

Figure 5.51 Jeff Koons, *Pluto and Proserpina*, 2010–13, mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent colour coating, live flowering plants, Florence, Italy

Figure 5.50 Reko Rennie, *Always Was, Always Will Be*, 2012, site-specific, acrylic paint, neon and aluminium, Sydney

Figure 5.49 John Kelly, *Cow up a Tree*, 2006, Melbourne Docklands

Figure 5.48 Alison Weaver and Paul Quinn, *Three Businessmen Who Brought Their Own Lunch*, 1993, Swanston Street, Melbourne

Figure 5.52 Sofles, *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped*, 2015, creative direction by Shaun Hossack, motion design by Grant Osborn, videography by Selina Miles, music by Opiuo

Figure 5.53 Guido van Helten, *Brim Silos*, 2015–16, Wimmera District, Victoria

Figure 5.54 Yarn Corner, *Knitted Installation*, 2016, Swanston Street, Melbourne

Cambridge University Press

Pop Art sculpture installed in Philadelphia in the 1970s.

Public art can be divided into a number of categories: art as memorial; art as political statement (either propaganda or dissent); art engaging in social issues such as democracy, citizenship and integration; and art in its own right. As the name suggests, public art is freely accessible to the person in the street, without the need to visit a gallery or museum. It can be found in urban and suburban parks, on street corners, in the forecourts of public buildings and in special sculpture parks such as Melbourne's Herring Island. Some works are so large and site-specific that they wouldn't fit into a gallery anyway, such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* and Christo's *Gates.*

Art in public places embraces a broad range of art forms and materials. It may be permanent or **ephemeral**. It includes street furniture, pavement inlays, landscaping and murals. It is not confined to physical objects either – dance, procession, street theatre and light projections are all examples of ephemeral public art. New technologies such as digital imaging are energising cities with light festivals, such as the White Night Melbourne and Vivid Sydney festivals. Traditional craft materials such as wool are being repurposed to brighten urban streets with guerrilla knitting, aka yarn bombing (Figure 5.54). **Kinetic** sculpture, such as Melbourne's Southbank *Gas Brigades* (fire towers) and Birrarung Marr's interactive *Federation Bells* have expanded our understanding of art in public places.

Another element of public art – street art – is more democratic, inexpensive and open to all. Some cities have urban spaces designated for those who wish to create their own aerosol work, in the style of galleries without walls. Tagging, graffiti, street art and galleries are all part of the public presence of art and mingle visually, although sometimes they war over space and visibility. Many street artists have come from a background in graffiti, and there are many who mourn the loss of graffiti's illegal, anti-establishment stance. Encompassing forms as varied as aerosol work, stencils, paste-ups, stickers and installations, street art has wide appeal to the general public and is now almost mainstream. Many street artists maintain a day job such as illustration, graphic design or tattooing, and an increasing number exhibit their work in galleries, although there are those who believe that once street art has moved into a gallery, it is no longer street art.

Street art draws its inspiration from a diverse range of sources; it sometimes takes the form of political dissent and can be witty and provocative, such as Cel Out's *Children in Detention* (Figure 5.8); it can reflect the art of the past and comment on social and political issues; often it is simply a canvas for an individual's need to create.

Consider these questions as you interpret artworks that can be seen in public places:

- What does the artwork reveal about its social, political, cultural, artistic and/or religious contexts? In what ways does it reflect the values and beliefs of the time in which it was made?
- For what reason was the work made and installed? Was it communicating a message to the viewer at the time? Is it perceived in the same way today?
- What symbols or metaphors contribute to the meaning or message of the work?
- How does the artwork 'fit' into its physical context? How important is interaction with its public space and the passer-by?
- Does the artwork challenge traditional understandings of what constitutes art and the role of the viewer? How does this differ from traditional ideas about viewing art in museums or galleries?
- If new technologies, emerging art forms and social media have been used, what is their impact on the viewer and their experience of the work?

ephemeral an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them

kinetic relating to or resulting from movement

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OTHER LOCAL VICTORIAN PUBLIC ART

- Ron Robertson-Swann, *Vault*, 1978, Southbank, Melbourne – abstract sculpture
- Keith Haring, *Mural*, 1984, Johnstone St, Collingwood, Melbourne – wall painting with stylised figures (see Figure 10.26 in Chapter 10)
- *Federation Bells*, 2001, Birrarung Marr, Melbourne – 39 upturned bells
- Ash Keating, *RMIT A'Beckett Urban Square*, 2014 – walls painted with a paint-filled fire hydrant
- Herring Island Sculpture Park, Yarra River, South Yarra, Melbourne
- Gertrude Street Projection Festival, Fitzroy, Melbourne
- White Night Melbourne festival

NON-LOCAL PUBLIC ART

- Antony Gormley, *Angel of the North*, 1998, near Gateshead, UK – 20 metre-tall sculpture
- Christo and Jeane-Claude, *The Gates*, 1979–2005, Central Park, New York – installation of over 7000 bright orange panels
- Jorge Rodriguez-Gerada, *Wish*, 2013, Belfast – monumentally scaled portrait 'painted' with sand and soil by volunteers over a period of four weeks
- *The High Line*, New York City, completed 2014 – art-lined elevated walkway
- Etam Cru, *Until the Quiet Comes*, Adelaide, 2015 – painting on the side of a high-rise building
- Vivid Sydney – light, music and ideas festival

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Bofkin, L. 2014 *Concrete Canvas*, Octopus
Schacter, L. 2013, *The World Art Atlas of Street Art and Graffiti,* NewSouth Publishing
Chamberlin, L. 2015, *Street Art Australia*, Hardie Grant Publishing

ACTIVITY 5.15

Marcus Westbury (festival director, TV presenter, writer and broadcaster) wrote in 2009 that street art was one of Melbourne's 'biggest tourist attractions and one of its most significant cultural movements since the Heidelberg School'. Research the Heidelberg School.

1 What did the work of these artists say about their historical and geographic context?
2 What can be said about the cultural/social context of street art?
3 In what ways are the Heidelberg School and the work of street artists similar or different?
4 Consider relevant aspects of the aims and subject matter of the artists and their reflection of contemporary values. Discuss style and symbolism where they are relevant.

Reko Rennie

Regardless of size and location, Rennie's projects remain political and shine a light on the richness of Aboriginal culture.

– VINCENT ALESSI, ART AND AUSTRALIA, SUMMER 2014

Always Was, Always Will Be is a site-specific design painted by Reko Rennie on a public building in Darlinghurst in Sydney (Figure 5.55). It was commissioned by the City of Sydney, supposedly as a temporary work, but it is now a long-term addition to the streetscape. It was painted in a style typical of the artist, with vibrant, fluoro colours and bold, repetitive hard-edge patterns. The neon text – 'Always was, always will be' – refers to the ownership of the land by the Gadigal people.

Born in Melbourne, Rennie is an urban artist who traces his Aboriginal roots back to his grandmother's country in Northern New South Wales. She was taken away from her parents and her community as part of the policy now referred to as the Stolen Generations. This is recent history – it happened less than three generations ago. Such knowledge has influenced Rennie's political activism. In his work, he addresses contemporary Aboriginal culture in an urban environment and provokes discussion about race, identity, land rights, the Stolen Generations and deaths in custody.

Figure 5.55 Reko Rennie, *Always Was, Always Will Be*, 2012, site-specific, acrylic paint, neon and aluminium, Sydney

The large-scale patterns on this building are based on traditional geometric markings of the Kamilaroi people. Lines and patterns were an integral part of maintaining records of marriage lines, family groups and territorial boundaries. They were passed down through sand engravings and shield carvings made for ceremonies, and through tree carvings used to mark significant sites. Rennie is able to use them because of family connections. For him, they reflect his connections to his community.

Cultural

In another way, his geometric patterns also make reference to the Op Art and Pop Art of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as to the principles of graphic design. Further symbolism can be seen in other examples of Rennie's work: the crown is a graffiti tag referring to graffiti 'royalty' (made popular by Jean-Michel Basquiat, an early street artist who has been an important influence on Rennie) and the Aboriginal flag pays respect to all Aboriginal people.

Cultural

Rennie grew up around art – his father was an artist – but he had no formal art education. He discovered graffiti, hip-hop and breakdancing as a teenager. These influences on his formative years have been significant in developing his artistic practice and have led to him undertaking street commissions and exhibiting around the world, in cities such as Paris, London, Venice and New York. He is also committed to community projects with urban Aboriginal youth – for example, *Welcome to Redfern*.

Personal

Today, Reko Rennie is widely recognised as an interdisciplinary artist who works across a range of contemporary media and art forms. He has produced work using aerosol and stencils, and he creates sculpture and installations as well as projection and neon works to reinterpret his Aboriginal identity in an urban world.

Contemporary

OTHER WORKS

- *Neon Natives*, Melbourne, 2011 – neon 'drawings' in an inner-city street
- *Welcome to Redfern*, Sydney, 2013 – a mural covering all sides of a terrace house
- *Federation²*, Melbourne, 2016 – light installation during White Night Melbourne

ACTIVITY 5.16

1 Rennie worked as a journalist for a number of years, but believes that he is able to make more powerful statements and provoke discussion about Aboriginal Australian culture and identity more effectively by creating art, especially in public places. If you agree with this position, write a paragraph that examines two examples of art that makes the viewer appreciate an issue in a different way.

2 Picasso's *Guernica* (Figure 5.27) has often been quoted as an example of the power of an image to communicate a social or moral injustice. Research *Guernica* and write a paragraph about how it tells a story of the impact of war in a different way to that of a newspaper article. If you don't agree that an artwork can be a more powerful statement than a newspaper article, make a case for the fact that the pen is mightier than the paintbrush. Whatever your opinion, use visual details from at least two artworks to support your response.

Figure 5.56 Guido van Helten, *Brim Silos*, 2015–16

Guido van Helten

My work is always about people and place.

– GUIDO VAN HELTEN

Four giant portraits, painted on concrete with a combination of spray paint and acrylic house paint, loom over the Henty Highway in the Wimmera district of North-West Victoria (Figure 5.56). The group of 30-metre-tall wheat silos was built in the 1930s and they were decommissioned around 2012 due to changes in agricultural management. Such silos were once central to farming communities and could be found throughout Australia's wheat belt. They are still iconic symbols of life in small wheat-farming communities, and remain a powerful visual presence in the landscape.

Brisbane-based artist Guido van Helten approached agribusiness GrainCorp for approval to paint a set of silos and together they considered a range of locations. Brim, a tiny community of 80 people, was selected as the site because the silos on the edge of the township could be seen from a great distance. The paintings were funded by grants from local government, Creative Victoria and a local community group, with donated paint and assistance in kind from local businesses. They are much loved in Brim, and show the power that exists when communities work together for a purpose.

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The *Brim Silos* portraits have a subtle, nostalgic quality. The monochromatic warm brown colours and subtle tonal gradations on the surface of the silos blend in and sit comfortably in the landscape. The identities of the four figures – three men and a woman – have been kept private, partly with the help of the shadows over their faces, so that instead of being individuals, they represent the general spirit of the community. Van Helten said that if the images remained anonymous, people would have their own connection to the work. He wanted viewers to be free to make up stories about the characters, believing that the 'real' story was in the eye of the beholder.

Painting †he six silos took van Helten three weeks of solid work, painting with aerosol and brush from a boom lift. Conditions were challenging, with temperatures as high as 42°C, winds up to 70 kph and a dust storm. During the planning stage, the artist took photos of many of the local characters and selected the final four figures after a couple of photo shoots. Throughout the painting process, he worked from photographic references stored on his phone.

The monumental scale of the paintings on the Brim silos dwarfs the humans standing below. The fact that they have been painted on a rough, curved surface and exhibited in such a non-traditional setting in a flat, open landscape affects the experience of the viewer. Van Helten says: 'It's about this place, it's about the community and, on a broader scale, the whole Wimmera region.'

OTHER WORKS

- 2015 and 2016 in Australia – including Stanthorpe, Queensland; Lismore and Wollongong, New South Wales; Fitzroy, Melbourne; Redfern, Sydney; Benalla, Victoria
- 2015 and 2016 overseas – including Aalborg, Denmark; Rome, Italy; Minsk, Belarus; Kyiv, Ukraine; Fort Smith, USA; Ecatepec, Mexico; Ostende, Belgium; Laguardia, Spain

ACTIVITY 5.17

Large-scale murals are becoming increasingly popular around the world. Silos have also been painted by English artists Phlegm and Hense in Western Australia and by the Brazilian twins Os Gemeos in Vancouver, Canada. The progress of such paintings on unconventional surfaces is often shown via social media, such as the short YouTube versions available via the *Art-iculate Second Edition Textbook*.

Watch the two videos provided via YouTube. Compare the silos painted by these four artists by explaining how they are different. Consider subject matter, style, their relationship with the landscape and their effect on the viewer.

Augustus, Weaver and Koons

Public Art is for the birds.

– TERRY ALLEN, AMERICAN SINGER AND ARTIST

The three examples of public sculpture on these pages are all based on the human figure, and were designed to be placed in public spaces and to have a relationship with the people who walk past. *Augustus of Prima Porta* (Figure 5.57) can be seen as a work of propaganda. Such sculptures are one of the oldest forms of approved public art. Jeff Koons' *Pluto and Proserpina* (Figure 5.58) is a contemporary response to **classical** subject matter and style and, in a very different way, the *Three Businessmen Who Brought Their Own Lunch: Batman, Swanston and Hoddle* (Figure 5.59) is a whimsical representation of three of Melbourne's founders.

Like politicians today, Augustus – the first emperor of the Roman Empire – was very particular about the way he was represented and the symbolism that was part of his image. This life-size **figurative** statue shows him to be younger than his years and in perfect physical condition. He is seen in military clothing, addressing his troops in his role as commander in chief of the Roman Army. But this sculpture is more than a symbol of his role as leader: it also represents his connection to the gods.

Augustus's breastplate alludes to his political and diplomatic triumphs, but also bears detailed **relief carvings** of Roman gods. His bare feet are a reference to the ways in which gods and heroes were often represented. The god Cupid, the son of Venus, is riding a dolphin near his right foot – these smaller figures are not only a structural support, but the dolphin is also a reference to a great naval battle won by Augustus. Cupid is also a reference to Augustus's claim to be descended from Venus. The statue itself, thought to be a copy of a bronze original, was heavily influenced by the *Doryphoros* by Polykleitos, a fifth-century BCE Greek work, and has much in common with it, such as the **contrapposto** pose, where the weight is on one leg.

The *contrapposto* of the figures in Koons' *Pluto and Proserpina* is far more extreme. The contorted figures are suggestive of violent movement in contrast to Augustus's more relaxed posture. This free-standing work, more than 3 metres high, was inspired by Bernini's *Rape of Prosperina*, carved in the Baroque style in 1621–22. That work, in turn, was inspired by classical sculptures from ancient Rome.

classical related to the art of ancient Greece and Rome; used to refer to the characteristics of beauty, balance and unity associated with these periods of art

figurative representing objects from the observed world in such a way that they can easily be recognised

relief carving any 3D work that projects *from* but belongs *to* the wall, or other type of background surface, on which it is carved

contrapposto Italian for counterpose; having the weight on one leg and the body twisted so that the hips and legs are turned in a different direction to the shoulders and head

Figure 5.57 *Augustus of Prima Porta*, first-century CE, marble, Vatican Museums, The Vatican (Rome)

Figure 5.58 Jeff Koons, *Pluto and Proserpina*, 2010–13, mirror-polished stainless steel with transparent colour coating, live flowering plants (327.7 x 167 x 143.8 cm), temporary installation in Piazza della Signoria, Florence

Figure 5.59 Alison Weaver and Paul Quinn, *Three Businessmen Who Brought Their Own Lunch: Batman, Swanston and Hoddle*, 1993, bronze

Unlike *Augustus of Prima Porta*, which was carved from marble, Koons' sculpture was fabricated using contemporary technology and the gold-coloured surface was polished to a mirror finish. In Figure 5.58, it can be seen as it was temporarily installed in 2015 beside the copy of Michelangelo's *David* that stands in Piazza della Signoria in Florence. *Pluto and Proserpina* is part of Koons' *Antiquity* series, which was inspired by the themes, characters and myths of classical antiquity. Here it interacts with the other statues and the architecture of the public square, and functions as a dialogue between past and present.

The semi-nude figures are intertwined and the action is intense. The diagonal thrusts emphasise the struggle of Proserpina, the daughter of Ceres, the ancient Roman goddess of agriculture and fertility, during her abduction by Pluto, the god of the underworld. The extreme reality of the sculpture – the texture of the skin, the folds of the drapery and the pressure of hand on flesh – is almost disguised by the mirrored surface, which reflects the light and creates strong contrast. The artist explains that the sculpture is: 'really a symbol of the seasons and of … the energy of life … The color yellow – gold – is like the sun – very, very bright in its intensity.'

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Three Businessmen Who Brought Their Own Lunch: Batman, Swanston and Hoddle, by Alison Weaver and Paul Quinn (Figure 5.59), stands on the corner of one of Melbourne's busiest pedestrian intersections, facing into the public space. Life-sized and thin, with exaggerated features, they represent three pioneers of

[Cultural] early Melbourne: Batman (who founded the first settlement in Melbourne and called it 'Batmania'), Swanston (a businessman and banker) and Hoddle (the surveyor who designed the grid layout of Melbourne's CBD). Weaver says that although they have been given identities that make them at home in their geographical location, she also sees them as anonymous, 'trapped in the perpetual motion of consumerism', placed as they are in a busy shopping area.

These free-standing figures are popular with passers-by, who enjoy their elongated

[Structural] figures and quirky expressions. Cast in bronze, the subtle colour differences are the result of differing chemical treatments to create a **patina** on the surface of the bronze.

OTHER WORKS

- Anonymous Roman, *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius*, c. 173–76 CE – bronze statue
- Andrea del Verrocchio, *Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni*, 1480–88 – bronze statue
- Giambologna, *Rape of the Sabine Women*, 1583 – an abduction scene carved in marble
- Jeff Koons, *Puppy*, 1992 – site-specific sculpture made of stainless steel, soil and flowering plants
- Jeff Koons, *Balloon Dog*, 1994–2000 – multiple versions of mirror-polished stainless steel figure

REFERENCE
Jeff Koons, 2012, *Jeff Koons*, Hatje Cantz, Berlin

ACTIVITY 5.18

1 The *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* was made around 173–76 CE, and is an example of Roman public art. The *Equestrian Statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni* is a Renaissance work created by Andrea del Verrocchio in 1480–88. It was heavily influenced by Roman sculpture of over a millennium earlier. Compare these two works using the Structural Framework and the Cultural Framework. Explain their functions as examples of public art.

2 *Puppy* by Jeff Koons is a contemporary public sculpture with a steel structure covered in flowering plants. Refer to the Contemporary Framework to help you make a list of its contemporary qualities. *Compare* it with another postmodern sculpture by Koons, such as *Balloon Dog* or *Michael Jackson and Bubbles*.

patina a thin layer that forms on a surface – usually metal – because of use, age or chemical action

abstract not representing outward appearances; having no recognisable subject. *Note:* this is different from abstracted, where the artist simplifies the subject but it remains figurative

Inge King and Sofles

The exciting thing about outdoor sculpture is the change with the light, the weather … everything is in constant flux. It becomes almost a living entity.

– INGE KING

The art of both Inge King (1915–2016) and Sofles is equally at home in public spaces. King was a renowned artist who made monumental sculptures – works in three dimensions – and Sofles is a street artist who generally works on two-dimensional surfaces. His example on these pages, though, includes the fourth dimension of time.

Yet the differences are broader than that. *Forward Surge* (Figure 5.60) is solid and static, but creates the effect of movement as the curved lines suggest the onward flow of waves. *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped* (Figure 5.61) includes visual movement over a seven-minute time-span with the use of digital projection onto a flat surface. The image literally changes with great fluidity as it is projected from a digital file onto the flat wall via a computer link.

King's sculpture is **abstract** in its simplicity of form and lack of detail, while Sofles' work is a figurative image – a woman in a space that morphs around her. Both works are the result of collaborative processes. *Forward Surge* was fabricated in a foundry by steel workers and constructed by engineers, while *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped* is the result of intense collaboration between the painter (Sofles), a motion designer who animated the figure (Grant Osborn), a videographer (Selina Miles) and a musician (Opiuo).

Inge King was born in Germany in 1915 but left on the eve of World War II, first travelling to England and then in 1951 to Melbourne with her husband, printmaker Grahame King. Early in her career she was inspired by Mediaeval sculpture as well as German Expressionism (in particular the sculpture of Ernst Barlach), in response to the Holocaust and the general suffering of the war. In Australia, she was a co-founder of

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Centre Five, a group of sculptors who worked to create a higher profile for public sculpture. She made monumental sculpture for 50 years, finding inspiration in the Australian landscape. As she said:

It's vast and rough, it's untidy and how can you counter that? You can make something 10 or 20 metres high and it doesn't mean anything. It has to have power and the power comes through simplicity and an inner strength.

The four wave-like forms of *Forward Surge*, frozen as they are about to crash forward, visually link the Arts Centre with its iconic spire and Hamer Hall, while at the same time contrasting the lush green of the lawn on which they sit. Both buildings are curved themselves, so there is a synergy between them and the sculpture that sits between them. The forms have an energy and

Structural

momentum that create the sense of power that King wanted to suggest – perhaps partially because the material itself is more readily associated with industry than it is with art. The spaces in between are as important as the shapes – in fact, it's the spaces that allow the public to become physically engaged. King called *Forward Surge* 'an environmental sculpture, which encourages the spectator to explore it by walking around and through the arches, as well as viewing it in its entirety'. She didn't mind skateboarders using it either, because she believed that sculpture should be an integral part of the community.

Just as King's monumental sculptures were born of the artist's creative responses to her time and place, so Sofles' work is a product of its time. He pushes the boundaries, applying technology with a new approach to **time-based art**. *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped*

Contemporary

time-based art depends on the passage of time – for example, performance, video and sound works and much technology-based art

Figure 5.61 Sofles, *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped*, 2015, creative direction by Shaun Hossack, motion design by Grant Osborn, videography by Selina Miles, music by Opiuo

uses all the contemporary elements of art. As well as time being an integral element, it is essentially a work that explores the possibilities of light and sound in addition to the traditional elements of colour, line and shape.

Sofles painted the black outlines of his image on a white wall and on a grand scale. Look at the first image in Figure 5.61 to see the work prior to the projection. The wall itself is a raw canvas, the pink fire hydrant work of Ash Keating visible beneath the figure of the woman and the graffiti on the lower sections keeping it true to the graffiti background from which it springs. The projection was repeated every ten minutes for the 12-hour duration of White Night Melbourne 2015 and today exists only through its documentation – a typical contemporary approach.

The wall itself is a contemporary exhibition space – on the side of an open car park on the edge of a commercial district. The viewer was immersed in the sound/light/time experience, and viewing time was greatly increased over the time that is generally spent in front of a painting in a gallery. The figure of the woman is the focal point of the wall and the video projection (Figure 5.61). There is a rhythm in the movement of the colours and shapes across the wall, matched by the sound that accompanies the video.

Go to the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for the video documentation of Sofles' *Graffiti Mapped* as well as a video that explains the production process.

OTHER WORKS

- Inge King, *The Sentinel*, 2000, Eastern Freeway, Doncaster – 13-metre-high steel sculpture
- Inge King, *Rings of Saturn*, 2006, Heide Museum of Modern Art – stainless steel sculpture
- Sofles – wall at Northland Shopping Centre and irregularly painted Melbourne laneways

- Sofles, *In Perspextive*, temporary installation, Christchurch – video available on Instagram, @sofles

REFERENCES

Sasha Grishin 2014, *The Art of Inge King,* Macmillan

ACTIVITY 5.19

On the internet, find an image of *Draped Seated Woman* by Henry Moore at the National Gallery of Victoria.

1   Discuss this work as an example of public art. How do you think it relates to its physical context?
2   Compare it with *Forward Surge*. Discuss relative scale and placement. How does the relationship with the viewer differ? Explain why you think this is so.

ACTIVITY 5.20

1   Make a list of the contemporary qualities that you find in *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped*. Consider its art form, its location, the technology involved, its relationship with time and its approach to collaboration.
2   What is the role of the viewer in relation to this artwork? Is it different from the role of a viewer regarding artworks in the past? Is it more active or passive?
3   Consider the importance of digital technology and the internet in its creation, documentation and sharing. Write a paragraph using the Contemporary Framework as reference.

USEFUL WEBSITES

For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Cambridge University Press

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this area of study, you will continue to use the art process and visual language to explore and experiment with materials and techniques, and to develop personal and creative responses in your own artistic practice in relation to the theme of culture and contemporary ideas and art practices. Because your practical folio should be an extension of Area of Study 1, you should explore areas of personal interest related to:

- a particular culture or aspect of that culture
- contemporary ideas and approaches to art.

This can be done in a number of ways, including as a single folio of work or as two separate folios. This chapter will look at the latter option, with the first folio focusing on the cultural context and the second on contemporary ideas and approaches to art. You will explore the ways in which these influence your artwork.

You should trial different ways of working to develop your own style and approach to the application of various techniques, materials and processes. You must manipulate the technical and expressive qualities of art forms to produce *at least one finished artwork.* Although the focus is on the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks, students can use all the Analytical Frameworks as appropriate to analyse visual qualities, concepts and meaning in their artworks and to document their artistic practice in a visual diary.

For this unit, it may be appropriate to use a concept like 'The Human Body and Culture' as a starting point to explore areas of personal interest related to a particular culture or aspect of that culture and 'War and Conflict' to explore areas of personal interest related to contemporary ideas and approaches to art.

This chapter will present you with ways to:

- interpret a concept
- explore 'The Human Body and Culture' as a possible concept
- explore 'War and Conflict' as a possible concept
- visually interpret your idea using thumbnail sketches and digital photography
- explore the art process
- explore qualities and characteristics of selected materials and art forms – working directly
- trial materials, techniques, processes and art forms – a structured, progressive approach
- establish a visual language
- create a folio of visual responses to an area of interest
- document your artistic practice
- apply the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks supported by aspects of the Structural and Personal Frameworks
- create a range of visual responses, including at least one finished artwork
- document the art process using visual language and the Analytical Frameworks.

6.1 Art process 1: Exploration of ideas

Folio 1: Cultural Context – 'The Human Body and Culture'

You will continue to use the art process and experiment with visual language to develop, present and document your ideas inspired by cultural sources. You must reflect on how cultural aspects are evident in your work. To generate ideas, you can research art that:

- is particular to a specific culture
- celebrates specific events or is produced for festivals
- comments on culture, like street art
- reinforces a social group's sense of power and authority
- challenges social attitudes and assumptions.

Artists have often worked hard to strengthen social and cultural values through their art. Art has been used as commemoration, to demonstrate power, as propaganda and for subversive purposes (now a favourite theme in contemporary society).

Art is closely related to the way members of a particular culture live, especially their religious beliefs, philosophy and environment. Religious art was often commissioned to strengthen shared beliefs. Egyptian tombs, Christian churches, Buddhist temples and Muslim mosques often present significant works of art because the people who made them understood that the arts stimulated the imagination and promoted thought about the quality of life and the possibility of an afterlife.

Art was often created to perform cultural functions rather than for its own sake. Much pre-modern art was made for functions such as propaganda. A ruler would commission an idealised portrait that transformed them from a weak and indecisive monarch into a divinely inspired figurehead of the nation. The destruction of some of these images shows evidence of the passing of political power. In some cultures, when a mourner wanted to provide safe passage of a relative from one world to the next, they would have an artist carve a ferocious guardian spirit. To convey the message of the artworks, artists would often make use of symbols. These visual references are sometimes difficult for us to interpret, but would have been immediately recognisable to people in the culture in which the artwork was created. They functioned as a visual language that viewers could read.

Folio 2: Contemporary Ideas and Approaches to Art – 'War and Conflict'

To generate ideas, you can research contemporary art that:

- challenges our traditional understanding of art
- makes use of contemporary art elements and materials
- is made for a public space or created in public spaces
- is collaborative
- is created for an art prize
- is ephemeral
- draws attention to contemporary issues and concerns regarding war or conflict
- presents a contemporary view of war.

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6.2 Interpreting your concept

The human body and culture

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH THIS CONCEPT?

Cultural You may identify with your ethnicity and culture of origin, or you could explore other cultures, social groups or subcultures. A subculture could be a group of people with a common interest, such as 'petrol heads', 'punks' or 'footy fans'.

You could examine the human body and how cultural identity is often established easily by physical traits, clothing, adornment or activities. The use of the figure – male and female – in art has its precedent in prehistoric cave paintings and sculpture. Since then, the figure has been used in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is part of a narrative, or a symbol; sometimes it is used to celebrate the pinnacle of God's creation, or as a record of human achievement or folly. Artists have depicted the human body as an exploration of beauty or sometimes purely as a vehicle of artistic expression. All the traditions of the past in art have presented us with the human body in every conceivable pose and situation sanctioned by history, religion or mythology.

You have no doubt studied the depiction of the human body in art during theory classes over the past few years, and may even have drawn the human form as a tool of expression or to develop skills and techniques in life drawing.

Cultural The human body plays an important role in the art of certain cultures; its depiction is forbidden in others; and in some cultures, it is the body itself that becomes art. The body can be the subject of art or the surface on which art is created. The body can be seen as graceful, awkward, classical, emaciated, obese, beautiful, ugly, at rest, dynamic, idealised, symbolic, emotional or spiritual.

You could look at the body and its relationship with its environment. Is it comfortable in, or alien to, its environment? When entering another country, we often feel out of place and uncomfortable. This could be because of our dress, our size or the expected codes of behaviour in a particular culture.

Enhancing or altering the human form by means of what we add to it could be an option. Fashion and jewellery are also very important aspects of 'The Human Body and Culture'. Fashion varies from culture to culture. In some cultures, the body is celebrated or emphasised, but in others it is hidden.

ACTIVITY 6.1

Create a mind map to establish ideas that you associate with 'The Human Body and Culture'.

War and conflict

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH THIS CONCEPT?

You could approach this concept in a number of ways. Most students immediately look at world war or contemporary wars like Desert **Contemporary** Storm, Afghanistan or the 'War on Terror'. Although it can do so, war and conflict does not necessarily refer to armed conflict between nations. You could look at conflict between two individuals who are fighting in a sporting conflict, opposing each other across the chessboard or even having a war of words. You could deal with conflict in the home, within your own mind or even conflicted emotions.

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The conflict you explore could be between two visual elements in an abstract painting. You could look at the ways in which war and conflict are

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represented using contemporary art forms and approaches, or even the conflict that arises because of the art form used. Your artwork could cause conflict because of the way it challenges traditional understandings of art.

Conflict will arise when there are opposing points of view, and you may wish to take on a contemporary issue that divides opinion or an issue such as domestic violence, violence against women, or drug and alcohol-fuelled violence in society today. Any of these interpretations can provide you with the stimulus to explore contemporary ideas or issues, and approaches to art in your own work.

If you were to approach the concept in a literal way and deal with war and armed conflict between nations and ideologies, you could present a contemporary view of war or compare the way in which war is viewed today with the way it was viewed in the past.

ACTIVITY 6.2

Create a mind map to establish ideas that you associate with 'War and Conflict' in terms of contemporary ideas or issues and approaches to art.

6.3 Art process 2: Experimentation with art elements and art principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms

A pathway to making art

USING VISUAL LANGUAGE TO EXPLORE ISSUES AND IDEAS OF CULTURE AND CONTEMPORARY PRACTICES

KEY SKILL

Produce visual responses to cultural and contemporary ideas and issues through exploration and experimentation using the art process.

You could, as in Unit 1, complete a series of teacher-directed tasks, but it would be helpful to familiarise yourself with the requirements of Units 3 and 4 by completing a self-directed and personal body of work under the guidance of your teacher. A number of things could be used as a starting point for the exploration of your chosen art form/s, including observations, imagination, ideas or concepts.

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ACTIVITY 6.3

Research how the human body is viewed in different cultures and the role it plays in the art of different cultures.
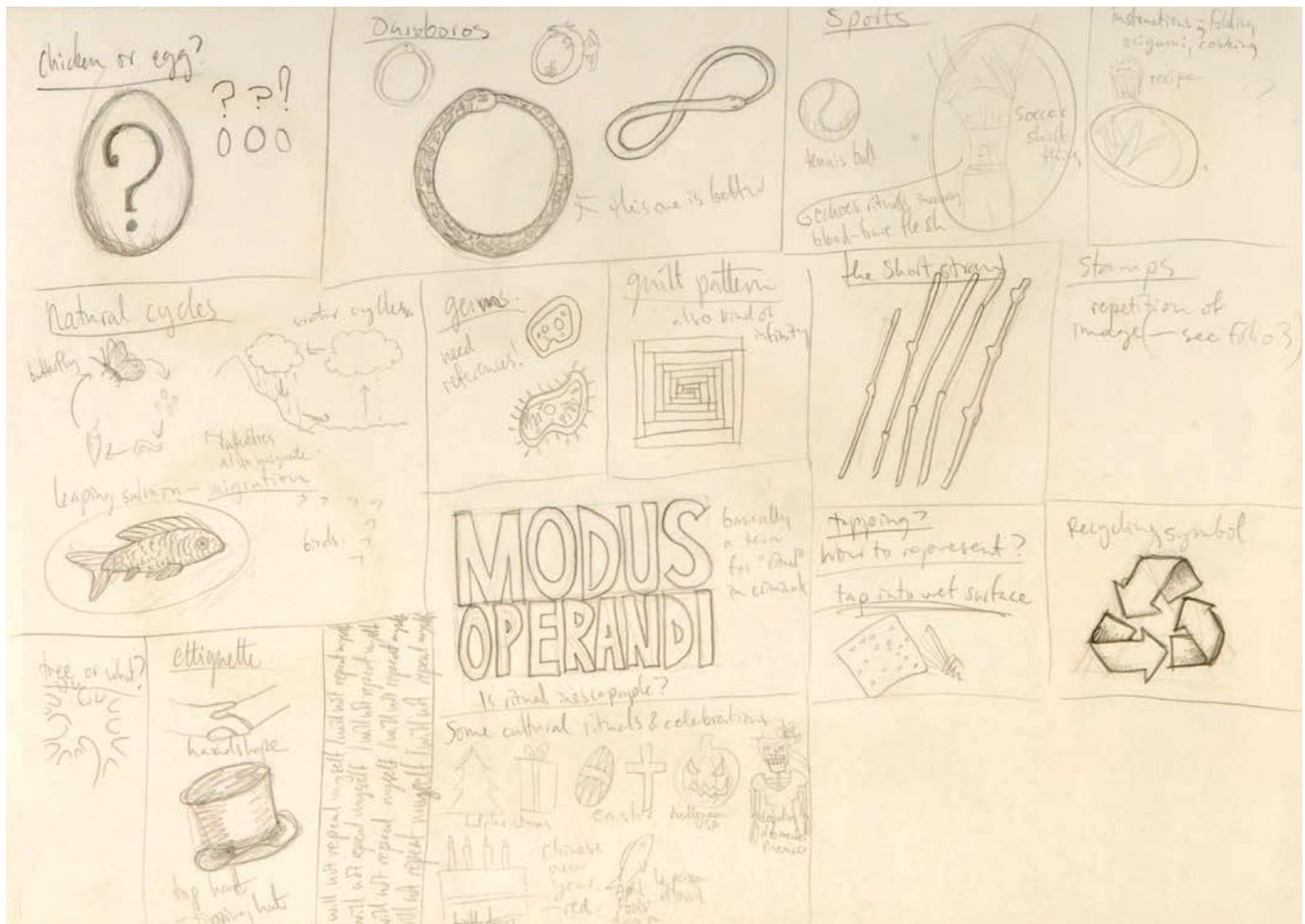
ACTIVITY 6.4

Research how war and conflict are represented in contemporary art through specific imagery or through the manipulation of the elements and principles of art or media and art forms.

Once you have a few ideas about the possible directions you would like to explore, you can begin to collect relevant images relating to the idea/s you wish to pursue. The collection of images, objects and surfaces is referred to in section 1.4 of Chapter 1. Establishing your ideas, and researching possible interpretations and approaches to these ideas, is just the first part of the *visual exploration of issues of personal interest through observation and imagination*.

It is important to begin your personal exploration of ideas by exploring interpretations or representations of your idea/s in a visual way. The best way to do this is to use thumbnail sketches or a digital camera to begin recording images. This is a personal exploration that is informed by your research. The use of both these methods can be seen in the work of two VCE students. Phoebe Garrett uses thumbnail sketches to explore a number of interpretations of ritual in various cultures using images, symbols and even words that she associates with the concept (Figure 6.1), while Diana Mejia-Correa uses thumbnail

Figure 6.1 Examples of thumbnail sketches by Phoebe Garrett exploring a number of options for ritual

digital photographs to explore ideas she has developed about an aspect of seeing (Figure 6.2). These photographs can be submitted as a contact sheet showing a series of photographs exploring a concept or area of interest.

ACTIVITY 6.5

Use thumbnail sketches or a digital camera to record 10 images that provide a visual interpretation of the concepts you would like to explore. Produce a range of ideas to interpret these. Do not only think of the obvious. Don't limit your choices because you are not sure how you will be able to resolve your ideas. Your teacher will be able to assist you with possible solutions and others will come to you as you begin to trial media and methods. Often solutions can present themselves by chance.

KEY SKILL

Explore and document the use of media, materials, techniques, processes and art forms, and investigate how these can be used to create artworks, taking into consideration contemporary approaches.

Using the ideas you have generated though brainstorming or mind mapping, and by creating thumbnail sketches and photographs as a starting point, you should begin to develop a folio of creative visual responses that presents your own understanding of the concept. Ideally, this should be done using a variety of materials, techniques and processes.

To develop a knowledge of the *qualities and characteristics of selected materials and art forms and how they may be used to present concepts and images*, you have to experiment with them and note, with annotations, the effects achieved by certain techniques and approaches. With this knowledge, you can begin to make art.
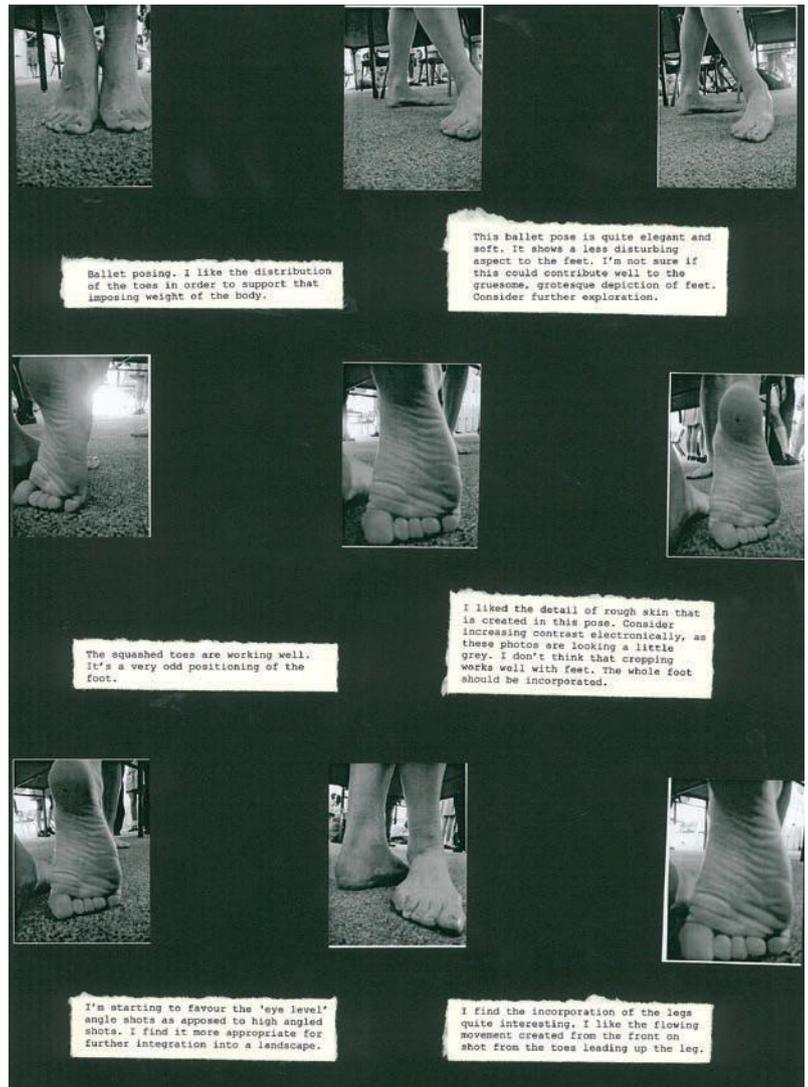
Figure 6.2 Examples of thumbnail photographs by Diana Mejia-Correa

Making art, or artistic practice, is a process. Every artist has their own way of approaching this. Some will plan each step of the way while others will work directly, developing an artwork as they go – 'knocking about in the studio and bumping into things'. The latter approach was evident in the 'splatter paintings' of Jackson Pollock, who worked directly on the canvas without any preconceived ideas beyond his process:

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When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing. It is only after a sort of 'get acquainted' period that I see what I have been about.

Yet, even for Pollock, there was a development and refinement of the work:

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.

holistic the idea that all the properties of a given system (e.g. physical) cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone; painting with no particular focal point and no natural boundaries – also called all-over painting

His paintings were built up and developed over time as he poured and dripped his paint from a can. Instead of using brushes, he manipulated the paint with sticks, trowels or knives. Yet, despite the way they appear to many viewers, his paintings were not totally accidental. The pouring of paint from the tin was not random. Pollock said:

When I am painting I have a general notion as to what I am about. I can control the flow of paint: there is no accident. When I lose control, the result is a mess.

To maintain control over the paint, Pollock placed a stick into the tin and allowed the paint to run down the stick, directing it onto the canvas. He controlled the amount of paint that poured down the stick by the angle at which he tipped the can. In these seemingly random accidental paintings, there was still an element of control, a development, a process.

Refinement can be seen in his work with the final touches of paint or the final drop that achieved what he wanted at that point in time. However, refinement of composition can also be seen in his process. Pollock introduced a style called All-Over Painting, evident in *Lavender Mist* (1950) (Figure 6.3), which used oil, enamel and aluminium on a canvas measuring 2.20 x 2.97 metres. This style avoids any points of emphasis or identifiable parts within the whole canvas, and therefore abandons the traditional idea of composition in terms of relations among parts. The paintings seem to have no beginning or end. They extend to the limits of the canvas and even beyond. The painting became **holistic**, an environment that encompasses the viewer. The design of Pollock's paintings had no relation to the shape or size of the canvas; in fact, once the
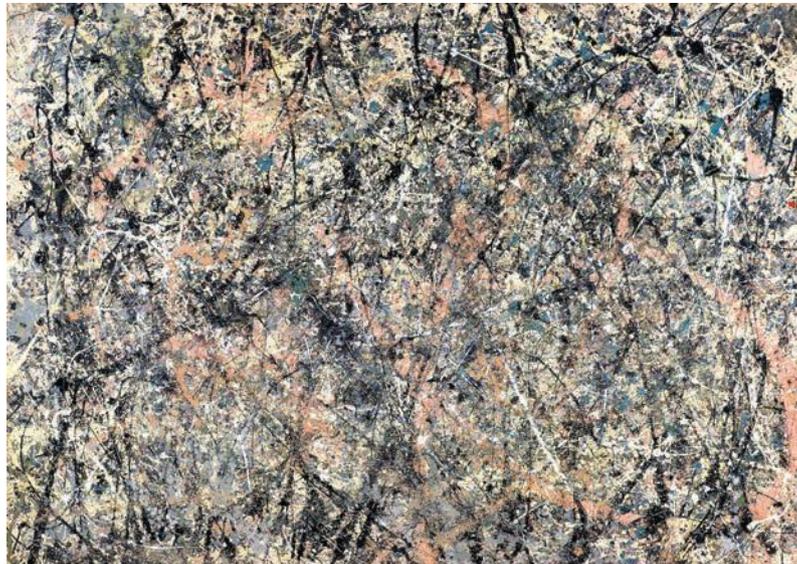

Figure 6.3 Jackson Pollock, *Lavender Mist*, 1950 (220 x 290 cm) © Pollock-Krasner Foundation/ARS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

Figure 6.4 Claude Monet, *Japanese Bridge*, 1924, oil on canvas, Musée Marmottan Monet

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Figure 6.5 Examples of Phoebe Garrett's folio, in which she develops a knowledge of the qualities and characteristics of selected media and how they may be used to present concepts and images

painting was completed, Pollock would often select a piece of the canvas that he considered successful, then cut it out and stretch it. This was another way of refining the composition. Selection is made and the desired composition achieved. This concept of the holistic unstructured picture space was not entirely new. Monet's late *Water Lily* series, for example, uses all-over modulations of the picture surface with no particular focal point and no natural boundaries.

In order to develop knowledge of the qualities and characteristics of selected materials and art forms, you will need to experiment broadly, just as Pollock did. By using different media and experimenting with different techniques and applications of your selected media, you will begin to establish an understanding of how they may be used to present your concepts effectively.

Figure 6.5 shows examples of a student's work that demonstrate this trialling of materials. At this point in her folio, Phoebe Garrett has decided that she wants to create a book of images that relate to her idea and now begins to experiment with a range of media to work out how she will resolve her

final artwork. The exploration of media and techniques goes through various stages, allowing her to see how each medium reacts on the surfaces she wants to use in her final, and which techniques and combinations will provide her with the effect she is seeking. She begins to establish her visual language as she communicates ideas through her experiences, images and objects.

KEY SKILLS

Explore and document the use of media, materials, techniques, processes and art forms and investigate how these can be used to create artworks, taking contemporary approaches into consideration.

VCE student Emily Whinfield came across a burnt-out car on the edge of a cliff. It appeared that someone had tried to destroy any latent evidence in the car before pushing it over the edge into the ocean. The scene inspired a narrative of crime and conflict, and she took a number of photographs of the scene (Figure 6.6), trying to capture the violent act of destruction as well as the destroyed car in conflict with the natural environment in which it was found. This led her to explore the conflict between modern human-made infrastructure and nature.

Inspired by the scene, Emily decided to trial art forms other than photography as a means of resolving her ideas, turning to the manipulation of the ready-made and drawing. Using a non-traditional art

Figure 6.6 Emily Whinfield – digital photograph

Figure 6.7 Emily Whinfield, digital photograph of burnt and smashed toy car
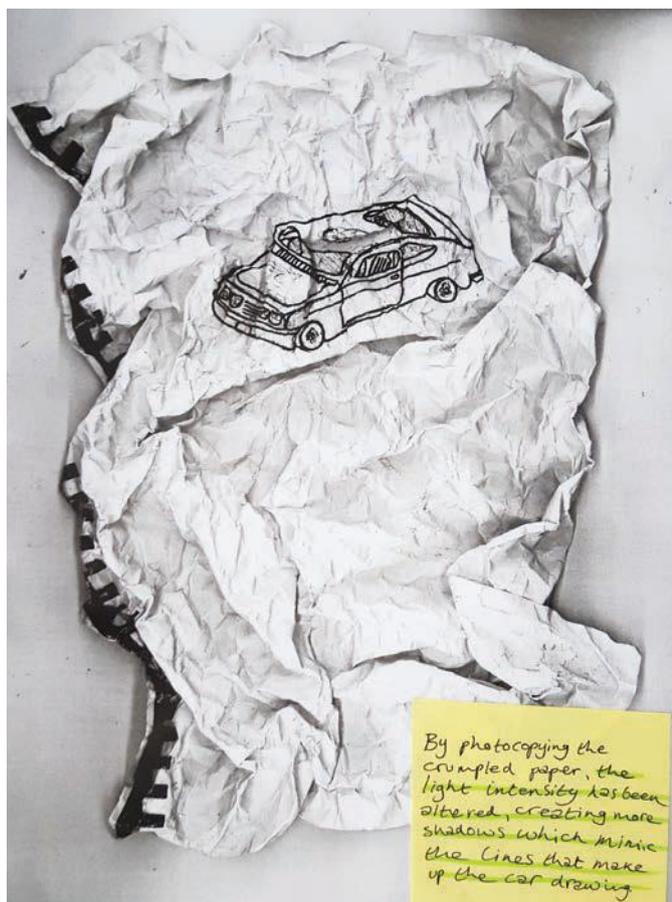
form – the ready-made – Emily destroyed a toy car with a hammer before dousing it with flammable liquid and setting it alight, creating her own burnt-out wreck. She used photography to record the ephemeral artwork of the burning toy and the end results of the process (Figure 6.7). Although the flames did not appear as dramatic as she had hoped, the potential of macro photographs of the burnt-out car in various environments provided Emily with other avenues of exploration, including the presentation of a series of destroyed toy cars or photographs of these.

Emily did a number of observational drawings of the destroyed toy and experimented with these. She 'destroyed' the drawing of the toy by scrunching up the paper to add to the violence and conflict represented in the image. Using another contemporary process, Emily then photocopied the result (Figure 6.8). The dark tones of the photocopy

created a visual link between the folds and creases in the paper, the black lines of the drawing and the black burn marks in the car.

Emily also attempted to add to the sense of conflict by burning the drawings (Figure 6.9). Although she was not happy with the result, the burnt edges and colour changes reminded her of the rusted parts of the original abandoned car she had photographed, and she began to explore the possibility of including rusted metal in her artwork.

This exploration of media, techniques and art forms allowed the student to experiment with different ways of visually representing her ideas and provided her with options that led her to find a visual solution (see Figure 6.31 later in this chapter).

Nicky Purser, a VCE student, wanted to create a portrait of her grandfather. After trialling various media and images, she finally chose to attempt a refined pencil drawing of her grandfather seated on his porch. Once

Figure 6.8 Emily Whinfield, photocopy of a scrunched fineliner drawing

Figure 6.9 Emily Whinfield, burnt drawings
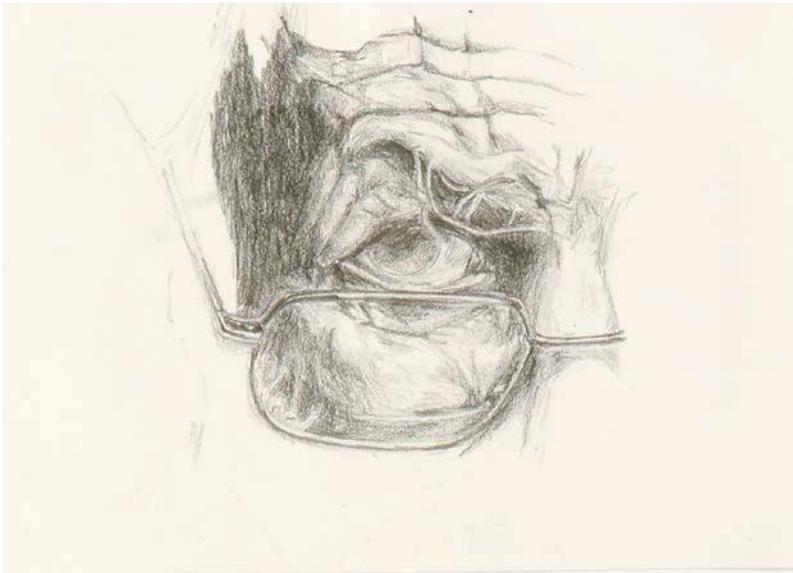
Here I thought I might try and develope the photo on the other page into a sketch or a painting and I experimented with drawing his eye. Although the sketch isn't finished and the strength of the shadow on the left tends to flatten it, I think I got the intensity well. I think, though, that the photo itself captures him perfectly, I don't need to develope it any further
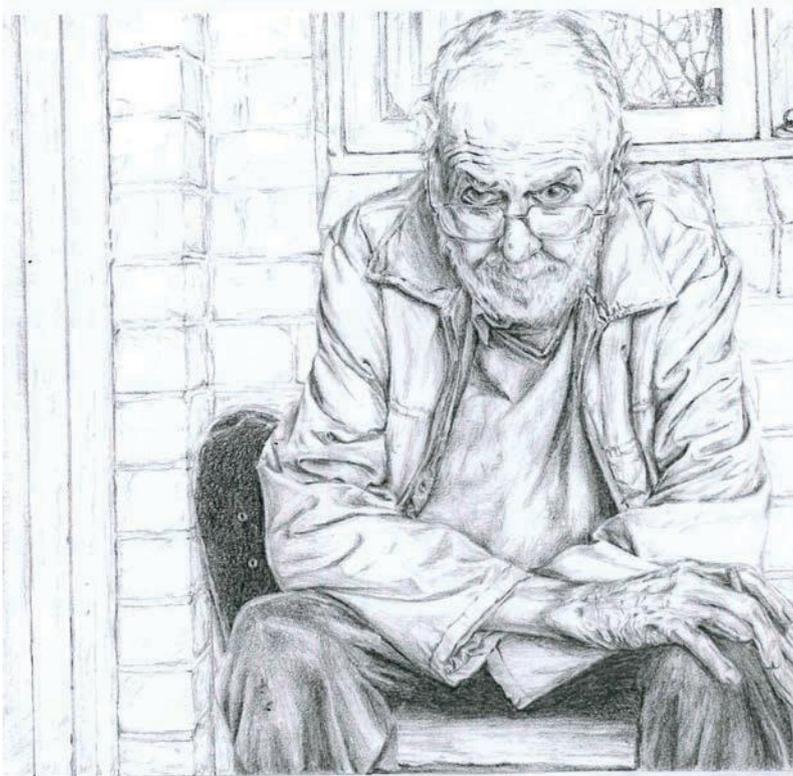
she had established her composition and had the required reference, it was important for her to refine her medium and drawing technique. Through experimentation, she established the grades of pencils that would achieve the tones she wanted and the type of paper that would provide the correct texture for the drawing style she intended using. Nicky also identified potential problems she may have when drawing areas of her subject matter. She attempted a full-scale trial of a section of her portrait (Figure 6.10), dealing with problems such as wrinkles, creases in the skin, fine hair and her grandfather's glasses.

After resolving how she would deal with these difficulties in her drawing, Nicky was confident enough to begin her final artwork (Figure 6.11).

ACTIVITY 6.6

Use different media and experiment with techniques and different applications of your selected media to establish an understanding of how they may be used to present a particular concept effectively.

Figure 6.10 Nicky Purser, pencil drawing (detailed trial)

Figure 6.11 Nicky Purser, resolved pencil drawing of her grandfather

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6.4 Art process 3: Development of ideas, concepts, style and visual language

During this semester, you will need to identify ways of visually representing your concepts and resolving your exploration so that you can produce a finished artwork. You may find that Jackson Pollock's direct approach works for you, but other artists like the French artist Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) followed a more structured approach to trialling materials, techniques, processes and art forms than that of Pollock. This approach is a logical way of interpreting the key knowledge and key skills listed in the Study Design, and is a method you may find useful when developing your folio. The approach used by Théodore Géricault to develop his painting *The Raft of Medusa* (Figure 6.12) provides us with an effective method of developing an artwork from initial concept through various stages of development to a final image. Many of his preparatory works have been preserved, and it is fascinating to follow his practice. His preparatory work can be divided into two areas of exploration: collecting visual source material and compositional planning.

