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Art for VCE Units 1–4

Art-iculate

Kathryn Hendy-Ekers
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Daniel Aspinall

About the cover

'From a young age I have been making films. It's only over the last few years that I have become interested in still photography. I use my film skills within my photography, emphasising the story it suggests, but particularly the drama. The Line was created using Photoshop, through a number of photographs, and immense burning and dodging to create the intense lighting effect. It is inspired by cinematic climaxes, when the highest point of drama is reached.'

Andrew Pearce, April 2009



Andrew Pearce, Wodonga
Senior Secondary College,
Wodonga,
The Line, 2008 inkjet
print; 49.5 x 82.0 cm
Photography: Jeremy Dillon

Introduction

Congratulations on choosing Art-iculate. This book has been purpose written to meet the requirements of the Units 1–4 of the VCE Art Study Design (2010–2014).

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 artforms and artists, while taking part in a process of personal artmaking. 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 artmaking.

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 artforms, materials, techniques and processes, students progressively develop their own aesthetic awareness of artworks.

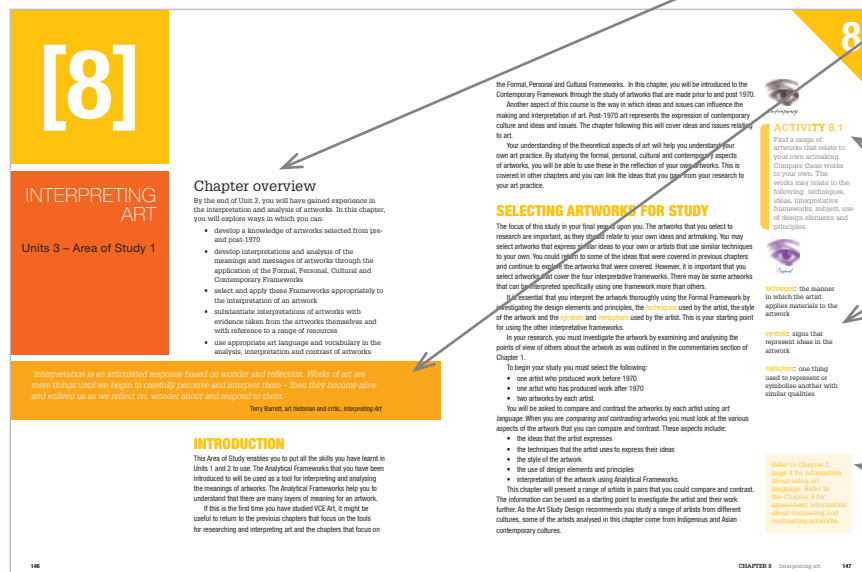
Using Art-iculate

The Art-iculate resource package consists of three components:

1 Student Book

The Student Book contains detailed information on all aspects of the VCE Art Study Design and is structured in such a way as to ensure that students and teachers cover all key knowledge and skills.

Key features of the Student Book



Chapter overview – outline keys knowledge and skills from the Study Design.







Notable quotes – from artists, art critics and authors help to start classroom discussion and encourage you to think about key concepts for a different perspective.

Activities – encourage you to consolidate and extend your knowledge and skills on a wide range of key topics.

Glossary terms – for each unit are outlined in the margin and in the glossary at the end of the book. These definitions are designed to help you learn and revise key terms from the Study Design.

Tips – appear throughout each topic to draw your attention to important practical, theoretical or safety information.

Guide to icons

	<p>Formal Framework icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know when the Formal Framework is being applied in order to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of an artwork.</p>
	<p>Personal Framework icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know when the Personal Framework is being applied in order to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of an artwork.</p>
	<p>Cultural Framework icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know when the Cultural Framework is being applied in order to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of an artwork.</p>
	<p>Contemporary Framework icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know when the Contemporary Framework is being applied in order to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of an artwork.</p>
	<p>Student CD-ROM icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know that there is some additional information or activities on the Student CD-ROM at the back of the book.</p>
	<p>Web resources icon</p> <p>This icon lets you know that you will need to access the internet in order to complete an activity or research task.</p>

Assessment chapters

Throughout the Student Book, you will also find five stand alone assessment chapters. These chapters include important information and tips to help you understand the assessment requirements of the Study Design and maximize your chance of achieving success in VCE Art. All of the assessment chapters contain sample student artworks and annotated student responses along with assessment criteria.

In Units 3 and 4, your grade is broken up in the following way:

- Unit 3 school-assessed coursework: 10 per cent
- Unit 4 school-assessed coursework: 10 per cent
- Units 3 and 4 school-assessed task: 50 per cent
- End-of-year examination: 30 per cent

[7]

ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 2

Unit 2 – Outcomes 1 & 2

Chapter overview

In this chapter, you will read how assessment will guide your study so:

- recognise the role and purposes that art plays in society
- apply the Formal Framework
- apply the Cultural Framework
- compare and contrast artworks
- justify personal responses
- use appropriate art language
- use reflective responses that demonstrate your exploration of ideas about culture through trialing techniques, materials and processes to produce an artwork.

You will find:

- assessment criteria sheet
- a sample response by a student with marking notes that highlight assessments.

‘Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end, then stop.’
Lewis Carroll (1832–1998), *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

INTRODUCTION FOR OUTCOME 1

To successfully complete Outcome 1 in Unit 2, you will need to study artworks by at least two artists from a range of cultural contexts. You must use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks as both contexts. You must use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks as both contexts. You must use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks as both contexts. You must use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks as both contexts.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unit 2 requires you to address the Cultural Framework as a means of understanding how an artwork reflects the time and place of its creation. Culture means 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:

- Organise the pieces you wish to make into an essay plan.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare artworks.
- Comparing and contrasting should take place throughout an essay.
- Use the Formal Framework to compare and contrast artworks in terms of elements, principles, style, colour, technique and symbolism.
- Use the Cultural Framework to compare and contrast the different ways that artists of different times and in different places and societies create and interpret images.
- Refer to relevant symbolism.
- Use visual evidence from the artwork 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 a point of comparison in mind. For example, how do they reflect society’s response to a particular concern, such as war and conflict, nature and child, or the rules?
- Research your selected artists and artworks and their cultural contexts. This will increase your knowledge and understanding of the environments in which the works were created and the roles they played in their original settings.
- Analytic, interpretive and comparison of artworks require close and perceptive observation. Place coloured images of the artworks side by side to assist you to compare formal qualities, technique and style and examine them carefully.
- When comparing and contrasting, select the most important points of difference. This is always easier if the works you discuss are linked by an idea or a theme.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare the artworks. When contrasting and contrasting you need to go on a number of levels. Consider the following questions:
 - 1 How does the appearance of the artworks differ? Were they created in the same artforms?
 - 2 How does the meaning of the work be interpreted? By the artist? By the public at that time? Using the same materials, techniques and processes?
 - 3 How are the meanings of the artwork originally viewed? Has this changed over time? Is the artist’s intention to be understood? What was the artist’s original intent? Was the work exhibited versus important in understanding the aims of the artist and the way the work is observed and interpreted? (Yes, how?)

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 1

Name: _____

Criteria for the award of grades	Outcome 1: Analyse, interpret and compare artworks from different cultural backgrounds.					Marks allocated
	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	
Criterion 1 Application of the Formal Framework to analyse and interpret the artworks (including symbolism)						/5
Criterion 2 Application of the Cultural Framework to identify the ways that artworks are influenced by and affect their cultural context (including symbolism)						/5
Criterion 3 Distinction of the roles and purposes of artworks, how they reflect the societies in which they are made and how this is evident in the works						/5
Criterion 4 Comparison and contrasting in the similarities and differences between the artworks						/5
Criterion 5 Expression of personal opinions supported by evidence from the artworks and research						/5
Criterion 6 Use of appropriate art language and research						/5

These criteria have been developed from the VCE Art Study Design and would apply to an extended response (essay or the like response). Not all tasks need to assess all criteria. This may be achieved instead by a combination of other tasks. This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSES

Task: Analyse, interpret and compare two artworks from different cultural backgrounds that are linked by the theme of *Gender and Child*. Address each criterion and use evidence to support your opinions.

Francesca Orlandi used the criteria sheet on the opposite page.




Figure 2.1 Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Portrait*, c. 1432 or 1434. Oil on panel, 62 x 68 cm. Musée de Louvre, Paris




Figure 2.2 Tracy Mitchell, *Up on the Sky Pt. 1*, 1997. One of 25 images off-set print, 50 x 50 cm. Image: Peter, 70 x 70 cm. Image: Peter, 70 x 70 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Ruyter Gallery, Sydney

The most notable differences, which compare, contrast and provide evidence to support my opinion, are the use of perspective and the use of light. The Arnolfini Portrait is a single-point perspective painting, which is a technique used by the Northern Renaissance painter Jan van Eyck. The use of light is evident in the painting, with the light source being the chandelier in the center of the room. This is highlighted in a comparison of the two paintings, where the light source in the Arnolfini Portrait is a chandelier, while the light source in *Up on the Sky Pt. 1* is a window. The use of light in the Arnolfini Portrait is used to create a sense of depth and perspective, while the use of light in *Up on the Sky Pt. 1* is used to create a sense of atmosphere and mood. The use of light in the Arnolfini Portrait is used to create a sense of depth and perspective, while the use of light in *Up on the Sky Pt. 1* is used to create a sense of atmosphere and mood.

Detailed assessment information and study tips – will help you gain a thorough understanding of what is expected for each outcome.

Assessment criteria – are included so that the requirements of each task are made explicit.

Student sample responses – are provided along with teacher comments to help you maximize your chance of success.

2 Student CD-ROM

The Student CD-ROM can be found at the back of the Student Book. It contains an electronic version of the Student Book as well as additional material on a range of artists and assessment criteria. For a detailed list of material, refer to the Contents pages.

3 Student and teacher website

The *Art-iculate* website is a free resource that contains a range of additional activities, weblinks, teaching plans and curriculum documents to support students and teachers.



Figure 0.1 Vincent Van Gogh, *Memory of the Garden at Etten (Ladies of Aries)*, 1888, oil on canvas, 73.5 x 92.5cm, Hermitage Museum Russia

[1]

Chapter overview

By the end of Unit 1, 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 artforms. 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 language in your writing and discussion
- understand what art commentaries are and how they are used in writing and discussion about art
- apply the Analytical Frameworks: Formal, Cultural, Personal and Contemporary, to interpret and analyse the meanings and messages of artworks
- form your own understanding and opinion of artworks
- create your own folio of work by researching visual stimulus, materials, techniques and ideas.

TOOLS FOR
RESEARCHING,
INVESTIGATING
AND
INTERPRETING
ARTWORKS
CREATING A
PRACTICAL FOLIO

'The VCE Art Study recognises art as an integral part of our lives. Art is a potent and dynamic visual language through which we are able to communicate personal experiences, ideas and cultural values. In both the process of making and examining art, students can realise the power to inspire change through imagination, creativity and innovation.'

Rationale – VCE Art Study Design 2010–2014

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.

The study of Art involves the development of skills in research, **analysis** and **art criticism**. Art study fosters enquiry. It also gives you the ability to develop your own personal ideas and concepts. You will undertake a visual investigation that will draw upon the expression

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 basic elements of art analysis include studying design elements and 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

of your personal ideas on a range of social, emotional and physical experiences. Therefore you will be responding to the artworks you have researched through the exploration and experimentation of artforms, materials, techniques and processes to develop your own artworks.

This first chapter 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 artmaking processes and skills.



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

RESEARCHING ARTWORKS

Commencing your research

You can use a number of resources to research artworks. Your school or local library will have books that are relevant in their Art sections. Your next stop is the internet. Most importantly, 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 a community gallery. Art magazines are also a good source of information on contemporary artists. There are also films, CDs and DVDs 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 as to how you will approach your research. You can group your findings in several ways, such as:

- The **artform** that the artist uses, for example three-dimensional works such as sculpture, ceramics and constructions; two-dimensional works such as painting, drawing, printmaking, collage, photography – both analogue and digital; four-dimensional works including multimedia works such as performance-based works, video works, works that involve sound and time, and installations.
- The **materials** that the artwork has been made from. With today's wide range of contemporary artforms, it is important to consider materials outside those traditionally used in artforms. As well as pencils, charcoal and paint an artist may use textiles as an artform. 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 theme of the work.
- Finally, 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 title of the work.
- The date it was produced; including the period of art it may have come from (e.g. Egyptian, Surrealism, Contemporary).
- The materials the artwork is made from.
- 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.

artform: how a work is presented and what materials have been used, including; whether it is two, three or four-dimensional, 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

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.



Figure 1.2
Jeffrey Smart, *Central Station II*, 1974–1975, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 86 x 100cm. Purchased 1976. Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales © Jeffrey Smart, photograph: Brendan McGeachie

ACTIVITY 1.2

Figure 1.2 is by Jeffrey Smart. Research any background information you can on the artist, such as the period of time and location when Smart painted this image. Find 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 if you can make a list of words that you think are words used in art language. See if you can look up the definition of the words in the glossary. Write the definition next to the word.

Art language

Throughout the VCE Art course, you will be asked to use art language and vocabulary in your writing and research. Many of the tasks that you will do will involve the use of art language 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 to evaluate their work.

Art, like many other subjects, 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 artforms. 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 language through specific examples.

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

- artforms
- materials and media
- techniques and processes
- style of artwork
- subject matter or content of an artwork
- use of design elements and principles in an artwork
- interpretation and analysis of artworks.

Art commentaries

Commentaries are often statements made about an artwork by a range of people. Commentaries include information from visiting speakers; art lecturers; gallery guides or the artists themselves; from film, sound and video files or online programs devoted to specific artists or styles; 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.



Figure 1.3
Jackson Pollock,
Convergence, 1952, oil on
canvas 237.5 x 393.7cm
© The Pollock – Krasner
Foundation/ARS. Licensed
by VISCOPY, 2009

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 this artwork? Do you agree with the comment?

ACTIVITY 1.5

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 1.6

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

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

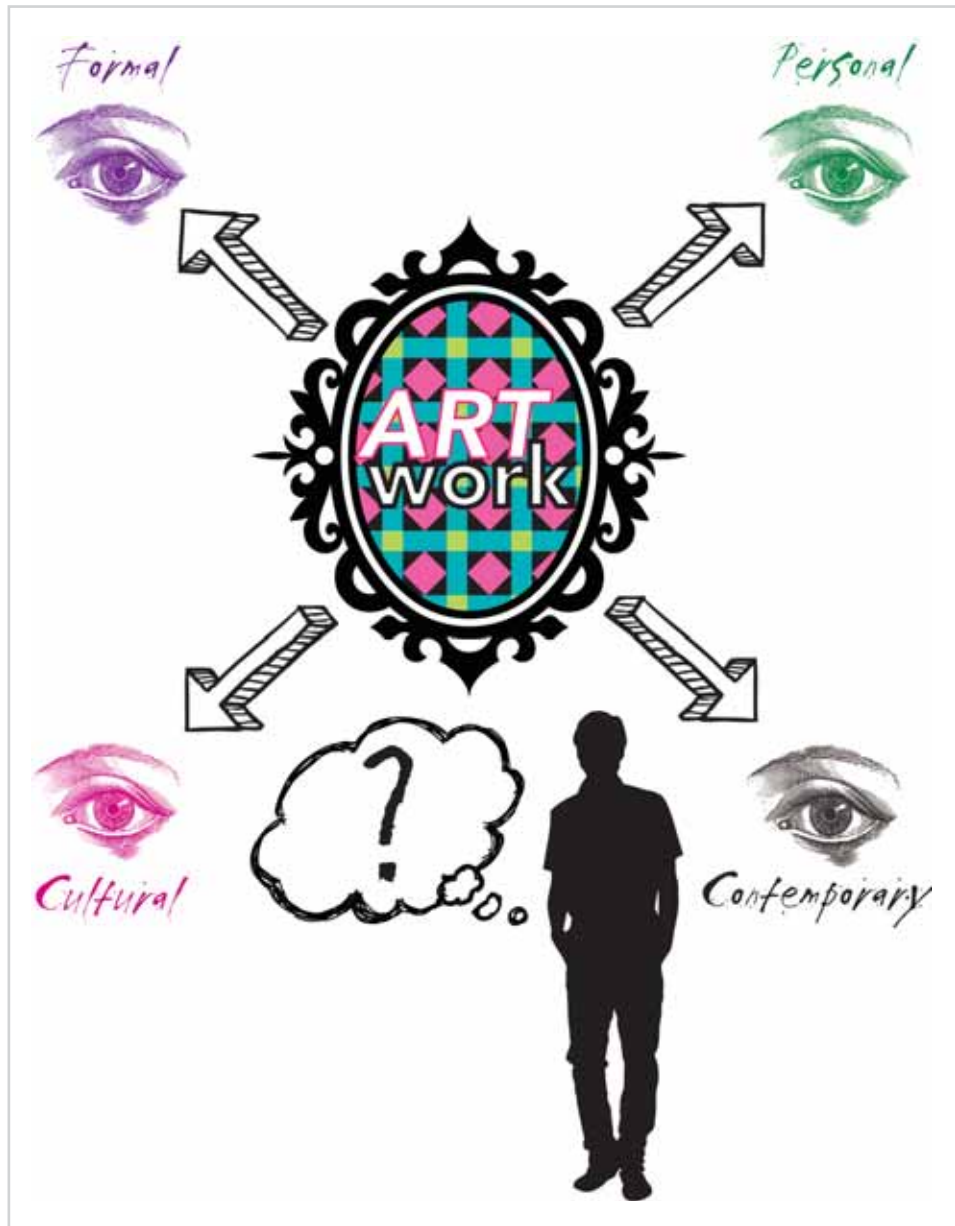


Figure 1.4
The Analytical Frameworks

The Analytical Frameworks are tools that assist you to analyse and interpret the meanings of artworks. There are four Analytical Frameworks:

- 1 the Formal Framework**
- 2 the Personal Framework**
- 3 the Cultural Framework**
- 4 the Contemporary Framework.**

The Frameworks provide you with different ways of obtaining meaning from an artwork.

The Formal Framework

This Framework is used when the viewer analyses the formal elements of an artwork and how they contribute to the meanings and messages of the work. This is the most important Framework and it provides links between the other Frameworks. The Formal Framework can be broken into different aspects of interpretation, such as:

- Visual analysis – how have the elements and principles of art been applied by the artist? What effect has this created? How do these qualities contribute to the meanings and messages of the artwork?
- Technique – what materials and techniques has the artist used and how do these assist in our interpretation of the artwork?
- Style – does the artist work in a distinctive style? How do the stylistic qualities of the artwork contribute to the meaning of the artwork?
- Symbolism and metaphor – what physical aspects or presentation of the artwork suggest symbolic meaning?

Visual analysis

A visual analysis involves analysing the elements and principles of art and how they contribute to the meanings and messages of the artwork. Using the design elements and principles is a bit like baking a cake: the elements are the ingredients and the principles are how these ingredients can be put together in an artwork. The combination of the **design elements** and **design principles** in an artwork is also called the composition. An artist may choose certain design elements and combine them with the principles to express their ideas.



design elements:

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

design principles: balance, focal point, unity (including harmony), variety, rhythm and space

ACTIVITY 1.7

Using a range of artworks from different periods of time and cultures, analyse the use of the design elements and principles. Write a description of the artwork and then discuss the use of the design elements and principles. There is a range of additional information relating to the design elements and principles on the Student CD-ROM.



Student CD-ROM

ACTIVITY 1.8

Using the same artworks, discuss how the artist has used the design elements and principles to communicate their ideas. Use examples of the design elements and principles that have been used to communicate those ideas by looking at the wordlists on the Student CD-ROM.

Use the table on pages 8 and 9 when analysing the use of design elements and principles in an artwork.

Table 1.1 Design elements and principles

Design element description	Analysis questions
<p>Line – The path left by a moving point. Lines can be physically represented in an artwork or can be visual references to space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the types of line used in the work. • What mood does the line create? • How does line assist in forming composition of the work?
<p>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. The colours of the colour wheel are called <i>hues</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the colours 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?
<p>Tone – Is the degree of lightness or darkness of aspects of an artwork, such as colour or light.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has tone been used? Is it highly contrasted? Are a variety of tones used? Is limited tone used? Is high key tone used? • How does the use of tone contribute to the mood of the image?
<p>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 they are simulated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 of the image?
<p>Shape – Is a two-dimensional area that can be drawn or cut. Shapes can be organic or geometric.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the shapes in the image geometric, flat, 3D or natural? • How are the shapes formed? • 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?
<p>Form – Is an element of art that is three-dimensional. It has height, width and depth and encloses space or volume.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the artist created the appearance of form in the work? Is it using particular brushstrokes? • Have they used light and surface qualities to suggest form? • Has the artist used particular materials to create form?
Design principle description	Analysis questions
<p>Composition – Is an arrangement or combination of the design elements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the artist emphasise visually? What first attracts the viewer’s attention? • How does the artist emphasise this/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, abstract or realistic? • How has the artist achieved an emotion or idea by using the visual elements? What are the ideas suggested? How are the visual elements arranged to achieve this?
<p>Balance – Affects the composition of an artwork and the combinations of the different elements in the work. Balance can be termed as symmetrical or asymmetrical.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the contrast of elements in the work create balance? (E.g. are some shapes larger than others are, 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?

Design principle description	Analysis questions
<p>Focal point – Is 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 using certain techniques including the contrast within a particular element, the size and placement of certain elements and by using lines and rhythm to draw our attention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What elements have been used to create a focal point in the artwork? • Describe the contrast of elements that have been used to create a focal point in the artwork. • Where have certain elements been placed to create the focal point in the artwork? • How has rhythm of the elements created the focal point in the artwork? What elements have been repeated or how have patterns been created?
<p>Unity – Is 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. An example of this is repetition. When elements are the same size and type and placed in a particular pattern they are said to be unified through repetition. Harmony within elements can also create a sense of unity, such as the use of harmonious colours in a work. 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which elements have been repeated to create unity in the artwork? How have the elements been repeated? • Are the shapes the same size and placed in a pattern to create unity? Or are they different sizes, thus creating variety? Describe the use of the shapes by the artist. • Has the artist used contrast with the elements to create variety in the artwork?
<p>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 design principles. Contrast can create a focal point in an artwork. Contrast can also create variety in an artwork.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?
<p>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 ordered pattern of shapes, space and colour in the work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What visual movement do you see in the artwork? • Which elements have been repeated to create this visual movement? Describe how patterns have been created by shape, space or colour.
<p>Space – When an artist arranges the art elements in an artwork, they create the artwork in a space. In two-dimensional artworks, three-dimensional space is given an illusion or is created. In three-dimensional artworks, the artist is working within the three-dimensional space. Not all two-dimensional artworks have the illusion of space; often abstract works and works involving patterning use the space on the picture plane. Often artists creating installation works are creating the artwork in a pre-existing space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the artist created depth or space in the composition? Have they used lines, the placing of objects, perspective or any other element to create space?

high key: composed mainly of light tones

symmetrical: where one side of an image mirrors the other. A work can have symmetry in the way it is arranged without the items in each half of the image being identical, rather it is their size and position that creates the symmetry, creating what is known as 'formal balance'

asymmetrical: opposite of symmetrical, the objects in an image are not balanced and each half of the image does not resemble the other

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

harmony: elements are harmonious if they are similar, such as colours (e.g. warm colours)

variety: variety is created by using a different element in a repetitive pattern (e.g. a square in a position of circles)

contrast: when two different forms of the elements are used in the same work specifically to emphasise the difference between them, for example use of light and shade or use of contrasting colours like blue and yellow.

ACTIVITY 1.9 Techniques

Using five artworks that you find in this textbook, answer the questions opposite. Use examples from the artwork to illustrate your answer.

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, printmaking, sculpture, three-dimensional works, performance works, and installations.

Questions to ask when analysing techniques in an artwork:

- 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?

Figure 1.5
Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656–57, oil on canvas, 318 x 276cm



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. The reason for the artist choosing certain materials and techniques relates to the purpose of the artwork.

- What processes has the artist used to create the work?
- What has influenced the production of the artwork? Is there an idea behind the work?
- Does the work appear representational or non-representational? Is it romantic? Is it a form of high art? Abstract? Realistic? Photojournalistic?
- Was it made as a narrative, i.e. was it designed to tell a story?
- What art movement does the image come from? Are there clues in the work that lead you to deduce this?
- What has the artist done with the techniques to achieve a certain style? For example, it may be realistic, abstract or expressionistic and the artist has used specific techniques to create that style.
- How does the style of the artwork represent the period of time in which the artist was living?
- 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?

The Spanish Court Painter, Diego Velasquez, painted the above artwork. The painting is of the infant Spanish princess and depicts the Royal family in the court. The style is **Baroque** and the work is a **narrative**.

Baroque: art style or movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, where artists used strong contrasts, emotion, movement, exaggeration and theatrical effects

narrative: telling a story

ACTIVITY 1.10

Write a definition of the following styles using the glossary in this book or other resources. Find an example of an artwork in each style. Write a series of points that justify why the artwork has been created in a particular style. Styles include Romanticism, Realism, Abstract, Neo-Classicism, Photojournalism, Narrative, Surrealism, Baroque, Renaissance, Impressionist, Cubist, Post-Impressionism, Expressionism, Pop art.

Metaphor and symbolism

Many artworks have physical symbols in them that represent abstract thought or **metaphors**. For example, the colour red can symbolise love or power. Artists and artworks throughout different times and cultures have displayed symbols in different ways. The artist may use the design 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 to what the meaning of the artwork may be. The artist may choose a particular artform to convey their ideas or use techniques in a particular way. The style of the artwork may also convey ideas.

metaphor: one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities

Questions you can ask when analysing symbolism in an artwork.

- What art elements and principles has the artist used as symbols? Describe what these are and the ideas they represent.
- How has the composition of the artwork been arranged to give 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 artform 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*, the artist has used significant symbolism. There are many symbols painted in the work that represent the marriage in the period it was painted. An example is the mirror in the background, which is reflecting the future for the young couple.

An example of how to apply the Formal Framework, using *Self-portrait in the Studio* by Brett Whiteley, can be found on the Student CD-ROM.



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



ACTIVITY 1.11

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

The Personal Framework

The Personal Framework can be used to interpret how an artist's experiences, feelings and thinking 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, what symbolic elements, aesthetic qualities or techniques they may have used in the work that are relevant to their personal ideas.

When applying this framework to your interpretation here are some questions that you may ask:

- What evidence in the artwork reflects aspects of the artist's life? Are there personal objects or is it a scene that relates to the artist's personality? Are there any symbols that reflect the artist's personality?
- Can the artwork be linked to people, places or personal experiences relating to the life of the artist or their ideas?

ACTIVITY 1.12

Using the same artworks as in Activity 1.11, above, discuss what appeals to you about the work personally. Justify the reasons for your decision, including discussing the subject of the painting, the techniques used by the artist and analysing the design elements and principles.

The personal framework can also be used to interpret the personal experience and viewpoint of the viewer in relation to the work. We all bring different backgrounds and experiences to the viewing of artworks and this is often reflected in our interpretation. Some other questions to ask are: What can we see in the work that reflects our personal experiences? How do we relate to the work?



An example of how to apply the Personal Framework, using *Self-portrait in the Studio* by Brett Whiteley, can be found on the Student CD-ROM.



The Cultural Framework

The Cultural Framework can be used to interpret the influences of the time and place 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 the 'Context' of the artwork. Most artworks are born out of the feelings the artist has for the time in which the work was produced or the purpose behind it. In the study of Art in an Australian culture, the student must also investigate the works of Indigenous and Asian cultures as an aspect of their study.

When applying this framework to your interpretation, here are some questions that you may ask.

- 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 that the artist is expressing.
- How does the social, political or religious context in which the artwork was made contribute to its meaning? Investigate the background of history or culture in which the artwork was made to see if you can gain evidence about the artwork.
- Is there evidence of cultural symbolism in the work? Cultural symbolism could include the representation of subject matter, the use of techniques in the artwork, the choice of design elements and principles or the style of the artwork. How does this reflect the ideas behind the work?
- Do the materials, techniques and processes selected and used by the artist reflect anything about the values of the culture in which the artwork was produced?
- Does the work reflect the gender values of the social context in which it was produced? If the work is a historical example, how does this compare with the gender values of today?
- 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?
- If the work is now in a different context and location to when it was produced, such as a gallery or museum, how does this location affect the interpretation of the work?

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 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 to that of the artist because of cultural, social, political, historical and gender differences in ideas?
- Do you think the work loses the original intention of the artist because of where it is located? What is it that makes the work different?

Examples of how to apply the Cultural Framework to a variety of artworks can be found on the Student CD-ROM:

- Western example – *Adoration of the Magi* by Giotto di Bondone
- Indigenous example – *Cyclone Tracy* by Joolama (Rover) Thomas
- Asian example – *Large Family No. 2* by Zhang Xiaogang





The Contemporary Framework

The Contemporary Framework can be used to interpret an artwork by applying contemporary ideas and issues. This framework is mainly applied to contemporary works produced after 1970. Many contemporary artworks take non-traditional artforms and include installations, performance works, video, photography, interactive art, street

art, sound installations and digital projections.

Contemporary artworks can often be conceptual in nature, meaning that there is an emphasis on the ideas of the artist rather than the subject matter of the work. Artists who create contemporary works are often attempting to experiment with new media and technologies. Many contemporary works are also based on postmodernist ideas. The following questions may be a starting point to apply the Contemporary Framework to your analysis.

- Artists often take ideas from society and make fun of them in their artworks. How are the postmodern ideas of parody, irony and satire used to question and challenge traditional understandings of art? In this way, the artist may have used the subject matter to highlight an idea or issue.
- Does the way in which the artist presents their subject matter and uses materials and techniques reflect or challenge artistic or social traditions?
- Has the artist used a non-traditional art practice or artforms to challenge traditional notions of art?
- How does media and other emerging artforms (such as video art, installation art, digital

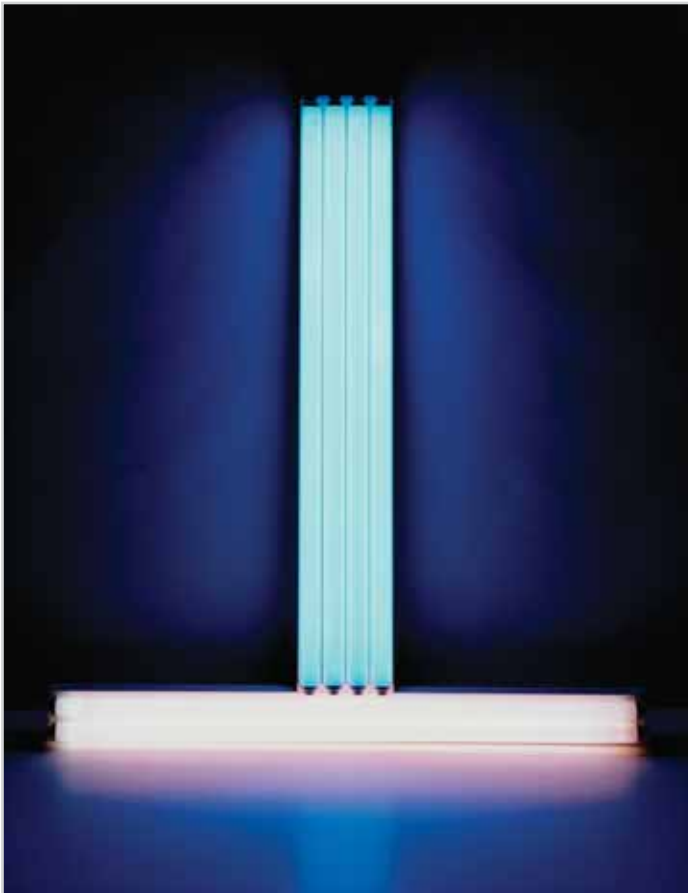


Figure 1.7

Dan Flavin, *Untitled (To Don Judd – Colorist)*, 1987 © Estate of Dan Flavin/ARS. Licensed by VISCOPY 2009

projection, performance and Street Art) challenge the importance of artworks based in a museum or gallery?

- How can the concepts or presentation of ideas and issues relate to broader ideas for the artist and for society? Think about how the artwork may provoke other ideas about the issue or reflect an issue. For example, presentation of ideas by an artist in photographs in a newspaper may create further ideas and issues for readers and the artist.
- How do symbols and concepts in a contemporary artwork reflect contemporary contexts and ideas?

When you use the Contemporary Framework, you can apply it not only to Contemporary works but also to works from different times and cultures to view those using contemporary ideas and values. You also have to investigate how you, as an individual living in contemporary society and culture, can interpret and gain an understanding of an artwork.

These questions will also help you with your interpretation:

- How can artworks of the past be interpreted in the light of contemporary ideas and issues? You must look at these works and see how the artists' presentation of subject matter, use of techniques, style of the artwork and ideas are interpreted from a contemporary point of view.
- How does the presentation of contemporary artworks such as video installations, digital projections and performance art in museums and galleries impact on your understanding of the artwork?

The Formal Framework and contemporary artworks

Analysing contemporary artworks using the Formal Framework can be challenging, as often the works are non-traditional artforms and the artist has used new technologies and mediums. In addition to the design elements of line, shape, colour, tone, form, and texture, there are some other elements that are outlined below.

Sound, space, light and time: these elements are considered in contemporary artworks particularly installation or video work. Using adjectives to describe these elements will help you analyse the artists that use them to express ideas.

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

- Describe the sound used with the work. Does it have an impact on the atmosphere of the location where the artwork is presented? How does the sound work with the visual qualities, if any, of the work. (Note that some artworks are only sound based.)
- How is light used in the installation or video work? What impact does it have on the subject of the work? What impact does it have on the messages the artist is trying to convey?
- Describe the space in which the work is located. How does this impact upon the work itself? Does it contribute to the work and its aesthetic qualities? Does it contribute to the meaning of the work?
- How long does the performance or video last? This will also have an impact on its meaning.



ACTIVITY 1.13

Find a range of contemporary artworks in this book. Analyse the artworks using the elements and principles of design, including sound, space and light.

An example of how to apply the Formal Framework to a contemporary artwork, using *The Tristan Project* by Bill Viola, can be found on the Student CD-ROM.



Student CD-ROM

CREATING A PRACTICAL FOLIO

'Just as our eyes need light in order to see, our minds need ideas in order to create.'

Nicole Malebranche

Creating a folio of artwork is very different from completing the individual, teacher-directed tasks that you may have had to do previously. Developing a folio of work will require you to follow a creative process that includes brainstorming, researching, trialling and refining. This chapter provides you with some of the basic tools in order to explore both teacher-directed tasks for Unit 1 and your own ideas and selected artforms 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 stimulus
- using mind maps and extended brainstorming to explore and interpret your ideas
- undertaking visual brainstorming using thumbnail sketches
- researching your ideas for a practical outcome
- dealing with reference material, plagiarism and appropriation – a practical approach
- investigating materials, techniques and processes
- documenting and reflecting on your exploration and resolutions
- using safe practices.

'Every artist dips his brush in his own soul, and paints his own nature into his pictures.'

Henry Ward Beecher

A folio of practical artwork

The VCE Art Study Design emphasises the link between theoretical research and investigation and your own artmaking. 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 artmaking. In turn, the discoveries you make in your artmaking can give you greater insight into the works of artists and the impact of their use of symbolism and subject matter. It can also give you an understanding of what impact the application of materials, techniques, processes and artforms has on meaning.

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

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

Visual language

A language is a system of codes of communication, made up of certain sounds or symbols. Visual language, as it is used in the Study Design, refers to the use of images as one such code of communication. A visual language is the way in which images, the elements and principles of art, materials, techniques, processes and artforms can be used to communicate concepts and ideas.

Katherine McCoy, a Senior Lecturer 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.

Your practical folio

You will explore a range of materials, techniques, processes and artforms 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 teachers 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 thinking and working practices. You will reflect on your own artmaking and examine how you have used art elements and principles to develop a visual language. You will reflect on how your experiences, feelings and thoughts are evident in your trials and finished artworks.

Getting started

Before you begin your exploration, it is important to decide what you would like to achieve in your folio. Do you want to:

- 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 approach to making art?
- work in a specific medium or artform?

You may want to take one of these approaches to your folio, or you may want to combine several of them. Whatever you choose to do, it is always best to work from your experience as this makes your work more real. 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.

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
- artform
- application of the elements and principles of art
- materials, techniques or processes used?

ACTIVITY 1.15

- List the things 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?

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, but 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.



Figure 1.8
Visual stimuli can help you to generate ideas and clarify your thoughts

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 a folder or sketchbook.

ACTIVITY 1.16

- Collect 10 manmade 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 stimulus

Images can be found in books, magazines, brochures, postcards or on the internet. These can be images that inspire ideas for subject matter or composition. They may show artforms, techniques, approaches or effects that you would like to explore. They may be interesting applications of the elements and principles of art. Found stimuli are not limited to imagery but can also include textures, objects and surfaces to work on, or they can be from 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, imbedded into an artwork as a symbol of flight or 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 papermaking. Phoebe Garrett (a VCE Art student) was inspired by fossils of an ammonite and a nautilus shell. She explored the forms and patterns through drawing. The pattern and spiral reminded her of fingerprints which she then explored as pure pattern.

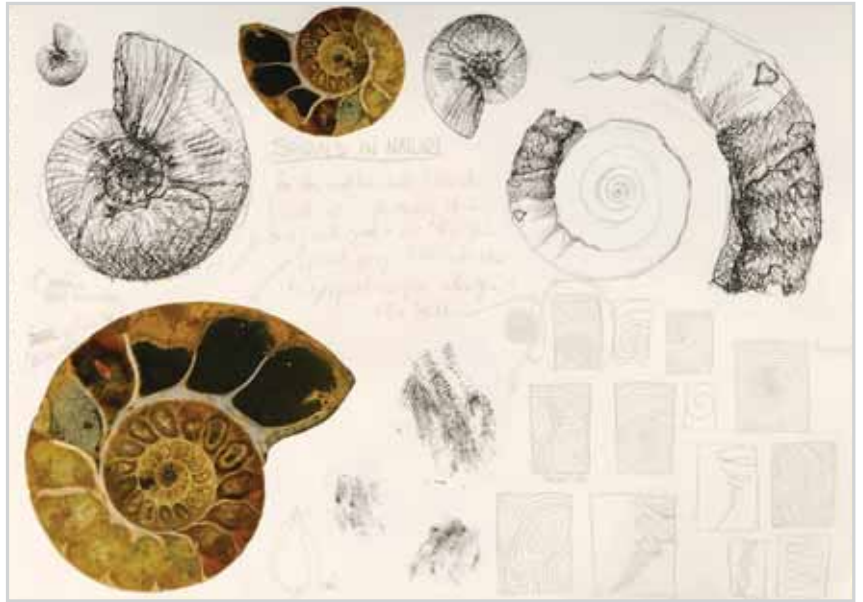


Figure 1.9
Phoebe Garrett
Exploring the potential
identified in found
stimulus

Personally created stimulus

Do not only rely on found images. You can create your own stimulus by drawing, painting, modelling, or by using photography. It is helpful to have a small sketchbook 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 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.

Mind map/brainstorm: Interpretation of the central idea

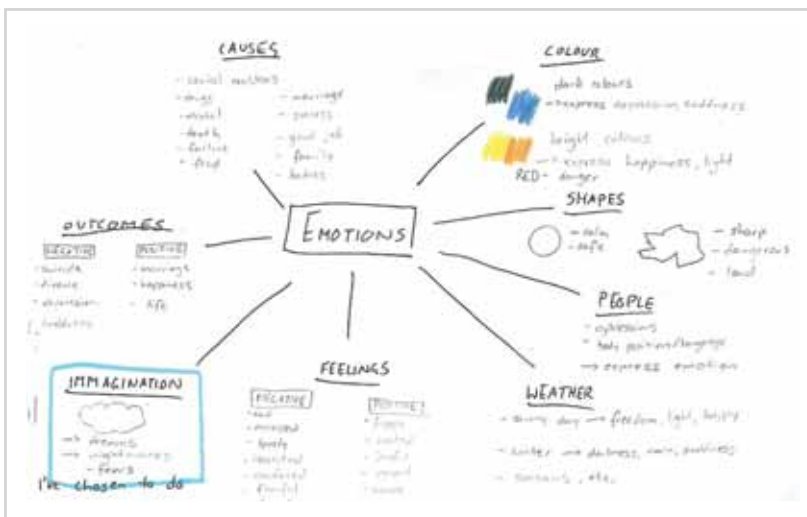
'Just as our eyes need light in order to see, our minds need ideas in order to create.'

Nicole Malebranche

Generating 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 the concerns of 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

Figure 1.10 Example of a hand-written mind map

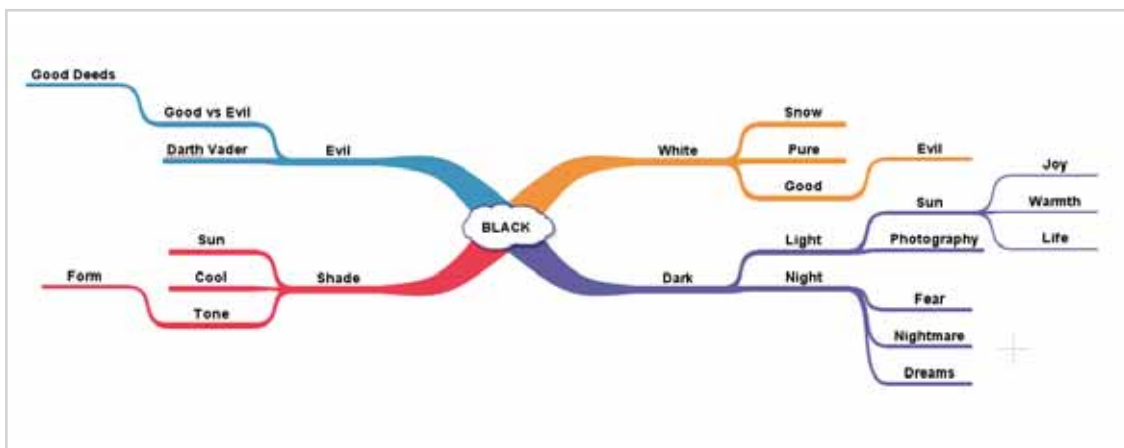


an effective way to do this. Remember that your artwork does not have to be an obvious reflection of the central idea. Be creative with your ideas and think outside the box.

Example of a mind map

Begin by interpreting your idea or concept and place these ideas down on paper. You can begin by doing 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.

Figure 1.11 Example of a mind map created using Inspiration Software. This mindmap uses 'black' as the central idea or concept



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 hand written mind map allows for a quick and more spontaneous development of ideas, whereas others prefer a more ordered approach. The program Inspiration allows you to develop mind maps on the computer.

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. These drawings do not have to be detailed, but 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. Inspiration also allows you to insert images into your mind map. These could be clip art or your own images.

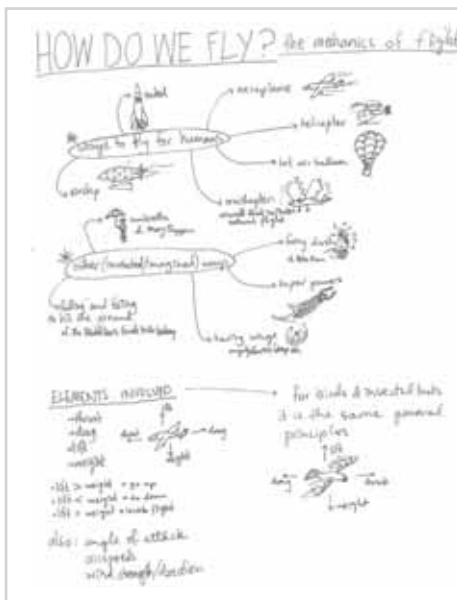


Figure 1.12
Phoebe Garrett's visual brainstorm

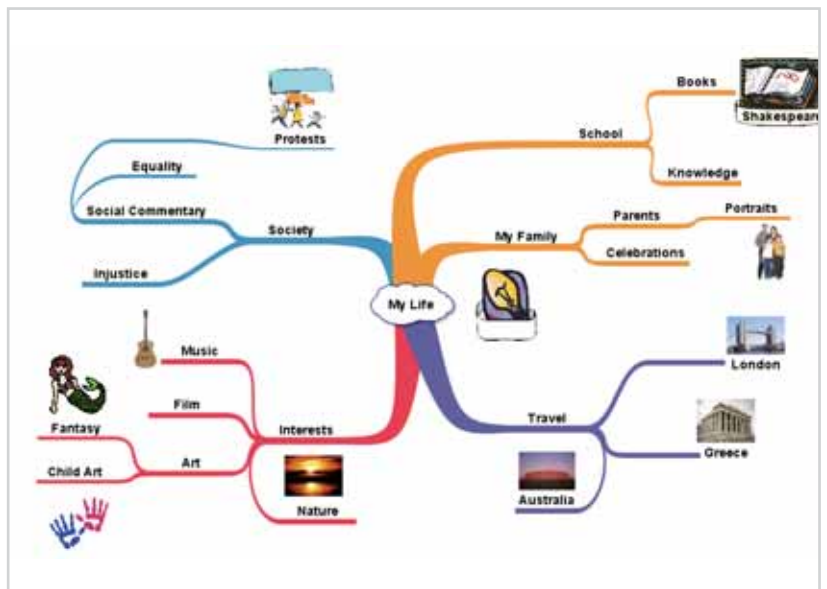


Figure 1.13
Example of a visual brainstorm using 'My Life' as the central idea (created with Inspiration)

ACTIVITY 1.18

Produce a mind map based on a concept or issue of your choice

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.

ACTIVITY 1.19

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

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

Select a range of artworks or images and paste a photocopy of them into your sketchbooks or folio. 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 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.

When annotating the selected works, note how the artists have used the formal qualities to create successful compositions or to convey 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 you are interested in. 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 you have listened to 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 you are interested in, you could interview them. This can provide you with a different perspective on how to approach your folio.

Generating visual interpretations of your ideas and concepts

Establishing your ideas and exploring possible interpretations and approaches to these ideas is just the first part of your exploration. Once you have established your area of interest, it is important you begin to generate a range of visual interpretations of these ideas and concepts. You need to establish ways that 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 generating images, especially if you want to establish a narrative or a figurative representation of your idea. For instance, how would you interpret thought in a drawing? You could draw someone thinking, you could include Rodin's famous sculpture *The Thinker* 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 combined 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 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.

The thumbnail sketches illustrated here are examples of two students' use of drawing to explore potential visual representation of their ideas. Figure 1.15 shows Melissa Atanasovski's exploration of a range of ideas, while Figure 1.16 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 1.15
Melissa Atanasovski's exploration of ideas



Figure 1.14
Auguste Rodin, *The Thinker*, 1902, bronze and marble, Musée Rodin, 71.5 x 36.4 x 59.5cm

annotate:
to write brief notes about your observations and to communicate your thinking and working practices

Figure 1.16
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 five 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 overthink the image. Do not be overly concerned with the quality of the drawing and don't get bogged down with 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 idea generation.

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 overthink these images and do not be overly concerned with planning your composition, worrying about the perfect lighting and depth of field. Even if your photograph is out of focus it can still serve its purpose. The quality of the image is not the objective, but rather the idea it portrays. Your photographs are a means of collecting images that clarify some 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 portrays a narrative you want to paint
- capturing a particular light quality or shadow that conveys a mood you are thinking of communicating
- showing an object you consider symbolises a concept you want to deal with
- producing an image such as an emotive portrait that establishes the feeling you wish to show.

Figure 1.17
An example of
thumbnail photographs



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

One way to present these thumbnail photographs is to produce a contact sheet using Photoshop. 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 (see Figure 1.19) 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 render the objects/images that make up your visual solution. This source material can be your own sketches, paintings, photographs and so on. If you choose to use a photograph not taken by you, for example, a picture from a magazine, you may only use elements from this image. The total image must be modified.

Avoid plagiarism – although there are many reasons you should look at other people's art, it is important 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 their own 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 – 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. As a guide, you should try to either change sourced images by 70 per cent or use sourced imagery in less than 30 per cent of your artwork.

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 parts work together. That includes making sure that the scale of items from

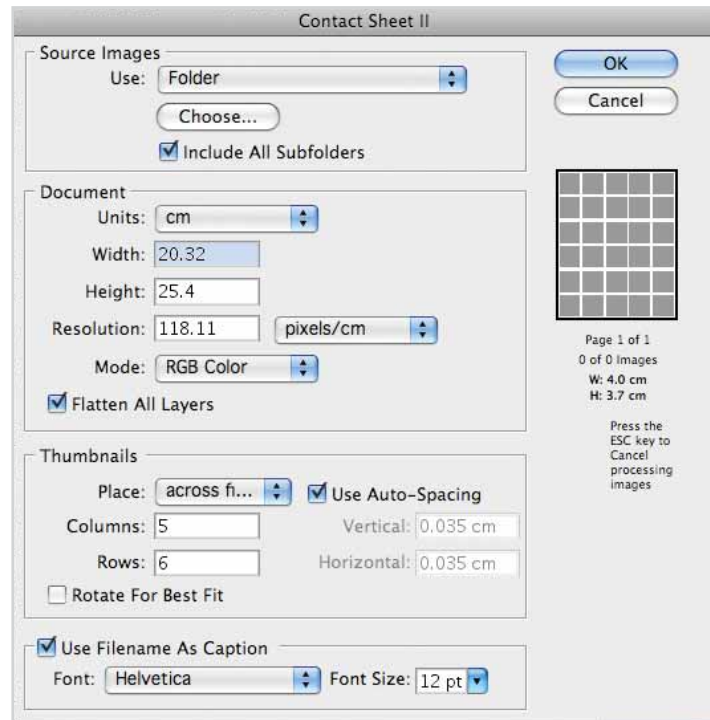


Figure 1.18
Screen dump of contact print through Adobe Photoshop

manga: Japanese comic books or graphic novels



Weblinks

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



Figure 1.19
Marcel Duchamp,
L.H.O.O.Q. postcard
reproduction, 1919,
19.7 x 12.4cm ©
Marcel Duchamp/
ADAGP. Licensed by
VISCOPY, Sydney 2009

different sources work 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 all things in the image are 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* 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 www.royaltyfreemusic.com 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. You can access information at www.screenrights.org.

Some students will use the postmodernist approach of **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.

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 *LHOOQ*. The use of appropriation generally creates a different meaning to 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.

Investigation of materials, techniques and processes

If you are exploring a range of media and artforms 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 a minor completed work.

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 develop and refine your ideas and media progressively. 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. You should also note if 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, media, techniques and formal elements 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 language, you should make observations about your work and how it relates to the Analytical Frameworks. In this evaluation, you may want to explain what you were trying to achieve and how you have used the artform/s, media and techniques to achieve this. Explain how effective your application of the formal qualities was and any symbolism that you employed to visually represent your idea/s.

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 artmaking on yourself and your environment.

Many of you will use media that are potentially harmful to you if not used correctly or in the correct environment. Some equipment, such as power tools, are obviously dangerous if not used correctly, but even something that many of you will use on a daily basis, such as an NT cutter, is dangerous if not handled safely.

The dangers of some materials are not immediately obvious and you may be using them without knowing the harmful effect they are having. If, for instance, you are using fixative, it may not be harmful if used inside once, but with extensive use by multiple students in a confined space, it can be hazardous. For this reason, it is safer to always spray your work in a well-ventilated area, away from other students. Often seemingly harmless things can emit hazardous vapours when used, or when combined with other materials. It is always important to read the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS forms) for any equipment or materials you are using for the first time. If you purchase something yourself, ask the supplier to provide the MSDS for you.

You must be aware of, and practice the safe and appropriate use of, the materials and techniques you use in respect to both yourself, other students and the environment. Discarding containers inappropriately or washing paint or dyes down the sink is harmful to our environment. Read the MSDS forms for any indication of correct handling and disposal of materials. Student information and resources to support you are available from the National Association for Visual Artists (NAVA) at: www.visualarts.net.au/advicecentre/healthsafety. A search facility and database of health and safety information for artists is also available at: www.ci.tucson.az.us/arthazards/medium.html.

ACTIVITY 1.21

Select an artwork that you have created to represent a concept or to reflect on an issue. Use correct art language 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 artform/s, formal qualities, symbolism, media and techniques.

ACTIVITY 1.22

Read the MSDS form for a medium you are using. Note any dangers that you were previously unaware of.



Weblinks

[2]

ART AND MEANING

Unit 1 – Area of Study 1

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 Formal Framework to analyse and interpret the formal qualities of an artwork
- consider the Personal Framework and the ways in which artworks can reflect the feelings, thinking and life circumstances of the artist
- consider the ways in which the interpretations of the artwork may be influenced by the background and experiences of the viewer
- form personal opinions about artworks and their meanings
- use appropriate art language
- explore self-portraiture as a means self-expression
- look at dreams and nightmares as examples of the expression of an artist's personal concerns and fears.

'A painting requires a little mystery, some vagueness, some fantasy. When you always make your meaning perfectly plain, you end up boring people.'

Edgar Degas (1834–1917), French artist

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. 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 formal qualities

of their artworks by controlling the manner in which they apply the art elements and principles, and apply materials, techniques and style. The Art Study Design calls this the Formal Framework and you use it to begin your investigation of the meanings and messages contained within an artwork.

The Art Study Design encourages enquiry to help you do this. It is not enough to describe what the work looks like, although this is obviously a consideration. What is more important is trying 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 elements and principles that are relevant to the effect created in this particular work. You will need to use art language to discuss the **visual language** of the work.

In order to recognise more than superficial interpretations of a work, you need to investigate more than 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.

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 for 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.'*

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 of these 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. Self-portraits reveal much about their creators. You will see how artists represent themselves and how their works can tell the viewer about their lives, their interests and often their hopes and desires. You will also see that dreams and nightmares often reflect an artist's deepest fears and concerns.



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



SELF-PORTRAITURE

'Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.'

Oscar Wilde



A self-portrait is a representation, usually visual, by an artist of himself or herself. Why do artists produce self-portraits? Whatever they create, it is always about themselves and usually their perceptions of themselves or their concerns. Often it is an opportunity to create something beyond the image in the mirror. American artist Marisol went a step further and said, 'Whatever the artist makes is always some kind of self-portrait'. This quote, like that by Oscar Wilde, refers to what she believes to be the autobiographical quality of artmaking.

Some self-portraits reveal the personal feelings of the artist through their facial features and expression; their pose, clothing and setting. This is particularly revealing when the artist produces a series of self-portraits over a period of time, such as those of Albrecht Dürer, who made his first self-portrait when he was 13-years-old (see Figure 2.1), and Vincent van Gogh, who painted at least 30 self-portraits (see Figure 2.5).

In a self-portrait, the artist may present themselves as they would like to be seen by the viewer. They may intensify this by capturing the viewer's attention through eye contact and, in this way, confront us by demanding a personal response. Alternatively, they may avoid our gaze and place us in the position of a spectator, left to read the hints about the artist's concerns.

For many artists, self-portraits are more than a literal likeness. They are a means of self-exploration – not simply of their physical likeness but also of their psychological reality. About one-third of Frida Kahlo's paintings were self-portraits for this reason (see Figure 2.6). Artists may search their souls and explore the nature of their personal feelings in their self-portraits. Instead of portraying objective appearances, they may concentrate on concerns that are more spiritual. They may forego the need for reality and use distortion and symbolism or perhaps even pure abstraction to express their interest in an aspect of their existence.

Self-portraiture timeline



Figure 2.1 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait at 13*, 1484



Figure 2.2 Lorenzo Ghiberti, *Self-portrait from the Gates of Paradise*, Baptistery of San Giovanni, Florence, 1425–1452



Figure 2.3 Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1638–39



Figure 2.4 Katsushika Hokusai, *Self-portrait at the age of 83*, 1843



Figure 2.5 Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait*, 1889

An artist's appearance may follow the style of their work, as we see in Hokusai's *Self-portrait at 83* (see Figure 2.4) and Tezuka's *Self-portrait (movie) Jigazou* (see Figure 2.7).

A self-portrait may also take the form of a signature. Ghiberti's self-portrait from the doors of the Baptistery in Florence is an example of this. He wanted the viewer to be in no doubt about who had created the doors that were dubbed *The Gates of Paradise* (see Figure 2.2).

Related artworks

Raphael, *Self-portrait*, c.1515

Parmigianino, *Self-portrait in a mirror*, 1524

Sofonisba Anguissola, *Self-portrait*, c.1560

Peter Paul Rubens, *Rubens and Isabella Brandt*, 1609

Diego Velázquez, *Las Meninas*, 1656

Rembrandt, *Self-portrait*, 1658

Goya, *Self-portrait, aged 69*, 1815

Paul Gauguin, *Self-portrait with Yellow Christ*, 1889

Henri Rousseau, *Self-portrait*, 1890

Edvard Munch, *Self-portrait with Burning Cigarette*, 1895

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Self-portrait as a Soldier*, 1915

Yasumasa Morimura, *Portrait (Twins)*, 1988

Chuck Close, *Self-portrait*, 1997

Tracey Moffatt, *Adventure Series 10*, 2004

ACTIVITY 2.1

1 Watch a narrative film made about the life and work of an artist, such as Artemisia Gentileschi, Vincent van Gogh, Frida Kahlo or Jean-Michel Basquiat. Compare the knowledge you gain from the film to a self-portrait by the same artist. Describe and compare any ways in which the film presents the artist and their personality and work differently to their artworks, both visually and psychologically. Look at the level of realism and the ways in which the emotional response of the viewer is controlled.

2 The Archibald Prize is Australia's most prestigious award for a portrait painting. Go to www.thearchibaldprize.com.au/history and select a portrait or self-portrait that you think says a great deal about the subject. Analyse this work using the Formal Framework as a structure to discuss the elements and principles of art, the style of the work and the medium used.

3 How would you represent yourself in a self-portrait? Brainstorm some examples – written and visual. What would you 'say' about your life, your experiences, your concerns, your beliefs and your hopes for the future?



Weblink



Formal



Personal



Figure 2.6
Frida Kahlo,
The Two Fridas, 1939



Figure 2.7 Osamu Tezuka,
Self-portrait (movie)
Jigazou, 1988



Figure 2.8 Marc
Quinn, *Self*, 1991



Figure 2.9 Louise
Bourgeois, *Cell (Glass,
Spheres and Hands)*,
1990–93



Figure 2.10
Gillian Wearing,
*Self-portrait
as my Uncle
Gregory*, 2003

Artemisia Gentileschi

'Artemisia transcended [rose above] victimization by sustaining an independent artistic identity (she was one of the first women artists to support herself entirely through her painting), and by creating an art that offered visual models of female defiance of masculine control.'

New York Times 24 May 1998

Figure 2.11
Artemisia Gentileschi,
**Self-portrait as the
Allegory of Painting,**
c1630, Royal
Collection, Windsor,
96.5 x 73.7cm



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

open composition: composition in which the objects in the picture extend visually beyond the edges of the frame



Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–1652/3), painted this self-portrait in the **Baroque** style of seventeenth-century Italy. The composition of *Self-portrait as the Allegory of Painting* is typically asymmetrical and contains an obvious diagonal emphasis, highlighted by the strong light being cast from the left. She has applied the popular practice of **chiaroscuro**, in which the contrast between the light areas (*chiaro*) and the dark (*scuro*) accentuate three-dimensional form. At the same time, this contrast suggests a sense of drama, of action that has been captured.

The figure is close to the front of the painting and is leaning towards the viewer, almost projecting into our space. This draws the viewer into the work and enables a sense of connection and empathy. There is nothing in the dark background to distract from the figure bathed in the strong light that highlights both the flesh and the rich colour and texture of the fabric. Gentileschi's **open composition** enhances the sense of mystery and allows the viewer to imagine what is happening outside the frame.

The artist probably worked from reflections in two carefully angled mirrors to gain this unusual three-quarter view of herself. She used fine brushwork to create the intense realism visible in the lace of her dress and the pendant around her neck.

It was unusual for a female artist to be successful professionally in the seventeenth century. It was very much a man's world and for a woman to succeed she needed great skill and a good start. Gentileschi certainly had the first quality and the fact that her father was a well-respected painter who allowed her to be apprenticed in his studio, supplied the second.

Those women who were fortunate enough to become painters maintained a career by painting landscapes, portraits and still lifes, as they were forbidden to work from nude

models and thus could not paint the historical and religious scenes that were popular among patrons. Gentileschi was one of the very few women who painted biblical and classical scenes of heroism and drama. She chose subject matter that reflected her interest in powerful women and produced images that evoke understanding and sympathy in the viewer. Many of her paintings empower the heroine, who acts with courage against her male adversary, often exacting symbolic justice for the vulnerable.

Gentileschi painted *Allegory of Painting* when she was 37 years old and at the peak of her career. In it, she expressed her commitment to her profession by representing herself as the personification of painting. She identified herself with her career, something that was impossible for a male painter to do because traditionally painting was symbolised by a female figure. This self-portrait is of great significance because it acknowledges her status as an artist in a male-dominated field. She painted herself at work, holding a palette and wielding a brush, the customary tools of the painter. Gentileschi used accepted symbolism to enhance the reference to the allegorical figure. The detailed pendant mask on the golden chain around her neck, for example, symbolises her ability to imitate reality.

Much has been written about the fact that Gentileschi was seduced and raped by a colleague of her father's when she was a teenager. While it is tempting to view her work as a response to the vulnerability that she felt in that situation, and the revenge she may have wished to take symbolically, it is important to maintain a balanced view without making this scandal the defining action of her life and her art.



Other works

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Slaying Holofernes* (Naples version 1612–13, Uffizi version 1620)

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and her Maidservant with the Head of Holofernes* c.1625

References

Garrard, Mary D. 1991, *Artemisia Gentileschi*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Web resources



Weblink

www.artemisia-gentileschi.com

ACTIVITY 2.2

- Both Gentileschi and Caravaggio (see page 116) painted versions of Judith and Holofernes. Painted a dozen years apart, their psychological emphases are quite different. Compare these two paintings. Do you think the gender of the artist had any influence on the representations of the characters? Explain your response with evidence drawn from research and your observation of the the works.
- Gentileschi has been described as an early feminist. What is your understanding of that term? Do you believe that the title should be applied to her? Use at least two paintings to support your point of view.

Osamu Tezuka

'People often forget this is work produced in the post-war period by a nation that ... had a lot of issues to deal with. People look at this stuff and think it's wacky and crazy and all over the place; it's actually very complex.'

Phillip Brophy (filmmaker, composer, and curator of the Tezuka exhibition at NGV, 2006)



Figure 2.12
Osamu Tezuka, *Self-portrait (movie)*, *Jigazou*, 1988

to an international competition that challenged the world's leading animators to produce an animated self-portrait. Tezuka's entry was inspired by the revolving sections of a slot machine. The caricatured parts rotate rapidly and line up briefly to create a number of faces, then change again before finishing with coins tumbling out of his mouth.

Manga is an important example of Japanese post-war popular culture, more respected and influential than comics or cartoons are in the West. It is the term used for all Japanese comics but especially those intended for children's entertainment. *Gekiga* is a more adult-oriented *narrative* form, popular in the generation who grew up with *manga*. This form uses realistic effects to tell more complex stories, including a Japanese version of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (*Tsumi to batsu*) and *Ludwig B* (*Rudovihi B*), the story of Beethoven.

Tezuka's *manga* and *anime* are multi-layered and contain moral and ethical lessons without preaching to the reader. His cartoons and animations were a response to political and social issues in wartime and post-war Japan, the psychological effects of war, technology, intolerance, reincarnation and messages of hope. He was also interested in nature and in promoting a healthy balance between living things and the future of the Earth.

His most famous characters in the West, *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*, are non-human but have been *anthropomorphised* and display human traits as they struggle to understand human behaviour. Living in the twenty-first century, *Astro Boy* is a human-like robot running on nuclear energy. Called 'Atom Boy' in Japan, he was Tezuka's response to living after the atom bomb, which was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan at the end of World War II. Like the wooden puppet Pinocchio, *Astro Boy* wants to be a real



To view this work, visit www.youtube.com

and look up 'Osamu Tezuka self-portrait'.

Osamu Tezuka (1928–1989), or Tezuka Osamu in the traditional Japanese format, is known in Japan as the 'father of *manga*'. He was also an animator and a filmmaker with a prodigious output. He wrote, produced and directed 14 television series, 36 shorts and television specials, and 23 feature-length films during his long career, as well as drawing 150 000 pages of *manga*.

The still on the left is from *Jigazou*, a very brief film made by Tezuka in response

manga: Japanese comic books or graphic novels

gekiga: adult-oriented Japanese graphic novels

narrative: telling a story

anime: a Japanese style of animation and film

boy. He embodies the uncomfortable relationship between humans and technology and in his adventures uses his energy for peaceful purposes. He was used by Tezuka to explore questions of human rights, intolerance and prejudice.

Tezuka's cartoons are known for their **cinematic** visual effects – for **cropping**, **framing**, **panning**, **zooming**, close-ups, unusual viewpoints and dramatic angles and movement across the page. He showed action from more than one viewpoint in panels of different sizes to better catch facial expression and story elements. The action is detailed, in much the same way as a **storyboard** for a film. There is a strong relationship between text and image with each playing its part in conveying meaning.

As with cartoons in the West, exaggeration and distortion of personal features is a major method of creating humour in *manga*. This is a method used by Tezuka throughout his work, obvious even in his self-portraits when he drew his nose several times larger than life. The big, seemingly cute, eyes he drew on most of his characters are expressive, which makes it easier to convey emotion and mood.

Born Tezuka Shigeru, as a child he was fascinated by insects and took the name of one (*osamushi*) as his nickname. He was a fan of both Russian animation and the early work of Walt Disney, the American cartoonist, animator and filmmaker who created Mickey Mouse in 1928. Tezuka claimed to have seen Disney's film *Bambi* more than 80 times. He was also influenced by other twentieth-century media forms such as photography, film and television and worked for many years in the last two.

Tezuka was a teenager during World War II and started drawing in 1946, soon after the end of the war. He studied medicine but never practiced and by the time he had finished his studies, he was immersed in the world of *manga*. *Astro Boy* has become a post-war icon for Japan. *Phoenix*, the mythical firebird, was the major character in what he called his 'master project'. This lengthy, lifelong project revolved around reincarnation and is a testament to the regenerative power of post-war Japan.

Other works

Astro Boy, 1963

Kimba the White Lion, 1966

Phoenix, 1980

References

Brophy, Philip ed. 2006, *Tezuka: The Marvel of Manga*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.tezukainenglish.com

Tezuka: The Marvel of Manga Education Kit, available at

www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/resources/ed-kits/tezuka

ACTIVITY 2.3

Go to www.roslynxley9.com.au/artists/26/Tracey_Moffatt/306. Select one of Tracey Moffatt's Adventure Series. Compare the presentation of this format to a page of manga by Osamu Tezuka.

anthropomorphise: to give human features to an animal or object



Formal

cinematic: having qualities specific to motion-pictures

cropping: to trim parts of an image to remove unwanted sections



Personal

framing: to isolate and draw attention to the most important part of an image by surrounding it with a visual 'frame'

panning: moving the camera horizontally to follow a moving object

zooming: a photographic term; to bring a subject into close-up without losing focus

storyboard: series of sketches that depict the changes to the scenes and action of a planned film or video production



Weblink

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



Figure 2.13
Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991,
blood, stainless steel,
perspex, refrigeration
equipment,
208 x 64 x 64cm © Marc
Quinn, courtesy Mary
Boone Gallery

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

A portrait aims to preserve a likeness. British artist Marc Quinn (born in 1964) has moved a step beyond this by using bodily matter that preserves the physical essence of a person. The example above is a self-portrait made with his own blood. It raises questions about the **genre** of portraiture in contemporary culture as well as issues of permanence, mortality and identity.

Self was created in 1991. Over a period of five months, Quinn collected 4.5 litres of his blood and froze it inside a mould taken of his head. This process calls to mind funerary masks that date back to the ancient Egyptians. They were placed over the faces of

mummies so that wandering souls would be able to identify their bodies and return to them, thus ensuring immortality. The Romans also made death masks to remember the spirits of their ancestors. More recently, our own Ned Kelly had a death mask taken to record his features. In this tradition, *Self* has been made in a fragile medium and, as such, is well placed to remind us of our human fragility and the vulnerability of our identities.

Every five years, Quinn has created a new version of *Self* by making a new cast of his head and freezing his blood inside it. He says that this series of self-portraits will document his ageing and record his ultimate deterioration. He is said to be planning a final one after his death, using blood drained from his body.

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. Instead, *Self* is unconventional in its vulnerability and its impermanence. Each version is exhibited inside a glass cabinet built above a specially constructed refrigeration unit. Its continued existence depends on technology and it 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.

The National Portrait Gallery in London has extensively researched the issue of display logistics and permanence concerning *Self*, 2006. As this is 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 media. Many of his most thought provoking works have used bodily fluids to challenge our understanding of the fragility and transience of life. 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 2 humans, who represent Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden on a cellular level.



Personal



Formal

Other works

Self-portrait (2nd perspective), Cloned DNA, 2001
Chemical Life Support, 2005
Angel, 2007

Web resources



Weblink

www.whitecube.com/artists/quinn

ACTIVITY 2.4

- 1 Art critic Andrew Graham-Dixon's verdict on *Self*, 1991 was that, 'The head-shaped plasma ice-lolly has novelty appeal, and that is about it'. Do you agree? Use evidence to support your opinion.
- 2 'The concept is more important than the artwork.' Debate this statement, using examples to support your opinion.

Louise Bourgeois

'My childhood has never lost its mystery, and it has never lost its drama. All my work of the last 50 years, all my subjects have found their inspiration in my childhood.'

Louise Bourgeois



Figure 2.14

Louise Bourgeois, *Cell (Glass, spheres and hands)*, 1990–93, glass, iron, wood, linoleum, canvas, marble, 219.5 x 218.8 x 220.0cm. Purchased with the assistance of the National Gallery Victoria, Melbourne. Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest, 1995. © Louise Bourgeois, 1990–3/VAGA. Licensed by VISCOPIY 2009



Cell (Glass, spheres and hands) is a large-scale installation. A compact, but complex work, it is steeped in symbolism. The title alone allows for multiple interpretations; it may refer to a cell as a basic unit of life, or a place of imprisonment or contemplation, or both. Bourgeois says that it reflects the fact that she is a prisoner of her memories.

Architectural in form, *Cell* is a small room, a confined space that both protects and restricts. Its steel frame, enclosing dirty glass walls, is reminiscent of a nineteenth-century factory. Its rigid, geometric cage-like structure allows only partial views of the world outside through the sooty, graffiti covered windowpanes. There is no access to the interior except via panels of broken glass. The doorway is closed with steel mesh – there is no way in or out.

Cell's enclosed space contains a range of diverse objects with symbolic significance. There is a pair of clasped hands on a small table facing five glass spheres of different sizes, each resting on a wooden chair. We are reminded of a classroom. Both found and made, these objects are juxtaposed symbolically within the enclosed space. They are together and yet isolated. The objects used in *Cell* – the worn and mismatched wooden furniture, the marble arms, the glass spheres – have a range of weathered, aged surfaces and textures. Much of Bourgeois' work refers to the tradition of **readymades** by Marcel Duchamp and Pablo Picasso, and shows how objects can be imbued with new meaning when their context changes.

readymade: a found object displayed as an artwork

Born in France in 1911, Bourgeois studied in Paris during the 1930s and, as an artist, moved on the fringes of the **Surrealist** circle. She married an American art historian and moved to New York in 1938. Her career has spanned seven decades, and her practice involves not only sculpture but also painting, drawing and printmaking. Since childhood, she has kept records and diaries that reflect the importance of her experiences and emotions.

Bourgeois' work is autobiographical. Her main source of inspiration is her life: its relationships and the tensions and pain they cause. She is obsessed by certain themes, including anxiety, alienation and betrayal. Since the 1990s, she has created a number of *Cell* installations, each being highly symbolic. In them, she exposes her anxieties and fears. She explains that they 'represent different types of pain: the physical, the emotional and the psychological, and the mental and intellectual'. They document her vulnerability and fragility within her family environment.

These self-contained cells echo Bourgeois' memories, the tension in family relationships and the feelings of isolation that she experienced in her childhood. The glass spheres are like bubbles. Each one is a different size and is self contained, sitting apart from the next and opposite the clasped hands. They allow us to see within but they are empty and fragile. They represent the members of her family, the three larger spheres representing her father, her mother and her father's mistress, who was also Bourgeois' governess. Their placement is also symbolic.

The hands are Bourgeois' self-portrait. They represent anxiety; their placement away from, but facing, the other members of her family suggests isolation. In their marble reality, they are very different in form to the objects that represent other members of her family. Bourgeois has said that she felt betrayed by her father, lacked trust in her governess and was deeply affected by her mother's tolerance of her husband's affair. She has said that the making of art is, for her, a magical and curative act.

Surrealism: an art movement launched in Paris in 1924 that was based on dreams and the creation of artworks based on irrational thought



Other works

Cell (Eyes and Mirrors), 1989–93

Spider, 1997

References

Storr R. 2003, *Louise Bourgeois*, Phaidon, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

For a video and article on Bourgeois go to

www.scribemedia.org/2008/07/11/louise-bourgeois-pandoras-box

www.pbs.org/art21/artists/bourgeois/card1.html

ACTIVITY 2.5

- 1 'A work of art doesn't have to be explained,' Bourgeois says. 'If you do not have any feeling about this, I cannot explain it to you. If this doesn't touch you, I have failed.' Do you agree that the viewer must be moved by a work of art to appreciate it? Look at another artwork and discuss whether it agrees or disagrees with this statement. Explain your response, isolating details in the work or its presentation that support your opinion.
- 2 Explain how making art could be a 'magical and curative act'. Use Bourgeois' *Cell (Glass, spheres and hands)* to support your response.

Gillian Wearing

'I was interested in the idea of being genetically connected to someone but being very different. There is something of me, literally, in all those people – we are connected, but we are each very different.'

Gillian Wearing



Figure 2.15 Left: Gillian Wearing, *Album*, 2003, Series of six photographs, Maureen Paley Gallery. Right: Gillian Wearing, *Self Portrait as my uncle Bryan Gregory* 2003, photographic print, 114.3 x 73cm Charles Clifton Find, courtesy Albright-Knox Art Gallery



chiaroscuro: Italian for 'light-dark', refers to the contrast of light and dark to make forms look three-dimensional

prosthetic: a device that substitutes for/ or supplements a body part

British artist Gillian Wearing's approach to portraiture is unusual. In *Album* (2003), she challenges the traditional understanding of a portrait as the likeness of a sitter. This series of larger than life-size digital photographs is based on images of members of Wearing's family – her mother, father, uncle, brother, sister and herself as a teenager. In 2004, she created *Self Portrait at Three Years Old* and in 2006, she added 'portraits' of her maternal grandparents.

The photographs that make up the series are disparate in size and style, something that Wearing (who was born in 1963) enjoys. She has noted that the original images reveal changing approaches to photography over time. The stark **chiaroscuro** of the image of her grandfather is very different to the informal snapshot of her brother and the staged studio shot of her uncle. Each one says something about its time as well as the sitter and the qualities of their personality that have been captured.

What makes these images self-portraits is the fact that Wearing herself is the sitter in each one. In order to imitate the appearance of family members, she collaborated with a team that created costumes, wigs and silicon **prosthetic** masks in order to painstakingly recreate photographs from her family's photo album. They copied poses and expressions, and imitated lighting conditions and photographic styles, from snapshots and black and white studio shots to the image of Wearing herself taken in a photo booth when she was 17 years old. In each photograph from the *Album* series, she is only visible where the edges of the mask stop around her eyes.

Wearing explores the idea of resemblance and connection with family members by using a disguise to capture a likeness. She is noting the links between family members, the connectedness across time. She has created a type of family tree, one based on memories and photographs. At the same time, she challenges personal identity and questions the concept of self. Writer Matt Lippiatt says, *'The results are spooky and raise questions around loss, the passage of time and disintegrating identity'*. In 2004, she went even further when she recreated an image of herself as a three-year-old, looking at the viewer with an adult's eyes through a toddler's mask.

Throughout her career, Wearing has used masks in many artworks to conceal or confuse identity. Sometimes these masks are physical, as in *Album*, and sometimes they are symbolic, including voice dubbing to disguise the identity of speakers. Much of her work is autobiographical and looks at issues of personal identity and how it can be manipulated.

Early reality television in Britain has been a great influence on Wearing's photography and documentary-style videos. She explores the private and the public **personas** that people show the world, the way in which they behave in public and the influence of the media on that behaviour.

In *Pin-Ups*, 2008, Wearing photographed people who wanted to become professional models and adjusted them in Photoshop to increase their glamour. She then collaborated with science-fiction illustrator Jim Burns, who recreated them in acrylics, adding a lustre of airbrushed artificiality. Identity and transformation are central to this work and Wearing notes that the reality and the fantasy are interlocked. She has said, *'I'm always trying to find ways of discovering new things about people, and in the process discover more about myself'*.



persona: a perceived personality or role

Other works

Self-portrait at Three Years Old, 2004

Self-portrait as my Grandmother Nancy Gregory, 2006

References

Ferguson, R. 1999, *Gillian Wearing (Contemporary Artists)*, Phaidon, London.



resources

www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2006/jul/06/art

Weblink

ACTIVITY 2.6

- 1 Gillian Wearing and Cindy Sherman both use ideas of self and disguise in their photographs. Compare Wearing's *Album* with a picture from the *Untitled Film Stills* series by Sherman.
- 2 Wearing says that, 'Photographs are part of your memory of people, so you don't imagine them in action, you imagine them sometimes as a still, almost a sculpture, static, defined by this one moment. It becomes an icon of that memory'. Discuss.

DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES

'Without this playing with fantasy no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable.'

Carl Jung, Swiss psychiatrist

psyche: Greek translation of the Latin *anima* which means soul; it refers to the human spirit or mind

photorealism: a style of painting that resembles a photograph in its reproduction of accurate and realistic detail; sometimes called super realism

archetype: an original model that is a universal image



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 **photorealism**, but the depiction of time, place and space lack 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 which 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, fairytales, religion and art. The incubus in, for example, *The Nightmare* by Füsseli (see 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

Dreams and nightmares timeline



Figure 2.16 Hieronymus Bosch, *The Temptation of St Anthony*,



Figure 2.17 Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781



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



Figure 2.19 Paul Gauguin, *Vision After the Sermon (Jacob's fight with the angel)*, 1888



Figure 2.20 Edvard Munch, *The Scream*, 1893

nightmare visions of Goya (see Figure 2.18), Bosch (see Figure 2.16) and Booth (see Figure 2.23), the fear and panic in Munch's *Scream* (see Figure 2.20) and the evil personified in *Nightmare on Elm Street* (see Figure 2.24) all hint at unconscious and universal fears, although they may also reflect personal horrors. In his performance work *Close the Concentration Camps* (see Figure 2.25), Mike Parr presents the audience with a scenario that contains universal fears about acceptance and survival.

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* (see Figure 2.21) and the positive qualities of Gauguin's socially shared religious experience in *Vision After the Sermon* (see Figure 2.19). Dalí's dream landscape (see Figure 2.22) has a **surreal** quality that is reminiscent of the unreality of dreams.

surreal: having a dreamlike quality.

Related artworks

Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, 1483
 Matthias Grünewald, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, c. 1515
 Goya, *The Bewitched Man*, c.1798
 Marc Chagall, *I and the Village*, 1911
 Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931
 Pablo Picasso, *La Rêve*, 1932

References

Freud, Sigmund 1911, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Avon, Germany.
 Jung C. G. 2005, *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, Routledge Classics, London.

Web resources



Weblink

To read Freud's book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, go to www.psychwww.com/books/interp/toc.htm

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 a Surrealist artist and explain the dreamlike or nightmare-like qualities it contains.



Figure 2.21 Constantin Brancusi, *The Sleeping Muse*, c.1910



Figure 2.22 Salvador Dalí, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, 1946 © Gala - Salvador Dalí Foundation, 1946/MEGAP. Licensed by VISCOPY 2009



Figure 2.23 Peter Booth, *Painting 1981*, 1981



Figure 2.24 Wes Craven (director), *Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1984



Figure 2.25 Mike Parr, *Close the Concentration Camps*, 2002

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



Figure 2.26
Bosch, *The Temptation of St Anthony*, (central panel), c1505, oil painting on wood panels, 131.5 x 119cm, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon

triptych: an artwork in three panels or parts

didactic: teaching or giving instructions

surreal: having a dreamlike quality

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.

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 paintings in single sittings rather than the more common method of working in multiple fine layers of transparent *glazes*. 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.

In 1500, when it was painted, the details of *The Temptation of St Anthony* would have been clearly understood by the viewer. Knowledge of the symbols has been largely forgotten but we can 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 that 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. 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 man 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.



alla prima: Italian for 'the first time' or all at once; a method of painting in which the picture is completed in one sitting

glaze: a thin translucent layer of oil paint



Other works

Christ Carrying the Cross, 1490

The Last Judgement, centre panel, 1500–1502

Hell panel from *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, c1504–1510

References

Campbell, John, *The Essential: Hieronymus*

Bosch, Harry N. Abrams, New York, 2000

Koldweij, Jos and Vandenbroeck, Paul 2001,

Hieronymus Bosch: The Complete Paintings and Drawings, Harry N. Abrams, New York

Web resources



Weblinks

www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/bosch

www.wga.hu/framex-e.html

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.
- 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 Salvadore Dalí (painted in 1946 – see Figure 2.25). Explain how the style and the symbolic detail might have been influenced by the historical, geographic and religious contexts of the artists.

Henry Fuseli

'One of the most unexplored regions of art are dreams.'

Henry Fuseli



Figure 2.27 Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781 Oil on canvas, 101.6 x 127cm, Detroit Institute of Arts



chiaroscuro: Italian for 'light-dark', refers to the contrast of light and dark to make forms look three dimensional

high key: composed mainly of light tones

incubus: demon or evil spirit

In *The Nightmare*, Henry Fuseli (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. Fuseli 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 lead the eye to the malevolent creature glaring at the viewer as it sits perched on her chest. This character was known as an **incubus**, a demon who visits women during the night, a symbolic representation of the nightmare itself that would have been well understood by Fuseli's contemporaries. The strange figure of the horse in the background is thought to be a visual pun on the word *nightmare* in the title.

The Nightmare is rife with qualities we associate with the **Gothic Revival**. As a style of architecture, it is 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 were sensational in their excesses of sentiment and fantasy. Masculine heroes, fainting maidens and grotesque creatures in nightmarish situations formed a large part of Füsseli's *oeuvre*. He often referred to literary subject matter such as the plays and poems of Shakespeare, Milton and Blake.

Füsseli was born in Switzerland, into a family of painters. He was an ordained minister but did not practice 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. 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.

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 Füsseli as he worked on his painting.

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. Füsseli 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.

Gothic Revival: a nineteenth-century style inspired by the Gothic period and known for its sense of fantasy and whimsy

oeuvre: French word describing the collected works of an artist



Other works

The Shepherd's Dream, 1798

Titania and Bottom, c.1790

Web resources



Weblink

www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/gothicnightmares/infocus/nightmare.htm

ACTIVITY 2.9

Füsseli 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 *The Great Dragon and the Woman Clothed in Sun* or *The Number of the Beast is 666*, by Blake, using evidence to support the similarities and differences that you see.

Peter Booth

'Peter Booth's dramatic imagery is framed within a world both observed and imagined. His art is concerned with portraying a journey through darkness, uncertainty, spiritual turmoil, loneliness and isolation to revelation'.

Robert Lindsay, Art historian

Figure 2.28 Peter Booth, *Painting, 1981*, 1981, oil on canvas, 197.5 x 304.5cm. Purchased with assistance from the Visual Arts Board Australia Council 1981. Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales. © Peter Booth, 1981. Licensed by VISCOPY, 2009. Photograph: Christopher Snee



figurative: representing objects in a way that they can be easily recognised

open composition: composition in which the objects in the picture extend visually beyond the edges of the frame



monumental: resembling a monument; grand or imposing

painterly: painting with visible brush strokes that create areas of colour and tone that merge rather than being contained within outlines

impasto: Italian word that refers to thick, textured paintwork with visible brush strokes

Born in 1940, Peter Booth works in the expressive tradition of Bosch and Goya. His paintings contain an emotional intensity that reminds the viewer of threatening dreams or nightmares. He uses distortion and exaggeration and his **figurative** paintings are always expressive. As viewers, we are caught between humour and a sense of the ominous. His dramatic compositions of distorted and mutated figures in shallow space can be menacing and provocative or absurd and witty.

In *Painting, 1981* the **open composition** contains numerous bizarre, morphed creatures. Booth relies on strong contrast to create drama. He uses a heavily restricted and yet symbolic palette. His intense reds suggest danger, threat and the life force, and the black represents anxiety, pain and suffering. At the same time, there is a subtlety in the hints of pink and yellow in the greys. Throughout the painting, Booth has used tonal variation to suggest three-dimensional form.

The scale of the work is **monumental**: it is almost 2 metres by 3 metres. Booth's use of paint is direct, **gestural** and energetic. Booth defines his forms with outlines and his **painterly** application and heavy **impasto** reinforces the drama of the macabre scene. His preliminary work generally involves compositional studies for his paintings, although as he works on them they develop a life of their own.

Booth has been influenced by the subject matter of nineteenth-century Romantic artists such as Goya and Blake and by Abstract Expressionism and its loose handling of paint. This combination has created in Booth's work an expressive style sometimes called **Neo-expressionism**.

Jason Smith (who curated Booth's retrospective at NGV in 2003–04) has defined Booth's work as 'deeply autobiographical'. Booth was born in Sheffield, England, during World War II, where his father was employed in the steel mills. Sheffield was an industrial centre of belching chimneys and polluted air; one of the largest steel producing centres in the world and a target for bombs during the war. Echoes of these childhood memories can be felt in Booth's use of black, his use of strong contrast, and in the sense of tension and foreboding in his works.

Booth's work is informed not only by personal experiences and his observations of the natural world, but also by his dreams and anxieties. He has been known to sleep with a book by his bed so that he can record his nightmares. In this way, his paintings and drawings are enigmatic and demand a **subjective** response from the viewer. Booth says, *'My art has definitely helped me to deal with life and what life has thrown at me. The works evolve the way they do because of the way I was feeling at the time ... A lot of my work is derived from my imagination'*. (quoted in Erica Longo, *A Creative Life: Peter Booth's World View*, NGV Gallery, January/February 2004).

Booth suffers from limbic epilepsy, which affects the part of the brain responsible for memory and emotion and is often associated with hallucinations and visions. His paintings have the absurd quality of dreams, of nightmarish visions. *Painting 1981* was inspired by the inner world of his imagination. The grotesque figures are barely human as they turn their rapt faces to the creature on the pole. Only one figure stares straight at the viewer; the rest are self-absorbed and isolated within the larger group. They symbolise the *'violent, destructive and dark aspects of human behaviour'* (Chee, Broos and Slade, *In the Picture*, 1996). The bandages and masks symbolise ignorance, an inability to see. Booth himself says that *'The figures in my paintings are never about physical deformity but about psychological deformity.'* ('The Dark Side' in *Good Weekend*, 24 March 1990)

Neo-expressionism: expressionist artwork produced after the Expressionist movement in the early twentieth century

subjective: based on personal feelings rather than external observation



Other works

Painting 1982, 1982
Painting 1982, 1982
Untitled (Whirlpool), 1995

World View, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
 Smith J. 2003, *Peter Booth: Human/Nature* (exhibition catalogue) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

References

Lindsay R. 1990, *Peter Booth: One Hundred Years of Solitude – The New Ice Age*, Melbourne.
 Longo E. 2004, *A Creative Life: Peter Booth's*

Web resources



Weblink

www.rexirwin.com/artists/gallery_artists/booth/2005/index.htm

ACTIVITY 2.10

- Booth's work has been compared to that of Bosch, Füsseli, Goya and Munch. Select a painting by Booth and compare it to a work by one of these artists, explaining points of similarity and difference. Be specific as you refer to details within the works to justify your opinions.
- Donald Richardson, *Art in Australia*, 1988 says of *Painting 1981* '... its style is wooden and clumsy, and its message melodramatic and therefore, unconvincing'. What is your opinion of Booth's style? Do you agree with Richardson? How does Booth's style contribute to the mood of his work?
- Booth's paintings are enigmatic and demand a subjective response from the viewer. He says, 'I find it quite fascinating to hear other people's interpretations of my work. I often find psychologists and psychiatrists' interpretations fascinating'. Select another painting by Booth and show how the details can have more than one interpretation.