Géricault's painting was based on a shipwreck that occurred in 1816, which resulted in a great deal of controversy. When the ship sank, the captain and crew took the lifeboats and left many of the passengers to fend for themselves. After 13 days, only 15 of the 152 passengers left behind were rescued. Although his painting is often discussed in terms of its social commentary and the recording of a contemporary event, Géricault was less concerned with commenting on where blame lay in this tragedy than in making a powerful work of art.

Always consider the combination of structural elements and principles, technique and your skilful application of the medium as a primary concern, as a powerful drawing will be more effective in conveying your

Figure 6.12 Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of Medusa*, 1818–19, oil on canvas (491 x l716 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris

message than a poor one. Géricault's massive painting *The Raft of Medusa*, which measures 3 x 7 metres, is a bold statement of human suffering rather than a sensationalised tragic event. It deals with the concept of *conflict* by showing humanity in conflict with nature as well as conflicting emotions and mental states.

Figure 6.13 Théodore Géricault, *Head of Shipwrecked Man, Study for The Raft of Medusa*, 1817–19

ACTIVITY 6.7

Research images of shipwrecks like *The Raft of Medusa* and works by J.M.W. Turner, and study the way the artist has represented people in conflict situations.

Explore ways in which you could use similar compositions to represent the trauma and anguish experienced by refugees struggling to escape conflict, and how they find themselves faced with a different conflict as they attempt to get into Australia and Europe. Try reimaging these traditional paintings using a contemporary approach to represent a contemporary issue of conflict.

In order to achieve the most effective artwork possible, Géricault immersed himself in the subject. You will find that it is a lot easier to create a more meaningful and effective image if you work from your own experience, irrespective of whether the image is factual or imagined. Work with what you know – deal with an issue about which you are passionate. Géricault was not part of the incident, so he had to do the next best thing: he researched it extensively.

The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.

– ARISTOTLE

The artist read every account of the incident that he could find, both to stimulate his imagination and to add authenticity to his work. He spoke to survivors and even had a full-scale model built of the raft from which the survivors were rescued. He then observed it to see how it sat in the water and how it moved on the waves. He completed studies, both drawn and painted, of survivors in hospital and bodies of the dead in the mortuary. He observed the effect of exposure on the bodies and the difference in the colouring between the survivors and the dead sailors. He drew from life, placing his models into the poses he required to tell the stories he was considering.

One of the big decisions that Géricault had to make was which part of the narrative he was going to illustrate in his painting. He made drawings of a number of the stages of the shipwreck, from when the ship ran aground to the construction of makeshift rafts and the eventual rescue of the survivors. He tried alternative approaches, showing the survivors being rescued by rowing boats, and explored the trauma experienced by the people on the raft – the survivors calling a boat as it sails close by – before he settled on what he considered the point of most impact. The survivors have just spotted a ship on the horizon and are
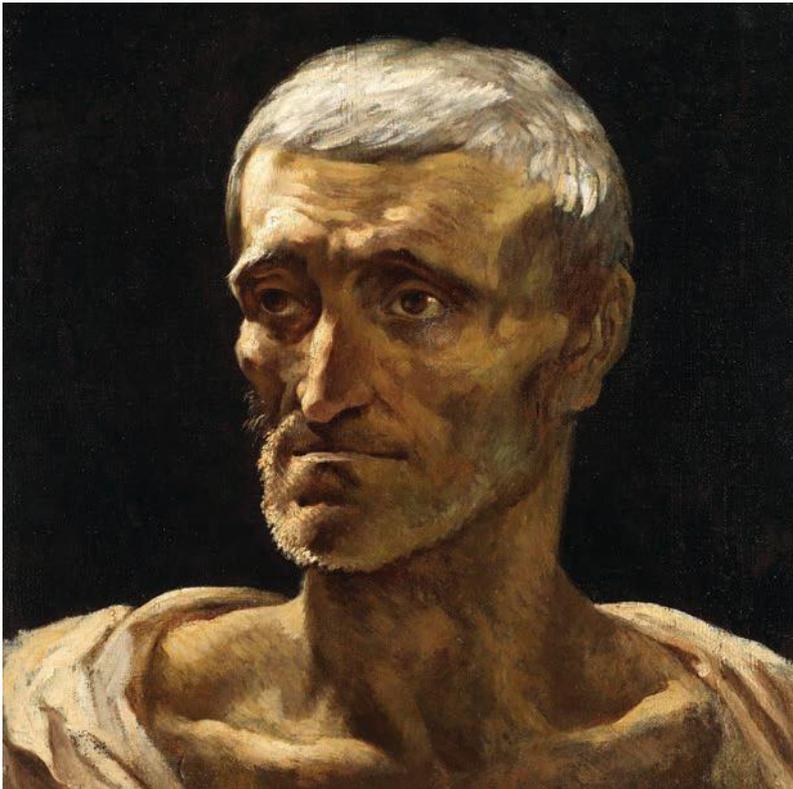
Figure 6.14 Théodore Géricault, *Heads of Guillotined Men*, 1817–20

desperately trying to attract its attention. The emotional response of the viewer is heightened by the uncertainty of the rescue.

Géricault used drawing and painted sketches to determine what would best resolve his intention for the piece. Often you have a vague idea of what you intend, but need to explore a range of options. Drawing is a good way to clarify what is going to work best. You may also wish to explore your ideas with a digital camera. You could photograph various environments and set up different scenarios that you can photograph from different viewpoints.

Géricault also used drawing to explore a range of compositional options once he finalised his idea for the painting. Why bother with planning your composition? You know what you want to paint, draw or photograph, so why waste time? Planning your composition allows you to find the most effective representation of the idea. It allows you to achieve the balance you desire, to work out how to draw the viewer's eyes towards the areas of importance – the focal point – and how to hold the viewer's

attention in your work. The balance and harmony of the work, or the dynamic movement of the composition, will all affect the effective representation of your intention. Planning on a small scale is helpful because you can easily make changes

Figure 6.15 Théodore Géricault, *Anatomical Pieces*, 1818–19, oil on canvas (52 x 64 cm), Musée Fabre, Fratice

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in minimal time, whereas changing your composition when you discover problems in the final work can be difficult and very time-consuming. This does not prevent you from altering your composition or image once you have begun the final work, though – many works do evolve during the working process.

Compositional planning can also be done on the computer using a program such as Photoshop, or even by using a photocopier to make multiple copies and vary the scale of the images, which you can then cut and paste.

It is worth looking at the different ways in which Géricault adds to the drama of the scene, as it is important to consider how you can portray your idea most effectively through your artwork. The subject matter, body language and expression, as well as the formal quality of colour, tone, line and so on, all add impact to your composition.

Figure 6.16 Théodore Géricault, *Study for The Raft of Medusa*, 1818

Figure 6.17 (left) Théodore Géricault, sketch of the survivors being rescued by rowing boats, 1817–18, ink on paper (35 x 41 cm)

Figure 6.18 (top right) Théodore Géricault, ink sketch of the survivors calling to a boat as it sails close by, 1817–18, ink on paper (24 x 33 cm)

Figure 6.19 (bottom right) Théodore Géricault, *Preparatory Work for The Raft of Medusa*, 1817–18, ink on paper (41 x 55 cm)

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foreshortening
shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and to make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

Figure 6.20 Théodore Géricault, *Preparatory Work for The Raft of Medusa in Oil Paint*, 1817–18, oil on canvas (38 x 46 cm)

To explore options and refine his ideas, Géricault produced a number of preparatory paintings using watercolour, coloured ink and even large-scale oil paintings. It is useful to explore your ideas for an artwork in a range of media, to establish what medium would most effectively achieve your intention.

Drawing was also used by Géricault to study details of his final work to resolve problems such as expression, decay, texture, perspective and **foreshortening**. This approach is very valuable when not working directly from an object or scene. If creating a composite image, you must make sure that you maintain a common viewpoint and light source. Digital photographs are very useful as reference if you choose not to work from life as Géricault did.

ACTIVITY 6.8

Choose an idea or image that you would like to represent in a medium of your choice:

1. Using thumbnail sketches, explore eight to 10 varied options for how you could represent your ideas.
2. Note which option would be the most effective for communicating your idea and explain why.
3. After choosing the option you will use to represent your idea, explore five to 10 compositions. These can be done as drawings or using a digital camera. Attempt different viewpoints. Consider your focal point and how you can maintain the viewer's interest in your work. If working in three dimensions, be sure that you consider the way in which your artwork will interact with the space in which it is placed. Is the composition equally effective from all views, or is the work meant to be viewed from the front only?

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6.5 Art process 4: Refinement of materials, techniques and technical processes to provide visual strength to artworks

Figure 6.22 Incomplete trial in oils on oil paper by Elisa Bongetti, with evidence of colour mixing
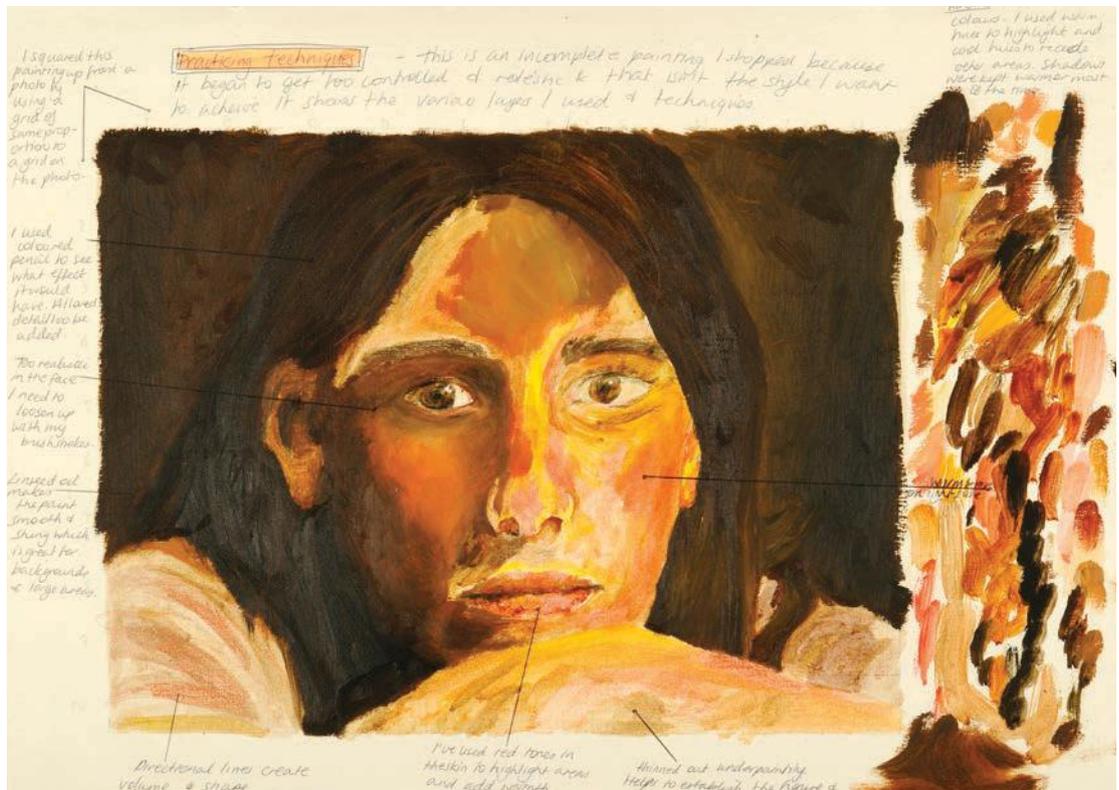
Elisa Bongetti, a VCE Art student, was inspired by a visit to the Archibald Portrait Exhibition. In particular, the double portrait of Jack Thompson by Danelle Bergstrom (Figure 6.21) appealed to her. The subject matter, colouring and loose style of painting inspired Elisa to explore portraiture in oils using a similar approach. Working from photographs she took of a friend, Elisa began trialling her medium and technique (Figure 6.22). Her intention was to capture the physical representation of her friend, developing her technique to achieve a realistic portrait in oils. She also chose to use the element of colour to reflect the personality of her model.

Structural

Elisa wrote:

> *Too tight – I need to loosen up my brushstrokes to get some life in the painted surface.*
>
> *Palette – autumn colours. I used warm hues to highlight and cool hues to recede areas. Shadows were kept fairly warm most of the time. The warm palette is important as it reflects Erin's warm and friendly personality.*
>
> *This painting is incomplete because it began to get too controlled and realistic. That is not the style I want to achieve. It shows the layers and techniques I used.'*

A second attempt of a portrait on canvas allowed Elisa to develop a more free style of painting as her confidence grew (Figures 6.23 and 6.24).

Elisa resolved her technique and palette in a series of portraits in oil on canvas, including *Portrait of Erin* (Figure 6.25).

KEY SKILLS

Use visual language and manipulate the technical and expressive qualities of art forms to produce at least one finished artwork.

Structural Using the Structural Framework, you must analyse the structural qualities in your artworks and document your creative and technical processes. You must reflect on your own art making and examine how you have used art elements and principles, and symbolism, to develop your style and visual language.

Establish an awareness of the elements and principles of art in your own exploration. Many students intuitively employ these

Figure 6.23 Detail of portrait with colour swatches and annotation

Figure 6.24 Detail of portrait with colour swatches and annotation

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Figure 6.25 Elisa Bongetti, *Portrait of Erin*

Figure 6.26 Example of Jess Maguire's manipulation of art elements and principles to produce creative responses

elements and principles effectively in their own work without realising it. This is usually because they subconsciously recall what they have been taught in the past, or observed or studied in theory when looking at other artists' work. It is important, however, that you become aware of what applications or combinations of the elements and principles work, what to avoid and how they can impact the meaning of your work. You should use the elements and principles to develop a visual language and as a means to convey symbolic meaning in your work.

An important component of the new Art Study is for you to become familiar with using the Structural Framework to analyse the structural aspects of your art works. You will explore how the art elements and principles, as well as your use of the materials, techniques and processes, affect the meaning of your own artworks, as well as the work of other artists you have researched. In order to do this, you will need to document your ideas, processes and the resulting practical applications of your techniques and materials.

Jess Maguire, a VCE Art student, explored a range of textures, colour combinations and techniques of applying paint in order to see what results she would achieve (Figure 6.26). She said:

Structural

I created this sample using acrylic paints. I began by layering warm and cool red for the background. I added a little purple to achieve more depth. I then used the back of the brush to scratch into the paint revealing different tones of red. The scratch marks are defined, short sharp motions. I then applied red and green from a squeeze bottle in the same direction I made the scratch marks. I was trying to achieve the emotion of anger. When I asked friends and family what they felt when they looked at it, I got reactions such as passion, anger, death, confusion, and Christmas. One observed that the green is too bright and 'lifted' the mood of the work. If I am to still use complementary colours, I will have to use a darker green next time.

I think I have achieved depth quite well in this sample [Figure 6.27]. I layered cool blue with purple in the background and scratched into it. I splattered gold, silver, red and different tones of purple on top. I also sprayed gold glitter hairspray. When people looked at this, some said it reminded them of a galaxy. I just liked the patterns created by the splatter technique and the harmonious colours of the purple and blue. I especially like the lightness of the cool blue.

Structural

In the second sample [Figure 6.28], I blended both cool and warm blue and scratched into it. I then dribbled red and gold paint on top. The red lines are energetic and create a feeling of electricity and excitement, whereas the first sample makes me feel calm.

ACTIVITY 6.9

1   Choose five artworks.
2   Explain how the art elements and principles, the use of the materials, techniques and processes, the creation of symbols and the style in which the artist works affect the meaning of the artworks you have selected.

ACTIVITY 6.10

Reflect how you have used art elements and principles to construct your visual language.

Figure 6.27 Example of Jess Maguire's splatter trial – *Galaxy*

Figure 6.28 Example of Jess Maguire's splatter trial – *Energy*

Use the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks and other Analytical Frameworks as appropriate, to support reflective annotation of your own art.

Examine your work and reflect on how cultural aspects and contemporary practices are evident in your finished artwork/s. You are required to analyse and annotate the meanings and messages in your own artwork. Discuss how effective the visual language you have developed is for achieving your intended outcome/s. Use the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks to identify the influences on you with reference to contemporary practices or the cultural environment in which you worked.

Cultural Was the purpose of your art affected by your own or any other culture? You could discuss how you were influenced by past or present cultural issues, any political, social or religious implications, or aspects of ethnicity and gender. Throughout the process of developing your folio, you must analyse the

structural qualities of your work and document the ways in which you have used visual language to comment on aspects of your culture or any other culture. You may also wish to consider the impact of your work on viewers from different cultural backgrounds, as our own cultural background and experience will always affect the way we see and interpret art.

Do you think the interpretation of your artwork could change over time as current viewpoints change? Would the cultural background of the viewer affect their interpretation of your artwork? Explain your response.

What symbols have you used in these works? Explain how they enhance the message. These may be generally recognisable symbols or personal symbols.

Points to consider when applying the Cultural Framework to the analysis of your artworks

Cultural What cultural issues have you dealt with in your folio? Have you made any specific references to a

Figure 6.29 Georgia Pinney Gvozdic, *You Make Me Sick*, fineliner and watercolour on paper

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specific culture or cultural events or festivals? How have you represented these? This representation could be an obvious reference through subject matter or a more subtle reference made through the application of symbolism.

In what ways do your works reflect present cultural factors? They could relate to tensions between two cultures currently being reported on, or use graffiti and stencil art to explore an issue that interests you from the perspective of 'youth culture' or 'street culture'.

Was it your intention to influence the emotions of the viewer? If so, how have you attempted to do this? Do you believe you were successful in this? Do your artworks contain messages? If so, what are they?

In Figure 6.29, VCE Art student Georgia Pinney Gvozdic was exploring the concept of 'The Human Body and Culture'. She focused on the physical representation of the human body while also considering the way the female body was viewed in our culture. She wrote:

Cultural *You Make Me Sick explores the female body, its anatomical functions and our culture's perception of these factors. The red*

Structural *splotted watercolour is applied in violent brush movements to represent menstruation, as the piece comments on our*

Cultural *society's shaming of women and their bodies,*
including their natural bodily functions. Periods are seen as disgusting, gross and even 'impure' across multiple cultures, despite them being not only completely natural and unavoidable, but even a defining event of womanhood. Yet still women's bodies are restricted to conforming to the male gaze (represented through the black harsh pen line), rather than being allowed diverse subjective expression. Our culture's commentary on women (portrayed in black text) is what
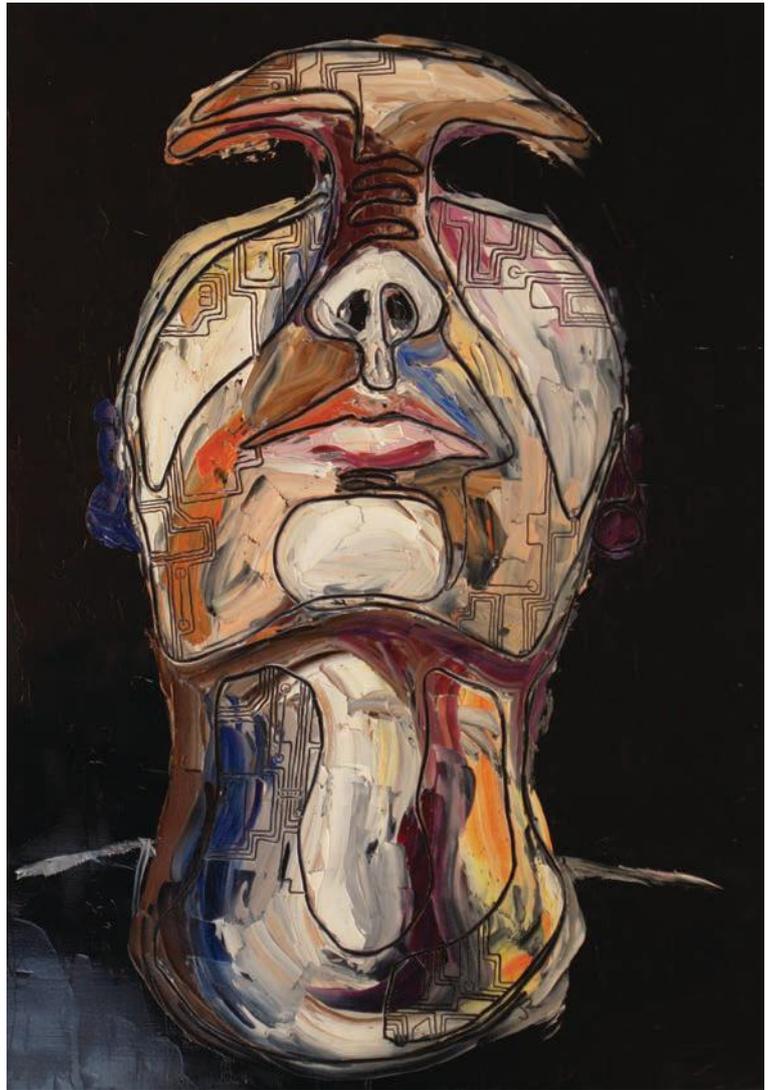
contains and shadows the free and fluid raw element of the female body, represented by the flowing blue watercolour strokes, which appear hidden, alienated and shamed behind the overlapping sharp line of patriarchy.

Figure 6.30 Julia Rogerson, *Game*, oil on canvas with sgraffito

Points to consider when applying the Contemporary Framework to the analysis of your artworks

Contemporary Did your art draw attention to contemporary issues or challenge the traditional understanding of art? Throughout the process of developing your folio, you must analyse the structural aspects of your work, and document the

ways in which you have used visual language to comment on qualities of your art or any contemporary issues or concerns. Have you made use of contemporary art elements and principles, materials and techniques or contemporary processes or art forms to communicate your ideas?

In Figure 6.30, VCE Art student Julia Rogerson explores the concept of 'Conflict', focusing on the conflict between humanity and technology. She examines the importance of technology in our lives and the struggle that exists because of this. How do we survive without technology and how do we prevent technology taking over our lives? Julia experimented with a range of materials and a number of art forms as she attempted to resolve this concept.

Figure 6.30 was her response to this contemporary issue, broadly and more specifically an exploration of the impact of gaming on the youth today:

It is a portrait of my younger brother transforming as he becomes immersed in the world of gaming. His head is thrown back both in the ecstasy of

the moment but also as though he is surrendering himself to technology.

His eyes are black holes, lifeless, unfocused as he begins to sink into the void of virtual reality, losing his connection to the world around him. The lines drawn into his flesh with the back of my brush are inspired by the lines of a circuit board. They are meant to express how technology has become a part of us in almost a physical way. I wanted the circuit board pattern to resemble veins running through the face. The idea was inspired by techniques used by the British painter Jenny Saville whom I studied in Unit 3 Outcome 1 and also by photographs of scarification used in some African cultures. While Saville used sgraffito as part of our attempt to manipulate and alter our bodies physically, Africans choose to scar themselves by cutting decorative patterns into their faces and rubbing ash into the wounds for spiritual and cultural reasons. This reflects the choices we are making in allowing technology to

Figure 6.31 Emily Whinfield, *It's Not a Game*, laser print on paper (polyptych)

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make us less-than-human technology zombies. This choice is scaring us as we become more plugged in but less connected.

Emily Whinfield wrote of her final artwork (Figure 6.31), which we looked at earlier in this chapter:

To analyse this work using the contemporary framework, the burnt car could be interpreted as depicting the conflict between modern infrastructure and nature. In recent years it has been realised that much of the human-made infrastructure on earth is harmful to the natural environment, and so this work could be interpreted as commenting on the current movement against machinery that is harmful to the earth, recognising that it is a large issue in our modern world. The car is representative of human-made technologies and materials that have been burnt by someone using fire, a natural and highly destructive force.

The burnt cars could be seen as a comment on how we must allow nature to return and overpower harmful technologies such as cars that cause pollution. The natural element of fire has conflicted with the modern vehicle, an act that rebels against the pollution of our earth and the rising issue of global warming, to which cars are a major contributing factor. By using the photographs I took of the burnt toy, the work comments on the fact that humans are playing with our world to destructive consequences. We believe that we have the power over everything in existence as the supreme beings, resulting in the growing list of consequences as a result of our actions. Being environmentally aware is not a game.

6.6 Art terminology for documentation and annotation of artistic practices in a visual diary

Continue to develop your use of art terminology as you document and annotate your work and that of the artists who have inspired you this semester. The annotation will assist you to formalise your understanding and help you to continue to develop a visual language to present your ideas effectively.

The annotation will help you to reflect on your research, experimentation, observations and attempts to visually represent a concept or idea. The analysis of your own artistic practice will enable you to determine how successful your decisions are regarding subject matter, symbolism, techniques and the use of the elements and principles of art. You must make use of real-time annotation, rather than annotating after the fact. By writing down your thoughts as they occur to you, you are less likely to forget them.

Analysing your work as you create it allows you to make informed decisions in your folio. Documenting your thoughts and your approach to developing your folio (*thinking and working practices*) will assist the viewer to understand what you are trying to achieve in your artistic practice. It will also provide evidence of your understanding to the person assessing your work. It is important that the person viewing your work is able to read your reflections of individual pieces in the context of viewing the work. If you are working in a visual diary, it is best to annotate your observations next to the work and if the work is not in a sketchbook or presentation folder, annotate on the back of the work.

The terminology that you use to document your practice should reflect the terminology that is used in art theory. Make

use of the terminology appropriate to the relevant Analytical Frameworks. As with the written responses in theory, you should substantiate your statements. This will demonstrate insight and understanding. Jess Maguire, a VCE student, explored colour, texture and paint application as a means to achieve emotional and psychological responses from the viewer. After a particular experiment with acrylic paint (Figure 6.32), she wrote:

I tried to achieve the emotion of calm. Previously, I used blues that were too dark to convey calm, so in this situation I used lighter blues and whites. Using long rectangular shapes and long

Structural *brush strokes emphasises the feeling of calm. The direction in which this piece is viewed changes the emotion evoked. When vertical it suggests strength and energy. When the lines are horizontal a more stable, flowing and calm emotion is suggested, which achieves my intention.*

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook.*

Figure 6.32 Jess Maguire, exploration in acrylic paint to elicit an emotional or psychological response

Figure 6.33 Brodie Lowe (VCE) explored contemporary art practice, creating a traditional subject (landscape) using Cinema 4D, a contemporary digital media, to produce an inkjet print.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, you will read how assessment will gauge your ability to:

- recognise the role and purpose of art in society
- apply the Cultural Framework
- apply the Contemporary Framework
- refer to the Structural and Personal Frameworks where relevant
- analyse, interpret and compare artworks from different cultures and times
- substantiate personal opinions with reference to artworks and other resources
- use appropriate art terminology

- use the art process and visual language to explore and experiment with materials and techniques, and to develop personal and creative responses in your own artistic practice in relation to the theme of culture and contemporary ideas and art practices.

You will find:

- assessment criteria sheets
- two student responses to Outcome 1 tasks with margin notes that highlight assessment

A painting in a museum hears more ridiculous opinions than anything else in the world.

– EDMOND DE GONCOURT (1822–96), FRENCH HISTORIAN AND CRITIC

7.1 Introduction to Outcome 1

To successfully complete Outcome 1 in Unit 2, you will need to study artworks by at least four artists from a range of cultural contexts. At least two of these artworks must have been created since 1990. You must use the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks as tools to discuss the different ways in which art reflects and communicates the values, beliefs and traditions of the societies for and in which it is created. You must also refer to aspects of the Structural and Personal Frameworks as appropriate when analysing, interpreting and comparing artworks. One way of doing this is by examining different ways in which artists interpret and present social issues. Another approach is to base artworks on a common theme – this must be done for at least two artworks.

Your teacher will set the assessment task. Some tasks are more complex than others, and you may be required to present more than one assignment to cover the necessary criteria.

Tips for responding to short answer questions, an annotated visual report, a response using digital technologies and exhibition reports can be found in Chapter 4.

7.2 Tips for completing assessment tasks

Unit 2 requires you to address the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks as a means to understand how an artwork reflects the time and place of its creation. Emphasis is placed on contemporary materials, ideas and approaches in today's world. It also asks that you *compare* your selected artworks and provide *evidence* to support your opinions. Consider the following when comparing and contrasting selected artworks in an extended written response:

- Make a chart that lists points of similarity and difference. Organise these points into an essay plan.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare artworks.
- Comparing and contrasting should take place throughout an essay – do not write two separate essays with a paragraph of comparisons at the end.
- Use the Structural Framework to compare artworks in terms of art elements and principles; materials, techniques and processes; style and symbolism.
- Use the Personal Framework to explore and compare the relevance of the artist's life and experiences and the background that the viewer brings to their interpretation of the work.
- Use the Cultural Framework to compare the different ways in which artists at different times, and in different places and societies, create and interpret images.
- Use the Contemporary Framework to compare interpretations of the works, both at the time of creation and from a current viewpoint.
- Refer to relevant symbolism.
- Always use visual evidence from the artwork and from a range of relevant resources to support your point of view.

Additional tips

- Choose your artworks carefully. They need to reflect and communicate the values, beliefs and traditions of a range of cultures across time. Remember that you will be comparing them, so make your selection with points of comparison in mind. For example, how do they reflect society's response to a particular concern, such as war and conflict, mother and child, or the use of public space?
- Research your selected artists and artworks and their cultural contexts. This will increase your knowledge and understanding of the contexts in which the works were created and the roles they played in their original settings.
- Analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks all require close and perceptive observation.
- Place images of the artworks side by side so that you can compare their physical scale, art form (painting or performance, for example), style, materials, media and techniques.
- Read the artwork captions carefully – you need the full and correct title, the date of production, the medium and the dimensions of the artwork in order to undertake a detailed analysis.
- When comparing artworks, select the most important points of difference. This is always easier if the works you discuss are linked by an idea or theme.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare the artworks. When comparing artworks, you need to do so on a number of levels. Consider the following questions:

  1 How does the appearance of the artworks differ? Were they created in the same art form, using the same materials, techniques and processes?
  2 How can the meaning of the work be interpreted? By the artist? By the public at that time? By you, now? Are these all the same? Explain.

  3 In what situation was the artwork originally viewed? Has this changed over time? Is the exhibition venue important in understanding the aims of the artist and the way the work is observed and interpreted? If so, how?

- In Unit 2, you are expected to substantiate your personal opinions by presenting evidence from the artworks and from a range of relevant resource material. Make clear and specific reference to the artworks. This will come both from close observation of the works and from research.

7.3 Assessment criteria: Outcome 1

VCE ART UNIT 2 OUTCOME 1 ASSESSMENT SHEET

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE				
		1–2 (Very low)	3–4 (Low)	5–6 (Medium)	7–8 (High)	9–10 (Very high)
Discuss and compare artworks from different cultures using the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework. At least two artworks produced after 1990 must be studied.	Analysis and interpretation of artworks using the Cultural Framework	Very limited understanding of how to analyse artworks using the Cultural Framework	Limited analysis of artworks using the Cultural Framework	Some evidence of analysis of artworks using the Cultural Framework	Detailed analysis of artworks using the Cultural Framework	Detailed and perceptive application of the Cultural Framework
	Analysis and interpretation of artworks using the Contemporary Framework	Very limited understanding of how to analyse artworks using the Contemporary Framework	Limited analysis of artworks using the Contemporary Framework	Some evidence of analysis of artworks using the Contemporary Framework	Detailed analysis of artworks using the Contemporary Framework	Detailed and perceptive application of the Contemporary Framework
	Formulation and substantiation of personal opinions	Very limited evidence of personal opinions or research about artworks	Limited evidence of personal opinions or research about artworks	Some evidence of personal opinions, supported by evidence from the artworks and related resources	Meaningful personal opinions, supported by evidence from the artworks and related resources	Formulation and substantiation of insightful personal opinions with clear evidence from the artworks and related resources
	Comparison of artworks and their place in their cultural context	Very limited evidence of meaningful comparison of artworks or their cultural contexts	Limited evidence of meaningful comparison of artworks or their cultural contexts	Some evidence of meaningful comparison of artworks and an understanding of their roles in their cultural contexts	Perceptive comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks, and an understanding of their role in their cultural contexts	Insightful and comprehensive comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks, and a clear understanding of their role in their cultural contexts
	Use of art terminology	Very limited understanding or application of art terminology	Limited application of art terminology	General accuracy in the use of appropriate art terminology	Clear and consistent use of appropriate art terminology	Highly effective and sophisticated use of art terminology

Please note that this is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from the VCAA.

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7.4 Student sample responses

Student sample response 1

Task: Analyse, interpret and compare two artworks from different cultural backgrounds that are linked by the theme of 'Mother and Child'.

Address each criterion and use evidence to support your opinions.

The following sample response was written by Francesca Ohlert. Her task included criteria relating to the Structural and Personal Frameworks and the use of a theme – 'Mother and Child' – as a focus for interpretation.

Appropriate art terminology has been highlighted in blue.

The maternal relationship, while timeless, universal and powerful, is viewed and represented differently by artists across time, culture, gender and, furthermore, between individuals. This is highlighted in a comparison of works featuring mother and child by the fifteenth-century Dutch master Jan van Eyck and the contemporary Australian photographer and filmmaker Tracey Moffatt. In his work *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, Jan van Eyck shows us the Virgin

The introduction sets the scene for the comparison of artworks and their cultural contexts by briefly describing the subject matter.

Figure 7.1 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435, oil on panel (66 x 62 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris

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The Structural Framework has been applied to an analysis of van Eyck's painting technique, use of colour and symbolism. Reference to the emerging medium of oil paints and the attention to detail refers to van Eyck's working environment and cultural context.

Discussion of Moffatt's technique and the way in which it communicates the message – Structural Framework.

Mary presenting the infant Jesus to the Chancellor in a reverent manner. In Tracey Moffatt's photograph *Up in the Sky #1*, an Aboriginal baby is being embraced by a Caucasian mother, raising questions of race in an Australian environment, with reference to the Stolen Generations.

In this work, which was commissioned by Chancellor Rolin in 1435, Jan van Eyck has depicted the holy figures of mother and child seated against a lavish Romanesque backdrop. He has used rich hues and a warm palette to suggest nobility, with his figures bathed in a natural golden light symbolic of God's radiant presence. Van Eyck's ability to capture light so realistically is due to his use of oil-based paints, a medium he pioneered. He has used a highly detailed painting method and employs controlled, blended lines to give his subjects a lifelike quality, something that, along with astute attention to detail, was highly valued during his time. In this detailed masterwork, the Virgin Mary has her gaze fixed on her child. This gaze connects the two figures; it is van Eyck's reference to Mary's concern for her son, the strong bond they share.

Tracey Moffatt has given the viewer much to consider in her powerful work *Up in the Sky #1*. It is a monochromatic photograph in which a white mother cradles an Aboriginal child. Moffatt's style of photography often produces raw, powerful and provocative images that contain deeper meanings and symbolism. The image is shot from an elevated angle,

Figure 7.2 Tracey Moffatt, *Up in the Sky #1*, 1997, from a series of 25 images, offset print, 61 x 76 cm (image size), 72 x 102 cm (paper size), courtesy of the artist and Roslyn9 Gallery, Sydney

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as if the viewer is standing over the rusting bed on which the mother sits cross-legged. We are therefore able to clearly see the activity outside the window. Three nuns can be seen approaching the dilapidated house, possibly to remove the child from its mother's arms. Techniques such as selective focus have been implemented to make the mother and child the focal point of her work and by pre-flashing and offset printing, Moffatt has achieved a softer focus on the entire image.

The right side of the photograph is visually heavier than the left, with the figures of mother, infant and the nuns filling this half of the image. Through clever subject arrangement, however, Moffatt has managed to balance the darker silhouette of the woman and child with the brighter area of the window light.

The hole punched in the wall can be interpreted to show the aggression and frustration of the society in which they find themselves, the poverty that this mother and baby must cope with and, metaphorically, the fragility of the foundations of a sense of identity for this Aboriginal child. The removal of mixed-race children from their families and the politics that were involved in this practice were powerful issues in Tracey Moffatt's life. It is relevant to note that Tracey Moffatt, of Aboriginal heritage herself, was fostered by a white woman, so in many ways this image can be seen as autobiographical.

Both artists have used colour symbolically. Van Eyck favours a deep and dramatic palette to show wealth and importance. Moffatt has chosen monochrome to further exaggerate the racial divide between black and white, especially with regard to Australia's largely segregated past and the controversial issue of the Stolen Generations, in which Aboriginal children were removed from their families. Both compositions contain deep space, with each of the mothers seated near a window, which allows the viewer to see vast areas of background. The artists have used this to help consolidate the setting and allow for better understanding of each mother and child's circumstances by the viewer. Through three Romanesque arches with sculpted capitals, symbolising the Holy Trinity, van Eyck displays a lush and picturesque village backdrop, suggesting the fertility and bounty of this mother and child, and the domain over which they rule. In contrast to this, beyond Moffatt's dirty and graffitied window, a harsh and arid Australian landscape is visible, hinting at isolation and destitution.

Reference is made to specific details and techniques visible in the work to support the analysis.

Discussion of culturally relevant interpretations using the Personal and Contemporary Frameworks.

Comparison of colour and space, and their symbolic interpretations using the Structural and Cultural Frameworks.

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Perhaps the most suggestive outward representation of the maternal bond is the body language displayed by the mother and child in the two works. In van Eyck's oil painting, Jesus sits on Mary's knee, wearing an expression of wisdom beyond his years. Both figures appear posed, upright and regal. The two sit an arm's length apart, Mary holding Jesus gently around the waist so that everyone may view him clearly. Only her eyes suggest the intimate bond that they share. In *Up in the Sky #1*, the mother is also looking intently at her child, but rather than presenting her baby to the world, she has her arms wrapped tightly around it, drawing it into her as if to hide the infant away or protect it from harm. Unlike the figure of Jesus, this infant looks helpless and vulnerable; we cannot see its face and are left wondering about its fate. Van Eyck has shown us a public scene of arguably the most famous mother and child in history in a passive moment of divinity. Moffatt, however, has shown the viewer a privately shared moment between an anonymous mother and child. *Up in the Sky #1* has a definite air of uncertainty, of sadness and imminent danger for this mother and her child.

It is interesting to note the contrasting ways in which religion has been portrayed in these two works. The very purpose of van Eyck's painting is to glorify religious beliefs at the same time as commemorating Chancellor Rolin, who commissioned it. Alternatively, Moffatt depicts three nuns in a colder, less enchanting light. The nuns' figures are slightly out of focus, thus allowing the viewer to suspect their actions and intent. Perhaps they are coming to separate this baby from its mother. The church supported the removal of Aboriginal children during the era of the Stolen Generations, and perhaps Moffatt, having experienced separation from her own mother at a young age, is expressing a concern about church interference in the lives of many Aboriginal people.

Originally intended to decorate the Chancellor's local parish church, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* now hangs in the Louvre in Paris. Without the stained glass surrounds and soft light of a church to mirror that shown in the picture, I feel that this work has lost a great deal of its original aura. It is difficult for the viewer to grasp the sense of awe that such works instilled in the viewer when they are now seen in a public exhibition space. On the other hand, Moffatt's *Up in the Sky* series was designed for exhibition and a gallery environment feels appropriate.

Both Tracey Moffatt and Jan van Eyck have individually interpreted motherhood and the maternal relationship. They have used vastly different materials, and explored and expressed the maternal bond very differently. Essentially, they were creating these pieces for two different reasons. Moffatt was wishing to encourage the viewer to interpret and question social issues, while van Eyck was honouring his employer, the Chancellor, and reworking the famous subject matter of the Madonna and Child. Moffatt provides the viewer with an open story that they themselves must interpret to draw meaning. Perhaps this is a luxury granted to her due to the fact that those in the contemporary public are more open to expressing their views and having them challenged, as opposed to van Eyck's Medieval audience, whose beliefs were automatically consolidated via visual examples of faith and literal interpretations of their religion.

Therefore, it is through these two different works, by artists with very different contexts and experiences, that the viewer becomes aware that the bond between mother and child can be interpreted in myriad ways. This physical bond has remained a presence in art throughout the ages and inspires empathy in the viewer due to the fundamental nature of the maternal relationship.

– Francesca Ohlert

Assessment

This is a high-scoring response to the task. The student has addressed the criteria and used evidence to support well-framed opinions. The use of art terminology reflects an understanding of the Structural Framework and has been employed in insightful analyses.

Further comparison of the theme as visible in the artworks. The contemporary quality of multiple interpretations of an artwork is mentioned.

Student sample response 2

Another way to explore an artwork is to respond to short-answer questions. Remember that your task is to use the Analytical Frameworks to help you to interpret the meanings and messages of artworks. In Unit 2, your priority is to use the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks. Your teacher will set questions that assist you in observing and interpreting specific artworks. You will probably need to complete more than one task. Keep your responses succinct and use art terminology as frequently as possible. Always check that you have addressed the relevant criteria set for the task.

Gabi Chapman was encouraged to write brief responses to the questions below after viewing *Sofles – Graffiti-mapped*. To view this video, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook.*

Appropriate art terminology has been highlighted in blue.

Question: Make a list of the contemporary qualities that you find in *Sofles – Graffiti Mapped*. In your response explain how they contribute to the meaning or interpretation of the work.

The use of digital projection creates transient colours and patterns over the geometric lines and shapes that surround the organic and flowing lines of the female figure in the original line drawing on the wall. She remains the focal point; although she becomes immersed in an ever-changing world. This sharp contrast between contemporary qualities (the use of digital technology, time and light) and traditional (painting on a two-dimensional surface) elements implies that the female has become a part of a new age world in which she is the only thing that remains in its purest, most natural form. The transience of the projections may also suggest that everything in her world is temporary, including herself, and sends a message to the viewer to live in the moment and not take things for granted,

Figure 7.3 Sofles, *Sofles – Graffiti-mapped*, 2015, creative direction by Shaun Hossack, motion design by Grant Osborn, videography by Selina Miles, music by Opiuo

as everything will quickly come to an end and therefore should be appreciated while we have the opportunity to appreciate it. The artwork is located in a contemporary, non-traditional location on the wall of a public car park. This location enables the viewer to relate to the figure more easily as she has been placed in a space to which everyone has access. She has been drawn into a digital world that relates to all of us.

The contemporary element of time has been used, which requires an increased viewing time. This results in a deeper understanding of the work as it gives the audience more time to consider the comments being made by the artist. Rather than the viewer considering the meaning after walking away from the artwork, they are given the opportunity to think about it while viewing and interpreting it as it develops in front of them. Therefore, they interpret the work in multiple ways rather than just taking it at face value as they might with a traditional work being viewed for a shorter period of time in a gallery setting.

Question: Describe the role of the viewer with respect to this contemporary artwork. How does it contribute to the meaning or interpretation of the work?

The use of digital technology modernises the artwork even further than the contemporary, non-traditional style of street art. The moving images, light and sound create a meaning that is futuristic and based on very recent developments in software design. The documentation of the work via social media allows it to be viewed by a wider, more diverse, audience rather than just those who may attend an exhibition or believe that it would be of interest to them. It opens up a new platform for creativity and a more accessible, easy way to produce and share artwork as compared with the traditional gallery and museum platform.

Question: Explain the role of digital technology. How does it contribute to the meaning or interpretation of the work?

In order to produce this artwork, Sofles worked with a range of different professionals. The collaborative aspect of the art making due to the use of contemporary materials and techniques altered his role to include that of a director or designer. Rather than physically producing every aspect of the project himself, he was able to direct others to produce something that used a broader range of skills and technical knowledge. Collaboration allowed Sofles to explore a greater range of mediums and materials and express his work in a more contemporary format than his usual technique of painting on walls.

Question: Discuss any collaborative qualities. What are the advantages of the collaboration process in this artwork?

– Gabi Chapman

Assessment

These responses show the student's awareness of the application of the Analytical Frameworks when discussing a recent artwork. The influences of the contemporary qualities of the artwork (Contemporary Framework) and the exhibition space (Cultural Framework) have been used to explain how the work might be interpreted by the viewer. Art terminology has been used to support a personal interpretation of the work.

OTHER POSSIBLE QUESTIONS THAT COULD BE ASKED ABOUT A SELECTED ARTWORK

- Are there any symbols or metaphors from contemporary culture visible in the artwork (e.g. subject matter) and, if so, how do they contribute to its meanings and messages?
- How does the work reflect the context of the time when it was created (this could be social, political, cultural, artistic or religious)?
- Compare this artwork with one created before 1990, using the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks to interpret the meanings and messages they contain.

7.5 Introduction to Outcome 2

The award of a satisfactory completion in Outcome 2 will be based on your teacher's decision that you have shown you have achieved the outcomes they have specified for the unit. This decision will be based on your teacher's assessment of how successfully you completed the task/s designated for this unit.

To successfully complete Outcome 2 in Unit 2, you are required to show evidence that you have trialled different ways of working to develop your own style and approach to the application of the art elements and principles, various materials, techniques and processes, and the use of different art forms. You must develop a folio of visual responses in which you identify ways of visually representing your concepts and resolving your exploration of areas of personal interest related to culture and contemporary practices, so that you can produce at least one finished artwork.

Assessment

You are required to produce at least one finished artwork in Unit 2. Finished artworks are not assessed individually, however, but rather will be assessed as part of your exploration. It is important that you continue to explore the art process in Unit 2. Explore materials, techniques and processes that you have not used before, while developing your skill in the application of the materials and techniques you used in Unit 1.

Although they should not be seen as a checklist, your teacher will observe how effectively you have applied the key knowledge and key skills outlined in the study design. Use these to determine how effectively you have met the criteria of the study design. Your teacher may provide

you with a list of criteria that they will use to assess your folio. It may also be useful to refer to the points below and to the marksheet at the end of this chapter while you are developing your folio, to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of this unit.

1 PRODUCING VISUAL RESPONSES RELATING TO CULTURAL AND CONTEMPORARY IDEAS AND ISSUES THROUGH EXPLORATION AND EXPERIMENTATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VISUAL LANGUAGE

- Am I making use of ideas influenced by aspects of culture and contemporary practices in my artwork/s?
- Am I using various means to explore my interpretations of issues and ideas, including brainstorming, annotation and an exploration of materials, techniques, processes and art forms?
- Am I generating a range of visual interpretations of my ideas and concepts through observation and/or imagination?
- Am I establishing a personal visual language that effectively communicates the issues and ideas?
- Am I using my materials, techniques and processes to achieve a visual representation of my concept or ideas?
- Am I using art technology and visual language to document artistic practice in a visual diary
- Am I being imaginative in the range of possibilities through which I am exploring my ideas?

2 EXPERIMENTING WITH ART ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES, MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES AND ART FORMS, AND INVESTIGATING HOW THESE CAN BE USED TO CREATE ARTWORKS

- Am I being imaginative in the range of possibilities through which I am exploring my ideas?
- Am I exploring my materials using a range of techniques and surfaces?
- Am I allowing my exploration, observations and discoveries to provide me with potential tools with which to develop an effective visual language?
- Am I exploring the expressive application of my materials and the symbolic meaning expressed by the imagery, art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes?
- Am I pushing the boundaries of my medium/media?
- Am I developing a knowledge of the qualities and characteristics of my materials and art forms, and how I can use them to visually represent my concepts and ideas?
- Am I starting to consider the meaning associated with the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes?
- Am I exploring a range of options to establish what the most effective medium, technique, process and art form would be to meet my needs?

3 DEVELOPING SKILLS IN ARTISTIC PRACTICE USING THE ART PROCESS

- Am I developing my skill in the manipulation of the elements and principles of art?
- Am I developing my skill in the application of my selected materials?
- Am I developing my skill in the application of my techniques?
- Am I developing my skill in the application of my selected processes?

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- Am I developing my skill in the application of my selected art form/s?
- Am I developing my skill in establishing a visual language?
- Am I skilfully using my materials, techniques and processes to achieve the best resolution of my intention?

4 USING VISUAL LANGUAGE AND MANIPULATING THE TECHNICAL AND EXPRESSIVE QUALITIES OF ART FORMS TO PRODUCE AT LEAST ONE FINISHED ARTWORK

- Am I observing how artists use and combine formal elements, the ways in which they compose the image and use their technique to express themselves?
- Am I considering how I can manipulate and combine the art elements and principles to communicate my ideas and achieve mood or atmosphere?
- Am I producing visual responses that are aesthetically pleasing?
- Am I using the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes, style and symbolism to create a visual language that comments on qualities of my and other cultures and contemporary art practice?
- Am I exploring ways of visually representing my concepts and resolving my exploration so that I can produce a finished artwork?

5 APPLYING THE CULTURAL AND CONTEMPORARY FRAMEWORKS AND OTHER ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS AS APPROPRIATE IN REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION IN ART MAKING

- Am I analysing and discussing the meanings and messages in my artwork and evaluating how effective the visual language is that I am developing?
- Am I applying the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks and other appropriate Analytical Frameworks explicitly in my annotation and using them to inform my practice?

- Am I considering how my art practice reflects the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks?
- Am I considering symbolism to explore my ideas and concepts?
- Am I explaining the meanings and messages in my own artwork?
- Am I using the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks explicitly to identify the influences on me and my artwork?

6 DOCUMENTING ARTISTIC PRACTICE IN A VISUAL DIARY

- Am I providing comprehensive visual documentation of my art process?
- Am I clearly annotating and communicating my art practice?
- Am I using annotation to reflect on my research, experimentation, observations and attempts to visually represent my concepts or ideas?
- Am I using my analysis to determine how effective or ineffective my exploration is, so that I can plan my next steps?
- Am I communicating my understanding of what I am learning?
- Am I applying the tools I have been given in theory in order to continue to develop my art terminology as I document and annotate my work and the work of the artists who have inspired me?
- Am I using the annotation to help me to continue to develop a visual language to present my ideas effectively?
- Am I documenting a progressive development of my artistic practice from the initial concept through to my final artwork?

7.6 Assessment criteria: Outcome 2

VCE ART UNIT 2 OUTCOME 2 ASSESSMENT SHEET

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE				
	1–2 (Very low)	3–4 (Low)	5–6 (Medium)	7–8 (High)	9–10 (Very high)
1 Produce visual responses relating to cultural and contemporary ideas and issues through exploration and experimentation and the development of a visual language	Very limited evidence of an exploration of issues and ideas relating to Cultural and Contemporary practices through a conceptual and practical investigation and the development of a visual language.	Evidence of some exploration of issues and ideas relating to Cultural and Contemporary practices, through a conceptual and practical investigation and the development of a visual language. The scope of the investigation is narrow and the investigation of selected art form/s is not always relevant to intentions.	Evidence of informative exploration of issues and ideas relating to Cultural and Contemporary practices, through a conceptual and practical investigation and the development of a visual language. Effective investigation of selected art form/s, relevant to intentions. Adequate and mostly relevant material communicates art practice.	Evidence of highly informative, focused exploration of issues and ideas relating to Cultural and Contemporary practices, through a conceptual and practical investigation and the development of a visual language. Focused and effective investigation of selected art form/s, relevant to intentions. Consistent and relevant material communicates art practice throughout the body of work.	Evidence of highly informative and focused exploration of issues and ideas relating to Cultural and Contemporary practices, through a conceptual and practical investigation and the development of a visual language. Focused and effective investigation of selected art form/s, highly relevant to intentions. The scope of the investigation is comprehensive and imaginative. Thorough and consistent, highly effective material clearly communicates art practice throughout the body of work.

2 Experiment with art elements and principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms and investigating how these can be used to create artworks.	Very limited evidence of satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Limited control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Limited evidence of satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Some control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Evidence of a satisfactory exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Satisfactory experimentation leading to adequate control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident.	Evidence of competent exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Satisfactory and consistent experimentation leading to effective control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident. Conceptually effective investigation of art elements and art principles exploring their relevance to intentions.	Evidence of highly innovative exploration and investigation of materials, technical processes, art elements and principles relevant to intentions. Satisfactory and consistent experimentation leading to highly effective control in the application of materials, techniques and art form is evident. Insightful and conceptually effective investigation of art elements and principles exploring their relevance to intentions.
3 Development of skills in artistic practice using the art process	Very limited development of skill in the application of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and art form to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Limited development of skill in the application of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and art form to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Effective development of skill in the application of art elements and principles, and skilful use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop a visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Focused and effective progressive development skill in the application of art elements and principles, and use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop an effective visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.	Evidence of highly informative and focused progressive development of skill in the application of art elements and principles, and consistent, skilful use of materials, techniques and art form/s to develop a highly effective visual language and enhance the visual strength of artworks.

4 Use visual language and manipulating the technical and expressive qualities of art forms to produce at least one finished artwork	Little evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. The finished artwork is not a clear resolution of the body of work.	Some evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. The finished artwork relates to, but is is not an effective resolution of the exploration of the body of work.	Evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A satisfactory level of technical skill is evident. The finished artwork is an effective resolution of the exploration of the body of work.	Clear evidence of selection and refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A high level of technical skill is evident. The finished artwork is a highly effective resolution of the progressive exploration and refinement of the body of work.	Clear evidence of selection and extensive and thoughtful refinement of visual imagery, concepts, structural elements, techniques and processes in the body of work. A very high level of technical skill is evident. The finished artwork is an excellent resolution of the progressive exploration and refinement of the body of work.
5 Apply the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks and other Analytical Frameworks as appropriate, in reflective annotation in art making	Inconsistent use of the language of one or more unidentified Analytical Frameworks in reflective annotation of art practices. Little reference to the Analytical Frameworks evident in evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations in the body of work.	Some use of the language of at least one identified appropriate Analytical Framework in reflective annotation of working practices. Some use of the Analytical Frameworks evident in evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations in the body of work.	Satisfactory use of the language of the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. The Analytical Frameworks are identified explicitly. Informative documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations throughout the body of work.	Effective and relevant use of the language of the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. These and other appropriate Analytical Frameworks are explicitly identified and applied consistently. Highly informative and appropriate documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations are evident throughout the body of work.	Highly effective and consistent use of the language of the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks in reflective annotation of working practices. These and other appropriate Analytical Frameworks are explicitly identified and applied consistently. Highly informative and thoughtfully selected documentation and critical evaluation of personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations are evident throughout the body of work.

6 Document artistic practice in a visual diary	Evidence of a limited understanding of art terminology through limited documentation of the art practice. Limited development of ideas and skills is evident in the art process.	Evidence of some understanding of art terminology through inconsistent documentation of the art practice. Some development of ideas and skills is evident in the art process.	Evidence of an adequate understanding of art terminology through an appropriate documentation of the art practice. A sound body of work showing a progressive development of ideas and skills is evident throughout the art process.	Evidence of a clear understanding of art terminology through a clear and consistent documentation of the art practice. A thorough body of work showing a progressive development of ideas and skills is evident throughout the art process.	Evidence of an excellent understanding of art terminology through a highly informative written and visual documentation of the innovatitive art practice. A comprehensive body of work showing progressive development of ideas and skills is evident throughout the art process from initial idea to the finished artwork.

Please note that this is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from the VCAA.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By the end of Unit 3, you will have gained experience in the interpretation, analysis and comparison of artworks.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- develop a knowledge of artworks produced before and since 1990
- apply the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks to the analysis and interpretation of the meanings and messages of artworks
- develop, examine and analyse your own and others' opinions
- use evidence from the artworks themselves and from a range of resources to support different opinions

- compare the characteristics and contexts of artworks
- use appropriate art terminology and vocabulary in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks.