Wes Craven

A Nightmare on Elm Street 'played for everybody in all cultures because everybody has to fall asleep'.

Wes Craven

collaboration: two or more artists working together to create an artwork

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

mise-en-scene: the arrangement of performers and properties on stage or before a camera in a film

framing: to isolate and draw attention to the most important part of an image by surrounding it with a visual 'frame'

depth of field: photographic term to describe the distance between the nearest and furthest points that are in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph

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



Figure 2.29
Wes Craven (director), image of Freddy Krueger from *Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1984

A film is a **collaboration**, produced by a team of people led by the director, who shares his or her vision with the producer, camera operators, editors and actors. By necessity, a film is viewed within a frame, although the action does not always happen within this frame. Sometimes what is imagined off screen is as important to the plot and flow of the film as is the action on the screen. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* contains many symbolic elements we associate with nightmares: tunnels, cellars, shadows, broken glass, chases at night and, of course, screams.

Film as an art medium addresses its audience in a similar way to other visual arts by using a visual language. Just as analysing the art elements and principles helps us to understand an artwork and begin to interpret its messages, so analysing the **mise-en-scene** is a method of understanding the elements of a moving picture. This term refers to the way the scene is put together, the combination of all the factors that make up its appearance or mood as it is recorded on camera. It refers not only to the set, the props, the composition and acting of the scene but also to the camera technique, the framing, lighting and depth of field.

A Nightmare on Elm Street is a teenage 'slasher film', firmly placed in the horror film **genre**. It highlights, in a stereotypical manner, the struggle between good, in the person of all-American 15-year-old Nancy; and evil, in the form of 'undead' child serial killer Freddy Krueger. This struggle is clearly depicted through contrasts of light and sound. On another level, it is a story about the dislocation of reality and nightmare; the dividing line is deliberately blurred. Freddy is definitely part of the world of nightmares, yet he can kill in the real world. On yet another level, it is a story about revenge and retribution.

To intensify the contrast between reality and dream, the nightmare sequences were filmed in **low key** lighting, with **backlighting** sometimes used to draw attention to the most important character on the screen and to enhance the frightening mood of the scene. Like all good horror films, sound is used to heighten the sense of tension and anticipation. Craven directed his cinematographer to film using unusual camera angles and, at times of greatest tension, to use a tracking shot to follow the character, which allows the audience to empathise with the characters and to feel part of the action.

To emphasise the wickedness of the villain, Krueger's appearance, voice and movements are distorted and exaggerated. His severe scarring from burns adds to his frightening, mask-like appearance. Craven has made deliberate use of clashing red and green to set up a visual tension, recognisable to the viewer as Freddy's jumper and the soft roof of the car in the final scene.

Written and directed by Wes Craven in 1984, this first film was followed by 7 sequels, as well as 12 novels, numerous comic books, and a television series. Typical viewers in the 1980s were teenagers, who enjoyed the shock value on the screen and the permission this gave them to scream. The special effects are somewhat crude – the surreal melting staircase, the bath scene, and the bloody murders lack the subtlety that viewers are accustomed to in the twenty-first century.

Wes Craven (born 1939) had worked in the genre of horror film for some time before directing *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. He acknowledges a number of personal influences that impacted on the creation of this film. The first was a series of newspaper articles in the Los Angeles Times in the late 1970s that reported people dying mysteriously during vivid nightmares. This then reminded him of a childhood memory when, as a seven year old, he felt threatened by a man outside his home; a man whose image and aura were later distilled into the 'essence of Freddy Krueger', even to the detail of the hat he was wearing.

Craven also remembers being bullied at school by a boy called Fred Krueger. He gave the same name to the villain of the film as a form of revenge. Furthermore, he tells us that while he was 'constructing' Krueger's character, his cat's retractable claws inspired Freddy's knifed fingers.

low key: using mainly dark tones or tints with few highlights



backlighting: light coming from behind the subject



Other works

A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors, 1987
New Nightmare, 1991
Scream, 1996

Web resources



Weblinks

www.spike.com/video/nightmare-on-elm/2772511
 For information on how to analyse films, go to <http://classes.yale.edu/film-analysis>

References

Craven, W. 1984, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, New Line Cinema

ACTIVITY 2.11

After watching *A Nightmare on Elm Street* compare it to Füsseli's painting *The Nightmare*. Both reflect a world of night-time horrors. Explain how the differences may be a result of different artforms (film versus painting) or the times in which they were created (eighteenth and twentieth centuries).

Mike Parr

'I want to go beyond the art world and create a disturbance deep within our culture.'

Mike Parr



Figure 2.30

Mike Parr, *Close the Concentration Camps*, 15 June 2002, 6 hour performance, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne. Photograph courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery



subjective: based on personal feelings rather than external observation

performance art: art events involving time, space, the performer's body and a live audience

In art, nightmares are born of the mind of the artist. Sometimes viewers will be moved by the images. Sometimes they will be placed in a position where a response is demanded of them. Such a situation occurs in *Close the Concentration Camps*, a time-based work presented by Mike Parr in 2002. It was Parr's **subjective** response to a contemporary political situation that he felt was abhorrent. The performance concerned

the Australian government's treatment of asylum seekers and compared detainees in detention centres to Jews in concentration camps in World War II.

Performance art can be a forceful political weapon and Parr's presentation was confronting and provocative. It blurred the boundaries between his life, his beliefs and his art. The title itself was a political statement; by renaming detention centres as concentration camps, he was alluding to his belief about the inhuman treatment of asylum seekers in twenty-first century Australia, and, at the same time, drawing attention to the fact that he felt the government was shielding the Australia public from the desperation of the refugees' plight.

Mike Parr is an artist who works across a wide range of disciplines. During a career spanning more than 30 years he has exhibited drawings and etchings as well as sculpture, video, installation and performance. Recently his performances have subjected his body to extreme conditions that have tested the limits of his endurance and the power of his mind to tolerate, and control, pain. In Parr's performance art, the body is both the subject matter and the medium. It challenges the concept of art being static and, due to its physicality, it challenges the audience.

Leading up to the creation of *Close the Concentration Camps*, Parr had read news reports about hunger strikes in detention centres and about detainees stitching their lips shut as a symbolic response to their belief that no one was listening to them. They were unable to eat or speak; this physically powerful gesture enforced the silence that they felt had been imposed on them. Parr said, 'I want to use the language of my 'body art' to make the strongest possible statement in support of the detainees'. In *Close the Concentration*

Camps, he not only had his mouth sewn shut but also his eyes and ears, thus symbolising blindness and deafness as well as the lack of freedom of expression.

Close the Concentration Camps was performed in a white gallery space at Monash University Museum of Art. Parr remained still and emotionally remote. He sat facing a mirrored wall; the only view of him was seen reflected in it. The audience also became part of the performance through this mirror; while they were observing Parr, they were forced to consider the implication that they were passive and silent spectators in the broader political issue that Parr was presenting. The work suggested similarities between German citizens during World War II and the members of the audience in 2002 as surrogates for the Australian population. Both were passive and silent. The response of the audience was discomfort on a number of levels, according to their understanding of the situation.

Resting near Parr in the gallery space was a stainless steel table containing bandages and surgical instruments. He chose to have the facial stitching completed before the performance began so that sensationalism did not overwhelm the sensitivity of the message. In addition to the sewing, which created facial distortion, the word 'alien' was branded on his thigh and could be seen where his trousers had been cut away.

Wall graphics, which supported Parr's position on the inhumanity of detention centres and the treatment of asylum seekers, were exhibited in an adjacent gallery. There were slides in large-scale projection entitled *Not the Hilton*, pages of text from the inspection report on immigration detention centres and a series of letters. Through his collaboration with filmmakers, the performance was documented photographically and on video. As with all his works, Parr controlled the framing of the images that would create a visual archive of the event. *Close the Concentration Camps* was also webcast, which presented it to a wider and physically remote audience.



collaboration: two or more artists working together to create an artwork

Other works

Malevich (A Political Arm), Performance, 2003
Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, Oi, Oi, Oi, Performance, 2003
Cartesian Corpse: The Tilted Stage, Performance, 2008

References

Artlink, 2003, Vol. 23, No. 1, pages 44–47.
 Austin, Sarah 2005, 'Anatomy and Poetics', *Double Dialogues*, Issue 6. Available at

Web resources



Weblink

www.doubledialogues.com/archive/issue_six/austin.html.

ACTIVITY 2.12

- 1 Art writer John McDonald argues that *Close the Concentration Camps* trivialises contemporary art and makes a 'ghastly' parody of the horrors people endure in captivity. Write a response to this statement drawing on information from Karen Heinrich's article 'Flinch Art' in *The Age*, available at: www.theage.com.au/articles/2002/06/11/1022982844221.html, 12 June 2002.
- 2 Parr himself says that performance art has always been based on a dialogue between artist and audience. Research another controversial political issue that artists have addressed in performance or another artform. Consider issues such as animal rights, feminism or political activism. Go to www.van-thanh-rudd.net and www.theage.com.au/articles/2004/05/13/1084289821310.html to read about Melbourne political activists Van Thanh Rudd and Azlan McLennan.



Weblinks

[3]

ARTMAKING AND PERSONAL MEANING

Unit 1 – Area of Study 2

Chapter overview

By the end of Unit 1, you should be able to present visual creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests and ideas by trialling techniques, materials and processes. 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 artforms
- use the qualities and characteristics of your materials and artform/s to present concepts
- trial materials, techniques, processes and artforms
- manipulate the elements of art to establish a visual language
- apply the Formal and Personal Frameworks
- annotate your artworks.

'There is no must in art because art is free.'

Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), Russian artist

There is no one right way to make art and this text 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.

INTRODUCTION

'A lot of it's experimental, spontaneous. It's about knocking about in the studio and bumping into things.'

Richard Prince

The VCE Study Design states that Unit 1 is a 'guided exploration of techniques, materials and processes' during which students must 'develop a folio of visual responses to a selection of set tasks'.

Unit 1 is a teacher-directed unit, but requires you to produce visual creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests. You may be required to make use of particular media or your 'teacher may set specific tasks to direct and facilitate your investigation and experimentation'. The way you do this should reflect your interests, creativity and imagination. There is no requirement to produce a finished artwork; however, during the process of exploration, you may end up with one or more works that *you* consider finished artworks.

The important thing in Unit 1 is to explore different ways of working. If possible, you should experiment with a range of **artforms** and media. What artforms you are able to explore may be determined by your school, or could be personal choices. They can be two-, three- or four-dimensional artforms. If you are limited to one artform or medium then you should trial various techniques and approaches to using this artform. To achieve this, you will draw on the key knowledge and related key skills outlined in the Study Design for Area of Study 2.

FOLIO OF VISUAL RESPONSES

The use of visual language as a means to explore issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination

Key skill: communicate personal ideas and concepts through the development of a visual language.

Where to start when exploring your selected artform/s

You are required to complete a number of teacher-directed 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 to 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 using drawing, painting or photography. But what can you draw or photograph? What sort of images could you look for? You may find it useful to make use of a mind map or brainstorm to open your mind to a range of possibilities, unencumbered by the concerns of how you would approach them as a painting, print or sculpture.

artform: the specific shape, or quality an artistic expression takes – two-dimensional artforms include painting, drawing, printmaking, collage and photography; three-dimensional artforms include sculpture, ceramics and construction; four-dimensional artforms include those making use of time such as performance, video and installation

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

this through the effective application of the elements and principles of art in his self-portraits. 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.

The Australia 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. 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. 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, 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 (see Figure 3.5) are an example of this. Her depiction 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 expectation 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 the 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.

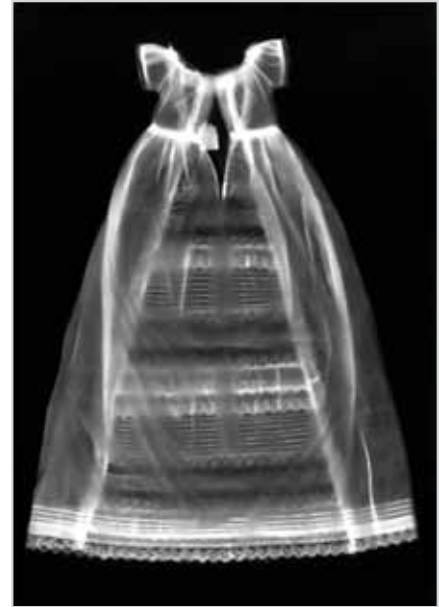


Figure 3.4
Anne Ferran, *Untitled Christening Robes*, 2001
silver gelatin photogram
127 x 90cm, unique print ©
Anne Farran, 2001/Licensed
by VISCOPY 2009



Figure 3.5
Audrey Flack, *Chanel*, 1974, acrylic
on canvas, 213 x 152cm, Louise K.
Meisel Gallery

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. The way we see things can also be affected by our perception of something or our point of view.



Figure 3.6
Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade (Morning)*, 1893, oil on canvas, Folkwang Museum, Germany



Figure 3.7
Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade (Sunset)*, 1893, oil on canvas, 100 x 65cm Musée Marmottan, Paris



Figure 3.8
Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral. Façade*, 1893, oil on canvas, Pola Museum of Art, Japan



Figure 3.9
Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral*, 1893, 107 x 73cm, oil on canvas, Musée d'Osay, Paris



Figure 3.10
Claude Monet, *Rouen Cathedral, Façade and Tour d'Albane*, 1893, Museum Beyelaer, Switzerland

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 (see Figure 3.11). You could experiment with the aesthetic qualities of actual textured materials and surfaces like Rosalie Gascoigne (see Figure 3.12). Touch and sight are closely linked when you consider brail. You could consider a sculpture for the blind or works that comment on sight and vision impairment.

Figure 3.11
Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini Marriage*, (detail) 1434, oil on oak panel, 82 x 59.5cm, National Gallery London



Figure 3.12
Rosalie Gascoigne, *Grassfest*, 1999, Weathered painted wood on composition board 106.5 x 101 cm, Queensland University of Technology Art Collection, Brisbane © Rosalie Gascoigne Estate. Licensed by VISCOPY, 2009



Smell

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

A work incorporating sound can provide the opportunity for a four-dimensional work of art such as an installation using video or PowerPoint. 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.

Taste

When depicting taste, our thoughts generally go 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 (see Figure 3.14) to the works in oil paint by Penny Siopis (see Figure 3.13) who depicted tables weighed down with food. However, Siopis' paintings don't only deal with eating. The overabundance of food comments on waste, decay and *vanitas*. Your exploration of taste may even deal with personal taste or aesthetic taste and the concept of *kitsch*.

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.

vanitas: Latin for 'emptiness'; refers to the transience of things of the world and the inevitability of death; in the 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

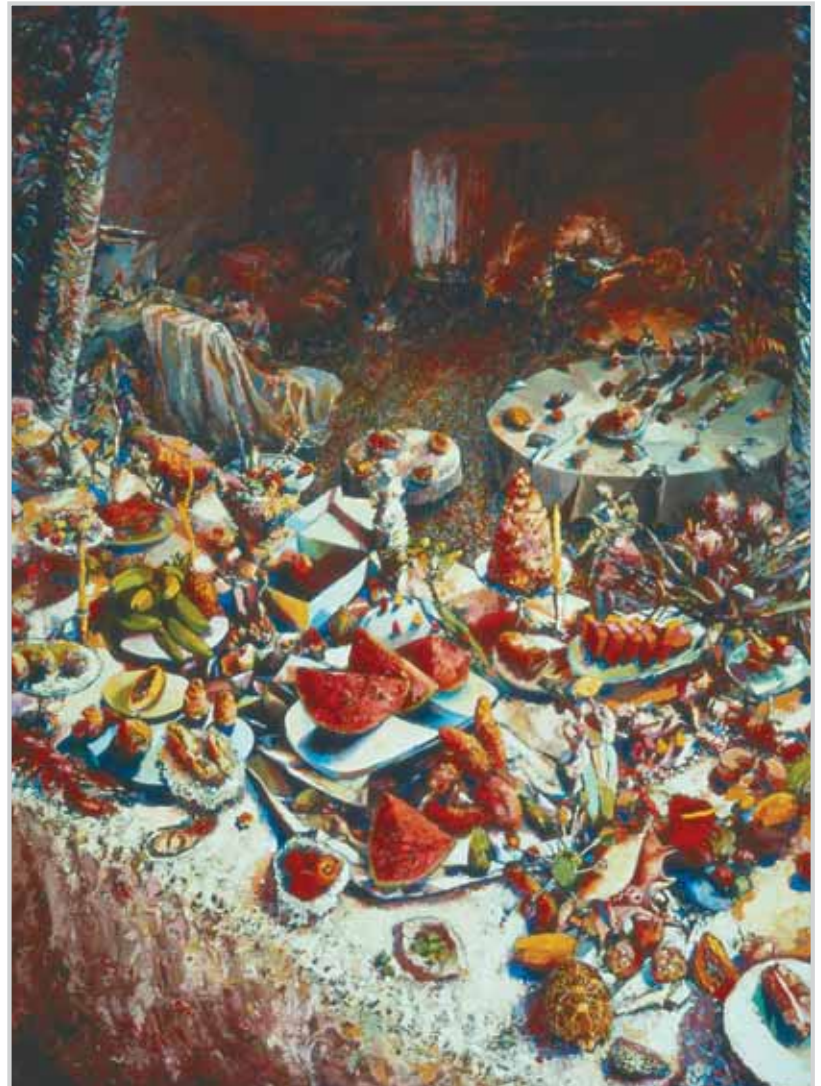


Figure 3.13
Penny Siopis, *Still Life with Watermelon and Other Things*, 1985 (oil on canvas), 242.2 x 180.5 cm, Rembrandt van Rijn Museum, South Africa



Figure 3.14
Unknown Roman
Artist, *Still Life with
Peaches*, found
at Herculaneum,
c1AD, 34 x 35cm,
Museo Archeologico
Nazionale, Naples

thumbnail sketches:

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

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.

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 that you can communicate your ideas and concepts in a visual way. One approach is to use **thumbnail sketches** (refer to page 23).

ACTIVITY 3.2

Select the three ideas you are most interested in exploring for *A Sense of My World* and, using 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.

An alternative method to communicate your ideas and concepts in a visual way is to start exploring your medium/media using a range of techniques. Begin exploring marks, making textures, layering your medium and experimenting with different surfaces as you generate possible ways that you could visually represent your ideas or concepts. This is an opportunity to explore both your medium and the elements 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.

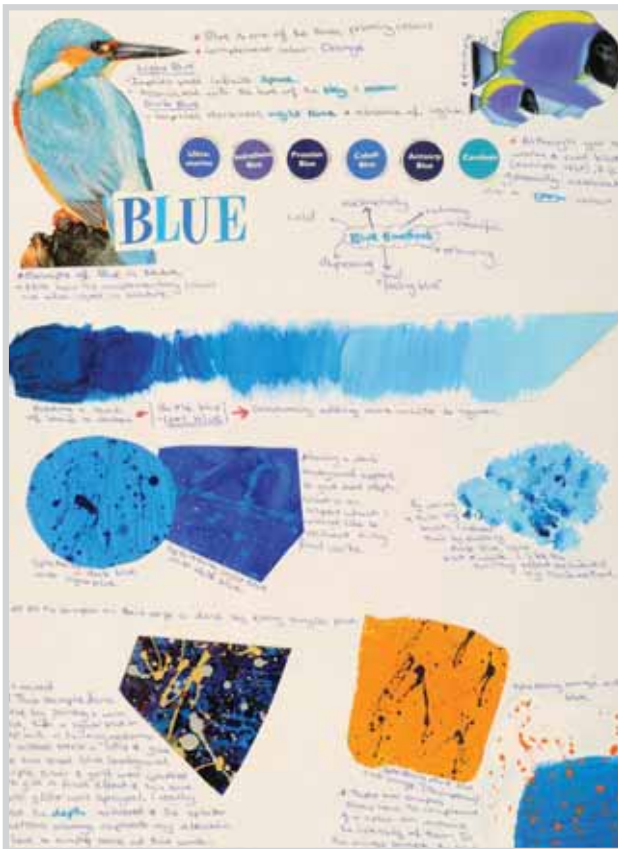


Figure 3.15
Examples of Jess Maguire's
exploration of blue

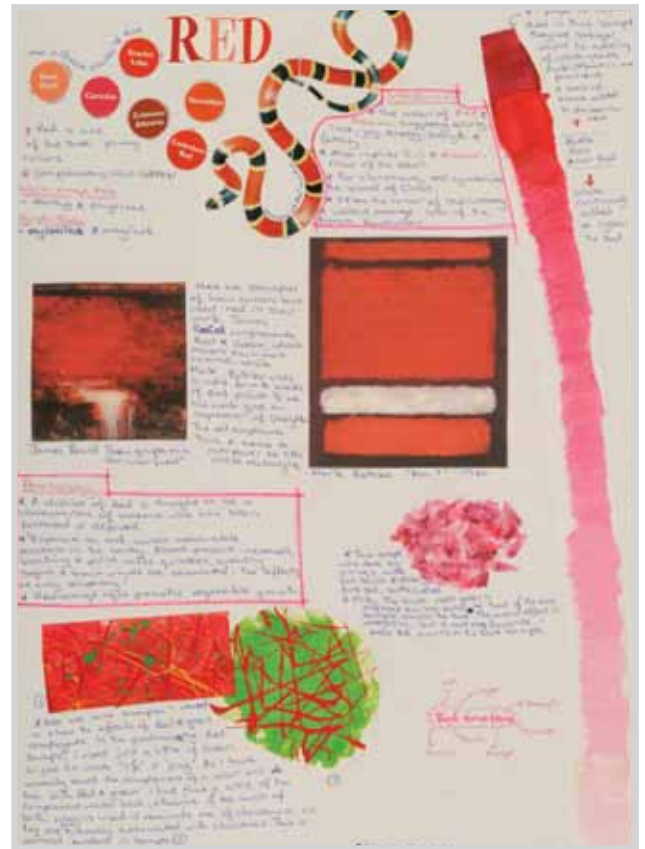


Figure 3.16
Examples of Jess
Maguire's exploration
of red

Colour was a major consideration for the VCE student Jess Maguire when developing her painting folio. As part of her exploration, Jess looked at different aspects of colour as stimulus for her paintings. You can see 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, finding evidence of her selected colour in the world around her, as well as in artworks.

Jess wrote:

'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".'

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

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 that you could 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, shown in Figure 3.17, 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 3.17
Examples of Jess
Maguire's sponge texture

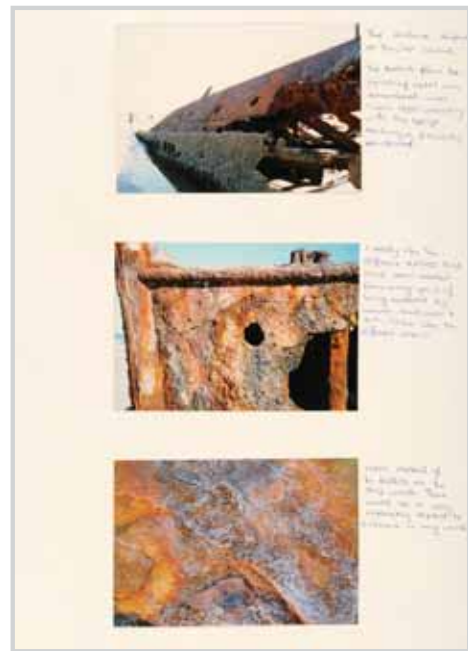


Figure 3.18 Jess
Maguire's
photo of a rusted wreck

ACTIVITY 3.3

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 might require you to explain the symbolism using written annotation.

QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED MATERIALS AND ARTFORMS

How they may be used to present concepts and images

Key skills: develop visual creative responses from methods of observation and the exercise of imagination and communicate personal ideas and concepts through the development of a visual language.

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 (see Figure 3.19), Andy Warhol presents repeated rows of Coke bottles, similar to what you would find on the supermarket shelves. By doing this, he is not only commenting on the consumer product, but also on the very way in which the product is presented and sold. By using repetition, he is making a comment 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 artmaking. Artists have often used particular artforms for an artwork because of the meaning that these artforms can give to the work.

Andy Warhol produced *Marilyn Monroe* (see Figure 3.20) using the silkscreen process. Warhol 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 her 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 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 transforms Marilyn into a mass-produced consumer item, a product of our society rather than a person.

As you explore different artforms, you should be aware of what meanings are associated with the medium, process or even techniques. 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 contracts, 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.

With this in mind, approach your exploration of art with an open mind and an awareness of how the subject matter, media and techniques can provide you with an effective visual language to communicate with the viewer.

Using the ideas you have generated through your brainstorm/mind map and thumbnail sketches and/or photographs as a starting point, you should begin to develop a folio of



Figure 3.19 Andy Warhol, *Green Coca-Cola Bottles*, 1962, synthetic polymer, silkscreen ink and graphite on canvas, 209.2 x 144.8cm, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Purchased with funds from the Friends of the Whitney Museum of American Art 68.25. Photography by Geoffrey Clements © Andy Warhol Foundation/VISCOPY, Sydney 2009. Registered trademark, The Coca-Cola Company. All Rights Reserved

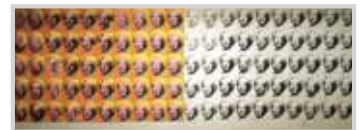


Figure 3.20 Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe*, 1962, oil, acrylic and enamel on canvas © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/Corbis



Figure 3.21 Penny Siopis, *Still Life with Watermelon and Other Things*, 1985 (detail, full image on page 59)

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 artform/s. This exploration will allow you to trial different techniques and get to know your medium or media.

photograms: images 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 often produce more interesting results

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

ACTIVITY 3.4

Find 10 examples of artworks. Write a brief explanation next to each image about how you feel the media, techniques and approaches to artmaking and the selected artforms have added to the meaning of the work. (Do not use any of the examples mentioned in the text above.)

APPROACHES FOR TRIALLING MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES AND ARTFORMS

Key skills: develop visual creative responses from methods of observation and the exercise of imagination and explore materials, techniques, processes and artforms and investigate how these can be used to create artworks.

The application of materials, techniques, processes and artforms is the point at which you are beginning to make art. 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 media by your facilities, 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 mediums or textures, such as sand, to your paint. If working in the darkroom, consider **photograms**, **double exposures**, and **hand-coloured gelatin silver prints**.

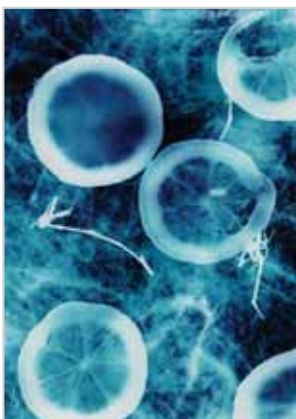


Figure 3.22
Example of a photogram: lemons



Figure 3.23
Example of a double exposure print: Slam Dunk Action Shot 3



Figure 3.24
Adolfo Farsari, hand-coloured albumen silver print, 1885–90, Musée Nicephore Niepce, France

ACTIVITY 3.5

Select a particular artform or medium you are interested in exploring. Find at least 10 different techniques and combinations of media that you can apply to your selected artform. Also, explore a range of surfaces onto which you can apply your chosen medium.

If you are unsure of how to proceed with your exploration of your materials, techniques, processes and artforms, 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 artform. 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.

hand-coloured gelatin silver prints: black and white prints that are coloured using water colour paints or drawing inks; it is important to hand colour subtly by patiently layering transparent layers of colour into the light areas of the print

FORMAL ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF ARTWORKS

Key skill: use the formal elements and principles to produce creative responses that illustrate personal interests.

The Study Design lists the following elements and principles of art. Although these are not the only ones, this is a comprehensive list and provides you with a broad range to employ in your exploration of art.

Art elements

Art elements are visual devices or tools that you use to create a work of art. Art elements that are traditionally associated with the visual arts include line, colour, texture, tone, form, and shape. In contemporary artworks, elements such as sound, space, light and time are also considered.

Art principles

Art principles are visual conventions used by artists to position and order art elements in artworks to create a composition, including balance, focal point, unity (including harmony), variety, contrast, rhythm, and space.

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, relied only on the elements and principles to convey his ideas with no reference to the world around him. 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 that comprised colour, line, shape and their relationship, to create abstract pattern; an image of spiritual conflict. He 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.'*

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

ACTIVITY 3.6

Choose an artwork you admire that relates to the concept you are exploring. 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.

Figure 3.25
Wassily Kandinsky,
Composition IV,
1911, oil on canvas,
159.5 x 250.5cm,
Kunstsammlung
Nordrhein–Westfalen,
Germany



When using the formal qualities in your art consider if the element/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 3.7

- 1 Using the list of art elements and principles above, explore how effective they are in establishing a visual language. Apply the formal quality to:
 - achieve a particular mood or range of atmospheres
 - convey a message
 - 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 formal quality to each task to determine how each can work independently, or in combination with other formal qualities to achieve the desired results.

FORMAL AND PERSONAL FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION

Key skill: apply knowledge of the Formal and Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to their own artmaking.

These key knowledge and skills form an important link to Outcome 1 of your study. You will apply what you have learnt about both the Formal and Personal Frameworks and use them to reflect on your own artmaking.

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 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 thinking and working practice to the person viewing your folio.



Formal Framework

When applying the Formal Framework you will look at how you have used 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. In analysing these, you will have to consider how they enhance 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 next step.

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*'.

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 3.26
An example of Elisa Bongetti's annotation of the elements and principles in her photograph of her grandmother



Figure 3.27
Elisa Bongetti's oil sketch of a seascape at sunset

While commenting on her oil sketch of a seascape at sunset, 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 theme or narrative, 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 formal qualities and your use of media and techniques. Some of the things you should consider discussing in your annotation are:

- How does my artmaking reflect the Personal Framework?
- What specific aspects of my art making, use of the medium etc. reflect my personality, thinking, values and who I am?
- What symbols, if any, have I used to explore my identity?

Explain:

- What you have done and what decisions you have made about the subject matter, artform, medium or technique.
- 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.

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, Nicky 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 (see Figure 3.28). She was happy with the result, but she wanted the surface to have a greater personal or symbolic link to her subject matter.



Figure 3.28
Nicky Purser's marker drawing on paper with text

ACTIVITY 3.8

Write a brief analysis of one of your artworks. Apply the Formal 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.



Figure 3.29
The old flying logbook belonging to Nicky Purser's Granddad



Figure 3.30
Nicky Purser's ink drawing of her granddad on a photocopy of the flight log

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'.

ART LANGUAGE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DOCUMENTATION AND ANNOTATION

Key skill: document thinking and working practices.

Part of your discovery of the artform/s and approaches used to create a visual language is to communicate your understanding of what you are learning. Merely presenting evidence shows that you have achieved a particular outcome or developed a skill, but does not explicitly demonstrate understanding. 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.

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 practice your writing and interpretive skills, 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 thinking and working practices during her exploration of photographs she took of children on a beach.

'This little girl's pink top is great to show contrast of the highlights and shadows on her and results in interesting reflections'. (See Figure 3.31)

'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.' (See Figure 3.32)

'I've simplified this one a lot more, sticking to the main lines that define the form, example the half circle the elbow and the shadow line on the simply but effectively portray the form. This sketch would be a good starting point for a painting.' (See Figure 3.33)

Figure 3.31
Nicky Purser's thumbnail photos



Figure 3.33
Nicky Purser's biro contour sketch



Figure 3.32
Nicky Purser's biro sketch

Figure 3.34
Oil experiments

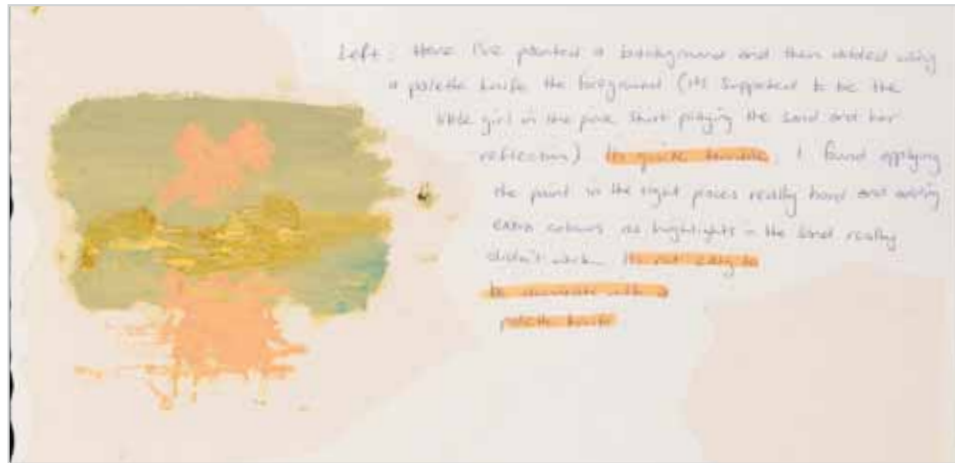


Figure 3.35
Oil sketch

'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 be accurate with a palette knife.' (See Figure 3.34)

'I used a contour line drawing to start my oil painting (See Figure 3.35) 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 (See Figure 3.36) 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 (See Figure 3.37) ... 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 3.36
Oil sketch on paper



Figure 3.37
Oil sketch on paper

You should also consider the issues that you have encountered by working in a specific medium. How has this improved your understanding of that artform? 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. You may annotate this and indicate that you should avoid working 'lean over fat'. On the other hand, you may suggest the symbolic potential of this chance occurrence. 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.

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

ACTIVITY 3.9

Write short annotations documenting a process you have used to explore an artform, medium or technique. Use the annotations to document your thinking and working 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.

[4]

ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 1

Unit 1 – Outcomes 1 and 2

Chapter overview

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

- the Formal Framework
- the Personal Framework
- the ways in which the experiences of the viewer can affect an understanding of artworks
- personal opinions
- art language
- creative responses that demonstrate your personal interests and ideas through trialling techniques, materials and processes.

You will find:

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

'Looking isn't as easy as it looks.' Ad Reinhardt (1913–1967), American artist

INTRODUCTION FOR OUTCOME 1

To successfully complete Outcome 1 in Unit 1 you will need to study at least three artworks by different artists. For each artwork you will need to consider what they express about the artists' interests, experiences, opinions and motivations and how they reflect the artist's personal and cultural identity. You will apply the Formal and Personal Frameworks to help you examine the form and appearance of the works and the motivation of the artists. You will also become more aware of your personal response to the works and how this affects your interpretations.

You will be asked to submit one or more assessment tasks to successfully complete Outcome 1. Refer to the sample criteria sheet on page 75.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Short-answer questions supported by visual references

- Read the question carefully, underlining key words before you begin.
- Keep your answers 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-answer 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 that you have a coloured copy 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
 - major formal qualities visible in the works
 - any symbols and your interpretations of them
 - your knowledge of the personal interests and concerns of the artist
 - any way that you feel your interpretation is influenced by your personal experiences and background.

Extended written response

- Organise the points you wish to make into an essay plan.
- Use the Formal Framework to analyse the works in terms of elements, principles, style, artform, technique and symbolism.
- Use the Personal Framework to acknowledge the impact of the artists' experiences, feelings and beliefs on their work.
- Refer to how your own experiences and background affect your understanding and interpretation of the works.
- Refer to relevant symbolism.
- Use visual evidence from the artwork to support your point of view.

Multimedia presentation

- Use PowerPoint or Photo Story (or other suitable program) to present a project that addresses your interpretations of selected artworks using the Formal 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.
- You could also ask someone to video you making an oral presentation.

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 artwork 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 page 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 page 3 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 language 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 an art glossary to do this.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 1



Name: _____

Outcome 1: Analyse and interpret artworks using the Formal and Personal Frameworks.

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the work demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 Selection of a range of artworks that clearly reflect the varied personal motivation and interests of the artists							/5
Criterion 2 Application of the Formal Framework to analyse and interpret the artworks							/5
Criterion 3 Application of the Personal Framework to identify the ways that artworks are influenced by and reflect the feelings, thinking and life circumstances of the artist							/5
Criterion 4 Discussion of the ways in which the interpretations of the artworks may be influenced by the background and experiences of the viewer							/5
Criterion 5 Expression of personal opinion with reference to the artworks and their interpretations							/5
Criterion 6 Use of appropriate research and art language							/5



These criteria have been developed from the VCE Art Study Design and would apply to an extended response (such as the ones on the following pages.) Not all tasks need to assess all criteria. This may be achieved instead by a combination of shorter tasks.

This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.



Figure 4.1 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait at 28*, 1500, oil on panel, 67 x 49cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

Criterion 1: The artists were selected from a range of historical and cultural settings and Teghan and Brittany have considered the ways in which the self-portraits reflect the identities and interests of the artists

Criterion 6: Appropriate art language has been highlighted throughout the text of these two extracts (in red)

Criterion 2: Discussion of visual analysis and style assist in the interpretation

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSES

Both students used the criteria sheet on page 75.

Task: Select at least three self-portraits from widely different times and cultures and analyse the way in which they reflect the artists' personal and cultural identities.

Student 1: Teghan Hunt-Macdonald

Teghan chose to write about six artists: Dürer, Rembrandt, Courbet, van Gogh, Kahlo and Picasso. She introduces her theme:

All of these artists gazed into their mirrors and attempted to grasp their own identities. They sought to portray their image, whether it showed a clear representation of their features, a walk through their imagination or an outpouring of emotions. Some self-portraits show only what the artist wants us to see, some chronicle the history of the artist; others reveal personal secrets and a sense of isolation. Whichever method is employed, each artist took a long literal and figurative look at him or herself. Each of these portraits is an exploration of the self.

The following discussion of Albrecht Dürer's *Self-portrait*, is a further extract:

Refer to Dürer's earlier drawing *Self-portrait at 13*, 1500, on page 30.

*Dürer's most impressive and final painted self-portrait was created in 1500, when he was 28 years old. The solemn, **frontal pose** and the Christ-like **idealisation** of the features assert an authority beyond the range of ordinary portraits. Contributing to this overall effect is the underlying **composition** of a circle at the top of a triangle, which supports the severe symmetry of the artist's face.*

Criterion 3: Consideration of the intentions of the artist

Criterion 4: Reflection on the changing interpretation of the work

Criterion 5: Teghan's opinion is evident in her interpretation of the work

Criterion 6: Research is obvious and is supported by a comprehensive bibliography

*This construction can be traced back to the **Byzantine** images of Christ the Redeemer. The painting looks, in fact, like a secularised **icon**. Today, the viewer might consider the artist audacious in comparing himself to Christ, but perhaps this is a misinterpretation and he was simply boasting of his skills as an artist.*

*Dürer used these skills to promote himself, much the way early portrait painters were commissioned to immortalise their employers. He painted his image to project an air of importance, to suggest high social status. He was obviously keenly aware of his audience. His portraits, though they do record change and emotional transition over time, were not an exploration of his psyche so much as a means of showing his rising social position. Dürer uses a **neutral colour scheme** that may be an ironic attempt to humble himself.*

Teghan Hunt-Macdonald

Figure 4.2 Andy Warhol, *Self-portrait*, 1986, silk screen, 1.8 x 1.8m, Australian National Gallery



STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSES

Student 2: Brittany Hendriks

In approaching the same task Brittany chose to write about Gentileschi, Munch, Close, Flack, Warhol and Bezor. She writes about Andy Warhol:

This self-portrait by Andy Warhol was created in 1986, the year before his death. He used four photographic images of himself and silk-screened them onto a large 1.8 metre square canvas so that they are not properly aligned.

Criterion 2: Visual analysis is integrated into a description of the work

Criterion 3: Research is evident in relation to the interests and style of the artist

Criterion 6: Appropriate art language has been highlighted throughout the text (in red)

Criterion 5: Brittany has expressed her personal opinions and supported them with reasons and evidence

Criterion 6: Research is obvious throughout the text

*The four large heads are all facing towards the viewer with staring eyes. This, along with the **distortion** of the faces due to the misaligned printing and Warhol's signature 'shocked' hair, creates a sense of unease and awkwardness in the viewer.*

*The heads are disembodied, giving them a floating, alien-like quality. This, along with the **contrast** made by the black background, makes them look eerie and **surreal**. The **warm** colours are layered on top of one another, which suggests there being multiple faces within the one face, perhaps giving reference to the drug-culture present at the time it was made. The way each image has been placed suggests **imbalance** and a lack of order, common themes in Warhol's work. The fact that there are four images, all subtly different, suggests the layers of Warhol's personality and the mystery behind them. Warhol was notorious for his membership in many diverse social circles and was often thought of as being asexual. He was also very interested in the underground filmmaking scene.*

*The **focal points** of this work are the eyes and mouths of each of the images. The eyes are all staring, which leaves the viewer feeling unsettled. The mouths are fixed and expressionless, yet in combination with the eyes and hair, they evoke a range of emotions from anger to fear to vulnerability. The hair is a further focal point and suggests a sense of madness.*

Warhol's works have often been referred to as being unsettling, which can be seen as a reflection of his own personality. As an underground filmmaker, he liked to make his viewers feel uncomfortable by presenting them with confronting, provocative images, which, nevertheless, make it difficult for them to turn away. Warhol's self-portrait also holds this quality; however, it is less confronting, which perhaps makes it more appealing.

Brittany Hendriks

INTRODUCTION FOR 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 explored a range of techniques, materials and processes. You must 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 explore different ways of working. Enjoy the experience of 'bumping into things'. Try media, techniques and approaches that you have not tried before. Be aware of the potential of unplanned results, chance experiences and embrace the possibilities presented in the environment of your art studio.

Although they should not be seen as a check list, 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 personal ideas and concepts through the development of a visual language

Am I:

- using various means to explore my interpretations of ideas and concepts, including brainstorming, annotation and an exploration of materials, techniques, processes and artforms?
- establishing a personal visual language that effectively communicates my ideas and concepts?
- allowing my media to achieve a visual representation of my concept or ideas?

2 Developing visual creative responses from methods of observation and the exercise of imagination.

Am I:

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

3 Exploring materials, techniques, processes and art forms.

Am I:

- exploring my medium/media using a range of techniques?
- considering how this exploration is communicating my ideas and concepts?
- allowing my exploration, observations and discoveries to provide me with potential tools with which to develop an effective visual language?
- exploring the expressive application of my medium/media and the symbolic meaning expressed by the media, techniques and approaches?
- starting to consider the meaning associated with the medium/media, process and techniques?
- pushing the boundaries of my medium/media?

4 Using the formal elements and principles to produce creative responses that illustrate personal interests.

Am I:

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

5 Applying knowledge of the Formal and Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to the artmaking.

Am I:

- analysing and discussing the meanings and messages in my artwork and evaluating how effective is the visual language that I am developing?
- reflecting on how my experiences, feelings and thinking are evident in my work?
- applying the formal 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?
- considering how the formal qualities enhance the messages of the artwork?
- considering how my artmaking reflects the personal framework, how the use of the medium etc. reflect my personality, thinking, values, interests and who I am?
- considering symbolism to explore my ideas and concepts?

6 Document thinking and working practices;

Am I:

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

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 2



Name: _____

Outcome 2: A folio of visual responses to a variety of set tasks exploring ideas and concepts of interest to you.