The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.

– ELLIOT W. EISNER, PROFESSOR OF ART AND EDUCATION

8.1 Introduction

technique the manner in which the artist applies materials to the artwork

style distinctive characteristics of an artwork that identify it with an artist or a group of artists

symbol a sign that represents an idea

metaphor one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities

In Unit 1, you became familiar with the Structural and Personal Frameworks and how to apply them when analysing and interpreting artworks. In Unit 2, you added the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks as analytical and interpretative tools. In this unit, you will be putting to use all the skills you have learnt in Units 1 and 2. This will help you to understand that an artwork may contain different aspects and layers of meaning and to acknowledge the validity of diverse interpretations.

If this is the first time you have studied VCE Art, it might be useful to return to the previous chapters that focus on the tools for researching and interpreting art and the chapters that focus on the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks.

Your understanding of the theoretical aspects of art will help you to understand your own art practice. By studying the structural, personal, cultural and contemporary aspects of artworks, you will be able to use these in the reflection of your own artworks. This is covered in other chapters, and you can link the ideas that you gain from your research to your art practice.

8.2 Selecting artworks for study

The focus of this study in your final year is on you. The Art Study Design asks you to link your study of artists and issues *to your own practice*. The artworks that you select to research are important, as they should relate to your own ideas and art making. You may select artworks that express similar ideas to your own or artists who use similar techniques to your own. You could return to some of the ideas that were covered in previous chapters and continue to explore the artworks that were covered. However, it is important that you select artworks that cover the four Analytical Frameworks. It is not always possible to refer to all four frameworks when discussing a single artwork, but you need to discuss them all at some stage in each writing task.

ACTIVITY 8.1

Find a range of artworks that relate to your own art making. Compare these works to your own. The works may relate to the following: subject matter, ideas, use of art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes.

It is essential that you interpret the artwork thoroughly using the Structural Framework by investigating the art elements and principles, the materials, **techniques** and processes used by the artist, the **style** of the artwork, and the **symbols** and **metaphors** within the work. This is your starting point for using the other Analytical Frameworks.

In your research, you must investigate the artwork by examining and analysing the points of view of others about the artwork, as outlined in the 'Commentaries' section of Chapter 1.

To begin your study, you must select the following:

- at least one artist who produced work before 1990
- at least one artist who has produced work since 1990
- at least two artworks by each artist.

You will be asked to compare the artworks by each artist using *art terminology*. When you are *comparing* artworks, you must look at the various aspects of the artwork that are either similar or different. These aspects include:

- the subject matter
- the ideas that the artist expresses
- the materials, techniques and processes that the artist uses to express their ideas
- the style of the artwork
- the use of art elements and principles
- interpretations of the artwork using the Analytical Frameworks.

This chapter presents a range of paired (or, in one case, a group of three) artists whose work can be compared. The information can be used as a starting point to further investigate the artists and their work. As the Art Study Design recommends that you study a range of artists from different cultures, some of the artists analysed in this chapter come from Aboriginal and Asian cultures.

Refer to Chapter 1 for information about using art terminology. Refer to Chapter 7 for assessment information about comparing artworks.

ACTIVITY 8.2

Find five pairs of artists (one before 1990 and one since 1990 for each pair) who you could compare.

Make a chart, a Venn diagram or a list using the following areas as points of comparison: subject matter, ideas, use of art elements and principles, materials, techniques, processes, style, cultural context and interpretation.

8.3 Aboriginal art: Traditional and contemporary

Mingelmanganu's figures possess a sense of enigmatic magnitude, a massiveness that projects far beyond the edges of the canvas.

– *KIM ACKERMAN, PROFESSOR OF ARCHAEOLOGY*

The art of Aboriginal Australians is the oldest unbroken tradition of art in the world. It varies in character and style from region to region, but is generally based on story-telling and oral traditions. It contains spiritual meanings, often represented through symbols that express the community's relationship with and knowledge of the land and its animals. It varies enormously from region to region.

The connection to country lies at the core of Aboriginal art. In some areas, such as the Western Desert, this results in 'map-like' paintings in which the landscape is seen from above, in an **aerial perspective** or bird's eye view. Such paintings do not simply depict the physical landscape, though. They also show knowledge of water and food, the tracking of animals and the spiritual story of the land.

Artists **traditionally** painted with earth-based pigments – white, yellow, brown, red and black – engraving or painting time-honoured Dreaming stories or designs with spiritual significance onto the walls of shallow caves, scratching or painting them onto bark, painting them on bodies and making sand drawings with sand, **ochres**, leaves, feathers and sticks. Since the 1970s, acrylic paint has become increasingly popular and much contemporary Aboriginal art uses bright colours, although the patterns and stories follow the same traditions.

aerial perspective the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be cooler and less intense, have less contrast and be less defined

traditional existing as part of a tradition; long-established

ochre coloured earth or clay that can be used as pigment

Symbols are a powerful method of passing down stories of cultural importance and are used for sharing information and skills for survival and land management. Different geographical locations and tribal affiliations have produced a range of different styles and techniques, such as the dot paintings from the Central and Western Desert, cross-hatching, **rarrk** and x-ray paintings from Arnhem Land, and the Wandjina figures of the Kimberley coast.

rarrk cross-hatching used by Aboriginal people from Arnhem Land

halo a circle of light, generally placed around the head of a saint or holy person to symbolise their holiness
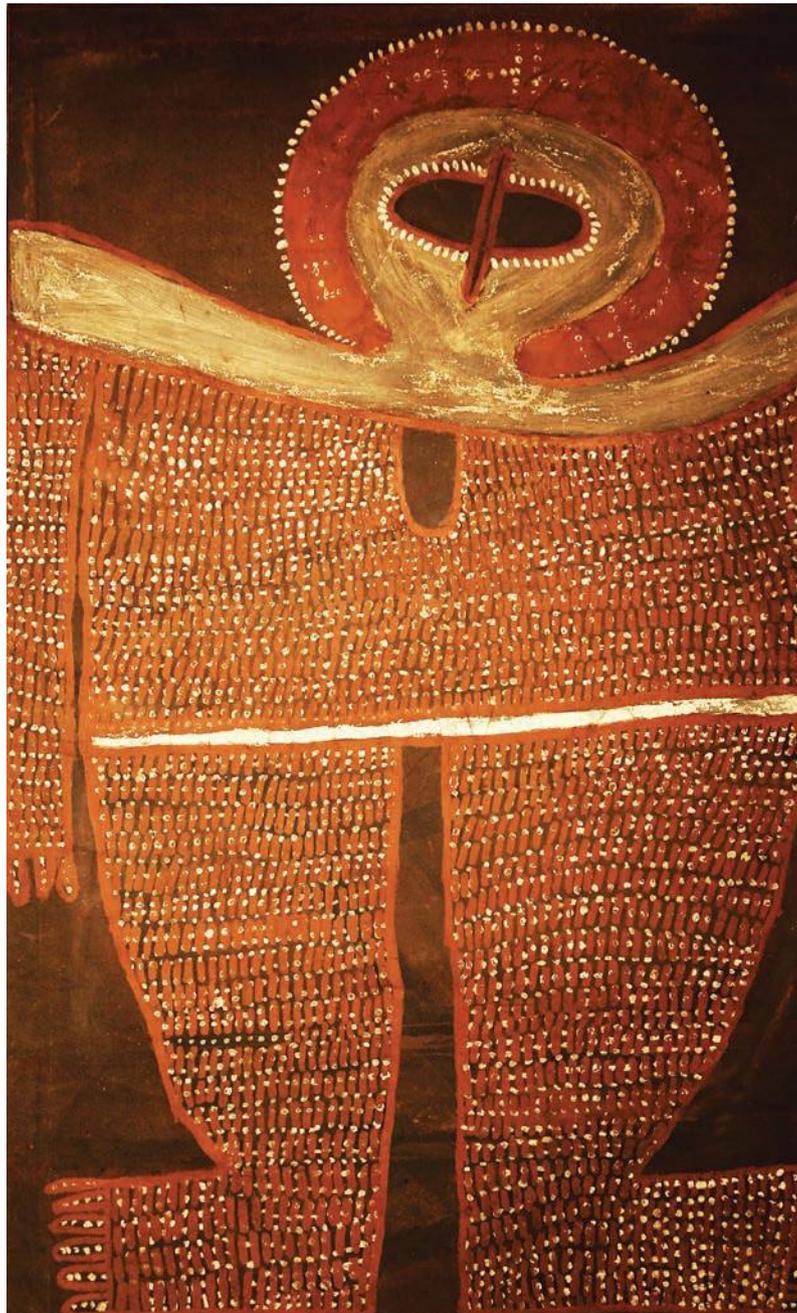
Alec Mingelmanganu

Alec Mingelmanganu (1905–81) is well known for his Wandjina images. He lived in the Kimberley region of the northern part of Western Australia and began painting in the 1970s. In 1979 he began to paint on canvas because it allowed him to paint his figures on a larger scale than had been possible on bark. Although the work in Figure 8.1 was painted in the 1970s, it follows a tradition of related images painted on rock walls in the Kimberley over millennia, where there is a practice of ritually repainting Wandjina figures on rock walls. One of the groups responsible for this was the Wunambal, to which Mingelmanganu belonged. The artist was motivated by a desire to maintain the cultural and spiritual practices of his people.

Wandjina are ancestral creator spirits who control the rains, which are such an integral life force in the landscape. They wear a semi-circular band of radiating, dotted lines around their head, not unlike a **halo**, and are said to represent lightning and be associated with rain and the wet season. In Mingelmanganu's painting (Figure 8.1), the Wandjina is a massive figure that fills the canvas, his pointed shoulders rising above his chin. He has close-set eyes on either side of a narrow nose: Wandjina figures never have a mouth. Mingelmanganu used earth pigments and natural binders to create the simple body with no attempt to suggest three-dimensional form. The paint has been applied in areas of flat colour, or as outlines or dotted patterns, and is reminiscent of body paint designs.

Figure 8.1 Alec Mingelmanganu [Wunambal], *Wandjina*, 1980, earth pigments and natural binder on canvas (128.1 x 91.4 cm), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne © Alec Mingelmanganu, licensed by VISCOPY

OTHER TRADITIONAL ARTWORKS

- Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri [Anmatyerr], *Spirit Dreaming Through Napperby Country*, 1980, National Gallery of Victoria – 6-metre-long collaboration
- David Malangi [Yolgnu], *Manharrngu Totems*, 1964, National Gallery of Victoria – painted in earth pigments on bark
- Walter Tjampitjinpa [Pintupi], *Water Dreaming at Kalipinypa*, 1971, National Gallery of Victoria – symbolic landscape

Note that 'traditional' refers here to the style, and that some artworks may be dated after 1990. Ensure that when you are asked to compare works from before and after 1990, you check the dates of the artworks you select.

REFERENCES

Ryan, Judith 2006, *Landmarks*, National Gallery of Victoria catalogue

For a list of the video references and other online links used in this chapter, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

ACTIVITY 8.3

Use a search engine to find a Papunya dot painting from the Western Desert and an x-ray painting from Arnhem Land.

Using the Structural and Cultural Frameworks, make a list of qualities they have in common – their purpose, materials, processes – and ways in which they are different – their use of representational reality, symbolism and colour. How do these contribute to the interpretation of the works?

Judy Watson

Even though the messages in her work are often tough, they are conveyed in an almost subliminal and subtle way, to be discovered in the layering of the surface and the imagery that floats mirage-like on it.

– MARGIE WEST, EMERITUS CURATOR OF ABORIGINAL ART, MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, 2012

Personal Judy Watson is an urban Aboriginal artist, a descendant of the Waanyi people of North-West Queensland. She has English, Scottish and Aboriginal heritage, but her connection to her ancestral country is at the heart of her practice and her work is largely inspired by the land of her grandmother and great-grandmother. It is also a personal response to places and their histories, and often contains an autobiographical element.

She uses drawing, painting, print-making, sculpture and installation as tools to express **Cultural** her relationship with her Aboriginal heritage and her land. Watson travels and looks at issues of First Nation peoples around the world: their social, political, environmental and spiritual concerns. She is also influenced by transient events in the world around her, as well as her Aboriginal heritage.

Symbolism and pattern are important elements in contemporary Aboriginal art, just as they were for artists like Alec Mingelmanganu. Often the meaning contained in an artwork is unclear or ambiguous unless it is explained by the **Contemporary** artist. Sometimes it can have multiple meanings or remain open to interpretation. Judy Watson's *Palm Cluster* is a good example of this. Ambiguity is a typical quality of contemporary art, and allows work to be appreciated on a number of levels. The viewer will often read different meanings and messages into an artwork, according to

the background or knowledge they bring to the experience.

The layering of meaning in Watson's paintings is echoed in the layering of the surface. On the most obvious level, *Palm Cluster* includes a map of the main island of the Palm Island group, which lies north of Townsville. Watson often uses maps – of landscape, flood or cyclone – as one layer of meaning. Here the island is represented by the brown shape on the bottom half of the canvas, brown being the symbolic colour of country. Watson visited the island in 1984 and is very aware of its secret underbelly of violent history as told by her grandmother and through her knowledge of the tragic story of Cameron Doomadgee and his death while in custody in 2004.

Figure 8.2 Judy Watson, Waanyi people, *Palm Cluster*, 2007, pigment, pastel, synthetic polymer paint and carbon ink on canvas (196.0 x 106.0 cm), National Gallery Australia © Judy Watson, licensed by VISCOPY

The simple line in the top half of the composition creates an **abstract** shape that can be interpreted as one of the stingrays that swam around Watson's feet at low tide. The two sets of simple horizontal lines can be read as gills. The intense blue background is made up of Prussian and ultramarine blues, applied with delicate tonal variation to create an area of colour that is both subtle and strong – perhaps the colour of the Pacific Ocean that surrounds the island, perhaps the colour of the night sky. On another level, for the artist blue is the colour of memory. She talks of the two blues – ultramarine and Prussian blue – washing over her as she remembered her grandmother, to whom she was very close and who died while she was working on this series of paintings. Watson describes the blue as a memory veil or *a* 'deep inner light', and explains that it was a significant part of the grieving process for her.

An important part of Watson's artistic practice is her habit of working on **unprimed**, unstretched canvas lying flat on the floor. She explains that this gives her a physical connection to the canvas, to the story she is telling and to the surface of the land itself. Sometimes she pins the canvas to the wall and stands back so that she can see it from a distance – this changes her perspective and allows her to read it in a different way. Watson often stains her canvases by scrubbing **pigment**, in powder form, into the surface, retaining a raw quality. She has done this with *Palm Cluster*. In some areas she has suspended the natural pigments in water and flooded them onto the canvas, so that they have pooled and dried in unpredictable ways.

Palm Cluster can also be appreciated as a totally non-representational painting, an image where colour, shape and line are subtly interwoven to create a poetic image of great beauty.
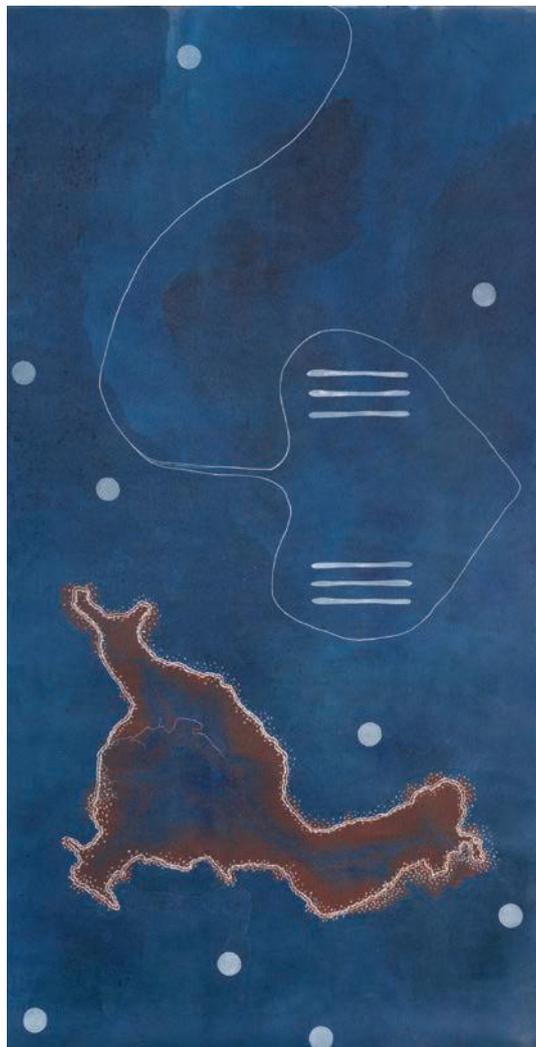
OTHER WORKS BY JUDY WATSON

- *Black Ground*, 1989 – earth colours, National Gallery of Victoria
- *Red Tides*, 1997 – inspired by red algae blooms on Sydney Harbour
- *Prato*, 2002 – abstraction
- *Heart Shield*, 2008 – simple symbolic shape relating to Aboriginal culture
- *Water Moon*, 2011 – simple, abstract image
- *Burning Boats, Flat Earth Theory*, 2011 – apparent narrative, range of paint application techniques

OTHER WORKS BY ABORIGINAL ARTISTS

- Judy Watson Napangardi [Warlpiri], numerous works entitled *Mina Mina* – artworks with energetic colour and pattern
- Emily Kame Kngwarray [Anmatyerr], *Big Yam Dreaming*, 1995, National Gallery of Victoria – dynamic black and white linear work
- Dorothy Napangardi Robinson [Warlpiri], *Karntakurlangu Jukurrpa* (*Belonging to Women*), 2000, National Gallery of Victoria, – black and white dot painting
- Paddy Bedford [Gija], *Mt King – Emu Dreaming*, 2004, National Gallery of Victoria – powerful design using earth pigments

ACTIVITY 8.4

Use the Structural and Cultural Frameworks to analyse a work by another Aboriginal artist, such as Emily Kame Kngwarray, Rover Thomas, Queenie McKenzie or Paddy Bedford. Refer to that artist's connection to land and other cultural factors. Analyse the composition, art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes, and examine how they have been used by the artist to create meaning.

ACTIVITY 8.5

Like Judy Watson, Brooke Andrew, Fiona Foley and Destiny Deacon are urban Aboriginal artists. Find examples of their artworks online and select one of these artists to research in depth.

Use the Contemporary Framework to investigate interpretations of two works by your selected artist. Also include reference to the materials, technologies and exhibition demands involved, contemporary art ideas or issues, political concerns, symbols or metaphors, artistic collaboration and the role of the viewer. Use evidence from research and the artworks themselves to support your opinions.

ACTIVITY 8.6

Brainstorm a visual response that relates to your own land – the place where you live, go to school, enjoy quiet time, feel most comfortable. Annotate your drawings with reflections about colour, details, angle of view, materials and techniques. Make a page of sketches that develop your ideas further.

COMPARISON

When comparing traditional and contemporary Aboriginal artworks, consider the points raised on the next page. The questions are meant as prompts rather than as a strict formula to follow. Always integrate comparisons by referencing both artworks rather than by writing about one artwork first, then about the second. Remember that it is sometimes difficult to separate your responses into the Analytical Frameworks because the information is relevant to more than one framework at the same time. Not all artworks can be discussed easily using all frameworks. This list is not exhaustive.

The following example looks at the works of Judy Watson and Alec Mingelmanganu.

Structural Framework

In what ways do the art elements and principles, materials and techniques contribute to the meanings of the works? How have the artists used symbolism to add meaning to the art work?

SIMILARITIES:
- Simplicity of composition and figure.
- Lack of 3D modelling.
- Symbolic use of colour.
- Use of ochre or raw pigment.

DIFFERENCES
- Rich earth colours (Mingelmanganu) compared with the non-traditional use of blue by Watson.
- Closed composition (Mingelmanganu) compared with the open composition of Watson's painting.

Always refer to details in the artworks to support your statements

Personal Framework

How do the artworks reflect the artists' lives and experiences? How might the experiences and background of the viewer affect their interpretation of the work?

SIMILARITIES
- Both artists have a strong bond with their ancestral land and tell stories of their people.

DIFFERENCES
- Mingelmanganu lived in a remote and traditional community while Watson lives a twenty-first-century life in an urban context.

Cultural Framework

In what ways are the artworks a result of the cultural context in which they were made? Be specific with reference to the impact of each artist's culture on their artwork.

SIMILARITIES
- The spiritual dimension of the stories and figures in the artworks is a clear reference to their Aboriginal heritage.
- Cultural symbolism can be seen in their artworks – Mingelmanganu through the details of the Wandjina figure and Watson through colour, line and shape – and their reference to places and experiences.

DIFFERENCES
- Mingelmanganu (Woonambal) lived his culture on the land, in direct contact with ancient Aboriginal art.
- Watson (Waanyi) lives at one remove; her appreciation of her cultural background is strong, but has been transmitted through her grandmother and her great-grandmother's experiences.
- Watson's subject matter also relates to transient events that impact on her life, and not only her cultural background.

Use references to support your claims – books, journals and reputable websites

Contemporary Framework

How is the artwork of the past interpreted from a contemporary point of view? Are there contemporary social or political issues expressed in the work? Has the artist used non-traditional materials or techniques?

DIFFERENCES
- Mingelmanganu's work was originally made for personal and cultural reasons, but has been placed in galleries away from its original context, appreciated differently by a viewer unfamiliar with the cultural relevance of the image.
- Mingelmanganu painted on canvas – a non-traditional surface – instead of bark; Watson uses a range of non-traditional techniques for applying paint to her canvases.
- Watson's work references social issues relating to Aboriginal communities in Australia and around the world.

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8.4 Asian art: Traditional and contemporary

We recognize the distinctness of Asian art when we turn to its traditional forms, recognize it as Japanese, Chinese and Indian, even Balinese or Thai.

– F. SIONIL JOSÉ, FILIPINO WRITER

Kitagawa Utamaro and Guo Jian belong to different Asian traditions: Utamaro from eighteenth-century Japan and Guo Jian from twenty-first-century China. While the individual artists need to be considered in their own cultural contexts, comparisons can be made in areas such as subject matter; art elements and principles; materials and techniques; style; symbolism; the influence of the artists' lives and experiences; and the impact of their cultural contexts. You will also need to consider how the artists fit into their own contemporary frameworks, as well as view them through your own eyes from your position in the twenty-first century.

Kitagawa Utamaro

Ukiyo-e was an important **genre** of Japanese art from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. The title itself means 'pictures of the floating world', and refers to woodblock prints – and earlier, paintings – of the pleasure-seeking, self-indulgent lifestyle that was becoming increasingly available to the merchant class at a time of rapid economic growth. Many could now afford to enjoy public pleasures such as theatre and entertainment. Because *ukiyo-e* prints were mass produced, multiple copies of each image were available; the price was less than that paid for a painting, and they could be afforded by people who would otherwise not have art in their homes. The subject

matter of the genre ranges from actors and elegant women to landscapes, nature studies, scenes from folk tales and erotica.

At first, colour was added to each print by hand, but later multiple woodblocks were used to print layers of colour one over another to create full-colour prints. Each print was the product of collaboration between the artist (who designed the image), the engraver (who cut the woodblocks by hand), the printer (who inked and printed the blocks in layers on the paper) and the publisher (who

ukiyo-e (pictures of the floating world), woodblock prints produced in Japan from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, depicting subjects such as female beauties, *kabuki* actors and sumo wrestlers, landscape, traditional scenes from daily life, or folk tales and erotica

genre depicts the realistic representation of everyday life; genres are also various categories of subject matter

Figure 8.3 Kitagawa Utamaro, *Three Beauties of the Present Day*, c. 1792–93, coloured woodblock print (37.9 x 24.9 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

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financed and distributed the prints). Often there were a number of versions, printed in different colours from multiple woodblocks, one for each colour.

Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806) was one of the leading woodblock printers in the late eighteenth century, at the height of this genre. He is thought to have produced over 2000 prints but is best known for his images of beautiful women, such as *Three Beauties of the Present Day* (Figure 8.3), although prints of domestic scenes, nature studies and erotica were among the thousands of prints that he designed. In 1804, he was arrested for publishing prints that were thought to insult the sixteenth-century military leader Hideyoshi. He died two years later, in his early fifties.

The three women represented in *Three Beauties of the Present Day* were well known for their beauty and were popular subjects with artists in Edo (modern Tokyo) in the 1790s. They would have been easily recognisable at the time due to the symbolic family crest worn by each, either on her clothing or on the fan she is holding. The figure at the top is a geisha, evidenced by her more ornate clothing; the two other figures were both popular waitresses in their fathers' teahouses; the one on the left was supposedly 16 years old and the one on the right 15 at the time this print was produced.

The full-colour image was designed with a tightly cropped triangular composition and reflects typical fashions and popular hairstyles of the time. The figures have been defined by simple, delicate lines that suggest form without the addition of tone. Pattern has been used on the clothing to contrast with the simplicity of the faces and neither the subtle colour nor the restricted palette distracts the viewer's attention from these faces. Although they seem similar, with their elongated faces, long noses and tiny mouths, the features and expressions are subtly different, unlike the stereotypical faces that were created by earlier artists. The colours are flat and lacking in tonal variation, and the empty background gives no hint of space, although a dusting of powder from the mineral mica lends a shimmer to the work.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, with the end of Japan's long period of isolation from the West, *ukiyo-e* prints by artists such as Utamaro, Hokusai and Hiroshige reached Europe – especially France. They were very popular, impressing Impressionist artists such as Monet, Degas and Cassatt, the Post-Impressionists Van Gogh and Gauguin, and Art Nouveau artists such as Toulouse-Lautrec with the different sense of perspective they saw in these prints and the simplified composition, with its unfamiliar use of space. They noted the way that outline and flat colour were used, as well as the lack of tone and shadow. Many prints arrived in the form of wrapping paper for goods imported from Japan. Monet framed and hung many examples of *ukiyo-e* in his home, and Van Gogh is said to have owned more than 400 Japanese prints.

OTHER WORKS BY UTAMARO

Women in late eighteenth-century Japan, all colour woodblock prints:

- *The Courtesan Yosooi of the Matsubaya*, c. 1799
- *Hairdresser* from the series *Twelve Types of Women's Handicraft*, c. 1798–99
- *Renowned Beauties Likened to the Six Immortal Poets*, series, c. 1794–96

OTHER WORKS

Another work that could be studied is the Triptych of *Takiyasha the Witch and the Skeleton Spectre*, by Utagawa Kuniyoshi, c. 1844, Victoria and Albert Museum – a set of three woodblock prints telling the dramatic story of a folk tale

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Cambridge University Press

REFERENCES

Tadashi Kobayashi, 2001, *Utamaro: Portraits from the Floating World*, 2001, Kodansha

Edmond de Goncourt, 2008, *Utamaro*, Parkstone Press, Temporis series

ACTIVITY 8.7

Compare Utamaro's *Three Beauties of the Present Day* with *You are What is Most Beautiful About Me, a Self Portrait with Kell and Arella* by Del Kathryn Barton (Figure 5.40). In your response, consider the Structural and Personal Frameworks: identify and discuss similarities as well as differences when you refer to the use of line, colour and pattern; evidence of 3D form; the relationship of the viewer to the figures in the work (this involves a discussion of eye contact/the gaze); and the mood created by the combination of these visual qualities. Use each of the following words as you write: contrast, juxtaposed, subdued, organic, flat, shallow, overlap, symmetrical and decorative.

ACTIVITY 8.8

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* and view Utagawa Kuniyoshi's triptych of *Takiyasha the Witch and the Skeleton Spectre.*

List five differences between this set of prints and Utamaro's *Three Beauties of the Present Day*. Consider focal point, any suggestions of movement, drama, colour, contrast and the use of 'three' as a compositional device. Be specific and use details from the works to explain the points you are making.

Guo Jian

I have witnessed many disturbing events and feel deeply about many social and cultural questions. My paintings are not just about China but the overall human situation. Injustice is going on everywhere so I feel a responsibility to tell people the truth, and I want my work to affect people.

– GUO JIAN

propaganda the spreading of a doctrine that reflects the views or interests of a particular group

Guo Jian was born in 1962 and grew up in China during the Cultural Revolution – a period of social upheaval led by Chairman Mao Zedong and characterised by military rule and the purging of intellectuals. His work is the product of the last 50 years of political and cultural unrest, which also includes war with Vietnam in the late 1970s and the bloody protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

As a young man in the late 1970s, Guo Jian joined the army as a way of becoming independent. He served for three years as a **propaganda** painter in the People's Liberation Army. This gave him insights into the way in which the military used the visual and performing arts as a form of propaganda to communicate the Communist Party's policies to motivate soldiers and to boost morale. It has since proved to be a fertile source of subject matter for his art.

Much of Guo Jian's imagery includes soldiers. This has personal meaning for him, not only because he was a soldier himself but also because his grandfather was executed by the People's Liberation Army after being denounced by his own son, himself a soldier who knew that he would be killed as well if he tried to defend his father. His work appears at first glance to be innocent, sometimes even with a humorous twist. Instead, there is an underlying sensuality and often violence.

The Day Before I Went Away (Figure 8.4) is based on the fact that the army puts on a gala for soldiers at the end of their basic training, before they are deployed in the field. These performances are given by the so-called 'entertainment soldiers' – dancers, singers, acrobats and musicians who belong to a special unit of the People's Liberation Army. In 2013 there were 10,000 such performers in the Chinese army. Superficially, these performances appear to be innocent and wholesome, but their aim is to raise morale and Guo Jian sees them as a sexually charged tool for propaganda.

In *The Day Before I Went Away*, the singer, flirting with the viewer, is the focal point due to her size, her position at the front of the **picture plane** and the pale skin of her face, which contrasts with the darker areas around it. Her pose and eye contact draw the viewer into the work. Only then do we see the group of enthusiastic – perhaps over-enthusiastic – soldiers arranged in an informal semi-circle in the shallow,

undefined space behind her. They can be identified as soldiers by their caps and uniforms, but the similarity of their faces renders them anonymous, although it has been said that they are all self-portraits of the artist himself. The repetition of the saturated complementary colours unifies the composition.

The meaning of the painting is ambiguous and open to interpretation, although when Guo Jian was asked why most of the soldiers in his paintings had happy faces, he responded by saying:

This is connected to how we were trained, not just in the army, but in China. There are not supposed to be any problems in life, everyone is supposed to be happy. The government orders happiness – if you are not happy then we will make you happy. This is what I am trying to show in my work – that this happiness is not real, that it is forced.

Figure 8.4 Guo Jian, *The Day Before I Went Away*, 2008, oil on canvas (320 x 227 cm), Queensland Art Gallery, purchased through the Queensland Government's Gallery of Modern Art
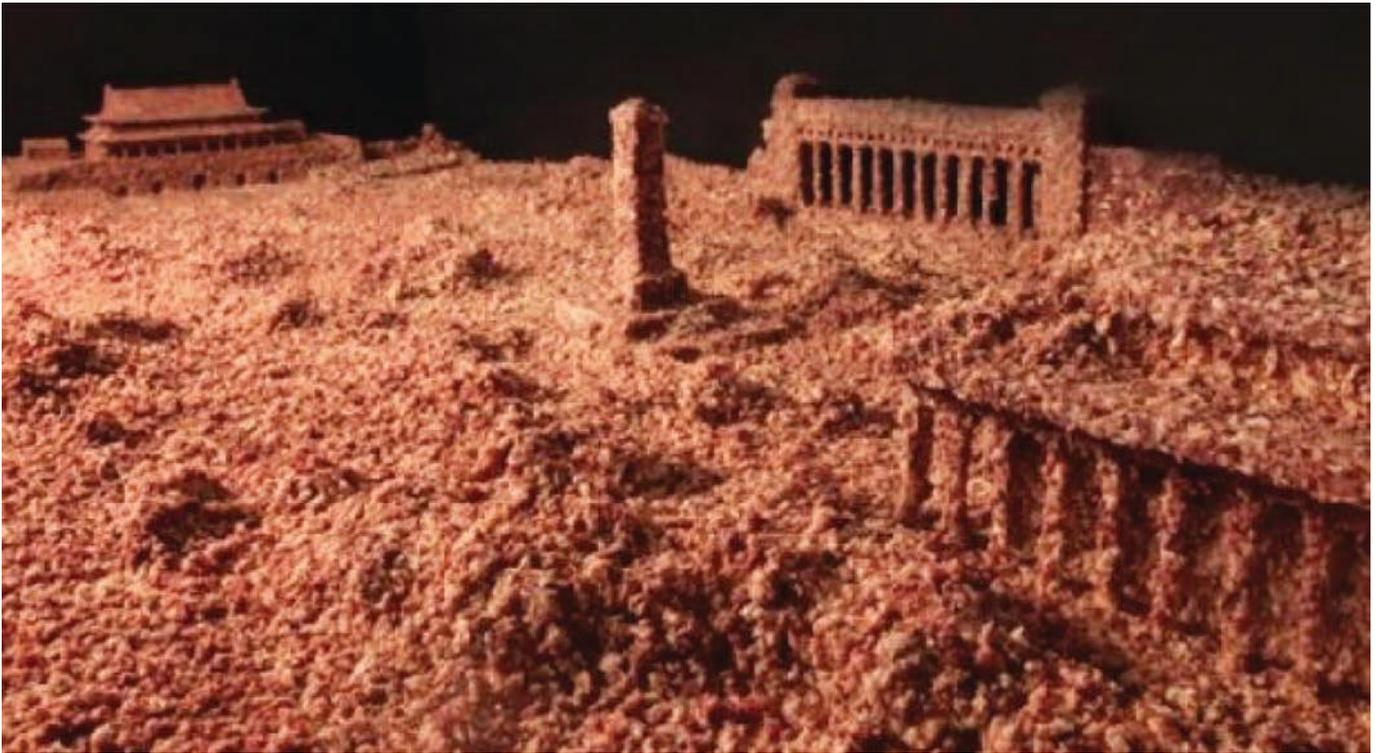
Guo Jian's artwork is sometimes labelled as belonging to the style called Cynical Realism, a contemporary movement in Chinese art that is a response to the propaganda-laden art supported by the government. At the same time, it reflects on China's rapid growth in urbanisation and industrialisation. Artists who work in this style often use satire and irony as tools to express their message.

Guo Jian took part in the student-led pro-democracy hunger strikes in 1989 and was in Tiananmen Square (a historically and culturally significant site in central Beijing) when the army opened fire on civilians, resulting in an undisclosed number of deaths. He is one of a number of Chinese artists (such as Ah Xian and Guan Wei) who moved to Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, and who have either returned to China – like Guo Jian in 2005 – or now have studios in both countries.

In 2014, within days of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen protests and the military crackdown that followed, and in the privacy of his studio in an artists' colony on the outskirts of Beijing, Guo Jian created *The Square* (Figure 8.5), an enormous diorama of Tiananmen Square. He covered it in 160 kilograms of raw pork meat, so that the geography of the square and the buildings surrounding it disappeared and it looked more like a nightmarish war zone. The Chinese government had tried to stop any commemoration of the 1989 event and after photographs of *The Square* began to circulate online, the artist was visited in the studio by the police, who forced him to destroy the work with a hammer and filmed him doing so. They then took him into custody and questioned him before making him serve 15 days of detention for 'visa irregularities' prior to being deported for five years. Because he had maintained his Australian passport, it was easier for him to be expelled, but he doubts that he will ever be able to return.

The politically correct interpretation of this very large sculptural form is that it is a comment on the rapid urbanisation of China, which is seeing an influx of people from rural areas to the

Figure 8.5 Guo Jian, *The Square*, 2014, covered in 160 kg of minced pork, image courtesy the artist, photo © Guo Jian

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cities and the degradation of air and water quality that inevitably accompanies that, as well as the frequent demolition of cultural landmarks. The government, however, was not convinced by this explanation and found the work to be 'offensive'. From our position outside China and its politics, it would be easy to interpret it as symbolic of violence and death, the meat red and bloody and the architecture decaying in a cultural wasteland. Guo Jian himself said, 'The meat was a sign that everything will go rotten.'

OTHER WORKS

- *Cast and Crew*, 1999–present – a series of black and white paintings of smiling soldiers posed as if for the camera
- *Untitled #9,* 2009–present – Marilyn Monroe playing to Chinese rather than American troops

ARTWORKS BY ANOTHER CHINESE AUSTRALIAN ARTIST, LOOKING AT THE POLITICS OF DISPLACEMENT AND IMMIGRATION

- Guan Wei, *Dow Island*, 2002, *Feng Shui*, 2004, *The Journey to Australia*, 2013

ACTIVITY 8.9

How would you interpret *The Square*? Based on the text on these pages and internet research, use the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks to unpack the symbolism, the use of non-traditional materials and the reference to contemporary issues embedded in this work. A number of newspaper articles were written at the time of the artist's deportation. Refer to these and to specific qualities of the artwork.

ACTIVITY 8.10

Guo Jian is aware of the similarities of a soldier's position in any army – the experiences and fears have much in common. His work acknowledges 'the commonality and empathy of soldiers across borders. Soldiers don't start wars, governments do; but it is the soldiers who serve and suffer the horrors.'

Select a painting from the artist's *Untitled 02* series on his website. Analyse it using the Structural, Personal and Cultural Frameworks. Refer to the artist's military experience and his reference to propaganda.

ACTIVITY 8.11

Refer to the commentary at the start of the text about Guo Jian. Do you feel he is successful in fulfilling the responsibility he feels? What impact does his work have on you, the viewer?

Write a paragraph that supports your response by referring to a specific artwork and explaining how it has or has not affected you.

COMPARISON

When comparing Asian art from different cultures and different times, select works that have obvious similarities – in subject matter, cultural expression, art form or medium, techniques or processes. Use all of the Analytical Frameworks to analyse and interpret your chosen works. To score highly, you must integrate your comparisons to establish relationships between the artists, their artworks and the contexts of both. There are more points of comparison than can be found in the following list.

Structural Framework

In what ways do the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes contribute to the meanings of the works? What are the distinctive styles of the works and how do they relate to their times or the messages of the artist?

SIMILARITIES
- Subjects are represented realistically.
- Sitters have been cropped to draw the viewer's eye to their faces.

DIFFERENCES
- Woodblock print (Utamaro) compared with oil on canvas (Guo Jian).
- Subdued colour with a limited palette (Utamaro) compared with intense complementary colours (Guo Jian).

Always refer to details in the artworks to support your statements.

Personal Framework

How do the artworks reflect the artists' lives and experiences? How do the works themselves affect the interpretation of the viewer?

SIMILARITIES
- Both artists responded to the people, experiences and situations of their times.

DIFFERENCES
- The sitter is an object of observation because of a lack of eye contact with the viewer (Utamaro) compared with engagement with the viewer via the gaze (Guo Jian).

Cultural Framework

In what ways are the art works a result of the cultural context in which they were made? How do the symbols reflect the cultural or social understanding of the artist or the society in which the works are viewed? Be specific with reference to the impact of their cultural contexts on the artworks.

SIMILARITIES
- Clothing of the sitters reflects their cultural context.
- Symbolism is used to enhance the identification of the sitter – family crests by Utamaro, uniforms by Guo Jian.

DIFFERENCES
- Utamaro's subject matter reflects the accepted values of its cultural context while Guo Jian challenges those values.
- Utamaro's work was profoundly influential in another time and cultural context.

Use evidence from research material to support your statements – refer to books, journals and websites

Contemporary Framework

How have collaborative approaches to art making changed how the role of the artist is seen? What political concerns are expressed in the artwork and how do they challenge the viewer's interpretation?

DIFFERENCES
- Guo Jian's painting refers to a social issue by using irony while Utamaro's is more a reflection of its time.

8.5 The place of animals in art

asymmetrical the opposite of symmetrical; the objects in an image are not balanced, and each half of the image does not resemble the other

Baroque art style or movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where artists used strong contrasts, emotion, movement, exaggeration and theatrical effects

chiaroscuro Italian for 'light-dark'; refers to the contrast of light and dark to make forms look three-dimensional

focal point centre of attention

The relationship between humans and animals has changed over time. We can read a sense of awe in prehistoric cave paintings. We know that animals were hunted for food and fur, and that later they were domesticated and laboured on the land. Some animals are the centres of cults, such as the cat and the bull in ancient Egypt and the lamb in Christianity. We know that for centuries they have been the source of 'sport', in activities such as duck-shooting and bull-fighting. Today, many of us enjoy their company as trusted companions.

Animals have come to symbolise human qualities – the strength and ferocity of the lion, the timidity of the lamb. The mythical unicorn symbolises fidelity and purity, and in the West the dragon personifies evil. The fact that in China and Japan the dragon is a symbol of wisdom highlights the fact that many symbols depend on their cultural environment and tradition for meaning.

Animals often tell of the character, personality or social status of a sitter in a portrait, or tell part of a story – often in religious paintings (such as *St George and the Dragon*, 1606–07, by Rubens). For some artists, the slaughter of animals for sport became a metaphor for war; for others, animals were symbols of love or passion. It wasn't until the eighteenth century that animals began to be seen in their own right in art: we have the horse paintings of George Stubbs and the lion fights of Delacroix. Damien Hirst's *Mother and Child Divided*, 1993 (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of this work) causes us to reflect on motherhood and separation, on the dichotomy of life and death.

Peter Paul Rubens

Surely no artist before him had so successfully integrated wild beasts into the formal and expressive vocabulary of dramatic painting.

– DAVID ROSAND, ART HISTORIAN

Lion Hunt (Figure 8.6) was painted in 1621 by Peter Paul Rubens. It is a painting on an epic scale. It dwarfs the viewer who, confronted by its size, is even further in awe of the drama of the subject matter – the power of the struggle of human versus beast. The violence of the lion hunt is made visible in the writhing composition of horses, riders and attacking lions. A dramatic moment has been frozen in time by Rubens, capturing the intense action and emotion. The battle is dynamic and vigorous, and the **asymmetrical** composition is filled with energy and movement.

Rubens (1577–1640) was a Flemish artist working in the **Baroque** style, inspired by classical art and the great Italian masters of the Renaissance. Art at this time is characterised by drama and theatricality, not only of the subject-matter but also in the way it is shown with intense contrasts of light and shade – a technique called **chiaroscuro** – and usually at a particularly dramatic moment of the story.

Using *chiaroscuro*, Rubens has highlighted the struggle of the figure in white being dragged from his horse and attacked by a lion. The man and the lion become the **focal point** against the darker tones of the action around them. The viewer's eye moves to the light shining on the flesh of the two men on either side, and is drawn to the intensity of the red tunic worn by the

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Figure 8.6 Peter Paul Rubens, *Lion Hunt*, 1621, oil on canvas (248.7 x 377.3 cm), Alte Pinakotek, Munich

turbaned figure at top left. It then follows the spear he is brandishing and continues to follow the lines of arms and spears as attention is drawn around the composition. The action appears to be extending beyond the edges of the canvas, and in this way it creates an **open composition**.

The violent motion in this painting is placed near the front of the picture plane, which draws the viewer into the action. Spatial depth is suggested by the low **horizon line** and the **foreshortening** of the figure on the ground on the right. We are also aware of it in the spaces around and between the figures. The strong emotion of the scene, with its expressive faces echoed by frenzied poses and thrusting spears, its agony and death, is further symbolised by the roiling clouds in the stormy sky. The swift brush strokes visible on the animals' manes accentuate the movement through texture.

Rubens wrote in a letter of 1621, 'I have almost finished a large picture, entirely by my hand, and in my opinion one of my best, representing a Lion Hunt, with the figures life-sized.' Completing the painting by his own hand is unusual in his practice, as he operated a large and very busy workshop. As was typical in such workshops, the master would sketch the composition, and his assistants would paint most of it before the artist added the final touches, often the faces. Such delegation of production is also a common element of contemporary art.

We are led to believe that the action in this painting takes place in Africa, a continent that inspired the imagination of the viewer in the seventeenth century. The landscape and animals were exotic, the people were colourful and the lifestyle was unfamiliar. The exoticism of this scene isn't understood in the same way today, when travel and tourism are within easy reach. *Lion Hunt* was **commissioned** by a wealthy aristocrat, and such paintings were seen at the time as symbols of affluence and status. Hunting was a popular pastime for those with the wealth to undertake such adventures, and aristocrats like the Archduke of Brussels owned a personal zoo where Rubens observed and sketched the wild animals.

open composition composition in which the objects in the image seem to extend beyond the edges of the frame

horizon line the line where water or land meets the sky; this is the eye level of the viewer in a painting, drawing or photograph

foreshortening shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and to make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

commission the act of hiring someone to create an artwork, usually for a fee

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OTHER WORK BY RUBENS

• *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1605 – a symbolic battle on a number of levels
• *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, c. 1614–16 – animals taking a symbolic part in a Biblical story

RELEVANT WORKS BY OTHER ARTISTS

• Dürer, *Rhinoceros*, 1515 – a detailed drawing of an animal known only by description but never seen by the artist
• August Friedrich Albrecht Schenck, *Anguish*, c. 1878, National Gallery of Victoria – an emotional image of an animal playing a symbolic role
• Henri Rousseau, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm*, 1891– an imaginary scene full of pattern
• Franz Marc, *Blue Horse 1*, 1911 – symbolic use of colour
• Katharina Fritsch, *Hahn/Cock*, 2013 – a symbol of maleness more than 4 metres high, created by a female artist

ACTIVITY 8.12

Italian artist Guido Reni (1575–1642) said that Rubens 'mixed blood with his colours'. Look at *Lion Hunt* and *St George and the Dragon* and explain why you think that an artist who lived and worked at the same time as Rubens would have said this. Looking at works by Reni may be useful.

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to view Reni's work.

ACTIVITY 8.13

Compare Rubens' *Lion Hunt* with another artwork of your choice that contains images of animals. *Daniel in the Lion's Den*, also by Rubens, is very different; so are *Anguish* by Schenck, *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* by Rousseau and *Hahn/Cock* by Katharina Fritsch. Whichever work you select, ensure that you research its cultural context and the artist's use of symbolism as well as the Structural Framework.

Julia deVille

My work asks questions about preciousness. Our society considers gemstones and gold to be precious, but to me the life of the animals I use in my work has a much higher value.

– JULIA DEVILLE

Julia deVille combines the two very different disciplines of taxidermy and jewellery to create poignant artworks that act as contemporary **memento mori** – reminders of our mortality – and at the same time challenges the traditional understanding of art and art objects. She integrates symbols of death into her artistic practice, although much of her work is designed to celebrate the preciousness of life. As she says, 'The only moment that actually holds any value is this moment. I use symbols of mortality in my work as an anchor into the present, a reminder of the importance of life.'

Taxidermy is the art of preserving animals as though they were alive. The word is derived from the Greek *taxis*, meaning arrangement, and *dermis*, skin. DeVille's interest in taxidermy began when she was young and fell in love with her grandmother's fox fur, which seemed to have a life of its own, even in death. She learned the art through a mentorship with an expert taxidermist and uses her skills to create not only sculptural works such as *Kitten Drawn Hearse* (Figure 8.7) but also elegant jewellery that may include details such as a mouse's skull, a bat with rubies in the place of eyes or a tiny bird's wing.

Born in New Zealand but now based in Melbourne, deVille only works with animals that have died of natural causes. She is a strict vegan and animal rights activist, always conscious of the ways in which animals are used and abused in our society. She sees her works as a gentle protest against traditions such as

Figure 8.7 Julia deVille, *Kitten Drawn Hearse*, 2013, kitten, black garnet beads, sterling silver, pear-shaped sapphire, egret feathers, wood, glass, photo courtesy of the artist and Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne

trophy hunting, when wild animals were killed for sport and their heads displayed as souvenirs of the battle between human and animal. Her sculptures highlight the fragility of life while celebrating its beauty. Sometimes she includes an element of light-hearted humour so that her work is approachable rather than gruesome or shocking, such as her 2013 work *Neapolitan* in which three gelati-coloured chicks are tucked into an antique ice-cream scoop.

Julia deVille is fascinated by the concept of mortality that is visible in death-related objects from as early as the fifteenth century, but especially in the Victorian era – a time when life was short and death was 'celebrated' by ritual and symbolism. When Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, died in 1861, England was thrown into an extended period of mourning. Funerals were elaborate and, if the person who died had been wealthy enough, had a theatrical quality – sometimes professional mourners were paid to 'grieve' loudly as the hearse (the vehicle that carried

the coffin) was driven to the graveyard. Black clothes – symbolic of death and spiritual darkness – were worn during the period of mourning for a close relative. Mourning jewellery, such as brooches and lockets holding photographs or hair from the deceased, were worn around the neck or pinned to clothes.

Kitten Drawn Hearse needs to be viewed against this background. The jewelled reins and the dark colours of the kitten's fur remind us of mourning jewellery. The miniature carriage is a detailed scale model of a Victorian hearse and the kitten's feather headdress is a reminder of the ostrich feather plumes worn by the horses pulling a funeral carriage. The change of scale from horse to kitten and the altered combination of kitten and hearse encourage the viewer to question the artist's intentions and symbolism. This is further supported because it is installed on a base that allows the viewer to walk around it and see it from every angle.

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In both her jewellery and her taxidermy-based practice, deVille enjoys the symbolism of using materials that were once living, such as jet (fossilised wood) and human hair, both of which were used in Victorian [eye/Structural] mourning jewellery. DeVille also uses precious and semi-precious stones in her work – it is not unusual to see an animal's injury symbolised by a string of rubies representing blood.

Julia deVille maintains an active studio [eye/Contemporary] and collaborates with a range of artisans and craftspeople, providing them with preliminary models or detailed reference material to complete elements of an artwork, such as making the carriage in *Kitten Drawn Hearse*. She often includes found objects, which take on the quality of **ready-mades** in the **Dada** [eye/Structural] tradition, sourcing them from flea markets or antique shops.

Examples include a silver platter bearing an artfully arranged still-born deer (*Sorrow*, 2012), still in a foetal position, and a plate of finches nestled in a silver serving dish (*Genocide*, 2013). In another sense, the animals themselves are incorporated into her work as **found objects**.

OTHER WORKS

- *Stillborn Angel*, 2009 – stillborn puppy with bird's wings
- *Orcus*, 2010 – jewel-encrusted piglet
- *Neapolitan*, 2013 – three chickens in an antique ice-cream scoop

REFERENCES

For a list of relevant online references, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

ready-made a manufactured found object modified by an artist and presented as an artwork in a different context from that originally intended

Dada an art movement started after World War I that was a reaction to the horrors of war; the artists created artworks that lacked traditional value and had little or no aesthetics

found object an object not originally intended as a work of art, which is found and exhibited by an artist

ACTIVITY 8.14

Respond to the question 'How is killing animals for art different to killing them for food, leather and fur?' Refer to the Contemporary Framework and to artworks of two contemporary artists to support your argument.

Discuss at least one artwork by each. (See also discussion of animals in art in Section 10.11 in Chapter 10). Possible artists include Julia deVille, Damien Hirst (animals preserved in vitrines), Noortje Zijlstra (animal puppets), Natalia Edenmont (Figure 10.16) (dismembered animal parts), Wim Delvoye (tattooed pigs) and Eduardo Kac (fluorescent rabbit).

In your response, refer to the contemporary issue of animal rights and how artworks can affect a viewer's appreciation of the subject through the artist's use of symbolism, non-traditional materials and the presentation of the artwork in a non-traditional exhibition space (which may be virtual – for example, via the internet or social media – rather than actual).

ACTIVITY 8.15

Nathalia Edenmont's photographs are beautiful at first glance, with their saturated colour and powerful composition (see *Bride Red* in Figure 10.16). Looking more closely, the viewer sees that the animal subjects are dead and dismembered. She makes comment on the shallowness and double standards of contemporary life:

> There is nothing illegal in Nathalia's art. She has killed the animals in as humane a way as possible. Has she been guilty of a moral crime?
>
> –*WETTERLING GALLERY, WHICH REPRESENTS THE ARTIST*

Discuss using the Personal and Contemporary Frameworks.

COMPARISON

A comparison of *Lion Hunt* by Rubens and deVille's *Kitten Drawn Hearse* could include the following points, which investigate ways in which the Analytical Frameworks can be used to interpret meaning. This is not claimed to be an exhaustive list. When comparing artworks, you need to observe each one closely and research their cultural contexts in detail from a range of reputable sources. Remember to integrate your comparisons using the Analytical Frameworks rather than writing about one artwork and then about the second.

Structural Framework

In what ways do the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes contribute to the meanings of the works? How have the artists used symbolism to add meaning to the art work?

SIMILARITIES
- Animal subject matter
- Symbolic use of colour and composition

DIFFERENCES
- Dynamic movement (Rubens) compared with arrested motion (deVille).
- Symbolism – the power and ferocity of animals (Rubens) versus their vulnerability (deVille).
- Techniques – traditional oil painting compared with non-traditional taxidermy (also Contemporary Framework).
- Presentation – 2D large-scale painting on a wall in a gallery compared with miniature 3D work installed so that viewers can walk around it. (Note that Rubens' painting is not exhibited in the type of space for which it was created.)

Always refer to details in the artworks to support your statements.

Personal Framework

How do the artworks reflect the artists' lives and experiences? How might the experiences and background of the viewer affect their interpretation of the work?

SIMILARITIES
- The viewer's response depends on their knowledge of the past (seventeenth-century 'adventure travel' and mourning symbolism in Victorian times).
- The emotional response is easy due to the clarity of the narrative (Rubens) or the inherent symbolism of the subject matter (deVille), although the message needs more active interpretation by the viewer.

DIFFERENCES
- Commissioned to create the work (money) versus influenced by philosophical and ethical beliefs (values).

Cultural Framework

How do the symbols reflect the cultural or social understanding of the artist or the society in which the works are viewed? How were the artworks critiqued at the time they were made? Be specific with reference to the impact of their cultural contexts on the artworks.

SIMILARITIES
- Both works were created with the viewer in mind, and were received positively. The artists understood their 'market'.

DIFFERENCES
- References to death – drama and heroism (typical of art in the seventeenth century) versus sentimental approach (typical of the Victorian era).

Use references to support your claims – books, journals and reputable websites.

Contemporary Framework

Have the artists used non-traditional materials or techniques? How have collaborative approaches to art making changed the way in which the role of the artist is seen? What political concerns are expressed in the artwork and how do they challenge the viewer's interpretation?

SIMILARITIES

- Both artists understand the value of collaboration and use it when appropriate. This may or may not be known by the viewer.

DIFFERENCES

- Traditional oil painting exhibited on a gallery wall compared with non-traditional taxidermy displayed so that the viewer can walk around it (also Structural Framework) can affect the viewer's reaction to the works. (Note that Rubens' painting is not exhibited in the type of space for which it was created.)

8.6 Three-dimensional works and installations

It is difficult to categorise the vast number of artists who work in three dimensions or with installations. Such work encompasses an enormous breadth of ideas, concepts, themes, media and art forms. Three-dimensional artworks have been created since humans first took clay from the ground and used it to form figures. They have changed over the millennia in response to new materials and techniques, and to the changing interests and aims of artists. All three-dimensional works fill space, but more recently artists have created works that are not only physical objects but also experiences created in time. They may involve the human body in performance. Often they are created for a specific place – we say these works are **site-specific**. Installation artworks can also surround the viewer and in this sense they are also three-dimensional, although this is not always the case.