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the folio demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 The effective communication of ideas and concepts of personal interest through the development of a visual language							/5
Criterion 2 The development of visual creative responses from observation, the exercise of imagination and the exploration of various media and techniques							/5
Criterion 3 The broad and creative trialing of materials, techniques and processes with selected art form/s. A developing skill in the application of materials & techniques							/5
Criterion 4 The use of the formal elements and principles to produce creative responses that illustrate personal interests							/5
Criterion 5 The application of knowledge of the Formal and Personal Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to the exploration of the set tasks. An understanding is shown through the appropriate application, control and documentation of elements, principles and aesthetics							/5
Criterion 6 The development and presentation of a sustained body of work, documenting thinking and working practices							/5



This criteria sheet has been developed from the VCE Art Study Design and is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

[5]

ART AND CULTURE

Unit 2 – Area of Study 1

Chapter overview

By the end of Unit 2, you will have analysed, interpreted, compared and contrasted works from different cultural contexts. In this chapter, you will examine ways in which you can:

- discuss the role and purpose of art in cultural contexts
- discuss the ways in which art reflects and communicates the values, beliefs and traditions of the societies in which and for which it is made
- apply the Formal and Cultural Frameworks to analyse and interpret artworks
- compare and contrast artworks
- substantiate personal opinions about the artworks
- use appropriate art language
- investigate images of war and conflict
- explore images of the mother and child
- examine images of the nude.

'The work of art is above all a process of creation: it is never experienced as a mere product.'

Paul Klee (1879–1940), Swiss artist



INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1, we saw how art could often be interpreted as a reflection of the artist's beliefs and feelings. The focus of Unit 2 is the ways in which art and culture are intertwined. As we know, art varies from culture to culture and from time to time. You are being asked to explore and discuss ways in which art reflects the broader cultural environment of the artist and how it may be influenced by the time, place, beliefs and traditions surrounding its creation. To complete this outcome successfully, you need to explore these changes across time and culture and investigate their interrelatedness. Here we will do this by considering the different ways in which artists interpret and present themes.

In Outcome 1, you will be exploring influences on artists that are broader than their personal worlds. You will look at ways in which art can reflect and communicate society's values, beliefs and traditions. You will find examples of how art may be made to reflect, communicate, celebrate and reinforce the values of a society. You will explore and investigate the ways in which the world and the artist have changed over time. Sometimes this is provoked by the artist and sometimes by historical, political and cultural factors. To do this, you will need to explore the society in which the artist lives. It may have a positive impact on the artist or the artist may challenge and rebel against its values. You will look at the role that art plays in society and analyse art's varying social functions.

To successfully complete this outcome you are asked to analyse and interpret the work of at least four artists and compare and contrast the ways in which they communicate (or reject) the values of their time and place. The works you select need to be from very different cultural contexts for the necessary comparison to be meaningful. It is generally easier to select artworks that have their subject matter or a theme in common. In this way, it is easier to find significant points of similarity or difference. You will use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks when analysing and interpreting your selected artworks.

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.

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. 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 the nude. Many other themes could be used as starting points to link the artworks you are comparing. Other possibilities include wealth and power, religious expression, landscape or still life.

Figure 5.1

Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 349 x 776cm, Museo Reina Sofia, Spain © Pablo Picasso/Succession Picasso. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney 2009



Picasso painted *Guernica* as a personal response to the atrocity of the bombing of the small Basque town of the same name in 1937. It has since become an icon of the anti-war movement and reflects the impact that art can have on a society's attitudes.

THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF ART

'The function of art is to disturb. Science reassures.'

Georges Braque (1882–1963), French artist

'Art is not a mirror to reflect the world, but a hammer with which to shape it.'

Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893–1930), Russian poet

'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 (1958–1990), American artist



Figure 5.2 Francisco Goya, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*, 1799, etching, 21.6 x 15.2cm



Figure 5.3 Henri Rousseau, *The Dream* 1910, oil on canvas, 204 x 298cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Art fulfils many roles in the twenty-first century, sometimes so quietly that we are unaware of the part it plays and the influence it has on our lives and our thinking. It also takes many forms. As well as traditional and static forms, such as painting and sculpture, which can be seen in galleries and public spaces, art is now often time based. It can take the form of performance, installation or video, or it can be an integral part of festivals and public celebrations to commemorate specific events.

Art can also challenge. It can confront society's values and assumptions and defy its rules, often by assuming less traditional forms, such as street art.

The roles that art fulfils change over time. They are influenced by social and political events and subsequent shared values, or they result from strong viewpoints held by artists who wish to provoke changes in philosophy or action. These roles often overlap and an artwork can fulfil more than one role at a time.

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 influences 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 the artwork was created.

As we saw in Unit 1, art can fulfil a very **personal role** in the life of an artist. It can express personal thoughts, feelings, concerns and interests. It can also convey imagination and fantasy by expressing the inner life of the artist through their dreams and nightmares. The nightmare quality of *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters* by Goya and the desire for a dreamlike, ideal world in Rousseau's *The Dream* reflect this role of art.

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 *Orange, Gold and Red*. Visit <http://www.nga.gov.feature/rothko/> to see a collection of Rothko's work. Of his work 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.



Weblink

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. In this way, the artist may reinforce cultural values and help to create cultural or national identity.

Many artists aim to represent the way they see the world around them. Often their purpose is only 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 illustrating rites of passage, such as Bruegel's *Peasant Wedding*, to reflecting the domestic values of women, as when Morisot painted scenes of middle class life in the late nineteenth century.

Much art commemorates historical events and the identity of significant people and institutions. It may record individual likenesses or represent an historical moment objectively and impartially such as Tom Roberts' *The Big Picture*, or the artist may be personally or emotionally involved, such as the work produced by Australians commissioned as official war artists including Wendy Sharp in East Timor and Lewis Miller in Iraq.



Figure 5.4 Pieter Bruegel, *The Peasant Wedding*, 1568, oil on wood, 124 x 164cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

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



Figure 5.5 Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1873, oil on canvas, 56 x 46cm Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Figure 5.6 Tom Roberts, *The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by H.R.H. The Duke of Cornwall and York (later H.M. King George V), May 9, 1901*, 1903, oil on canvas, 304.5 x 509.2cm, Parliament House Art Collection, Australia

patron: person who supports the arts, especially financially

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. In the past, artists often produced artworks that reflected the values of their **patrons**, the wealthy and powerful who commissioned the work. Political leaders often commission art and architecture to consolidate their power and to create civic pride by placing large works in public places. They also censor art and information that they consider is not in their interest.



Figure 5.7 Arch of Constantine, 312 CE

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

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 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.

Art may also be the voice of dissent, often through satire or subversion and through this dissent, it can undermine the ruling power.

Art can communicate **religious and spiritual values**. It can inform people of accepted ideals and morals. In many cultures, art presents and supports religious beliefs and values. It embodies, in visible form, ideas that are spiritual. 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 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*.

The wooden *Nkisi Nkondi*, or spirit container, on page 87, was invested with magical properties by the Kongo peoples who used it for a variety of purposes, from healing and



Figure 5.8 An example of political Street Art



Figure 5.9 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435, oil on panel, 66 x 62cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

settling disputes to punishing the guilty and protecting the village. The nails were added after the figure was carved, as part of ritual use.

Since ancient times, architects and artists have designed and constructed churches and temples where people gather to worship. *Angkor Wat* in Cambodia 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.

Our society today does not share one set of religious beliefs. There are numerous forms of spirituality that are expressed in many ways. Today, religious expression tends to be a more personal expression of the artist and may be non-traditional in form and presentation.

An important role that art plays 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. This was an aim of Mike Parr's in *Close the Concentration Camps*, (see page 52–53).

ACTIVITY 5.1

- 1 Which of the three quotations on page 84 is closest to your own opinion about the role that art should play? Write an essay using it as a starting point for discussing the function of art. Refer to specific artworks that support your opinion.
- 2 Organise a debate. Use Haring's quote as your topic. Present it to your class and ask an adjudicator to assess your presentation on matter, manner and method.



Figure 5.11
Angkor Wat,
Early twelfth
century,
Cambodia



Figure 5.12 Mike
Parr, *Close the
Concentration
Camps*, 2002. View
the full installation
on page 52



Figure 5.10
**Kongo People, *Nkisi nkondi* (female
figure)**, date unknown, wood, nails,
51.4 x 27.9 x 20.3cm, The Stanley
Collection University of Iowa, Museum
of Art



Further
information
on Nkisi
Nkondi can
be found
at **www.**

**artsconnected.org/
artsnetmn/whatsart/
kongo.html** and
**www.randafricanart.
com/Bahongo_
Nkondi_figure.html**

WAR AND CONFLICT

'The most persistent sound which reverberates through men's history is the beating of war drums.'

Arthur Koestler (1905–1983), Jewish author and political activist

Refer to page 183 for further discussion of War and Conflict

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 (see Figure 5.15) records the Battle of Hastings, fought on one day in 1066. The *Battle of San Romano* (see Figure 5.16) lasted for only eight hours. More recently the village of Guernica (see Figure 5.19) was mercilessly bombed during a short two hours, although this was but one event in a long civil war. Mona Hatoum's glass hand grenades (see Figure 5.22) refer to the broader issue of war without reference to a specific conflict.

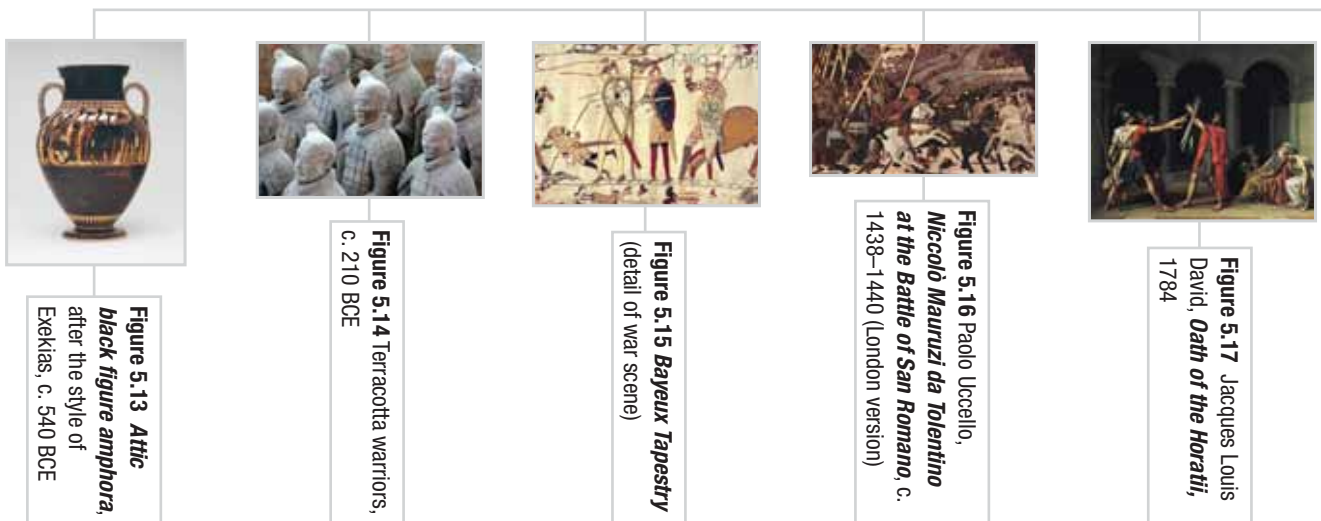


Weblink

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.

Go to www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/war_artists/artists.asp for more information.

War and conflict timeline



Sometimes depictions of war simply record historical events, such as Eddie Adams' photograph in Saigon (see Figure 5.20). 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 *The Oath of the Horatii* (see Figure 5.17) 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 5.46). Sometimes their work criticises and passes judgement.

Just as the approach to subject matter has varied with time and place, so too have the conventions for recording battle – from the extreme reality of Qin Shi Huangdi's *Terracotta Warriors* (see Figure 5.14), to the stylised figures on *Greek vases* (see Figure 5.13), the artificial structure of linear perspective in *The Rout of San Romano* and the monochromatic Cubism of Picasso's *Guernica* (see Figure 5.19). 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.

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?
- Was war seen as something right and just? Or something that lead to the suffering of the innocent?
- Does the artist use symbolism and metaphor to express the message?
- Has the artist referred to earlier artworks in order to imbue the work with greater levels of complex meaning?
- Do the images tell the truth? Who is the judge of this?



Figure 5.18 Francisco Goya,
*Great Deeds against the
Dead*, 1810



Figure 5.19 Pablo Picasso,
Guernica, 1937



Figure 5.20 Eddie Adams,
*General Nguyen Ngoc
Loan Executing a Viet
Cong Prisoner in Saigon*,
1968



Figure 5.21 Jake and Dinos
Chapman,
*Great Deeds
Against the Dead*, 1994



Figure 5.22 Mona
Hatoum,
*Nature morte aux
grenades*, 2006–2007

Greek vase

'We make war that we might live in peace'.

Aristotle, Greek philosopher



Figure 5.23 Attic black figure amphora, c540BCE, fired clay, 54.8 x 36.2cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Felton Bequest 1957



slip: liquid made by mixing finely ground clay with water, used for decorating or joining clay

incised: cut into

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

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

The vast majority of Greek ceramic vases were functional and their shapes were determined by their function. This amphora was made on a potter's wheel, to store liquids such as oil, wine or honey. It is an example of black-figure ware in which the figures were painted using black slip on the red clay body and lines were incised or painted. The story of a battle scene encircles the vase, following its contours.

The Greek idea of beauty was achieved through simplicity, balance, harmony and unity and is evident in the simplified realism of the figures on their vase. Contrast and line are the major aesthetic tools used by vase painters. The figures are presented as dark shapes, almost silhouettes, against the lighter red background of the central panel. They are generally seen in profile, and are both motionless and emotionless. Their movements have been captured in a moment of time and appear to be stiff and awkward. Space remains undefined.

Greek vase painting was always linear and relied on simplicity and a minimum of carefully observed detail. Such details can be seen in the shields carried by the soldiers, each of which had a symbolic meaning that was understood at the time. Repetitive line work was used to create patterns around the neck and base of the pot to enhance its elegance.

Fine clay was readily available and cheap in Greece. Vase painting was an important industry and accounted for a major part of Greece's international trade. Because of its durability, clay objects form a large part of ancient Greece's archaeological record and have contributed much to our knowledge of people's lives and social conditions. Vases such as this amphora reveal details of life, war, death and religion. They also tell stories of the gods and present domestic scenes.

War was considered the supreme test of a man's courage in classical times. Individual combat reflected the ultimate in personal bravery. Heroic combat was popular as a theme on pots just as, in literature, Homer's *Iliad* celebrates the heroes of the Trojan War.

Related works

Psykter amphora, attributed to the inscriptions painter, 540 BCE.

References

Boardman J. 2006, *The History of Greek Vases (Illustrated)*, Thames and Hudson, London.
Rasmussen T. and Spivey N. (editors) 1991, *Looking at Greek Vases*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

ACTIVITY 5.2

Like Greek black figure vases, the *Bayeux Tapestry* (see page 92) is a narrative. Make a list of all the other qualities they have in common as well as the ways in which they differ. Refer to cultural references as well as formal qualities. Consider elements and principles, materials and techniques, styles of representation, function and historical relevance. Write a comparative essay that uses this list as a structure.

Terracotta warriors

'Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive one; it is man and not materials that counts'.

Mao Zedong, (1943–1976), Chinese statesman

Qin Shi Huangdi was born in 259 BCE and was to become the first emperor of a unified China. He initiated the creation of a national road system and a major canal for transport and linked together the walls of former independent states to form the first version of the Great Wall of China. As a further monument to his greatness, Qin Shi Huangdi commissioned the construction of a great tomb, near present day Xi'an, with a terracotta army to guard its entrance and accompany and protect him in the afterlife. The size of the undertaking reveals much about the power of this ambitious and aggressive ruler.



Figure 5.24
Terracotta warriors,
near Xi'an, China,
c. 246–210 BCE

An estimated 8000 terracotta soldiers have been found in three pits, in military formation with armour and weapons, ready for battle. There are over 600 horses and 130 chariots, the majority of which are still buried. Cavalry, infantry, archers and charioteers are all represented. Details vary according to each soldier's rank and are of great military, cultural, economic and historic interest. Many of the terracotta soldiers originally held genuine weapons.

Estimates of the workforce conscripted to build the tomb and its surrounding pits (which were discovered in 1974) vary from 70 000 to 700 000 and it is thought to have taken 37 years to build. The scale of the project is so grand that only a portion of the entire site has been excavated. The tomb itself has not yet been opened but is believed to replicate the Qin Empire with palaces, towers and rivers of mercury.

The life-size clay warriors and horses have been dated to 210 BCE but, obviously, took many years to complete. Each figure was made by hand. Heads, torsos, arms and legs were constructed separately and later joined. There were probably eight different face moulds and clay was added separately to create individual facial features and expressions, hairstyles, clothing and gestures in order to enliven the reality of the 'army'.

The clay was brought from nearby Mount Lishan and the warriors were originally painted to enhance their reality although the colour has now disappeared.

Related works

Simpson and his Donkey, Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne

Statue of Sir John Monash, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

Nurse Edith Cavell, Kings Domain, Melbourne

There are similar statues in regional centres and war memorials around Australia.

Web resources



Weblinks

For an interactive panoramic view of the pit, go to www.world-heritage-tour.org/asia/china/army-of-terracotta/main-pit/sphere-flash.html. Go to www.youtube.com and search Terracotta Warriors for a video of the site.



ACTIVITY 5.3

Most statues of soldiers today fulfil a commemorative function. Find one in your local community and compare it to the terracotta warriors. Write a short report that discusses differences in function, scale, site, materials and surface treatment.

Bayeux Tapestry

The battle of Hastings is described thus, 'And the while, William the earl landed at Hastings, on St Michael's-day: and Harold came from the north, and fought against him before all his army had come up: and there he fell, and his two brothers, Girth and Leofwin; and William subdued this land'.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (compiled from documents written between 890 CE and the middle of the twelfth century)



Figure 5.25
Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1077, (detail of war scene)

The *Bayeux Tapestry* illustrates the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings, fought between Harold, King of England and William, the Duke of Normandy, now known as William the Conqueror, in 1066. It takes the form of a visual document measuring no less than 70 metres long and 50 centimetres wide.

This example of narrative art has been called an eleventh-century comic strip and has also been likened to a film storyboard. The title *tapestry* is a misnomer: instead of being woven, the scenes were in fact embroidered in wool yarn on a background of linen fabric. It is made up of eight panels sewn together but is believed to be incomplete, with perhaps as much as six metres lost. It is not known with certainty when and where the *Bayeux Tapestry* was

made, although it was soon after the battle. It is an example of political propaganda, told from William's point of view as the victor and justifying his actions in invading England. Its accuracy is therefore in doubt.

The tapestry's makers have told the story in a linear sequence. The 50 scenes take place in undefined space, although the overlapping of forms suggests depth. The story is told not only via the images but also through the Latin text that was embroidered on each scene.

The 625 figures and more than 500 animals have been outlined in stem stitch and filled in with stitching in eight colours. These colours have been used decoratively rather than descriptively and simple linear shapes have been used to create a pattern. The main story is bordered at the top and bottom by panels that provide background information not only about battle and death in war, but also mythical and symbolic creatures. As a document, it is a vivid description of eleventh-century life: housing, boat-building, farming, hunting and the seasons. The level of historical detail is great; the Anglo-Saxons can even be recognised by their moustaches while the helmets of the Normans have distinctive nose guards.

Related works

The Last Judgement, 1130 CE, relief sculpture in tympanum, St Foy, Conques, France

Web resources



Weblinks

For images and a translation of the entire tapestry, go to <http://hastings1066.com/baythumb.shtml>.

To watch a four minute animation, go to www.youtube.com and search for Bayeux Tapestry.



Formal

Cultural

ACTIVITY 5.4

The Battle of Hastings was fought and won in the space of a single day in 1066. The bombing of the Basque village of Guernica in 1937 lasted for a matter of hours. The artworks that commemorate each have more than their subject matter in common. Write a comparative essay that documents the similarities and differences within these works. Consider scale, style, materials and intention.

Paolo Uccello

'What a delightful thing this perspective is!'

Paolo di Dono, known as Paolo Uccello, 1397–1475, Italian artist

Paolo Uccello (1397–1475) used **linear perspective** and **foreshortening** to create a structure for understanding space. While today it is easy to note inaccuracies of scale and angle in the image, remember that this was groundbreaking work when it was painted. The contrived lines and rhythmic pattern of lances and rearing horses provide structure to the battle scene. The mathematical arrangement lends the composition a feeling of artificiality. The figures appear wooden and frozen. Even though the lines suggest chaos, the men and horses appear to be suspended in motion. The lines lead the viewer's attention to the figure of Niccolò da Tolentino, sitting on the white horse and leading the Florentine cavalry. The landscape in the background lacks reality. There are no shadows and there is no blood.

Uccello's painting blends the decorative tradition of late Gothic painting with the Classical realism of the Early Renaissance. The patterned and terraced fields, the trees and the hedge of roses have the appearance of a stage backdrop more than the setting for a battle. He used gold and silver leaf to enhance the opulence of the painting, but they have become tarnished over time and other colours have faded. *Niccolò Manzi da Tolentiho at the Battle of San Romano* was painted in **tempera** on a wooden panel. Uccello used tonal modelling and scratched back through the metal leaf to create detailed pattern.

The Battle of San Romano depicts an episode of late medieval warfare and reflects the fact that battle was a popular theme for artists and weavers in the Early Renaissance. It was commissioned by Lionardo Bartolini Salimbeni to record the events of a battle between Florence and Siena. It was designed to be hung up high which helps to explain the strangeness of the perspective when it is viewed at eye level in a gallery. The panel reflects the medieval tradition of hanging tapestries to decorate walls as well as to tell stories. This was also one of the functions of the *Bayeux Tapestry*, discussed on the opposite page.

Other works

The Battle of San Romano: the Counter-Attack by Michelotto da Cotignola, c.1440, Musée du Louvre, Paris
The Battle of San Romano, c. 1440. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

Web resources



Weblink

For information on technical details of the painting, go to www.nationalgallery.co.uk/PDFs/TB22_chp1.pdf



Figure 5.26

Paolo Uccello, *Niccolò Mauruzi da Tolentino at the Battle of San Romano*, c. 1438–1440, egg tempera with walnut oil and linseed oil on poplar, 182 x 320cm, National Gallery of London



Fajna!

linear perspective: illusion of spatial depth created by parallel lines that appear to converge as they move towards the horizon



Cultural

foreshortening: shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

tempera: paint made by mixing powdered colour with a water-soluble binder such as egg

ACTIVITY 5.5

'War is a bright, glorious game in this painting.' So said Jonathan Jones in an article in the *Guardian* in 2003. What evidence would you use to support this opinion?

Jacques Louis David

'In the arts the way in which an idea is rendered, and the manner in which it is expressed, is much more important than the idea itself.'

Jacques Louis David (1748–1825), French artist

Figure 5.27
Jacques Louis David,
Oath of the Horatii,
1784, oil on canvas,
326 x 426cm, Musée
de Louvre, Paris



The *Oath of the Horatii* tells of the three Horatii brothers who swore allegiance to Rome before they went into battle with three Curatii brothers from Alba in the seventh century BCE. It also explores the conflict between patriotism and love, because the two families were linked by marriage and the women would grieve for whoever lost. The story was painted by Jacques Louis David (1748–1825) and foreshadows the great political change that was to come with the French Revolution in five years' time.

The painting's references to the classical

world are a response to the sensational archaeological discoveries of ancient Roman life, which were uncovered in the eighteenth century in Pompeii and Herculaneum. The subject matter and the physical details of the *Oath of the Horatii* are reminiscent of classical architecture and morality. It also contains a strong political message as David glorifies the heroes and martyrs of the past. The French Revolution was looming, and the painting urged patriotism and praised the importance of duty, discipline and loyalty. The combined emphasis on classical details and moral nobility makes this painting a significant example of the **Neoclassical** style, which was championed by David and became popular during the upheaval and the aftermath of the Revolution.

Classically inspired architecture frames the three sets of figures within **shallow space**. The father stands in the centre, supporting and urging on his three heroic sons. They are tall and muscular and represent all that is good, patriotic, energetic and courageous, in contrast to their mourning sisters on the right. David rendered the women using curved lines and forms to suggest less heroic emotions of love, despair, grief and tragedy.

David has used precise brushstrokes, harsh lighting and crisp outlines to define his forms and figures. The father is the focal point of the composition, not only because he stands in the centre, but also because the actions of his sons and the linear perspective of the floor tiles lead to him. The rich red of his cape symbolises both passion and blood and was to become the rallying colour of the French Revolution.

Other works

The Intervention of the Sabine Women, 1799
Bonaparte Crossing the St. Bernard Pass, 1800

References

Lee S. 1999, *David*, Phaidon, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.abcgallery.com/D/david/david.html

For a video presentation, go to www.youtube.com and search Jacques Louis David.



Cultural



Formal

Neoclassical: revival of the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome

shallow space: limited depth in an image

ACTIVITY 5.6

Compare the *Oath of the Horatii*, with *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, 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.

Eddie Adams

'Still photographs are the most powerful weapon in the world. People believe them; but photographs do lie, even without manipulation. They are only half-truths.'

Eddie Adams (1933–2004), American photojournalist

Eddie Adams (1933–2004) was an American photojournalist actively involved in recording 13 wars. *General Nguyen Ngoc Loan Executing a Viet Cong Prisoner in Saigon* was photographed in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) on 1 February 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War. Adams captured a series of images as he walked beside the Vietcong prisoner being escorted by General Loan, the Chief of Police. Adams' shocking photograph freezes the moment of death and has become a symbol of the universal brutality of war.

This image appeared in newspapers worldwide and helped to stimulate anti-war sentiment in the US and Australia. It won Adams the prestigious Pulitzer Prize, although afterwards he regretted having taken it because, in its bluntness, it provided no context for the action it shows. It does not explain that the Vietcong prisoner had just murdered eight South Vietnamese, including a member of the general's staff and his entire family. The execution was a reprisal for the Vietcong action that had broken a truce during the Vietnamese holiday of Tet. Adams later said, *'The general killed the Vietcong; I killed the general with my camera'*.

Black and white was the standard film type in the 1960s and enhances the immediacy of the image while eliminating the distraction of colour. The abandoned and almost empty street is littered with evidence of fighting and the pale background achieved through **aerial perspective** draws attention to the figures in the foreground. The General's back is towards us but his outstretched arm leads the viewer's eye to the terrified face of the Vietcong prisoner. The **open composition** reminds the viewer that the action continues outside the frame.



Figure 5.28
Eddie Adams, *General Nguyen Ngoc Loan Executing a Viet Cong Prisoner in Saigon*, 1968, photographic print



Cultural



Formal

Other works

Boat of no smiles, Vietnamese Refugees, Gulf of Siam, Thanksgiving Day, 1977, 1977
Brother and Sister, Cambodia, 1979

Web resources



Weblink

For more examples of Eddie Adams work, go to www.monroegallery.com/display.cfm?id=66.

ACTIVITY 5.7

Adams is quoted as saying 'Photographs do lie'. Find another photograph that lies, either through manipulation or by showing a half-truth. How important is the element of truth? Consider how and to what purpose it can be manipulated.

aerial perspective: the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be lighter, bluer and less focused

open composition: composition in which the objects in the picture extend visually beyond the edges of the frame

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 in the *Guardian*



Figure 5.29 Goya, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, plate 39 of *The Disasters of War*, c. 1810, etching, 15.24 x 21cm



Figure 5.30 Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Great Deeds Against the Dead*, 1994, mixed media, 277 x 244 x 152.5cm, White Cube Gallery, London



oeuvre: a French word describing the collected works of an artist

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* 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 tells of macabre horrors on the battlefield and behind the front lines during the 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* 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.

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) **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-size – 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.

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 World War II 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 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.

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

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



tableau: grouping which forms an image or picture; plural – tableaux

vitrine: glass cabinet or showcase

Other works

Goya, *The Colossus*, 1810–1812

Goya, *The Third of May, 1808*, 1814

Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Disasters of War*, 1993, miniature mixed media sculptures

Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Insult to Injury*, 2004 'rectified' etchings

References

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

Hackworth N. 2008, *Jake and Dinos Chapman (Tate Modern Artists Series)*, Tate Publishing, London.

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

Web resources



Weblinks

Warning: site contains adult themes and may be offensive to some viewers

www.jakeanddinoschapman.com

www.whitecube.com search for Chapman

ACTIVITY 5.8

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?

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 work that obviously reveals itself, its intentions, so boring. It is about spoon-feeding people instead of treating them as intelligent and imaginative beings who could be challenged by the work.'

Mona Hatoum (1952–), Palestinian artist living in England



Figure 5.31 Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937, oil on canvas, 349 x 776cm, Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid © Pablo Picasso/ Succession Picasso. Licensed by VISCOPY 2009



Guernica 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 the *Oath of the Horatii*. While couched in terms of a particular bombing raid, *Guernica* can be read as a universal comment on the violence and suffering of war.

Conflict has also impacted on Mona Hatoum's life. She is Palestinian, born in Beirut in 1952 and now living and working in London and Berlin. 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 artforms 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*

(*Still Life with Grenades*) 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, which undermine and disrupt the superficial meaning. *Nature Morte au 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 and 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 au Grenades* contradict its deadly reference.

Picasso suppressed colour in *Guernica*, in fact removing the colour he had already painted in, preferring to allow **monochromatic** 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.



Figure 5.32 Mona Hatoum, *Nature morte aux grenades*, 2006–07, crystal, mild steel and rubber, 95 x 208 x 69.8cm, Galerie Chantal Crousel. Photograph by Marc Damage. View a detail of this work on page 89.

surreal: having a dreamlike quality

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



Postmodern: art style that challenges traditions and the idea of originality by using non-traditional materials, appropriation or humour

monochromatic: consisting of only one colour and its tints and shades

Other works

Picasso, *Weeping Woman*, 1937

Picasso, *The Charnel House*, 1944–45

Hatoum, *Misbah*, 2006

Hatoum, *Hot Spot*, 2007

References

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

Hatoum M. 1997, *Mona Hatoum (Contemporary Artists)*, Phaidon, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

For a spatial immersion into *Guernica*, go to www.lena-gieseke.com/guernica/movie.html. www.whitecube.com search for Hatoum

ACTIVITY 5.9

- 1 Observe *Guernica* closely. The figure and the sword on the ground are reminiscent of Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (page 93). Compare the two paintings. Consider the reasons they were created, the styles and techniques, the artists' preoccupations and the impact on the viewer.
- 2 How has Picasso represented conflict in *Guernica*? How has Hatoum done the same? Compare another artwork by each artist to show their different approaches not only to subject matter but also to materials and aesthetics.

MOTHER AND CHILD

'Every culture since the ancient civilisations has recognised the bond between mother and child in their art and has interpreted the subject in countless ways.'

Matt Foley, Queensland Minister for the Arts (1998–2001)

Madonna: the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus

conventions: accepted rules

Humanist: one who gives priority to human endeavours and values rather than religious or spiritual beliefs

secular: worldly, materialistic

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

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 **conventions** and symbols that varied little over the period of a millennium. This can be seen in the *Theotokos* (see Figure 5.33) and *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* (see Figure 5.34). The maternal bond was used in the service of religion to highlight the human qualities of God, as shown in Michelangelo's *Pietà* (see Figure 5.35). 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 reflect the familiarity and 'ordinariness' of motherhood with images such as *Portrait of Marie Antoinette and her Children* (see Figure 5.36) and *The Cradle* (see Figure 5.37). We also see

Mother and child timeline



Figure 5.33
Theotokos of Vladimir, twelfth century



Figure 5.34 Jan van Eyck,
The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin, c. 1435



Figure 5.35 Michelangelo,
Pietà, 1499



Figure 5.36 Elisabeth
Vigée-Le Brun,
Portrait of Marie Antoinette and her Children, 1787



Figure 5.37 Berthe
Morisot, *The Cradle*,
1872

images of the mother and child used to express profound emotions such as love and grief. *Woman with Dead Child* by Kollwitz (see Figure 5.38) is a heart-breaking 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?
- Are there religious references or mythological references?
- 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?
- Does it make the viewer question what motherhood is?
- Has the artist used symbols to make us think about motherhood in a different light?

Related works

Duccio, *Queen of Heaven*, 1311

Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia*, 1512–1514

Lucas Cranach, *Venus and Cupid*, c.1537

Georges de la Tour, *The New Born*, c.1650

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Portrait of Mrs Renoir Nursing Pierre*, 1885

Mary Cassatt, *The Bath*, 1891–92

Yoruba, Benin or Phemba (African) statues of Mother and Child of the nineteenth century

Barbara Hepworth, *Mother and Child*, 1934



Figure 5.38 Käthe Kollwitz,
Woman with Dead Child,
1903



Figure 5.39 Damien Hirst,
Mother and Child Divided,
1993



Figure 5.40 Zhang
Xiaogang, *A Big Family*,
1995



Figure 5.41 Tracey Moffatt,
Up in the Sky #1, 1997



Figure 5.42 Ron Mueck,
Mother and Child,
2001–03

Theotokos of Vladimir

The Theotokos of Vladimir 'is of considerable importance in the history of painting, for it not only is a work of outstandingly high quality but also is in a new, more human style, anticipating the late Byzantine style that flourished between 1204 and 1453.'

David Talbot Rice, art historian



'Theotokos' is the Greek term for the Virgin Mary as the Mother of God. This image reflects the strong bond between mother and child that lies at the heart of Christianity. Its style and symbolic detail place it in the

Byzantine tradition, when artists sought to depict the spiritual nature of the religious figures and followed a strict code of **conventions** in doing so. The Virgin's oval face has been simplified, and her large, melancholy, almond-shaped eyes, long nose and small mouth comply with the rules of the time, as do the proportions of the exaggeratedly small Christ Child and the **stylised** linear patterns on the drapery. The gold background symbolises the glory of God and gives no indication of time and place, thus emphasising the eternal qualities of the subject matter.

The purpose of Byzantine art was the glorification of God. Icons are sometimes called 'windows into heaven' and aim to inspire holiness. This particular icon is the patroness of Russia. The image has been copied many times and it is considered to be of sufficient importance that a cathedral was built to house it in the Russian town of Vladimir (although today it is in the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow). It has fulfilled, and still fulfils, an important cultural role in Orthodox Christianity. The coronation of tsars and the elections of patriarchs take place in front of it. The image has witnessed numerous important ceremonies of state, and miracles, such as saving Russia from defeat by Tamerlane, the Tartars and Hitler (as recently as 1941), have been credited to it.

Figure 5.43 *Theotokos of Vladimir* (our lady of Vladimir), c12th Century, 104 x 69cm, Tretyakov Gallery, Russia

Related works

Throned Madonna, fourteenth century, National Gallery

of Art, Washington D.C.
Duccio, *Maestà*, 1308–11

Web resources

<http://econcept.dk/icon/dox.html>



Weblink



conventions: accepted rules

stylise: simplified using a set of rules

ACTIVITY 5.10

Compare the *Theotokos* as a representation of the mother child relationship to *The Cradle* by Berthe Morisot. What do they have in common? Which image do you identify with more easily? What cultural experience and understandings do you bring to this discussion?

Jan van Eyck

'Painting is a form of profound creative release.'

Jan van Eyck (1385–1441), Flemish artist

In *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, the Christ Child sits on his mother's lap and blesses the chancellor, who commissioned and paid for the work. This painting by Jan van Eyck (1385–1441) reveals an impressive ability to represent space convincingly. He does this by using **linear perspective** in the details of the symmetrical interior, such as the tiles on the floor appearing to recede, and also by using the tricks of **aerial perspective** to render the landscape in the distance; it is paler, bluer, smaller and less detailed than the foreground.

Van Eyck has used thin **glazes** of the new oil painting technique to create layers of rich, jewel-like colour. His intense observation of detail is obvious in the fabric of Rolin's robes, the sculpted capitals of the columns and the representation of space and depth in the landscape visible through the archways.

Van Eyck worked in the courts of late medieval Europe, alongside men such as the high-ranking government minister who commissioned this painting for his chapel. It tells today's viewer much about the physical environment and the religious context of the time. It also hints at the importance of the Chancellor Rolin that he shares equal space with the Madonna and Christ Child. The Christian symbolism of the angel as a messenger from God, the crown signifying the Virgin's role as Queen of Heaven and the triple archway symbolising the Trinity would have been clearly understood by those who viewed the painting at the time.

Other works

The Madonna with Canon van der Paele, 1436
Madonna in the Church, c.1425

Web resources



Weblink

Search van Eyck's works at the Louvre website, www.louvre.fr.



Figure 5.44 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, 1435, oil on panel, 66 x 62cm, Musée de Louvre, Paris



linear perspective: illusion of spatial depth created by parallel lines that appear to converge as they move towards the horizon

aerial perspective: the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be lighter, bluer and less focused

glaze: a thin translucent layer of oil paint



References

Borchert, Till-Holger 2008, *Jan van Eyck: Renaissance Realist*, Taschen, Cologne.

ACTIVITY 5.11

Research medieval art – list the ways in which *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* is similar to or different from examples of Romanesque and Gothic painting. Consider subject matter, detail, level of reality, painting technique, symbolism and venue for display.

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun

'Before beginning a portrait, engage your model in conversation, try several different poses, and finally select not only the most comfortable and natural, but the one that best suits his or her age and character; for all that helps to make the likeness better.'

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun (1755–1842), French artist

Figure 5.45
Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun, *Portrait of Marie Antoinette and her Children*, 1787, oil on canvas, 275 x 215cm, Musée National de Chateau et des Trianons, Versailles



In the informal state portrait of *Marie Antoinette and her Children* the queen seems to be more interested in the way she appears to the viewer than in her children. This painting is one of 30 portraits of Marie Antoinette painted by Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Le Brun, the most famous French woman painter of the eighteenth century and a popular painter of life at the French court. It shows Marie Antoinette in an informal pose but wearing most of the trappings of wealth and royalty that so incensed the common people in France and contributed to the political unrest that would soon culminate in the French Revolution and the fall of the monarchy. As a royalist, Vigée-Le

Brun was forced to flee France at the beginning of the Reign of Terror. She lived in exile for 12 years, travelling and painting for the courts of Europe, before she could return to France.

The empty cradle in the painting reminds the viewer of the death of one of the queen's daughters the year before the portrait was painted. The prince, standing on Marie Antoinette's left was to die within two years and the queen herself was to die on the guillotine in 1893, after being convicted of treason.

Vigée-Le Brun's portraits were painted with **Rococo** delicacy and sentimentality. Always elegant, graceful and finely detailed, they retain a level of artificiality that flattered her sitters. In this painting, she has used a warm palette; realistic modelling to suggest three-dimensional form; and a delicate treatment of surface texture gained through close observation and careful

Rococo: an eighteenth-century art style noted for its delicacy and elegance



ACTIVITY 5.12

In Vigée-Le Brun's family portrait of Marie Antoinette, the queen presents her family to the viewer in a similar way to the Madonna in van Eyck's *Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*. Compare these two paintings in terms of the cultural context of the artists, the use of detail, the depiction of space and the symbolism.



Other works

Vigée Le Brun and her daughter Julie, 1789
The Marquise de Peze and the Marquise de Rouget with her Two Children, 1787

Web resources



Weblink

www.batguano.com/vigee.html

Käthe Kollwitz

'While I drew, and wept along with the terrified children I was drawing, I really felt the burden I am bearing. I felt that I have no right to withdraw from the responsibility of being an advocate.'

Käthe Kollwitz, (1867–1945), German painter, printmaker and sculptor

The nurturing and protective love of mothers for their children was an abiding theme for Kollwitz. In *Woman with Dead Child* she has drawn, in the medium of **etching**, a *pietà* – an image of heart-wrenching tenderness. In their physical closeness, there is a powerful link between the mother and her lifeless child. The body language speaks loudly of grief and excruciating pain. Kollwitz has simplified them and eliminated all unnecessary detail, placing the figures close to the viewer to increase their emotional impact. She has used strong directional



lines to describe the forms and has handled the dramatic interplay of light and shadow with sensitivity. The use of black and white emphasises the sombre subject matter and helps to express raw emotion.

Kollwitz's work was a commentary on the hardships facing working class people living in Germany during the first half of the twentieth century. She observed the life around her and created imagery showing war, the plight of women and children, and human vulnerability in general. Her prints were based on close observation and she felt a strong sense of empathy with the women she lived among; their strength and character when faced with seemingly insurmountable suffering. Her artwork reflected her social conscience and her experiences living in the poor parts of Berlin where she saw at first hand poverty, injustice, hunger and death through her husband's medical practice. Kollwitz was no stranger to the personal suffering of war: her son Peter died in World War I and her grandson died in World War II.

Other works

Death Seizing a Woman, 1934

Seed Corn must not be Ground, 1942

References

Israel G. 2002, *Senior Artwise: Visual Arts 11–12*, John Wiley and Sons, Brisbane

Web resources



Weblink

www.kaethe-kollwitz.de



Figure 5.46
Käthe Kollwitz,
Woman with Dead Child, 1903, etching on ivory wove paper, 42.7 x 48.5cm, Galerie St. Etienne



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

pietà: Italian word meaning 'pity' or 'compassion', usually applied to an image of the Virgin Mary mourning over the dead body of Jesus

ACTIVITY 5.13

Kollwitz's *Mother and Dead Child* and Michelangelo's *Pietà* both tell similar stories. List as many differences as possible, in materials, techniques, depiction of space, detail and so on. Write a 300-word report that explains how these differences are responsible for such divergent interpretations of the same situation.

Zhang Xiaogang

'The concept of family in China goes far beyond one's immediate family and the ties of family blood ... the ties of social and cultural blood are very strong forces indeed.'

Zhang Xiaogang, (born 1958), Chinese symbolist and surrealist painter



Figure 5.47
Zhang Xiaogang, *A Big Family*, 1995, oil on canvas, 179 x 229cm, courtesy Pace Beijing, China and Pace Wildenstein, New York © 2009 Zhang Xiaogang, courtesy Pace Beijing, China and Pace Wildenstein, New York

monochromatic:
consisting of only one colour and its tints and shades



With the obvious exception of the face of the central figure, Zhang Xiaogang (born 1958) used a **monochromatic** palette when he painted *A Big Family*. The choice of red emphasises the boy's separateness and is symbolic of political correctness during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. A fine red thread connects the figures, not only as a nuclear family, but also as part of the larger Chinese 'family'. The smoothly painted surface of Zhang's painting reflects a realistic style that has overtones of dream and illusion, similar to Surrealism.

Like all people of his generation, the Cultural Revolution affected the artist Zhang Xiaogang greatly. *'For me the Cultural Revolution is a psychological state, not an historical fact. It has a very strict connection to my childhood.'* The revolution saw the destruction of a number of Chinese traditions. Among these was family photographic portraiture. Zhang addresses the loss of these important family memories in *The Big Family* canvases.

Zhang's artworks reflect the place of the individual in Chinese society. The stiff, silent and staring faces recall the conformity and lack of individuality that was expected during the Cultural Revolution. They stand frontal, formal and unsmiling. They all have the same blank face and staring eyes, which conceal their identity and personality behind a culturally acceptable exterior. While the two children and their mother stand together, their expressions suggest alienation and emotional distance. The anonymous background suggests emptiness and disengagement.

ACTIVITY 5.14

The posed and formal appearance of the figures in *Big Family No. 2* creates no suggestion of family relationships or affection. A similar sense of disengagement can be seen in Ron Mueck's *Mother and Child*. Compare the painting and the installation, concentrating on an interpretation of the relationship between the characters in the works. Present your response as two annotated illustrations, with a third sheet listing the points of comparison.

Other works

Family Portrait, 1992

Bloodline: Big Family No. 9, 1996

Web resources



Weblinks

www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/zhang_xiaogang.htm

www.hanart.com/statement.php?artist_number=1

www.mbergerart.com/xzg/about.htm

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 (born 1960) is an Australian photographer. *Up in the Sky #1* 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 quality of a film still, which is unsurprising as Moffatt is also a filmmaker.

The photograph 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 means of drawing 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 uncomfortable watching a scene that promises pain.

Up in the Sky #1 references the 'stolen generation', and as such contains autobiographical elements of Moffatt's Indigenous heritage. The somewhat menacing figures of the nuns can be interpreted as symbolising institutional authority and the power relationship that was part of the 'stolen generation' policy.

Other works

Birth Certificate, 1962, *Scarred for Life* series, 1994

Night Cries – A Rural Tragedy, 1989 (17-minute film)

References

Newton G. 1996, *Tracey Moffatt: Fever Pitch*, Piper Press, Annandale.

ACTIVITY 5.15

Go to www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/artists/26/Tracey_Moffatt 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?