Fiona Hall works with her hands using non-traditional materials in unexpected ways to create artworks of great symbolic meaning. Miguel Chevalier uses computer technology to immerse the viewer in his large-scale light installations, many of which are interactive.

Fiona Hall

I wouldn't classify myself as a political artist because that's a very narrow area, protest art. But a lot of my recent work touches on environmental politics, although I try to get beyond the purely political.

– FIONA HALL

Fiona Hall's *Mourning Chorus* (2007–08) (Figure 8.8) was inspired by a residency the artist undertook in New Zealand in 2006. The title is a play on words – the evocative chorus of birds in the morning becomes a song of mourning for their disappearance due to habitat destruction and the introduction of predators. A **vitrine** in the shape of a coffin holds 11 disposable plastic chemical containers, which in turn represent 11 extinct or endangered species. Each species of bird can be recognised by the shape of its beak, which Hall has accurately carved and then cast in resin. Electric cables clustered below the coffin allow the interior to light up randomly as though flickering to life. When the viewer looks through the glass walls of the vitrine, their sight is partially obscured by vinyl images of native New Zealand plants that represent the birds' natural habitat, now under threat. Of the political nature of her work, Hall says that it 'is a carrion call, sounding the siren in a dying wilderness'.

The presentation format of Hall's work is integral to its reading. The vitrine is an ironic reference to specimen collections of extinct species found in museums, and its coffin shape can be understood as a symbol of death and mourning. The bodies of the birds are replaced by bottles of toxic chemicals such as stain removers, engine oil, insect poison and weed killer, symbolising our consumerist and often not eco-friendly habits. They stand as a metaphor for the destruction of bird species. The containers still wear the colours that brand them but the beaks retain the neutral colour of the resin. This helps to draw attention to the underlying symbolism of lack of care for the consequences of our mismanagement of our environment.

vitrine glass cabinet or showcase

Figure 8.8 Fiona Hall, *Mourning Chorus*, 2007–08, resin, plastic bottles, electric lights, vinyl, vitrine (157 × 217 × 88 cm), courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Figure 8.9 Fiona Hall, *Mourning Chorus* (detail), 2007–08, resin, plastic bottles, electric lights, vinyl, vitrine (157 × 217 × 88 cm), courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

multi-disciplinary art practices that work across a range of art forms and materials, blurring their boundaries

recontextualise place in a new or unfamiliar context, especially in order to suggest a different interpretation

wunderkammer a place where a collection of rarities is exhibited; a precursor to the concept of a museum; also known as a cabinet of curiosities

Fiona Hall is a **multi-disciplinary** artist, working in a diverse range of media to create sculptures and installations. Her mother was a well-known scientist and the artist grew up without a car or a television. Her family walked everywhere. Hall went bushwalking and camping regularly as a child, and developed a sense of inquiry and an interest in the natural world.

Unsurprisingly, a core theme of her work is the relationship between nature and human culture – not only conservation and endangered species, but also environmental destruction, globalisation, consumerism and economic corruption, and the part they play in the fragility of the environment.

A further thread in Hall's work is her use of commonplace materials and found objects, often discarded because they have little value. She says 'I tend to choose materials already loaded with meaning.' By reworking and **recontextualising** these materials, using them in unexpected ways that differ from their usual functions, she creates work with added symbolic cultural meaning. Over

the last 30 years she has employed a broad range of non-traditional materials and techniques in her artistic practice. Unlike many contemporary artists, Hall completes all her work herself, without the help of assistants.

Hall has formed birds' nests from shredded US dollar notes to create *Tender* (2003–05), knitted human body parts from the video tapes of war movies for *Slash and Burn* (1997) – drawing to our attention the role played by the media in glorifying war and conflict – and glass beads threaded onto wire, which was then attached to PVC pipe to create *Dead in the Water* (1999); this artwork brings to mind issues of global warming and, nearly 20 years after its creation, can be seen as a metaphor for current coral bleaching. She has also carved soap, knitted Coca-Cola cans and reworked found object such as Tupperware and sardine cans.

Not only is there a layering of concepts in her work; there are also multiple possible interpretations. Titles are usually a witty play on words and often suggest double meanings. 'Tender' refers to something that is kind and caring, but money is also called legal tender – this work can be seen as a comment on natural habitats and economic greed; 'slash and burn' refers to an agricultural method of clearing land but just as easily describes warfare and ethnic cleansing. There is a gentle humour and sharp irony as well as dark symbolism embedded in both her works and their titles.

Hall's use of vitrines calls to mind the earliest form of museum – the **wunderkammer** – or cabinet of curiosities. From as early as the Renaissance in the fourteenth century, wealthy people have collected and privately displayed objects of interest, and sometimes of fantasy. Early collections are known to have contained (fabricated) examples of mermaids and unicorn horns. Over time, small collections were absorbed into larger ones, and eventually turned into

public museums. They bear witness to human curiosity and an innate interest in collecting. Hall's work reflects her interest in science as well as in collecting and displaying. It can be read on a number of levels and, in true **postmodern** fashion, there is no single interpretation. Instead it depends on the background and experiences of the viewer to help them look beyond the intricate surface of her work and interpret the message.

OTHER WORKS

- *Medicine Bundle for the Non-born Child*, 1993 – babies' clothes knitted from shredded Coca-Cola cans
- *Cell Culture*, 2002 – glass beads threaded onto wire and attached to Tupperware to create hybrid creatures
- *The Barbarians at the Gate*, 2010 – an installation using beehives, architectural models, plastic action dolls and camouflage patterns

REFERENCES

Julie Ewington 2005, *Fiona Hall*, Piper Press

For a list of online references, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

ACTIVITY 8.16

[A] … lot of my recent work touches on environmental politics, although I try to get beyond the purely political.

– *FIONA HALL*

Use the Contemporary Framework to explain how you think Hall's work is political and the ways in which it goes beyond this interpretation. On what levels does she appeal to the viewer – political, intellectual, aesthetic? Explain your opinion by referring to specific qualities of specific artworks.

ACTIVITY 8.17

Using the Contemporary Framework, compare Hall's *Mourning Chorus* to *Cannonball Heaven*, 2011, by Yinka Shonibare, *Shooting into the Corner,* 2008–09, by Anish Kapoor, or *Burned Out*, 2014, by Urs Fischer.

In your response, ensure that you consider the contemporary qualities of time/permanence, documentation, non-traditional materials, movement and light, and discuss subject matter and physical context as well as symbolism.

Refer to the Structural Framework and the relevant art elements and principles. You must use evidence from the works you are discussing to support your statements. Underline any art terminology you use.

postmodern an eclectic style of art that came about as a reaction to modernism, which had dominated art theory and practice since the beginning of the twentieth century. It challenges traditions and the ideas of originality by using non-traditional materials and art forms, appropriation or humour.

Miguel Chevalier

[T]echnology is a part of human beings' evolution.

– MIGUEL CHEVALIER

monumental grand or imposing; resembling a monument

Gothic the dominant style of architecture in Europe in the late Middle Ages, characterised by pointed arches, slender windows and elaborate architectural carving

immersive appearing to surround the viewer in three dimensions

ephemeral an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them

arabesque ornamental linear designs inspired by the rhythmic patterns of nature, originally found in Islamic art

Digital projection artist Miguel Chevalier was born in Mexico, but currently lives and works in Paris. His father was an academic and during the artist's childhood the family mixed with famous artists such as Mexican mural artists David Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera and French filmmaker Luis Buñuel. The artist has said that this exposure to the art world was a very important part of his artistic awakening.

Chevalier is a pioneer in the world of digital art, using computer technology as his medium and working with a team of technicians to see his images come to life on a large scale. Having worked on displays for the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and on the prestigious façade of the Grand Palais in Paris in 2014, he is no stranger to working on a **monumental** scale at an impressive site.

Dear World … Yours, Cambridge (Figure 8.10) is an interactive work on a grand scale. Chevalier transformed the interior of the sixteenth-century **Gothic** King's College Chapel at the University of Cambridge into an **immersive** art installation specially designed for the famous chapel's interior. Commissioned as part of a fundraising campaign by the university, this work was a series of projections that combined light and sound, designed to accompany speeches by well-known professors and alumni of the university, including Sir David Attenborough and Stephen Hawking.

Figure 8.10 captures a moment in the sequence that illustrated Stephen Hawking's speech. The chapel's interior was filled with an interconnecting web of constellations that changed in real time across the walls and the ornate ceiling. Expansive stained-glass windows that cast coloured light by day resonated with the light of the projections as they played across the chapel's lavishly decorated interior at night, sometimes emphasising the architecture and sometimes hiding it.

Consideration of the space where a light work is to be installed is an important part of Chevalier's practice – it is always site-specific. Sometimes the space carries its own symbolism, such as King's College Chapel where the internal space of the sixteenth-century chapel brings with it the history and use of the space over time. Although he often creates interactive installations in galleries, Chevalier's work is frequently experienced out of the museum and on the street. His exterior locations are transformed from their usual business – for example, the waterfront in Shajah in the United Arab Emirates in 2014 and a public street in Valletta, Malta in 2015. In these venues, viewers found themselves immersed in virtual worlds, their eyes following shapes and colours as they appeared and disappeared, interlaced, overlapped, transformed, fragmented and reassembled. Technology, freed from the space of the computer screen, allowed intense light, colour and movement to envelop them.

Chevalier's compositions across surface and time are **ephemeral**. Works such as his 2015 floor projection *Digital Arabesques* in Fès suggest an artificial intelligence that goes beyond human control. This virtual magic carpet was made up of constantly moving geometric patterns. Inspired by Moroccan architecture and Islamic mosaics, the level of interactivity depended on the viewer's presence – it mutated as spectators triggered detection sensors. Light reacted to movement and the **arabesques** formed and transformed into seemingly endless patterns. In this way it can be said that Chevalier paints with light.

The artist developed an interest in digital technology as a student, and has been working in this field since the 1980s. He works with themes such as nature, networks and virtual cities, producing light installations based on binary waves, fractal flowers and virtual gardens. He has mimicked plants growing from seed, then blossoming and dying. He could be called a digital gardener because of the way in which he combines light with mathematical and digital raw material to create artificial life.

Drawing his inspiration from technology as well as nature, Chevalier is constantly experimenting with high-tech computer processing tools and practices. He works alongside computer scientists and electronics engineers, and incorporates new technology from the fast-developing world of computing, such as the motion detectors used in video games. He also uses developing 3D printing technology to create sculptural forms.

OTHER WORKS
- *Terra Incognita*, 2010, Sao Paulo, Brazil – interactive images developed from cross-sections of Chevalier's brain
- *Fractal Flowers*, 2014, Céret, France – interactive virtual garden
- *Magic Carpets*, 2014, Casablanca, Morocco – short-term, site-specific interactive virtual reality installation

INSTALLATION WORKS BY OTHER ARTISTS
- Alexandra Stratou, Stella Constandines and Danae Stratou, *Desert Breath*, 1997 – land art on an enormous scale, subject to erosion and disappearance
- Julius Popp, *Bit.Fall*, 2005 – the controlled motion of falling water
- Andre Amador, *Capturing Impermanence*, 2016 – designs scratched into sand on a large scale

For a direct link to the videos showcasing these installations, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Figure 8.10 Miguel Chevalier, *Dear World … Yours, Cambridge*, 2015, immersive projection, technical productions by Voxels productions, software by Cyrille Henry and Antoine Villeret, film by Claude Mossessian, image courtesy of the artist © Miguel Chevalier/ADAGP, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

For a list of relevant online references, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook.*

ACTIVITY 8.18

Bit.Fall (2005) by Julius Popp, installed at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Hobart, is another artwork that is closely linked to computer technology. For a direct link to the video showcasing this installation, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook.* The controlled motion of falling water in which letters are written, accompanied by the live sound of water hitting a surface below, is mesmerising in a similar way to Chevalier's *Dear World … Yours, Cambridge* (2015).

Use the Personal Framework to explain what you believe holds the viewer's attention in these time-based works, referring to specific examples from the works seen in video format on the internet. Use the Contemporary Framework to discuss the physical contexts of the works and the use of technology as an art medium.

ACTIVITY 8.19

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to see Cai Guo Giang's installation *Sky Ladder* (2015) – a huge helium-filled balloon floating a 500 metre-long ladder made of metal wire and aluminium. It was coated with fuses and fireworks that were ignited at night. Use the Structural and Contemporary Frameworks to interpret this work. Make a list of words describing the elements, principles, materials and physical properties. Write a paragraph about the contemporary qualities of the work. Write a sentence that explains possible meanings or interpretations.

ACTIVITY 8.20

Research the links between Chevalier's work and the paintings and kinetic sculptures of Op artists such as Victor Vasarely and Bridget Riley, who created artworks based on optical illusions that predate digital art by 50 years.

Compare a work by one of these artists with another by Chevalier and make a table of similarities and differences, referring to elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes as well as the viewing space. Use the Structural, Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks to explain how each work was a reflection of its time and the contemporary interests of the artists.

COMPARISON

When comparing a sculptural work and an installation, ensure that there are areas of similarity as well as differences. Use the points below to help investigate the meanings of the works and how the messages have been created by the artists. You will need to apply aspects of all the Analytical Frameworks in your writing, although they will not always be relevant to both artworks. Integrate comparisons by referencing each artwork at each stage of the discussion rather than by writing first about one artwork and then about the second. Remember that it is sometimes difficult to separate information in your responses into Analytical Frameworks because it may be relevant to more than one framework at the same time. This list is not exhaustive.

Structural Framework

What materials and processes have the artists used? In what ways do the art elements and principles contribute to the meanings of the works?

SIMILARITIES
- Both artworks exist in three-dimensional space.

DIFFERENCES
- Sculpture installed in a gallery (Hall) compared with an immersive light installation (Chevalier).
- Elements of form, space, texture (Hall) and light, time and movement (Chevalier).
- On a human scale (Hall) or a monumental scale (Chevalier).

Refer to details in the artworks as evidence to support your comments.

Personal Framework

How do the artworks reflect the artists' experiences, feelings, thinking and personal philosophies? What are the symbols and metaphors explored in the artworks that contribute to the personal meanings and messages of the artists?

SIMILARITIES
- Experiences and interests when the artists were young have contributed to the subject matter or form of their practice.

DIFFERENCES
- The subject matter of *Mourning Chorus* refers to Hall's specific and personal concerns (her beliefs about species destruction), but the subject matter of *Dear World … Yours, Cambridge* was set by the body that commissioned Chevalier's light installation.

Cultural Framework

How do the symbols reflect the cultural or social understanding of the artist or the society in which the works are viewed? How does the placement of the artworks affect their interpretation?

SIMILARITIES
- Both artists use symbolism that reflects the culture of their time – found objects with obvious brand names (Hall) versus symbols related to Cambridge and alumni (Chevalier).

DIFFERENCES
- The viewing space and scale have an impact on the viewer's experience – walking around and observing Hall's work close up is very different from being immersed in Chevalier's light installation, or seeing it on video.

Refer to books, journals and reputable websites to support your statements.

Contemporary Framework

Have the artists used non-traditional materials or techniques? How have collaborative approaches to art making changed the way in which the role of the artist is seen? What political concerns are expressed in the artwork and how do they challenge the viewer's interpretation?

SIMILARITIES
- The works are reflections of issues or interests in contemporary culture.
- There is use of non-traditional materials – found objects (Hall) and light (Chevalier).
- Viewing the work on a screen or in a book impacts on the experience for the viewer – not as intended by either artist.

DIFFERENCES
- Chevalier's work immerses the viewer by using modern technology and the element of light as major features while Hall's work uses light in a more traditional way.
- Chevalier's work was created collaboratively but Hall created every element of her sculpture herself.
- Chevalier's light installation was ephemeral while Hall's is permanent, although it may be installed in different places.

8.7 Movement on film

Introduction

Movement can be represented in artworks in many ways. In two-dimensional artworks, motion can be implied by diagonal lines or overlapping shapes. Movement also exists in time-based artworks. One way of capturing actual motion is by using video or film – for example, in the work of Bill Viola, where the use of extreme slow motion impacts on the viewer's interpretation of the work. Movement can also be captured mid-stride, as in the still photographs of Rosemary Laing, where it is frozen in the instant that it was captured by the shutter of the camera. The drawings of William Kentridge, with their time-consuming erasure and redrawing, suggest both movement and time.

Movement in the artworks discussed on the following pages has been captured on film or video. Be aware that it can also be experienced in sculptures that move through space and time, either as a quality of the work or as a result of interaction with the viewer.

William Kentridge

I am interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contradiction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings.

– WILLIAM KENTRIDGE

William Kentridge is a South African artist. Both his parents were lawyers who worked on behalf of people marginalised by apartheid, the political system of racial segregation that was official government policy in South Africa between 1948 and 1994. His father played a leading role in a number of prominent political cases,

including the trial of Nelson Mandela and the inquest into the death of Stephen Biko. Kentridge is descended from Jewish refugees who emigrated to South Africa from Lithuania to escape anti-Semitism. His narratives include elements of his family history and although they don't specifically illustrate apartheid or religious intolerance, they are inspired by it.

Kentridge is best known for his drawings and animated films about inequality and injustice, but his arts practice is broader than that. His versatility is shown through the extensive range of media and art forms in which he works, including print-making, sculpture and installation; he is also a writer, director, set designer, actor and puppeteer. Kentridge is part of a long tradition of artists who have responded to the society of their times, making comment on issues such as power, injustice and apathy. Such artists include William Hogarth, Francisco Goya, Honoré Daumier and Max Beckmann – they all present narratives that make us feel uncomfortable.

After leaving school, Kentridge studied politics, African studies and theatre, all of which have contributed to the subject matter of his animated films. Much of his work has the same two central characters – Soho Eckstein, a white Jewish real estate developer and industrialist, recognisable by the pin-stripe suit he always wears (even to bed and while sitting on the beach) and Felix Teitelbaum, an artist and dreamer who is Eckstein's alter-ego – a gentler and more humane version of himself. These films explore ideas related to power, colonial oppression, social conflict, dispossession, loss and reconciliation. Memory is a core concept in his work. Remembering and forgetting relate closely to events that

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Kentridge lived through in South Africa in the 1990s, especially the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which investigated crimes and human rights abuses during the apartheid era.

But memory is not purely an abstract concept in Kentridge's work. It takes physical form through the artistic practice he uses to create his films. Beginning with a large-scale charcoal drawing, he photographs two frames, then erases sections and redraws on the same sheet of paper, over and over again, photographing it each time changes are made. Sections of the first drawing are still visible beneath later additions and subtractions, and a ghostly image is visible at the end of each series of drawings. This is called a **palimpsest**. It is the partial erasing that can be interpreted as the passing of time as well as the illusion of motion. Erasure and redrawing mimic remembering and forgetting – they can be seen as a physical reminder of memory. The vague marks that remain remind us that our lives are made up of layers and that the past is always with us. The drawings remaining at the end of each sequence are kept by Kentridge and exhibited alongside the animated films as finished artworks in their own right.

Kentridge's technique of **stop-motion animation** is both extremely time-consuming and labour-intensive – a hundred frames are needed to produce every four seconds of his visual **narratives**. He calls the practice of walking backwards and forwards from the drawing to the camera to shoot the two frames, 'stone age animation'. His style is expressive, and he uses an extremely limited **palette** – generally black and white, occasionally with a single colour for emphasis.

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to watch *Mine*, 1991 (Figure 8.11).

palimpsest a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed, effacing the earlier writing; something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form.

stop-motion animation a technique in which objects or images are photographed one or two frames at a time with slight changes so that the illusion of movement is created when they are screened rapidly

narrative story

palette the range of colours used by an artist; surface on which paints are mixed

Figure 8.11 William Kentridge, *Mine*, 1991, 16mm animated film transferred to video (black and white, sound) 5:49 min., direction, drawing, photography by William Kentridge; editing by Angus Gibson, music by Anton Dvořák, production by Free Filmmakers Co-operative, Johannesburg, collection of the artist, courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Goodman Gallery, South Africa

Mine is set in apartheid-era South Africa and records abuses of white authority. It swings between drama and melancholy as

Cultural

it tells a story of legalised racial discrimination and exploitation. Kentridge's work has been described as a coming together of the political and the poetic. Contrast is a dominant art element in the video, one

Structural

frame of which is visible in Figure 8.11, where the white bed contrasts with the darkness of the mine below, both literally (above and below, white and black) and metaphorically (the bureaucrat and the exploited). Objects morph as Kentridge draws, erases and draws again: Soho's cigar becomes a teacup and his coffee plunger morphs into a mine elevator and later an adding machine. The drawing, smudging and erasing are clearly visible, suggesting an active technique that uses **gestural** lines. The rhythm of the animation is jerky but, combined with the strong black, and the white of the erased areas, this creates a rawness that adds strength to the message. The soundtrack includes sound and orchestral music linked to the images, and creates a haunting quality.

Kentridge's films are made without a **storyboard**; instead, they are built around

Structural

a number of key drawings and each scene slowly evolves as those images change, layer upon layer.

As the artist says, 'I made a decision that I would never ever write a script, I would never write a storyboard, I would never ever write a proposal on the basis that even if I wrote them, the act of codifying like that somehow killed the project.' Kentridge photographed *Mine* on 16mm film at each stage of its evolution. As analogue photography has been overtaken by digital technology, he has transferred his films onto video.

OTHER WORKS
- *History of the Main Complaint*, 1996 – in which Soho faces up to white responsibility
- *Tide Table*, 2003 – a reflection on youth and immediacy
- *Other Faces*, 2011 – begins with a car accident between a white driver and a black driver discussing his process

For a list of the video references and other online links, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

REFERENCE
Mark Rosenthal (ed.) et al. 2009, *William Kentridge: Five Themes*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

ACTIVITY 8.21

Research one of the following artists who, like Kentridge, made comment on social injustice or apathy – Hogarth, Goya, Daumier and Max Beckmann. Choose one work by your selected artist and compare it with a stop-motion video by Kentridge. Areas of comparison could include subject matter, materials and techniques, the message and how it is communicated, the mood created and the effect on the viewer. Use the Structural, Personal and Cultural Frameworks and refer to details from the two artworks to substantiate the points you are making.

gestural marks made on paper, board and canvas that are a direct expression of the artist; usually created in broad, sweeping lines or directional strokes

storyboard series of sketches depicting the changes to the scenes and action of a planned film or video production

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ACTIVITY 8.22

Contemporary Italian artist Blu has also produced a number of stop-motion videos. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* and watch *MUTO* (2008). Also watch *Mine* (1991) by Kentridge. There are a number of similarities, such as technique and the limited use of colour, and some important differences, such as subject matter and mood.

Write a comparative essay explaining ways in which they are similar and different, using evidence to support your opinions.

ACTIVITY 8.23

Corpse Bride (2005) by Tim Burton is a stop-motion animation with a Hollywood budget. Make two lists – one of the ways in which it is similar to *Mine* and another of the differences between the two. Include the following in one or both lists: technique, meanings and messages, mood, style and the application of the elements and principles.

Explain the effect of each video on you, the viewer, giving reasons for the way they affect you as they do.

Bill Viola

[S]low motion for me is the quelling of something, and the calming it down so that you can look at it. … opens up a space in you, expands something in you …

– BILL VIOLA, 2013

For more than four decades, Bill Viola has been at the forefront of video art and developing multimedia technologies. His images are uncomplicated and depend for their impact on their simplicity. Although there is rarely a single interpretation of his works, they encourage the viewer to stop and think. Much depends on the physical context of the space in which they are seen and the experiences viewers bring with them.

Viola nearly drowned when he was six years old, but he didn't find the experience terrifying as we would expect. Rather, he found it peaceful and profound, and extremely beautiful. With this in mind, it's not a coincidence that many of his videos involve water. He uses it to create rich visual imagery based on universal themes of the human condition: life, death, consciousness, spirituality, transition and the extremes of emotion. He presents us with the power and sensitivity of water as a life force, but he also tells us that we have to look deeper because 'The real things are under the surface.'

Viola's works have roots deep in a range of Eastern and Western spiritual traditions and belief systems, including Zen Buddhism, Islamic Sufism and Christian mysticism. He is also often inspired by the art of the past, which is a frequent element of the artistic practice of contemporary artists, sometimes through **appropriation** and sometimes through the inspiration of subject matter or symbolism. *Emergence*, 2002, for example, has much in common with the subject matter and composition of

appropriation using an image from another artist, usually without permission, and placing it in a new context that changes its meaning

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Figure 8.12 Bill Viola, *The Dreamers*, 2013, video/sound installation, photo: Kira Perov

installation artwork designed for a gallery space or other environment for a specific period of time; these artworks are designed to be walked through and around so the viewer becomes immersed in the experience of the work

ambient relating to the immediate surroundings

Masolino's *Pietá* of 1424, and *The Raft*, 2004, is based on the story underpinning Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19, although it takes a very different visual form.

The space in which the viewer experiences Viola's videos is an integral part of each work. Sometimes the venue for the **installation** is chosen for its cultural or symbolic references, such as *Ocean Without a Shore*, which visually explores the threshold between life and death and was installed in a small chapel in Venice, with the screens being incorporated into three stone altars. Viola always considers the interface between the moving image and the viewer, allowing the latter to move at their own pace through darkened spaces in which the flat-panel plasma screens almost glow with colour.

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to watch *The Dreamers* by Bill Viola.

The Dreamers (Figure 8.12) is part of Viola's ongoing *Water Portraits* series. On each of the seven screens installed in a darkened space, the viewer can see the upper body of a figure, still apart from the gentle disruption of the surface caused by ripples in the water. Every now and then, bubbles rise to the surface and remind us that these people are alive, simply suspended. The figures are almost life-sized and are of different ages and ethnicities; they symbolically represent each one of us.

They all have their eyes shut and their features are softened by the water as they lie submerged. If you look at Figure 8.12, you will see that some look comfortable, and some even look asleep. They almost appear to be standing as they lie on the vertical screens. The shallow space is defined by a background of stones just behind the figures.

The very slow, gentle movement of the water barely affects the almost static images and allows the viewer time to see the detail of expressions, the movement of hair and clothes and the play of light and shade on the surface.

The sound environment is layered, almost silent, but for the **ambient** sound of flowing water in the background and intermittent drips. Viewing *The Dreamers*, like all of Viola's works, is an immersive experience for the audience as the sound and the images envelop them in the darkened space and create a sense of calm and peace. As with many contemporary works, interpretation is left to the viewer, with each of us bringing our own experiences to the viewing. In this case, the gentle movement of the water may suggest tranquillity, the passage of time or even memory.

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Time is an important element in Viola's work. According to the National Gallery of Australia's website, 'Viola shoots on high-speed 35 mm film: at 210 frames per second, it is almost seven times normal speed, and allows extreme slow motion.' This slowing down of the moving image encourages the viewer to notice the details more closely, and is a way of holding their attention and enriching the experience.

Music has also been an important part of Viola's artistic practice, both as a performer and as a studio engineer, especially with electronic music. He has collaborated on a number of large-scale theatre projects, including *Tristan and Isolde*, an opera by Richard Wagner performed in a contemporary style by the Canadian Opera Company in 2013 for which he created *The Tristan Project*. Sound is an integral part of his videos, and its quiet simplicity enhances the meanings of the works.

OTHER WORKS

- *The Quintet of the Astonished*, 2000 – inspired by *Christ Mocked (the Crowning with Thorns)*, c. 1510 by Hieronymus Bosch
- *The Raft*, 2004 – inspired by Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19
- *Ocean Without a Shore*, 2007 – about the threshold between life and death
- *Tristan's Ascension*, 2014 – inspired by the unhappy love story of Tristan and Isolde

For a list of the video references and other online links mentioned, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

REFERENCES

Handhardt, J.G. and Perov, K. 2015, *Bill Viola*, Thames & Hudson

Townsend, C. 2004, *The Art of Bill Viola*, Thames & Hudson

Ross, D. et al. 1997, *Bill Viola*, Whitney Museum of American Art

ACTIVITY 8.24

Viola has been called a 'hi-tech Caravaggio' with reference to the drama and *chiaroscuro* of his videos. Research the work of the artist Caravaggio – suitable examples would be *Narcissus*, 1597–99 or *The Taking of Christ*, 1602.

View sections of Viola's videos that are available on YouTube or Vimeo, such as *The Messenger*, 1996 and *Quintet of the Astonished*, 2000.

Explain why you think the label 'hi-tech Caravaggio' has been given to Viola by noting the similarities between their artworks – obviously not in art form, medium or technique, but rather in subject matter, mood and the application of art elements and principles. Refer to specific details of works by both artists in your response as you use the Structural Framework to help you explain the ways in which they communicate the artists' meanings and messages.

ACTIVITY 8.25

Shaun Gladwell is an Australian-born but London-based video artist. Watch his *Interceptor Surf Sequence*, 2009. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to watch the video.

'This video is interesting, maybe, but it's not art.' Respond to this statement by the author, making notes to support both sides of the debate – one list that supports the statement saying that it isn't art and another explaining why it should be described as art. Use the Analytical Frameworks to comment on the subject matter, and the use of motion/time and sound/silence. At the end, decide which side of the debate wins the argument. Ensure that you refer to details of the video as you make your points.

Rosemary Laing

Idea is everything. The image exists in relation to the idea.

– ROSEMARY LAING

Rosemary Laing is a Brisbane-born artist now based in Sydney. She produces images constructed in front of the camera, without the intervention of digital manipulation. The photographs in her *weather* body of work were staged and photographed in a rented film studio rather than manipulated after the photo-shoot. Laing's images are dramatic and rich in symbolism, and are often a response to current socio-political issues, such as colonialism, climate change, natural disasters and asylum seekers. She presents these issues in photographic series.

Since her early career in the 1980s, Laing has had an ongoing interest in movement, as shown by artists before her, such as Eadweard Muybridge, Marcel Duchamp and the early twentieth-century Futurist painters.

weather #12 (Figure 8.13) is a staged scene that includes unexpected or absurd elements. A woman appears to be tumbling through the air, thrown about like a rag doll. She is surrounded by a storm of shredded paper that reminds us of confetti or ticker-tape but is in fact made up of shredded newspaper texts from the time of making the work. The woman's body seems to be suspended – light and airy, but at the same time disoriented and overwhelmed by information. The layers of paper suggest a wealth of contradictory information, such as we receive from newspapers, online forums and social media, often out of context. This photograph is part of a series that can be seen as a metaphor for cultural turbulence, and the confusion and chaos of facts and opinions that are part of the contemporary climate change debate. Her work echoes her frustration in the face of political conservatism and the seeming inability of the individual to affect change.

weather #12 is a large-scale **type C photograph**. It is theatrical in subject matter and **cinematic** in scale, as though it would be quite at home on a large screen. Unless you are aware of the symbolism behind the image, the narrative remains both unexplained and ambiguous. Movement has been captured in much the same way as a film 'still'.

The edges of the print do not enclose the action – it has an open composition as it appears to extend beyond the edges of the frame. The **depth of field** is shallow – the woman somersaulting through the air and the shredded paper appear focused at the same distance from the viewer's eye. The paper closer to the viewer is out of focus, which leads our eyes to the woman who is the focal point. She is also larger and central to the composition.

Laing's *weather* series recalls her earlier *flight research*, 1999, and *bulletproofglass*, 2002, bodies of work. The former is a series of dreamlike images that capture a bride in free fall against a sky that is either vivid blue or the subtle colours of evening. In some photographs the bride seems to dive; in others she calmly floats. *bulletproofglass* seems to be a continuation of this earlier series, but here the bride has a wound on her chest and blood stains her neck and the white of her wedding gown. The sky in which she is seemingly suspended is eerily cloudy and sometimes even turned upside down. Birds move in too close. The hopeful imagery of *flight research* is contrasted with the violence and lost of innocence in the later series; for more information on the meaning and inspiration behind these images, visit the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

The artist's fascination with flight is in part linked to the fact that in 1994 she moved to a studio in Leichhardt that was directly underneath the Sydney airport flight path, so she was

constantly aware of the sound of the planes taking off and landing nearby. On another level, Laing says:

Flight sits in our consciousness as a kind of fantasy or dream. It is a metaphorical notion. Children dream of flying. It is a very escapist notion to be able to fly. Superheroes fly … I was interested in unfettering the body from the mechanics of flight.

Contemporary Laing's artistic practice is largely independent, and she is involved in all aspects of her **photo-shoots** even when working collaboratively with others. Laing often works with a camera assistant (for light readings, camera preparation and the recording of technical information) and has occasionally worked with a production manager, who assists with logistical problems. She stages the effects of extreme weather by using a range of wind machines. Laing, in effect, ´documents´ the performance by taking the photograph herself.

OTHER WORKS

- *flight research*, 1999, from the series *bride falling from the sky*
- *groundspeed*, 2001 – landscape interventions
- *bulletproofglass*, 2002 – series featuring the same bride as in *flight research*, but this time wounded
- *a dozen useless acts for grieving blondes*, 2009 – series of crying girls

REFERENCES

Solomon-Godeau, A. 2012, *Rosemary Laing*, Prestel

Webb, V. 2005, *The unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, exhibition catalogue and texts, Museum of Contemporary Art

Figure 8.13 Rosemary Laing, *weather #12*, 2006, Type C photograph (129 x 201 cm), edition of eight

photo-shoot a session in which a photographer takes a number of photographs

ACTIVITY 8.26

'There is a quality of movement having been captured and suspended in Rosemary Laing's *weather #12*.' (Statement by the author) Do you agree with this statement?

Use the Structural Framework and refer to evidence from the photograph to support your opinion. Consider the composition, shapes and foreground detail. Compare the feeling of movement and space in this photograph to the still images from Bill Viola's *The Dreamers*. In what ways are they similar and how are they different? In your response refer to the figures' poses, the depth of field and the space around the figures. Be specific in your use of evidence to support your comments.

ACTIVITY 8.27

Use the Structural and Contemporary Frameworks to analyse and interpret the meanings and messages in a photograph from Laing's *groundspeed* series. Refer to symbolism as a way to read the image, remembering that there may be alternative 'readings'. Use art terminology in your response.

COMPARISON

The previous pages have introduced you to three examples of images that suggest movement and have been captured on film or video. These examples are all artworks produced since 1990 – but remember that you will need to discuss one from 1990 and one produced since 1990. Because the media, techniques and processes may be very different, you need to begin by selecting images that have something in common. This could be subject matter, social commentary, preoccupations of the artist or even the strength of a single art element of principle such as rhythm or movement. To score highly, you must integrate your comparisons

to establish relationships between the artists, their artworks and the contexts of both. Not all artworks can be discussed easily using all frameworks, but all must be used at some stage of your response. There are more points of comparison than can be found in the list below.

Structural Framework

In what ways do the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes contribute to the meanings of the works? What physical aspects or presentation of the artwork contain symbolic meaning?

SIMILARITIES
- All works have been created by time-consuming processes.
- All works contain symbolic meaning – contrast (Kentridge), immersive qualities of sound and time (Viola) and flight (Laing).

DIFFERENCES
- Different art forms and media are used – drawing/stop-motion animation on video (Kentridge), video (Viola), still photography (Laing).
- Contrast is the major element in Kentridge's work; movement, rhythm and time are central to Viola's; and movement and space to Laing's.
- Sound is an integral element of the video works by Kentridge and Viola, but irrelevant to Laing's photograph.
- Exhibition space is integral to an appreciation of Viola's videos.

Always refer to details in the artworks to support your statements.

Personal Framework

How are the artworks linked to the artists' lives and experiences? How might the experiences and background of the viewer affect their interpretation of the work?

SIMILARITIES

- Each work reflects the values, interests or experiences of the artist, in their personal lives and in the time and place in which they live.

DIFFERENCES

- The understanding of the viewer depends on their background knowledge and their openness to the images in the space they are exhibited. It will be different for each work.

Cultural Framework

How do the social, political, cultural, artistic and/or religious contexts of the artworks contribute to their meaning? How do symbols reflect the cultural or social understanding of the artist or the society in which the works are viewed? Be specific with reference to the impact of their cultural contexts on the artworks.

SIMILARITIES

- Each artist has been influenced by artists who came before them – this is visible in the artworks.
- Each artist uses cultural symbolism to strengthen their message.

DIFFERENCES

- The artists reflect different cultural references: society's values (Kentridge), spiritual traditions (Viola) and contemporary issues (Laing).

Use references to support your claims – books, journals and reputable websites.

Contemporary Framework

What political concerns are expressed in the artworks and how do they challenge the viewer's interpretation? How have collaborative approaches to art making changed the way in which the role of each artist is seen?

SIMILARITIES

- Time is a physical or symbolic presence in each artwork.

DIFFERENCES

- Kentridge and Laing have been motivated by political concerns but Viola's meanings and messages are more personal and spiritual.
- Both Viola and Laing work with a team of assistants. Kentridge works alone in his studio.

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

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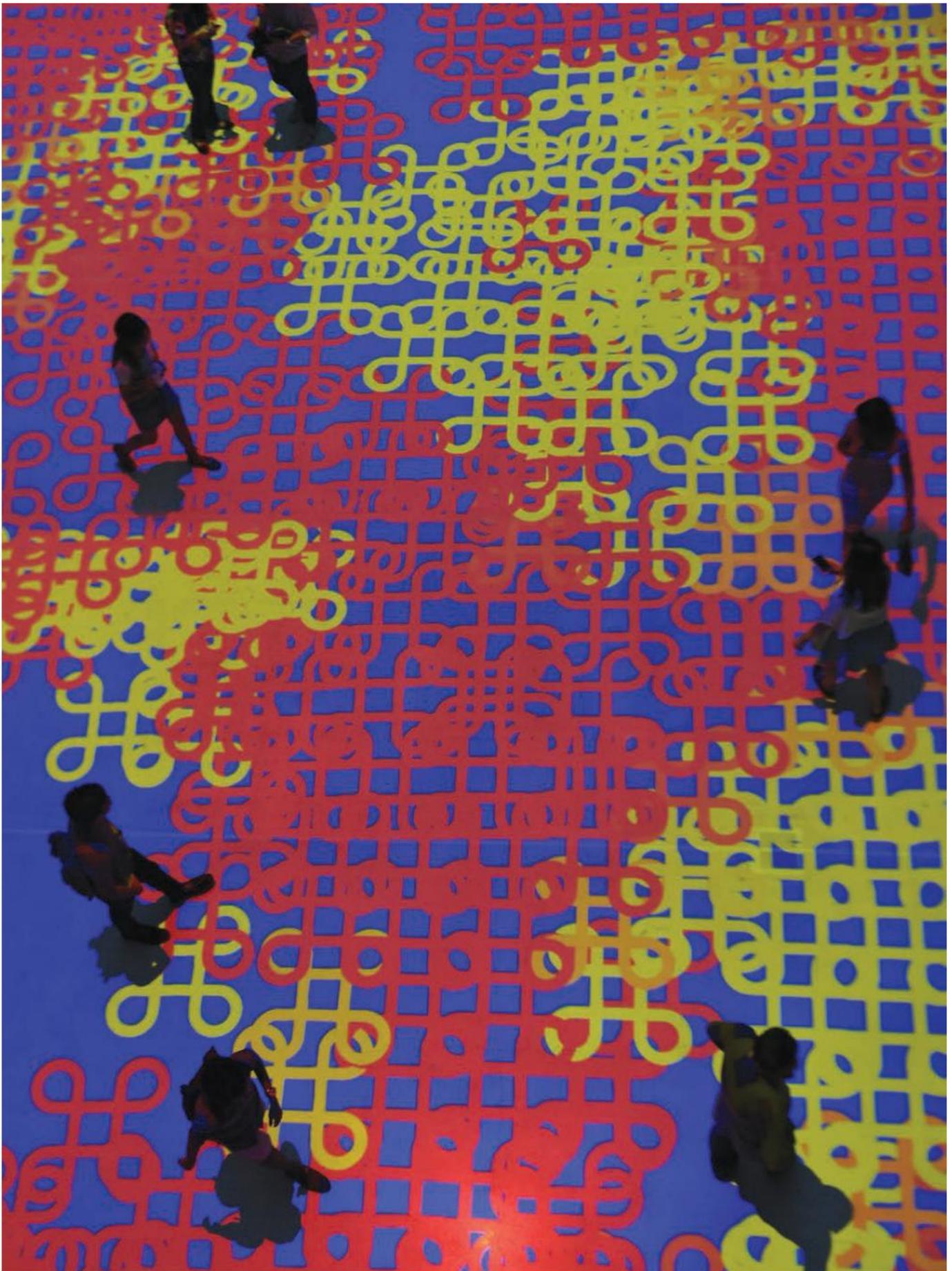
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will prepare you to do the following for school-assessed coursework tasks:

- introduce you to a range of ways of approaching the task
- demonstrate how to write analyses and interpretations of the meanings and messages of artworks using the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks
- demonstrate how to use evidence from artworks to substantiate your interpretations

- demonstrate how to use the resources you have collected regarding the artists you will write about in your assessment task
- demonstrate how to compare the contexts and characteristics of artworks
- demonstrate how to use art terminology when analysing, interpreting and comparing artworks.

9.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to show you how to prepare yourself for the assessment of coursework for Unit 3 – Outcome 1 of the VCE Art Study Design. You will be able to use the skills that you have developed in Units 1 and 2 and apply them to your knowledge of a range of artworks that you have selected to study. As this is coursework assessment, there are a number of ways of completing it. In the previous chapter, we discussed a range of artists grouped in pairs or threes who you may like to use for the assessment task. The artists have been linked by subject matter, cultural contexts, art forms, techniques and ideas.

As outlined in the previous chapter, there are certain parameters set by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority regarding the artworks and artists that you must study for the Unit 3 – Outcome 1 assessment of coursework. These have been set so that you provide an in-depth analysis and interpretation of your selected artists. Throughout Unit 3, you must:

- study at least *one* artist who produced work *before 1990* and at least *one* artist who has produced work *since 1990*
- compare at least *two* artworks by *each artist*
- apply relevant aspects of *all* the Analytical Frameworks – Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary – across each of the selected artworks to interpret the meanings and messages.

Refer to Chapter 8 for information on artists that you could use for your assessment task for Unit 3.

9.2 Assessment tasks

There is a range of ways in which you can be assessed on your research, and a list is published in the VCE Art Study Design. Some of these have been covered in Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 of this book. This is a list for Unit 3, Outcome 1.

A written report

You will be required to write on your two artists and their selected artworks. You will be given a list of points that you are required to cover in your report. Usually you would include visual examples of the four artworks. A report can be prepared after you visit a gallery and view the artworks.

An extended response

You will write about your two artists and four artworks in response to a question given to you by your teacher.

Short responses

Your teacher may give you a series of questions that cover the assessment criteria for the task. You will use your selected artworks to respond to the questions.

Structured questions

You will be given four examples of artworks to respond to using a series of questions based on the artworks you see on the question paper. The questions are designed for you to analyse the artworks, interpret them and compare them.

An annotated visual report

To complete this type of task, you will provide a copy of the artwork and indicate evidence of your analysis and interpretation on the artwork. You may have to produce several copies of the artwork as they must be included in the report when you compare the artworks.

A response using digital technologies

You could present your information in a PowerPoint presentation, or using Microsoft Photo Story, Movie Maker or Prezi. Instead of providing the information as a hard copy, you could analyse and interpret your artworks on separate slides or frames with the information included as hyperlinks, overlays or using voiceover.

An oral presentation with documented evidence

Your information could be presented in front of a class, or documented via video and shown through a data projector. You need to have large versions of the artworks you are discussing available for the audience to see, preferably on a screen, as you apply the Analytical Frameworks to interpret the meanings and messages of the works. Rehearsing your presentation should help to reduce your nervousness and at the same time make you more aware of your content. Do this in time to make adjustments to your text if necessary.

9.3 Tips for completing assessment

Here are some tips that will help you prepare for any of the assessment tasks listed:

- Research your two artists and a range of artworks by each artist. You are required to write on at least two artworks by each artist, but you are looking for variety and similarities between the two artists' works. You can look for similarities between both artists under the following topics:
  - subject matter
  - materials, techniques and processes
  - ideas
  - style.
- Draw up a table with these topic headings and put the information under them.
- Apply the Structural Framework to each artwork. Analyse relevant art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes, style and symbolism for each artwork you are discussing. You will be able to summarise this information in your assessment task. Ask yourself, 'How have the art elements and principles, materials, techniques and processes, style and symbolism contributed to the meanings and messages of the work?'
- Look for as many aspects of the Cultural, Personal and Contemporary Frameworks in the artwork as possible. These may be the main points of comparison you can use between your two artists. Refer to the Analytical Framework questions in Chapter 1 to help you find points for discussion.

- Comparison is a fundamental skill in this outcome. Refer to both similarities and differences between the works of the two artists. Again, it is a good idea to draw up a table with the following headings to help you:
  - subject matter
  - materials, techniques and processes
  - style
  - symbols
  - Analytical Frameworks.
- You must refer to the artworks, so next to each point put a reference to what you can see in the artwork to support your point.
- Check to see whether you are using art terminology. Refer to Chapter 1 for references to art language. Look up the glossary to see whether you can use some of those words in your discussion.
- Keep a list of all the resources you have used, including books, magazine and newspaper articles, DVDs, exhibition catalogues and websites. These are handy to source any quotes by the artist or about the artist and their artworks.

9.4 Recommended assessment criteria: Outcome 1

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority provides descriptors in the form of rubrics for assessment. These are drawn from the Key knowledge and skills in each Outcome. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from the VCAA to ensure accuracy.

When you are completing your Assessment of Coursework task, you must cover the following key knowledge and skill areas, which are outlined in Outcome 1 of Unit 3 of the VCE Art Study Design.

Key knowledge

- Contexts of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.
- The characteristics of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.
- The Structural Framework, the Personal Framework, the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework.
- Resources available to support research of selected artists and artworks.
- Terminology appropriate to the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks.

Key skills

- Compare the contexts and characteristics of artworks produced before 1990 with those of artworks produced since 1990.
- Apply the Structural Framework, the Personal Framework, the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework to the analysis and interpretation of the meanings and messages of artworks.
- Substantiate interpretations of artworks with evidence taken from the artworks themselves and with reference to a range of resources.
- Use appropriate terminology in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks.

UNIT 3 OUTCOME 1 – SCHOOL-ASSESSED COURSEWORK PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS

DESCRIPTOR: TYPICAL PERFORMANCE IN EACH RANGE

	Very low 0–6	Low 71–12	Medium 13–18	High 19–24	Very high 25–30
UNIT 3 OUTCOME 1 Use the Analytical Frameworks to analyse and interpret artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990, and compare the meanings and messages of these artworks	Limited analysis and interpretation of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.	Some analysis and some interpretation of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.	Largely accurate analysis and clear interpretation of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.	Detailed analysis and meaningful interpretation of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.	Comprehensive and insightful analysis and perceptive interpretation of artworks produced before 1990 and since 1990.
	Very limited attempt at comparison between artists, artworks and contexts in the different time periods.	Limited comparison between artists, artworks and contexts in the different time periods.	Satisfactory comparison between artists, artworks and contexts in the different time periods.	Thoughtful and clear points of comparison integrated to establish relationships between artists, artworks and contexts.	Highly adept and detailed points of comparison integrated to establish relationships between artists, artworks and contexts.
	Very limited evidence of research with little attempt to reference information to artists and artworks.	Limited use of research with some referencing of information to artists and artworks.	Appropriate research used with information referencing artists and artworks.	Effective and wide range of research used with information clearly referenced to artists and artworks.	Extensive and accurate use of research with information clearly and effectively referenced to artists and artworks.
	Very limited use of art terminology in the description and comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks.	Limited use of art terminology in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks.	Satisfactory use of appropriate art terminology in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks.	Clear and effective use of appropriate art terminology in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks.	Highly effective and sophisticated use of appropriate art terminology in the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks using the Analytical Frameworks.

Please note that this is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessment Criteria documentation available from VCAA.

9.5 Student sample response

Task: Use the Analytical Frameworks to analyse and interpret artworks created before 1990 and since 1990.

Compare the meanings and messages of these artworks as well as their contexts and characteristics. Address each of the criteria and use evidence to support your opinions

Appropriate art terminology has been highlighted in green.

A theme has been used as a meaningful scaffold for comparison of artworks.

From simple cave drawings by the earliest humans to poignant murals by street artists such as Banksy, animals have been used as subject matter across culture and styles, adding complexity to the meaning of artworks for centuries. This is highlighted in works by seventeenth-century Flemish artist Peter Paul Rubens, and contemporary Melbourne-based New Zealand taxidermist and jeweller Julia deVille.

Comparison of subject matter and art form. Evidence of research is noted.

As stated on the National Gallery of Art website, the dynamic and emotional style and lively movement in Rubens' paintings have influenced Western art to the present day. His spectacular composition *Saint George and the Dragon*, painted c. 1605–07, depicts Saint George in the process of slaying the dragon that had been plaguing a village and was about to kill the king's daughter. Julia deVille's *Stillborn Angel* (2009) takes the more contemporary form of a taxidermied puppy with angel wings, still curled up as though in the womb, reminding the viewer of their own mortality and the fragility of life.

Appropriate art terminology is used in a clear and detailed analysis of the stylistic qualities of the work. References to specific details in the painting support the analysis. A second work by the first artist is used to support the student's statements using the Structural Framework.

In his *Saint George and the Dragon*, which was commissioned by the Catholic Church during the Counter Reformation of the early seventeenth century, and in a similar manner to his later painting, *Lion Hunt* (c. 1617–21), Rubens shows a crucial moment in a violent and intense battle for existence between human and animal. He has replaced the balance, calm and harmony of the Renaissance style with the theatrical, emotional and dramatic style of the Baroque period. The use of diagonal lines and forms suggests the kind of intensity within the battle scene that is typical of Rubens' style. Similarly to *Lion Hunt*, the use of low key

Figure 9.1 Peter Paul Rubens, *Saint George and the Dragon*, 1605, Prado

tones allows the pale highlights to become focal points, drawing the viewer's eye towards the stallion, the princess and then Saint George, who is cleverly positioned between the two. Rubens has used *chiaroscuro*, typical of the Baroque period, so that forms and details are lost in shadow, edges are blurred and elements are concealed in dark or vague areas. Note how the dragon is almost cloaked in darkness.

While Rubens' work uses the power and majesty of the horse and the dragon to tell a story, Julia deVille's *Stillborn Angel* focuses more on the vulnerability and innocence of creatures, particularly in death. Fascinated with the concept of *memento mori*, used to communicate mortality in the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries, deVille draws particular inspiration from the Victorian era, which sentimentalised death with mourning rituals and personal adornment. Using many materials that were once living, deVille incorporates symbols of death throughout her work because she thinks it is important to remind the viewer that we are mortal creatures. *Stillborn Angel*, like many of her works, is also a celebration of life. DeVille uses a real still-born puppy, still curled up in the foetal position, as a symbol of the fragility of life and the imminence of death. This is also seen in deVille's *Kitten Drawn Hearse* (2013), where

Interpretation of the work is linked to symbolism, the use of materials and the pose of the subject matter (Structural Framework). The student's opinion is supported by research about the aims of the second artist and by reference to the visual qualities of the work. The artist's experiences and personal philosophy are explained (Personal Framework) and a second artwork is used to support the student's interpretation.

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she uses dark and brooding colours coupled with symbols and themes of death to create a tense and reflective atmosphere.

The sparrow wings attached to the puppy's body give it a reverent and angelic quality, with the pale and soft texture contrasting with its dark and woolly coat. It is interesting to note that while deVille wants the viewer to accept mortality and the fragility of life, she attaches angel wings to her *Stillborn Angel*, typically a symbol of higher realms of existence or ascension. Perhaps it is deVille's way of saying that while our existence as living beings is temporary, what happens to us after death is unknown. The cluster of pearls at the base of the wing may seem unassuming at first glance, but over time the pearl has become the symbol of purity and innocence and some believe that pearls were formed by the passage of angels through the clouds of heaven.

The random and impartial nature of death is highlighted in both artworks. There is an interesting parallel between Rubens' princess, drawn by lottery to be fed to the dragon, and deVille's newborn puppy, taken from the world before it even takes its first breath. Both have been selected by an unknown force to meet their demise, and their innocence cannot save them.

Figure 9.2 Julia deVille, *Stillborn Angel*, stillborn puppy, sparrow wings and sterling silver, 2009, photo courtesy of the artist

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Cambridge University Press

Both artists have used animals symbolically to add a deeper meaning to their works. DeVille is a strict vegan and the animals used in her art are ethically sourced and have died naturally. Her main goal is to remind her viewers of our mortality, and she uses animals to achieve this. Similarly, Rubens has used animals as symbols to convey his message. The white stallion and the lamb in *Saint George and the Dragon* represent a powerful force for good, while the black dragon symbolises evil influences with strong ties to the devil.

Commissioned as it was by the Catholic Church during the Counter Reformation in order to to gain support and to restore faith in its practices, there are several references to Catholicism in Rubens' composition. The crucifix speared through the dragon's mouth represents the notion that belief in God and Christ will prevail over any evil, which is the message that the Catholic Church was trying extremely hard to convey to people following the attacks on the church's credibility during the Reformation. The princess can be seen as another symbol of the Church, with the position of her body and her blue and white robes giving her an appearance very similar to Mary, while the lamb seen clinging to her feet is a traditional symbol of Christ. Saint George's bright red cloak is quite intrusive, and can be seen to symbolise not only drama but the passion so often associated with death. The colour red is also often closely linked to Christ.

Designed for a church setting among other grand artworks in Genoa, whose patron saint is St George, Rubens' painting would have been very impressive in its original context. During the seventeenth century, most people couldn't read or write, and were heavily influenced by myth and legend, so the subject matter of *Saint George and The Dragon* was very relevant for its time and place. Nowadays, the painting is displayed in the Museo Del Prado in Madrid, and has lost much of its original impact. The interpretation of this composition would have changed greatly due to a contemporary lack of understanding of the Counter Reformation, as well as people's superficial knowledge of the story of Saint George and the symbols embedded in the image. In contrast, deVille's work was designed for galleries, so an exhibition setting would elicit the greatest impact.

Rubens established his studio in Antwerp after his return from Italy in 1608, and from that time onwards much of his work was planned by him but executed by his assistants. As Graham Hopwood wrote, Rubens became one mind to a score of hands. While

Symbolism is related to personal and cultural beliefs.

The cultural context of Rubens' painting is used to interpret the symbolism as it would have been understood at the time of its creation (Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks).

The Contemporary Framework is used to explain how much the original meaning of the work has changed with time and exhibition location. Comparisons continue.

The Contemporary Framework is applied to artistic practice. A research reference is noted.

collaboration is considered to be a very contemporary practice, it was popular even back in the seventeenth century among artists such as Rubens. In contrast, deVille created every aspect of *Stillborn Angel*, including the taxidermy and the jewel details.

Both Julia deVille and Peter Paul Rubens have used animals in their artwork to add depth and complexity to their meanings. Their pieces were created for very different reasons and audiences. DeVille's *Stillborn Angel* serves to remind viewers of mortality and the temporary nature of our existence, while Rubens' painting had the purpose of restoring faith in the suffering Catholic Church. DeVille's work, designed for a more contemporary and less traditional society, provokes deep thought and its message is not immediately recognizable. On the other hand, Rubens' *Saint George and the Dragon* is both literal and symbolic, and while its open composition leaves a lot to the viewer's imagination, its outward symbolism presented the message clearly and easily for its seventeenth century audience.

– *Carli Tesoriero*

Assessment

The analysis and interpretation of two artworks linked by theme is comprehensive and relevant to all Analytical Frameworks. Comparison is consistent and insightful throughout the extended response. Research was obviously undertaken by the student in order to establish the relationships between the artworks, their cultural and personal contexts, and the symbolism. The use of art terminology was applied effectively to an analysis of the artists' visual language.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

By the end of Unit 4, you will have developed the ability to examine, analyse and discuss an art idea and its related issues, using a range of resources, selected artist/s, artwork/s and viewpoints to inform and support your opinion.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- develop a statement that defines an art idea
- identify and research different issues regarding the role of art in society that relate to your selected art idea
- identify, discuss and debate different points of view relating to your chosen idea or the related issues

- develop a personal point of view and support it with evidence from relevant artworks and with reference to attributed commentaries from others
- use the Analytical Frameworks to structure your response
- use terminology and vocabulary appropriate to the discussion of art.

If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him.

– JOHN F. KENNEDY

10.1 Introduction

In Units 1 and 2, you were introduced to the Analytical Frameworks as tools for analysing and interpreting the meanings and messages of artworks. The Analytical Frameworks provide you with a structure that you can apply to the analysis of artworks, and they can help you to understand the diverse interpretations that can be applied to artworks and their meanings. The Analytical Frameworks can also help you to explore the ways in which ideas and issues can impact on the making and interpretation of art.

The approach to Unit 4 has changed considerably in the new Study Design. In Unit 4, you must develop your understanding of broad ideas or issues related to the role of art in society, how these ideas are communicated through artworks and what issues may have been created by the artworks themselves or the ideas being expressed.

Artists often present ideas through their artworks, which affects the way people think. You have seen in Units 1–3 how various artworks throughout history have been created for particular purposes. Artworks are created for different social, historical, political and cultural purposes. These include commemorating events; expressing a viewpoint on an aspect of society, traditions or beliefs; providing a political viewpoint; and representing people or individuals in society. Artworks can also express ideas relating to the individual and their identity. Through artworks based on emotion and ideas, artists from different cultures have expressed their viewpoints on a range of issues and events throughout history.

10.2 Art ideas and related issues

According to the *Cambridge Dictionary,* the word 'art' is a noun that refers to:

- the making of objects, images and so on that are beautiful, or that express feelings
- the activity of painting, drawing and making sculpture
- an activity through which people express particular ideas.

The word 'idea' is a noun that refers to:

- an understanding, thought, or picture in your mind
- a belief or opinion.

The word 'issue' is a noun that refers to:

- a subject or problem that people are thinking and talking about, such as environmental/ethical/personal issues.

How to approach this area of study

An art idea is a belief or opinion that someone has represented visually using a selected art form. The ideas expressed or the methods used to express them may present a problem for some people, and these related issues should be discussed and commented on. This involves taking the following steps:

- Research ideas about society that an artist has chosen to represent with their art, such as religion, politics, animal rights, body image or identity. Alternatively, you could select an artwork and study the ideas that the artist was attempting to express. Consider how these ideas are communicated in the artwork.
- Develop a statement that defines the art idea being expressed.

- Research viewpoints about either the idea/s that the artist has expressed, or how the artist chose to express them. Sometimes people take exception to artworks that are considered to be inflammatory, inappropriate or insensitive. These reactions may raise other issues related to the artwork, such as freedom of speech and censorship.
- Consider issues (ideas or problems) such as the censorship of art, or the use of appropriation, plagiarism or collaboration that have been raised about your selected artwork/s, which may be related to the idea expressed or how the artist has chosen to work.

10.3 Ideas and issues within society that are explored in artworks

The artwork in Figure 10.1 by New Zealand artist Colin McCahon explores ideas about religion and faith. The artist, a native New Zealand Māori, created the work based on a chapter from the Bible, but the image also explores political issues. The painting was given to Australia by New Zealand at the time of the bicentenary of white settlement in Australia.

To start your investigation, you may want to research artists who explore ideas or issues that interest you, or that affect the world today. You may choose to focus on an artwork that deals with one of the following ideas or themes.

Figure 10.1 Colin McCahon, *Victory Over Death 2*, 1970, synthetic polymer paint on unstretched canvas (207.5 x 597.7 cm), National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, gift of the New Zealand Government, 1978, reproduced courtesy of the Colin McCahon Research and Publication Trust
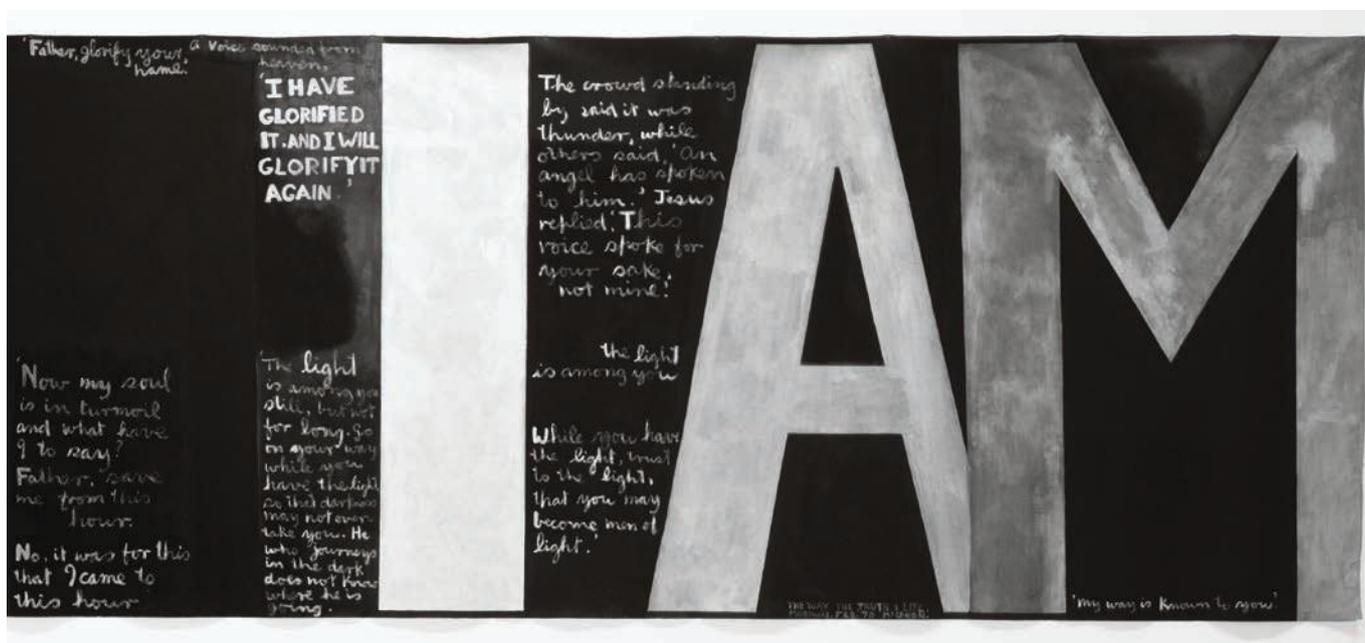
Globalisation and the environment

Artists often use their artworks to comment on the plight of the environment or to highlight humanity's misuse of it. They often use the environment itself to create a **site-specific** work or take natural objects to make their artwork.

Political dissent and uprising

Throughout history, artists have expressed their point of view about their society and culture through their art. They often create a political discourse through their art, trying to change public opinion and influence politics. One such artist is Ai Weiwei.

site-specific created for a specific site; an artwork will relate to various aesthetic qualities of the site or environment for which it is created

Figure 10.2 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)*, 1989, photographic silk screen/vinyl (284.5 x 284.5 cm), The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, California © Barbara Kruger, photo courtesy Mary Boone Gallery

War and conflict

Refer to Chapter 5 for a range of images and a discussion of 'War and Conflict'.

Artists often expose issues arising from war and conflict through their art. Their artworks can comment on the senselessness of war, the impact of war on those in the firing line and those on the sidelines. Artists comment on the plight of refugees and the people from war-torn countries. The works they create are often controversial and provoke discourse.

George Gittoes is known for his controversial works on the wars in Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan. The artist attempts to provoke reactions through subject matter and symbolism. Investigate Gittoes' works on his website. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for the link.

ACTIVITY 10.1

Investigate the artworks of photographers Damien Parer, Eddie Adams, Lyndal Brown and Charles Green. What ideas have these photographers explored in their works? Discuss the controversial nature of their images through any commentaries on their works and issues that surround their works.

Gender and identity

Traditionally, art was a male-dominated field. With the rise of feminism in the 1970s, women began to express their rights through their art. Ideas on feminism and women's rights can be explored by comparing the work of artists from the 1970s to works from earlier periods of time and contemporary female artists. The role of women in art can provoke much discussion.

The artwork by Barbara Kruger in Figure 10.2 discusses the way in which women try to conform to the conventions of society and beauty.

ACTIVITY 10.2

Investigate the works of some artists who have worked during or since the 1970s, including the Guerrilla Girls, Jenny Watson, Vivienne Binns, Julie Rrap, Jenny Saville and Vicki Varvaressos. What ideas do they express about feminism? What are some of the issues that surround the works of these artists?

ACTIVITY 10.3

View a range of works from different cultures and periods of time and discuss the artists' presentation of gender. What is each artist's intention in symbolising gender in this way? Are males represented differently from females? Does the gender of the artist impact on the way they represent the different genders? Artworks to explore could be those by the Baroque artists Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi, and contemporary examples by Bill Henson, Jenny Saville and Lucien Freud.

Genetic engineering

The successful growth of an ear-shaped cartilage on a laboratory mouse in 1997 piqued Patricia Piccinini's interest in scientific themes. She has continued to respond to scientific innovation and her often-controversial sculptures directly challenge ethical issues surrounding biotechnology and genetic engineering as well as commenting on the way technologies graft on to our everyday life. Because of the way her work is produced, the role of the artist as director rather than creator is an issue that is often raised with reference to Piccinini's work, despite this not being relevant to the ideas she is exploring.

I have always loved the idea of creating an entire world of my own. However, the world of my imagining is nowhere near as strange or impossible as I first thought. The more I learn about the 'real' world, the more I realise just how truly bizarre it is.

– PATRICIA PICCININI (1965–), AUSTRALIAN ARTIST

Animal rights

Animals have been prominent subject matter in artworks throughout history. However, many contemporary artists use the rights of animals as a vehicle of expression. They use animal parts such as skins, bones and feathers in their works to express their ideas. Viewing the 'real thing' can often lead to a rise in emotion in the viewer and lead to controversy. Is it right to use animal parts as a material in artworks? Should art challenge views and values?

Refer to Section 8.4 in Chapter 8 for a range of images and a discussion of the place of animals in art.

10.4 Issues related to artworks

When researching artworks and ideas that artists are exploring, you may come across issues that are raised about artworks because of their subject matter, the art form, techniques or media that are used to create the work, or the placement of the artwork and its impact on people. These things initiate an emotional response from critics or members of the public who take issue with the artwork.

Divisive and controversial artworks

Individual artworks can be divisive and controversial even if this was not the intention of the artist. Debate then occurs about the validity of the artist's choice and often revolves around the interpretation and discussion of what is acceptable in art and the role played by art in society. This can be seen in the work of a number of artists, including:

- Bill Henson's nude photographs of children
- Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ*
- Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*
- Tracey Emin's *My Bed.*

Censorship

Artworks often provoke controversy due to their subject matter or the materials an artist may use in expressing their ideas. This can often depend on the values or morals of the society in which the artwork was created. Artworks may often be censored on the grounds of religious and political beliefs, or because of the subject matter and emotions that the artwork can evoke.

10.5 Issues relating to art and art making

These issues may have nothing to do with the ideas the artist is trying to convey, but arise purely because of the way they have chosen to work or how they have chosen to express these ideas.

Moral rights, copyright and appropriation

Every artist has the right to own their creative ideas and the techniques or art forms that they produce. Often an artwork is so successful that it may be reproduced in several forms or by other artists. Sometimes artists will use an existing image or artwork and claim it as their own. The issues of copyright and **appropriation** come into play in this area of art. Pop artists, such as Andy Warhol, were among the first artists to use imagery from popular culture in their works as a form of appropriation. There are laws protecting the copyright and moral rights of artists in Australia.

ACTIVITY 10.4

1 Investigate the work of artists such as Immants Tillers and Gordon Bennett. Both these artists have used the works of other artists to express their own ideas in their work. What was the intention of each of these artists and what ideas were they trying to convey? Research the issue of appropriation that arose because of the approach they took.

2 Investigate the work of Pop artists Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein and Claus Oldenberg. What are some of the images or subjects from popular culture that they used in their works? What were the ideas these artists were expressing with these images? Was appropriation an issue for these artists?

Collaboration

Artists often use the skills of others to create their artworks. This can lead to an issue of ownership with regard to these artworks. Who has created the artwork? Is the artwork valued for its ideas or the skill that has been used to create the work? Conceptual art falls into this category, as this art form is valued for its ideas and the choice of materials and forms used to express those ideas. If a person directs the making of an artwork rather than making it personally, can they still be considered to be an artist?

The validity of art outside the gallery

Contemporary art appears in many different forms, and is not only displayed in an art gallery. Over the last 15 years, street art has become a valid art form. Many cities across the world have public art programs, which provide artists with the opportunity to display their work in a public space such as a city square or laneway. Often this art may not be as highly valued as artworks that are displayed in a gallery. A city council or municipality may also commission an artist to create an artwork for a specific space. The artwork can provoke discussion, and will draw the attention of the public to an area that previously was ignored.

appropriation using an image from another artist, usually without permission, and placing it in a new context that changes its meaning

Figure 10.3 Makatron, Dem189, Otis Chamberlain and Plea, *Whale Wall*, 2013, Richmond

According to Lou Chamberlin's *Street Art International*:

Various labels have been applied to it [street art] of late, from guerrilla art and urban art to post-graffiti and new muralism. Today the guerrilla element remains to a certain extent but it is more often curated, generally by the artists themselves. It's now widely embraced as an antidote to urban greyness. It is morphing into something respectable, becoming mainstream.

The Whale Wall in Richmond, Victoria (Figure 10.3) is the result of a collaboration between four artists. It brings together different styles to create a dynamic work that adds colour, humour and striking visual impact to what would otherwise be a seemingly endless expanse of urban greyness.

Refer to Section 5.4 in Chapter 5 for a range of images and discussion of art in public places.

ACTIVITY 10.5

Visit a local area that has examples of street art, such as Hosier Lane and Blender Lane in the Melbourne CBD, or research a public art event, festival or project, such as White Night Melbourne, Wall to Wall, the Benalla street art festival, Powerhouse Geelong or Meeting of Styles, an international street art event that visited Melbourne for the first time in April 2016.

Analyse an artwork and write an essay discussing the ideas being explored by the artist and the relevance of the subject matter, technique, style, art form and location to the ideas being explored. Use specific examples from the artwork that you see and any commentaries you can find about the artwork or project. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for a list of useful websites.

commentaries
statements by artists, critics, historians or the public about an artwork or an issue

10.6 Research and study for Unit 4

The focus of this unit of study is for you to develop a personal point of view about art ideas and related issues. Your opinion should be supported by evidence from your selected artwork and attributed **commentaries** on the artwork, art ideas or related issues. You should consider how art might affect and change the way people think.

In your discussion, you must refer to a range of resources and commentaries to examine and debate opinions and arguments about the ideas, related issues and the artworks you are researching. The sources you choose should be reliable, recognised and relevant. They should reflect viewpoints that enrich your discussion. Commentaries are explained in detail in Chapter 1. In your study for this outcome, you should investigate attributed commentaries that discuss or debate opposing opinions on the following:

- how these ideas and related issues have been explored in art generally and by the selected artist specifically
- aspects of the artist's personal or cultural background that impact on the way the idea is represented
- the ideas the artist expresses in individual works, as well as the techniques and approaches they use or the subjects they depict
- aspects of the commentator's personal or cultural background that may impact the viewpoints they express about the artwork or the ideas being expressed by the artist.

Students must make use of attributed commentaries. These can come from a range of sources: from exhibition catalogues through to lectures and curatorial notes about the artist/s and their work/s. Don't just stick to the one source: it is a good idea to explore a range of resources that will support your argument or opposing opinions that you can debate.

To begin your study, you must:

- research artworks that express an art idea that interests you
- select *at least one* artwork that expresses this idea and about which there are varied opinions
- *develop a statement* that defines the art idea expressed by your selected artist
- select a *range of diverse viewpoints* on the artwork or the ideas being expressed
- select *viewpoints* on *issues* that have been raised about the ideas expressed by the artist or how they are represented in the artworks.

You will then be able to:

- *discuss and debate* different points of view relating to your chosen artwork, with reference to *attributed* commentaries
- *develop a personal point of view* and support it with evidence from the selected artworks and with reference to attributed commentaries
- use each of the relevant Analytical Frameworks to structure your response.

In this chapter, a range of art ideas will be presented with examples of artworks, commentaries and interpretations that you can use to develop your own opinion about the ideas and related issues.

ACTIVITY 10.6

Select one of the ideas outlined previously in this chapter and develop a statement that defines the art idea expressed. Select two artworks that express this idea and find at least three commentaries on the artworks or related issues. The commentaries can include any discussion about the ideas behind the artwork, the materials and techniques, processes or art form the artist has used, or any related issues.

10.7 Gender and identity

I would like to challenge how we look at our bodies … our category of what's normal is getting so small.

– JENNY SAVILLE

Jenny Saville

THE ART IDEA

Jenny Saville is challenging how we look at our bodies and what is considered normal. Jenny Saville worked with the idea that the body could be consciously altered at one's own whim.

DISCUSSION ON THE IDEA OF GENDER AND IDENTITY

In *The Female Grotesque* (1995), Mary Russo writes about the depictions of the female body in art, stating:

> The classical body is transcendent, monumental, closed, static, self-contained, symmetrical and sleek; it is identified with the 'high' or official culture of the Renaissance, and later, with rationalism, individualism, and normalising aspirations of the bourgeoisie. The grotesque body is open, protruding, irregular, secreting, multiple, and changing; it is identified with non-official 'low' culture, or the carnivalesque, and with social transformation.

The ancient Greek philosopher Plato believed that beauty was 'proportion and symmetry'. He believed that the human body was constructed based on geometry formed with mathematical precision, and that every part of the body related to the others in perfect harmony and design. He believed that it was the vision of proportion and symmetry

that made the human body attractive and pleasing to the eye. This philosophy is evident in the art of ancient Greece. The ideals of beauty seen in ancient Greek art and culture continue to influence the ideas of accepted beauty today. A PBS television special on beauty and attraction in 2006 noted that important elements of beauty were proportion and symmetry. It concluded that the more symmetry there was in the human face, the more beauty other people would recognise in that face.

These ideals of beauty were expressed in **classical** art, and it can be said that they form the foundation of society's views on beauty today. This classical ideal of beauty has been part of our aesthetic for so long that we, as a society, feel the need to conform to these accepted ideals of beauty and perfection. We seek to attain this beauty, which equates to a balance between shape and proportion, to achieve a harmonious and symmetrical body type. This concept of balance and harmony is seen as aesthetically beautiful for us, much as it applies to composition in art.

classical related to the art of ancient Greece and Rome; used to refer to the characteristics of beauty, balance and unity associated with these periods of art

Figure 10.4 Jenny Saville, *Self Portrait*, 1992, oil, oil pastel and paper collage on paper (126.2 x 96.3 cm), private collection/photo © Jenny Saville, all rights reserved, DACS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

The *Venus de Milo*, created between 130 and 100 BCE, is one example of how the idea of 'perfect' proportion was expressed in classical art. If we compare the proportions of face and body evident in this work with images that have flooded the media over the last two decades, we can see how art impacts on what society accepts to be beautiful.

Given that art holds such enormous power in describing and initiating the perceptions of one's culture, should artists not be more careful of what messages they are sending with their work? People in society are focused on attaining the ideals of physical beauty that have been passed down through art and are propagated on the fashion runways and in the magazines of today. Shouldn't artists start portraying the reality that beauty cannot be measured by one particular body type?

One artist who could be seen to question the representation of the ideal body is Jenny Saville. One of Saville's paintings, *Self Portrait*, is shown in Figure 10.4. Saville is a British artist who uses the traditional method of oil painting to produce imagery that challenges the traditional representation of the female form in art. Her painting *Propped*, 1992, oil on canvas, is an example of how Saville does not confine her representation of the female form to the constraints of what is considered 'ideal'. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to view Jenny Saville's *Propped*.

Structural The female figure sits perched on a black stool or pedestal. We look up at the figure, which places this woman in a dominant position. This relationship established with the viewer, along with the reference to a pedestal, gives

Cultural the figure the connotation of being important, referencing public art that presents us with powerful political figures gazing down on us from numerous public squares around the world (see Chapter 5).

Structural The low viewpoint emphasised by the foreshortening of the figure's legs also results in a viewpoint that

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does not flatter the figure but instead emphasises the curves of her large legs. This decision demonstrates Saville's unwillingness to conform to the idea of painting an ideal woman to flatter, as seen in the classical beauty of *The Birth of Venus* by Sandro Botticelli, 1485. Not only is the figure painted in *Propped* quite large, but the canvas itself is big – 213.5 x 183 cm. The scale of the work emphasises, exaggerates and celebrates a large female figure, which is unexpected in art.

Saville uses **sgraffito** to scratch text into the wet oil paint. The words have been written backwards, suggesting that it is not intended for the viewer but rather for the model to read. It appears that the text has been written on a sheet of glass placed between the viewer and the subject of the painting. This could be seen as a glass wall placed between the audience and the figure, suggesting that she is either in a glass case and put on display, or that it is there to protect her from a society that places unnatural expectations on her. Despite not being able to read what is scratched into the paint, the words seem to empower the figure, with her proud head tilted upwards. The meaning of the words may, like the wall itself, act as a screen for the model.

Once we understand the meaning and origin of the words, they may suggest that the figure is trying to rid herself of the pressures and expectations placed on her in terms of body image and her role in society. *Propped* can be seen as a comment on the traditional view of a beautiful figure, but also the nature of low self-esteem towards body imagery. This is identified by Susie Mackenzie's article in *The Guardian* of 22 October 2005:

> *Her [Saville's] exaggerated nudes point up with an agonizing frankness, the disparity between the way women are perceived and the way that they feel about their bodies.*

ACTIVITY 10.7

1 Compare Jenny Saville's works *Propped* and *Branded*, 1992, in terms of how Saville is attacking the cultural view on what is accepted for woman in today's society. What is the meaning of the words *decorative, support, petite* and *delicate* that are scratched into the painting?

2 Why has Saville used sgraffito to scratch the words into the figure in *Branded* rather than across the surface of the painting as she has in *Propped*? Does the technique have any symbolic meaning? What is the relevance of these words facing the correct way for the viewer to read?

ACTIVITY 10.8

Research how Saville worked with the idea that the body could be consciously altered at one's own whim, exploring the practice of plastic surgery to alter the aesthetics or gender of the body. Study paintings such as *Plan*, 1993, *Matrix*, 1999 and *Passage*, 2003, and comment on Jenny Saville's statement:

> *It's a good learning opportunity …*
> *I find transsexuals very interesting.*
> *Our whole cultural structure is based*
> *on the polarity of male and female, and*
> *we don' t seem to be able to cope with*
> *it any other way. But I would like to*
> *blur it … to break it down, to challenge*
> *how we look at all our bodies, men's*
> *included. Our category of what is*
> *normal is getting so small.*

RELATED ISSUES

- Is it the role of the artist to question the conventions that society places on beauty?
- Is it appropriate for an artist to portray confronting images about sexual identity?

sgraffito a form of decoration made by scratching through a surface to reveal a lower layer of a colour. In painting, this technique is often done with the handle of the brush while the paint is still wet.

10.8 Environmental art

Even if I work parallel to nature and only intervene with the greatest possible care, a basic internal contradiction remains. It is a contradiction that underlies all of my work, which itself can't escape the inherent fatality of our existence. It harms what it touches: the virginity of nature … To realize what is possible and latent in Nature, to literally realize what has never existed, utopia becomes reality. A second life suffices. The event has taken place. I have only animated it and made it visible.

– NILS-UDO, BAVARIAN ENVIRONMENTAL ARTIST

Discussion on art in the environment

Artists often explore themes connected with the environment in their art. These are often related to social, psychological and political ideas expressed by the artists. Environmental artists are often concerned with contemporary environmental issues, including the relationship between human beings and nature, and generally make use of non-traditional (contemporary) art forms, such as **installations**, and media that come directly from the environment and are used in the place of, or combined with, traditional materials. These materials, including the found and the discarded, inform us about environmental issues, and are used to interpret nature and its processes. Environmental artworks are often conceptual and express the artist's personal thoughts on the environment.

Environmental artworks have traditionally been defined as **land or earth art**, which is the 'artist working directly into the landscape'. This term was given to the practice of such artists such as Robert Smithson and Richard Long, who began working with natural materials in the 1960s, and is also explored by the contemporary British artist Andy Goldsworthy. Other artists who work primarily within the environment or who use materials from nature to express their views on issues concerned with the environment include Gyongy Laky, Nils-Udo and the Red Earth Environmental Art Group.

Andy Goldsworthy

THE ART IDEA
Goldsworthy wants:

- to get away from two-dimensional representation of landscape in a frame, and give the viewer the thing itself
- to draw our attention to the beauty within nature and show us that when there is synergy between humans and nature, we can produce something special
- his art to be sensitive and alert to changes in material, season and weather, and therefore make the viewer more sensitive towards nature and the beauty of the natural environment
- the viewer to be aware of the transience in nature
- to highlight the relationships people have with their natural world.

DISCUSSION OF ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

Andy Goldsworthy is an innovative British artist who not only works within nature, but could be said to collaborate with nature to produce uniquely

personal artworks. He uses a broad range of natural materials, including snow, ice, leaves, bark, rock, clay, stones, feathers, petals and twigs, to create site-specific and **ephemeral** sculptures in the landscape. By using the materials that he finds at the site, no matter how ephemeral his works are, he achieves a sympathetic contact with the natural world before they disappear – or *as* they disappear.

We live in a world where the goal has always been to create things of permanence. We like to keep 'things' for a long time, and even erect special buildings to preserve our creations. This longing to leave our mark stems from an acute awareness that our lives are temporary. This is not something with which Goldsworthy concerns himself. He does not seek to use permanent materials; nor is he deterred by changes in the weather, as traditional artists may be who are attempting to capture the scene. Rather, he embraces this as part of his expression. Where many artists wish to leave their mark by creating works that will outlive them – whether in a gallery or in the environment where they work – this is not his intention.

Andy Goldsworthy's works are highly site-specific and most of them have only existed for a short period of time. Works made of ice cannot not be sustained after the winter, and works made of flowers or leaves will eventually decompose and disappear, which is less invasive than it would be if he used more traditional media; it also has less of an impact on nature, which is an important consideration for Goldsworthy.

Because his works are ephemeral, we can only admire the beauty of his works through photographs. And because he photographs his work, it could be argued that the photographic records still achieve the permanence artists have always desired. This, however, has not been a desire of Goldsworthy, who has said:

Nature is in a state of change and that change is the key to understanding. I want my art to be sensitive and alert to changes in material, season and weather. Each work grows, stays, decays. Process and decay are implicit. Transience in my work reflects what I find in nature.

Goldsworthy collaborates with nature, so that a delicate screen of bamboo or massive snow rings or a circle of leaves floating in a pool will allow the viewer to gain an understanding of the land. He seems to want to draw our attention to the beauty within nature and show us that when there is synergy between humankind and nature, we can produce something special.

We are voracious consumers, but most of what we consume is returned to nature in a form that cannot decay, wash, melt or blow away. Goldsworthy draws our attention to this by creating his artworks with materials from nature that can be, and are, absorbed. He often uses materials that do disappear, even as we are looking at the artworks. His artworks are often designed to decay or disappear with the ebb and flow of nature.

Goldsworthy characterises his art in this way:

Movement, change, light, growth and decay are the life-blood of nature, the energies that I try to tap through my work. I enjoy the freedom of just using my hands and 'found' tools – a sharp stone, the quill of a feather, thorns. I take the opportunities each day offers: if it is snowing, I work with snow, at leaf-fall it will be with leaves; a blown-over tree becomes a source of twigs and branches. I stop at a place or pick up a material because I feel that there is something to be discovered. Here is where I can learn.

ephemeral an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them

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Figure 10.5 Andy Goldsworthy, *Wood Line*, 2011

Looking, touching, material, place and form are all inseparable from the resulting work. It is difficult to say where one stops and another begins. The energy and space around a material are as important as the energy and space within. The weather – rain, sun, snow, hail, mist, calm – is that external space made visible. When I touch a rock, I am touching and working the space around it. It is not independent of its surroundings, and the way it sits tells how it came to be there.

The underlying tension of a lot of my art is to try and look through the surface appearance of things. Inevitably, one way of getting beneath the surface is to introduce a hole, a window into what lies below.

– ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

Goldsworthy is a land artist in the tradition of the great American earth-movers like Robert Smithson who created Spiral Jetty *at Salt Lake, Utah. Richard Long, who imported that tradition to Britain, is another mentor; like them, he wants to get away from two-dimensional*

representation of landscape in a frame, and give you the thing itself. That's the theory. But he is also strongly in the tradition of everyone who has ever had memorable days making dens in parks or sandcastles on beaches. He preserves such ephemeral creations, icicle statues on rocks, brilliant forest dramas made with autumn leaves, in exquisite photographs.

– TIM ADAMS, THE OBSERVER, 11 MARCH 2007

By working large, I am not trying to dominate nature. If people feel small in relation to a work, they should not assume that there is an intention to make nature itself small. If anything, I am giving nature a more powerful presence in the mass of earth, stone, wood that I use. I do not change the underlying processes of growth, and nature's grip is tightened on the site that I have worked.

– ANDY GOLDSWORTHY

ACTIVITY 10.9

1   Analyse Goldsworthy's works using the Structural Framework. How does he use materials and the design elements and principles to express his views on environmental issues?

2   Compare the construction of a work such as *Rowan Leaves Laid Around a Hole* with Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* or Christo's *Wrapped Coastline* (see *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to view these works). Consider the scale of the works in relation to the ideas both artists were exploring. Compare the processes both artists used to construct their work.

3   Analyse Goldsworthy's work using the Personal Framework. What personal involvement and ideas did he have in relation to the work?

- In site-specific artwork, what is the relevance of the site to the work? Why does the work have to remain at the site where it has been created? Why did Goldsworthy select that particular site and what is its significance to the work?
- What contemporary environmental issues is Goldsworthy exploring in this work?
- Are the photographs Goldsworthy takes of his ephemeral works significant in the interpretation of the artwork?
- Despite creating his artworks with materials from nature, does Goldsworthy comment on the negative impact of our consumer society on nature?
- By removing his artworks from the gallery space, does this place a different value on the work?
- Does the artist, like the scientist, have a crucial role to perform in our society regarding the state of the environment?

RELATED ISSUES

- Because Goldsworthy takes photographs as a 'permanent' record of his work, it could be argued that this goes against his intention of creating ephemeral artworks.
- If this artwork has been made out of leaves, rocks or mud, how can it be considered art? How is this different from a child building a sandcastle on the beach?
- Site-specific artworks remove the artist's work from the gallery and place it in the environment. Does this reduce the value of the artwork?
- The 'ephemeral' nature of many environmental artworks challenges the traditional approach of making works that are permanent. What is the relevance of this?

10.9 Artworks that have offended

If art is meant to provoke dialogue and discourse, which is at the core of education, is it therefore justified to create artworks that offend as they are fulfilling this role?

Andres Serrano, *Piss Christ*

THE ART IDEA

Cultural Personal

The only message is that I'm a Christian artist making a religious work of art based on my relationship with Christ and the Church. The crucifix is a symbol that has lost its true meaning; the horror of what occurred. It represents the crucifixion of a man who was tortured, humiliated and left to die on a cross for several hours. In that time, Christ not only bled

Figure 10.6 Andres Serrano, *Piss Christ*, 1987

to dead, he probably saw all his bodily functions and fluids come out of him. So if Piss Christ upsets people, maybe this is so because it is bringing the symbol closer to its original meaning. There was a time prior to the 17th century when the only important art, the only art that mattered, was religious art. After that, there were very few contemporary art pieces that were considered both art and religious, and Piss Christ is one of them.

I distrust anyone with a message. The best artistic intentions are usually cloaked in mysteries and contradictions. It wouldn't be interesting for me if the art were not 'loaded' in some way. I always say my work is open for interpretation and that's why I prefer not to read many of the 'interpretations' out there. Suffice it to say, the work is like a mirror, and it reveals itself in different ways, to different people.

– ANDRES SERRANO, THE HUFFINGTON POST, 4 AUGUST 2014

Figure 10.7 Andres Serrano, *Piss Christ*, 1987, vandalised print, 2011 (detail)

DISCUSSION OF ANDRES SERRANO'S *PISS CHRIST*

Art has the power to shock. Throughout history, viewers have been disturbed, offended and outraged by art that was socially, politically and religiously challenging. Serrano's *Piss Christ* (Figure 10.6), a photograph of a small plastic crucifix submerged in a glass of the artist's urine, sparked a great deal of controversy in 1987. The fact that the artwork was publicly funded, with Serrano receiving a total of $20 000 from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), added to the public outrage. Serrano received hate mail and death threats and lost grants due to the work. Negative opinion has continued and as recently as 17 April 2011 a print was vandalised beyond repair by Christian protestors who found the work to be a 'deplorable, despicable display of vulgarity' (Figure 10.7).

RELATED ISSUES
- Serano produced an artwork that was highly offensive to Christians because of the materials and presentation of the religious subject matter.
- Does freedom of expression take precedence over the rights of groups within society that may be offended by what artists choose to express?
- Should publicly funded artworks be permitted to offend members of the public responsible for their funding?

10.10 Artworks that have attracted legal action

Artworks have at times raised the ire of the public to such an extent that the ensuing debate has gone so far as to result in legal action, as was the case with the goldfish installation *Helena* by Marco Evaristti (discussed later in this chapter) and *Tilted Arc* by Richard Serra.

Time and movement became really crucial to how I deal with what I deal with, not only sight and boundary but how one walks through a piece and what one feels and registers in terms of one's own body in relation to another body.

— RICHARD SERRA

Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*

THE ART IDEA

This newly created concave volume has a silent amplitude which magnifies your awareness of yourself and the sculptural field of the space.

— RICHARD SERRA

DISCUSSION OF RICHARD SERRA'S *TILTED ARC*

Tilted Arc by Richard Serra (Figure 10.8) attracked probably one of the most notorious law suits involving a public artwork, which involved the removal of the commissioned site-specific sculpture. The 36 m x 3.6 m steel sculpture was commissioned in 1979 by the US General Services Administration

Figure 10.8 Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981–89, Corten steel, Federal Plaza, New York

Arts-in-Architecture program; and was to be installed in the Federal Plaza in downtown Manhattan. Heated debate quickly followed after the installation of the arc in 1981. People denounced Serra's sculpture as an ugly rusted metal wall, and argued that it disrupted the flow of the plaza as people had to walk around it.

Serra responded that this was the point:

The viewer becomes aware of himself and of his movement through the plaza. As he moves, the sculpture changes. Contraction and expansion of the sculpture result from the viewer's movement. Step by step the perception not only of the sculpture but of the entire environment changes.

The public also strongly objected to the fact that the arc they disliked so much was commissioned with public funds. In a matter of months, 1300 employees in the area signed a petition to remove what they termed 'this eyesore'. In 1989, the court ruled four to one in favour of the sculpture's removal, highlighting the power of the public to remove artworks based on a matter of taste. In 1993 a new sculptural installation was commissioned for the Federal Plaza by Martha Schwartz (Figure 10.9), which involved a maze of swirling benches and mounds of shrubbery. The new installation caused a similar if not worse disruption of movement through the plaza, raising the question of the validity of the premise for the removal of *Tilted Arc* four years earlier.

RELATED ISSUES

- Is *Tilted Arc* a sculpture or just a rusty wall that obstructed government workers working in the Federal Building?
- Federal Plaza workers said the piece 'attracted graffiti, rats, and terrorists who might use it as a blasting wall for bombs'.
- Does the public have a right to challenge public art?
- Should public funding be used to pay for artworks disliked by members of the public responsible for their funding?

Controversial sculpture of a man sleepwalking in his underwear

THE ART IDEA

Matelli's intention was to create a man who is hopelessly lost and out of place. He wanted to raise the issue of vulnerability, misplacement, loss and abandonment.

The Director of the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, Lisa Fischman, explained that the intention behind the placement of the sculpture was to connect the exhibition within the

Figure 10.9 Martha Schwartz, 1993 installation, Federal Plaza, New York

museum to the campus world beyond. This also brought into question the line between what we expect to be inside the museum (art) and what we expect to be outside (life).

DISCUSSION OF TONY MATELLI'S *SLEEPWALKER*

A realistic-looking life size sculpture of a man sleepwalking in his underwear was placed near the centre of Wellesley College. Tony Matelli's *Sleepwalker* (Figure 10.10) formed part of the *New Gravity* art exhibit at the College's Davis Museum, featuring sculptures that were reversed, up-ended or atomised.

RELATED ISSUES

The work created a great deal of controversy and more than 100 students at the all-women's college signed a petition asking administrators to remove it.

'This highly lifelike sculpture has, within just a few hours of its outdoor installation, become a source of apprehension, fear, and triggering thoughts regarding sexual assault for many members of our campus community,' says the petition started by Zoe Magid, a Wellesley College junior majoring in political science. 'While it may appear humorous, or thought-provoking to some, it has already become a source of undue stress for many Wellesley College students, the majority of whom live, study, and work in this space.' 'We really feel that if a piece of art makes students feel unsafe, that steps over a line.

Davis Museum director Lisa Fischman wrote:

We placed the Sleepwalker *on the roadside just beyond the Davis to connect the exhibition within the museum to the campus world beyond … I love the idea of art escaping the museum and muddling the line between what we expect to be inside*

Figure 10.10 Tony Matelli, *Sleepwalker*, 2014, painted bronze (165 x 120 x 90 cm)

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(art) and what we expect to be outside (life) … As the best art does, Tony Matelli's work provokes dialogue, and discourse is at the core of education. I watched from the fifth-floor windows today (intermittently, over several hours) as students stopped to interact playfully with the sculpture. They took selfies with him, snapping pics with their phones, and gathering to look at this new figure on the Wellesley landscape – even as the snow fell.

Others said while the statue came as a surprise, they understood the artist's intention.

'I find it disturbing, but in a good way,' said Sarah Wall-Randell, an English Professor at Wellesley. 'I think it's meant to be off-putting – it's a schlumpy guy in underpants in an all-women environment.'

Wellesley College senior Annie Wang, an art history major, said, 'I think art's intention is to confront, but not assault, and people can see this as assaulting. Wellesley is a place where we're supposed to feel safe. I think place and a context matters, and I don't think this is the place to put it.'

Commenting on the debate surrounding his artwork, Matelli said, 'Everyone brings to a work of art their own interpretation, their own history and their own baggage … I think people might be seeing things in that work that just aren't there.'

Wellesley College President H. Kim Bottomly said:

We cannot destroy the artistic integrity of this exhibition by moving the sculpture, and also, we must do everything we can to support those students who find themselves deeply affected by it … I have welcomed the depth of the dialogue and am grateful for the many voices and perspectives that have productively contributed to conversations about art, freedom, censorship, and feminism, to name a few.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Does the placement of an artwork impact on its meaning?
- Should artists be more sensitive about where they choose to place artworks?
- Do the gender of the sculpture and its location have any bearing on the intended meaning, or the meaning placed on it by the viewers?
- Does freedom of expression take precedence over the rights of groups within society that may be offended by what artists choose to express?

ACTIVITY 10.10

Matelli related one of his first art experiences with a Duane Hanson sculpture, *The Janitor*, which leans against the wall in the Milwaukee Art Museum:

It is incredible because it does so many things at once; it takes you totally by surprise. Janitors are supposed to be completely unseen in museums, their labour is supposed to disappear; so it's sort of surprising on that level, and then you realise it's a sculpture, and become conscious of how you are looking at the thing. You become aware of that perceptual shift, so what was a seemingly real-life experience becomes a complicated art experience, and that approach to art is really powerful and cool. It made everything else seem like a prop that only pointed to an idea.

How does this experience relate to Matelli's *Sleepwalker* and where it was placed on the Wellesley College campus?

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Images of animals in art have existed alongside or parallel to those of humans for as long as images and objects have been made. Our link with the animal kingdom was evident in the Palaeolithic cave paintings in Lascaux, the ancient Egyptians' representation of their gods, Renaissance depictions of Biblical events and in paintings by artists like George Stubbs that celebrate the beauty of horses. Modern art, however, introduces the viewer to a new way of depicting animals in art.

American artist Robert Rauschenberg first began using dead animals in his sculptural compositions as early as 1950. One of his most famous pieces, *Monogram, 1955–59* (Figure 10.11), was a stuffed Angora goat with a rubber tyre wrapped around its torso, standing on a Cubist-style mixed-media painting.

Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Something Living*

THE ART IDEA

This work, like many of Hirst's artworks, involves the viewer contemplating the processes of life and death, and the ironies, falsehoods and desires that we negotiate to end up with our own mortality and alienation. The installation aims to challenge the boundaries between art, life and science.

Hirst's works are brutally honest and confrontational; he draws attention to the paranoiac denial of death that permeates our culture.

– *VIRGINIA BUTTON*

Figure 10.11 Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1955–59 © Untitled Press Inc./VAGA, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016
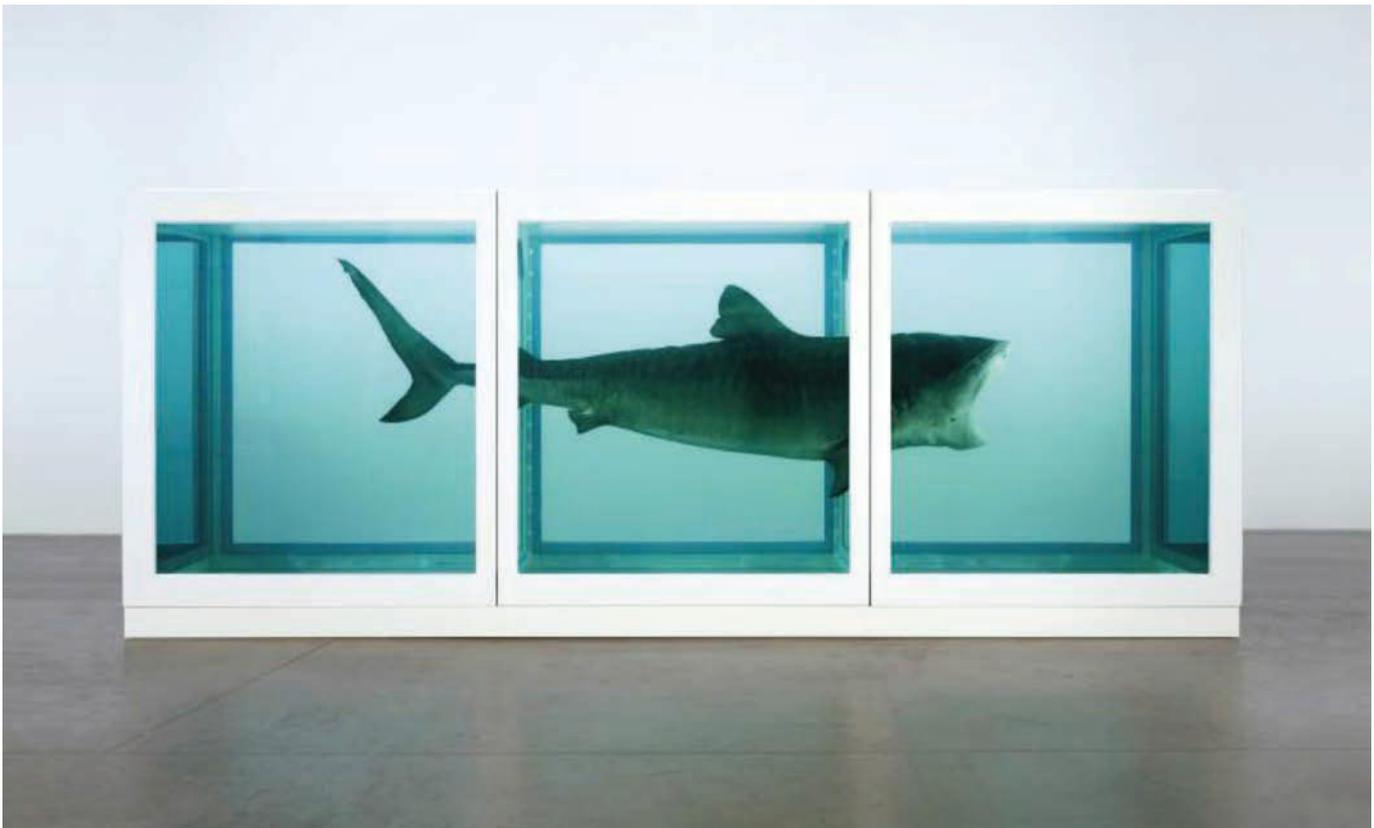
Figure 10.12 Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, glass, painted steel, silicone, monofilament, shark and formaldehyde solution, 85.375 x 213.375 x 70.875 in (2170 x 5420 x 1800 mm) © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved, DACS 2016, photo by Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd. licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

vitrine glass cabinet or showcase

DISCUSSION OF HIRST'S *THE PHYSICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF DEATH IN THE MIND OF SOMEONE LIVING*

Damien Hirst's wide-ranging practice, which moves between painting, sculpture and installations, aims to challenge the boundaries between art, life and science. In 1991, art collector Charles Saatchi put together a collection of artwork by young British artists, including Hirst, who had come to the attention of Saatchi when he presented *In and Out of Love*.

He created this installation by filling a gallery with hundreds of live tropical butterflies, some of which were spawned from monochromatic canvases on the walls. Saatchi paid Hirst approximately $75 000 to create his work *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, in which Hirst suspended a tiger shark in a glass **vitrine** filled with formaldehyde. Hirst paid an Australian fisherman approximately $10 000 to kill the shark.

In *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* (Figure 10.12), Hirst plays on the idea that sharks need to move ahead in the water constantly or they die. The irony in the work is that, despite the shark being a killer, it has been killed itself; yet by being preserved in formaldehyde, it has beaten death to become immortal.

> *Hirst circumnavigated the primary pitfall of much British art – its guilt-ridden distrust of the visual – with superbly finessed aesthetic objects.*
>
> *– MARTIN MALONEY, ARTIST*

Through his imagery, Hirst is commenting on the values viewers were placing on artworks in Britain in the 1990s. Hirst felt that the art world had become so obsessed with making artworks that were obtuse in their meaning that the public did not understand what art was about. Therefore, he used animals in his art to make a statement about the hierarchy that had been established by critics and

gallery owners. It was a form of 'anti-art' that provoked much controversy about what art should be and what artists should be expressing.

After *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Something Living*, Hirst went on to create other works using animals in vitrines. Refer to the following pages for a discussion of Hirst's *Mother and Child Divided* (Figure 5.44 in Chapter 5). He believes that the geometry of the glass of the vitrine provides a barrier for the viewer, yet seduces them at the same time. The geometry of the glass case also acts as a frame, thus creating an 'art object' or 'museum piece' to be viewed.

ACTIVITY 10.11

Hirst uses installations to express his ideas. Discuss Hirst's works and the presentation of animals in formaldehyde. Does this increase the meaning for the viewer?

> *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 the lace collar in a Velasquez painting could be more radical. I don't think there is any doubt that the present commercialisation of the art, at its top end, is a cultural obscenity.*
>
> *— ROBERT HUGHES*

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION
- What is Robert Hughes saying about the art market valuing Hirst's work?
- What is Hirst stating about art in his work? What symbolism does he use? Research what was happening in the British art industry at that time. Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to view some of the artists that Saatchi Gallery represents.
- Discuss this artwork in relation to the question 'What is art?'

ACTIVITY 10.12

1 Compare the works of Damien Hirst with those of Marcel Duchamp. What are the similarities in the works of both artists? How do they create symbolism using common objects or animals?
2 Analyse *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* using the Structural Framework, including the use of techniques, the style of the work and the use of design elements and principles.

RELATED ISSUES
- Is this art?
- How are artworks valued by society?
- What value does the art market place on the artwork?
- How does the value an artist places on a work differ from that of the viewer or the art dealer?
- Is it ethical to have a living creature hunted and killed for art?

ACTIVITY 10.13

View other works by Damien Hirst. What is Hirst expressing about death and immortality in his works? What symbolism does he use? Compare the practices of Hirst with other contemporary installation artists. How do their artworks differ in their use of materials?

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Hirst, D. 2001, *Damien Hirst: Pictures from the Saatchi Collection*, Saatchi Gallery, London

Compare how animals have been used by the artists discussed in this section with the way New Zealand-born, Melbourne-based artist Julia deVille uses animals. She is a strict vegan and animal rights activist who is always conscious of the way in which animals are used and abused in our society. She only works with animals that have died of natural causes. (See Chapter 8 for a detailed discussion of her work.)

Figure 10.13 Marco Evaristti, *Helena*, 2000

Figure 10.14 Marco Evaristti, *Helena* (detail), 2000

Marco Evaristti, *Helena*

THE ART IDEA

Evaristti wanted to create an interactive artwork that aimed to pose a moral dilemma – an experiment involving human nature.

DISCUSSION OF MARCO EVARISTTI'S *HELENA*

Helena, 2000, by Marco Evaristti, was an installation that featured a live goldfish swimming in water in a blender. Visitors to the museum were invited to switch the blender on and liquefy the fish. The artist said he wanted to force people to:

> do battle with their conscience. Do I press the button or don't I? We, the audience, have power over the lives of a few goldfish. Do we let them live, or reduce them to goldfish puree? Do we need to make use of all the possibilities we have? Usually, when in a museum, we are not even allowed to touch the artwork.

Evaristti did not aim to encourage the pointless killing of goldfish. Rather, he aimed to pose a moral dilemma – an experiment involving human nature. Within a few days, about 16 goldfish were crushed. The protests by animal rights organisations were large; they included a few surviving goldfish being stolen from the blenders. After two days, the museum decided to pull the plug on the exhibit.

The work is ultimately about the three types of people that Evaristti believes exist: the sadist, the voyeur and the moralist. If a person is a sadist, they will press the button on the blender because they can, or even because it brings them pleasure. The voyeur excitedly watches to see whether others will press the button, while the moralist becomes infuriated by the fact that there is an option to blend fish and even more so if anyone acts on this option.

His art was conceived within ethical boundaries and that these allowed, on balance, the killing of goldfish as an acceptable cost (to the goldfish and the universe) in return for the opportunity to engage the conscience of gallery-goers.

– DR SIMON LONGSTAFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ETHICS CENTRE

I suppose the suspicion is that this work is more about art than it is about animals and that there is something ruthless in the dispassionate way it uses both the fish and the audience. On the other hand, a refined art lover might choose not to press the button, while hoping that someone would, because an unwitting proxy may well be the most convenient way of starting the debate – that is, of raising the rights of animals and the limits of art. In every respect, the work relies so completely on the audience that it's very hard to attribute responsibility.

– MIKE PARR, ARTIST, QUOTED IN SIMON ETHERINGTON'S ARTICLE ANIMAL RIGHTS AND ARTISTIC FREEDOM *PUBLISHED BY ARTS LAW CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA*

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

The most common response to critics of using live animals in art – in particular to those who condemn the act as cruelty to an animal – has been to invoke the principle of freedom of artistic expression. Are there other ways that the artist could respond?

And yet many art museum directors and gallery curators (and some artists) often use the 'art above law' argument in defending controversial exploitative exhibits when it is plain to see that their real motivation is to attract publicity, drive up the value of the art, and promote sales. In the case of museums,

the increased media attention drives up private and public funding. The impetus for exploitative art isn't free speech, it's profit.

– 'THE EXPLOITATION OF ANIMALS IN MODERN CONCEPTUAL ART' BY ROBERT WAYNER

RELATED ISSUES

- The exploitation of animals in modern conceptual art
- Animal rights and artistic freedom

Guillermo Vargas, *Exposición No. 1*

THE ART IDEA

The artist explained that he had created this installation piece to draw attention to public hypocrisy after a drug addict, who was trespassing on private property in Costa Rica, was killed by two guard dogs as municipal authorities watched.

However, the artist was also trying to incite a reaction, making the spectator – like the dog – an unwilling participant in the work. There is evidence that another idea the artist was expressing was how easily we can be manipulated into believing what news outlets want us to believe. Through the work, the artist also sought to draw attention to the plight of stray dogs in society.

DISCUSSION OF *EXPOSICIÓN NO. 1* BY GUILLERMO VARGAS

In 2007, an unknown Costa Rican artist named Guillermo Vargas created an installation entitled *Exposición No. 1*, for the Códice Gallery in Managua, Nicaragua, in which he tied a starving stray dog to a wall in the gallery with a bowl of food just out of its reach, while numerous pieces of crack cocaine and marijuana burned nearby. Written in dog food on a gallery wall was the statement, *'Eres lo que lees'*, meaning, 'You are what you read.'

According to hundreds of blogs and news articles circulating on the internet, the artist intended the dog to starve to death during the course of the exhibition. After a few days, the dog is reported to have starved to death.

On investigating the source of this information, David Yanez states in his blog *You are What You Read* (4 March 2010) for *art21* magazine that he discovered that not one blog or news source that covered the exhibition could confirm whether the dog had actually died. The outlets were getting their information from the same source: a blog published by a friend of the artist called *El Perrito Vive* or *The Dog Lives*. Yanez went on to state:

> One of the aims of this project was to demonstrate the hypocrisy in real world and art world ethics. Take a dog off the streets and put it into a gallery and it becomes an ethical phenomenon, while stray dogs and most real human suffering are ignored or given minimal attention.

Another purpose was to incite a reaction, making the spectator, like the dog, an unwilling participant in the work. By creating this controversy and appealing to the emotions, the manipulated 'truth' was spread by the outraged public, who eventually petitioned to have the artist boycotted from a major upcoming Biennale. This illustrates how easily we can be manipulated into believing what news outlets want us to. The phrase 'You are what you read', written in dog food on a gallery wall, illustrates this point very well and now makes sense in the context of the artist's intention.

Structural

> If one artist can manipulate over four million people around the world, imagine the ability that governments, corporations, and religious entities have to do the same.
>
> – DAVID YANEZ, YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ, 4 MARCH 2010

RELATED ISSUES

- Cruelty to animals
- The ethical implications of using live animals in art
- Use of social media to manipulate public perceptions and opinions

Figure 10.15 Guillermo Vargas, *Exposición No. 1*, 2007, for the Códice Gallery in Managua, Nicaragua

© Chamberlin et al 2017   Cambridge University Press

ACTIVITY 10.15

The photographic works of Nathalia Edenmont have often met with controversy. Edenmont photographs animals, such as rabbits and mice, in delicate lace collars posed in glass vases. It is not determined whether the animals are dead or alive. This is the issue that Edenmont wishes the viewer to contemplate regarding her work. Her presentation of the animals and the artistic process transgress and challenge social viewpoints.