Figure 5.48
Tracey Moffatt,
Up in the Sky #1, 1997, offset print from a series of 25 images, 61 x 76cm (image size), 72 x

102cm (paper size). Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney



framing: to isolate and draw 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

Web resources



Weblink

www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/artists/26/Tracey_Moffatt/

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



Figure 5.49 Michelangelo, *Pietà*, 1499, marble, 174 x 195cm, St Peter's Basilica, The Vatican



Figure 5.50 Ron Mueck, *Mother and Child*, 2001–03, mixed media, 24 x 89 x 38cm, Museum Brandhorst, Munich © Ron Mueck Photograph: Anthony d'Offaly, London

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: freestanding three-dimensional form that can be viewed from all sides

Although Michelangelo's *Pietà* and Ron Mueck's *Mother and Child* 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 in a twenty-first century version of hyperreality. Both mothers appear emotionless, accepting their fate.

When we think about mother and child as subject matter, we immediately think of the bond of mutual affection. 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 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 it was 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 Humanism 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, somewhat startled at the appearance of her child, only minutes old. This is very different to 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, who 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
 Michelangelo, *Bruges Madonna*, 1501–04
 Ron Mueck, *Pregnant Woman*, 2002
 Ron Mueck, *A Girl*, 2006

References

Greeves S. and Wiggins C. 2005, *Ron Mueck*, National Gallery Company, London.

Web resources



nga.gov.au/mueck/index.cfm

Weblink

maquette: small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work



Cultural

Humanist: one who gives priority to human endeavours and values rather than religions or spiritual beliefs

secular: worldly, materialistic

voyeur: a French term for an obsessive, often secretive, watcher

ACTIVITY 5.16

In an article in the *Guardian*, Adrian Searle wrote that, '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* engages your attention and challenges you to interpret its meaning.

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, (1841–1895), French painter



Figure 5.51 Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1873 oil on canvas, 56 x 45cm, Musée d'Orsay Paris



Figure 5.52 Damien Hirst, *Mother and Child Divided*, 1993 steel, GRP composites, glass, silicone, sealants, cow, calf, formaldehyde solution; dimensions variable, © Damien Hirst/DACS. Licensed by VISCOPY 2009



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

Morisot's sister Edma and her infant daughter Blanche modelled for the intimate study of a new mother that we see in *The Cradle*. 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 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* but in a very different manner. Because of the three-dimensional quality of the installation, the viewer is lead around and through the work physically. Furthermore, the title *Mother and Child Divided* suggests a layered meaning compared to the uncomplicated story of *The Cradle*. As Nicholas Serota was quoted 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 which are otherwise unavailable and which 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 is often unconventional and controversial as he explores non-traditional materials and artforms. 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 artist's apprentices, which was the accepted norm in Renaissance studios. Andy Warhol's 'factory' of the 1960s brought this practice into the modern world 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 for 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.



Cultural



Formal

vitrine: glass cabinet or showcase



Cultural

Other works

Berthe Morisot, *Hide and Seek*, 1873
 Berthe Morisot, *La Lecture (Reading: the Mother and Sister Edma of the Artist)*, 1869–70
 Damien Hirst, *The Virgin Mother*, 2006
 Damien Hirst, *Birth (Cyrus)*, 2006

Web resources



Weblinks

www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/morisot

www.whitecube.com search for Damien Hirst

www.damienhirst.com

References

Adler K. 1995, *Berthe Morisot*, Phaidon, London.
 Higonnet A. 1995, *Berthe Morisot*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Refer to page 198 for further discussion on Hirst's work

ACTIVITY 5.17

- 1 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 that it is important or preferable to do so in your own work?
- 2 '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.

THE NUDE

'The male image is one of power, possession and domination; the female is one of submission, passivity and availability.'

Linda Nochlin, 1972

In 1972, John Berger and Linda Nochlin both wrote that in the tradition of European art, the naked woman is the object, the surveyed. She is the passive figure displayed for the male gaze. She is conscious of being watched but, by her very presence, she is there to flatter the spectator, who is assumed to be a man. In *Ways of Seeing*, Berger wrote '*Men act and women appear. Men look at women, women watch themselves being looked at*'.

The image of the nude is timeless, fundamental and universal. We can all empathise with the unclothed figure; it can provoke curiosity, desire, guilt or disgust. Images of the nude have long reflected society's attitudes to the body and beauty, gender and sexuality. More recently, they have revealed the attitudes and beliefs of the artist. They often reflect cultural stereotypes and refer to issues of race, sensuality, sexuality, censorship and morality.

The nude has been represented in Western art in an unbroken line from the 25 000-year-old Venus of Willendorf, whose rotund figure emphasised fertility, through to the twenty-first century, when shock value has become an important element of the imagery, used by artists such as Damien Hirst and Ron Mueck who defy tradition and conventions. In the classical world, it was believed that perfection of the body reflected spiritual beauty and nobility, while in the Middle Ages the naked figure was rarely shown and when it was, it usually suggested the bestiality of evil. In the Renaissance, Michelangelo dissected bodies to learn and understand them. This allowed him to create images based on physical reality (see Figure 5.55). In the late nineteenth century, Degas placed the nude in everyday situations (see Figure 5.60), in compositions inspired by the new ways of seeing, influenced by the snapshot quality of photographs and the unusual angles of view in Japanese prints.



Weblink

Venus of Willendorf
<http://witcombe.sbc.edu/willendorf>

Refer to page 184 for further discussion of The Body

The nude timeline



Figure 5.53 Agesander, Polydorus and Athanadorus, *Laocöon*, c.40BCE



Figure 5.54 Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, c.1485



Figure 5.55 Michelangelo, *David*, 1504



Figure 5.56 Caravaggio, *Amor Vincit Omnia*, 1601–02



Figure 5.57 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Three Graces*, c.1639

Working from the naked human figure was, for centuries, an integral part of a male artist's training. Women had restricted access to models until the late nineteenth century because it was considered unsuitable and immoral for them to be exposed to nudity. Interestingly, the nude female served as the subject in more artwork than the male, largely because the artist and the patron were typically male and the female figure was presented for their pleasure.

Consider these questions as you interpret artworks representing the nude

- Why has the nude been represented?
- What was acceptable in the society in which this artwork was made? How has acceptability varied over time?
- How are beauty and the nude related? How was beauty defined at the time the artworks were created?
- Are there obvious (or not so obvious) attitudes to gender in the works? Are these the same attitudes that are accepted by contemporary society or that you hold?

Related artworks

Ancient Greek koros (male figure) or kore (female figure)

Ancient Greece, *Venus de Milo*, 130–120 BCE

Bernini, *David*, 1623–24

Rembrandt, *Bathsheba Bathing*, 1654

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *The Bather of Valpinçon (The Great Bather)*, 1808

Pablo Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, 1907

Man Ray, *Violon d'Ingres (Kiki de Montparnasse)*, 1924

Norman Lindsay, *Spring's Innocence*, 1937

Yves Klein, *L'Esclave de Michel-Ange*, 1962

Lucien Freud, *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995

Guerrilla Girls, *Get Naked Poster*, 2004

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John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, 1972

Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male – A New Perspective*, Penguin, 1978

Linda Nochlin, *Representing Women*, Thames and Hudson, 1999

Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A study in Ideal Form*, Princeton University Press, 1990

Germaine Greer, *The Boy*, Rizzoli, 2003

ACTIVITY 5.18

- 1 Compare any two artworks from The Nude timeline. Discuss the ways in which they represent the nude and research the ways in which they reflect the time and place of their creation.
- 2 The following paintings follow a tradition of representing the recurring theme of the reclining female nude: Giorgione, *Sleeping Venus*, c.1508–10; Titian, *Venus of Urbino*, 1538; Goya, *The Nude Maja*, c. 1800, Edouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863; Amedeo Modigliani, *Reclining Nude*, 1917. Find illustrations and explain how each image approaches the theme of the reclining nude in a slightly different manner.



Figure 5.58 François Boucher, *Marie-Louise O'Murphy*, c. 1752



Figure 5.59 Katsushika Hokusai, *Hokusai-Manga*, c.1811–1820



Figure 5.60 Edgar Degas, *The Tub*, 1886



Figure 5.61 Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1992



Figure 5.62 Bill Henson, *Untitled #8*, 2007–08

Botticelli and Jenny Saville

'A large female body has a power, it occupies a physical space, yet there's an anxiety about it. It has to be hidden.'

Jenny Saville, in an interview with Susie McKenzie in the *Guardian*, 22 October 2005



Figure 5.63 Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, c. 1485 tempera on canvas, 172.5 x 278.5cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Italy



Figure 5.64 Jenny Saville, *Propped*, 1992, oil on canvas, 213.5 x 183cm © Jenny Saville, courtesy Gagosian Gallery



figurative: representing objects in a way that they can be easily recognised

mythological: relating to myths, imaginary

cropping: to trim parts of an image to remove unwanted sections

foreshortening: shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

The *Birth of Venus* by Botticelli (1445–1510) and *Propped* by Jenny Saville (born 1970) are both **figurative** paintings of female nudes. Botticelli's painting of Venus was revolutionary for its time. Instead of being an image related to a religious theme as was usual, the subject matter was secular and **mythological**. Five hundred years later, Saville's painting questions the appearance and the role of such traditional paintings of the nude.

Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* owes its inspiration to the classical ideas and ideals of ancient Greece and Rome, which were becoming increasingly popular during the Early Renaissance in fifteenth-century Italy. The mythological figure of Venus was the symbol of female desirability and represented beauty and pleasure. Here she is shown being blown gently ashore by the winds soon after her 'birth' as a fully-grown woman. Her pose was inspired by the classical sculptures that Botticelli would have seen in the collection of his patrons, the Medici family. Painted at a time when naked women symbolised sinful lust, Botticelli's Venus remained modest. He exaggerated the length of her neck and slope of her shoulders to enhance her natural elegance and grace, in accordance with contemporary taste.

Saville also exaggerates and distorts the female nude, but she does this by distorting the angle of view and by dramatically **cropping** and **foreshortening** the figure, which emphasises its physical bulk. She is fascinated with the body, particularly by female flesh, which she describes as '*ugly, beautiful, repulsive, compelling, anxious, neurotic, dead, alive*'. About the time she painted *Propped*, Saville was intrigued by plastic surgery and spent many hours watching surgeons manipulate flesh. In her work, she raises contemporary concerns about expectations of beauty and the female body. As Susie

McKenzie wrote in the Guardian (22nd October 2005), '*Her 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.*'

Both *Birth of Venus* and *Propped* are **monumental** in scale. Botticelli's mythological story was painted to fit an architectural setting and was the first large-scale canvas painted in Renaissance Italy. Saville, on the other hand, uses scale to overwhelm the viewer.

In *Propped*, the angle of view is low; as viewers, we are forced to look up as the figure looks down, sitting uncomfortably on a tall stool, which is almost hidden by her abundant flesh. Foreshortening causes her head to look disproportionately small although her gaze demands an embarrassing level of intimacy between the model and the viewer.

Both artists have used a restrained and somewhat muted palette. Botticelli's painting style is **linear**, a necessary quality of the **tempera** technique he used. He applied clear, precise outlines to define his forms and details. In some places, these are reduced to decorative patterns, such as the waves and the leaves on the trees. In Saville's painting, however, there is a sensuous quality to her expressive and **painterly** brushwork as it echoes the physical quality of the flesh. The depiction of space is unimportant in both artworks. In *Birth of Venus*, it is shallow and unconvincing and in *Propped*, depth is not suggested although the viewer feels a claustrophobic space surrounding the figure.



John Berger said in *Ways of Seeing* that in the European tradition of art, 'Women watch themselves being looked at'. They are very aware of the spectator, who is usually male. This is certainly true of Botticelli's *Venus*, who is aware of the **voyeuristic** male gaze. When observing the figure in *Propped*, however, there is a feeling that the intended observer is not necessarily male. Saville's distorted figure dares the viewer to look at her and pass judgement on her size and shape. She's not comfortable with the bulk of her flesh. Incised text covers her like a net, both confining and protecting her body behind a veil of words taken from the writings of the French feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray and painted in mirror reverse.

In short, Botticelli contemplates beauty and pleasure in the *Birth of Venus* while Saville questions the definition of beauty in *Propped*.

Other works

Botticelli, *Venus and Mars*, c.1483

Botticelli, *Primavera*, c.1482

Saville, *Branded*, 1992

Saville, *Plan*, 1993

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Berger, J. 1972, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin, London

McKenzie, S. 2005, 'Under the Skin', *Guardian*, 22 October

Web resources



Weblinks

www.bergerfoundation.ch/Home/Ahigh_botticelli.html

The unofficial Jenny Saville homepage is at www.geocities.com/craigsjursen/index.html

www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2005/oct/22/art.friezeartfair2005

monumental: resembling a monument, grand or imposing

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

tempera: paint made by mixing powdered colour with a water-soluble binder such as egg

painterly: painting with visible brush strokes that create areas of colour and tone that merge rather than being contained within outlines

voyeur: French term to describe an obsessive, often secretive, watcher

ACTIVITY 5.19

Saville's work is often compared to the paintings of Peter Paul Rubens and Lucian Freud. Compare the figure in Saville's *Propped* to the female nude in a painting by Rubens or Freud. What does each artist 'say' about female flesh? Do you think it makes a difference that one was painted by a woman and the other by a man? Do you think that they represent the body differently?

Caravaggio and Bill Henson

'All works, no matter what or by whom painted, are nothing but bagatelles and childish trifles ... unless they are made and painted from life, and there can be nothing ... better than to follow nature.'

Caravaggio, Italian artist

[Henson's] photographs, with their cinematic use of light and dark, depth and ambiguity, are moody in both texture and subject matter. Henson's images are beautiful, disturbing, ambiguous and emotionally riveting.'

Gerard Vaughan, director, National Gallery of Victoria



Figure 5.65
Caravaggio, *Amor Vincit Omnia*,
1601–02, oil on canvas, 191 x
148cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Refer to page 202 for
further discussion on
Bill Henson's work

Amor Vincit Omnia by the Baroque artist Caravaggio and *Untitled #8* by contemporary photographer Bill Henson can be compared on a number of levels. In both, the subject matter is the naked figure of a male youth. Both use extreme light and shade to suggest aspects of the human condition, but unlike the animated figure in Caravaggio's painting, Henson's photograph hints at vulnerability and fragility.

By all accounts, Caravaggio (1571–1610) was a volatile and violent man. He led a life marked by murder and exile and died before he was 40. Given these experiences, it is not surprising that he painted many scenes of struggle, torture and death in his relatively short career. He was born at a time when the classical idealism of Michelangelo was considered the height of beauty. Like Michelangelo, he painted from life, but his models were ordinary people, including street children and prostitutes; they were not beautiful and, in his religious paintings, they did not look particularly holy. This was controversial – while it was easier for ordinary people to identify with the characters in his religious stories, many of his patrons thought his figures were vulgar and some refused to accept and pay for his work.

Amor Vincit Omnia was inspired by a line from the Roman poet Virgil, '*Love conquers all: let us yield to love!*' and was a common theme at the time. In the painting, we see the young god Amor, known to the ancient Romans as Cupid, spotlighted against a dark and poorly defined background. On his back is a pair of powerful eagle's wings and at his feet are symbols of war, music and learning. The young figure was painted from a model and reflects the artist's acute observation of reality. Amor makes eye contact with the viewer and his cheeky grin is endearing.

Melbourne Photographer Bill Henson (born 1955) also works with live models. The subject in *Untitled #8* is an adolescent male, no longer a child, not yet an adult, and unlike Amor, he avoids our gaze. He remains anonymous and is indifferent to the camera, lost in his own private thoughts. This quality of separateness enhances the tenderness and mystery of the image and increases the vulnerability of the figure. We, the viewers are voyeurs, unseen observers.

Both Caravaggio and Henson use light as a powerful tool in their artworks. Caravaggio's paintings are known for their **chiaroscuro**. He used it not only to suggest three-dimensional form, but also to heighten the sense of drama by deepening the shadows and increasing the

chiaroscuro:
Italian for
'light-dark'
refers to the
contrast of
light and dark
to make forms
look three
dimensional



strength of the light. The figure of Amor is posed and appears to be illuminated by a spotlight.

Henson can also be called a tenebrist; he uses light in a similar way in *Untitled #8*. The figure emerges from the rich black darkness outlined by **backlighting**. Both time and space seem ambiguous; he appears to be in a twilight zone between waking and sleep. Henson's long exposures create finely focused photographs and enhance their dreamlike melancholy. His large format images are painstakingly produced in the darkroom. The name *Untitled* hints at the fact that Henson wants to leave the meaning of the image open for the viewer. In the absence of a narrative, we are forced to use our imagination to interpret the ambiguous, moody, casual drama.

Caravaggio's painting technique, on the other hand, was characterised by immediacy. He worked *alla prima*, straight onto the canvas, sometimes scratching the lines of the composition directly onto the canvas with the handle of the brush. He generally finished each work in one sitting, without the preliminary drawings that, at the time, were thought to be essential.

Both artworks are large and the artists have used a restricted palette. The portrait format of *Amor Vincit Omnia* echoes the verticality of the figure and contains clues about the 'story' told through symbolism, while the horizontal format of *Untitled #8* forces us to think about the empty space that surrounds the model.

The explicit nakedness of the young Amor in *Amor Vincit Omnia* and the suggested nakedness of Henson's figure in *Untitled #8* confront the viewer when the works are first seen. It has been said, but remains disputed, that *Amor Vincit Omnia* was kept behind a curtain by its owner and only revealed to a select few men. In a similar way, the use of young naked models has led to controversy around Henson's photographs.



Figure 5.66
Bill Henson, *Untitled #8*, 2007–08,
Type C photograph, 127 x 180cm.
Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn
Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney



backlighting: light coming from behind the subject

alla prima: Italian for 'the first time' or all at once; a method of painting in which the picture is completed in one sitting

Other works

Caravaggio, *Bacchus*, 1597
Caravaggio, *St John the Baptist*, 1602
Henson, *Untitled #7*, 1998/1999/2000
Henson, *Untitled #33*, 2002/2003

Visit www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/03/12/2514552.htm for a theory that links Caravaggio and Henson.



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Web resources



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www.roslynnoxley9.com.au/artists/18/Bill_Henson
www.billhenson.net.au
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/resources/ed_kits/bill_henson

ACTIVITY 5.20

Compare the figures in Boucher's *Marie-Louise O'Murphy* and *Untitled #8*. The young models seem unaware of the viewer. Do you believe this is true of both? Use evidence to support your opinion. Compare the artworks in terms of what the image says about the individual model.

[6]

ARTMAKING AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Unit 2 – Area of Study 2

Chapter overview

In this area of study, you will examine ways in which you can develop and apply the skill you established in Unit 1, while exploring the idea of art as a cultural expression. In this chapter you will be presented with ways to:

- produce a folio of visual responses to an area of interest
- produce at least one finished artwork.
- develop *The Human Body and Culture* as a possible concept to explore in your Unit 2 folio
- interpret a concept
- visually interpret your idea using thumbnail sketches and digital photography
- explore the process of making art:
 - qualities and characteristics of selected materials and artforms – working directly
 - trialling materials, techniques, processes and artforms – a systematic, progressive approach
- manipulate the elements of art to establish a visual language
- apply the Formal and Cultural Frameworks
- document your thinking and working practices.

'It is important to express oneself ... provided the feelings are real and are taken from your own experience.'

Berthe Morisot (1841–1895), French Impressionist

INTRODUCTION

In this Area of Study, you are encouraged to develop and apply the skills you established in Unit 1. You will continue to develop a visual language as you produce a folio of visual responses to an area of interest, *which must include at least one finished artwork*. You should trial different ways of working to develop your own style and approach to the application of various techniques, materials and processes. Because your practical folio should be an extension of Area of Study 1, you should explore the idea of *art as a cultural expression*.

In the past, art was used by different cultures to define what the culture stood for, and what it did not. The social function is one of

the most important factors we need to consider when studying art. This function has a lot to do with the meaning of the artworks.

Pre-modern artists worked hard to strengthen social and cultural values. Art was 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, together with 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 stimulate the imagination and promote 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.

For Unit 2, you are required to explore *artmaking and cultural expression* where you can consider values, beliefs, traditions or even cultural events. For this unit, it may be appropriate to use the concept of *The Human Body and Culture* as a starting point.

A PATHWAY TO MAKING ART

Using visual language to explore issues and ideas of personal and cultural interest

Key skill: produce visual responses to personal and cultural ideas and issues through exploration and experimentation.

You could, again, 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 artform/s, including observations, imagination, ideas or concepts.

ACTIVITY 6.1

Research how the human body is viewed in different cultures and the role it plays in the art of different cultures.

The Human Body and Culture

What can you do with this concept?

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 easily established 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 of 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 skill and techniques in life drawing.

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 to 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, the body is celebrated or emphasised but in others, it is hidden.

Once you have established your area of interest

Once you have a few ideas of the possible directions you would like to explore, then 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 Chapter 1 in the section 'Creating a practical folio' starting on page 16. 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 the following two VCE students. Phoebe Garrett uses thumbnail sketches to explore a number of interpretations of ritual using images, symbols and even words that she associates with the concept, while Diana Mejia-Correa uses thumbnail digital photographs to explore ideas she has developed about an aspect of seeing.

ACTIVITY 6.2

Create a mind map to establish ideas that you associate with *The Human Body and Culture*.

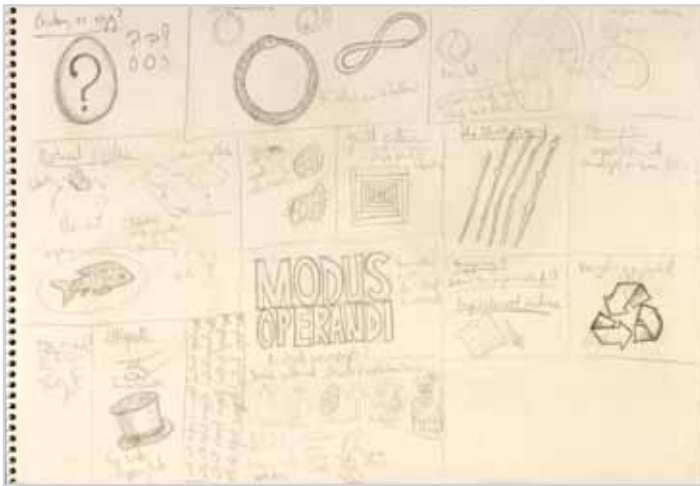


Figure 6.1
Examples of thumbnail sketches by Phoebe Garrett exploring a number of options for ritual

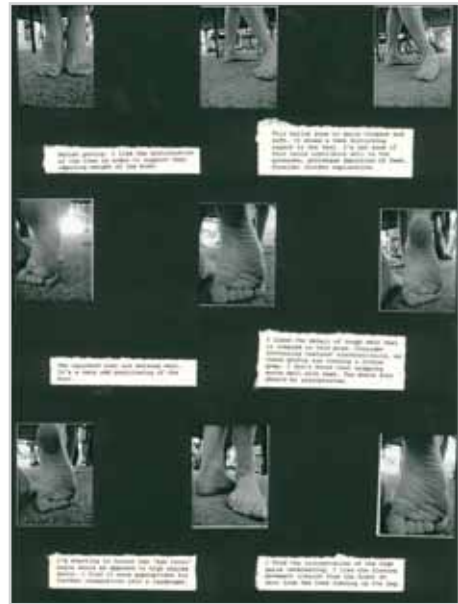


Figure 6.2
Examples of thumbnail photographs by Diana Mejia-Correa

ACTIVITY 6.3

Use thumbnail sketches or a digital camera to record 10 images that provide a visual interpretation of the concepts you would like to explore for *The Human Body and Culture*. 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.

QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SELECTED MATERIALS AND ARTFORMS

How they may be used to present concepts and images

Key skill: produce visual responses to personal and cultural ideas and issues through exploration and experimentation.

Using the ideas you have generated through brainstorming or mind mapping, and 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 Human Body and Culture*. Ideally, this should be done in a variety of materials, techniques and processes.

To develop a knowledge of the *qualities and characteristics of selected materials and artforms and how they may be used to present concepts and images*, you have to experiment with them and note the effects achieved by certain techniques and approaches. With this knowledge, you can begin to make art.

Making art is a process. Artists have 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



See
Lavender
mist and
many other
Pollock
works at

[http://www.nga.gov/
feature/pollock](http://www.nga.gov/feature/pollock)

– *'knocking about in the studio and bumping into things'*. The latter approach was evident in the 'splatter paintings' of Jackson Pollock, where he worked directly on the canvas without any preconceived ideas beyond his process. *'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'*. 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), which used oil, enamel and aluminium on a canvas 2.20 metres by 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 painting was completed, Pollock would often select a piece of the canvas that he considered successful, then cut it out and stretch it. This is 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 artforms you have 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. Below are examples of a student's work that demonstrates 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 use in her final and which techniques and combinations will provide her with the effect she is looking for.

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



Figure 6.3 and 6.4
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

APPROACHES FOR TRIALLING MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES, PROCESSES AND ARTFORMS

Key skills:

- explore media, materials, techniques, processes and artforms and investigate how these can be used to create artworks
- develop skills in art making
- manipulate art elements and principles and technical qualities of artforms to produce creative responses using 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 Jackson Pollock's direct approach works for you, but other artists like the French artist Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) follow a more systematic approach to trialling materials, techniques, processes and artforms, than Pollock. This structured 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 Theodore Géricault used to develop his painting *The Raft of Medusa* 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 thinking and working practices. 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 of 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 people of the 152 passengers left behind were rescued. Although his painting is often discussed in terms of its social commentary and



Figure 6.5
Théodore Géricault, *The Raft of Medusa*, 1818–19 oil on canvas, 491 x 716 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris

ACTIVITY 6.4

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.

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 formal qualities, technique and your skilful application of the medium as a primary concern, as a powerful drawing, for example, will be more effective in conveying your message than a poor one. Géricault's massive painting *The Raft of Medusa*, which measures 3 by 7 metres, is a bold statement of human suffering rather than a sensationalised tragic event.

In order to achieve the most effective artwork possible, he 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. Géricault was not part of the incident, so he had to do the next best thing; he researched it extensively.

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 the survivors were rescued from. He then observed it to see how it sat in the water and 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 to tell the stories he was considering.



Figure 6.6 Théodore Géricault, *Head of Shipwrecked Man*, Study for raft of Medusa, 1817–19



Figure 6.7 Théodore Géricault, *Heads of Guillotined Men*, 1817–20



Figure 6.8 Théodore Géricault, *Anatomical Pieces*, 1818–19 oil on canvas, 52 x 64cm, Musée Fabre, Fraticce



Figure 6.9 Théodore Géricault, *Study for raft of Medusa*, 1818

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 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, he 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 trying desperately to attract their 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 of clarifying 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 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



Figure 6.10
Théodore Géricault,
Sketch of the survivors
being rescued by
rowing boats, 1817–18
ink on paper,
35 x 41cm



Figure 6.11 Théodore Géricault, Ink sketch of the survivors calling to a boat as it sails close by, 1817–18 ink on paper, 24 x 33cm



Figure 6.12
Théodore Géricault, Preparatory work of the raft of Medusa, 1817–18 ink on paper, 41 x 55cm

can easily make changes with 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. 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 that Géricault adds to the drama of the scene, as it is important to consider how you can most effectively portray your idea 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. 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.

ACTIVITY 6.5

Choose an idea or image that you would like to represent in a medium of your choice:

- 1 Using thumbnail sketches explore eight to ten varied options for how you could represent your ideas.
- 2 Note which would be the most effective in communicating your idea and explain why.
- 3 After choosing the option you will use as the representation of your idea, explore five to ten 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 it is placed in. Is the composition equally effective from all views, or is the work meant to be viewed from the front only?



Figure 6.13 Théodore Géricault, Preparatory work for the Raft of Medusa in oil paint, 1817–18, oil on canvas, 38 x 46cm



Figure 6.14
Danelle Bergstrom,
Take Two: Jack Thompson, 2007,
oil on linen, 182 x
182cm, Photograph
© Jenni Carter

Elisa Bongetti, a VCE student was inspired by a visit to the Archibald Portrait Exhibition. In particular, the double portrait of Jack Thompson (left) by Danelle Bergstrom appealed to her.

She wrote: 'I love the use of blue and red hues in the face to highlight and recede certain areas. The brushwork is so loose and expressive. I particularly like the way in which the shirt has not been completely painted. Most attention is drawn to the face. The artist has cleverly avoided detail in the background and clothing. The painting is split across two canvases with two portraits of the sitter. The close up portrait and the full figure in

the background combine well and create depth.'

'Too realistic – I need to loosen up my brushstrokes.'

'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 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.

'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 (see Figure 6.17 and 6.18).

Elisa resolved her technique and pallet in a series of portraits in oil on canvas, including the *Portrait of Erin* (see Figure 6.19).

Elisa continued to explore the ideas generated by Danelle Bergstrom's double portrait in other ways, using digital photography, oil painting and charcoal drawing. Using photographs of another friend taken in the studio, Elisa combined two of these two achieve a similar composition as Danelle Bergstrom's double portrait, in which she explored the interaction between the cloned model and the space of the format (Figure 6.20), the play of light and her painting technique.

Figure 6.15 Incomplete trial in oils on oil paper by Elisa Bongetti, with evidence of colour mixing



Figure 6.16 Detail of portrait with colour swatches and annotation



Figure 6.17 Detail of portrait with colour swatches and annotation



Figure 6.18 Elisa Bongetti, *Portrait of Erin*

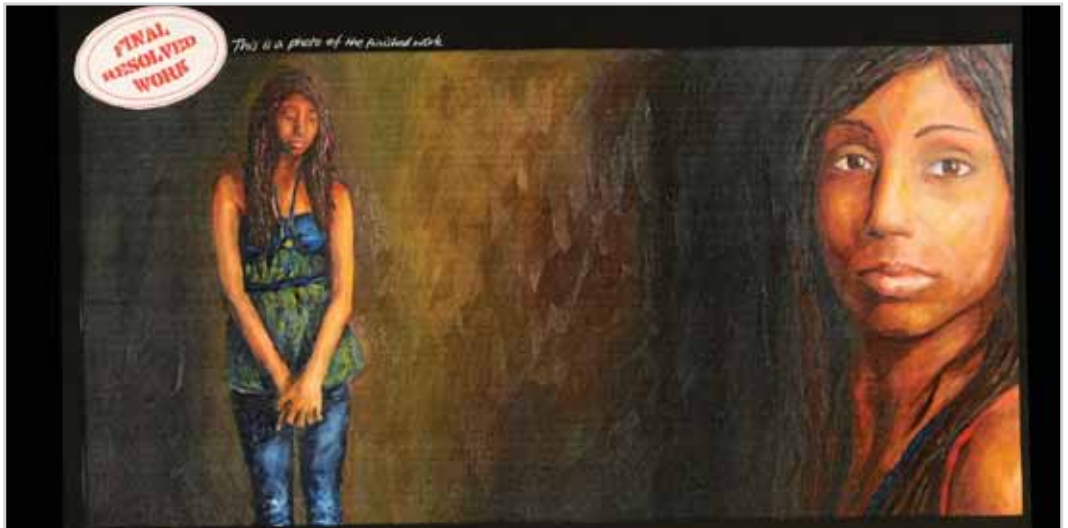


Figure 6.19 Elisa Bongetti, *Double portrait of Nisha*

foreshortening:

shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

The use of two views of the same figure provided Elisa with an opportunity to expand on her exploration of the human form in life drawing classes. She experimented with combining multiple life drawings into one composition, which she resolved (Figure 6.22). It is important that you keep an open mind when exploring an idea, as this one idea may be able to lead you to a number of solutions in a range of media and approaches.

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.

Nicky Purser, a VCE student, chose to attempt a refined tonal drawing of her grandfather using pencil. Once she had established her composition and had the required reference it was important for her to trial her medium and her 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-



Figure 6.20 Elisa Bongetti, *Life drawings*



Figure 6.21 Elisa Bongetti, *Resolved double life drawing*

scale trial of a section of her portrait (Figure 6.23), 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, she was confident enough to begin her final artwork (Figure 6.24).



Figure 6.22 Nicky Purser, pencil drawing (detailed trial)

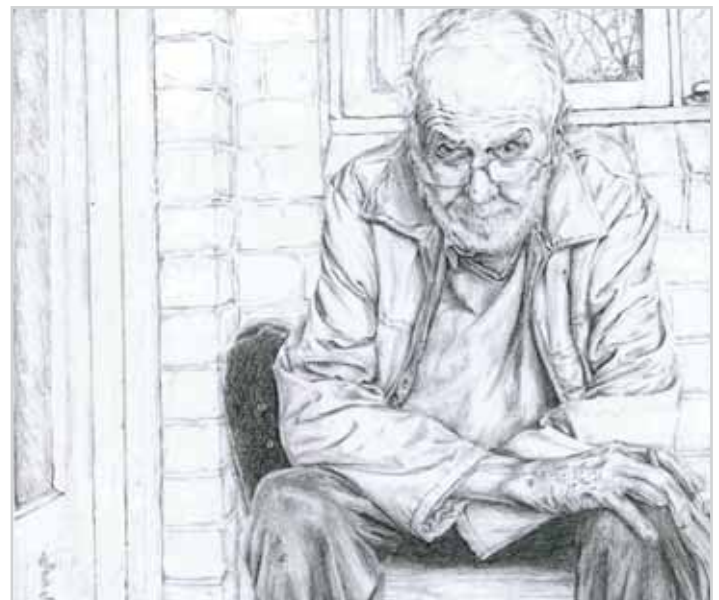


Figure 6.23 Nicky Purser, resolved pencil drawing of her grandad

FORMAL ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF ARTWORKS



Key skill: manipulate art elements and principles and technical qualities of artforms to produce creative responses using visual language.

Using the Formal Framework, you must analyse the formal qualities in your artworks and document your creative and technical processes. You must reflect on your own artmaking and examine how you have used art elements and principles to develop your visual language.

Establish an awareness of the elements and principles of art in your own exploration. Many students intuitively employ these 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 on 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 Formal Framework to analyse the formal qualities in your art. You will explore how the formal art elements and principles, as well as your use of the materials, techniques and processes, affect the meaning of your own artworks, and 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 student, explored a range of textures, colour combinations and techniques of applying paint in order to see what results she would achieve.

'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 6.25). 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.'

'In the second sample (Figure 6.26) I have 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.'



Figure 6.24 Example of Jess Maguire's manipulation of art elements and principles to produce creative responses

ACTIVITY 6.6

- 1 Choose five artworks.
- 2 Explain how the formal art elements and principles, as well as the use of the materials, techniques and processes, affect the meaning of the work of the artists you have selected.

ACTIVITY 6.7

Reflect on your own artmaking and examine how you have used art elements and principles to develop your visual language.



Figure 6.25 Example of Jess Maguire's splatter trial – Galaxy

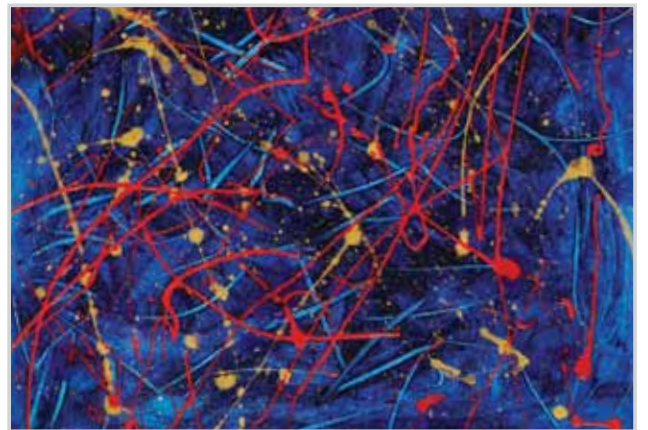


Figure 6.26 Example of Jess Maguire's splatter trial – Energy

USING FORMAL AND CULTURAL FRAMEWORKS TO SUPPORT REFLECTIVE ANNOTATION

Key skill: apply knowledge of the Formal and Cultural Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to their own artmaking.



Formal



Cultural

Examine your work and reflect on how cultural aspects 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 in achieving your intended outcome/s. Use the Cultural Framework to identify the influences on you with reference to the cultural environment in which you worked. 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, political, social or religious implications, or aspects of ethnicity and gender. Throughout the process of developing your folio, you must analyse the formal qualities of your work and document the ways in which you have used visual language to comment on qualities of your or any other culture or an aspect of the human body and culture.

You may also wish to consider the impact of your work on viewers from different cultural backgrounds, as our cultural background and experience will always effect the way we see and interpret art.

Points to consider when applying the Cultural Framework to the analysis of your artworks

What cultural issues have you dealt with in your folio? Have you made any specific references to historical, cultural or social events? 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 Figure 6.27, a VCE student, Kathryn Panias, was exploring the rituals surrounding Greek Easter. She explored the painting and decorating of eggs, Easter egg hunts, table decorations at the Easter celebration and Easter candles. She brought all of these ideas together in an abstract painting that references the colours, shapes and patterns she associated with Easter, including a subtle reference to the crucifixion.

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 is that message?

Do you think the interpretation of your artwork could change over time? 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.



Figure 6.27
Kathryn Panias
Abstract painting
exploring Greek
Easter, oil on canvas

ART LANGUAGE FOR DOCUMENTATION AND ANNOTATION

Key skill: document your thinking and working practices.

Continue to develop your art language as you document and annotate your work and the work of the artists who have inspired you this semester. The annotation will assist you in formalising 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 work 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, as apposed to 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. It will also show 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, then annotate on the back of the work.

The language that you use to document your thinking and working practices should reflect the language that you are developing in theory. Make use of the terminology appropriate to both the Formal and Cultural 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, 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 brush strokes emphasises the feeling of calm. The direction that this piece is viewed in 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'.



Figure 6.28 Jess Maguire, *Exploration in acrylic paint to elicit an emotional or psychological response*

[7]

ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 2

Unit 2 – Outcomes 1 & 2

Chapter overview

In this chapter, you will read how assessment will gauge your ability to:

- recognise the role and purpose that art plays in society
- apply the Formal Framework
- apply the Cultural Framework
- compare and contrast artworks
- justify personal opinions
- use appropriate art language
- use creative responses that demonstrate your exploration of ideas about culture through trialling techniques, materials and processes to produce an artwork.

You will find:

- assessment criteria sheet
- a sample response by a student with margin notes that highlight assessment.

'Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end; then stop.'

Lewis Carroll (1832–1898), *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

INTRODUCTION FOR 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. You must use the Formal and Cultural Frameworks as tools to discuss the different ways that art reflects and communicates the values, beliefs and traditions of the societies for and in which it is created. It is suggested that you do this by examining different ways that artists interpret and present social issues.

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 COMPLETING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unit 2 requires you to address the Cultural Framework as a means of understanding how an artwork reflects the time and place of its creation. 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:

- Organise the points you wish to make into an essay plan.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare artworks.
- Comparing and contrasting should take place throughout an essay.
- Use the Formal Framework to compare and contrast artworks in terms of elements, principles, style, artform, technique and symbolism.
- Use the Cultural Framework to compare and contrast the different ways that artists at different times and in different places and societies create and interpret images.
- Refer to relevant symbolism.
- Use visual evidence from the artwork to support your point of view.

Tips for responding to short answer questions, an annotated visual report, multimedia presentation and exhibition reports can be found in Chapter 4.

Additional tips

- Choose your artworks carefully. They need to reflect and communicates the values, beliefs and traditions of a range of cultures across time. Remember that you will be comparing them so make your selection with a point 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 nude?
- Research your selected artists and artworks and their cultural contexts. This will increase your knowledge and understanding of the environments in which the works were created and the roles they played in their original settings.
- Analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks require close and perceptive observation. Place coloured images of the artworks side by side to assist you to compare formal qualities, technique and style and examine them carefully.
- When comparing and contrasting, select the most important points of difference. This is always easier if the works you discuss are linked by an idea or a theme.
- Refer to both similarities and differences when you compare the artworks. When comparing and contrasting 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 artform, 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?
 - 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. Make clear and specific reference to the artworks. This will come both from close observation of the works and from research.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 1

Name: _____



Outcome 1: Analyse, interpret and compare artworks from different cultural backgrounds.

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the work demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 Application of the Formal Framework to analyse and interpret the artworks (including symbolism)							/5
Criterion 2 Application of the Cultural Framework to identify the ways that artworks are influenced by and reflect their cultural context (including symbolism)							/5
Criterion 3 Discussion of the roles and purposes of artworks, how they reflect the societies in which they are made and how this is evident in the works							/5
Criterion 4 Comparison and contrasting of the similarities and differences between the artworks							/5
Criterion 5 Expression of personal opinion supported by evidence from the artworks and research							/5
Criterion 6 Use of appropriate research and art language							/5



These criteria have been developed from the VCE Art Study Design and would apply to an extended response (such as the one opposite.) Not all tasks need to assess all criteria. This may be achieved instead by a combination of shorter tasks. This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSES

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.

Francesca Ohlert used the criteria sheet on the opposite page.



Figure 7.1 Jan van Eyck, *The Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin*, c. 1435 oil on panel, 66 x 62cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris



Figure 7.2 Tracey Moffatt, *Up in the Sky #1*, 1997 from a series of 25 images, off-set print, 61 x 76cm (image size), 72 x 102cm (paper size). Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn9 Gallery, Sydney

Criterion 6: Appropriate art language has been highlighted throughout the text of the essay (in red).

The introduction sets the scene for the comparison of artworks and their cultural contexts by briefly describing the subject matter.

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 Chancellor Rolin, Jan van Eyck shows us the Virgin 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 generation'.

Criterion 1: Visual analysis of van Eyck's painting includes technique and the application of colour.

Criterion 2: Use of the emerging medium of oil paints and the attention to detail refers to van Eyck's working environment and cultural context.

Criterion 1: Discussion of Moffatt's technique and the ways in which this strengthens the artist's representation of the subject matter.

Criterion 5: Reference is made to specific details in the work to support the analysis

Criterion 2: Discussion of culturally relevant interpretations.

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**, 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 they find themselves in, 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

Criterion 4: Comparison of use of colour and its symbolism.

Criterion 4: Comparison of the representation of space and their culturally relevant symbolism.

child. It is interesting to note that Tracey Moffatt, also of Aboriginal heritage, 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 regards to Australia's largely segregated past and the controversial issue of the 'stolen generation' 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.



Figure 7.3 Photographer Tracey Moffatt at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Circular Quay, Sydney

Criterion 5: Reference to specific details to support interpretation of symbolism.

Criterion 4: Comparison of approaches to the theme of mother and child.

Criterion 4: Contrast of religious interpretations – a major difference in the cultural contexts of the images.

Criterion 5: Expression of personal opinion about subject matter and presentation, supported by reasons.

Criterion 2: Consideration of the presentation of the artwork to its audience and how this changes with time.

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 pair sits 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 generation' and perhaps Moffatt, having experienced separation from her mother at a young age, is expressing a concern about church interference in the lives of many Indigenous people.

Originally intended to decorate the Chancellor's local parish church, The Madonna of Chancellor Rolin now hangs in the Louvre in Paris. Without the stained glass surrounds and soft light of a church to mirror

Criterion 3: Discussion of the role these artworks play in their societies.

that shown in the picture, I feel that this work has lost a great deal of its original aura. 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 is 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 the contemporary public is 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 a myriad of 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 very high scoring response to the task. The student has addressed each of the criteria and used evidence to support well-framed opinions. The

use of art language reflects an understanding of formal qualities and has been employed in insightful analyses.

INTRODUCTION FOR OUTCOME 2

The award of a satisfactory completion in Outcome 2 will be based on your teacher's decision that you have shown that 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 tasks 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 various techniques, materials and processes. You must develop a folio of visual responses in which you identify ways of visually representing your concepts and resolving your exploration 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, however, are not assessed individually, but will be assessed as part of your exploration. It is important that you continue to explore different ways of working in Unit 2. Explore media, techniques and approaches that you have not used before, while developing your skill in the application of the media 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 to personal and cultural ideas and issues through exploration and experimentation

Am I:

- using various means to explore my interpretations of ideas and concepts, including brainstorming, annotation and an exploration of materials, techniques, processes and art forms?
- developing a personal visual language that effectively communicates my ideas and concepts?
- allowing my media to achieve a visual representation of my concept or ideas?
- making use of ideas influenced by aspects of culture in my artwork/s?
- generating a range of visual interpretations of my ideas and concepts through both observation and imagination?
- establishing ways that I can communicate my ideas and concepts in a visual way, including the use of thumbnail sketches, exploration of media and developing a range of images?
- being imaginative in the range of possibilities with which I am exploring my ideas?

2 Exploring materials, techniques, processes and art forms

Am I:

- exploring my medium/media using a range of techniques and surfaces?
- considering how this exploration is communicating my ideas and concepts?
- allowing my exploration, observations and discoveries to provide me with potential tools with which to develop an effective visual language?
- exploring the expressive application of my medium and the symbolic meaning expressed by the media, techniques, approaches and art forms?
- pushing the boundaries of my medium/media?
- 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 images?
- exploring a range of options to establish what the most effective medium would be to meet my needs?

3 Develop skills in artmaking

Am I:

- developing my skill in the application of my selected medium/media and tools?
- developing my skill in the application of my techniques?
- developing my skill in the application of my selected processes?
- developing my skill in the application of my selected art form/s?
- developing my skill in the manipulation of the elements and principles of art?
- developing my skill in establishing a visual language?
- skilfully using my medium, techniques and processes to achieve the best resolution of my intention?

4 Using the formal elements and principles to produce creative responses that illustrate personal interests

Am I:

- observing how artists use and combine formal elements, the way they compose the image and how they use their technique to express themselves?
- considering how I can manipulate and combine the elements of art and the relationships I am establishing?
- achieving mood or atmosphere, enhancing the message I want to convey in my artwork through the application of the formal elements?
- producing visual responses that are aesthetically pleasing?
- using the formal qualities of my work to create a visual language that comments on qualities of my and other cultures and aspects of my concept and ideas?
- evaluating how effective my use of art elements and principles is in developing my visual language?
- exploring how the formal qualities, as well as my use of the materials, techniques and processes, affect the meaning of my artworks?
- exploring ways of visually representing my concepts and resolving my exploration so that I can produce a finished artwork?

5 Applying knowledge of the Formal and Cultural Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to the artmaking

Am I:

- analysing and discussing the meanings and messages in my artwork and evaluating how effective the visual language is that I am developing?
- reflecting on how my experiences, feelings and thinking are evident in my work?
- applying the Formal and Cultural Framework in my annotation and using them to inform my artmaking?
- considering how the formal qualities enhance the messages of the artwork?
- considering how my artmaking reflects the cultural framework?
- considering symbolism to explore my ideas and concepts?
- explaining the meanings and messages in my own artwork?
- using the Cultural Framework to identify the influences on me and my artwork?

6 Document thinking and working practices

Am I:

- clearly annotating and communicating my thinking and working practice?
- using annotation to reflect on my research, experimentation, observations and attempts to visually represent my concept or idea?
- using my analysis to determine how effective or ineffective my exploration is, so that I can plan the next step I will take?
- communicating my understanding of what I am learning?
- applying the tools I have been given in theory in order to continue to develop my art language as I document and annotate my work and the work of the artists who have inspired me?
- using the annotation to help me to continue to develop a visual language to present my ideas effectively?

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 2



Name: _____

Outcome 2: A folio of visual responses that identify ways of visually representing concepts and resolving exploration that result in the production of at least one finished artwork.

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the folio demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 The effective communication and production of visual responses to personal and cultural ideas and issues							/5
Criterion 2 A broad exploration of media, materials, techniques and processes with selected art form/s to create artworks							/5
Criterion 3 The development of skills in art making and the exploration of media, materials, techniques, processes and art forms. Competence and control in the application of materials & techniques, from initial exploratory work to resolved artworks is communicated through visual material							/5
Criterion 4 The manipulation of art elements and principles and technical qualities of selected artform/s to produce creative responses using visual language							/5
Criterion 5 The application of knowledge of the Formal and Cultural Frameworks in reflective annotation as they apply to the exploration of media, materials, techniques, processes and the production of a finished artwork. An understanding is shown through the appropriate application, control and documentation of elements, principles and aesthetics							/5
Criterion 6 The documentation of thinking and working practices throughout a sustained body of work							/5
Criterion 7 The resolution of ideas, directions and/or concepts in a body of work that includes at least one finished artwork							/5



This criteria sheet has been developed from the VCE Art Study Design and is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

[8]

INTERPRETING ART

Units 3 – Area of Study 1

Chapter overview

By the end of Unit 3, you will have gained experience in the interpretation and analysis of artworks. In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- develop a knowledge of artworks selected from pre- and post-1970
- develop interpretations and analysis of the meanings and messages of artworks through the application of the Formal, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks
- select and apply these Frameworks appropriately to the interpretation of an artwork
- substantiate interpretations of artworks with evidence taken from the artworks themselves and with reference to a range of resources
- use appropriate art language and vocabulary in the analysis, interpretation and contrast of artworks

'Interpretation is an articulated response based on wonder and reflection. Works of art are mere things until we begin to carefully perceive and interpret them – then they become alive and enliven us as we reflect on, wonder about and respond to them.'

Terry Barrett, art historian and critic, *Interpreting Art*

INTRODUCTION

This Area of Study enables you to put all the skills you have learnt in Units 1 and 2 to use. The Analytical Frameworks that you have been introduced to will be used as a tool for interpreting and analysing the meanings of artworks. The Analytical Frameworks help you to understand that there are many layers of meaning for an artwork.

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 Formal, Personal and Cultural Frameworks. In this chapter, you will be introduced to the Contemporary Framework through the study of artworks that are made prior to and post 1970.

Another aspect of this course is the way in which ideas and issues can influence the making and interpretation of art. Post-1970 art represents the expression of contemporary culture and ideas and issues. The chapter following this will cover ideas and issues relating to art.

Your understanding of the theoretical aspects of art will help you understand your own art practice. By studying the formal, 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.

SELECTING ARTWORKS FOR STUDY

The focus of this study in your final year is upon you. The artworks that you select to research are important, as they should relate to your own ideas and artmaking. You may select artworks that express similar ideas to your own or artists that 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 interpretative frameworks. There may be some artworks that can be interpreted specifically using one framework more than others.

It is essential that you interpret the artwork thoroughly using the Formal Framework by investigating the design elements and principles, the **techniques** used by the artist, the style of the artwork and the **symbols** and **metaphors** used by the artist. This is your starting point for using the other interpretative frameworks.

In your research, you must investigate the artwork by examining and analysing the points of view of others about the artwork as was outlined in the commentaries section of Chapter 1.

To begin your study you must select the following:

- one artist who produced work before 1970
- one artist who has produced work after 1970
- two artworks by each artist.

You will be asked to compare and contrast the artworks by each artist using *art language*. When you are *comparing and contrasting* artworks you must look at the various aspects of the artwork that you can compare and contrast. These aspects include:

- the ideas that the artist expresses
- the techniques that the artist uses to express their ideas
- the style of the artwork
- the use of design elements and principles
- interpretation of the artwork using Analytical Frameworks.

This chapter will present a range of artists in pairs that you could compare and contrast. The information can be used as a starting point to investigate the artist and their work further. As the Art Study Design recommends you study a range of artists from different cultures, some of the artists analysed in this chapter come from Indigenous and Asian contemporary cultures.



Contemporary

ACTIVITY 8.1

Find a range of artworks that relate to your own artmaking. Compare these works to your own. The works may relate to the following: techniques, ideas, interpretative frameworks, subject, use of design elements and principles.



Formal

techniques: the manner in which the artist applies materials to the artwork

symbols: signs that represent ideas in the artwork

metaphors: one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities

Refer to Chapter 1, page 4 for information about using art language. Refer to the Chapter 9 for assessment information about comparing and contrasting artworks.

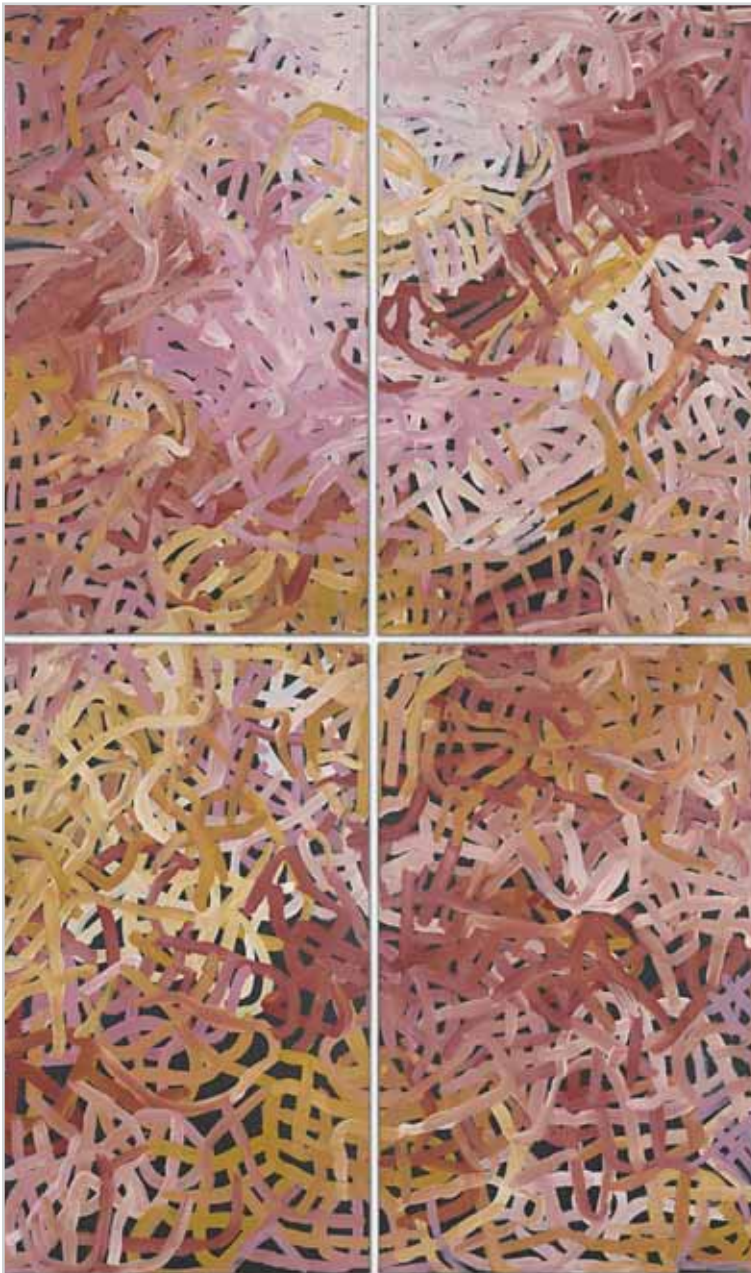
Figure 8.1 Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Big Yam Dreaming*, 1996, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 401 x 245cm overall, National Gallery Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased by the National Gallery Woman's Association to mark the directorship of Dr. Timothy Potts, 1998 © Emily Kame Kngwarreye/ Licensed by VISCOPY 2009

ACTIVITY 8.2

Find five pairs of artists (one post-1970 and one pre-1970 for each pair) that you could compare. Use the following topics as a point of comparison: ideas, techniques, style, and interpretation.

AUSTRALIAN ART FROM A FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

Emily Kame Kngwarreye



Emily Kame Kngwarreye (1910–1996) was an initial member of the Utopian art group, which began in 1977. The **co-operative** of artists was formed on Utopia station where Kame Kngwarreye had worked mustering cattle. Under the reforms established for Aboriginal Land Rights in the 1970s, the station was returned to the Aboriginal people and they decided to set up small communities. Kame Kngwarreye first exhibited as an individual artist in 1990 in Perth and later at Utopia Art in Sydney. She was known as an elder in the Utopian community and she applied an individual approach to her artmaking.

Formal Framework

This work is typical of the style of Emily Kame Kngwarreye and the Utopia Art group. The work consists of four large canvas panels, which are 4 metres by 2.5 metres when put together. Kame Kngwarreye has **overlaid** large tangled lines in pale colours such as pink, brown and white. The lines intertwine to form a web and they blend in areas such as the top area of the canvas. The lines are based on Kame Kngwarreye's response to her country and the contours of the landscape, the cycle of the seasons, the parched land, the flowing of waters and rains.

The work is also created from an **aerial** perspective and hence there is a rhythmical movement created by the intertwined lines. Kame Kngwarreye would have painted the work quite rapidly as she was used to using a similar technique with Batik wax which can dry quite rapidly. The **batik** process similarly overlays line work with each application of wax and dying of the material.

The manner in which Kame Kngwarreye paints the work is quite gestural, which is similar to the work of the Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock. Hence, the work appears **abstract** in style. The lines the artist has used is a response to her emotions and retelling of stories and ceremonies connected with the land.

Personal Framework

Big Yam Dreaming is an artist's personal response to her environment. Kame Kngwarreye has retold her stories using these rhythmic lines. They evoke a spiritual quality as Kngwarreye is using the colours and lines to create an atmosphere that could be calming and meditative. However, the tangled lines could suggest the state of uncertainty in which many Indigenous artists find themselves.

ACTIVITY 8.3

What aspects of Kame Kngwarreye's work appeals to you? How do you relate to the work? Consider the design elements and principles and the techniques that Kame Kngwarreye uses.

Cultural Framework

As Kame Kngwarreye's style is unique, she challenges the way in which we view works by most Indigenous Australians. In another work by Kngwarreye, 'Kame' the dots that are painted on the surface of the work take on the forms and colours of the local geography and vegetation in the area. At the same time, the work **depicts** the women's ceremony as the dots take on the markings that are painted on women during women's ceremonies. Both works tell a dreamtime story that is related to the formation of the land.

It is unusual for Kame Kngwarreye to be singled out as an indigenous artist from her cultural group in Utopia. This goes against Aboriginal tradition, which demands reciprocal rights and obligations concerning the group of clan. The rights of ceremony, songs, dances and ownership of land belongs to the group. Nonetheless, Kame Kngwarreye has an inherited place within her cultural group and her sense of belonging has enhanced her work.



www.ngv.vic.gov.au/collection/pub/itemDetail?artworkID=7377

ACTIVITY 8.4

- 1 Research other artworks by Emily Kame Kngwarreye. How do these works relate to the Indigenous ownership of the land?
- 2 Compare the work of Kame Kngwarreye to another Indigenous artist. What cultural aspects are similar?

ACTIVITY 8.5

View Kame Kngwarreye's work in a gallery such as the National Gallery of Victoria. How does the presentation of the work in the gallery differ from the location in which it was created. You may have to view video work of Indigenous women working in Utopia to understand the significance in the creation of the work.



Formal

co-operative: a group of artists working together

overlaid: placed over the top of one another; overlapping

aerial: viewing an artwork from directly overhead; a bird's eye view

batik: a process which involves using wax on fabric; the fabric is dyed and the wax removed using heat; a pattern forms where the wax covered the fabric and resisted the dye on the fabric

abstract: not representing outward appearances; having no recognisable subject



Personal



Cultural

depict: show, represent or demonstrate



motifs: signs or symbols that represents a personal idea for the artist, their beliefs and culture

Contemporary Framework

Kame Kngwarreye's work appears to be abstract and spontaneous. However, the development of her style has come from years of learning traditions and rituals. As her work has progressed through the years, often **motifs** have repeated and the marks and gestures have become more sophisticated.

Kame Kngwarreye was one of the first Indigenous female artists to exhibit her work, with the assistance of the Australian Aboriginal Media Association. She has been able to transpose traditional designs using contemporary media. Her work is now represented in most Australian public galleries and many European modern galleries such as the Tate Modern in Britain and the Guggenheim in New York. Kame Kngwarreye expresses the ideas of a female indigenous woman in an art field that is often dominated by men.

Her work expresses the issues of Land Rights and the importance of spiritual possession of the land by the Indigenous people.

ACTIVITY 8.6

- 1 Find the location of Kame Kngwarreye's works in public or commercial galleries. What values do these galleries place on the work? How does the meaning of the work differ when it is removed from its original context?
- 2 What do you feel makes Kame Kngwarreye's work feminine? Discuss the aesthetic qualities of the work as well as the techniques and ideas behind the work.
- 3 What symbols in Kame Kngwarreye's work demonstrates the Indigenous connection with the land?

Related works

Kame, 1991, Synthetic Polymer paint on canvas, 137 x 300 cm, National Gallery of Victoria

References

- Hart, D. 1995, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Paintings from 1989-1995*, Parliament House, Canberra.
- Isaacs, J. 1998, *Emily Kngwarreye Paintings*, Craftsman House, Smith, T. North Ryde, Sydney.
- Neale, M. 1998, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye: Paintings from Utopia*, Macmillan Publishers, South Yarra, Victoria.
- Neale, M. 2008, *Utopia: The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, National Museum of Australia Press, Canberra.
- Thomas, D. 1988, *Earth's Creation: The Paintings of Emily Kame Kngwarreye*, Malakoff Fine Art Press, North Caulfield, Victoria.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.nga.gov.au/exhibitions/Kngwarreye/index.html

www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/utopia_the_genius_of_emily_kame_kngwarreye

Grace Cossington Smith

Grace Cossington Smith (1892–1984) grew up in the Northern Sydney suburb of Turramurra. She had an interest in art at school and attended painting classes with Anthony Dattilo-Rubbo in 1910. She travelled to England with her family, furthering her artistic development by attending art classes at Winchester Art School and joined outdoor sketching classes in Germany. She returned to settle in Turramurra in 1914, which was her home for the next 65 years. Cossington Smith continued to attend the Dattilo-Rubbo school, working with her contemporaries, such as Max Meldrum and Roy de Maistre, who were considered the founding members of the Modernist colour movement in Sydney.



Figure 8.2
Grace Cossington Smith, *The Curve of the Bridge*, 1928–29, oil on cardboard, 110.5 x 82.5cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales. © Estate of Grace Cossington Smith, Photograph © Jenni Carter. Purchased with funds provided by the Art Gallery Society of New South Wales and James Fairfax AO 1991

development works: sketches or small artworks that assist in the development of techniques and ideas for an artwork

perspective: see linear and aerial perspective



geometry: mathematical shapes often used in the structure and composition of artworks

foreground: space created in the front area of an artwork, particularly in landscape works

Formal Framework

Cossington Smith had an interest in topical subjects that were occurring in Sydney during the 1920s. Although her work was largely private, she completed many sketches and **development works** that demonstrated the growth of Sydney during the 1920s and the subsequent depression and World War II. This view of the almost completed Sydney Harbour Bridge is depicted from an unusual **perspective** showing the undercarriage of the bridge. At the base of the pylons, you can see some of the construction equipment indicating that the bridge is yet to be finished. Cossington Smith has focused upon the **geometry** of the bridge caused by the repetition of the struts, concrete brickwork and lattice ironwork.

The colours used in the work are quite dull in tone, which was unusual for Cossington Smith as she had an interest in colour. However, you can see the influence of artists such as Cezanne as Cossington Smith has broken the surface of brushstrokes into little blocks of colour. This provides texture in the painting, particularly in the repetition of brushstrokes in the sky and on the foreshore in the **foreground** of the work. Strong lines outline some of the shapes in the work and patterns are created, as in the stack of wood on the left of the work and the houses on the further shore.

Cossington Smith developed the work through a series of sketches. However, she is known for her use of colour and light in her works. Like other artists, such as Roy De Maistre and Ronald Wakelin, Cossington Smith structured her works based on colour, a technique adopted from the influences of Cezanne and the Cubists. The works of van Gogh,

atmosphere: emotion created in an artwork by the techniques or formal elements that an artist uses

medium: the canvas, board or paper that an artwork can be painted or drawn upon; most mediums are prepared with a surface that allows the paint, pencil or charcoal to adhere to the surface

who used colour to convey emotion in his work, inspired her interest in colour motivating the **atmosphere** of the work. In this painting, the dark shape of the bridge dominates the work and it is made reference to in the title. Another work by Cossington Smith *The Lacquer Room* shows how the red used in the cedar chairs links the viewpoint in the composition and creates rhythm. In the same way, the small brushstrokes in this work create a rhythm. Cossington Smith also painted her works on cardboard or paper, which would have been the most readily available **medium** at the time.

ACTIVITY 8.7

Analyse *The Lacquer Room* using the Formal Framework. After reading this information about Grace Cossington Smith, what ideas was she expressing with the use of technique, style, symbols, design elements and principles. *The Lacquer Room* can be found at www.nga.gov.au/exhibition/cossingtonsmith



Personal Framework

Cossington Smith's works were a personal response to her environment. She documented the city and its social and industrial development from the point of view of a woman. *The Lacquer Room* depicts the tearoom at the Farmers Department Store in George Street, Sydney. Cossington Smith would have developed the work sitting in the restaurant sketching. This work features a young man with golden hair and blue eyes who sits in the centre of the composition. His colouring draws the attention of the viewer. It is said that Cossington Smith, who came from a conservative Anglican background, would often depict momentous personal events in her personal and private life. Perhaps this young man has drawn her attention. She was also influenced by the works of Italian Renaissance painter Fra Angelico who depicted Christ-like figures at the centre of his works. The fact that Cossington Smith's work is intensely private in its subject matter enhances this interpretation.

ACTIVITY 8.8

Research artworks by two female artists who were contemporaries of Grace Cossington Smith: Margaret Preston and Thea Proctor. Analyse an artwork by each artist using the Personal Framework. Compare aspects of the interpretation of the three artists in a discussion.



Cultural Framework

Cossington Smith has captured the events that were important in the development of Sydney as a city. The scene created in *The Lacquer Room* and the figures in the work are typical of the time in which it was produced. The work was probably painted in August, during winter, as the women are wearing fur coats. It also signified the end of the Depression, as women were able to dress up and go into the city to dine, which shows an improvement in the economic situation of the country. The restaurant has been designed in the Art Deco style, as indicated by the lights on the background wall. It was designed by Cossington Smith's close friend, the artist Thea Proctor, and to dine there would have been very fashionable.

Contemporary Framework

Viewing Cossington Smith's work from a contemporary perspective allows the viewer to analyse the manner in which she presented her **subject matter**. It was unusual for a woman, at the time, to depict scenes that were usually the domain of male artists. In addition, Cossington Smith was able to convey her subject matter from a woman's perspective. Many of her scenes were domestic but rendered in a contemporary style.



Contemporary

subject matter:
the content or subject
of an artwork

References

- Hart, D. 2005, *Grace Cossington Smith*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
 James, B. 1990, *Grace Cossington Smith*, Craftsman House, Roseville.
 Thomas, D. 1973, *Grace Cossington Smith*. Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney.
 Thomas, D. 1993, *Grace Cossington Smith: A life from drawings in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/cossingtonsmith/Default.cfm
www.evabreuerartdealer.com.au/cosssmith.html



Student CD-ROM

A comparison of Emily Kame Kngwarreye and Grace Cossington Smith can be found on the Student CD-ROM.

ASIAN ART: TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY

Utagawa Hiroshige

Figure 8.3 Utagawa Hiroshige, *Odawara – Sakawa River, Travellers Crossing a River*, (colour woodcut from the series *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō*), c. 1831–34



stylised: a simplified style where the artist removes all detail so the artwork is reduced to a series of shapes and lines (e.g. Egyptian art)

commissions: situations in which an artist is paid or requested by another person to create an artwork; often the benefactor will state what the subject matter of the artwork will be and the techniques that the artist will use



hand colouring: many black and white wood block designs are coloured by hand; the artist will paint in the white areas of the print

Utagawa Hiroshige (1797–1858) is one of Japan's most famous woodblock designers. He became devoted to the *Ukiyo-e* style of printing at a young age after viewing the works of his contemporary Hokusai. *Ukiyo-e* painting developed around the cities of Kyoto in 1600 and then moved to Edo (Tokyo) around the late seventeenth century. The woodblock printing style sprung from another form of **stylised** painting known as *Kano* painting, which Hiroshige first trained in as a young man. Both painting styles were connected with the *Kabuki* theatre and the depiction of the actors and scenery. However, *Ukiyo-e* prints were known as 'pictures of the floating world' displaying interpretations of landscapes and people of the time. They were very much reflective of the cultural and social systems in place in Japan.

Hiroshige is most famous for his series of works that were published in books. *Ukiyo-e* prints were popular at the time because they were cheap and easy to produce. Throughout his career, Hiroshige was responsible for many **commissions**; however, his most famous were *One Hundred Famous Views in Edo*, *The Fifty-three Stations of the Tōkaidō* and *The Sixty-nine Stations of the Kisokaidō*. These were produced in a small format and were sold to travellers and tourists to promote the city. The stations along these routes were the guest houses along the road where travellers could obtain food and lodgings for the night.

ACTIVITY 8.9

Research *Ukiyo-e* prints by Hokusai. What were some of the subjects of these prints? Describe some of the images by Hokusai. Compare the subject matter of these prints to that of Hiroshige.

Formal interpretation

Travellers Crossing a River (1831–34) depicts a group of travellers crossing the Sakawa River on the backs of waders. Right of centre, on the plain on the opposite bank, is the prosperous town of Odawara. To the right is the fifteenth-century castle of Odawara. The scene is probably set in the summer at the approach of evening. The dark strip along the upper edge of the otherwise yellow sky implies this. The mountains in the background of the print indicate the challenging journey the travellers have just completed.

As the image is a print it is characterised by the large flat shapes outlined in black. The image would have been printed in several main blocks and then smaller details would have been completed by the artist using **hand colouring**. A particular characteristic of Hiroshige is the ability to create light in his prints. This was created by the printing technique where the ink was partially rubbed off the printing block to give the tonal effect of light. This is evident in the tones of the river, from dark blue to light turquoise. Texture has been created in the grass in the middle of the image and in the pattern of the trees in the mountains in the background. The mountain shapes are angular and the varying colours of pink, green and blue provide depth.

Hiroshige was influenced by Western painting techniques, as is evident in his use of perspective. The work is divided into three main bands, the foreground of the river, the middle ground of the plain and the mountains in the background. This technique created a sense of space in his work. This was important, as it led to creating atmosphere in the print. The size of the mountains and river overpower the smaller people. Hiroshige

was indicating that life was a balance between the powerful forces of nature over man. The space in the image also creates a strong sense of balance, which contributed to the contemplative atmosphere of the image.

As Hiroshige was commissioned as the designer of the print, he would pass his design, with colour notations, on to a woodblock specialist who would prepare the block in the *Ukiyo-e* style. A third man would print the image. The characteristics of woodblock were the fine pigments on high quality rice paper. These materials allowed detail to come out in the work. *Ukiyo-e* prints conveyed the ever shifting moods of the Japanese seasons and displayed the natural beauty of the landscape.

Personal interpretation

The views of the Tōkaidō Road were the personal perspective of the artist. Hiroshige was known to state



'I leave my brush in the East, And set forth on my journey. I shall see the famous places in the Western Land.'

– Utagawa Hiroshige

He was referring to the road between Edo and Kyoto, and the images depict not only the physical journey but a spiritual journey. Later in life, Hiroshige became a Buddhist monk so his art was often a result of his reflections on life. The space and colours in the work were aimed at creating a meditative state when the viewer contemplated the work.

The series based on the Tōkaidō Road arose from the story that Hiroshige was selected to escort the white horse presented to the Emperor by the Shogun, the imperial army commanders, in 1831. This would have been a considerable honour for the artist and he would have taken it as a duty to document the event. This series was also a turning point in Hiroshige's career, as he had been influenced by the work of Hokusai and his style became more developed.

ACTIVITY 8.10

Investigate some other prints by Hiroshige. Describe the images and any symbolism you can see in the image. List the aesthetic qualities (design elements and principles) and techniques that have been described in the paragraphs above. Try to find examples of these in the Hiroshige prints you have investigated.

Cultural interpretation

The work of Hiroshige is an important visual document of the events of the time. His prints depict the lifestyle and daily events of the people as a narrative. In *Travellers Crossing a River*, it is interesting to note that the travellers are carried upon litters by waders. This indicates the importance of the travellers, as they were members of the Imperial Army.

Other series by Hiroshige also depicts scenes of Edo and the importance of public buildings. Again, this symbolises the power of the Emperor and his army. In *Kinryzan Temple at Asakusa* the temple is shown dominated by a large lantern that has been cropped. This symbolises the Japanese observance of the ruling class.



Many of Hiroshige's prints have the obligatory features of snow, moonlight, evening light, fireworks and cherry blossoms. These were all important metaphors for the power of nature that was observed in Japanese culture.

These prints were the first images produced as 'books'. *Ukiyo-e* prints could be purchased in booklet form with poetry or stories of the area. They were seen as promotional brochures for the city. Hence, the titles of the works were often ambiguous, leaving much to the viewer's imagination. They were intended to promote discussion.



Figure 8.4 Utagawa Hiroshige, *The Kinryuzan Temple at Asakusa* (from the series *One Hundred Famous Views in Edo*), 1856–58, woodblock print, 35.9 x 24.4cm, Brooklyn Museum, New York

Contemporary interpretation

It is interesting to view the work of Hiroshige from a contemporary perspective. His work, along with many other *Ukiyo-e* artists provided inspiration for the Impressionist and Post-impressionist painters such as Manet, Monet, Van Gogh and Cezanne. They were inspired by the artists' use of flat coloured shapes to create perspective; a technique that they began to implement in their own work. The Impressionists were also interested by the use of colour to depict light and began to break down their paintings into optical illusions of colour.

ACTIVITY 8.11

Investigate the work of the artists Monet, Cezanne, van Gogh and Manet. What similarities can you draw between their works and those of Hiroshige? Consider techniques, formal elements and the subject matter of the artworks. Provide examples from the artworks to support your point of view.

Through their images, artists such as Hiroshige provided documentation of their period of time and culture. Because the prints were produced in booklet form, they were readily accessible, a bit like a travel brochure. It should be noted that as the prints became increasingly popular many were reproduced and, because of this, there is often a difference in the colour and quality of many of the prints held in art collections. Often the individual images are displayed as a series in an art museum so the viewer can read the images as a story.

It was Hiroshige's intention that viewers were to speculate on the story presented in the images – he was leaving the interpretation up to individual viewers. They were intended to promote discussion. Hiroshige was therefore promoting **postmodernist** concepts with his work.

ACTIVITY 8.12

What do you feel when you look at the work of Hiroshige? Support your point of view with examples from the artworks.

References

- Smith II, H. D. and Poster, A. G.; Lehman, 1986, *Hiroshige: One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, George Braziller Inc, New York.
- Forrer, M. 1997, *Hiroshige Prints & Drawings*, Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Web resources



Weblink

www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/online/edo/



Figure 8.5 Claude Monet, *Water-lily Pond*, 1907, oil on canvas, Bridgestone Museum of Art, Tokyo

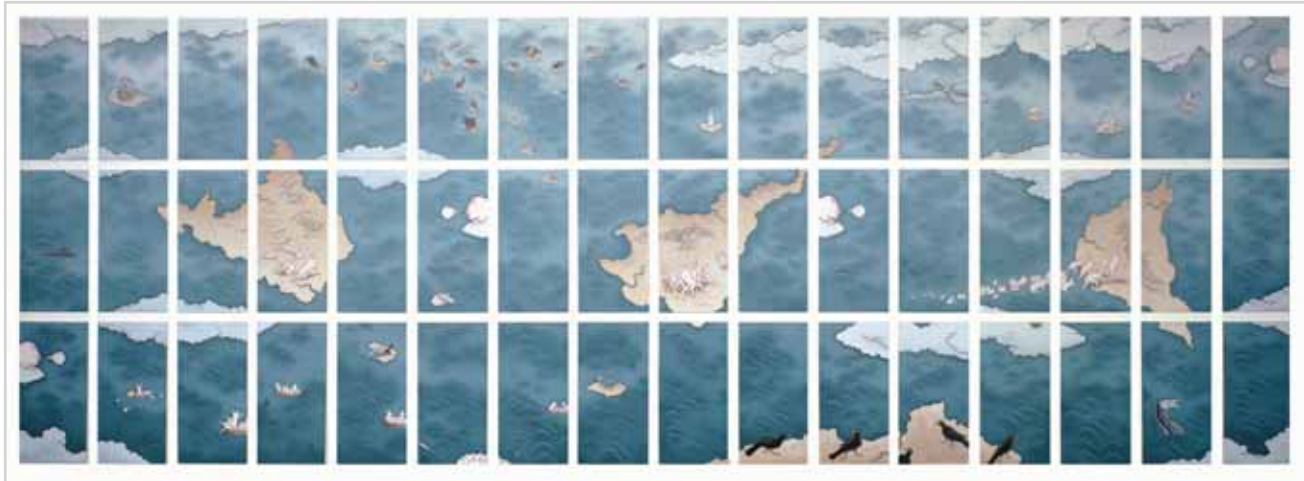
postmodernist: artworks in the postmodern style collapse the differences between what is known as 'high art' and the visual imagery of popular culture; postmodernist artists often break the rules of art to provoke a reaction from the viewer – the artworks are intended to be interpreted differently by different people

Figure 8.6
Guan Wei, *Dow: Island*, 2002 acrylic on canvas, 48 panels, 101.5 x 50.5 cm each. With mixed media installation, Sherman Galleries Sydney

Guan Wei

Guan Wei (born 1957) grew up in Beijing and was trained in traditional art and calligraphy by his father. He is a descendent of the Manchu nobility, who ruled China in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). He graduated from the Fine Arts department of the Beijing Capital University in 1986. Guan Wei migrated to Australia with his family in 1989.

Formal Framework



stylised brushstrokes:
brushstrokes that are simple lines or shapes

narrative qualities:
artworks that feature narrative qualities tell a story through the subject matter or symbols created by the artist

fourth dimension: the element of time in a contemporary artwork

The large-scale paintings of Guan Wei draw on his personal experiences, imaginings and interests. *Dow: Island* is presented as an installation work that has 48 canvas panels with a tonne of sand in front of them on the gallery floor. Other domestic objects are present, such as a clock and a looped video of waves crashing on a shore played on a television monitor on the floor. The canvas panels show an aerial view of islands and an expanse of blue water with stylised waves. On the lower edge of the map, the shoreline of Australia is symbolised with crows guarding the territory. Each of the islands has a name, such as Calamity Island, Trepidation Island and Aspiration Island. The figures and creatures in *Dow: Island* are observed with precision and minute detail. On one island, the figures cluster together for protection; to the right another group are swimming in what appears to be dangerous waters. Another figure is solitary on an island while another dangles from the mouth of a mythical creature.

The work, like many of Wei's artworks, expresses the vulnerability of many people who have escaped their homeland, sometimes taking great risks searching for a better life in Australia. In this image, the plight of many refugees attempting to get to Australia is exhibited.

Much of this imagery is symbolic and can be read on many levels. Guan Wei has executed the work in a style that is similar to Chinese painting with the use of **stylised brushstrokes**. The **narrative** qualities of the work are like the scroll paintings of early China, where a story is told as you read through the images. The artist's use of clouds in the work is also symbolically used in Chinese scroll paintings.

The elements and principles that Wei has used also contribute to the aesthetic symbolism of the work. The strong use of blue with white suggests purity in the work and

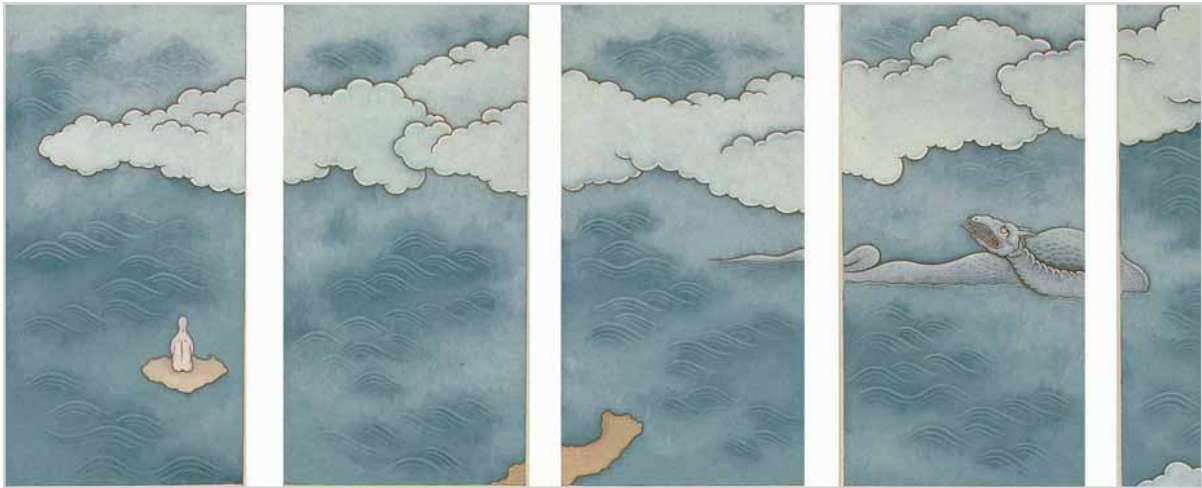


Figure 8.7
Guan Wei, *Dow:*
Island, 2002 (detail of
clouds)

creates a peaceful atmosphere. The placement of the islands across the canvas panels creates visual rhythm and movement in the work. The rhythmical crashing of the waves on the television monitor would enhance this atmosphere. The space represented two dimensionally on the canvases is also presented as a **fourth dimension** in the exhibition space. The concept of space is important to the meditative contemplation of the work.

Scale is an important aspect of this artwork. The islands are presented in a much larger scale to the smaller people. Again, it is as though the forces of nature are overpowering the smaller groups of figures.

Personal Framework

Guan Wei was introduced to art through his father, who was a singer and performer with the Beijing Opera. Chinese Opera allows the performer to express his emotions through colour and gesture. In this manner, Wei has translated this expression of emotion to the canvases of his artworks. Guan Wei is also a descendant of Chinese nobility. The concept of passing on of tradition is important in Chinese culture and Wei has achieved this through the narrative style of his images.

As Guan Wei grew up under the Cultural Revolution in China, when there were restrictions on artistic expression, his original art training was in realistic drawing. Hence, his art shows strong compositional work and drafting. However, after the end of the Cultural Revolution in the early 1980s, he began to undertake a more radical approach to his work and he studied the works of Western art movements. He has been particularly influenced by German Expressionism and Surrealism, through his expression of life's ambiguities. In many of his works, the figures do not have eyes or mouths. Wei is commenting on the restrictions that the government in China can pose on the individual.

ACTIVITY 8.13

Investigate the symbols used in another work by Guan Wei. How do these symbols represent the background and influences upon the artist?



"The government does not like you seeing or talking too much".

– Guan Wei

It appears as though Wei's works have been influenced by the writing of George Orwell, particularly Orwell's novel 1984.

ACTIVITY 8.14

Research the German Expressionist and Surrealist art movements. Select an artist from each art movement and compare the symbols these artists have used with the techniques and subject matter that Guan Wei depicts. Artists to compare include:

- German Expressionism – Edvard Munch, Ernst Kirchner, Franz Marc
- Surrealism – Dorethea Tanning, Salvador Dalí, Rene Magritte, Joan Miro.

The work is a personal expression perhaps of Guan Wei's own voyage to Australia and his escape from the restrictions the government imposes in his native country. In 1989, Wei returned to Beijing and encountered the student uprising in Tiananmen Square. He became disillusioned with his homeland. As he migrated to Tasmania, many of Wei's works reflect the closeness of the island to water. Other works by Wei, such as *A Distant Land* have **iconography** that is uniquely Australian, such as floral motifs and images of the tall ships that our first immigrants arrived upon. All these are depicted in Guan Wei's stylised flat shapes and repetitive patterns. The blue in much of his work refers to the exotic blue skies of Australia.

iconography: symbolism that represents religious or spiritual concepts

ACTIVITY 8.15

Research an Australian artist such as Tom Roberts, Fredrick McCubbin, Charles Conder, Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd or Albert Tucker. Compare and contrast the expression of subject matter and use of techniques and symbolism of one of these artists, with Guan Wei.

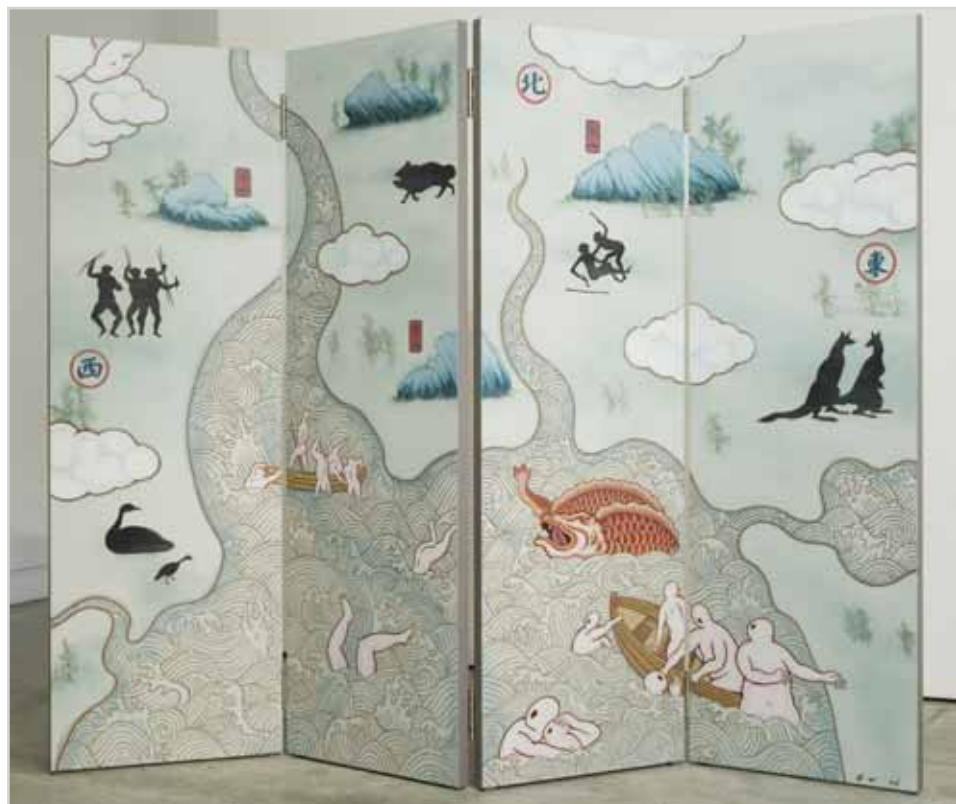


Figure 8.8

Guan Wei, *A Distant Land*, 2006, 3 acrylic panel boards presented as screens, 208 x 160cm, Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Cultural Framework

As Guan Wei has experienced both Chinese and Western cultures his work reflects those traditions. *Dow: Island* is a fable, a story told to the viewer. He offers no solution to the problem but offers the work up for quiet contemplation. This is typical of many works in the Chinese tradition. The myth or story told in the work is also part of that tradition. Guan Wei is using a visual language that is bringing together the East and the West.



Guan Wei also expresses concerns about history, science and the environment in the symbolism in his work. *Dow: Island* is presented as a map, which is an important document in any culture. He is expressing his interest in the reading of old maps that the early explorers used. Wei states, *'When people are thinking about global things they draw a map. The map is very important to human thinking'*. In this respect, Wei is expressing the ideals of both Western and Asian cultures. The figures in the work represent the plight of people of his culture and demonstrate Wei's concern for social responsibility.



ACTIVITY 8.16

Create a mind map using thumbnail images similar to those images used by Guan Wei. The map may be of a particular journey or voyage you may have taken or it may be a collection of ideas related to a theme.

Figure 8.9
Guan Wei, *Dow: Island*, 2002 (detail of people)

Contemporary Framework

Guan Wei has brought together the styles and beliefs of two different cultures in his work. Using a contemporary style of imagery that appears 'cartoon like' he has expressed the beliefs and traditions of his Asian heritage. He has appropriated some of the style of Asian artworks in his work by using stylised brushstrokes and similar compositional arrangements.

In his work, Guan Wei has presented a range of global issues: immigration being the foremost. The manner in which he explores this issue and the symbolism that is used allows the viewer to draw on their own experiences when viewing the work and evoke their own interpretation. Although the issue is one that is to be contemplated seriously, Guan Wei has presented it in a somewhat humorous and whimsical manner.