> *Her work calls into question the hypocrisy in the debate surrounding animal rights.*
>
> – BJOERN WETTERLING, GALLERY OWNER, STOCKHOLM

Search for commentary on the issues of Nathalia Edenmont killing animals for use in her work and search for 'The Exploitation of Animals in Modern Conceptual Art'. Also search for debate on animal rights and artist freedom using the link from the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Figure 10.16 Nathalia Edenmont, *Bride Red*, 2003, C-print mounted on perspex, 150 x 150 cm © Nathalia Edenmont/BUS, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

ACTIVITY 10.16

Contemporary Damien Hirst has presented a range of decaying or preserved animals in his works. As the animals are purchased for the artwork, this has created controversy with animal rights groups. Discuss whether Hirst should be killing animals for his artwork. Discuss this issue and compare it with the artworks of Evaristti, Vargas and Edenmont.

Related issues for each of the artworks mentioned

- Do artists have the right to harm or even kill animals for the sake of their artwork?
- Do the ideas being explored in the artworks justify the use of animals?
- Do artistic freedom and expression outweigh the legal and ethical implications of using live animals in art?

10.12 Artworks, artists and censorship

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines 'censorship' as 'the practice of officially examining books, movies, etc., and removing things that are considered to be offensive, immoral, harmful to society, etc.'.

> **Censorship is to art as lynching is to justice.**
>
> *– HENRY LOUIS GATES*

Cultural Creative works like books and works of art have regularly been at odds with current standards of decency and good taste in the fight for freedom of expression. Throughout history, works of art have been altered, censored and even destroyed due to unacceptable content. Artworks are often censored due to the subject matter or content of the artwork. Some are censored because of the materials the artist has used. The values that society places on art can vary from culture to culture, and at different periods in time.

Therefore, something that one culture deems acceptable may not be acceptable to another.

Artworks have been censored due to public outrage, which has often been fuelled by the media. The reasons for censorship even been a result of various factors, including religious, social or political; they have even been censored by governing bodies in galleries as the ideas expressed in the artwork may be against the viewpoint of the controlling body.

Many people are familiar with Michelangelo's *The Last Judgement*, 1536–41, but few would realise that this masterpiece was also impacted on by censorship in its day. Biagio Cardinal da Cesena, the papal master of ceremonies at the time, described the fresco as 'a stew of nudes, better suited to a bathhouse or roadside wine shop than the Pope's chapel'.

Although it may not appear too contentious to contemporary eyes, because Michelangelo chose to paint many of the figures naked, his famed Sistine Chapel fresco was considered immoral by many, including Pope Daniele de Volterra, who in 1565 had a pupil of Michelangelo's add loin-cloths to the once-nude figures.

Nudity in art has often resulted in issues being raised by people who are offended by it, but when the nudes are children the situation becomes more volatile.

Figure 10.17 Bill Henson, *Untitled No. 39*, 2007–08 (Detail), C-type photograph (127 x 180 cm), courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Bill Henson, *Untitled No. 30*

THE ART IDEA

Australian photographer Bill Henson explores a number of ideas in this and many of his other figure studies and landscapes. In an interview, he stated:

> I think that what interests me in any art form, whether it's music or literary or anything else, are the same things that interest all of us in life generally. Things that shape our lives – loss, longing, love, a sense of mortality – beauty is the mechanism that animates those things.
>
> – *LUCY FEAGINS, THE DESIGN FILES, 5 OCTOBER 2012*

As with this photograph, Henson has often worked with young subjects during his 30-year career and said, 'Youth seem to be the most effective vehicle for expressing the things that interest me about humanity and vulnerability.' Teenagers represent a gap between childhood and adulthood, and a time of change that interests Henson.

DISCUSSION OF BILL HENSON'S *UNTITLED NO. 30*

Untitled No. 30 was the photograph at the centre of the controversy surrounding Bill Henson's work, and one of the images removed by the police from the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney in 2008, forcing the closure of Henson's latest exhibition. This closure of the exhibition led to a public debate that raged nationally for many weeks. Subsequently, directors and curators removed many of Henson's works from public exhibition in other galleries.

In Tony Wyzenbeek's 2003 ABC documentary *The Art of Bill Henson*, which was re-screened by the ABC during the media furore in 2008, Henson uses the term 'teenagers' when stating clearly that he is interested in photographing boys and girls in the transitional stage of adolescence:

Figure 10.18 Bill Henson, *Untitled No. 30*, 2007–08

Adolescence is interesting. Of course, all of life is interesting and transitory. However, I think there is an exponential growth physically, intellectually and emotionally during adolescence. All of this unfolds very rapidly. The potential for things to go well or to go badly produces a kind of floating world. Of course the Germans have a word for it, 'Erwartung', which sits somewhere between anxiety and expectation. It seems to me that this is a primary condition of adolescence and therefore a most effective microcosm for the macrocosm of society and indeed civilization generally. There is this great potential; there is such rapid growth, an acceleration, an independence/ letting go of our parents' hands and this produces such tremendous uncertainty and expectation. I find it awe inspiring.

– BILL HENSON, INTERVIEW WITH SABINE MIRLESSE, 15 JUNE 2015

RELATED ISSUES

The way Henson chose to portray his ideas, with nude photographs of pubescent young girls, raised issues within society. This could be seen to be largely due to the fact that people interpret visual imagery in completely different ways because of their personal, historical and cultural backgrounds. Some viewers see the works as aesthetically beautiful while others see them as child pornography. This results in another issue: the censorship of art.

Police Seize Artist's Photographs of Naked Teenagers

News BY Hanae Ko from Jul/Aug 2008

On May 23, more than 20 photographs by acclaimed Australian photographer Bill Henson … were seized by authorities from an exhibition about to open that night at the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in Sydney. The police raid was prompted by complaints filed by a child advocacy group alarmed by the invitations sent out for the show that featured an image of a naked 13-year-old girl.

Internationally renowned for his lush photographs, Henson has often worked with young subjects during his 30-year-long career. The children in this current series were photographed in the artist's Melbourne studio with the permission of their parents. In a report by Victorian newspaper *The Age*, Henson is quoted as saying that the youth 'seem to be the most effective vehicle for expressing the things that interest me about humanity and vulnerability'. For the exhibition at Roslyn Oxley9, a third of the displayed photographs were of naked teenagers. The gallery released a statement on May 23 saying that the exhibition would re-open without the controversial works.

In an article for *The Australian*, Judy Annear, senior curator of photography at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, commented that Henson's 'images may take the viewer to an edge, to an uncomfortable place, but it's like great music or great literature'. Similarly, former National Gallery of Australia director Betty Churcher defended Henson on ABC Radio, saying that the photos are 'breathtakingly beautiful' and have 'absolutely no suggestion of pornography'. On May 29, Australian actress Cate Blanchett joined the fray, signing an open letter to the Australia prime minister

with 42 other important cultural figures that read: 'The potential prosecution of one of our most respected artists is no way to build a creative Australia and does untold damage to our cultural reputation.'

On the other side of the debate, Hetty Johnston, the founder of the anti-child abuse advocacy group Bravehearts, expressed her disapproval in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, declaring that the works 'are clearly illegal child pornography images, it's not about art at all'. Johnston, who had filed the complaint against the gallery, claims they are criminal and hopes that both the artist and gallery will be prosecuted. Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd also condemned Henson's work, telling the Nine Network that the photos are 'absolutely revolting'.

The Rose Bay Police announced on May 23 to the media that charges would be made under both the NSW and Commonwealth *Crimes Act*. Hugh Macon, president of the New South Wales Law Society, commented that the case against Henson could be difficult to prove. 'The *Crimes Act* requires two things – an intention and an act,' Macon commented. 'The act is usually fairly easily established but if the intention is to produce a work of art and solely to produce a work of art, then I cannot see how a crime has been committed.'

In a sudden reversal, on June 10, the seized artworks were returned to Roslyn Oxley9, after police were advised by the NSW Director of Public Prosecutions that action against Henson was unlikely to succeed. 'It is reassuring to see existing laws, having been rigorously tested, still provide a framework in which debate and expression of ideas can occur,' said the artist in an issued statement. Following the dismissal, the gallery has reopened the show to viewers with scheduled appointments to protect the gallery and artworks from potential protestors.

Source: *ArtAsiaPacific*, no. 59, July/August 2008.

There have been several occasions when an artist's work has caused public debate about both what is permissible in working with children and how and where the artworks should be seen. While NAVA does not in any way condone an action which would cause harm to children, it is concerned that the sensitivity over protection of children should be proportional and should not lead to the representation of children becoming so restricted that they are erased from public view.

– NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS CEO, TAMARA WINIKOFF

The controversy that censorship attracts raises the question of the artist's role in society, and the idea that they might have social responsibility. Censorship also opens up questions about the role of art as truth, and the implications of constraining expression. Commenting on the complex nature of the issue at a conference on censorship, Tate director Nicholas Serata stated:

We can probably all agree on many of the principles that we seek to uphold. What's actually much more difficult is to recognise that there are no easy paths, that there are no guarantees by which, and through which, we can preserve this hard fought-for right for the freedom of free expression.

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* to visit the links for 'The National Association for the Visual Arts in Australia Provides Insight into Freedom of Expression' and the article 'A Brief History of Art Censorship from 1508 to 2014'.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is deemed 'moral' or correct by contemporary society?
- Who has the authority to censor artworks?
- Is censorship only limited to artworks that are on public display or does it extend to those in galleries?

While works depicting nudity and works that have represented religious imagery in confronting ways have often sparked outrage, works of art that are censored because they offend those in power suggest a desire to control thought. Censorship often accompanies pieces that present an uncomfortable truth, responding to or representing political injustice, conflict or morality. In regions where political rule is accompanied by tightly controlled propaganda, artists whose imagery differs from accepted forms are often targeted.

Figure 10.19 Ai Weiwei, *The Grass-Mud Horse Blocks the Middle*, 2011 © Ai Weiwei Studio

Ai Weiwei: Artist and activist

THE ART IDEA

Personal **Cultural** **Contemporary** The title of the work is *Cao ni ma dang zhongyang – The Grass-Mud Horse Blocks the Middle.* This may seem innocent, but these basic sounds in Mandarin, with different characters, are an obscene insult to senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials. Reference to this animal is a way of defiantly making censors choose between allowing the implied insult or taking what would be seen as the ridiculous step of censoring a cute animal popular in children's cartoons.

Ai Weiwei is using the artwork to comment on the political situation in China, where democracy is limited, education and medical insurance are not available to everyone and there are restrictions on freedom of speech. All that remains is symbolic civil disobedience.

DISCUSSION OF AI WEIWEI AND *THE GRASS-MUD HORSE BLOCKS THE MIDDLE*

Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei is one of the most prominent contemporary examples of an artist persecuted for political reasons. He produces works that directly criticise his native government's approach to democracy and human rights. In April 2011, this resulted in him being detained by the CCP for three months. The artist's detention sparked an international protest, including a street art campaign incorporating slogans such as 'Free Ai Weiwei' and '1001 Chairs for Ai Weiwei', which saw artists from all around the world bring chairs to Chinese embassies and consulates to sit peacefully in support of the call for the artist's immediate release.

Although officially arrested for tax evasion, it is thought that the photo of a naked Ai Weiwei with a toy alpaca blocking his penis from public view may have played a role in his arrest.

In a post titled 'All That's Left is Grass Mud Horse' in 2009, translated by China blogger Charlie Custer, Ai wrote:

> *In sixty years, [I] have never seen a ballot. There isn't education for everyone, there isn't medical insurance, there's no freedom of the press, there's no freedom of speech, there's no freedom of information, there's no freedom to live and move where you choose, there's no independent judiciary, there's no one supervising public opinion, there are no independent trade unions, there's no armed forces that belongs to the nation, there's no protection of the constitution. All that's left is a Grass Mud Horse.*

RELATED ISSUES

- Should artists have the right to question government?
- Should there be freedom of artistic expression?
- Should art be censored?

ACTIVITY 10.17

The censorship of politically motivated artworks can paradoxically increase the visibility of both the artwork and the issue the artist is highlighting. Do you think that Ai Weiwei set out to be censored by the government in order to draw more attention to his artwork and his ideas?

POINT FOR DISCUSSION

If everyone brings their own interpretation, their own history and their own baggage to a work of art, could any artwork be found to be offensive by someone?

Access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook* for links to PBS Newshour – Art, China and Censorship According to Ai Weiwei; and links to the debate about censorship of art.

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10.13 Street art

THE ART IDEA

Street art takes the ideas and imagery directly to the people. The artists want their work to be accessible and recognisable to the viewer. Like traditional art, street art is both intended to appeal because of its aesthetic beauty, sophisticated imagery and the technical skill it demonstrates, and sometimes is also a means of appealing to the intellect, making people aware of issues and bringing about social change.

Figure 10.20 Isolde, Paste-up street art in Fitzroy, Melbourne
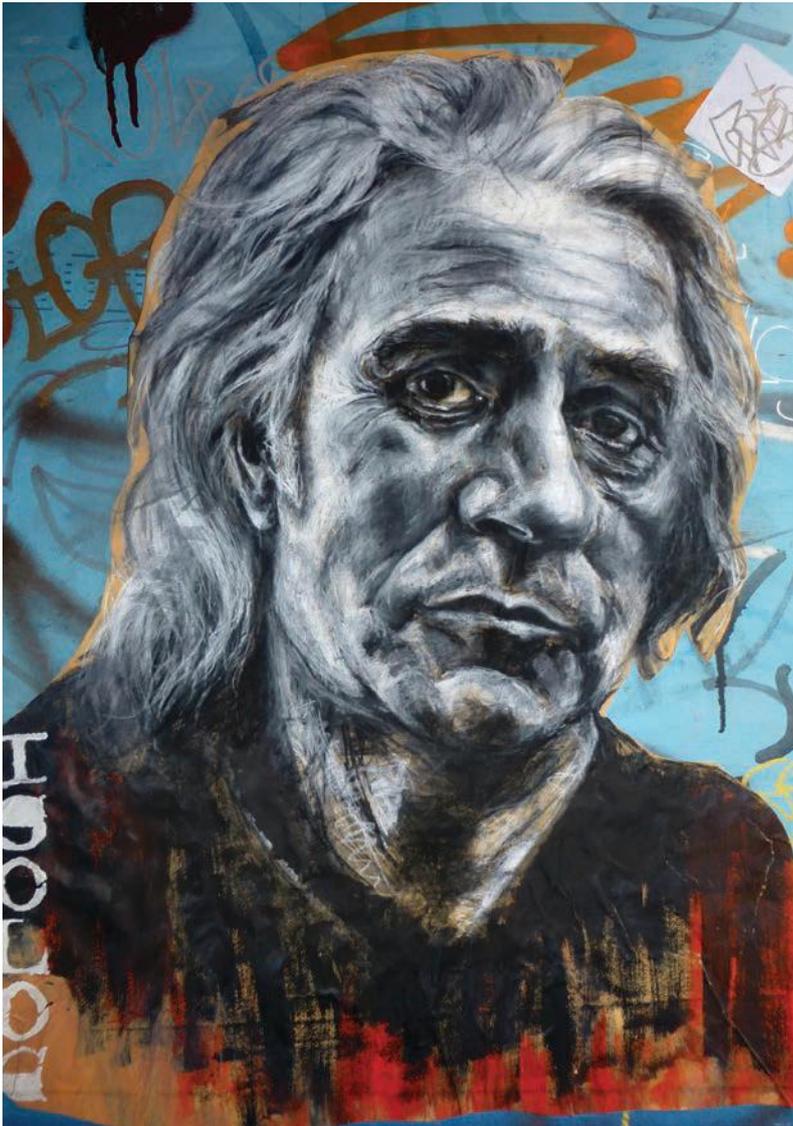
Street art is essentially collaborative: it sits in conversation with artists, with the wall itself, with the passer-by. Work gains meaning over time as the conversation is joined by other voices.

– LOU CHAMBERLIN, STREET ART: AUSTRALIA

The art can be found in places not designed for it. The space in which an artwork is created often has a profound effect on its appearance, too – the uneven surfaces, hidden corners, spots that are difficult to reach or see – they all leave their mark on the work and the way it's appreciated.

– LOU CHAMBERLIN, STREET ART: AUSTRALIA

DISCUSSION OF STREET ART

Just as the Pop artists reacted against the institutionalisation of art that was prevalent at the height of Abstract Expressionism, by reintroducing imagery with which people in the street could connect, street art moves art from the museums and galleries into the street. It takes the ideas and imagery directly to the people. The imagery that is used is recognisable, and often references popular culture as a way of relating to its audience. Street art belongs to public spaces and is created to be viewed by the public. Is street art the Pop Art of the twenty-first century?

In the first edition of this book, the British artist Banksy was introduced as one of the most well-known contemporary street artists, at a time where there was still extensive debate over the validity of street art as an art form. The question posed by many students who used Banksy as an example of a street artist was, 'Is the work

Figure 10.21 Heesco, painting in Artists Lane, Windsor, as political commentary

Figure 10.22 Tinky Sonntag, Three-dimensional objects as street art in Presgrave Place, Melbourne

of Banksy graffiti or is it art?' Since then, *Time* magazine has included Banksy – graffiti master, painter, activist, filmmaker and all-purpose provocateur – in its list of the world's 100 most influential people in 2010, along with Barack Obama, Steve Jobs and Lady Gaga. So the debate seems to have moved on from the question, 'Is it art?'

Although graffiti and tagging still exist, street art has become a valid art form, shifting from the realm of rebellious tagging to skilfully created social commentary. Because the messages can sometimes be political and produced by anonymous artists, street art is often labelled as activism and subversion.

Street art can take several forms. Many artists produce free-form paintings using spray paint applied directly onto the wall. Some artists install three-dimensional objects that change the environment or use the environment around it to strengthen the comment made by the work. Usually these 3D objects are found objects and, like the Dadaists, contemporary artists elevate ready-mades to art. Others artists use techniques that have the ability to be reproduced repeatedly so that they can appear in numerous areas around the city. These include **stencil** art (see the section on

Banksy later in this chapter), where a design is cut from cardboard or plastic as a template and the image is transferred onto the wall surface using spray paint. Sticker art uses imagery displayed using stickers while paste-ups present artwork in poster form, which is applied to the wall using a type of wallpaper paste.

While street art was originally seen as illegal vandalism, and began as a way for disenfranchised youths to voice their opinion and express themselves, it a growing

stencil made by cutting an image out of cardboard, plastic or any flat, sliceable surface; stencils are held up to walls and spray painted over

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Figure 10.23 Heesco and Dukestyle, Hosier Lane

worldwide phenomenon that has become legitimised. Because of its illegal status, street artists generally kept their identities a secret. Although many artists now reveal their identities, some – like Banksy – still maintain their anonymity for various reasons, including to create a sense of mystery around the artist and their work, which has appeared overnight, confronting members of the public as they started their daily routine. Often Banksy's works were intended, through satire, to shock them out of this routine and question the world around them.

As street art became a legitimate art form, street artists began coming out of the shadows. Now some are even working with galleries and painting commissions. Some, like Banksy, are selling work and are represented by agents and commercial galleries.

Just as traditional art is identifiable by culture or even region – as is evident when comparing the Renaissance art of Rome and Venice – street art is a reflection of the community in which it is made. To a certain extent, style and subject matter change from one country to another, but the ease of travel now means that there is a cross-pollination of styles and ideas. In Melbourne, we not only have artists travelling from all around the world as the street art scene gains traction, but the multicultural nature of this city means that – like mainstream art – street art has influences from all regions of the world.

Heesco, originally from Mongolia and now living and working in Melbourne, is well known for his skill in rendering photorealist portraits. He often collaborates with other artists, as is the case in Figure 10.23. This brings an extra level of dynamism to the work, which includes the electric touch and intense colour of Dukestyle.

Street art has become a popular means of communication. Sometimes the messages are personal comments on life, while many convey political commentary or

attempt to appeal to the viewer's intellect to provoke their social conscience. This is achieved through the use of symbolism, wit and metaphor. Sometimes text is used for clarity, but often the ideas and issues are communicated visually.

Where street art previously was seen as an urban blight, councils and communities now see it as a cultural asset, and they support artists financially or by providing them with wall space. Most street artists have rejected the traditional gallery space and use the public domain to exhibit their art and to get their message across to as wide an audience as possible.

> *When you go to an art gallery you are simply a tourist looking at the trophy cabinet of a few millionaires.*
>
> – *BANKSY*

Street art is now a legitimate art form that is accepted by the councils that previously tried to eradicate it. The City of Melbourne recognises the importance of street art in contributing to a vibrant urban culture. Melbourne's street art has become internationally renowned, and has turned into an attraction for local and overseas visitors experiencing the city's creative ambience. The City of Melbourne Council decided not only to allow street art, but also to support it.

In 2007, the City of Melbourne ran a mentoring program in which young people worked with professional artists to create legal street art murals in Union Lane in the Melbourne CBD (near Bourke Street Mall). Along with Hosier Inc., the City of Melbourne Council set up PaintUP! to encourage street artists to submit designs for an area set aside for the project. After the success of PaintUP! Round 1, which featured the stunning portrait, by Adnate, of a local Aboriginal boy on the side of MacDonald House in Hosier Lane, Hosier Inc. announced a call for expressions of interest for PaintUP! Round 2 in 2014 and

Figure 10.24 Adnate, portrait; Hosier Lane, Melbourne

Figure 10.25 Banksy, *Cave Painting*, Leake Street, London – infamously known as Banksy Tunnel, May 2008; it had been painted over by August 2008

buffing the act of covering over graffiti; an activity that usually is sponsored by city councils for the purpose of 'cleaning up' street art characterised as vandalism

palimpsest a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed, effacing the earlier writing; something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form

ACTIVITY 10.19

Although frowned upon by the establishment, there are characteristics in street art that are similar to prehistoric cave painting, an art form that has long been held in high regard by the art establishment, as these works are the earliest evidence of our creative spirit. At the dawn of time, people painted on walls. Like street art, this could have been considered ephemeral as, once it had served its purpose – whether for ritual or magic – it was often painted over with a new image. The resulting **palimpsest** provided historians with an invaluable insight into the culture of these early people.

Will the layering of street art provide a similar insight into contemporary society? Discuss how this relates to the following comment by Lou Chamberlin, 'The work gains meaning over time as the conversation is joined by other voices.'

offered a grant of $6000 to the successful artist to supplement project costs.

Adnate is a Melbourne-based artist who works all around Australia. He has developed a relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and produces beautiful large-scale portraits in the hope that they may heighten awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, and the issues faced by these communities (Figure 10.24).

ACTIVITY 10.18

Due to the ephemeral nature of street art, which may be tagged or **buffed** at any time, and which is constantly exposed to the elements, capturing it in its urban context by means of photography is important to its longevity.

Compare this to the role of the photograph in recording the environmental art of artists like Goldsworthy.

RELATED ISSUES

- Street art is ephemeral. It is exposed to the elements and is in danger of being vandalised. Should it be protected or preserved?
- By taking art out of the gallery and placing it into the streets, artists are making their work more accessible. They are taking their art to the people. Does this new context change the meaning of the art?
- Is there a difference between public art and art in public places?
- If street artists are starting to produce works for exhibitions in galleries and are being represented by commercial galleries, can they still be considered street artists?

Keith Haring

The thing I responded to most was Christo's belief that art could reach all kinds of people, as opposed to the traditional view, which has art as this elitist thing.

– KEITH HARING

THE ART IDEA

In all my work there is some degree of content that is more obvious, communicating a specific or a general idea that people will get. But a lot of times the work is ambiguous enough that it can interpreted by whoever.

– KEITH HARING

Keith Haring wanted to create art that could reach all kinds of people. The mural shown in Figure 10.26 is about the importance of everyone in society doing their part to ensure that society works. It also deals with Haring's fear of technology, and how humans are creating a monster they might not be able to control.

DISCUSSION OF KEITH HARING'S *MURAL AT COLLINGWOOD TECHNICAL COLLEGE*, 1984

Keith Haring (1958–90) was a widely popular American artist and social activist who has often been credited with bringing street art into the mainstream. Haring was an art student in New York City when he was inspired by the public artworks of Christo and Andy Warhol. He began to chalk drawings in rhythmic lines on the empty black advertising boards on the subway. Links to some of these drawings can be found via the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Haring visited Melbourne in 1984, and he was offered the wall at the Collingwood Technical College to create a project with the art students from the college. The mural is painted onto a cement panel, which is

Figure 10.26 Keith Haring, *Mural at Collingwood Technical College*, 1984, photographed 2015

located on the bottom half of the red brick wall (Figure 10.26). The yellow background of the mural was painted using rollers by students of the Collingwood Technical College before Haring painted the red and green figures with a brush by hand on 6 March 1984. The upper half depicts a green caterpillar with a computer monitor for a head, with a red brain inside it.

The monster is ridden by two human figures, one holding a stick that is either powered or being used to hit the caterpillar.

The lower half of the mural consists of vibrant dancing figures in red with green emphasis lines around them to create the effect of movement and energy. It could be seen as the energy of the moving bodies, creative energy that leaves the humans to produce technology or the electronic energy that technology uses to make us, the puppets, dance. In an interview shortly after completing the mural, Haring explained his interpretation of the imagery:

What's going on in the bottom is about – I mean all these people are doing different things, right? Some of them are dancing, like rap dancing or acrobatics. Some of them are almost like they are fighting. But the way they are all together means that they can't – I mean, if one comes out, the whole thing falls down. So they sort of depend on all of them to make it work. So it's like society where the world only works when lots of individuals do their part. The thing at the top is the impending doom, the confrontation between technology and the human element, which is still holding up the technology. It sort of takes a semi-circle in evolution, where people evolved up to a certain point, and now they've evolved so far that they have invented a computer or machine to evolve further. And the computer is maybe evolving more than the people were. So it's about that sort of confrontation.

This work was controversial for both its imagery and its attempt at validating an art form that was frowned upon by much of the art world and broader society when it was created in the 1980s. However, further controversy arose as the work deteriorated over time. As opinions about street art changed from it being seen by the establishment as vandalism to being accepted in the twenty-first century as a legitimate form of artistic expression, debate began to rage over whether it was appropriate to preserve or even restore this ephemeral art.

ACTIVITY 10.20

Discuss Haring's work and the temporary nature of it. Should the works be preserved and how should this process occur?

Figure 10.27 Keith Haring painting the Berlin Wall, 1986

Haring, who understood the transitory nature of his work, never intended his chalk drawings on the New York subway to last. He once said:

I like the idea of things lasting longer than you last, being somewhere lots of people can see them. Sometimes they're temporary, sometimes they last forever.

However, art consultant John Buckley said:

I asked Keith a few times, in later years, what he wanted to do with it and he said, 'Get some sign writers in, freshen it up.' There was absolutely no preciousness to it; that would have been counter to the spirit of everything.

The Collingwood mural is now one of only 31 known murals across the world by Haring to have survived, and one of only three not to have been significantly over-painted. In recognition of its local, national and international significance, it was added to the Victorian Heritage Register in 2004. In 2010, Creative Victoria (then Arts Victoria) took over management of the Collingwood site where the mural is situated. At that time, the organisation initiated a project to conserve and protect the mural. In 2013, the mural was restored by Italian conservator Antonio Rava following a contentious community campaign.

ACTIVITY 10.21

How is Haring's work different from the street art we view today? Discuss his use of techniques and the manner in which he approached his art production.

RELATED ISSUES

Given the ephemeral nature of street art, should we seek to preserve and even restore these works?

Banksy

THE ART IDEA

Contemporary

Much of Banksy's work involves the concept of anarchy and the rise of revolutionary forces against the dominant power. He uses symbolism that comments on the political and social aspects of our society, and also speaks out against the abuse of animals. He creates public artworks to gain direct access to the public and highlight ideas that are important to him and believes that art belongs to the people, not the establishment. He also questions the notion of the value of art.

Despite what they say, graffiti is not the lowest form of art … there is no elitism or hype, it exhibits the best walls a town has to offer and nobody is put off by the price of admission.

– BANKSY

DISCUSSION OF BANKSY AND HIS ART

Personal

Banksy (1974–) is best known for his stencil work and his placement of graffiti slogans in public places. He settled on his distinctive stencil approach to graffiti early on. When he was 18, he was painting a train with some friends when the British Transport Police showed up and everyone ran. While the rest of his group made it clear, Banksy had to hide under a dump-truck for over an hour. As he lay there listening to the police searching the tracks, he realised he had to reduce the time it took him to do the paintings, otherwise he would get caught in the act. He was staring straight up at the stencilled plate on the bottom of the fuel tank when he realised that he could just copy that technique and started to stencil his images from then on.

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Figure 10.28 Banksy, *Rat Photographer*, c. 2006

Figure 10.29 Vladimir Maiakovsky, propaganda against the counter-revolution, 1920, ROSTA Window no, 337 (detail), Russia

Contemporary **Structural** To Banksy, stencil art also took on another meaning:

As soon as I cut my first stencil I could feel the power there. I also like the political edge. All graffiti is low-level dissent, but stencils have an extra history. They've been used to start revolutions and to stop wars. They exist without permission. They are haunted, hunted and persecuted. They live in quiet desperation amongst the filthy. And yet they are capable of bringing entire civilisations to their knees.

– BANKSY

In modern times, graffiti continues to explode during periods of social unrest. It played an important role in communicating dissent during Egypt's latest revolution. In May 1968 during the student protests and general strike, slogans such as 'Boredom is counterrevolutionary' and 'Read less, live more' were stencilled across Paris.

Prior to this, stencils played an important role during the German invasion of Russia, where the TASS studios sought to draw upon the militant, revolutionary sentiment conveyed by the old handmade ROSTA posters of the 1920s. ROSTA (the acronym for the Russian Telegraph Agency) began producing political posters in the early 1920s, immediately following the 1917 Russian Revolution. Some key TASS artists got their start working in these studios, and brought that experience to the new operation. Initially painted freehand, ROSTA posters were later stencilled in order to reproduce multiple copies by hand.

ACTIVITY 10.22

Research the use of stencil art as propaganda or dissent, and explain why this method was preferred. How do street artists use stencil art differently today?

Cultural Banksy's works use symbolism that comments on the political and social aspects of our society. Banksy's identity is anonymous, adding to the mystery and power of his work. He often

uses the classic yellow smiley face as his personal symbol, possibly to draw attention to the satirical nature of his work. This symbol has been used to wish people a good day since it was first designed in 1963. Given the serious context into which Banksy often places the smiley face, he may be warning people that their good day is at risk if they ignore his warnings. Banksy has a keen interest in animal welfare and animal rights – his images often use animals such as monkeys or rats – the monkey is seen as 'stupid' and the rat as 'dirty'. These animals are linked with the sense of humour that Banksy conveys in his work. Banksy has also painted slogans in the zoo pens at Bristol and London Zoos, speaking out against the abuse of animals.

ACTIVITY 10.23

Compare some of Banksy's works that feature animals with the work of Damien Hirst. What are the similarities in the messages both artists are expressing?

Much of Banksy's work involves the concept of anarchy and the rise of revolutionary forces against the dominant power. Other stencil works have included images that are against the police force in London and dictators of countries such as Romania. For example, in August 2005 Banksy created a series of stencils on the West Bank barrier between Israel and Gaza as a political statement. Banksy's works also comment on the abolition of graffiti as an art form by many councils and governments. His artworks can often be whimsical and show children playing with balloons or his famous image of a rebel throwing a bunch of flowers entitled *Flower Chucker* (Figure 10.30). This artwork makes a statement about the nature of rebels and what their intentions can be. Banksy has used the famous image of a masked rebel throwing a bunch of flowers instead of a Molotov cocktail or brick.

In recent years, Banksy has questioned the notion of the value of art by subverting artworks in famous art galleries such as the Louvre in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In all cases, Banksy has crept into the gallery during public hours and installed the work, which can be seen on Banksy's website. In the Tate Gallery, he hung an artwork with this label: 'Crimewatch UK has ruined the countryside for all of us 2003, oil on canvas'.

This new acquisition is a beautiful example of the neo post-idiotic style. The Artist has found an unsigned oil painting in a London street market and then stencilled Police incident tape over the top. It can be argued that defacing such an idyllic scene reflects the way our nation has been vandalized by its obsession with crime and paedophilia, where any visit to a secluded beauty spot now feels like it may result in being molested or finding discarded body parts.

– BANKSY

Figure 10.30 Banksy, *Flower Chucker*, c. 2006

The fact that Banksy was able to install the work without anyone noticing is incredible in itself. He is not only making a statement about the nature of 'high art', but also about security in galleries.

ACTIVITY 10.24

1 Discuss what Banksy is stating about the values placed by galleries and curators on artworks through his installation in the Tate Gallery. Use some examples of Banksy's 'subversive artworks'.
2 How has Banksy appropriated the imagery in these works and for what purposes? Use examples of the images to support your point of view.
3 How has Banksy linked social issues such as crime and vandalism with art? Explore several of Banksy's images in galleries and the messages the artist is attempting to convey.

Banksy has stencilled walls across the world, including in London, Vienna, Melbourne, San Francisco, Barcelona, Paris and Detroit. He has worked on canvas, created conceptual sculpture and even film, with the documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, which was nominated for an Academy Award. Banksy has been exhibited in galleries and had works bought at auction, but still conceals his identity.

He believes in a direct connection between the artist and his public:

There's a whole new audience out there, and it's never been easier to sell [one's art]. You don't have to go to college, drag around a portfolio, mail off transparencies to snooty galleries or sleep with someone powerful, all you need now is a few ideas and a broadband connection. This is the first time the essentially bourgeois world of art has belonged to the people. We need to make it count.

– BANKSY

RELATED ISSUES

- Subversive street art is censored by the very people in power whom it challenges.
- Banksy questions the notion of the value of art.
- Creating art on buildings and structures without the consent of the owners raises legal issues.
- Appropriation of famous artworks can be problematic.

ACTIVITY 10.25

Select an artwork by Banksy, discuss the art ideas that are raised by the work and research, and comment on related issues to the materials, techniques, symbolism, style, art form or ideas raised by this artwork.

REFERENCES

Banksy, 2006, *Wall & Piece*, Century Publishing

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

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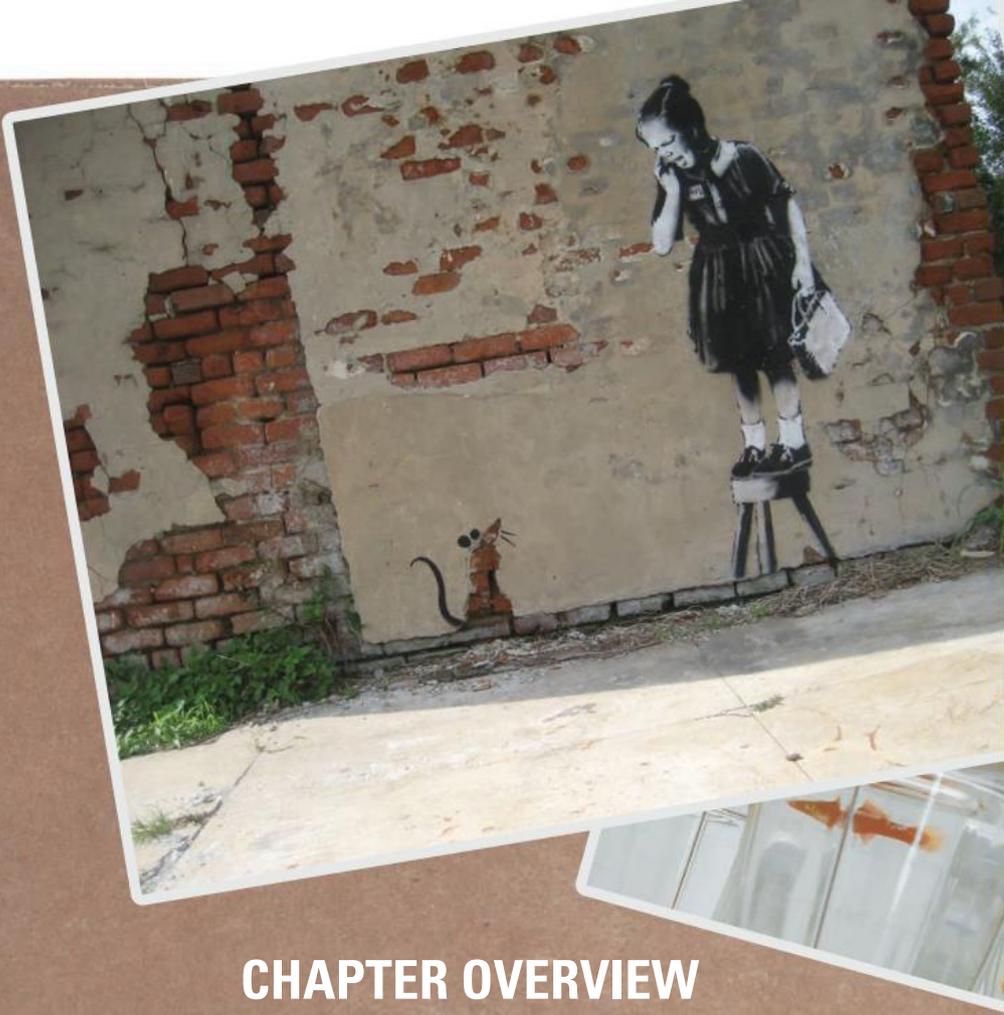
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter will prepare you to do the following for an example task for assessment of coursework:

- by researching the role of art in society, select an artwork that expresses a particular idea
- define, discuss and examine an art idea and related issues
- use selected artist/s, artwork/s and viewpoints to inform and support your own opinions on the idea or issue
- demonstrate how to use a range of identified commentaries to examine, debate and evaluate different interpretations of an art idea or related issues

- demonstrate how to discuss, debate and compare two or more viewpoints regarding an art idea or related issues using the Analytical Frameworks. These do not have to be oppositional
- demonstrate how to express a personal point of view regarding art ideas and related issues, and support it with evidence and reference to the opinions of others
- demonstrate how to refer to a range of artworks and commentaries to support your point of view
- demonstrate how to use appropriate art terminology in your assessment task
- demonstrate how to use selected Analytical Frameworks in your analysis and interpretation of artworks.

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11.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to show you how to prepare yourself for the assessment of coursework for Unit 4 – Outcome 1 of the VCE Art Study Design. The previous chapter introduced you to a range of art ideas and related issues, and the different interpretations of the role of art in society. You researched the role of art in society and explored different ideas expressed by artists regarding specific artworks. Using various resources and commentaries, you explored issues related to these selected artworks and art ideas. You also investigated how the artworks could be interpreted using the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary Analytical Frameworks. In this chapter, you will be shown how to use the Analytical Frameworks to structure your analysis of art ideas and related issues, and reminded about the aspects you need to cover to complete the assessment of coursework for Unit 4.

11.2 Content of the assessment of coursework

Refer to Chapter 10 for information on artists that you could use for your assessment task for Unit 4.

As outlined in Chapter 10, there are certain parameters set by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) regarding the artworks and artists that you must study for the Unit 4 – Outcome 1 assessment of coursework. These have been set so that you provide an in-depth analysis and interpretation of your selected art idea, artworks, artists and related issue. Throughout Unit 4, you must undertake the study of:

- a minimum of *one* selected art idea and related issue
- at least one artwork *not* studied in Unit 3
- a range of diverse viewpoints as seen in identified commentaries relating to ideas, artworks and related issues. This means that you will need more than one point of view about your selected idea, artwork and related issue.

You can find information on the Analytical Frameworks, art language and commentaries in Chapter 1.

11.3 Assessment tasks

The recommended assessment tasks for Unit 4 coursework are listed in the VCE Art Study Design and are the same as those recommended for Unit 3. These tasks are also listed in earlier assessment chapters in this book. When you consider which assessment tasks to do to complete the course, you may want to consider which ones will best prepare you to answer the questions on the examination paper at the end of the year. The questions in the assessment task may be similar to those on the examination paper, so it is a good idea to look at past examination papers to help prepare you for the exam. Following is a list of the recommended assessment tasks and how you can complete them using the content, knowledge and skills you have learnt in Unit 4.

A written report

You may present a report on a relevant art idea and related issue, describing the idea that is being expressed in your selected artwork and how this idea might also be expressed differently in other artworks by this artist. Using the examples of artwork/s, you can provide an analysis and interpretation of the work using the Analytical Frameworks. Then you can provide examples of identified commentaries that express viewpoints on the ideas expressed and the artwork you have selected that raise related issues. You could then interpret the various points of view about the artwork/s, art idea/s and related issue/s, and provide your own viewpoint.

An extended response

You may be provided with a commentary or question about a particular art idea and related issue, and you are required to respond to the question using the example of at least one artwork, identified commentaries and your own personal point of view. You will need to analyse the artwork using the Analytical Frameworks.

Short responses

You may be provided with a series of artworks and an art issue with questions directly relating to the content of the artworks and the art idea and related issue. You may also be given some commentaries regarding the art idea and related issue, and you may be required to respond to questions about them. You will also have to provide your personal point of view.

Structured questions

These questions will relate directly to the set criteria provided by VCAA. The questions may ask you to analyse and interpret some given artworks, commentaries on an art idea and related issue, and provide your own personal point of view. Usually the art idea, related issue, commentaries and artworks are given to you.

Annotated visual report

You need to provide an example of at least one artwork that expresses an art idea. Using the artwork/s, you will analyse and interpret them in relation to the art idea being expressed and the Analytical Frameworks. You may refer to all aspects of the Structural, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary frameworks. You will also have to demonstrate how examples of artworks relate to the art idea. You will have to provide identified commentaries that express different viewpoints on the artwork and art ideas expressed, and interpret and discuss the issues related to the artwork and art idea. You will also provide your personal point of view using examples from the artworks.

An oral presentation with visual evidence

You may present an oral presentation on a relevant art idea and related issue, describing what the idea is that is being expressed in your selected artwork and how this idea might also be expressed differently in other artworks by this artist. To support your oral presentation, you can use digital visual evidence with programs such as PowerPoint, iMovie or Flash, or hard-copy posters or prints to show examples of artwork/s. You must provide an analysis and interpretation of the work using the Analytical Frameworks. Then you can provide examples of identified commentaries that express viewpoints on the ideas expressed and the artwork you have selected that raise related issues. You could then interpret the various points of view about the artwork/s, art idea/s and related issue/s, and provide your own viewpoint referring to the visual evidence.

A presentation using digital technologies

Using a program such as PowerPoint, Photo Story, Movie Maker, Flash or iMovie, you will create a presentation on an art idea that an artist expresses in a particular artwork or series of artworks. You will provide information about the art idea and use a series of visual examples in your presentation. You need to analyse and interpret the artwork/s using the Analytical Frameworks and provide visual examples. You will have to provide identified commentaries that express different viewpoints on the artwork and art ideas expressed, and interpret and discuss the issues related to the artwork and art idea. Commentaries and your personal point of view about the art idea and related issue could be provided as overlaid text, hyperlinks or voiceovers. This presentation could be conducted as a series of interviews about an art idea and the related issue, and these could be recorded.

11.4 Tips for completing assessment tasks

Here are some tips to help you prepare for any of the assessment tasks listed.

1 Select your art idea. Look through the list of ideas and related issues in the last chapter and find examples of artworks that illustrate your selected art idea.

2 Find other artworks that the artist created that might express the ideas differently.

3 Find a list of commentaries about the art idea and artwork that raise related issues. The commentaries could include any statements about the subject of the artworks, the techniques and materials used by the artist, references to symbols or metaphors that the artist has expressed in their work or information about the ideas the artist is expressing. Remember to write down who expressed the viewpoint, what their role or job description is, where you found the commentary and when it was stated. Analyse what the commentary is stating and write some points down about it that will help you.

4 Analyse and interpret your artwork/s using the Structural Framework. Write a series of headings under which you can put points relating to art elements and principles, materials, techniques, style and symbols and processes. Then provide examples of these, referring to your artwork/s. Consider how any of these may apply to the art idea and related issue you have selected, what the artwork is about or why the artist may have used these to convey their ideas.

5 Use any of the other Analytical Frameworks to interpret your artworks relevant to the art idea and related issue. You should refer to the questions used for the Analytical Framework section in

Chapter 1. Apply the interpretations to the art idea and related issue you are exploring. For example, Banksy's use of stencilling in his work can be interpreted from a cultural perspective as this type of technique is often used in revolutions.

6 Develop your point of view regarding the art idea and related issue. Investigate the artworks, the commentaries and your interpretation of the artworks to support your point of view. Find some examples from the artworks to support your points – for example, the symbols and metaphors, the techniques the artist has used, or their use of art elements and principles. Link your points to those expressed in the identified commentaries.

7 A question or statement can be given to you by your teacher, which will provide the focus for you when preparing your outcome. Based on research, you will identify and consider the varying interpretations of the role of art in society. Having selected suitable quotes, you must unpack and critique the meaning of each quote. This will include making specific references to the artworks being studied and considering how each quote relates to the works.

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11.5 Recommended assessment criteria: Outcome 1

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority provides a series of criteria for assessment. These are drawn from the key knowledge and skills in each outcome. When you are completing your assessment of coursework task, you must cover the following key knowledge and skill areas which are outlined in Outcome 1 of Unit 4 of the VCE Art Study Design.

Key knowledge

- Ideas and issues expressed in viewpoints and attributed commentaries about the meanings and messages of artworks.
- Connections between the artwork/s, viewpoints and commentaries in relation to an art idea and related issue that explores the role of art in society.
- A range of relevant resources to support research.
- Opinions and viewpoints in attributed commentaries about an art idea and related issues that explores the role of art in society.
- Terminology used in discussion.
- Relevant aspects of the Analytical Frameworks.

Key skills

- Develop a statement that defines an art idea and related issues regarding the role of art in society.
- Analyse a range of viewpoints in relation to the identified idea and related issues.
- Use commentaries and viewpoints from a range of resources to examine and evaluate interpretations about an art idea and related issues.
- Develop a personal point of view about an idea and issue regarding art in society and support it with evidence, and reference to the viewpoints of others.
- Refer to relevant artwork/s and a range of attributed commentaries to support viewpoints.
- Use appropriate terminology.
- Use relevant aspects of the Analytical Frameworks.

Please note the following assessment rubric is not an official VCAA document. Teachers and students should refer to the Advice for Teachers and Assessement Criteria documentation available from the VCAA.

	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
UNIT 4 – OUTCOME 1 Examine an art idea and related issue and use selected artist/s, artwork/s and viewpoints to inform and support their opinions on the idea and issue.	No statement introducing the art idea and intention of the artist or no discussion of the selected artwork to support the statement outlining the art idea.	Limited introduction of the art idea and intention of the artist. Some discussion of the selected artwork to support the statement outlining the art idea.	Appropriate use of a statement to introduce the art idea and intention of the artist supported by discussion of selected artwork.	Effective use of a statement to introduce the art idea and intention of the artist supported by comprehensive discussion of the selected artwork.	Highly effective use of a statement to introduce the art idea and intention of the artist supported by comprehensive and insightful discussion of the selected artwork.
	Little analysis of commentaries leads to a very limited investigation of the art idea or related issue regarding the role of art in society.	Limited analysis of unidentified commentaries leads to some investigation of the art idea or related issue regarding the role of art in society.	Appropriate analysis of relevant commentaries leads to a generally detailed investigation of the art idea or issue regarding the role of art in society.	Careful analysis of substantial and relevant identified commentaries leads to a detailed investigation of the art idea or related issue regarding the role of art in society.	Insightful and critical analysis of substantial and relevant identified commentaries leads to a comprehensive investigation of an art idea and related issue regarding the role of art in society.
	A personal opinion supported by basic examination and/or evaluation of interpretations and viewpoints is expressed, but struggles to establish connections.	A personal opinion supported by limited examination and evaluation of interpretations and viewpoints that sets out some connections is expressed.	A clear personal opinion supported by the general examination and evaluation of interpretations and viewpoints that sets out connections is expressed.	A well-developed personal opinion supported by detailed examination and evaluation of interpretations and viewpoints that clearly sets out connections is expressed.	A sophisticated personal opinion supported by insightful examination and evaluation of interpretations and viewpoints that thoroughly sets out connections is expressed.
	Little understanding of the use of the Analytical Frameworks and art terminology.	Limited use of the Analytical Frameworks and appropriate art terminology.	Effective use of the Analytical Frameworks and largely accurate use of some appropriate art terminology.	Highly effective use of the Analytical Frameworks and accurate use of appropriate art terminology.	A thorough and relevant use of appropriate aspects of the Analytical Frameworks and highly effective use of appropriate art terminology.

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Sample task

Examine an art idea and related issue you have researched and use selected artist/s, artwork/s and viewpoints to inform and support your opinions on the idea and issue.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

Marco Evaristti wanted to create an artwork that would pose a moral dilemma for the viewer – an experiment involving human nature. To achieve this, he created an installation titled *Helena* in 2000 that featured live goldfish swimming in water in a number of electric blenders. Images of animals in art have existed alongside or parallel to those of humans for as long as images and objects have been made.

Evaristti, however, continues the trend begun at the start of this century that saw artists pushing the ethical boundaries with the introduction of live animals into their art. This use of non-traditional art materials was selected to elicit an emotional and intellectual response from the viewer.

Figure 11.1 Marco Evaristti, *Helena*, 2000

Unlike a painting of a goldfish in a blender, the artwork forces people to make a choice. Usually we are not allowed to touch artworks; however, visitors to the museum were invited to switch on the blender and liquefy the fish. Evaristti introduces a contemporary practice by using live animals in an interactive installation and we, the audience, have power over the lives of a few goldfish. Do we let them live or press the button? Do I watch as someone else presses the button?

The peaceful scene is rather beautiful, with the bright-orange fish contrasting with the stark white blender bases as they swim, apparently protected by the transparent fishbowl-like jugs. The serenity of his clinically pristine display is further enhanced by the purity of the white environment, only disturbed by the bright-yellow buttons that hint at the danger to which the fish are oblivious. The peace is disturbed from time to time as a button is pressed and the sound of the motor fills the room. The visual harmony is also disturbed as these crisp colours are altered with the introduction of a cloudy puree of goldfish. The repetition of the blenders and fish creates a community of separated beings that introduces a sense of isolation and loneliness. Maybe we can end their misery with the flick of a button. The bright yellow buttons draw the viewers' attention, inviting interaction.

The choice of the kitchen appliance also raises questions of food and society's reliance on the taking of life to preserve our own. But ultimately the artwork is about choice and power. Do we choose to press the button and exert our power over the fish? Do we get to play God?

Although the intention of the artwork was to pose a moral dilemma for the viewer, the choices Evaristti made in terms of materials, processes and art form resulted in a number of issues. The primary one is whether the principle of *freedom of artistic expression* gives an artist the moral right to use live animals in art. Within a few days of the

exhibition opening, about 16 goldfish had been blended. The protests by animal rights organisations were vociferous, and included a few surviving goldfish being stolen from the blenders. After two days, the museum decided to pull the plug on the exhibit. Evaristti did not, however, aim to encourage the pointless killing of goldfish. He aimed to pose a moral dilemma; his artwork was an experiment involving human nature. The work is ultimately about the three types of people that Evaristti believes exist: The sadist, the voyeur and the moralist. If a person is a sadist, they will press the button on the blender because they can or even because it brings them pleasure. The voyeur excitedly watches to see whether others will press the button, while the moralist becomes infuriated by the fact that there is an option to blend fish and even more so if anyone acts on this option. Is it, however, ethical for the artist to endanger live creatures for the sake of art? According to Dr Simon Longstaff, executive director of St James Ethics Centre:

> *His art was conceived within ethical boundaries as the fish died instantly and are presumed not to have suffered, and … these allowed, on balance, the killing of goldfish as an acceptable cost (to the goldfish and the universe) in return for the opportunity to engage the conscience of gallery-goers.*

Yes, the artwork was not only a study of human nature, but successfully raised awareness and stimulated debate over animal rights – but are there other ways by which the artist could have achieved these objectives without endangering living creatures? The artist Mike Parr as quoted in Simon Etheridge's article *Animal Rights and Artistic Freedom*, said:

> *I suppose the suspicion is that this work is more about art than it is about animals and that there is something ruthless in the dispassionate way it uses both the fish and the audience. On the other hand, a refined art lover might choose not to press the button, while hoping that someone would, because an unwitting proxy may well be the most convenient way of starting the debate – that is, of raising the rights of animals and the limits of art. In every respect, the work relies so completely on the audience that it's very hard to attribute responsibility.*

While I agree with the sentiments expressed by Parr, there were other avenues open to the artist.

While the ideas being explored are all valid, and I support the artist in doing so, I question his right to allow these fish to be blended. I would have suggested limiting access to a few blenders where the goldfish had been replaced by a soft latex cast of the fish ready for those few sadists. The other blenders with living goldfish, inaccessible to the public or unplugged, would have provided the flickering movement important to suggest life and engage Evaristti's three 'types of people'.

But would the same hype have existed if the subterfuge had been discovered? Without the hype, would the installation have achieved the same impact and fulfilled that all-important role of art, to stimulate discussion? To those who are more cynical, the view of Robert Wayner could be raising another valid issue, when he states:

> *Many art museums and some artists use the 'art above law' argument in defending controversial exploitative exhibits when it is plain to see that their real motivation is to attract publicity, drive up the value of the art, and promote sales. The impetus for exploitative art isn't free speech, it's profit.*

– Aidan Johns

Sample task

Much of Banksy's work involves the concept of anarchy and the rise of revolutionary forces against the dominant power. Discuss one of his artworks in terms of his selected art form and use of symbolism in comments on political and social aspects of our society.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

Despite what they say, graffiti is not the lowest form of art … there is no elitism or hype, it exhibits the best walls a town has to offer and nobody is put off by the price of admission.

– BANKSY, WALL & PIECE

This commentary identifies the desire of Banksy that the ideas expressed in his art should reach as broad an audience as possible. He wants his art to be accessible. For this reason, he not only chooses street art as his vehicle of expression but uses a style and imagery that are recognisable and appeal to a broad spectrum of people, not just the artistic elite. Street art has become a popular way for artists to express their ideas about society through their public display of art. The artists aim for maximum exposure with their works and often place the works on walls or in spaces such as freeway walls, buildings or lanes where many people pass by. In this sense, they are rejecting the idea of displaying art in a traditional gallery space.

Street artists work quickly and often under the 'cover of darkness' to protect their identity from exposure. Street art is still associated with vandalism, and many councils and the owners of buildings try to have the images removed. The removal of images is sometimes related to the ideas expressed rather than the art form. Banksy reacts to the removal of his art and the art of other street artists from the walls around the world in his Leake Street (Banksy Tunnel) London, May 2008, image of a council worker removing a prehistoric cave painting. By referencing an acclaimed and historically

Figure 11.2 Banksy, *Cave Painting*, Leake Street, London, May 2008

ASSESSMENT COMMENT

For this response, the student selected a work that provoked dialogue and discourse, which was in part the intention of the artist. The student has commenced their essay by establishing the art idea that Evaristti wanted to explore through this work before introducing the artwork and providing an analysis supported by two appropriate Analytical Frameworks. Once a clear picture of the artwork was established, the student then introduced issues related to the art idea and selected artwork. Throughout the essay, the student has used a range of commentaries that provide differing points of view about the validity of Evaristti's work and clearly stated their personal opinion.

important art form, Banksy is commenting on the importance of street art in today's society. Ironically, this artwork was painted over by August of the same year.