Web resources



Weblinks

www.guanwei.com.au
www.shermangalleries.com.au/artists_exhib/artists/wei.html



Student CD-ROM

A comparison of Utagawa Hiroshige and Guan Wei can be found on the Student CD-ROM.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORKS, SCULPTURES AND INSTALLATIONS

The following artists are presented as a part of a group that create three-dimensional works, sculptures or installations. One artist worked prior to 1970 and one artist worked after 1970. The artists have been selected as similarities can be drawn between their works. The similarities may occur in the materials and processes the artists use and the ideas behind their works. For more artists working in three dimensions, see the Student CD-ROM.

Barbara Hepworth

Barbara Hepworth (1903–1975) is one of the most prominent female artists in the development of Abstract sculpture in Britain. Hepworth trained at the Leeds School of Art where she became close friends with Henry Moore. She married her second husband, sculptor Ben Nicholson in 1938. Together with Moore, they developed the first school of British Abstract sculpture based on influences from the development of contemporary art in Europe at the time.



Figure 8.10

Barbara Hepworth, *Pelagos*, 1946
painted wood and string, 43 x 46
x 38.5cm, 15.2kg, Tate, London.
© Bowness Hepworth Estate.
Photograph © Tate, London 2009



Formal Framework

Hepworth mainly worked in wood and stone and enjoyed carving. She worked with these materials because she felt they held an affinity with nature. The artwork shows Hepworth's concentration on achieving perfect form in the sculpture. *Pelagos* is based on natural forms such as shells, the rock formations and caves around Hepworth's home in St Ives, on the coast of Cornwall. Hepworth was inspired by the view of St Ives Bay from her home. The viewer can see how the delicate carving of the interior of the circular form resembles the fine delicate material of the inner spiral of a shell. The grain of the wood on the exterior of the form resembles rock formations. Hepworth has painted the interior of the sculpture white to

provide contrast and highlight the different surfaces of the form. Hepworth has used the fine lines of the strings to link the inner space of the hole with the exterior of the form.

Her husband Nicholson, Henry Moore and Naum Gabo, also influenced Hepworth's use of materials and the simple forms of her work. The artists all worked in a group and were influenced by each other's ideas and techniques. The group of artists was inspired by pure colour and form and the use of materials to create artworks that were deemed as **modernist**. At the time, Nicholson was developing many works using **relief carving**, which also influenced the carving style of Hepworth. Hepworth began to use colour in her works as she was inspired by the colour theories of Adrian Stokes who wrote in his book *Colour and Form* in 1937 that '**colour is the ideal medium for the carving conception**' and that colour in the interior form of a sculpture gave the work '**its inner life**'. The contrast in colour with white in Hepworth's works from the 1930s also influenced the contrasting colours in the works of Piet Mondrian.

Essentially, Hepworth's works were strongly related to the balance of the elements. Hepworth was developing the relationship between mass and space in sculpture. '**I believe that the understanding of the material and the form must be in perfect equilibrium.**' Therefore, she considered the use of the materials and the manner in which she carved or painted them in order to achieve perfect balance.



<http://www.barbarahepworth.org.uk/sculptures>

ACTIVITY 8.17

Using the Formal Framework and the information that you have read above, analyse *Sculpture with Colour (Red & Deep Blue)* 1940, available at the website listed above. Compare this with the analysis of *Pelagos* and draw similarities between the two artworks.



Personal Framework

Hepworth's abstract forms were closely related to her emotions and the events in her personal life. She deliberately chose certain materials to reflect her inner spirit and the forms replicated that relationship between the inner and outer being. '**Stone forms and the love of them and emotion can only be expressed in abstract form.**'

As she spent most of her life on the Cornish coast, Hepworth's sculptures are reflective of her life spent in this environment. The sculptures reflect the natural environment of the area and often involve sweeping curves such as waves. *Pelagos* (meaning 'sea' in Greek) was inspired by a view of the bay at St Ives in Cornwall, where the two arms of land enfold the sea on either side. The hollowed-out form evokes a shell, a wave or the roll of a hill. Hepworth wanted the taut strings to express '**the tension I felt between myself and the sea, the wind or the hills**'. Hepworth's married life in Cornwall was often filled with frustrations and the works can also reflect this tension. She wanted to work as an artist but her life was often filled with domestic duties as a wife and mother.

modernist: an art style that uses the simple elements of art to represent ideas

relief carving: a process in sculpture where a block of stone or wood is carved; relief carvings are usually created on the sides of buildings, particularly in ancient and classical cultures



Cultural



Weblink

View *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red)* at

<http://www.barbarahepworth.org.uk/sculptures>.

maquettes:

a small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

terracotta reliefs:

terracotta is a red clay that is soft and easy to carve; many medieval villages in Britain carved decorations, known as reliefs, on the outside of their buildings out of terracotta



Contemporary

ACTIVITY 8.19

Investigate the symbolism behind Hepworth's work. What aspects of the work express her femininity? Consider the subject matter of the work, the techniques that Hepworth has used and her use of the design elements and principles.

The processes Hepworth used in making works, such as *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue and Red)*, was reflective of her life in St Ives. She was living in the area during World War II when materials and equipment were hard to obtain. Hence, this was another reason Hepworth made so many smaller *maquettes* of the larger work. She may have used plaster because of its economy and availability.

Cultural Framework

Barbara Hepworth's work is representative of British Sculpture at the time. There were strong historical influences in her work. She had travelled and was interested in the representation of Greek mythology in her work. Many of her works are given titles in Greek. She was inspired by the natural forces of wind, water and earth, which are often symbolised in Greek myths. Hepworth had also seen Anglo-Norman villages unearthed by the bombings in wartime Britain. She was impressed with the strong red colour of the *terracotta reliefs* that had been unearthed and tried to replicate the red interior of these sculptures in her own work.

Hepworth had an interest in the links between science and art. She tried to replicate natural forms in her work and used ideas that were based on mathematical theory and physics when she was carving her sculptures.

ACTIVITY 8.18

Compare an artwork such as *Pelagos* or *Sculpture with Colour (Deep Blue & Red)* with other sculptures created at the time by Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo. Focus on the Personal Framework in your analysis.

Contemporary Framework

Although Barbara Hepworth's works are fine examples of modernism, they can be interpreted from a postmodern perspective. Hepworth was a woman who was one of the most significant sculptors in Britain during the nineteenth century. She stands alone in a group of predominantly male artists. Although her techniques were inspired by her male contemporaries, Hepworth's expression of emotion in her work and her use of natural materials were feminine. The contrasts of surfaces of her sculptures and the delicate circular forms were representative of her intuitive treatment of materials.

References

Forster A. 2004, *Tate Women Artists*, Tate Publishing, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.barbarahepworth.org.uk/

www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ArtistWorks?cgroupid=99999961&artistid=1274

Roni Horn

Roni Horn, an American artist, was born in 1955. Horn's body of work is incredibly varied. Not only does she work with materials and three-dimensional works but she also works with drawings and photography to create **installations**.

Formal Framework

The most striking aspect of Roni Horn's sculptural works is the simple aesthetic of the pieces. *Gold Field* is a square of pure gold that lies on the floor of the gallery space. The striking texture and colour of the work draws the attention of the viewer to the simplicity of the piece. The weight of the material gives the impression that the work could blow away in a gentle breeze. The quality of the material of the artwork and its colour contrasts with the rough texture of the gallery floor. *'I am moved by the physical reality of the stuff'* says Horn. Therefore, she is trying to present the material in its purest form, as an expression of her emotions.

Untitled (Aretha) is a glass block made of **highly refined** optical glass that has been made by a German lens maker. The slightly recessed surfaces of the block leave an impression of the mould. The colour and texture of the work again draws the attention of the viewer to contemplate the simplistic form. In this work, the **translucent** quality of the colour and surface of the glass contrast. In turn, they also contrast with the colour and light of the gallery space.

Light is an important aspect of Horn's work. Horn intends her works to be lit by pure daylight and the play of light on the surface of the artwork heightens the **aesthetic** qualities of the pieces. Both these artworks have been created by Horn for the context of the gallery space. The aesthetic interpretations of the works are dependent on the gallery site in which they are located. Hence, space is an important consideration for Horn. She carefully considers the placement of the work within the gallery environment.

The works are **minimalist** in style. Horn would carefully consider the scale of the work in respect to the space in which it is placed. The size of the work would make an impact on the surface qualities and the colour of the work. Horn designed the sculptures so that the viewer can walk around and look at the work from all aspects. Horn also believes that this movement by the viewer contributes to the meaning of the work.

Horn uses metals and glass that are molten and slowly solidify to create a **paradox** in her work. The sculptures appear if they are liquid but, in fact, are strong and sturdy, although they give the impression of delicacy and translucency.

installations: artworks designed for gallery spaces or other environments for a specific period of time; these artworks are designed to be walked through or around, so the viewer becomes immersed in the experience of the work



Find *Gold Field* at www.guggenheim.org/new-york

highly refined: highly polished, highly developed



translucent: a material that allows limited light to pass through it; translucent sculptures appear to shine

ACTIVITY 8.20

Horn's works are described as minimalist. Compare her work to other minimalist artists through Formal Framework. Artists to study include Donald Judd, Richard Serra and Carl Andre.

aesthetic: the perception or nature of beauty with respect to the visual aspects of art

minimalist: an artwork that uses the smallest range of art elements and materials possible

paradox: a contrast created in artwork by using materials to convey opposing ideas

ACTIVITY 8.21

How do you feel viewing Horn's works? What atmosphere does the work create in the gallery space?

modernist: an art style that uses simple elements of art to represent ideas



Figure 8.11 Roni Horn, *Untitled (Aretha)*, 2002–04, optical glass, 33 x 76 x 76cm. The Museum of Modern Art of New York



Personal Framework

Horn grew up in the suburbs of New York. Her father was a pawnbroker and therefore a link can be identified with the use of precious metals and glass in her work. Horn has created artworks that are based around the aesthetic qualities of the materials. The works are **modernist** in style as Horn has created them to be appreciated for their pure form.

Horn's works are to be interpreted by an individual from their personal point of view.

Horn hopes that her works will move the viewer to a 'higher plane'. It is as though she has created these works to escape the conditions that she grew up in, in Harlem, New York.

'She is waiting for the right viewer willing and needing to be moved to a place of imagination'.

– Felix Gonzales Torres

Cultural Framework

Horn has deliberately created her works to strip all cultural understanding away from the viewing of an artwork and for the viewer to view the object as it is. She appears to be weighed down by the social and economic atmosphere of the world and the purity of colour and form of her work removes the viewer from these burdens.



Contemporary Framework

As Roni Horn's artworks are installations, they immediately fall into the postmodern perspective. The conceptual nature of the artworks; where the viewer is left to interpret the meaning of the work, is also a postmodern concept. Horn bases her works on the reaction of the viewer and the relationship of the individual viewpoint to her work; hence, the nature of individual interpretation is increased.

As minimalist artworks, *Gold Field* and *Untitled (Aretha)* have been created as artforms as their own reality. They are not representative of anything else. Horn's use of industrial materials allows her to explore the properties of those materials. Horn states that her works are aesthetically a high form of beauty showing truth, order, simplicity and harmony.

In *Untitled (Aretha)* Horn has named the sculpture after the African American soul singer Aretha Franklin. The colour of the sculpture alludes to the rich quality of Franklin's voice. Horn feels that the light and rich colour gives **tangible form** of the words of Franklin's lyrics. This work is similar to Horn's earlier works in the 1980s, which were based on poetry. Horn used materials to give visual form to the words.

tangible form: providing a visual symbol of an idea, words or lyrics; the artist creates this form by using materials and techniques that they feel represents the idea

ACTIVITY 8.22

Horn's earlier works that relate to language and text are also a form of Postmodernism. She is attempting to relate the visual form of art with the structure of poetry. Visit the website below and have a look at her collection. In *Thicket No.2* Horn uses a pair of polished aluminium rectangles and bright yellow plastic to represent the words of William Blake's poem 'Tyger, tyger burning bright'. Compare the use of materials in Horn's later works with these earlier works. What is the difference between the use of materials and formal elements to express ideas in both works? These works can be found at www.tate.org.uk.



Weblink

References

- Horn, R. 1990, *Roni Horn*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.
 Horn, R. 2002, *This is Me This is You*, Edition 7L, University of Michigan, Detroit.
 Neri, L. 2000, *Roni Horn*, Phaidon, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.xavierhufkens.com/artists/?artist_intro=Roni_Horn
www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/ronihorn



Student CD-ROM

A comparison of Barbara Hepworth, Roni Horn, Marcel Duchamp and Rachel Whiteread can be found on the Student CD-ROM.



Student CD-ROM

An exploration of the work of the artists Marcel Duchamp and Rachel Whiteread can be found on the Student CD-ROM.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEDIA

Man Ray

'I do not photograph nature, I photograph my fantasy'

Man Ray (1890–1976), American Surrealist and Dada artist

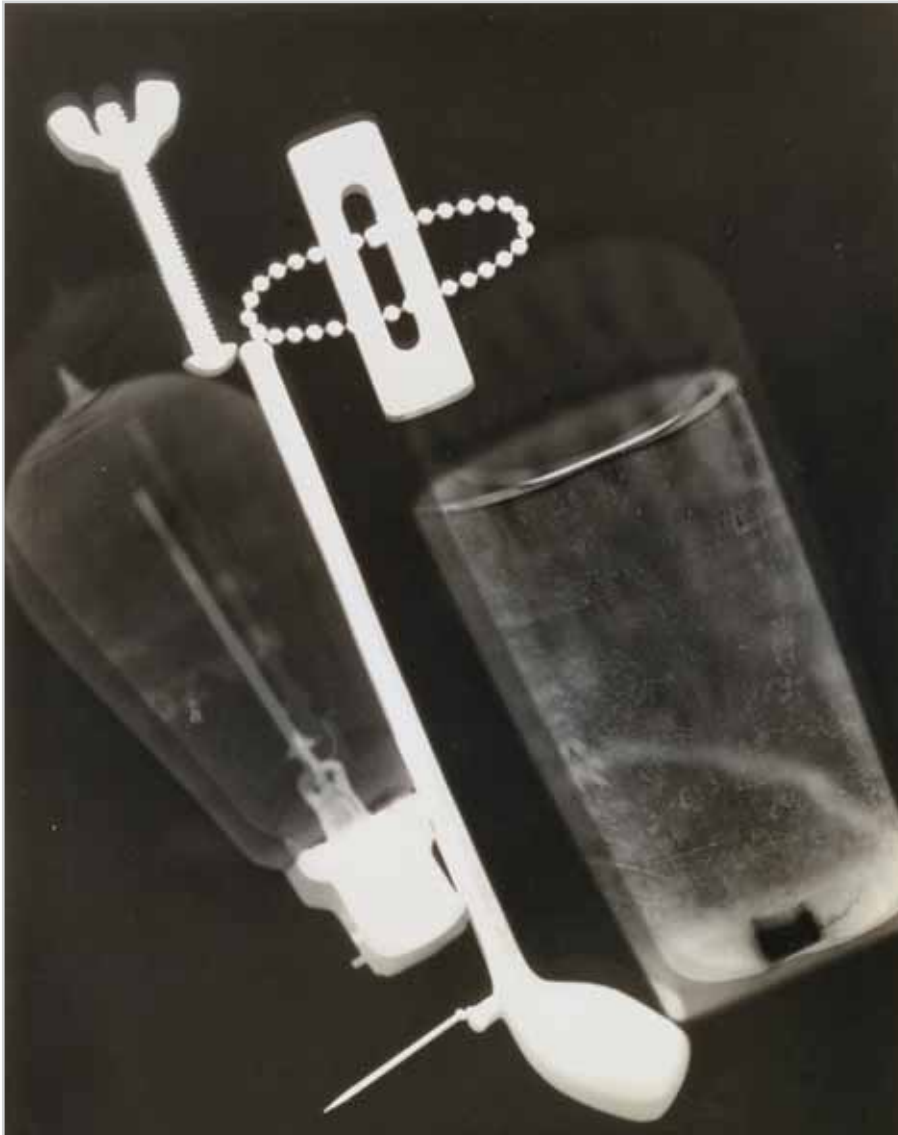


Figure 8.12
Man Ray, *Untitled Rayograph*, 1922



as this dismissed the traditional relationships that had been established in photography between the viewer, the sitter and the photographer. The effect of placing objects on the photographic paper was random and Man Ray felt that the process fitted well with the Surrealist notion of chance. For example in 'Spiral' Man Ray dropped a cut spiral from a piece of paper onto the photographic paper and then exposed the image, leaving an impression where the paper fell.

Man Ray (1890–1976) is known as one of the main members of both the Surrealist and Dada art movements. He considered himself primarily a painter but is best known for his *avant-garde* photography and his invention of the 'Rayograph' a photographic process that did not require the use of a camera. Man Ray was born in Philadelphia in the US but spent most of his life living in Paris where he built up his reputation as a fashion and portrait photographer.

Formal Framework

Man Ray discovered the photogram process, that he named *Rayograph*, after himself, when he placed objects on a piece of wet photographic paper and accidentally exposed it to light. The objects left an imprint on the paper and the shadowy forms emerged. This product is known as a photogram and many contemporary photographic artists have continued to use this process in their work. Man Ray liked the effects created by his Rayographs. He dismissed the use of the camera in his work

'A throw of the dice can never do away with chance.' He also liked the notion that the photographer could not determine the end result of the image and its effect.

Man Ray was influenced by the early artist Henry Fox Talbot who used dark backgrounds, hazy mid tones and silhouetted forms in his works, which were an earlier version of the photogram.

In Man Ray's Rayographs, the objects in the image take on **anamorphic** qualities. They become like living bodies that overlap and interact on the photographic paper. Man Ray created the images coming out of the black velvety tones of the background of the paper. The forms overlap, creating grey tones in the work, thus giving depth to the images.

Man Ray was perceived as a modernist. He was interested in the aesthetic qualities that his prints created and experimented with form and light. You can see in the image that Man Ray has frozen the movement by suspending his own hands and the spinning gyroscope on the photographic paper. Man Ray compared his freezing of movement in his images to that of the Cubists: Braque and Picasso. They were all trying to break down movement into block-like forms and mechanical parts. His images had a mysterious and disturbing atmosphere, as the viewer could not quite discern what the images were. The objects became isolated and remote.

ACTIVITY 8.23

- 1 Through his Rayographs, Man Ray created images with strong formal elements. Analyse one of the Rayographs using the Formal Framework. Discuss why Man Ray used formal elements to express his ideas.
- 2 Compare Man Ray's Rayographs to artworks by Picasso and Braque. Can you see the similarities in the works of the artists?

Man Ray was also known for his portraiture work. He favoured natural light in his images and informal poses. The images had clear contrasts due to the process of **solarisation**. Man Ray used in his work. The mid tones of the images were obliterated and the contrasts of light and dark were increased in the image. In this self-portrait, the viewer sees a cropped image of the photographer with his camera. The solarisation process has increased the contrast of tones in the image and given a black hazy outline to the profile of the artist.



Dada: an early twentieth century international movement that exploited accidental and incongruous effects in their works and that challenged established canons of art

avant-garde: art that is ahead of its time; innovative and art that explores new ideas and techniques

Rayograph: placing of objects on photographic paper and then exposing the paper to light; this process was discovered by Man Ray

anamorphic: animal like

solarisation: a process introduced by Man Ray whereby photographic paper is exposed to light during the developing process; as a result the image on the paper often has a silver 'halo' or ring of light

Figure 8.13
Man Ray, *Self-Portrait with Camera*, 1932



Weblink

A collection of Man Ray's work is available at <http://www.manray-photo.com>. Many of Man Ray's portraits can be viewed here.



Personal



Cultural

Personal and Cultural Frameworks

Man Ray's images were a personal exploration of his life. Many of his portraits included close friends and the artistic world of the Surrealists in Paris during the 1920s. Man Ray gave visual form to many poems of the Surrealists and, therefore, his images were based on imagination and dreams. The techniques of the Rayograph and solarisation gave the images a dreamlike quality through the use of hazy light and soft tones. However, simultaneously, Man Ray had an interest in science and many of his images included objects that were considered new technologies. Man Ray explored the compositional elements of photography and attempted to show a 'moment arrested in time'.

ACTIVITY 8.24

What atmosphere did Man Ray create with his solarised prints? Discuss how he used the design elements and principles to convey his ideas by analysing one print.

ACTIVITY 8.25

- 1 Research the ideas that the Surrealists were expressing in their works. Using an example of Man Ray's work, discuss how the image demonstrates those concepts.
- 2 Compare the work of Surrealists such as Salvador Dali, Joan Miro, Max Ernst and Giorgio De Chirico with Man Ray's images. How do the artists convey similar ideas in their works through symbolism and subject matter?



Contemporary

Contemporary Framework

Man Ray's experimentation with new photographic processes in the 1920s was perceived as contemporary. The fact that he was using objects such as light globes, or items that measure time such as a gyroscope, demonstrates that he was exploring the use of new technologies in his works. They reflected the events that were happening at that time. These were combined into an artistic process that was following the directions of the Surrealist movement. Man Ray had embraced the experimentation with his new artform to break from the influences that society could have over artists. He immersed himself in studies of the formal elements of art. He was challenging the traditional notions of art, particularly those expressed in photography and painting.

References

Man Ray 1979, *Man Ray (Aperture Masters of Photography)*, Aperture, New York.

Web resources



www.manraytrust.com

Weblink

Anne Ferran

Anne Ferran (born 1949) is an artist, academic and writer. She has been exhibiting in Australia since the mid 1980s. Ferran is best known for her installation work and research into the lives of women and children of Australia's colonial past.

Formal Framework

Anne Ferran uses contemporary **photomedia** to document and recall the lost past of many Australian women. She is best known for her photograms. She commenced working with **photograms** in 1997 during a residency at Rouse Hill near Windsor, NSW. The one family had continuously used the home, constructed in 1813 and now owned by the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales. Ferran documented the history of the family by using items of clothing in the collection of the house. She placed each of the items on the photographic paper, exposed it to light and then rolled up the paper to take to a darkroom to process.

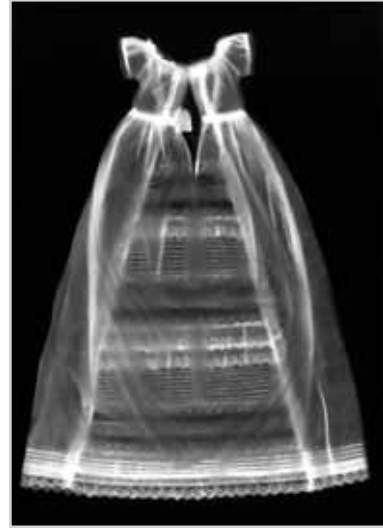


Figure 8.14 Anne Ferran, *Untitled (Christening Robe)*, 2001 silver gelatin photogram 127 x 90cm, © Anne Ferran, 2001/Licensed by VISCOPY 2009

'I wanted to use the resources of photography to probe some of the more obscure aspects of the house and to penetrate the air of self containment that always surrounds it'

Anne Ferran

The series was entitled 'Longer than Life' and consisted of a range of photograms and C Type photographs. *Untitled (Christening Gown)* is an image from this series. The gown appears to float on the black surface of the photogram. The gown appears as an x-ray image as the tones merge to create the form of the dress. The overlapping lines and shapes of the gown create the impression that movement has been frozen and also give depth to the image. The patterns of the lace of the gown have also left an impression that contributes to the composition of the image. The background and foreground of the image merge and create a powerfully physical image so it appears that the gown is a three dimensional object placed on the Photographic paper.

ACTIVITY 8.26

- 1 Analyse *Christening Robe* using the Formal Framework. Discuss Ferran's use of the design elements and principles to create atmosphere in her work. How does the use of the design elements and principles contribute to the meaning of the work? Use specific examples from *Christening Robe* to support your point of view.
- 2 Compare Ferran's work to that of Man Ray. What are the similarities in both artists' use of design elements and principles? What are the different ideas that both artists convey? Use examples from the work of both artists to support your point of view.



photomedia: the use of photography rather than traditional tools of art to create images

photogram: an image similar to that created by Man Ray, where objects are placed on photographic paper and exposed to light, leaving the silhouettes of the forms on the surface of the paper

Ferran developed her artistic practice at Rouse Hill from her original work in the series 'Secure the Shadow' (1995). She worked at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney. This area had been used as an immigration depot in 1817–1846 and then as an asylum for insane, destitute, aged and infirm females from 1846–1896. She took an interest in the archaeological material that she had researched in the official records and archaeological collection in the barracks. Ferran created a series of photographs of the soft caps that the women wore. In the images, the sculptural form of the cap hovers over the receding space of the background. In 'Soft Caps' the image is a form of portrait, however, there is no discernable subject, only a black void where the woman's face should be. Using the most delicate and minimal means *Soft Caps* evokes a physical presence, which brings these women to the viewer's attention. These images were further explored in the 'Longer than Life' series at Rouse Hill in 1997. In these images, the soft caps are photographed in situ and hence the physical presence of the women that wore them is further enhanced.

Web resources



Weblinks

Soft Caps, 1995, Silver Gelatin Photograph

www.hht.net.au/discover/highlights/art_at_the_properties/photographs_and_photograms/anne_ferran3

Rydalmer Vertical, 1997, from the Series 'Longer than Life', Type C Print

www.stillsgallery.com.au/artists/ferran/img/life_04.jpg

'I might start with a museum collection or an archive or a site, but it's less the history I'm interested in than the historical record and how it comes down to us. Especially I'm drawn to the gaps, for what else they reveal.'

Anne Ferran

Personal Framework

Ferran expresses her thoughts on these images as artist who is also a woman. Her process of documenting objects such as undergarments, clothing and christening gowns demonstrates her affinity with her subject matter. The process of photograms is very intimate and conducted in an enclosed space. Therefore, Ferran has created an indirect relationship with her subjects. The subjects are never seen in the photograms but their presence haunts them.

Ferran trained at Sydney College of the Arts in the early 1980s. This was a period of time in Australian Arts culture where photography began to be accepted more widely as a form of fine arts. Ferran has approached the documentation of history from an artistic perspective and has used her personal insight to create these works. The use of touch in the photogram process is also intensely personal.

Cultural Framework

Through her images, Ferran puts a collective focus on the Women's Movement of the 1970s. However, the form of her work follows contemporary practices. She explores the lives of female immigrants and residents of Australia over the last 150 years. This exploration highlights issues of self-awareness and identification. Ferran is indirectly



Personal

ACTIVITY 8.27

How do the design elements and principles in one of Ferran's works convey the following ideas?

- femininity
- intimacy
- absence.



Cultural

documenting the progression of women's identity throughout Australian history by exhibiting items of clothing and personal objects from different areas and cultural times. Yet a common thread links all the images: the treatment of women on the fringes of society; the unmarried mothers, the infirm, the old and the psychologically unstable. The influence of the visual code of film is shown in Ferran's work. They appear as though they are telling a story, a narrative, of the lives of these women, but we are unable to form a coherent story as we can only grasp fragments of their lives.

Contemporary Framework

Ferran's work explores the concept of women's identity; a social issue. Through installation work, the viewer is able to experience the conditions that many of these women may have felt. This is particularly evident in works such as 'Soft Caps' where the images of the clothing that the inmates of Hyde Park Barracks wore are exhibited in a room of the barracks. Ferran's use of the clothing and personal items of the women and children she has researched highlights the interest that the artist has in what little is left of the lives of these people and how difficult it is to establish a sense of their personalities and lives.

Ferran's photographs challenge the traditional notions of photography and the artist's relationship with their subject. Her method of creating the images 'in-situ' takes the photographic process to a new level where the image has not been created in a dark room or studio but constructed on the site where these women lived. The notion of **conceptual** and **site-specific** work is explored by Ferran in her images. The importance of the area where these works are created and exhibited becomes increasingly important in the interpretation of the images.

Other works

Anne Ferran: No Words for this, 1991, Canberra Contemporary Art Space

References

Brennan, A. and Ferran, A. 1995, *Secure the Shadow, Anne Ferran*, published by Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Glebe.

Ferran, A. 2002, 'Seeing Through Appearances', *Art & Australia*, Vol. 39, No.3, Paddington. Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 2008, 'Anne Ferran: The ground, the air', Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart

Web resources



Weblinks

www.stillsgallery.com.au/artists/ferran

www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/artistprofile.php?id=23

www.abc.net.au/arts/visual/stories/s586494.htm

www.usyd.edu.au/sca/profiles/Anne_Ferran.shtml

www.hht.net.au/discover/highlights/art_at_the_properties/photographs_and_photograms/anne_ferran3

www.hht.net.au/discover/highlights/highlights/art_at_the_properties/photographs_and_photograms/anne_ferran

www.hht.net.au/discover/highlights/highlights/art_at_the_properties/photographs_and_photograms/anne_ferran4

ACTIVITY 8.28

Find examples of symbols in Ferran's work that represent a psychological viewpoint. How is this abstract concept represented?



Contemporary

conceptual: concerned with ideas

site specific: an artwork created for a specific site; the artwork will relate to various aesthetic qualities of the site or the environment in/for which it is created

ACTIVITY 8.29

Compare Ferran's work with other site-specific works such as those by Jean Claude Christo and Robert Smithson. What are the physical differences in the works? Compare how the works convey the artists' ideas about the site where the artwork has been located and the ideas the artist is expressing using the site.



Student CD-ROM

A comparison of Man Ray and Anne Ferran can be found on the Student CD-ROM.

[9]

ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 3

Unit 3 – Outcome 1

Chapter overview

This chapter will prepare you to do the following for an example task for assessment of coursework:

- introduce you to a range of ways of approaching the task
- demonstrate how to write interpretations and analysis of the meanings and messages of artworks using the Formal, 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 use art language when analysing, interpreting, comparing and contrasting artworks.

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, that you may like to use for the assessment task. The artists have been linked by subject matter, artforms, 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

Refer to Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 for information on assessment for Units 1 and 2.

Refer to Chapter 8 for information on artists that you could use for your assessment task for Unit 3.

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 1970** and at least **one** artist who has produced work **since 1970**.
- Compare and contrast at least **two** artworks by *each artist*.
- Apply relevant aspects of **all** the Analytical Frameworks: Formal, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary, across each of the selected artworks to interpret the meanings and messages.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

There is a range of ways 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 the 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 carried out 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 and contrast them.

An annotated visual report

To complete this type of task you will provide a copy of the artwork and then indicate on the artwork, evidence of your analysis and interpretation. You may have to produce several copies of the artwork as they must be included in the report when you compare and contrast the artworks.

A multimedia presentation

You could present your information in a PowerPoint presentation, or using Microsoft Photo Story or Movie Maker. Instead of providing the information as a hard copy, you could analyse, interpret, compare and contrast your artworks on separate slides or frames with the information included as hyperlinks, overlays or using voice over.

Often the assessment tasks are structured in the same format as the questions that you will be asked in your examination at the end of Unit 4. Over the year, it is a good idea to have a look at past examination papers and see how you can organise your information to adequately answer those questions.

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 only required to write on 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
- techniques
- ideas
- style.

Draw up a table with these topics headings and put the information under them.

- Apply the Formal Framework to each artwork. Analyse the design elements and principles, techniques, style, metaphor and symbolism to each artwork you are discussing. You will be able to summarise this information in your assessment task. Ask yourself, 'How have the design elements and principles, techniques, style, metaphors and symbols contributed to the meanings and messages of the work?'
- Look for one or more aspects of the Cultural, Personal and Contemporary Frameworks in the artwork. 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 some points.
- Refer to the 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
 - techniques
 - 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 if you are using art language. Refer to Chapter 1 for references to art language. Look up the glossary to see if 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.

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 1

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority has a series of criteria that they provide 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 3 of the VCE Art Study Design.

Key knowledge

- the context of artworks produced before 1970 and artworks produced since 1970
- artworks selected from those produced before 1970 and since 1970.
- the Formal Framework, the Personal Framework, the Cultural Framework and the Contemporary Framework.
- a range of relevant resources available to support research of selected artists and artworks
- art language appropriate to the analysis, interpretation and comparison of artworks.

Name: _____

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the work demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 Interpretation of meanings and messages produced before and after 1970.							/5
Criterion 2 Application of analytical frameworks (Formal, Personal, Cultural, Contemporary)							/5
Criterion 3 Comparison of the similarities and differences in artworks made before and after 1970 using the analytical frameworks.							/5
Criterion 4 Substantiate interpretations of artworks with evidence taken from the artworks							/5
Criterion 5 Clear references to a range of resources.							/5
Criterion 6 Use of appropriate art language and vocabulary pertinent to the selected artists and artworks.							/5



This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSE

Task: 'Compare and contrast, through analysis and interpretation, the work of one artist who has produced work before 1970 with the work of one artist who has produced work since 1970. In your response you must refer to at least two artworks by each artist and aspects of the Analytical Frameworks: Formal, Cultural, Personal and Contemporary.'

Zoe Paule used the criteria sheet on page 177.

Assessment comment:

The student has introduced the two artists, Peter Booth and Albert Tucker, which she will discuss in the essay. She has highlighted themes the artists express through symbolism in their works and she has provided some contextual information about the inspiration and influences the artists gained to create their artworks. The student has linked the two artists by referring to similar background circumstances in their work.

The Australian Expressionist artist Albert Tucker was born in Australia in 1914 at the start of World War I. His father was a railway worker and Tucker was forced to trade school for more urban industrial surrounds at 14 to help support his family. These harsh experiences, and particularly the anger and depression of war, were significant factors that inspired his figures and landscapes. A second artist who draws on war and hardship for inspiration, is the Australian artist, Peter Booth. Born in Sheffield, England in 1940 at the start of World War II, Booth, like Tucker, experienced childhood in an industrial setting as his father was a steelworker. At the age of 18, Booth immigrated to Australia to work as a labourer and this, combined with his childhood surroundings, is reflected in his artworks. Both artists have used personal and historical symbolism in their works to express their ideas.

Tucker is described as an Expressionist artist but also a social realist, which suggests that while his artworks are very expressive or exaggerated he chooses to depict society or social aspects of humanity in his work. His work can therefore be interpreted from a cultural perspective. Tucker's artworks can be described as very perceptive of society, culture, history and humanity. However, they also exhibit a pessimistic attitude, which shows his critique and disgust of the environment around him. Tucker chooses males and females as his subject matter and blends them together to suggest sexual confusion. Booth, on the other hand, is a Surrealist painter, meaning his works are based on dreams or are drawn to appear as an alteration in humanity. He depicts mutilated or altered scenes like Tucker, which often incorporate horrifying figures. Painting 1978 depicts an industrial wasteland reflecting the impact of war. It resembles an Australian landscape with stereotypical sharp peaked mountains and a vast flowing



Figure 9.1 Peter Booth, *Painting 1978*, 1978 oil on canvas, 198.2 x 274.5cm, National Gallery Australia, Canberra, © Peter Booth, Licensed by VISCOPY, Sydney 2009

river. This could also be interpreted as a combination of his childhood surroundings in Sheffield and his life in Australia. Unlike Booth, Tucker's backgrounds and settings are not as distinctive as in *Paris Street* but the presence of mutilated and morphed characters are.

Tucker's desire to show social realism and post-war loss is evident in his artworks. In *Paris Street*, Tucker depicts what appears to be a man in a suit on the left hand side of the artwork. His face has a content expression but is very angular. It appears to be made up of blocks with only one eye visible and a patch of blue on one side of the figure's head. This well suited man is contrasted with a single face to the right of the image, which is a lighter colour than the other, and it has a hungry and fierce look in its eyes. Both figures share the same dark surroundings and there are what appear to be yellow lights in the background symbolising the *Paris Street*. These figures link back to Tucker's war and post-war depression experiences. Perhaps they are meant to reflect the inequality felt by society as well as the devastation felt by war.

While Tucker perhaps shows the impact war has on humanity, Booth also chooses to focus on the environmental impact on post-war destruction. In his artwork, *Painting 1978* Booth shows a landscape and figures heavily devastated by war. The colours are charcoal and grey, which are a reflection of the industrial surroundings of his early life. The background texture is shown in the sharp mountain range, which appears to be an explosion of light. The colour and light may be an example of what one experiences in nuclear or atomic war. It may represent the sound as the waves move along the ground towards the figure that is facing it. The colour red is also prominent and it is shown at the base of the mountain perhaps symbolising anger, frustration or determination. The mutilated figure to the left of the foreground is partially encapsulated by something resembling defeat, in contrast with the figure on the right who is closest to the river but also seems unaffected.

Both artists rely on colour and composition in their artworks; however, Tucker chooses to use shape and line more, while Booth uses texture and balance. In Tucker's

Assessment comment:

Zoe has referred to the Cultural and Personal Frameworks when referring to the symbolism in the work of Peter Booth & Albert Tucker by discussing to the influence of personal experiences in their work. Zoe also highlights that both artists are figurative painters, which is a point of comparison. Zoe also highlights the different styles of the artists suggesting that Tucker's work is an expression of social constructs whilst Booth is more of a Surrealist painter.

Assessment comment:

Zoe has used the Formal Framework to interpret the artworks and refers to the symbolic use of techniques and formal elements. Zoe uses art language, referring to the symbolism for example; 'the colour red is also prominent and is shown at the base of the mountain symbolising anger, frustration or determination'

Zoe also compares and contrasts the formal elements and techniques that both artists uses when they discuss how Tucker and Booth depict 'the impact war has on humanity'.

Zoe has used the Contemporary Framework discussing the issues in the artworks such as globalisation, environmental issues and the impact of war.

It is also important that Zoe has referred to examples from the artworks to support their interpretation.

Assessment comment:

The student continues to use the Formal Framework to draw comparisons between the artworks. They refer to both artists 'relying on colour and composition in their artworks'. However, they then contrast the works by referring to the varied used of design elements that the artists use. Booth uses 'texture and balance' and Tucker uses 'shape and line'.

Assessment comment:

The student discusses how the artists draw attention to symbolic aspects of their works. The student discusses how Tucker draws attention to the features of the figures in his work and Booth uses texture to highlight symbols in his work.



Figure 9.2 Albert Tucker, *Paris Street*, 1950, gouache, watercolour, brush and ink, 41.7 x 50cm, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Gift of Barbara Tucker 2005, © Barbara Tucker

work *Figures*, painted in 1954, he uses oil on composition board to express angular forms. The figures are painted over a dark background that changes from deep red to dark purple. This is broken up with a dark yellow shape towards the bottom. The faces of the figures are similar in style to the figures in *Paris Street* but their expressions appear more concerned or horrified. Their bodies are two-dimensional shapes and draw the attention to the focal point of their faces. The shapes represent street signs with arrows, oblongs and squares drawn on them to suggest that their environment is 'under construction'. The spiral of yellow in the background creates movement as though they are being 'moved along'.

Like Tucker, Booth uses colour and line in *Painting 1977* but there is a heavier focus on texture. Booth has used texture and colour in the artwork to create an industrial environment with war connotations. The use of colour in the black sky, is a bright orange sun, that links to the urban environment, which appears to be on fire, on the left-hand side of the work. Texture is also important as it helps to highlight and focus on the characters and other symbols. This can be shown on the right-hand side of the work where there is a plant whose stalk uses a variety of colours and textures to contrast with the bold orange of the sun. The use of these elements highlights the industrial scene in the work and linking to Booth's childhood. The sun and plant in colour offer hope, as does the bright light in the background.

Although Tucker and Booth lived at different times, they suffered the effects of war personally and saw the significant impact it can have on society and the environment. Both artists used similar materials and techniques but their subject matter was different; Tucker's works were more figurative whereas Booth's were based more on the landscape. However, they both expressed personal, cultural and historical features in their works.

Zoe Paule

Assessment comment:

The conclusion draws together both artists as a comparison discussing influences, techniques and materials. However, the contrast highlights the difference in styles and subject matter of both artists. The student also highlights the interpretative frameworks used by both artists.

Chapter overview

By the end of Unit 4, you will have gained experience in the interpretation and analysis of artworks using all four Analytical Frameworks. In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- identify and discuss different art ideas and issues
- identify, discuss and debate different points of view relating to art issues and artworks
- develop a personal point of view regarding issues about art and support it with evidence from a range of artworks and reference your point of view to the opinions of others
- refer to a range of artworks and commentaries to support your points of view
- interpret a range of artworks using the four Analytical Frameworks
- use appropriate art language and vocabulary in your discussion.

'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 (1958–1990), American artist

INTRODUCTION

In Units 1, 2 and 3, you were introduced to using the Analytical Frameworks as tools for interpreting and analysing the meanings and messages of artworks. The Analytical Frameworks help you understand the diverse interpretations that can be applied to an artwork. The Analytical Frameworks also help you to explore the ways in which ideas and issues can influence the making and interpretation of art.

In Unit 4, you will be investigating more about the issues and themes relating to art. In Chapter 8, you were introduced to a range of artists and their works and, through the Analytical Frameworks, you were able to investigate the various themes that artists express

ART ISSUES AND IDEAS

Artists often present issues and themes through their artworks, which affects the way people think. You have seen 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 a society, traditions or beliefs; providing a political viewpoint or representing people or individuals in society. On the other hand, artworks can also express ideas relating to the individual and their identity. Through portraits and artworks based on emotion and ideas, artists express their viewpoints on a range of issues and events throughout history and from different cultures. Many artists often choose to express their ideas using the formal elements and aesthetic qualities of artworks. These include artworks that are Modernist, Abstract or Conceptual.

The artwork below by New Zealand artist Colin McCahon, explores the issue of religion and faith. The artist created the work based on a chapter from the bible, but as native New Zealand Maori, 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.

As you are studying art and exploring artworks by contemporary artists, you will look, in particular, at artists and artworks that explore ideas and issues from current societies and cultures. You will be able to compare these with artworks from earlier periods and different cultures to investigate the ideas that the artists you choose are exploring. To start your investigation, you may want to highlight a series of issues that affect the world today including those that arise out of the following themes.

Figure 10.1
Colin McCahon, *Victory over Death 2*, 1970, synthetic polymer paint on unstretched canvas, 207.5 x 597.7cm, 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 man's misuse of it. They will often use the environment itself to create a **site specific** work or take natural objects to make their artwork.

site specific: an artwork created for a particular environment or site. The aesthetic features and meanings of the artwork relate to the environment for/in which it was created

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. Artists are often censored for the political statements they express through their art.

Refer to pages 88–99 for a range of images of War and Conflict

War and conflict

Artists often expose issues arising from war and conflict through their art. Their artworks can comment on the plight of refugees and the people from a war-torn country. Artists are often assigned to produce artworks or images that document battles and war scenes. The images can be controversial and provoke discourse. The images can be censored in exhibition because of the subject matter and emotions that the artwork can evoke.

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: www.gittoes.com.



Figure 10.2
Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)*, 1989, photographic silk screen/vinyl, 284.5 x 284.5cm, The Broad Art Foundation, Santa Monica, California © Barbara Kruger. Photo courtesy Mary Boone Gallery, NSW

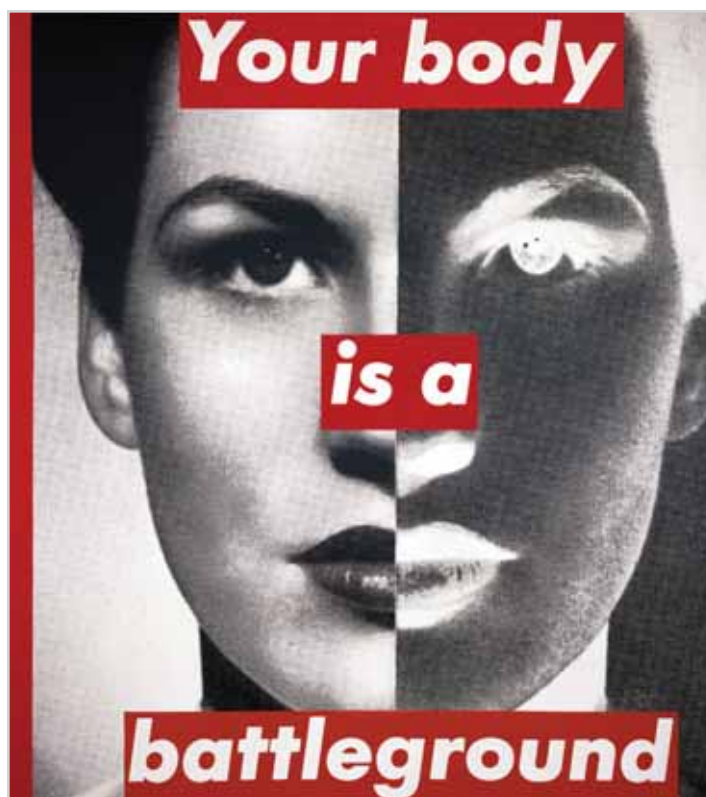
ACTIVITY 10.1

Investigate the artworks of photographers Damien Parer, Eddie Adams, Lyndal Brown and Charles Green. What issues have these photographers explored in their works? Discuss the controversial nature of their images through any commentaries on their works.