Banksy is best known for his stencil work, which began in the city of Bristol and has spread worldwide. Banksy's images are created using stencils, which are sprayed through in layered templates. His use of stencilling focuses on art elements and principles such as form, shape, balance and contrast in his work to create tension and atmosphere, which relate to the ideas he is trying to express.

Personal Banksy settled on his distinctive stencil approach when he was 18. While painting a train with some friends, the transport police arrived. The rest of his group got away while Banksy had to hide under a dump-truck for over an hour. As he lay there, he realised that to stop himself getting caught he had to reduce the time it took him to do the paintings. He saw a stencilled plate on the bottom of the fuel tank and he realised that he could just copy that style.

Structural **Contemporary** Banksy said, 'As soon as I cut my first stencil I could feel the power there. I also like the political edge. All graffiti is low-level dissent, but stencils have an extra history. They've been used to start revolutions and to stop wars.' It was appropriate, therefore, that stencil art became his selected process for his images of political and social satire. He uses wit and his highly skilled stencil art form to comment on serious politically sensitive subjects such as the work of nine stencils that Banksy put on the wall that divides Israel from Gaza. *The Wall* series, August 2005, included *Balloon Debate, Escapism* and *Unwelcome Intervention.*

Figure 11.3 Banksy, *Balloon Debate*, wall between Israel and Palestine, August 2005

Figure 11.4 Banksy, *Escapism*, Wall between Israel and Palestine, August 2005

The use of a female child represents the innocence and vulnerability of the oppressed

Cultural 👁 people longing for freedom, while the artist's choice of the number of balloons may not be accidental either. The religious significance of the number 7 must be considered given the context of this image. The number 7 appears prominently in Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptures, and one of its uses is to represent divine perfection. Freedom can be equated to this. Considering other religious symbols, the idea of ascending to heaven may be linked to this if heaven is the opposite of what the people of Palestine were experiencing.

This longing to escape is also an idea expressed by *Escapism*, which was sprayed

Structural 👁 in black and white, creating a contrast that makes the image stand out from the grey concrete wall while also making it a part of this achromatic environment. The joy on the boy's face is evident as he turns toward the viewer with pride at having created this avenue of escape. The lines Banksy used, however, are fragile and the ladder appears to lack the strength to carry us to freedom. The length of the ladder and scale of the boy in relation to the height of the wall remind the viewer of the distance that needs to be travelled and the hopelessness of the task. The plight of the Palestinians is made so much more poignant by the smiling innocence of the child.

Banksy was making a statement about the wall and Palestinian rights, a way to express

Contemporary 👁 his sorrow and anger without having to engage in aggression or protests. Banksy's works are deliberately provocative to spark comment, which is an important role of art. Banksy wants the viewer to comment on the work and, by using humour and scale, he draws our attention to it. His comment that, "They exist without permission. They are hated, hunted and persecuted. They live in quiet desperation among the filthy. And yet they are capable of bringing entire civilizations to their knees.' is appropriate in the context of these works, the

Balloon Debate is situated on the Palestinian side of the West Bank wall; it

Contemporary 👁 comments on how ludicrous the existence of the wall is. The image reminds us of our childhood idealism, the dreams we had as a child, wishing we could fly. The fantasy aspect suggests the dream of the people that they may be able to escape one day, but as it is a child who floats to a new hope it will no doubt be their children in some distant future who will be able to overcome this obstacle.

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state of the environment and the conditions in which the people are living. It also comments on the illicit nature of his work, and perhaps the hope that they may well bring the wall down – if not entire civilisations. Although his works are considered illegal, Banksy makes a legitimate comment about this:

How illegal is it to vandalize a wall if the wall itself has been deemed unlawful by the International Court of Justice? The Israeli government is building a wall surrounding the occupied Palestinian territories. It stands three times the height of the Berlin Wall and will eventually run for over 700km – the distance from London to Zurich. The International Court of Justice last year ruled the wall and its associated regime is illegal. It essentially turns Palestine into the world's largest open-air prison.

But with all the attention Banksy has drawn to the wall with his art, has he been successful in his intentions? Emily Hanssen Arent questioned this:

His artwork has dramatically increased the visibility of the issues among a younger generation of Western travellers. But this isn't necessarily a good thing. The amount of attention it has garnered has made it too easy for tourists to feel as though they're politically engaged. It's providing an opportunity for passive, rather than active engagement, making a community of Palestinians beholden to a Westerner's interest in a Westerner's mural on a wall that's destroying their lives.

– EMILY HANSSEN ARENT, 'SEARCHING FOR BANKSY ON THE WEST BANK WALL', MATADOR NETWORK, 14 MAY 2012

I, on the other hand, believe that he has achieved his aim and created artworks that draw attention to a wall that divides a people and, like art should, it has stimulated thought and dialogue. It also brings humour, beauty and art into a sad and desolate place. I completely support beautiful protest over violent protest.

I agree with Adela Kim's statement:

By using an illicit art form to express opposition, Banksy draws on a historical notion of protest, fighting against the establishment and their rules. He presents political protest as art and therefore moves it from the realms of the marginalised members of society into the world of art one of the keystones of civilisation. He travels to the source of a problem and transforms it into a beautiful piece of protest.

– ADELA KIM, 'THE ART OF PROTEST', THE HARVARD CRIMSON, 25 MARCH 2014

– Vivienne Dalziel

ASSESSMENT COMMENT

For this response, the student selected a few examples of street art by Banksy that highlighted the ideas or related issues the artist was expressing. Throughout the essay, the student has used a range of commentaries that provide differing points of view about Banksy's work, including commentaries by the artist himself. By discussing a wide range of examples of Banksy's work in different locations, the student is therefore using a range of resources including commentaries to examine, debate and evaluate diverse interpretations of art ideas and issue. As the essay progresses, the student discusses the artworks and commentaries, and clearly states their point of view. They have also cited where the commentaries have come from and who stated them.

The student has also used the Analytical Frameworks to interpret the work, and uses art terminology to clearly describe the images to which they are referring. In the

conclusion, the student expresses their point of view and finishes with a commentary to support it.

SAMPLE TASK

Art can both reflect and shape reality. Comment on this with reference to an artist you studied and issues that were raised about their art and the ideas they expressed.

SAMPLE RESPONSE

One of the most prominent contemporary examples of an artist persecuted for political reasons is Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei. He produces works that directly criticise his native government's approach to democracy and human rights. This resulted in him being detained by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), for 81 days in April 2011. Although officially arrested for tax evasion, it is thought that the photo of a naked Ai with a toy alpaca blocking his penis from public view may have played a role in his arrest.

In a post titled 'All That's Left is Grass Mud Horse' in 2009, translated by China blogger Charlie Custer, Ai expresses his displeasure towards his native government. To view this article, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Ai Weiwei uses the phrase, '*Cao ni ma dang zhongyang*, *The Grass-Mud Horse Blocks the Middle*' as the title of his artwork for two reasons. It may at first seem innocent, but in Mandarin these basic sounds, with different characters, are an obscene insult to senior Communist Party officials and also reference a cute animal. He is therefore challenging the censors to choose between allowing the implied insult or taking what would be seen as the ridiculous step of censoring a cute animal popular in children's cartoons. This image becomes his protest – all that remains to him in his oppressive country. His voice has been silenced. Where there is no freedom of speech, all that remains is symbolic civil disobedience. After his release

in 2011, the magazine *Art Review* named Ai 'the contemporary art world's most powerful player'. To view this article, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

Ai's art is not limited to the gallery. He works in a range of art forms, including installations, photography and film, and makes effective use of the internet to spread his ideas through his art. Although much of his artworks shed light on political oppression in China, they have relevance around the world and speak of freedom for all people. In 2015 he stated:

In China, I am constantly under surveillance. Even my slightest, most innocuous move can – and often is – censored by Chinese authorities.

This was very true of Ai Weiwei's situation and became more so as his fame spread. After his release, Ai discovered that his passport had been confiscated, meaning that he was not free to travel. Hoping that restricting him in this way would silence him proved unsuccessful as he set to work with a team of assistants and sculptors to create S.A.C.R.E.D., an installation that gives viewers a very literal look at Ai's experience in solitary detention and that commented directly on the fact that he was constantly under surveillance. Commenting on the theme of this installation, he said:

The misconception of totalitarianism is that freedom can be imprisoned. This is not the case. When you constrain freedom, freedom will take flight and land on a windowsill.

S.A.C.R.E.D. (Supper, Accusers, Cleansing, Ritual, Entropy and Doubt), an installation displayed at the Venice Biennale in 2013, comprises six iron boxes, 150 x 365 cm in size and weighing nearly 2.5 tonnes. Each sat in place of pews at the Church of Sant' Antonin in Venice. The boxes have a slight slit in the metal, allowing one to view the lifelike

Figure 11.5 Ai Weiwei, S.A.C.R.E.D., 2013, Venice Biennale

fibreglass dioramas depicting in painstaking detail scenes of how Ai spent his days locked up. They are intimate moments of him sleeping on a white cot, being interrogated by officers, being watched as he ate food and used the bathroom. The minutiae, from the clothes hanging in his closet to the white padding on his cell walls, was reconstructed from Ai's memory.

Maurizio Bortolotti, curator of *S.A.C.R.E.D.*, said:

> *He was watched all the time during his detention under obsessive surveillance at a very close proximity. Through his dioramas he upturns this situation, making us the viewers watching the guards who are in turn watching him.*

The outside of the metal boxes is entirely blank, which represents the fact that Ai was brought there hooded and had no idea what the outside of the prison looked like. The dark metal also looks heavy, oppressive and clearly allowed no possibility of escape. The only detail of the cell's exterior he observed was on his release, when he saw the number on the door: 1135.

The plain dark exterior also contrasts with the surprising realism and detail with which the viewer is confronted when they peer through the slot. Each diorama takes place in the same tiny space, and in each the artist is under double guard. Every scene is illuminated with a single harsh, fluorescent light, which shows the bleakness of the prison. The scenes create an atmosphere of unease and discomfort through their small scale and sombre-toned palette of greys and browns.

In one box, Ai is eating dinner and two guards hover over him, recording every move. Their blank faces yield no sympathy and seem robot-like, adding to the uneasiness of the atmosphere. It is as if the viewer is watching the every move of Ai Weiwei – much like the guards holding him captive, almost making us implicit in this violation of human rights. We cannot do anything but passively observe and acknowledge the wrong. This adds another level to the meaning of Ai Weiwei's installation. If we see what is going on, if we are aware of the oppression but stand on the outside looking in, are we not equally to blame? Like the artist, we need to take action.

Ai may not only be criticising the Chinese government, but also the inactive citizens who go along with the government's agenda.

Placing the installation into a church, the title of the work and the fact that the metal crates resemble a reliquary – a shrine or casket that holds the sacred remains of the saints in churches all around Europe – could suggest that Ai is positioning himself as a martyr. According to Greg Hilty of London's Lisson Gallery, however:

He is not pretending to be a saint, but the setting does suggest things such as the stations of the cross, or the temptations of St Anthony, to whom the church is dedicated. But these are human, universal things that go beyond Ai Weiwei … he's not saying he's a saint, or that he is wholly right or good. He's just being honest.

Figure 11.6 Ai Weiwei, *S.A.C.R.E.D.*, 2013, Venice Biennale

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Greg Hilty also states that, for Ai, the work is a form of:

therapy or … it was something he had to get out. It is an experience that we might see as newsworthy, but for him, he was the one in it.

Although this allowed Ai to work through personal issues that resulted from the incarceration, the desire of the artist to reveal the most intimate and painful moments of his detention has had a secondary outcome. The artwork also emphasises the relentless attack on the personal dignity and freedom that he and many others have suffered, and continue to suffer, at the hands of the authorities in China and in other countries around the world that seek to stifle freedom of expression by force. His work not only comments on his own incarceration but on all people who have been imprisoned for speaking out and questioning those in power. They have been silenced but his work speaks for them.

Art can clearly reflect reality, and in this artwork Ai does so by including every detail he could remember from his time in prison. Not only has he reflected the visual reality but also created a sense of the claustrophobia, isolation and being observed constantly. However, not only does the work reflect the reality experienced by the artist and many others around the world; it also is capable of shaping reality. By making the world aware and encouraging dialogue, there is a chance that things can change.

Of course you can lock up a person, but you cannot really destroy an idea.

– AI WEIWEI IN AI WEIWEI SPEAKS, HANS ULRICH OBRIST, PENGUIN, 26 MAY 2011

– Timothy James

ASSESSMENT COMMENT

For this response, the student selected two works that show how the artist reflects reality in China and how he hopes to shape reality. The student has commenced their essay by establishing the art idea that Ai Weiwei wanted to explore through the first work before then introducing the second artwork, which was created in response to the resulting issues and his experiences. The student has provided an analysis supported by appropriate Analytical Frameworks and an effective use of art terminology.

Once a clear picture of the artwork was established, the student then introduced issues related to the art idea and selected artwork. Throughout the essay, the student has used a range of clearly identified commentaries, including statements by the artist himself, that provide differing points of view about the work and the issues being explored. The student clearly states their personal opinion and concludes their response by addressing the wording of the task directly.
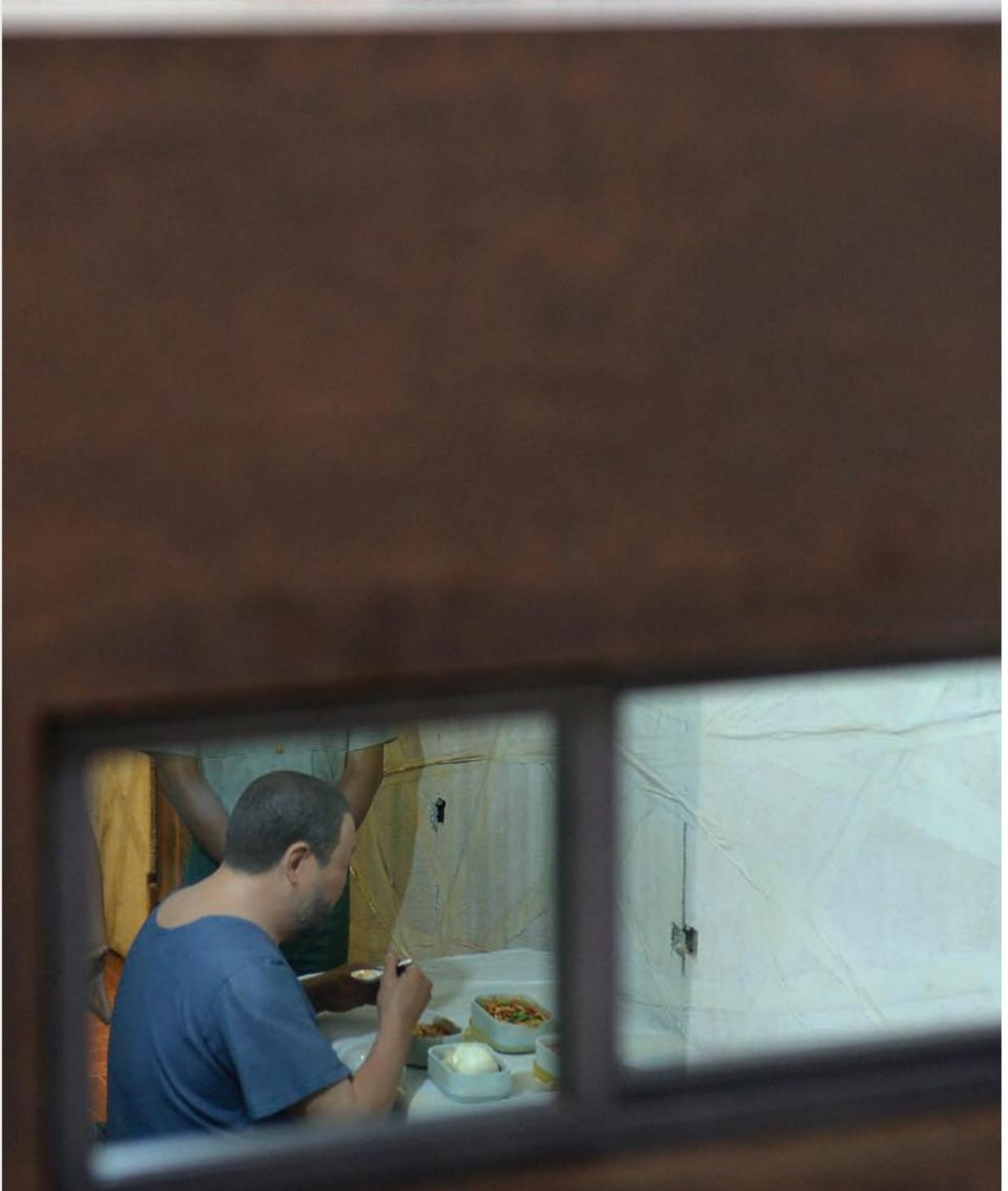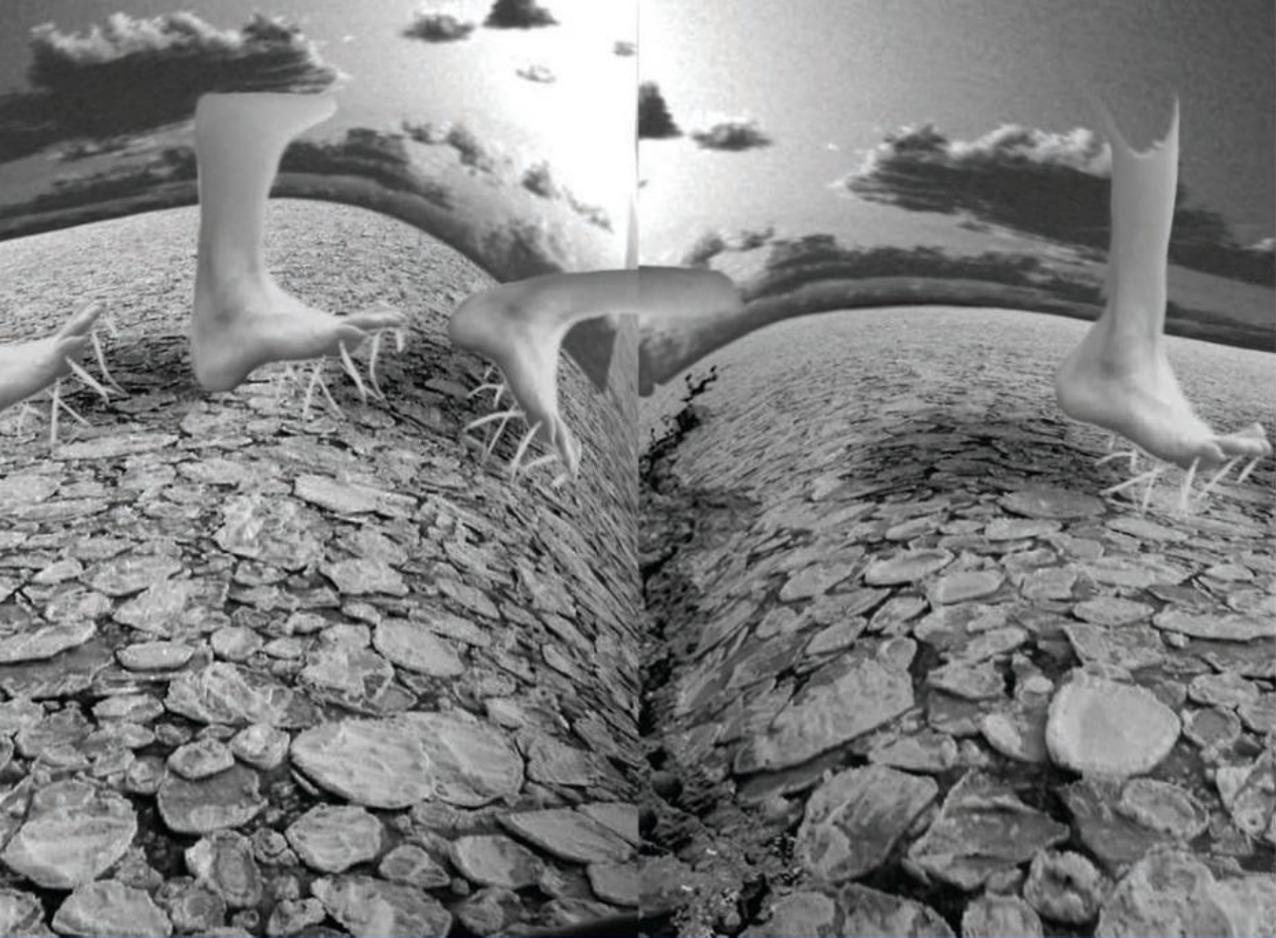
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

You will apply imagination and creativity to develop your ideas through the art process and visual language. Your art making should be supported by investigation, exploration and the application of a variety of materials, techniques and processes. By the end of Units 3 and 4, you will have progressively developed a single *body of work* to explore personal ideas or concepts. You must document and analyse your practice throughout the art process, using art terminology and appropriate, clearly identified Analytical Frameworks to guide this reflection.

In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- create a body of work
- select a concept
- prepare for Unit 3
- meet the expectations of Units 3 and 4
- understand the process of making art
- apply the Analytical Frameworks
- be inspired by other artists while developing your own interpretation
- document your artistic practices
- resolve and refine your ideas
- structure and present a folio of work
- present your final artworks.

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

– EDGAR DEGAS

12.1 Creating a body of work

body of work a collection of visual and written material communicating artistic practices

conceptual based on or relating to ideas or concepts

conceptual art art in which the creative thought, the concept and the process are considered to be more important than the product

aesthetic the perception or nature of beauty with respect to the visual aspects of art

For Units 3 and 4, you are required to develop a **body of work** on which you must work progressively throughout the year to explore personal ideas or concepts. How you approach this body of work is up to you, but this is an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills you developed during Units 1 and 2. You must apply appropriate technical skills to produce at least two finished artworks as you develop a body of work that will be completed at the end of Unit 4. At least one artwork must be completed during Unit 3 and at least one artwork must be completed in Unit 4. You must identify the unit in which each of your artworks was completed. The Unit 3 final artwork must be put to one side and may not be worked on during Unit 4. You may continue working on the same concept or idea explored in Unit 3 but you cannot revisit the final artwork itself.

In this study, you should sequentially work through the art process to undertake a **conceptual** and practical investigation that explores personal ideas and concepts. At first, it may appear prescriptive to expect all students to develop a conceptual folio. What if you are not interested in **conceptual art** and prefer to develop aesthetically pleasing works of art for their intrinsic beauty and the pleasure they bring to the viewer? It is important to realise that conceptual does not refer to conceptual art, but rather art that is concerned with concepts or develops from concepts and ideas. Your folio therefore could explore the concept of **aesthetic** beauty, or you could look at what makes something aesthetically pleasing. Whereas conceptual art may see the concept as being more important than the skill of the artist or what the resolved artwork looks like, a conceptual and practical investigation that explores personal ideas and concepts can show evidence of your aesthetic awareness and developing skill.

In this Area of Study, you are required to develop your own art responses inspired by ideas, concepts and observations. You are expected to apply imagination and creativity to your exploration. You should develop your visual language as you investigate and experiment with materials, techniques and processes using an art form or art forms of your choice. You may work in any medium or art form, or a range of media, but whatever you choose, make artworks that best reflect your skills and abilities – work to your strengths and interests. Having said that, don't only take the safe route in your folio. Challenge yourself and push the boundaries of your art making.

Selecting a concept

When selecting a concept, choose something that you are passionate about: events, issues or experiences that are important to you. Choose a concept in which you will be able to fully immerse yourself for the year. You are not limited to one idea but can explore various concepts, issues, ideas or aspects of these. You should revisit these ideas or concepts over the duration of the year to assist in the development of your art making. Ideas and concepts can be both broad and definitive, developed by you through personal research and thinking. Do not feel trapped by a concept, because through creative thinking and the use of a mind map you can take concepts in an endless range of directions. You may be quite focused and direct in your interpretation, but you can also be fluid. If you get to a point that you no longer feel you can continue with your chosen concept or any of the directions you have explored, you can begin a totally new concept during the process. It is important, however, that you retain everything you did prior to the change, as it all forms a part of your body of work.

Working outside of class time

As with your other subjects, a comprehensive art folio requires additional work outside of class time. It is vital that you record ideas as they occur, wherever you are, and then discuss these with your teacher. Your teacher can advise you on how you can approach your ideas and what art forms will be appropriate, and can also help you to develop the required techniques and skills.

Beginning your body of work early is very important, as it will allow you the time to develop your ideas and concepts fully. In Activity 12.1 you will find a suggested list of things you could do to kick-start your folio.

ACTIVITY 12.1

Using the following table as a guide, complete the tasks listed in preparation for Unit 3.

TABLE 12.1 PREPARATION FOR UNIT 3

YOU SHOULD COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING WORK.	YOU WOULD ALSO BENEFIT FROM COMPLETING THE FOLLOWING WORK.
You must decide on the central idea or concept that you wish to explore in your body of work.	Visit three or more exhibitions and make annotations of your observations.
Create a mind map/brainstorm to explore your selected idea or concept.	Begin creating a visual brainstorm through drawing, painting, collage, etc. to create visual interpretations of your ideas/concepts.
You must take a large number of photographs that will act as stimulus for further exploration, a reference collection from which to work, or as possible final photographs. You must sort these out into each of these three categories and create contact prints to place in your folio. If you are working with digital photographs, ensure you take photos at a high resolution in case you want to use these as final artworks.	Research artworks and images that relate to your ideas, concepts, interests, media, approaches and so on.
AND/OR	Start exploring your ideas in a range of media or approaches of your choice.
You must do a large number of small annotated sketches, which will act as stimulus for further exploration, and begin experimenting with different materials, techniques and processes.	Do lots of drawing.
You must visit at least one exhibition and note items of interest with regard to imagery, style, techniques, approaches or media that you may want to explore.	Take part in life drawing or art classes.
	Attend a summer school.
Begin a visual diary or treasure box (or both) in which you collect a range of visual stimuli. This can be images (found or created by hand or by photography), textures, objects, surfaces to work on or from – anything of interest for future exploration or inclusion in your folio.	Read up on art issues in the newspaper, magazines or other resources.
Note: Avoid plagiarism – you can include other people's art as inspiration but DO NOT COPY. See the paragraph after the table for information on authentication of your work.	

Note: It is essential that you read Chapters 1, 3 and 6. Much of this chapter has been written in a way that takes your knowledge of Units 1 and 2 for granted. If you have not completed Units 1 and 2, you will need to read through the work so that you can apply the knowledge gained to fulfill the requirements and expectations of Units 3 and 4.

Authentication

It is important to acknowledge the sources of materials and information used to support the development of ideas, including materials identified for inspiration and further development. This includes documentation of any appropriated imagery, with information detailing how your work has evolved from the source imagery.

Your teacher is required to complete an Authentication Record Form that provides a record of their monitoring your work in progress for authentication purposes. Your teachers must ensure that all source and reference material, all appropriate imagery used in the final artwork, all use of non-school resources and any external assistance are acknowledged on the authentication form.

12.2 Unit 3: Investigation and interpretation through art making

Unit 3 – Outcome 2 is not to be viewed in isolation. It is connected to Unit 4 – Outcome 2 and is assessed as a body of work at the conclusion of Unit 4. It is the starting point to your exploration and provides you with the opportunity to investigate and interpret your idea/s, techniques, materials, processes and art forms. Before you begin, think broadly about ideas and concepts that you may want to explore, and consider what you would like to achieve in your folio. Compile a range of thoughts, ideas and concepts to which you can refer during the year, using mind maps or lists. Establish the focus and direction you would like to take in your body of work. By the conclusion of this unit, you should have used the art process to produce at least one finished artwork and used the Analytical Frameworks to document and evaluate the progressive development and refinement of your artistic practice.

ACTIVITY 12.2

Decide what the focus of your folio will be. Are you aiming to:

- develop a folio of aesthetic exploration
- develop a folio that visually interprets ideas, concepts or issues
- explore a particular subject matter that appeals to you
- work in a style or approach to making art, or
- work in a specific medium or art form?

12.3 Unit 4: Realisation and resolution

In Unit 4, you will continue to develop the body of work begun in Unit 3 while you further develop your artistic practice, using the art process to produce at least one more finished artwork. You must continue to use the Analytical Frameworks as tools to support and guide reflection and documentation of your art making. On completion of this unit, you should be able to apply the art process to progressively communicate ideas, directions and personal concepts in a body of work.

A **resolution** is not necessarily a finished work of art, but could be the resolution of an area of exploration. As you work through an idea, you may get to a point where you feel you cannot take it any further. You may not be happy with what you have achieved or with where this line of exploration is taking you. This could be considered the completion of that avenue of thought, and is therefore a resolution. It is important to communicate the fact that you feel this line of exploration has been resolved. To do this, you should annotate regarding why you have decided to change direction. You can also comment on any ideas this exploration may have generated or any materials and techniques you may have discovered that you will continue to use. Give a clear indication through visual and written documentation of where you will go next.

By the conclusion of this unit, you are also required to have produced at least one finished artwork *in addition to* the work that was completed for Unit 3. You are able to explore ideas and concepts in a number of art forms or use a range of approaches to a single art form or medium.

The process of making art

There is no one way to create a body of work (see Chapter 6 for two possible approaches). Regardless of how you choose to approach your folio, the basic creative process remains consistent, and includes the exploration of ideas; experimentation with art elements and art principles, materials, techniques, processes and art forms; development of concepts, style and visual language; the refinement of these to provide visual strength to artworks; and finally, the resolution of ideas, directions and concepts.

ACTIVITY 12.3 ———

Choose a concept or idea that you feel that you could explore for the year. It may help to focus on something about which you are passionate or issues that are important to you. List different aspects of your idea that you could explore or revisit during the process of creating your body of work.

Application of the language of the Analytical Frameworks to support reflection

It is important that you engage in critical analysis and evaluation throughout your creative process. As part of your assessment, you are expected to select appropriate Analytical Frameworks to provide you with the tools with which to reflect on your artworks throughout your body of work. You should reflect on the ideas, techniques, materials and processes that you have explored, and the way you have applied and manipulated the art elements and principles. As part of your body of work, you are required

resolution an idea that that you have explored and refined to the point where it is considered complete

Figure 12.1 Salvador Dali, *Sleep*, 1937, oil on canvas © Salvador Dali, Fundació Gala-Salvador Dali/VEGAP, licensed by VISCOPY, 2016

to document and evaluate the progressive development and refinement of work using appropriate written and visual material.

You are required to apply the language of selected and identified Analytical Frameworks to support reflective annotation of your art making. This can be achieved in a number of different ways through discussion and in writing. Although you are required to make use of more than one framework, you are not required to apply all Analytical Frameworks to your art making. More importantly, you are required to select the appropriate Analytical Frameworks that are relevant to your work. It would be logical to make use of the Structural Framework, as this links all the frameworks and any other framework that is relevant to your art making.

An important thing to remember when using the frameworks in your annotation is that they must be used explicitly: you must identify which framework you are using and when you are using it. If you use the frameworks without identifying them, there is no evidence that you understand them

or the difference between them. You can identify the frameworks in several different ways:

- You can identify the framework at the beginning of the paragraph where you are discussing the meaning of your work.
- You can write the name of the appropriate framework next to the paragraph you are writing.
- You can place a colour code for each of the frameworks you use at the beginning of your body of work, then place a corresponding colour dot, X or icon next to the paragraph you are writing, as we have done in this text using icons.

Whichever system you use, implement it at the time of writing. The problem that some students have with the second two options is that they incorrectly label the frameworks because they do it when they have finished their folio – and often at the last minute. They scan for words that relate to the framework and place the dot

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next to the paragraph. Remember that the Analytical Frameworks are used for interpreting meaning, so if you place a dot next to a passage where you are speaking about the use of colour to achieve balance in a composition, you have not shown a correct understanding of the Structural Framework. If, however, you go on to say that the balance this achieves adds to the meaning of the work, you are then applying the framework to interpret the message.

Introducing your concept

Although not an expectation of the study design, it is worth introducing your concept at the beginning of your body of work, as it helps to explain the concept, why you have selected this concept and how you intend to explore it. If you write this introduction using the language of the Analytical Frameworks, it will allow you to set the tone of your folio, immediately identify your understanding of the frameworks and clarify your thoughts. This introduction does not only have to be at the start of your body of work; it can also be written at the start of each new idea or direction.

An example of this can be seen in the introduction written by VCE student Madeleine Pattison, for her concept of creation and collection.

Introduction

Collection:
v. The action or process of collecting someone or something: Bring or gather together (things, typically when scattered or widespread);
n. An assembly of items such as works of art, pieces of writing, or natural objects, especially one systematically ordered.

Creation:
v. The action or process of bringing something into existence;

n. something (as a device) created for the first time through the use of the imagination.

I have chosen to explore the concept of creation and collection. Approaching my exploration from the Personal Framework, I've chosen the idea of collection, as I myself have always collected items, whether they be miscellaneous findings, sentimental mementos, or objects that inspire me. The reasons behind people keeping things interest me; I'm also intrigued by how incongruous objects find a place. The change in character of a person, or object on its own, compared with when it is seen in the context of a collection, is intriguing. Additionally, collection in the sense of an active verb inspires me: the gathering together, bringing home, making a place for things. I also enjoy looking around my ordinary world to find unexpected objects: the stories that objects may hold and the context in which they are found are inspiring. I will draw inspiration from the Dada and Surrealist movement of found objects. My initial ideas include the exploration of human hands, which both create and collect. A major factor that drives me as a person is my faith and belief in a Creator. The idea of God gathering the lost, making a home for those who don't belong, inspires me to create artwork that explores the idea of gathering.

ACTIVITY 12.4

Before doing a photo-shoot in which you are addressing a particular concept, write an introduction to the concept that you want to explore, explicitly using the appropriate frameworks. Explain the intention of the photo-shoot and what you are hoping to achieve.

After the photo-shoot, create contact sheets of all the images and record how successful the shoot was in achieving your intention. Evaluate the photographs and how effective they are in conveying the intended meaning. If they are effective and technically successful, outline how you will proceed. If not, explain what you need to do in order to achieve your goal and what you need to do when retaking the photographs.

Inspired to create?

Before beginning your exploration, it may help to collect images that relate to the ideas and concepts you have chosen to explore. Collect images of artworks related to your concept or idea from a range of sources such as books, magazines, exhibitions or the internet. When including the work of artists who inspire you, it is important to reference these correctly (see Chapter 1). You can photograph, scan, photocopy or draw objects that represent the concept or idea. You may also choose to read the work of writers and critics who have explored similar concepts or ideas.

It is very useful to research artists and artworks that you consider to be relevant to the concepts and ideas you have chosen to explore. Document examples of these and annotate with information about specific details regarding subject matter, techniques, materials, art elements and principles. Study how artists have approached and presented similar concepts or ideas, and how they have manipulated the elements and principles of art in their work. Look at the subject matter they have selected and the techniques they have applied to achieve the resolved works they have presented. Use appropriate Analytical Frameworks to interpret the meaning of the works and identify how the artist has been able to convey this meaning in their work. This will help you to find solutions to your own ideas. It is also very useful to research techniques that you would like to attempt, learning from other artists' explorations.

ACTIVITY 12.5

1 Research 10 artists who inspire you with their subject matter, style, use of a particular medium, technique or approach to creating art.

2 If you have decided to explore a specific art form, the artists do not have to use the same art form. If you want to paint, you may be inspired by the emotion achieved by a sculptor through the body language and expression they have used. You may be inspired by the techniques employed by Dalì to produce his surreal paintings and want to recreate these using digital photography and Photoshop.

Figure 12.2 Diana Mejia-Correa, *Aspects of Seeing*, inkjet print
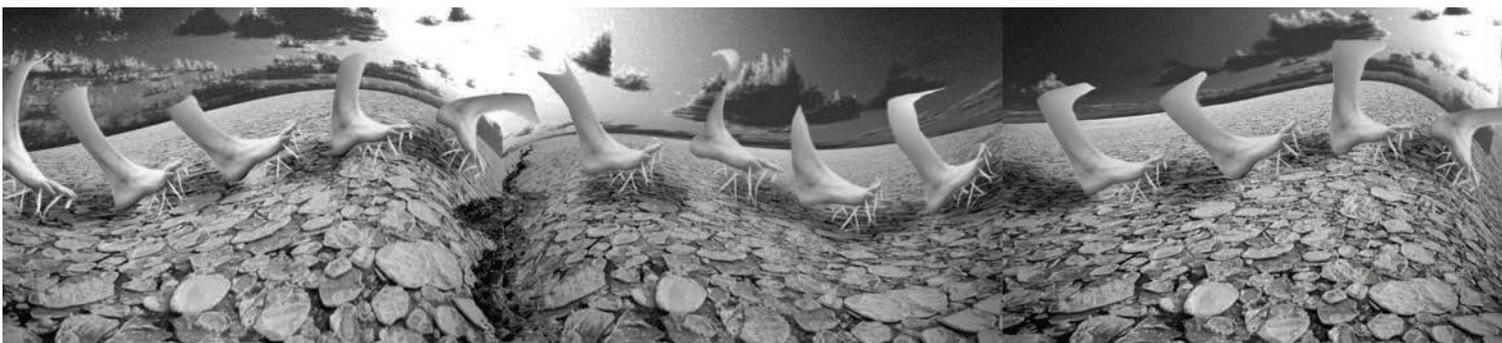
3. Identify and described what interests you about the works you have selected and what ideas they have generated for your folio. Have they used symbolism that you think you may be able to use to communicate your ideas to the viewers? Have you been inspired to attempt something new?

4. Identify how the artist has been able to convey meaning in their work and how you could use this in the exploration of your own ideas and concepts.

A study of other artists' work can be an effective way to clarify your thoughts about a concept or inspire you to use a particular medium or subject matter. It is important, however, to ensure that you do not copy the artist who inspires you, but rather reinterpret their approach in a personal way. (See Chapter 1 for information on plagiarism.)

VCE student Diana Mejia-Correa was inspired by the Surrealists and based her exploration on imagery that reflected this style. Figure 12.2 shows how she created a personal interpretation on aspects of seeing, using digital photography and Photoshop. She said:

Personal *I was interested to see that a number of Dali's paintings dealt with sleep issues and the Freudian theme of the world of dreams. The Surrealists believed that the freedom of the subconscious within sleep could be tapped into and used to inspire their art. Dali's* Sleep *of 1937 attempted to duplicate the dream world onto the canvas. Crutches are a familiar motif in Dali's works and here the head is supported by a series of wooden crutches, as are the mouth, nose and also eyes, suggesting that the head might collapse if they were removed. Whether to tap into the subconscious mind through dreams, or by placing themselves into a trance state by depriving themselves of sleep, sleep was important to the Surrealists. I too find many of my* *Contemporary* *ideas in dreams or when I lay awake at night unable to sleep. The inkjet print allowed me to reinterpret this traditional style using contemporary media, processes,* *Personal* *techniques and art forms. While wanting to reference Dali through the style and imagery, I also wanted to make this work personal. Rather than using the wooden crutches, I looked for something in my life that held me up and without which I would collapse. Art is my crutch and I represented this by supporting the feet with pencils, my preferred tool of expression.*

I have often imagined the monster of sleep as a heavy, giant head with a tapering body held up by the crutches of reality. When the crutches break we have the sensation of falling.

– SALVADOR DALI, THE SECRET LIFE OF SALVADOR DALI, NEW YORK, 1942, BURTON C. HOFFMAN DIAL PRESS
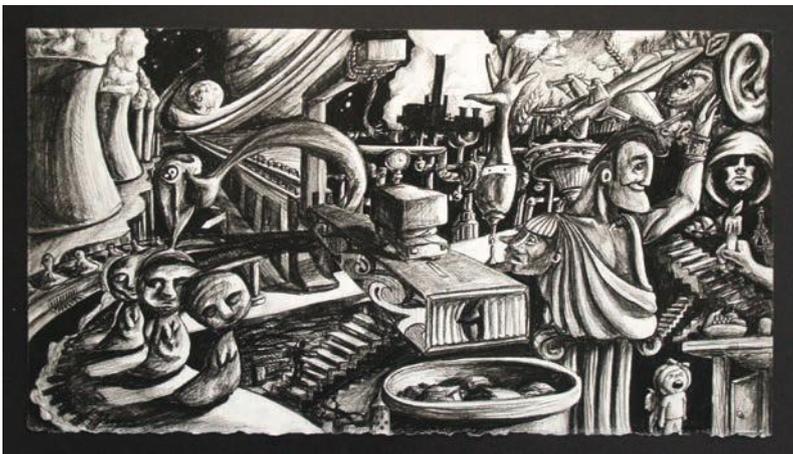
Another VCE student, Bethany Cherry, was inspired by an artist and adapted his style to produce a personal image that was relevant to her and dealt with issues that she considered important. She studied Picasso's *Guernica*, and also looked at other artists who were inspired by this work, before trialling her idea (Figure 12.3). After numerous trials and exploration of materials, techniques and symbols, Bethany produced *Do You See What I See?* (Figure 12.4).

Bethany wrote:

This work is inspired by Picasso's Guernica. *I wanted to create an overwhelming piece of work, both physically and mentally, and I felt that* Guernica *had that particular quality. To more effectively convey the theme of 'Conflict' to my audience, however, I decided to use more contemporary ideas* of conflict, portrayed in a new way to challenge and stretch the imagination of my audience, yet still relate to them.

While Guernica *focused on one catastrophic scene, I wanted to emphasis the shear number of catastrophic issues with which our society is riddled. I focused on issues like mental health, gender inequality, suicide, war, human waste and the abuse of human power, all of which are issues that reflect the state of modern society. Taking a common issue like gender inequality, I developed the idea of how women are just 'accessories' to men, there for show and always in the shadow of their counterparts. I literally portrayed a woman as part of a man's clothing, hanging off him just for show.*

I chose to work in charcoal, which I felt was appropriate to my negative issues, as it is a natural material that has been burnt and destroyed for human use.

I felt that one of the more serious issues recognised within our society is one we can't physically see: mental health. I took an idea that modern society has clearly recognised this to be a problem, and made it confronting and, most of all, tangible and visible. I created personified human emotions that weigh many heads down. I gave them a slightly humanoid appearance to deepen their connection to the audience. As mental health is often overlooked by society because you cannot see it, I decided to draw these little emotions in a line, leading into the foreground of the work, confronting the audience.

In this surrealist work, I intertwined and twisted issues and scenes. By turning the shadow of an emotion into a city landscape, or an eye into an iconic symbol, I hoped to show my audience that in our society today, everything is connected, everything matters and we have to recognise every issue, big and small.

Documenting your artistic practice

You are required to document and analyse your artistic practice throughout the art process. To document does not only mean to write, but also to record. Recording can be visual and/or written. As a visual subject, the most important means of conveying information is through the presentation of images. These could be drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, screen shots or **maquettes**.

Every sketch and trial, no matter how unsuccessful and disappointing, is an important record of your art process and, along with successful experimentation with materials and techniques, and photographs of your working practice, allows the assessor to understand how you progressively developed your folio from concept to final artwork. Images on their own are open to interpretation by the viewer. In order to clearly communicate your practice, it is important to combine written commentary that reflects on your ideas and art making with your visual documentation.

Elisa Bongetti included an oil paint on paper study of her cat (Figure 12.5) as evidence of having explored the medium. Her accompanying annotation, however, communicates her thoughts while doing so and evaluates the result:

> *This is an oil painting sketch of my cat. I don't really like it because it is out of proportion in the shape of her face and the distance between her eyes. However, I like the monochromatic colouring and the intense mood. I also like the cropped composition, as I feel it creates an intimate connection with the viewer.*

Annotate each image with information that includes details about how the ideas can be treated and further developed. Your annotation must make use of the art terminology that you have been developing during theory. Ensure that it is appropriate to the art study.
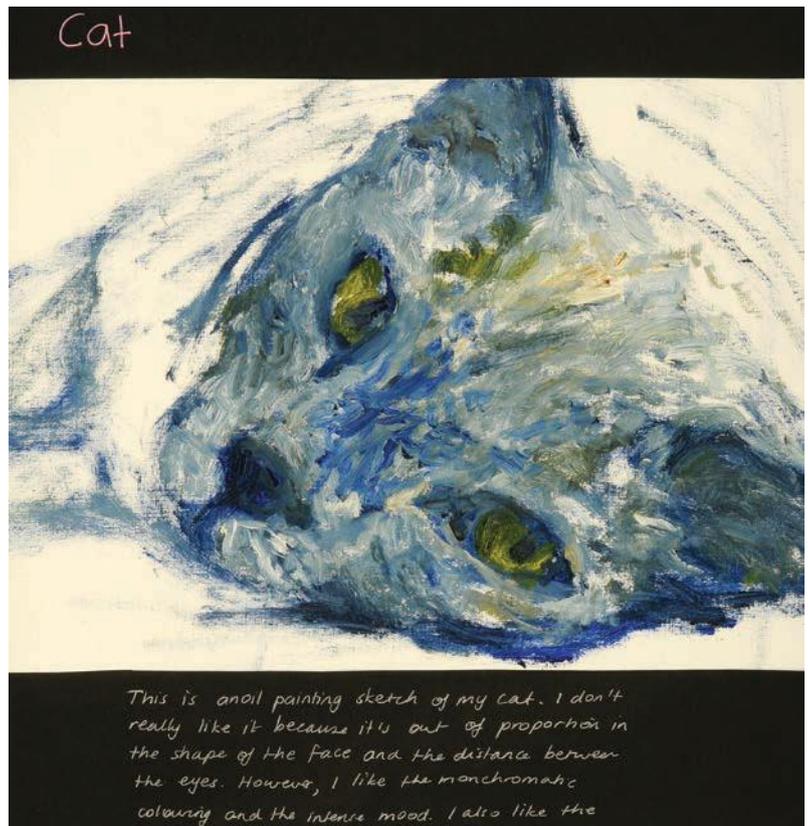
Figure 12.5 Elisa Bongetti, *Cat*

All your trials – whether they are small sketches, large trials with oil on canvas or a contact sheet of digital prints – present to the viewer a picture of what you are trying to achieve in your body of work. By including unsuccessful trials, you are able to evaluate them and explain what you will do to improve your practice. By resolving the issues that you identify, you show a development of your skill and your practice. This annotation is separate from the application of the Analytical Frameworks, which explain the meaning and messages contained in your work. Recording your working practices allows you to evaluate and record the art process and the development of your techniques and visual language.

Screen shots are important to guide the viewer through your process when working on the computer. It is essential that you record all major steps in the development and refinement of your ideas. Without these images, which show your involvement and the steps you went through to achieve your final image, a computer-generated work can

maquette small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

Painting #1

- I used a dip pen and burnt sienna ink to paint this.
- I also used minimal amounts of red and green watercolour paints.
- The lamp post is too high on the right of the building.
- A few 'perspectives' are wrong with the road and

Painting #2

- I have corrected the errors I had made in the first drawing. The lamp post is shorter and perspectives are better.
- However, the image was better monochromatic, the colours in the trees are distracting from the building.

Figure 12.6 Elisa Bongetti, *Painting 1*

Figure 12.7 Elisa Bongetti, *Painting 2*

appear to be a quick resolution. The screen shots will also remove any doubt about the authenticity of your work. Computer-generated images can leave doubt in the viewer's mind, as it is very easy to source images on the internet or by scanning.

By presenting your original images and thus documenting all steps in the process, you can show how you created your final artwork. Elisa Bongetti used screen shots (Figures 12.9 and 12.10) to demonstrate how she combined two watercolour paintings (Figures 12.6 and 12.7) to create a final digital image (Figure 12.8).

If you are working on the computer and have produced a complex digital image in Photoshop that required many trials and combinations of images and effects, subtle variations of colours and careful manipulations of tone, you must record each significant step of the process. Avoid pages and pages of mindless screen shots, though. Your documentation should demonstrate how you arrived at the final solution and show that it was a result of your own work and not an image you found. This record of your process must be done in 'real time', not in retrospect. If done after you have

completed the artwork, the annotations will have no relevance to your practice.

It is not only important for you to record your process for the viewer's benefit, but as a backup for yourself. The documentation – whether written, typed or provided by means of selected screen shots – will provide you with the necessary information to reproduce the image if the file is corrupted at any stage of the process, causing you to lose everything you have done up to that point. It is a lot quicker to reproduce the same image if you have the steps and solutions to certain problems annotated than it would be if you were trying to work from memory.

This scenario emphasises the importance of you annotating as you go. 'Real-time' annotation is vital, as you will often forget certain steps in your process and the details that are so important to achieving your objective. This is equally important whether you are painting, drawing, printing or working in the darkroom. Imagine that you have spent hours perfecting a gelatin silver print in the darkroom only to have a classmate spill paint on it. How do you easily reproduce this if you have not recorded the height and aperture of the enlarger, the filter

This has a low-level of "cutout" filter applied to it → still quite a lot of texture.

Fewer levels than the previous.

I like this version because of it's smooth texture.

This is high contrast version of the image on the left. I think I prefer the lower contrast because of the harmonious hues.

Combining the TWO PAINTINGS

There are things I like about both drawings (and things I dislike), so I've used Photoshop to scan them in and take aspects of each to create 1 new image.

PROCESS:

① Scanned in Painting #1 for base. I prefer this painting.

② Used magic wand to select and erase oversized lamppost. "Healed" in white parts.

③ Increased contrast of

④ I scanned in Painting #2, selected lamppost section & copied into Painting #1

⑤ Also cut and pasted in the figure. Worked in layers & blended them by erasing lightly around edge.

⑥ Flattened all the layers as one when I was satisfied with image.

⑦ Increased brightness &

Figure 12.8 Elisa Bongetti, *Digital final*

Figure 12.9 Elisa Bongetti, *Screen shots 1*
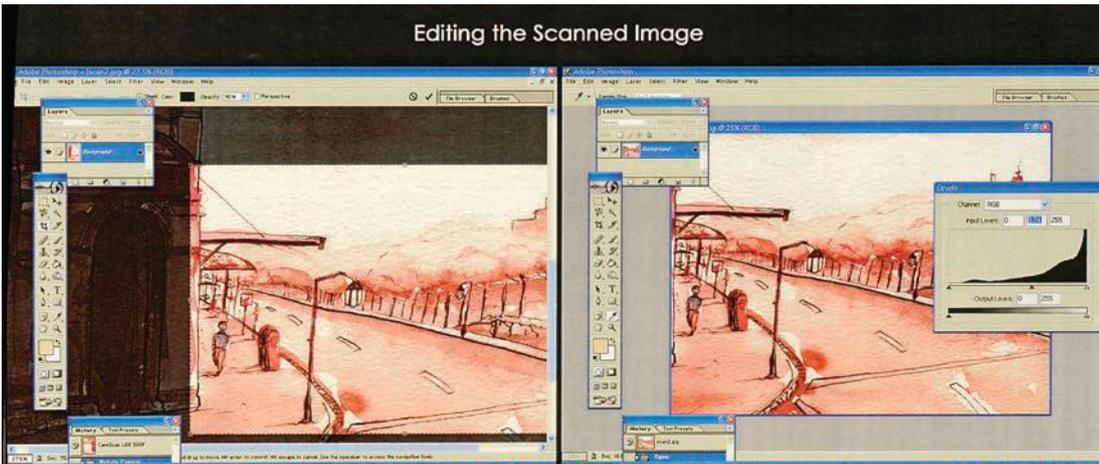
Figure 12.10 Elisa Bongetti, *Screen shots 2*

Editing the Scanned Image

[Above] I scanned in the original image and cropped my favourite part, which is the street scene. I was careful to frame part of the edge of the building so that all the sun guards hanging off the wall would be distinguishable. It also helps to set the scene.

[Above] I adjusted the levels to increase the contrast of the image and improve its visual appeal. It also helped remove the unattractive scratchy quality of my strokes that are visible at this level of zoom on one area of the painting.
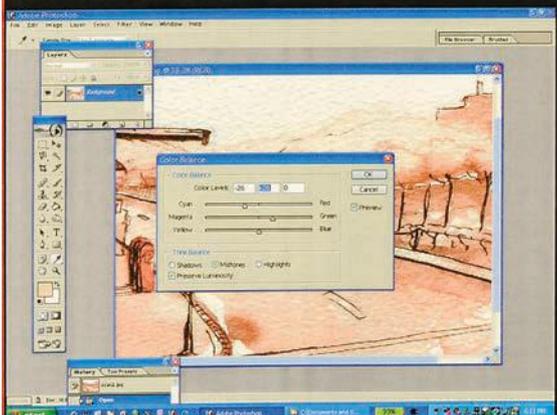
[Above] I fiddled with the colour balance in order to add more yellow and less red to the scene. I think that these colours are better suited to an image with plant life in it rather than a red brick hue.
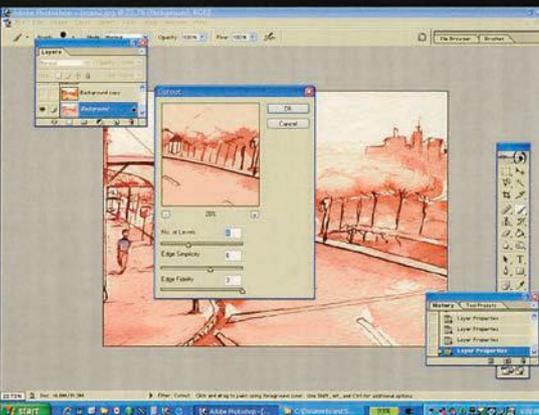
[Above] Finally, I used the cutout filter to apply varying levels, edge simplicity and edge fidelity values to the image. I am very pleased with the result. I also experimented with a few more colour combinations.

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you have used or the amount of time for which you have exposed your paper.

Writing down your ideas makes them more visible and concrete, and ensures that you do not forget them. By writing them down, you can revisit earlier ideas when you need a new direction in your folio. If you are painting and have explored a range of techniques, you could revisit some that you had earlier rejected for a particular painting if you thought they had potential for a new idea. Annotation also provides you with the means to evaluate your exploration and finished works. Remember that you will not be around to explain your ideas and decisions when your folio is assessed, so you need to provide the assessor with all the information they require to navigate your body of work.

Self-reflection should occur regularly throughout the art process. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the focus of my work?
- How can I best express that?
- What materials, techniques and processes could I use?
- What do I need to do to resolve my work?

Answering these questions in your folio will help you to develop an effective body of work and assist the viewer to gain greater insight into your thinking and working process. Visual and written annotation can explain:

- how you are interpreting your ideas
- how you are making use of the techniques, materials and processes to create a visual language
- how you are manipulating the art elements and principles to emphasise the messages and meaning in your artwork/s
- your reason for making decisions and choices in your folio
- the symbolism you have used
- the style in which you have chosen to work.

ACTIVITY 12.6

Use a digital camera to document, and written annotations to record, your artistic practice.

When annotating your body of work, it is important to keep it relevant to you and the viewer.

Annotation serves many purposes. It can provide you with a means of working through a problem. Many students find that it helps them to talk through an idea or to discuss something challenging. Annotation is an opportunity for you to have a conversation with yourself without someone thinking you are crazy – especially when you answer back with a solution to the problem. This annotation will also provide the viewer with an idea of what you are thinking and why you made the decisions you did. Furthermore, it will guide them through your process of creating a body of work.

A question many students ask is, 'How much written annotation do I need?' No minimum or maximum word count is specified in the study, so instead you should ask yourself, 'How much written annotation do I need to record my practice, to help me to develop a body of work and to clearly communicate with the viewer?' Some students find it helps them to write a lot. This, however, is not a requirement. You do not have to write an essay or even paragraphs of text – often a sentence will be sufficient.

If there is something that you believe is important for the viewer to read, then highlight the key details in the body of work. You can do this with a highlighter, underlining the text or drawing a coloured box around the relevant text.

VCE student Nicky Purser was inspired by the watercolour figure studies of Charles Reid, and chose to use this medium and style to rework life drawings that she had completed in class during the year (Figures 12.11 and 12.13):
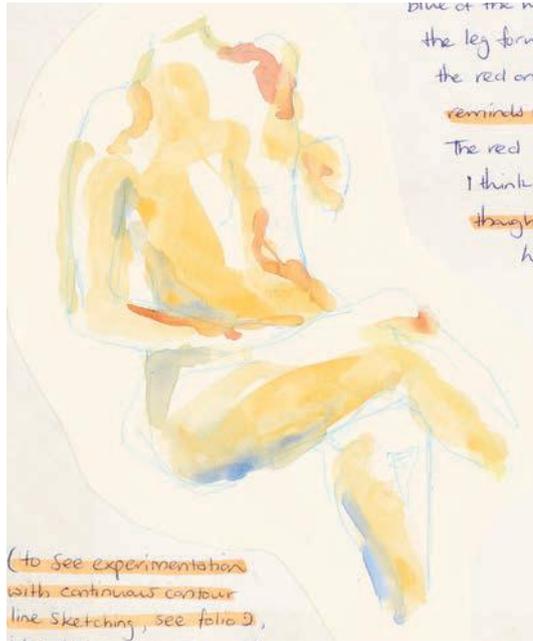
Figure 12.11 Nicky Purser,
Charcoal 1

Figure 12.12 Nicky Purser,
Watercolour 1

Figure 12.13 Nicky Purser,
Charcoal of Reclining Figure

Figure 12.14 Nicky Purser,
Watercolour of Reclining Figure

I copied a charcoal sketch I did in life drawing ... working quickly; the contour line sketch took about 30 seconds and the watercolour about two minutes. The skin tone is much too yellow ... I like the red on the knee, it reminds me of the spots of colour Reid uses ... I need more colour variation.

Continuing with the exploration (Figures 12.12 and 12.14), Nicky decided to use tubes of watercolour rather than the disks she had been using to see whether she could achieve the colours and effects she was looking for.

I like the tube paints better because the colour is more intense ... I took a little longer on the contour line sketch and painting, but again tried to work quickly. I used a spray bottle with water to keep the paint from drying ... I like the speckled effect and the way it softens the mid tones and makes the shadows stand out.

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Figure 12.15 Nicky Purser, *Charcoal of Standing Nude*

Figure 12.16 Nicky Purser, *Watercolour of Standing Nude* (final)

ACTIVITY 12.7

Choose an artwork that appeals to you. Reinterpret this artwork in a personal way. You may reference the original, but you may not copy it. Create something personal that is inspired by the artwork you have selected, or that challenges the original in concept or approach. You do not have to work in the same art form.

Nicky achieved a resolved artwork based on a 10-minute gestural contour line drawing of a model (Figure 12.15) that she reinterpreted using a watercolour technique inspired by Charles Reid, but which she had explored in a personal way and had made very much her own (Figure 12.16).

As you explore your ideas, materials, techniques and processes, you will use annotation to explain your journey and assist the viewer to navigate your body of work. At times this will have a logical sequence that is easily followed by the viewer, while at other times you may revisit earlier ideas or your folio may take a different path. An important function of the written annotation is to identify links to earlier ideas and concepts, and show how these relate to your current artistic practice.

Investigating, trialling and applying materials, techniques and processes to concepts and ideas

It is important that you engage in a creative and technical processes with a range of materials and art forms, and use a visual diary to document your reflections, exploration of ideas and art making. Your folio can take many different directions and explore a range of art forms and approaches. Experiment with,

explore and apply a range of materials, techniques and processes relevant to your ideas or concepts. Paul Rand said, 'Without play, there would be no Picasso. Without play, there is no experimentation. Experimentation is the quest for answers.' Document the development of investigation and application of materials, techniques and processes in written and visual form (see Chapters 3 and 6).

Bethany Cherry investigated a number of approaches to portraiture in Unit 3. She trialled different images and viewpoints before focusing on self-portraits in profile. She also explored a range of materials and techniques before settling on her final approach. Explaining her technique and the importance of the decisions she made, Bethany wrote:

I chose to work in Willow Bark Charcoal on 300 gsm Hot Press Fabriano paper because the combination allowed for the freedom and energy I could express in my drawing. The charcoal also reflects the more subtle side of inner conflict I am trying to express. Charcoal was once a natural living, growing substance and is now dead – burnt. This quite violent process to create the material I use for my self-portrait adds to the sense of pain and at times no longer feeling alive. The combination of charcoal and paper allows me to create an achromatic work. Colour can add vibrancy and life to a portrait while an achromatic work is lifeless and feels depressing.

Resolving and refining your ideas

Your artwork should display technical skill and the most appropriate materials for what you want to achieve. It is important to progressively refine, improve and resolve ideas and skills as you produce your final artworks. In order to do this, you will need to explore solutions to demonstrate different interpretations of the ideas or concepts. You will need to progressively resolve ideas, concepts, direction, materials, techniques, processes and your application of the art elements and principles. You should produce solutions that demonstrate considered and well-developed responses to the stages of art making.

Jess Maguire, a VCE student, explored abstract painting through the use of line, colour and texture. In one exploration (Figure 12.18), she cut one of her acrylic trials into strips and arranged them in different ways:

Figure 12.17 Bethany Cherry, page from her visual diary discussing her Unit 3 Final

I liked the result of separating the abstract work. The strips are placed in their original order but force the viewer to look closer at the colours and patterns created.

I cut in the direction of the lines created by the paint, but it is not easy to distinguish that the pieces were once connected.

I then cut across the direction in which the lines of the painting were going. This contrast between horizontal and vertical lines makes it easier to recognise that the pieces were once connected.

I placed harmonious colours behind the strips, which work okay. The complementary colours are jarring. It is busy and the colours compete for the viewer's attention ... I could try to lay different abstract pieces under the strips instead of flat colour.

Following on from the idea of cutting up her splatter painting, Jess wanted to achieve this on a larger scale:

I wanted to paint on canvas and break up the splatter with defined lines. I also wanted to physically break up the canvas by painting onto more than one stretched canvas.

She used drawing to experiment with different compositions (Figure 12.19).

I based the placement of my lines on the rule of thirds and experimented with the idea of adding patches of canvas to the paintings for added interest.

She experimented with separating the canvases in contrast with the direction of her lines and in the same direction. She also

Figure 12.18 Jess Maguire, Experimentation with strips from acrylic trial

Figure 12.19 Jess Maguire, compositional drawings

© Chamberlin et al 2017
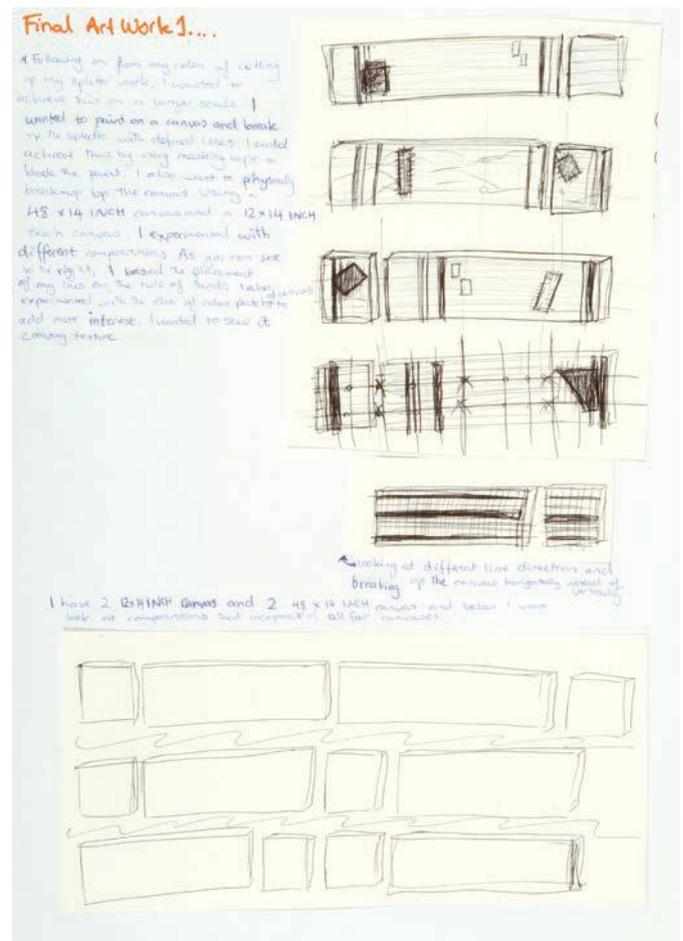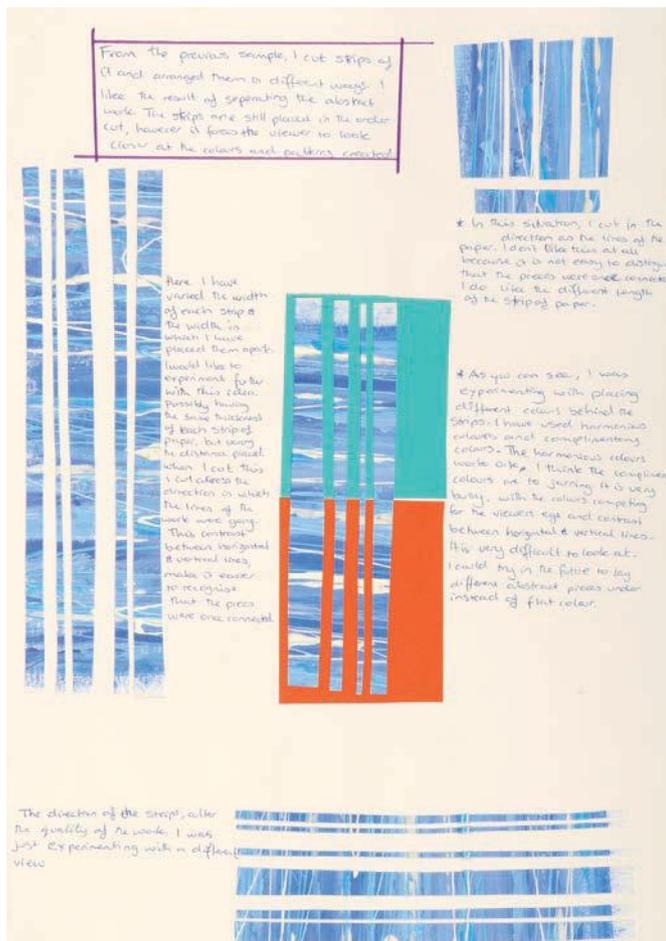
trialled the idea of two and four canvases in various horizontal combinations.

Once Jess had decided how she would approach the painting and had settled on the use of four canvases, she applied all the skills she had developed through trialling her medium and techniques to start her final painting. She made use of digital photographs to document her artistic process.

Even though Jess had resolved many of the issues she was exploring, her final painting process was still fluid and Jess continued to trial ideas as she worked.

Paul Gardener said, 'A painting is never finished, it just stops in interesting places.' This willingness to be sensitive to the aesthetics of your work and your materials is very important in being able to successfully resolve your work. Jess said:

I used masking tape to retain the white of my primed canvas ... I worked quickly blending colours and creating new tones of blue ... I used the fabric paint bottle to add more line work ... Before removing the masking tape I splattered white pearl paint to create a sparkle and to further link the four canvases. The lines are more fluid than the paint from the bottle and give the painting more life ... After removing the masking tape you can see how the splatter lines and the white lines connect the canvases.

By using different tones of orange it gives more interest to the work. I chose orange as it is the complement of blue. The use of complementary colours accentuates each of the colours and intensifies the work ... I think the largest orange line is too dark and I may change the tone.

After playing around with patches of canvas I decided against their inclusion because it was becoming busy, making it difficult to look at.

I love the outcome of this work. It is vibrant and has an interesting

composition. It incorporates my research on complementary colours, the splatterwork and my ideas of cutting up the image.

Throughout your folio, you are required to apply the language of the Analytical Frameworks to reflect upon your own art making. The Structural Framework allows you to analyse how you have used the art elements and principles, style, symbolism and techniques to contribute to the meanings and messages in your artwork. The Personal Framework should be used to explain how your art reflects your feelings, thinking, influences, interests and experiences. The Cultural Framework should be used to identify the impact of your own culture and other cultures, as well as culturally linked events that reflect upon your art making. The Contemporary Framework can be used to discuss the impact of

Figure 12.20 Jess Maguire, process documented with photographs 1

Using masking tape I boarded the edge of the white lines to make it easier for me to keep the line straight

Colour swatch

In the following photos you can see the different tones of oranges I have used. I kept adding white to the first orange to change the tone. By using the tones of orange instead of one, it also gives more interest to the work. I chose orange as it is the compliment of blue, as I have mentioned earlier in folio a compliment accentuates each of the colours, brightens the work.

Final work ... so far. I really like the result of this picture I do wish to exp with the canvas pieces and I think the dark/dark orange line is too dark and may change the tone of orange

breaking up line

I had the idea of having colour patches attached to break the lines up. I was thinking of making the patches orange with their own individual splatter work on them, having some (very little) of the orange line, break the patch and enter the blue on canvas. After playing around with the swatches, I decided against including them because it would go to many ways. It could get messy and busy, making it difficult to look at. I like the canvas with and without the patch so because of time limitations I will not include the patches.

This patch would overlap the 3 canvases and be cut in the physical breaks and folded on the back.

composition I could have used.

This is the final piece. I love the outcome of this work. It is vibrant and has an interesting composition. I like the idea of using four different canvases for a physical break of the white splatter, as well as the painted lines to break it. This piece incorporates my research on compliment colours the splatter work and my ideas of cutting it up, mentioned previously.

contemporary media, processes, techniques and art forms on your ideas as well as contemporary issues you have explored. You could also deal with traditional subject matter in a contemporary way.

Your annotation should communicate your application of each of these Analytical Frameworks throughout your body of work. Symbolism is a part of all art making, and may intentionally be included by you or perceived by the viewer. Symbolism can be used to strengthen the messages and meaning of your work, associated with each of the other Analytical Frameworks. You should also consider and annotate the decisions you make about the context of where your work will be viewed and your intentions as an artist in relation to the viewers' perception and interpretation of
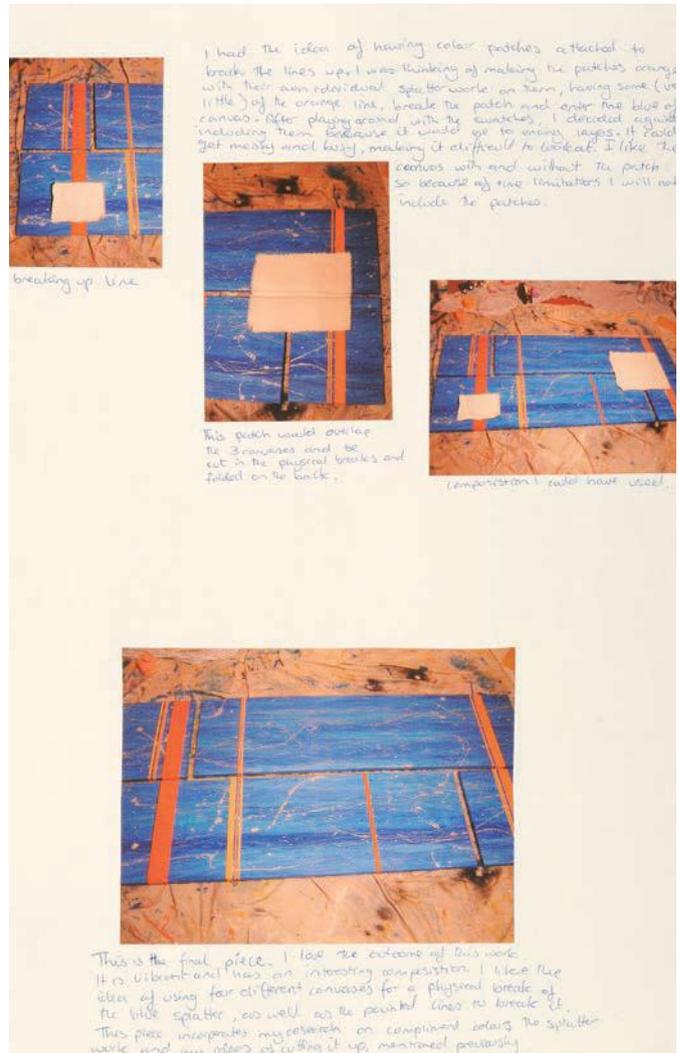
your work. Ways of presenting your final artworks are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

In his folio, VCE Art student Tim Greenwood chose to explore depression, an important issue in contemporary society that touches every one of us (Figure 12.23). It is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and an estimated 45 per cent of people in Australia will experience a mental health condition in their lifetime. If we don't suffer depression personally, it is likely that someone in our family does. Yet many people still do not understand this illness.

Contemporary

Tim explored this issue in order to gain a better insight into a disease from which a member of his family suffers, and to heighten people's awareness

Personal

of this debilitating illness. He explored his ideas in many art forms, including photography, sculptural masks and digital imagery, before settling on chalk pastel. Tim wrote:

The theme represented in these three artworks is an attempt to express the downward spiral of depression, a debilitating illness in contemporary society; but more specifically, the many masks worn to hide sad, hopeless, helpless and often empty feelings. I have broken the process of depression into three stages rather than show it in the single image I used earlier in my folio. A smiling man holding a feather, which hints at the depression within him, represents the first stage. A deep sadness lies undetected due to the fact that, like most people who suffer depression, he is wearing a mask to hide the illness from those around him, or to conceal his pain. In the second stage the man is ripping away at the mask, revealing the darkness of his torment and his deep black abyss that has become too hard to hide. As the mask tears away

the flaking pieces turn into birds that replace the feather in the first panel. In the third artwork and final stage, his mask is almost completely removed and darkness has engulfed his entire mind, body and soul.

The crazed birds seen in the second and third artwork illustrate how depression usually clouds, darkens and warps your mind and thoughts. This is represented by their erratic placement on the paper. The technique I used to layer the pastel and build up the images is an ironic reversal of the of how the man is removing the layers that he has built up to hide behind.

Figure 12.23 Tim Greenwood, *Portrait of Depression*, chalk pastel on paper
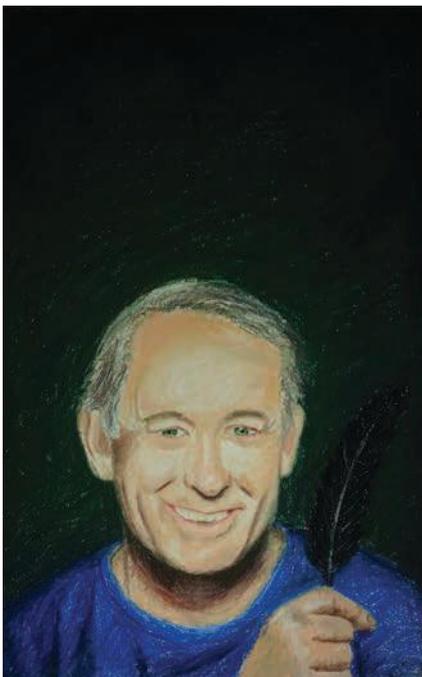
Presenting a folio of work

There is no prescribed method of creating a folio, although the VCAA would like to encourage students to move away from using expensive and wasteful plastic pockets. Using a sketchbook is seen to be a way of showing the true process rather than a 'curation' of the process, which is often the case when using plastic pockets.

The Study Design requires you to document your artistic practices in a visual diary; however, this can be interpreted in a number of ways. Many students choose to work in a sketchbook as a means to structure their folio and to collect and document their exploration, while others arrange their documentation in a file, folder or even a box.

However you choose to work, it is important that you present your body of work in a way that will allow your teacher and others viewing your work to navigate easily through your folio. It is important to note that your visual diary should be seen as part of your artistic practice, and is just a way of documenting your art process. No consideration should be given to pretty pages or spending money on expensive folders. This is a workbook and should be used as such. If you get paint on it while referring to something related to your painting, it does not matter. No borders, scrapbooking or fancy covers are needed, as the focus is on the content and the progressive development of your ideas and exploration, not the look of your visual diary.

Students working in a sketchbook tend to present their work in chronological order from the point of origin to the point of submission. Although this provides an accurate record of your journey, if you explore more than one idea at the same time it can be very confusing for someone trying to follow your process. To assist with the viewer's navigation of your folio, some students use colour tabs or numbers to guide them through the chronological development of one idea

or area of exploration, before they then return to the point where the next idea starts. A more effective way would be to break the exploration up into multiple sketchbooks. One book could be for general idea generation. When ideas are established, you could then work each idea through to completion in a separate book. New ideas continue to be placed into the first book as they occur.

Some students work in sketchbooks and on loose paper or canvases. This allows for free exploration and development of ideas and experimentation with materials, techniques, processes and art forms. Once the work is completed, the pages are placed in a presentation folder or bound in a book. Some students photograph works that can't fit into their sketchbook to make it easy to annotate, but remember that you can annotate on the back of works that are presented outside your visual diary.

ACTIVITY 12.8

1 View the *Top Arts* exhibition and look through the folios on display.
2 Note the different approaches that each student has taken when putting their body of work together.
3 How do they help you, as the viewer, to navigate their folio?
4 How do they provide you with insight into their artistic practices?

Presenting your final artworks

If you would like to lay your work out in a specific way, you should make a layout map of how you would like your work to be presented for display. This should include the order in which multiple works are to be hung if you are creating a series. There are no marks allocated to the presentation of your artworks in the assessment criteria, but it is still an important part of your art practice.

You are not expected to mount final artworks and you are discouraged from framing. This is a costly exercise, and glass in a frame can often hide the details and subtleties in your artworks. If you do choose to mount a work, you must consider why you are doing so. A mount is intended to enhance the artwork and separate it from its surroundings. It should never distract the viewer from the artwork or overpower the work on which it is placed. Poorly mounted work – mounts that are cut askew, ripped, uneven or an unsuitable colour – are far worse than presenting a work unmounted. Many artists prefer their artworks to interact with the surroundings and the surfaces on which they are presented, and therefore leave them unmounted and unframed. If you choose to frame your work, you should consider how this adds to the meaning of your artwork.

The way in which you present your artwork can also add to the meaning of the work. The presentation of the artwork could suggest symbolic meaning. If you are representing a series of beautifully detailed and delicate drawings of everyday objects that you consider to be precious, you could place them in a bound album or a series of small boxes.

This could convey that the objects (and the drawings) are worth preserving like cultural artefacts in a museum. If you have an engraving of an insect, pinning the print onto a display board can reference the way collectors pin butterflies onto a display board. Pinning up a drawing of a person may have negative connotations, for the same reason.

Presenting multiple copies of an object or image will reference Pop Art and the ideas of consumerism and mass production.

The twentieth-century sculptor Constantin Brancusi (1876–1957) was the first sculptor to carve his own pedestals on which to present his sculptures. These not only raised the

Figure 12.24 Constantin Brancusi, *The Beginning of the World*, 1920, marble, nickel, silver and stone (76.2 x 50.8 x 50.8 cm), Dallas Museum of Art © Constantin Brancusi/ ADAGP, licensed by VISCOPY, 2009

works off the floor, bringing them closer to the viewer and isolating the sculpture from the environment, but they also began to play a conceptual role. Many of his works were highly polished bronze or marble pieces that he placed on roughly carved stone or wooden pedestals. This contrast accentuated the finish of the sculptures, making them appear more mystical on the solid earthbound mass of the base. In other works, such as *The Beginning of the World* (Figure 12.24), he introduced a highly reflective bronze disc on which the marble sculpture was placed.

This reflective surface beneath the sculpture repeated the form of the egg-shaped sculpture as though it was capable of reproducing, pointing to the renewed cycle of life. The polished surface of the disc also reflected the surrounding environment, making everything around it – including the viewer – a part of the work. This disc is placed on a marble cube, which in turn is placed on a marble cross.

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Figure 12.25 Fiensted Mobiles, *Flowing Rhythm (Red)* in the style of Alexander Calder

Cultural The form of the pedestal could have symbolic relevance, hinting at the symbol for female (the source of life) and the cross, a symbol of Christ's physical death and the spiritual rebirth of Christians. Brancusi would often repeat the forms of the sculpture in the pedestal, creating a greater unity between the two parts. In other works, such as *King of Kings* (c. 1938), it is not possible to tell what is sculpture and what is pedestal – if, in fact, there is even a pedestal.

Contemporary In postmodern art, the installation has become an important art form. Projecting a video onto a screen will have a different effect to a video and sound installation where the viewer might become immersed in the artwork. If you are in any doubt as to the importance of how a work is displayed, imagine a mobile by the artist Alexander Calder, presented lying 'lifeless' on a stone block. Always consider how you want your artwork viewed.

ACTIVITY 12.9

1. Find five artworks that have been presented in a way that adds to the meaning and messages that the artists wish to convey in their work. Note the differences between how each has been presented. Could the presentation of one be applied to any of the others to add to its meaning?
2. Select any artwork that you believe explores a concept. Consider how you could present it differently to how the artist has, in a way that would symbolically enhance the meaning of the work.
3. Consider how you could present one of your own artworks in a way that would symbolically enhance the meaning of the work.

It is important to explore different media and surfaces for your artworks. The surface on which you work can also add to the meaning of your art. Imagine you are interested in Thai culture, and are creating a body of work using photography. You have taken a range of photographs showing both ruined and functioning Thai temples, which you present as mounted gelatin silver prints. One of the things you have noticed about the preserved temples is the presence of gold on many of the surfaces. How could this fact be introduced into your black and white prints? You could, for example, scan your negatives and produce inkjet prints on gold metallic paper. The white in the photographs would be replaced with gold, introducing this important aspect of the subject into your final artwork.

The ruined temples that you explored in photography may work very successfully as mounted gelatin silver prints, but could you present these in a more creative way that reflects the quality of these crumbling three-dimensional architectural structures? One of the things that may have caught your attention as you explored the ruins were the blocks of stone that were used to construct the temples. The textures that you captured in your photographs were important to you. How could you incorporate the tactile and three-dimensional qualities of the temples into your photographs?

A solution could involve both the surface on which you work and the medium with which you work. You could create blocks of plaster of Paris with a textured surface that references the textures of the temples' stone blocks. Copy your final gelatin silver print onto Lazertran, and apply the Lazertran photograph to the surface of the plaster of Paris block using purified turpentine. The photograph will adhere to the block, following the rough surface you have created. The light areas of the image will be replaced with the colours, tones and textures you have created in your block.

These blocks with photographs embedded in them could be placed randomly on the ground like fallen blocks of stone or used to construct a three-dimensional structure.

Presentation of your ideas and concepts can also be enhanced by the media you use. When you are exploring a medium, try to push the boundaries of the medium as far as possible. Look at alternative surfaces to work on and various combinations of media. Consider the symbolic value of the art form, medium and surface on which you are working.

The painter Penny Siopis made effective use of collage to build up a surface on which to paint for *Patience on a Monument: A History Painting* (Figure 12.26). She made use of photocopies taken from old school history books that she used to construct a heap of debris in a vast landscape. These images show entrenched perceptions, stereotypes, national symbols and a Eurocentric version of South African history. Piling all these almost sacred images on top of each other leads them to begin to lose their power, and the disorderly manner in which they are piled up lessens their iconic force. Penny states that she is dealing with:

historical misrepresentations of cultural identity, gender and race. I work within the traditions of Western painting in ways that attempt to show that it is not only the representation of politics that is the issue, but the politics of representation as well.

ACTIVITY 12.10

1 Find artworks that have used a medium or a surface that adds to the meaning of the artwork.
2 Consider how you could use a medium or surface that would symbolically enhance the meaning of one of your artworks.

Figure 12.26 Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument: A History Painting*, 1988, oil paint and collage (200 x 180 cm), William Humphries Art Gallery, Kimberly, South Africa

USEFUL WEBSITES
For a list of useful websites to explore, access the *Art-iculate Second Edition Interactive Textbook*.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

In this chapter, you will learn how your creative responses will be assessed. Your responses need to show how you have used the art process to:

- demonstrate your exploration of personal ideas or concepts
- show how you have developed a visual language through the trialling of materials, techniques and processes to produce a body of work

- document and analyse your thinking and working practices throughout the art process, using the language and context of selected and identified Analytical Frameworks
- include at least two finished artworks.

13.1 Introduction

The School-assessed Task contributes 50 per cent of your study score. You will start it in Unit 3 and finish in Unit 4. Your teacher will use criteria published in the assessment handbook to do an initial assessment of the School-assessed Task, and this will constitute the assessment for Outcome 2 in Units 3 and 4. Your teacher's assessment will then be subject to moderation by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

The award of satisfactory completion for this unit is based on a decision that you have demonstrated achievement of the set of outcomes specified for the unit. This decision will be based on your teacher's assessment of your overall performance on assessment tasks designated for the unit by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

13.2 Content of the assessment of the School-assessed Task

To successfully complete Outcome 2, you are required to develop a body of work on which you have worked progressively throughout the year, exploring personal ideas or concepts to produce at least two finished artworks. Your finished artworks are not assessed individually, but rather will be assessed as part of your body of work. It is important that you present evidence of a broad innovative investigation and the trialling of materials and techniques, and show documentation of your art practice in your body of work.

Although it should not be seen as a checklist, it is useful for you to evaluate how effectively you have applied the key knowledge and key skills outlined in the VCE Art Study Design to your body of work. Use the following points to determine how effectively you have met the criteria of the study design.

Key knowledge

- The art process relevant to materials, techniques, processes and art forms.
- Artistic practice that explores, experiments, develops, refines and resolves ideas, concepts, materials, techniques and processes.
- Artistic practice to refine, resolve and realise concepts in artworks.
- Techniques and processes to develop effective visual language that reflects imagination and the development of concepts and skills.
- Selected and identified Analytical Frameworks as a guide for reflective annotation.
- Terminology used in documentation annotation, reflection and evaluation.

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Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- make and document the development of creative personal responses using the art process to explore, investigate and experiment with materials, techniques, processes and art forms
- explore, develop and refine ideas and personal concepts
- manipulate visual and technical qualities to produce visual imagery and resolve artistic ideas and concepts to produce at least two finished artworks
- reflect on and document personal ideas and concepts
- employ the language of selected and identified Analytical Frameworks to support reflective annotation
- document and evaluate the development, refinement and resolution of artworks using appropriate written and visual material.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority publishes an assessment handbook for this study that includes advice on the assessment tasks and performance descriptors for assessment. It is important that you have a copy of both the performance descriptors and the marking scheme while you are developing your folio. Use them to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of this unit in your body of work.

In addition to your practical exploration of materials, techniques and processes within selected art forms, your folio will be assessed in terms of how effectively you have used appropriate Analytical Frameworks as tools to guide and support your art making, self-reflection and analysis. *The performance descriptors for assessment in this chapter are not produced by the VCAA, but rather provide a possible overview of how your folios may be assessed. It is important that you work to the official criteria once they are made available.* You can determine the extent to which your folio demonstrates the requirements of the study by applying the 'very high' assessment criteria to your work.

CRITERION 1: EXPLORATION OF CREATIVE PERSONAL ART RESPONSES, IDEAS, CONCEPTS AND OBSERVATIONS

Very high

You have produced a comprehensive and highly informative exploration of creative personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations. You have provided a focused and imaginative investigation of your selected art form/s and/or materials relevant to your intentions. The folio provides an insight into the development of your concepts, directions and skills. The range of your investigation is broad and creative.

CRITERION 2: EXPERIMENTATION AND INVESTIGATION OF MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES AND ART FORMS, SYMBOLISM AND STYLES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATED TECHNICAL SKILLS

Very high

Your body of work documents a broad and creative art process that includes the exploration and investigation of selected materials, techniques, processes and art form/s, relevant to your intentions. Your folio reveals a very high level of sustained experimentation, competence and control in the application of materials, techniques and aesthetic qualities. You have demonstrated a thoughtful and appropriate use of the art elements and principles, and made skilful use of materials and techniques throughout the art process, from initial exploratory work to the finished artworks.

CRITERION 3: EVIDENCE OF A PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND REFINEMENT OF SKILLS, IDEAS AND PERSONAL CONCEPTS

Very high

Your body of work is innovative and imaginative. You have consistently communicated the development of your ideas, concepts and skills from initial exploratory work, through the progressive refining of ideas and directions, to the resolution of concepts with technical skills. You have presented a sustained, clear and logically presented body of work that progressively realises and resolves your responses and reflects personal concepts, ideas, direction, aesthetic qualities, art form/s and/or media explorations. Detailed evidence is provided of your art practice. The development and refinement of your ideas and directions is progressive, innovative and highly imaginative. The application and refinement of techniques and processes demonstrate a very high level of technical skill in the use of materials and tools.

CRITERION 4: UNDERSTANDING AND APPROPRIATE MANIPULATION OF ART ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES, APPLICATION OF MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES AND THE USE OF SYMBOLISM AND STYLE TO PRODUCE A CREATIVE VISUAL LANGUAGE

Very high

Your application of the art elements and principles to visually communicate ideas and concepts is insightful and conceptually appropriate, and demonstrates excellent aesthetic awareness. The appropriate application of materials, techniques and processes and the use of symbolism and style to produce a creative visual language is insightful and highly effective. The clear annotation throughout your body of work demonstrates a very high level of understanding and control of the structural and aesthetic qualities.

CRITERION 5: EMPLOYING ART TERMINOLOGY AND SELECTED IDENTIFIED ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS AS TOOLS TO SUPPORT REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION AND THE DOCUMENTATION OF THINKING AND WORKING PRACTICES

Very high

Your written annotation makes excellent use of art terminology and combines with your visual documentation to clearly communicate your art practice. Your annotation makes outstanding use of clearly identified and appropriate Analytical Frameworks to provide critical analysis of artworks selected as inspiration and your own artworks throughout your body of work. You provide insightful reflection and thoughtful interpretation of the messages and meaning in your art and the work of others.

CRITERION 6: RESOLUTION OF IDEAS, DIRECTIONS AND/OR PERSONAL CONCEPTS IN A BODY OF WORK THAT INCLUDES AT LEAST TWO FINISHED ARTWORKS

Very high

Your body of work involves a highly imaginative realisation of an innovative art practice with sustained and critical reflection and evaluation of the development of the work throughout your art process. This work is comprehensive and insightfully organised with a highly effective and articulate visual presentation of the written and visual material. Progressive resolution of concepts and ideas with innovative, imaginative and extremely competent finished artworks is evident. Highly effective and clearly defined visual solutions are the culmination of a broad and innovative investigation. A high level of sustained and well-developed technical skill and highly effective, insightful and conceptually appropriate application of structural elements in the resolution of concepts and ideas is evident.

UNIT 3 FINAL ANALSIS:

(SF) THIS IS A <u>SELF-PORTRAIT</u>, DONE IN <u>WILLOW BARK</u> CHARCOAL ON 300gsm A1 (CUT DOWN TO SIZE LATER) PAPER.

(SF) THE CHARCOAL MEDIUM REFLECTS THE MORE SUBTLE SIDE OF <u>INNER CONFLICT</u> I AM TRYING TO EXPRESS. USING THE FACT THAT CHARCOAL WAS ONCE A NATURAL (ALIVE AND GROWING) PIECE OF WOOD BUT IS NOW <u>TECHNICALLY DEAD</u> (IT HAS BEEN <u>BURNT</u>) DRAWING ON THIS QUITE <u>VIOLENT MEDIUM</u> TO ADD THE MEANING OF BEING BURNT AND <u>NO LONGER FEELING ALIVE</u>

(SF) IN THIS WORK I HAVE MADE THE BEST USE OF THE CHARCOALS <u>RANGE</u> OF <u>TONE</u>. USING <u>CONTRAST</u> BY ADDING PRESSURE AND CREATING A VERY STRONG <u>BLACK</u> AGAINST THE <u>REDUCTION TECHNIQUE</u> I HAVE DEVELOPE WHICH LEAVES <u>GREY OR WHITE</u> I HAVE USUALLY CREATED <u>STRONG CONTRAST</u> WITHIN THE CANVAS

PERSONAL FRAMEWORK:

(SF) MY USE OF ONLY A <u>MONOCHROMATIC SCALE OF TONE</u> ADDS THE <u>LIFELESS SUGGESTION</u> I WANT THE AUDIENCE TO FEEL. GREY IS A VERY <u>DEPRESSIVE</u> AND <u>SAD</u> TONE, ADDING THIS GENERAL FEELING.
I HAVE ALSO FADED THE HAIR OUT SO THE <u>HEAD LOOKS LIKE IT IS FLOATING</u>. THIS ADDS THE IDEA THAT <u>I AM LOST</u>, FLOATING IN THE MIDDLE OF <u>NOWHERE</u>. I HAVE INCORPORATED A <u>SCRATCHING</u> TECHNIQUE THAT LOOK LIKE CLAW MARKS - <u>PAIN AND HURT ARE IMPLIED</u>

(SF) I WANTED THIS WORK TO BE <u>CONFRONTING</u> TO THE AUDIENCE, BECAUSE I WANTED TO EXPRESS INNER CONFLICT (IN MYSELF) AND GENERALLY PEOPLE WILL IGNORE / NOT UNDERSTAND BECAUSE IT IS NOT CONCERNING THEM ... SO I MADE THIS WORK LITERALLY <u>LARGER THAN LIFE</u> (A LITTLE LESS THAN A1) SO THE WORK <u>BECOMES BIGGER</u> THAN THEM AND HOPEFULLY <u>MORE IMPORTANT</u>

(SF) I HAVE DRAWN ON A FEW <u>TECHNIQUES AND ELEMENTS</u> TO ADD AND EXPRESS MEANING. I HAVE USED A <u>VERY EXPRESSIVE</u> WAY OF APPLYING CHARCOAL AND <u>USED CONTRAST</u> WITHIN THE TECHNIQUE TO EMPHASIS CRITICAL PARTS. THE <u>ROUGHLY APPLIED LINES</u> OF THE HAIR <u>CREATE MOVEMENT</u> AND QUITE A <u>WILD ENERGY</u>. I AM TRYING TO SHOW THE AUDIENCE HOW ON THE <u>OUTSIDE WE MAY BE</u> CALM AND STILL BUT INSIDE WE ARE A <u>MESSY TANGLE</u>. THE <u>CALM PENSIVE EXPRESSION</u> OF THE FACE REINFORCES THIS INSIDE-OUTSIDE CONFLICT. USING A <u>GRADIENT</u> I <u>FADED</u> THE <u>BLACK OUT</u>, CONTRASTING AND CREATING A MORE <u>DRAMATIC SCHEME</u> OF LIGHT AND DARK - THIS ADDS DRAMA AND MAKE THE <u>WORK JUMP OUT</u>.

• AS THIS IS A SELF-PORTRAIT, IT IS VERY PERSONAL TO ME. IT IS A COMBINATION OF HOW I SEE MYSELF AND HOW I WANT OTHERS TO SEE ME. IN THE CURRENT SOCIETY I LIVE IN, IT IS INCOURAGED WE GROW UP FAST AND WEAKNESS IS LOOKED DOWN UPON. IT HAS MADE COME TO FEEL MENTAL ILLNESS AND INNER STRUGGLES ARE BAD AND SHOULD BE HIDDEN
• AS A RESULT I HAVE HIDDEN MY PROBLEMS AND THEY HAVE BURNT ME UP INSIDE. THIS PORTRAIT EXPRESS WHAT I FEEL THE TABOO ON HIDING OUR TROUBLES DOES TO US INSIDE - IT DESTROYS US, LEAVING US LOST AND UNREVEALING. THIS PORTRAIT IS ALSO ABOUT MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THIS. MY EXPRESSION IS CALM, LOOKING FORWARD AND BRAVE, DETERMINED TO FACE MY FUTURE ... BUT, I AM HIDING MY DISTRESS AND PAIN INSIDE ME, AND I AM SLOWLY FADING. THE SCRATCHES ADD TO THIS UNREACTIVE PAIN.

Figure 13.1 A page from Bethany Cherry's visual diary: analysis of her first Unit 3 final artwork

Figure 13.1 shows a page from VCE Art student Bethany Cherry's visual diary, in which she applies the Structural and Personal Analytical Frameworks highly effectively to analyse her first Unit 3 final artwork, an A1 charcoal drawing on paper. Part of the annotation of her art process for this work can be seen in Chapter 12.

Bethany included a photograph of her final artwork, so that she could refer to the artwork directly in the analysis. The final artwork demonstrates the skilful resolution of the exploration shown in Figure 12.17. It is a highly effective visual solution that is a culmination of a broad and innovative investigation of materials, techniques and the elements and principles of art.

Glossary

abstract not representing outward appearances; having no recognisable subject. *Note:* this is different from abstracted, where the artist simplifies the subject but it remains figurative.

achromatic having no colour

aerial perspective the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be cooler and less intense, have less contrast and be less defined

aesthetic the perception or nature of beauty with respect to the visual aspects of art

alla prima Italian for 'the first time' or all at once; a method of painting in which sections of the painting are completed in one sitting, rather than using the traditional method of building up layers

ambient relating to the immediate surroundings

analysis the separation of the parts of a subject for individual study, in order to find out their nature, function and meaning. To analyse an artwork, the viewer breaks the artwork into simple elements in order to interpret the ideas and meanings expressed. The fundamentals of art analysis include studying the art elements and art principles, techniques, style, symbols and metaphors included in the artwork.

annotate write brief notes about your ideas and observations, and communicate your artistic practice

appropriation using an image from another artist, usually without permission, and placing it in a new context that changes its meaning

arabesque ornamental linear designs inspired by the rhythmic patterns of nature, originally found in Islamic art

archetype an original model that is a universal image

armature a skeleton-like framework that supports a figure being modelled

art criticism the analysis, evaluation, interpretation and judgement of works of art. Art criticism can vary in degrees of positive as well as negative remarks, and critical methods vary considerably in their approaches

to considering the forms, content and contexts of works of art.

art elements line, shape, colour, tone, texture and form; contemporary artworks can also have additional elements such as sound, light, time

art form how a work is presented and what materials have been used, including whether it is two-, three- or four-dimensional, and what materials and techniques have been used (e.g. painting, sculpture, multimedia works)

art principles emphasis (focal point), balance, movement, unity, variety, contrast, rhythm, repetition (pattern), scale, proportion and space

artisan a skilled craft worker who makes objects by hand

artistic practice includes use of the art process, critical, creative and reflective thinking; visual language and analysis using the Analytical Frameworks

asymmetrical the opposite of symmetrical; the objects in an image are not balanced and each half of the image does not resemble the other

asymmetrical balance where balance is achieved by elements either side of a visual axis achieving equal visual weight despite their variation in colour, scale and number. A large object can be balanced by a number of smaller objects or a single large area of subdued colour can be balanced by a small area of bright colour. This creates a dynamic informal composition.

Baroque art style or movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where artists used strong contrasts, emotion, movement, exaggeration and theatrical effects

batik a technique of wax-resist dyeing applied to fabric

body of work a collection of visual and written material communicating artistic practices

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buffing the act of covering over graffiti; an activity that usually is sponsored by city councils for the purpose of 'cleaning up' street art characterised as vandalism

bust a sculpture of a person's head, shoulders and chest

celadon glaze a grey-green glaze used on ceramics, especially from China; pottery made with celadon glaze

chiaroscuro Italian for 'light-dark'; refers to the contrast of light and dark to make forms look three-dimensional

cinematic of, or relating to, motion pictures

classical related to the art of ancient Greece and Rome; used to refer to the characteristics of beauty, balance and unity associated with these periods of art

closed composition a composition in which there is a clear focal point and all the elements are kept within the frame

coiling a technique of building pots by rolling coils or ropes of clay and layering them to build the walls

collaboration two or more artists/artisans working together to create an artwork; in some contemporary artworks, the viewer is also a collaborator

colonialism political control of one country by another, which occupies it with settlers

commentaries statements by artists, critics, historians or the public about an artwork or an issue

commission the act of hiring someone to create an artwork, usually for a fee

composition the arrangement of the objects and the way the art elements are structured in the format

conceptual based on or relating to ideas or concepts

conceptual art art in which the creative thought, the concept and the process are considered to be more important than the product

contrapposto Italian for counterpose; having the weight on one leg and the body twisted so that the hips and legs are turned in a different direction to the shoulders and head

contrast when two different art elements or principles are used in the same work specifically to create emphasis and visual interest – for example, the use of changing scale or contrasting colours like blue and yellow

cross-hatching shading by drawing sets of parallel lines that cross each other

Cubism early twentieth-century art style in which objects were fragmented and rearranged, often using multiple viewpoints

Dada an art movement started after World War I that was a reaction to the horrors of war; the artists created artworks that lacked traditional value and had little or no aesthetics

depth of field photographic term to describe the distance between the nearest and furthest points that are in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph

didactic teaching or giving instructions

double exposures can be used to create a complex image that combines elements from more than one negative or repeats aspects from the same negative in one print

earth art see land and earth art

empirical observed or factual information about the artwork, such as the title, artist, date of execution, medium and where the artwork can be found. This is not information that relies on opinion or interpretation.

ephemeral an artwork that is temporary and lasts at the site for a short period of time; works such as installations can be ephemeral if intended for temporary display or if created with impermanent materials without any attempt to preserve them

etching a printing process in which a design is scratched through an acid-resistant ground on a metal surface before being submerged in acid. Ink is pressed into the resulting grooves and printed onto paper.

figurative representing objects from the observed world in such a way that they can easily be recognised

firing a process of applying heat in a kiln to harden or glaze ceramics

focal point centre of attention

foreshortening shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and to make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

found object an object not originally intended as a work of art, which is found and exhibited by an artist

four-dimensional adds time to the traditional dimensions of height, width and depth

framing isolating and drawing attention to the most important part of an image by surrounding it with a visual 'frame'

genre depicts the realistic representation of everyday life; genres are also various categories of subject matter

gestural marks made on paper, board and canvas that are a direct expression of the artist; usually created in broad, sweeping lines or directional strokes

glaze (ceramics) a glass-like substance fused onto the surface of pottery to form a waterproof decorative coating

glaze (painting) a translucent layer of oil paint that can be either thick or thin; a glaze medium can be mixed with the paint or diluted with a mixture of 50 per cent linseed oil and 50 per cent turpentine

Gothic the dominant style of architecture in Europe in the late Middle Ages, characterised by pointed arches, slender windows and elaborate architectural carving

Gothic Revival a nineteenth-century style inspired by the Gothic period and known for its sense of fantasy and whimsy

graphic novel a novel in comic-strip format

halo a circle of light, generally placed around the head of a saint or holy person to symbolise their holiness

hand-coloured gelatin silver prints black and white prints that are coloured using watercolour paints or drawing inks

harmony elements are harmonious if they are similar, such as colours (e.g. warm colours)

high key composed mainly of light tones

holistic the idea that all the properties of a given system (e.g. physical) cannot be determined or explained by its component parts alone; painting with no particular focal point and no natural boundaries – also called all-over painting

horizon line the line where water or land meets the sky; this is the eye level of the viewer in a painting, drawing or photograph

Humanist prioritises human endeavours and values rather than religious or spiritual beliefs

iconography symbolism that represents religious or spiritual concepts; or symbols, images and subject matter used in an artwork

immersive appearing to surround the viewer in three dimensions

Impressionism a French art movement that represented everyday scenes in an attempt to capture light, surface and atmosphere

in the round free-standing, three-dimensional form that can be viewed from all sides

incise to cut into

installation artwork designed for a gallery space or other environment for a specific period of time; these artworks are designed to be walked through and around so the viewer becomes immersed in the experience of the work

iterative the act of repeating a process, either to generate a range of outcomes or with the aim of approaching a desired goal, target or result

juxtaposed placed side by side to create contrast

kawaii cute, in a Japanese context

kinetic relating to or resulting from movement

kitsch refers to 'vulgar' art, or art with no artistic merit such as commercial ornaments, tourist souvenirs; the *Cambridge Dictionary* defines it as works of art or decorative objects that are ugly, silly or worthless

land or earth art an art movement that emerged in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which landscape and the work of art are inextricably linked

linear representing shapes and details by using clearly defined lines and edges

linear perspective the illusion of spatial depth created by parallel lines that appear to converge as they move towards the horizon

low key composed mainly of dark tones

Madonna the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus

manga a style of Japanese comic books and graphic novels, aimed at adults as well as children

maquette small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

materials what an artwork is actually made of (e.g. paint, charcoal, video or plaster); not to be confused with 'technique', which is how the materials are used

memento mori an object serving as a reminder of death and mortality

metaphor one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities

montage a composite produced from fragments

monumental grand or imposing; resembling a monument

multi-disciplinary art practices that work across a range of art forms and materials, blurring their boundaries

multi-sensory involving more than one of the senses

narrative story

Neo-Platonic a philosophical system that originated in the third century. Founded by Plotinus, it was based chiefly on Platonic doctrine and Oriental mysticism, with later influences from Christianity. It holds that all existence consists of emanations from the One, with whom the soul may be reunited.

new media refers to interdisciplinary works using recently developed electronic media and recent developments in software and related hardware devices

objective colour the actual colour of an object, observed colour; also known as local colour

ochre coloured earth or clay that can be used as pigment

oeuvre French word describing the collected works of an artist

open composition composition in which the objects in the image seem to extend beyond the edges of the frame

palimpsest a manuscript or piece of writing material on which later writing has been superimposed, effacing the earlier writing; something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form

palette the range of colours used by an artist; surface on which paints are mixed

patina a thin layer that forms on a surface – usually metal – because of use, age or chemical action

patron person who supports the arts, especially financially

personal meaning ideas, concepts, images and issues that are significant to you or that are of personal interest

photograffeur a term coined by JR to note the link between his photography and the genre of graffiti or street art (*graffeur* means graffiti artist in French)

photogram image created in the darkroom without the use of a camera: objects are placed onto photographic paper and then exposed to light; the silhouette of the object appears on the paper; objects that combine interesting positive and negative shapes as well as those that have areas of transparency are often used

photographic transfer a process that transfers a photographic image onto a new surface

photorealism a style of painting or sculpture that resembles the photographs used as reference in its reproduction of accurate and realistic detail; sometimes called super realism or hyper-realism, although these may be done from life, not photographic reference

photo-shoot a session in which a photographer takes a number of photographs

pictorial space the space on the picture plane or surface of the artwork

picture plane the imaginary plane corresponding to the surface of a picture, perpendicular to the viewer's line of sight, similar to a plate of glass

pigment the substance or powder used as a colouring agent

porcelain a fine white ceramic ware, sometimes called china

postcolonial after the end of colonial rule; generally refers to the legacy of colonial history

postmodern an eclectic style of art that came about as a reaction to modernism, which had dominated art theory and practice since the beginning of the twentieth century. It challenges traditions and the ideas of originality by using non-traditional materials and art forms, appropriation or humour.

propaganda the spreading of a doctrine that reflects the views or interests of a particular group

psyche Greek translation of the Latin *anima*, which means soul; refers to the human spirit or mind

rarrk cross-hatching used by Aboriginal people from Arnhem Land

ready-made a manufactured found object modified by an artist and presented as an artwork in a different context from that originally intended

recontextualise place in a new or unfamiliar context, especially in order to suggest a different interpretation

relief carving any 3D work that projects *from* but belongs *to* the wall, or other type of background surface, on which it is carved

repetition where elements of an artwork occur more than once, often to create unity in a work; can be repeated shapes, colours, arrangements or even sounds in multimedia works

resolution an idea that that you have explored and refined to the point where it is considered complete

secular worldly; not having any connection to a church or religion

selective focusing photographic term referring to focusing on a particular part of a composition and throwing other sections out of focus

sgraffito a form of decoration made by scratching through a surface to reveal a lower layer of a colour. In painting, this technique is often done with the handle of the brush while the paint is still wet.

site-specific created for a specific site; an artwork will relate to various aesthetic qualities of the site or environment for which it is created

soundscape an immersive environment created by a combination of sounds

staccato short and disconnected, jerky

stencil made by cutting an image out of cardboard, plastic or any flat, sliceable surface; stencils are held up to walls and spray painted over

stop-motion animation a technique in which objects or images are photographed one or two frames at a time with slight changes so that the illusion of movement is created when they are screened rapidly

storyboard series of sketches depicting the sequence of scenes and action of a planned film or video production

style distinctive characteristics of an artwork that identify it with an artist or a group of artists

subjective colour a colour chosen for personal reasons or selected by the artist for its symbolic value

subtractive cutting back or taking away

surface composition the space of the picture plane – how objects are arranged within the space of the format and the space that exists between these objects. It also refers to the space around the objects and the space into the image (real or illusion).

surreal having a dream-like quality

symbol a sign that represents an idea

symbolism representing something abstract – an idea or concept – with something concrete, visible or tangible

symmetrical balance where elements are mirrored on opposite sides of a visual axis. This creates a stable and formal composition.

tableau grouping that forms an image or picture; plural – *tableaux*

technique the manner in which the artist applies materials to the artwork

thinking and working practice your art practice – what you are trying to achieve, the conceptualisation of your ideas – is your thinking practice. How you create a visual representation of these ideas, by exploring materials, techniques, processes and art forms, is your working practice.

three-dimensional has three dimensions – height, width and depth

thumbnail sketches small, rough sketches outlining the elements in a proposed artwork, useful for exploring multiple ideas quickly

time-based art depends on the passage of time – for example, performance, video and sound works and much technology-based art

traditional existing as part of a tradition; long-established

triptych an artwork in three panels or parts

two-dimensional flat with two dimensions – height and width

type C photograph a colour photograph printed from a negative (the developed film that contains a reversed tone image of the original scene)

ukiyo-e (pictures of the floating world) woodblock prints produced in Japan from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, depicting subjects such as female beauties, *kabuki* actors and sumo wrestlers, landscape, traditional scenes from daily life, or folk tales and erotica

unprimed not having a layer of undercoat on the painting surface; the canvas responds by being more absorbent

vanitas Latin for 'emptiness'; refers to the transience of things of the world and the inevitability of death; in seventeenth-century still-life paintings, *vanitas* was signified by images of spoiling food, the overturned glass, the burning candle, worms and the obvious inclusion of the skull

variety created by using a different element in a repetitive pattern (e.g. a square in a position of circles)

vertical position the base of an object on the ground is positioned higher on the picture plane the further away it is

visual language the way in which images, the elements and principles of art, materials, techniques, processes and art forms can be used to communicate concepts and ideas

vitrine glass cabinet or showcase

voyeur a French term for an obsessive, often secretive, watcher

wave field synthesis software this system uses specially designed loudspeakers that provide listeners with an immersive sonic experience. This technology allows sound to appear to emanate from any desired area of the space, and then move through the area in spatial pathways or patterns within and outside the formation of the loudspeakers.

wunderkammer a place where a collection of rarities is exhibited; a precursor to the concept of a museum; also known as a cabinet of curiosities

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