Gender

The role of women in art can provoke much discussion. Traditionally art was often a male-dominated field. With the rise of feminism in the 1970s, women began to express their rights through their art. The issue of 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.

This artwork by Barbara Kruger discusses the way in which women try to conform to the conventions of society and beauty.



ACTIVITY 10.2

Investigate the works of some 1970s artists, including the Guerrilla Girls, Jenny Watson, Vivienne Binns, Julie Rrap and Vicki Varvaressos. What are some of the issues of feminism the works of these artists provoke?

Refer to pages 112–117 for a range of images of The Nude

Censorship

Artworks often provoke controversy through 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 can often be censored on the grounds of religious and political beliefs.

The body

Artists have often used the body to challenge the values of society. The body has often been used to express ideas on beauty, race, gender, sexuality, censorship, morality and ethics through its representation. Over time and in different cultures, the nude has been expressed in various forms to explore many issues. Nudity in art is often controversial and the issue of morality arises from the display of the human form.

ACTIVITY 10.3

View a range of works from different cultures and periods of time and discuss the artist's presentation of the body. What is the artist's intention in symbolising the body in their work? How is the nude form exposed differently to the viewer in each artwork? Artworks to explore could be those by the Renaissance artists such as Botticelli and Rubens and contemporary examples by Bill Henson, Jenny Saville and Lucien Freud.



Figure 10.3
Julie Rrap, *Persona & Shadow*, 1984, cibachrome print approximately 194 x 105cm. Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn9 Gallery, Sydney

Moral rights, copyright and appropriation

Every artist has the right to own their creative ideas and the techniques or artforms that they produce. Often an artwork is so successful it may be reproduced in several forms or by other artists. An example of this is the values that some Asian cultures place on the skill of the artist who can copy the work of a great painter such as van Gogh. Often artists, particularly photographers, 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.

appropriation: the taking of objects from other works of art, or from life. The aim of the artist is to create a new meaning for the object. Appropriation belongs to the modernist tradition of questioning the nature of or definition of art itself

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.
- 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?

Collaboration

Artists often use the skills of others to create their artworks. This can often lead to issues of ownership of 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 artform is valued for its ideas and the choice of materials and forms used to express those ideas.

ACTIVITY 10.5

Find a conceptual or installation piece by one of the following artists: Cornelia Parker, Tacita Dean, Daniel Von Strummer or Nam June Paik. Discuss the artwork, the materials used and the ideas the artist has expressed. Evaluate the work of the artist in terms of ownership.

Animal rights

Animals have been a prominent subject matter in artworks throughout history. However, many contemporary artists use the rights of animals as a vehicle of expression. They will 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?

The art market – sale and resale of artworks

The art market is an area of art that is integral to the art industry. Artists make a living through commissions and through the sale of their work at exhibitions. Most contemporary artists are now represented by a commercial gallery who will take a percentage of the sale of each artwork by the artist. The values of artworks can vary enormously depending on the age of the artist or the interest in their work.

Art auction houses resell artworks from art collectors to other art collectors. With the sale of these artworks, a percentage of the sale goes to the artist who originally created the work, a percentage to the auction house and a percentage to the owner of the work.

Therefore, the auction houses and commercial galleries can be integral in fixing the values of the work of an artist. This often affects the production of an artist's work and their livelihood. Indigenous artworks are an example of how the art market has affected the production of artworks by Indigenous artists and the monetary value that is passed on to the artist.

ACTIVITY 10.6

- 1 Visit a commercial gallery and a public art gallery. What are the different purposes of these galleries? How do the different galleries affect the value of artworks? Consider artforms, techniques and materials used by the artists. Select an exhibition from a public art gallery and a commercial gallery. What are the different purposes of these exhibitions?
- 2 View the website of an auction house such as Sotheby's, Christie's or Deutscher-Menzies. What artworks does the auction house sell? Analyse the work of several artists on the site and discuss the values that could be placed on the works. What would justify the value placed on the work.

Validity of artforms

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 artform. Many cities across the world have public art programs, which provide artists 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 in a gallery. However, often the artist has been commissioned by a city council or municipality to create an artwork for a specific space. The artwork often provokes discussion and will draw the attention of the public to an area that was previously ignored.

Figure 10.4
Ghost Patrol, *Turtle
Wolves Mural*,
c. 2006, Fitzroy,
Melbourne



ACTIVITY 10.7

Research an area of public art or street art such as the City lights project in Degraives St, Melbourne. If you cannot find any Street or public art in your local area, find an example on www.flickr.com. Analyse the artworks and write an essay justifying the purpose of Street Art, using specific examples and any commentaries you can find from the artworks that you see.



Weblink

RESEARCH AND STUDY FOR UNIT 4

The focus of this unit of study is the discussion and debate of art issues. To commence your study you will have to pick an art issue and then find a series of artworks that relate to that issue to research, analyse and interpret.

In your discussion, you must refer to a range of resources and **commentaries** to examine and debate opinions and arguments about the issue and the artworks that you are researching. Commentaries are explained in detail in Chapter 1. In your study for this outcome you should be investigating commentaries that discuss or debate the following:

- How this issue has been explored in art.
- Commentaries on the life of the artist/s you have selected.
- Commentaries about the art movement to which the artist/s belonged.
- Commentaries about the artworks of the artist/s – these can be related to the ideas the artists expresses in individual works, the techniques they use or the subjects they depict.
- Commentaries about the art processes the artist/s uses in making their work.

These commentaries can come from a range of sources: from exhibition catalogues through to lectures and curatorial notes about the artist/s and their work/s. It is a good idea to explore a range of resources that will support your argument and not just stick to the one source. A list of commentary sources is outlined in Chapter 1.

To begin your study you must do the following:

- select **one** art issue
- select at **least one** artist that you can use to support your discussion of the art issue
- select **two artworks** by the artist to support your discussion
- select a **range of diverse** viewpoints on the art issue as seen in commentaries.

You will then be able to discuss, debate and compare the viewpoints regarding the issue and develop a personal point of view. Your personal point of view will be established by referring to the opinions of others you have read about and the range of artworks you have studied. Tied in with all of this is your use of the Analytical Frameworks when you interpret the artworks you have selected. You must apply relevant aspects of each of the analytical frameworks to support your discussions. In this chapter, a range of art issues will be presented with examples of commentaries, artworks and interpretations that you can use to develop your own opinion about the issue.

ACTIVITY 10.8

Select one of the topics outlined previously in this chapter. Select two artworks that are related to each topic. Find at least three commentaries on the artworks. The commentaries can include any discussion about the ideas behind the artwork, the materials and techniques the artist has used or anything by a critic or curator about the artwork. How do the commentaries you have selected relate to the issue?

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

Issues

How do artists explore issues concerning the environment in their works?

How do conceptual and contemporary artists address the issue of the environment in their work? These works are often termed as 'ephemeral'. What does this mean and how does it relate to environmental art?

What are 'site specific' artworks and how do they relate to the environment?

Artists often explore themes connected with the environment in their art. These themes are often related to social, psychological and political ideas expressed by the artists. The materials that the artist uses in the work often come directly from the environment and are used in the place of, or often combined with, traditional materials.

As environmental issues are often contemporary and are concerned with the relationship between human beings and nature, these works are often installations. They are often conceptual and express the artist's personal thoughts on the environment.

Environmental artworks have often been traditionally defined as **land art** or **earth art**, which is defined as 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.

There is a range of artists presented here that work primarily within the environment and express their views on issues concerned with it.

land or earth art: an art movement that emerged in the US in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which landscape and the work of art are inextricably linked.

'As I looked at the site, it reverberated out to the horizons only to suggest an immobile cyclone while flickering light made the entire landscape appear to quake. A dormant earthquake spread into the fluttering stillness, into a spinning sensation without movement. The site was a rotary that enclosed itself in an immense roundness. From that gyrating space emerged the possibility of the Spiral Jetty.'

Robert Smithson (1938–1973), American artist

Robert Smithson

Robert Smithson (1938–1973) created the first of what was termed as his 'Earthworks' in 1970. Smithson attempted to create a sculpture from materials found at the location of the work. At the Great Salt Lake in Utah, Smithson deposited mud and rocks with the aid of a bulldozer. He then created a salt crust on the spiral out of salt crystals. The work is viewed most effectively from an **aerial perspective**; however, Smithson designed the work so the viewer could walk on the piece as though they were walking above the surface of the water. The red oxide of the lake contrasts with the white crust created by the salt crystals. Over time, the level of the water rose over the work but, due to extended periods of drought, the work was revealed again in 1990.

In creating this site-specific work, Smithson was attempting to freeze a moment in time. He has captured, through naturally solid materials, the notion of a cyclone or movement through the air. Smithson was also interested in scientific theory, which has been represented in this work.

aerial perspective: viewpoint of an artwork from directly overhead; usually works created in aerial perspective appear flat and two dimensional



Points of discussion

- What is art?
If this artwork has been made out of rocks and mud, how is it deemed as art? Discuss the processes Smithson used to create the work.
- 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 Smithson select that particular site and what is its significance to the work?
- Environmental art** – what environmental issues is Smithson exploring in this work?
- Artistic integrity** – Smithson would have used a team of people to assist him to construct *Spiral Jetty*. Who, therefore, is responsible for creating the work, the artist or the workers?

Figure 10.5
Robert Smithson,
Spiral Jetty, 1970
precipitated salt
crystals, rocks, water,
coil, 45.72 x 4.58m,
Rozel Point, Great Salt
Lake, Utah, United
States. Photograph
courtesy DIA Center
for the Arts, New York

'Spiral Jetty is an inaccessible artwork only viewed from the air.'

Eugenie Tsai, *Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art Catalogue*

Smithson deliberately attempted to create his works away from the traditional space of the gallery. He developed 'the site' of his works as the artwork. In doing this, he was making a statement about how the formal construct of the gallery can place value on an artwork.

'Smithson's work can only be appreciated in documentation and photos but it makes it no less remote than the Parthenon in Athens or the Great Wall of China.'

Eugenie Tsai, *Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art Catalogue*

Smithson was also interested in archaeological sites and spiritualism. He attempted to create a structure that was similar to the ancient man-made structures related to religion, art and literature. Some of these ancient structures were constructed in remote areas and they have an importance in the timeline of art and history.

'The trip to see the artwork brings people to a place they would not normally experience. The 'Jetty' is a vortex that draws in everything in the landscape around it.'

Nancy Holt, wife of Robert Smithson

Smithson intended the viewer to go to the site to view the work. He felt that by placing it in a particular site the viewer would be drawn to the environmental conditions of that site and, therefore, they would become more aware of the plight of the land and drought conditions. Smithson also believed in the spiritual qualities of the land and that the spiral was like a cosmic force or a metaphor for a cyclone that would draw people in.

'Instead of putting a work of art on some land, some land is put into the work of art. Smithson moved beyond the notion of sculpture and beyond the idea of the discrete consolidated object.'

Anne Rorimor, Dia Foundation

Smithson began working with natural materials in the 1950s. His work progressed from Minimalist sculptures to creating simple geometric forms in the gallery space using earth and glass. These works were entitled 'Nonsites', meaning that Smithson had removed the earth or debris from a particular site and created a sense of that site in the gallery space. The works were based on crystalline and geological structures.

Points of discussion

- **Exhibition and display of artworks** – by removing his artworks from the gallery space, Smithson was exploring the values exhibiting art in a gallery places on the work. How does Smithson's selection of an outdoor site place a different value on the work?
- What was Smithson stating about the importance of cultural values when viewing an artwork? Refer to the commentary by Nancy Holt and examples of Smithson's works to support your point of view.



Weblink

Often Smithson would present the works with maps indicating the original location of the materials. As Smithson was interested in language he would also provide a typed text offering a commentary on the work with suggestions on how to view it. Hence, the *Map of Broken Glass* (www.diabeacon.org/exhibitions/main/97) is a work of broken glass shards from a demolished building site. The reflective nature of the glass presented in piles gives the work a shimmering effect and enhances the formal qualities of the work.

Smithson would present his 'Nonsites' with mirrors so that the sculptures would reflect the emotion that the viewer was expressing. Smithson deliberately chose his subject matter to be non-emotive so all personal interpretation or expression in the work was divulged by the viewer.

Smithson's works reflect the natural forces that exist in the world. By creating works such as *Spiral Jetty* and his Nonsites, he was suggesting that all cosmic systems are governed by geological time and natural energy.

Points of discussion

- **Conceptual art** – discuss Smithson's processes and use of materials to create his 'Nonsites'. What constitutes them to be works of art?
- **Environmental issues** – what was Smithson stating about the environment in his choice of materials for a work such as *Map of Broken Glass*?



ACTIVITY 10.9

- 1 Analyse Smithson's works using the Formal 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 *Spiral Jetty* with Christo's *Wrapped Coastline* (see Student CD-ROM). Consider the scale of the works in relation to the ideas both artists were exploring. Compare the processes both artists use to construct their work.
- 3 Analyse Smithson's work using the Personal Framework. What personal involvement and ideas did Smithson have in relationship to the work?

References

Tsai, E. 2004, *Robert Smithson*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.robertsmithson.com

www.nytimes.com/2005/06/24/arts/design/24kimm.html

www.diabeacon.org/exhibitions/main/97

www.spiraljetty.org

www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/

www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/mar/11/art.features3

www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3663966/He%27s-got-the-whole-world-in-his-hands.html

www.metmuseum.org/special/Goldsworthy/roof2004_more.htm#works

www.sculpture.org.uk/artists/AndyGoldsworthy



Student CD-ROM

An exploration of the works of the following environmental artists can be found on the Student CD-ROM:

- Christo and Jean Claude
- Andy Goldsworthy
- Gerada Steiner and Jörg Lenzlinger.

PERFORMANCE ART

Issues

Is performance art a valid artform?

Performance Artists use their body in their artworks to 'perform' often complex issues surrounding society, culture, beliefs, values and politics. How are these ideas expressed using the body?

Performance art is often performed outside the gallery space. What is the symbolism of the gallery or environment in a performance?

What is the role of the viewer in Performance Art?

Performance art is often termed as temporary or ephemeral. What is left of the artwork once it is performed and what is the value of the documentation of the performance as the artwork?

action painting: a painting style developed by Jackson Pollock where the artist would move or 'dance' to apply the paint to the canvas

Performance artists express their ideas through body expression or 'performance'. The work usually takes place in a gallery, installation or environment with sound, light, video projections and audience participation. This artform began in the 1950s as events called 'Happenings'. One of the most influential artists of Performance Art was Jackson Pollock with his **action paintings**. The artform also had its origins in the works of the Dada and Surrealist artists. Performance artists powerfully express political and social issues and the human condition. Because the artist is directly involved, the work is often an intensely personal expression of their ideas. Hence, there are many issues that arise from the works of such artists; the main issue is that Performance Art is accepted as a valid artform.

Although Performance Art developed in Europe and America in the 1950s and 1960s, such artworks were not in existence in Australia until the 1970s.

Jill Orr

'Jill Orr is a fiery artist and her work expresses the beauty, power and spiritual depth that is her trade mark.'

Helen Vivian

Jill Orr is one of Australia's most well known performance artists. She has been producing events centred on the use of her own body since the mid 1970s. Her works are often set in the landscape and explore environmental and ecological issues. Orr's work also addresses gender issues and the position of the female subject in art and gender identity. Orr believes her performances are inspired by her childhood and the Australian connection with the land.

'Ritual practices were evoked in all of Jill Orr's works. The use of fire, earth and water juxtaposed with images of sacrifice and endurance, permeated the performances'

Helen Vivian



Figure 10.6 Jill Orr, *Bleeding Trees*, Performance Biennale of Sydney, 1979 © Jill Orr, photograph courtesy Elizabeth Campbell

Her strong identification with nature was conveyed in the 1979 performance 'Bleeding Trees'. Orr carried out a series of performances that showed her body strung-up, crucifixion style, as a **metaphor** for the devastation of the natural environment. She also appears naked flung backwards with her head buried in the soil. The strong physicality of Orr's body used in these images has a strong psychological effect on the viewer. It is as though Orr's body has become as one with the earth in which it was created.

Points of discussion

- Discuss Orr's work as a performance artist. How does she use her body to show the environment?
- Photographic works are the only documentary evidence of Orr's performances. How can these be evaluated as artworks? What is their significance in the interpretation of the work?
- In what aspects of her work does Orr explore her gender? How is her body used a symbol of gender?

metaphor: one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities



ACTIVITY 10.10

Evaluate Orr's performance of bleeding trees using the Formal Framework. How does her use of the design elements and principles contribute to the symbolism in the work?

'Orr uses her body as a psycho-social boundary line between the body and the audience'

Anne Marsh

Orr comments on the mythologies of women, sometimes reinscribing them and at other times terrorizing them'

Helen Vivian

This work also saw Orr using her body to reinscribe the purpose of the naked female form in art. The woman is seen as a victim with her body contorted and tortured. The final image of her head buried with her mouth open to the viewer appears as though she is offering herself up for sacrifice.

'My performances elicit a new, more raw and sensuous approach to the condition and experience of the environment'

Jill Orr



Figure 10.7 Jill Orr, *Ash*, Performance, © Jill Orr, Photograph by Joanne Haslam and Bruce Parker

Orr believes that she should have a direct relationship with the site she uses and that the site becomes an integral part of the performance. In her 2002 performance *Ash*, Orr's body becomes a metaphor for the land. *'Both land and the body are a canvas on which our lives are written, marks made and experience inscribed.'* In the performance, Orr's body lies on a coffin-like slab of hewn wood. The floor is strewn with dried forest litter from the bush around the house Orr occupied during her residency with Parks Victoria. There is a soundtrack of bush sounds playing. Orr's body is chalked with ashes and is covered with writing in charcoal describing wars, devastation, personal emotions and stories surrounding the plight of refugees seeking asylum on Australian shores. Accompanying the performance is a series of paintings that Orr created from pigments mixed from the ash of native timbers burnt in an open fire. They are loose gestural marks on thick textured surfaces.

The work grapples with harmony and balance, and the discord between human spirit, art and nature. The performance draws the audience into a meditation on the human and environmental tragedies we are experiencing in this land. Orr has created hope out of what seems to be despair: that through suffering we can achieve our finest moments. She uses the symbolism of fire as cleansing and ash as rebirth.

Using the stories of refugees and media references to suicide bombings and civilian losses through the Iraq war, Orr is performing two separate realities that are occurring at the same time in different places. One is her idyllic experience of living in peaceful bushland, while the other is the impact of the Iraq war on both the refugees escaping the war and the media reports of suicide bombings. Orr's work chronicles the devastation caused through war on both the people and the land.

Points of discussion

- What is the significance of the site in a performance work such as *Ash*? How does this contribute to the symbolism of the work?
- Orr's work is associated with myth and ritual in the Australian environment. Discuss how this is symbolised in Orr's work.



'When an audience receives those images it is felt in many different ways depending on what they are dealing with'

Jill Orr

Orr draws on the experience of the audience in her latest work *The Crossing*. Performed on Lock Island in Mildura, the work draws on local stories about the island. The island is the traditional homeland of the Latche Latche and the Barkindji tribes, among others. In the work, Jill Orr collaborated with the Victorian College of Koori Education, the NSW TAFE Koori unit, and six Melbourne-based dancers and a musician and didgeridoo player. Orr wrote and directed the live event and it is now viewed as a six screen video installation and on DVD.

The stories are told by the dancers; who designed and told them from their own perspectives. For example, the Lachte Lachte danceman invented his character that he called 'the black shadow' as a counterpart to the white character of the missionary. The missionary was a character that did have contact with the Indigenous population in the area, but this relationship was often fraught with difficulties.

Orr has directed the characters in the work to combine many ideas, including the experience of women in Australian colonial history through her characters. They have taken the concept of Aboriginal myths and legends and tied it in with rituals concerning the land, such as earth, fire and water. The dancers have formed a spiritual connection with the site, which is also important in Indigenous culture. At the same time, they are mourning the impoverishment of our current political and social ethos. The work is also about the overlapping and co-existing relationships with the land and with each other. It discusses the impact of history on the present and on cross cultural and environmental interactions. It is a work of reconciliation that enables respect of differences and of place as a possible and necessary way forward. Orr outlines this in discussing the work.

'My work is taken from the standpoint of the individual: an organism of emotion.'

Jill Orr

'Performance, at its most powerful – although frightening and confronting – is articulating those things which are denied'

Jill Orr

As each performer has developed their individual style they have worked collaboratively with Orr to produce the performance. Each performer has their own dance style and traditions and therefore the method of working with difference in a singular work is exemplified. Each dancer is an individual with different emotions that are combined to express a singular emotion.

ACTIVITY 10.11

Investigate Orr's work *Ash* using the Personal Framework. Compare the message Orr is trying to convey with your personal interpretation of the work.

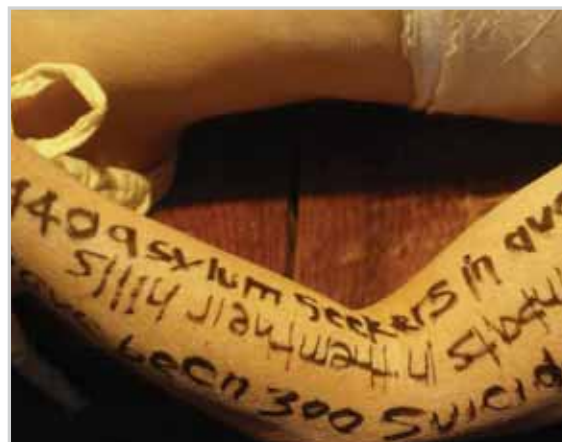


Figure 10.8

Jill Orr, *Ash*, Melbourne, 2002 ©
Jill Orr, photograph by Joanne Haslam and Bruce Parker

Points of discussion

- What is the involvement of the viewer in Orr's performance *The Crossing*? As a performance work, how does the interaction of the viewer contribute to the work? Compare this work to others by Orr.
- *The Crossing* features many of the myths and stories of Australian Indigenous culture. How has Orr incorporated Indigenous culture into the work? List the Indigenous symbolism you can find and relate it to the meanings that Orr is trying to convey. Does the work re-tell only indigenous myths or does it also represent non-Indigenous history? How are the voices of indigenous people presented within the other stories to make a complete work?
- Comments have been made that Orr's work is postmodern. What aspects of Postmodernism do you see in her work? How is the meaning of the work interpreted using postmodernism?

ACTIVITY 10.12

- 1 Compare the various aspects of Orr's works. How are the three artworks presented linked? Consider the ideas that Orr is expressing and the symbolism that she has used.
- 2 How does Orr's work differ to that of Robert Smithson? Both artists work with site-specific works in the environment but present different issues concerning its devastation. Discuss their processes and use of materials in their works.



Figure 10.9 Jill Orr, *The Crossing* 2007; *Cleansing* (left), *White Tree Spirit* (centre), *Lost Malaysian* (right), performances featuring Peter Paterson, Latche Latche Dance Man, Emma Straps, Tony Yap © Jill Orr. Photograph by Naomi Herzog and Malcolm Cross

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- Kirby, S. 1992, *Sightlines: Women's Art and Feminist Perspectives in Australia*, Craftsman House, Sydney.
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Web resources



www.jillorr.com.au

Weblink

VALUE IN ART: INSTALLATIONS

Issues

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 to that of the viewer or the art dealer?

What rights do artists have in using animals in their artworks?

How does the presentation of ideas in an installation work involve the viewer and thus heighten their sense of interpretation of the artwork?

How does an artist gather together a random collection of objects and deem it an 'installation'?

'Hirst's works are brutally honest and confrontational; he draws attention to the paranoiac denial of death that permeates our culture.'

Virginia Button

Damien Hirst

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. Hirst had come to the attention of Saatchi when he presented *In and Out of Love*, an installation where he filled a gallery with hundreds of live tropical butterflies, of which some 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.

This work, like many of Hirst's, involves the viewer contemplating the processes of life and death, and the ironies, falsehoods and desires that we negotiate through to end up with our own mortality and alienation. In *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 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



vitrine:
glass cabinet or
showcase

Figure 10.10
Damien Hirst, *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, 1991, tiger shark, glass, steel, formaldehyde solution, 21 x 518cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, © Damien Hirst/DACS, Licensed by VISCOPY 2009

despite the shark being a killer it has been killed itself and preserved in formaldehyde. It has beaten death to become immortalised.

Hirst has gone on to create other works using animals in vitrines. 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.

Hirst circumnavigated the primary pitfall of much British art – its guilt-ridden distrust of the visual – with superbly finessed aesthetic objects.'

Martin Maloney, artist

Refer to pages 110–11 for a discussion of Hirst's *Mother and Child Divided*

Through his imagery, Hirst is making a comment 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 surrounding what art should be and what artists should be expressing.



Points of discussion

- 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. Investigate the Saatchi website (www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk) to view some of the artists that Saatchi represents. Discuss these artworks in relation to the question 'What is art?'



ACTIVITY 10.13

- Compare the works of Damien Hirst with Marcel Duchamp. What are the similarities in the works of both artists? How do they create symbolism using common objects or animals?
- Analyse *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* using the Formal Framework including the use of techniques, the style of the work and the use of design elements and principles.

Points of discussion

- 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 Nathalia Edenmont's works.
- 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?

ACTIVITY 10.14

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?



Figure 10.11
Nathalia Edenmont,
Bride Red, 2003,
C-print mounted on
Perspex, 150 x 150cm
© Nathalia Edenmont/
Wetterling Gallery

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 in her work. Her presentation of the animals and the artistic processes transgresses and challenges social viewpoints.

The art market

Hirst's work continues to be marred with controversy. The work was put in the Sensation exhibition of young British artists that was due to tour Australia. The exhibition was subsequently cancelled because of the content of many of the artworks in the show. The Sensation exhibition did tour in New York.

'When Mayor Giuliani tried to ban the Sensation Show in New York, Damien was reported to have said that if "New York wasn't such an important market he'd refuse to show there ever again".' This declaration is very revealing and confirms that Damien's work is not about integrity but markets, which is in stark opposition to art, the heart and soul of which is integrity.'

Billy Childish, British artist

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 of discussion

- What are these commentaries saying about the art market valuing Hirst's work?
- What are the commentaries stating about artistic freedom?
- Who has the authority to establish the value of artworks? The artist? The art dealer? Or the art critic? Use examples of Hirst's work to illustrate your point of view.
- **Censorship** – discuss the banning of the Sensation exhibition as an issue of censorship. Should the exhibition have been banned from the National Gallery of Australia? The issue of censorship is explored in greater detail in the next section of this chapter.

Saatchi invested a lot of money in the work of Damien Hirst. The artist became so successful that he went on to be represented by galleries in New York and London and his work sold for millions. Saatchi was often questioned as to why he invested so much money in Damien Hirst and gave him subsequent artistic freedom.

In 2008, after many years of financial success with galleries, Hirst decided to sell 223 of his works directly through Sotheby's Auction House in New York. This action was seen as Hirst taking a risk with flooding the market with many of his works and thus decreasing their value. This action by Hirst was demonstrating how influential an artist can be in the sale and value of their work. He was also making a statement about the value of art in the art market.

'When I got into the art world, I consciously wanted to change it. I found it really annoying because it seemed like a kind of club where people would sell cheaply to investors and they'd make the money. Collectors would take the art off the artists and, because they came in early and they gave the artists a little bit of money, later, when the artwork got resold, it would be the collector who made the big money in the secondary market. I always thought that was wrong. I'm the artist, the primary market. And I want the money to be in the primary market.'

Damien Hirst

Points of discussion

- What is Hirst stating about the art market in his commentary? How does his individual sale of artworks in 2008 support his statements?
- How do Hirst's artworks express the ideas in the commentary above? Refer to the subject matter of the works and the materials used.

ACTIVITY 10.15

- 1 What is a work such as *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* stating about the value of art?
- 2 Investigate what some of Hirst's other works, such as *For the Love of God*, express about the value of art. Analyse the materials and subject matter of the work to support your point of view.

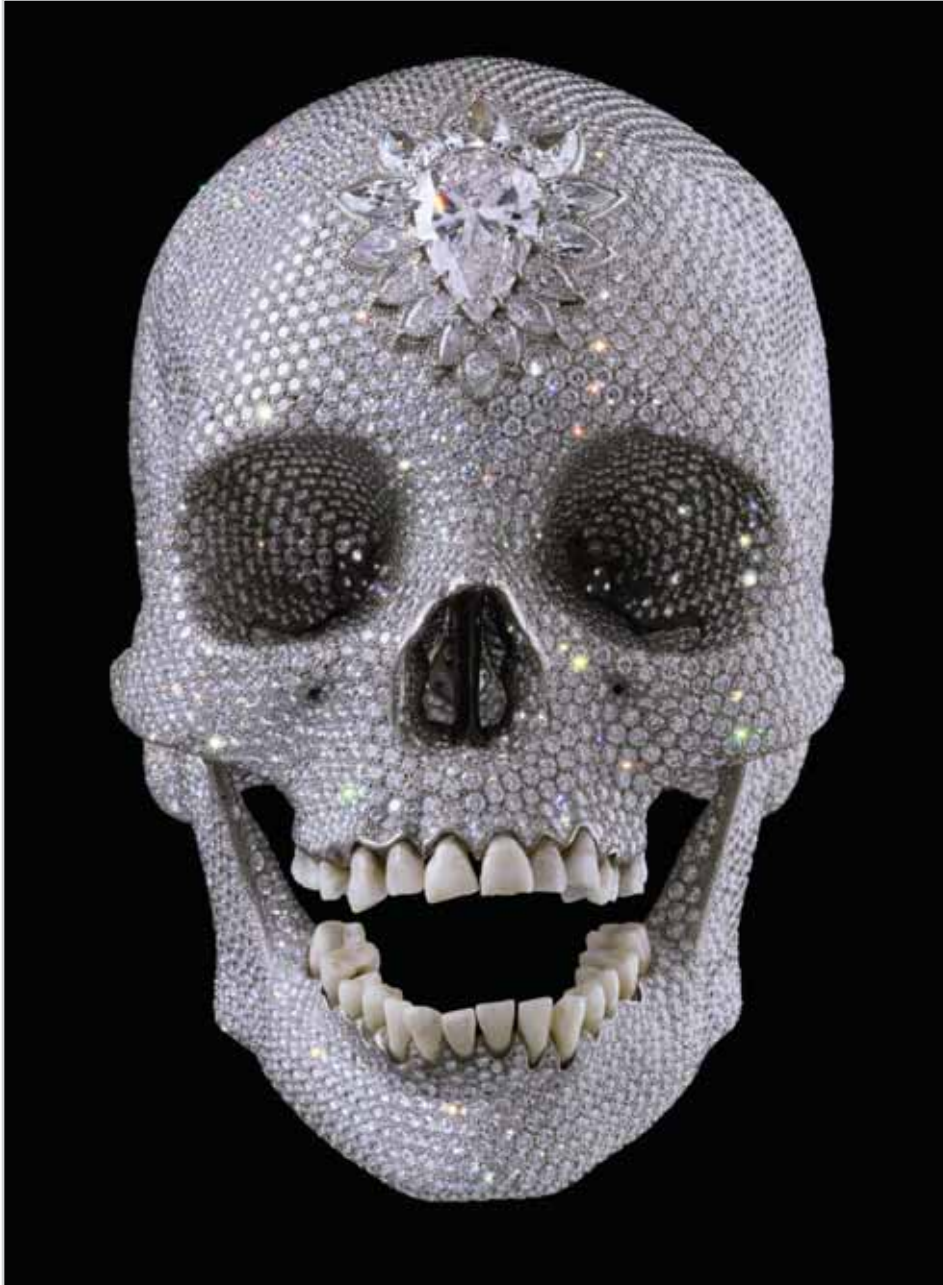


Figure 10.12
 Damien Hirst, *For the Love of God* 2007,
 diamond, platinum,
 human teeth,
 White Cube Gallery,
 London, © Damien
 Hirst/DACS, Licensed
 by VISCOPY 2009

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Web resources



Weblinks

Search for Hirst at www.whitecube.com
www.gagosian.com/artists/damien-hirst

CENSORSHIP IN ART

Issues

'Books won't stay banned. They won't burn. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas.'

Alfred Whitney Griswold

Why are certain artworks censored?

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?

What role does the media play in the issue of censorship?

Different cultures have censored artwork throughout history. 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 of 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 fueled by the media. Artworks are often censored by governing bodies in galleries or governments, as the ideas expressed in the artwork may be against the viewpoint of the controlling body. An example is that of the removal of photographs of, and the closure of an exhibition by, the Australian photographer Bill Henson in 2008.

The Henson case

Refer to pages 116–17 for a discussion of Henson's *Untitled #8, 2007–8*

'Bill Henson's work dwells on what is difficult and mysterious in the drama of each individual's experience. We know nothing of those he photographs: indeed, their anonymity is an important aspect of his work.'

Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator of Photography, National Gallery of Victoria

Bill Henson is a well-respected photographer both nationally and internationally. His work spans over 20 years and he has had several retrospectives at major galleries throughout Australia including the National Gallery of Victoria and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. Henson has always displayed an unconventional approach to his art. His photographs exist in the twilight region, between real and imagined landscapes, evoking an emotive response from the viewer. Barren landscapes, isolation and dislocation have been common themes throughout the development of his work.

In May 2008, an exhibition of Henson's work at the commercial Roslyn Oxley Gallery in



Sydney, displaying a range of female nudes, was closed by the New South Wales police and several images were seized on the grounds of 'pornography'. 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 galleries.

The central focus of the debate was on the image of a young pubescent girl, with her eyes downcast, her face in darkness with budding breasts of puberty and her hands casually covering her naked crotch. The image had been chosen by Henson as the main image on the invitation for the exhibition opening. It was this image which caught the eye of a talkback radio announcer who sparked the whole controversy. This controversy centred around whether Henson's photography was art or pornography.

'I don't think I've seen anything more disgusting. How people think this somehow comes under the category of art defies logic. It is disgraceful. It is disgusting. It is pornographic. It is woeful.'

Chris Smith, radio journalist

'Art can be defined as having certain characteristics and qualities. Art, to use Keats' words, tells us that: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", it is said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but most viewers, I think, would agree that images of naked, under-age girls, silhouetted and standing provocatively are unacceptable.'

Figure 10.13
Bill Henson, *Untitled No. 39*, 2007–08, C-type photograph, 127 x 180cm, Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

ACTIVITY 10.16

Discuss the symbolism of 'beauty' in Henson's works. Analyse Henson's use of aesthetic qualities, techniques and subject matter to express the concept of beauty.

Points of discussion

- Discuss the two commentaries above with reference to Henson's images. In your discussion, view a range of Henson's works from different series and periods of time. This will give you an understanding of the range of images in his work.
- What right do journalists have to pass evaluative judgements on art? What controversies would comments such as these provoke?

Kevin Donnelly, journalist

The initial case opened to other issues of a broader nature including the consent of children to be used in artworks and the sexual exploitation of young teenagers in artworks. Henson has traditionally used young adolescents in his images. In an untitled series of works in the 1980s, Henson photographed teenage models in decaying wastelands and epic landscapes. The images were high art compositions that were reminiscent of the Old Masters. In 1992–93, another untitled series featured young people in Arcadian forest settings. These works were on a large scale and were collaged together using torn photographs. In 2000, Henson continued the inherent tension and discord in his works by photographing another series of young models in an 'elusive no man's land' of dumped cars and lit fires. Henson explains his representation of adolescents, stating:

'The reason I use adolescents is because to me, they symbolise that transitional no man's land. They're still unformed, one foot in childhood, one foot in the adult world, a floating time of exciting, confusing, vulnerable uncertainty.'

Bill Henson

'Like all great art they're profoundly mysterious, almost Shakespearean, in the way they touch on the range and depth of human emotions.'

Gerard Vaughan, NGV Director

Henson's choice of subject is connected with his fascination with the 'twilight zone'. The subjects are no longer children, they are approaching adulthood, but not yet an adult and they are caught in an intensely private transition. The subjects are detached from the viewer, their gaze remains averted or they stare blankly, oblivious to their own personal drama. This lack of emotional engagement, offers a deep level of empathy, a sense of familiarity and knowing. Henson's images exhibit young people, face on to the camera, often in a devastated landscape. However, his use of lighting encourages the viewer to see hope. The romantic composition of the images leads to a link with the compositions of great artists.

Henson uses formal elements to create psychological tension in his work. He has studied the great artists for their use of composition and light. Henson manipulates his compositions to give an abstract character to the picture. The 'warm tones' come forward and the 'cool tones' recede.

'It's as though the pictures make themselves', says Henson. He believes that the relationship of viewers to the model leads to their own interpretation of the image.

'Each person experiences a different journey when viewing an artwork. It takes the viewer to a different place'

Bill Henson

Points of discussion

- Discuss Henson's portrayal of young adolescents in his works. What ideas do the images convey about adolescence?
- Nudity in art – what defines an artistic nude? Why is the exhibition of teenage nudes as art an issue? Investigate Henson's presentation of nudes from a range of his images.
- Gender – what ideas about gender do Henson's images convey? Refer to a range of Henson's images that demonstrate both male and female adolescents. What do the images express about relationships?

ACTIVITY 10.17

- 1 Analyse the formal elements, techniques and style of two images by Bill Henson. Use your interpretation to support your points of view in the discussions above.
- 2 Compare images by Henson to works of the Romantic artists such as Turner, Delacroix and David. What are the similarities between the images, their style and the formal elements used by the artists?

In *Untitled No. 20*, 2000–2003 the figure of the girl floats above a distant landscape. She is in another world, oblivious to the viewer watching her in her dreamlike state.

Henson aims to have a spontaneous approach when creating his images. He leaves it up to the viewer to draw on their own experiences to interpret what messages the image is conveying. The lack of emotional engagement of his subjects offers a deep level of intimacy. The viewer does not make a connection with the subject, but obtains a profound level of empathy; a sense of familiarity and knowing. Henson has created many settings where his subjects appear detached from the viewer.

Henson's works appeal to any viewer psychologically. The composition and lighting of the images appeal to the aesthetic sentiments of the viewer and once they attempt to interpret the images, they begin to understand the meaning and messages Henson is trying to convey. Although the subjects are detached, this is not the overall interpretation that Henson is aiming for – he is looking for the drama in which the works attempt to interact with the viewer. The large scale of the images draws the viewer into the work. The viewer becomes conscious they are watching a scene but they are unable to participate.

ACTIVITY 10.18

Visit http://roslynxley9.com.au/artists/18/bill_henson and analyse Henson's images using the Personal Framework. In the artwork, what symbolism has a psychological impact on the viewer? How can you relate to these images? What appeals to you about them? How does the viewer's personal background influence their interpretation of the work? Consider the techniques and the formal elements and principles that Henson uses.



Weblink



Figure 10.14
 Bill Henson, *Untitled No. 20*, 2000–03
 C-type photograph,
 127 x 180cm.
 Courtesy of the artist
 and Roslyn Oxley9
 Gallery, Sydney

In *Untitled No. 10* (2002–03), the subject looks out at the viewer with an expression of nonchalance on her face. The pose of the sitter dominates the landscape and confronts the viewer with its large scale and size. This image can be found at http://roslynoxley9.com.au/artists/18/bill_henson.

As the debate over the images continued to rage, it widened to discuss the appropriate use of imagery on the internet. As the initial invitation had appeared via email, many saw that by taking the images out of the more private space of the gallery and putting them into the 'public' domain on the internet it made them more accessible to those who would not interpret the image as artworks. Below are several quotes here about the works, including commentaries on the exploitation of children, drawing comparisons between this imagery and Henson's images.



'Presenting young girls in such a vulnerable and voyeuristic way is especially wrong given the way children's sexuality is being commodified and exploited in advertising, marketing and popular culture.'

'Henson's work is art, and as such, it falls into a different category to the ads for kids' clothes and the tween magazines that have been the central focus of this debate. But these distinctions are irrelevant to people who believe that visual representations of children and adolescents are the real source of child abuse.'

Catharine Lumby, Journalist

Commentaries regarding the viewing of images in other contexts and the viewing of images in a gallery:

'Normal rules do not apply and admiring a young naked girl when it is in an art gallery, as opposed to men's magazine or adult internet site, is acceptable.'

'Take the photographs that were to be exhibited last week at the Sydney gallery and put them on the internet or somebody's laptop and those responsible would be charged with child pornography.'

Kevin Donnelly, *The Age*

The issue surrounding Henson's work circulated for several months with many public debates in galleries, on television programs and in the written press. The author David Marr even wrote a book on the issue. One of the final outcomes was that the Australia Council, the Arts organisation responsible for giving grants for the arts issued a series of protocols that were a condition of funding for projects they supported. These included four critical issues:

'The rights of children to be protected throughout the artistic process, ensuring that viewers of the work had an appropriate understanding of the nature and artistic content of the material, protecting the images from being exploited and acknowledgement of the Australia Council's role in upholding and promoting the right of people to freedom in the practice of the Arts.'

The Australia Council

'How can you ensure that everyone viewing an artwork has an appropriate understanding of it and how, in the digital age, can you guarantee that images of children are not exploited or moved beyond their original context?'

Gabriella Coslovich and Geoff Strong in *The Age*

'After all, if art is whatever you wish it to be then it is impossible to draw the line between what is and what is not.'

Kevin Donnelly

Points of discussion

- What role does the internet play in the exhibition of images? What is appropriate to be placed on the internet and what should be censored?
- What is the importance of a gallery in the display of images? What role should the gallery take in an exhibition such as this?
- What is the difference between the use of young adolescents in advertising images and the use of the young adolescents in Henson's images? Find some examples of persuasive advertising and compare the use of the imagery with Henson's images.
- Consider the protocols that the Australia Council has introduced for the funding of their projects. Are these protocols appropriate for the production of artworks or are they limiting creativity and artistic expression. Use some examples of artworks to support your points of view.

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Web resources



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www.billhenson.net.au

www.tolarnogalleries.com/bill-henson

www.theage.com.au/news/national/the-controversial-career-of-bill-henson/2008/05/24/1211183189567.html

www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/artblog/2008/may/27/these-photographs-arent-sexual

STREET ART

Issues

What is the difference between graffiti and street art?

Why should street art be valued as an artform?

Should outdoor galleries be created for street art?

Censorship – are there some street art images that should be banned? Why should they be banned?

What forms of appropriation are used in street art?

What are the differences between street art and planned public artworks?

Street art has always belonged to public spaces. The artwork is created to be viewed by the public. Street art has developed from graffiti and has become a valid artform, as the imagery that is used is often sophisticated and demonstrates technical skill in its execution. Street artists aim to reach a wider public audience and their work often conveys messages that are political and cite a form of activism and subversion. Street artists often use imagery from popular culture to convey their messages.

Street art comes in several forms. The most common is stencil art, 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 is imagery displayed using stickers; this type of art sometimes has a political agenda. Paste-ups, or artwork in poster form, are applied to the wall using the type of paste used for wall-papering. All these forms of street art have the ability to be reproduced repeatedly so they can appear in numerous areas around the city. Another form of Street art is known as woodblock graffiti, where the image painted onto wood and then attached to street signs with bolts.



Figure 10.15
Examples of street art
found in Melbourne



Street art is often created illegally and is seen by some as a form of vandalism. However, most street artists have used the public domain to get their message across to as wide an audience as possible. Street artists are often rejecting the traditional gallery space to exhibit their art and they are often making a statement about the hierarchy of the selection of art for gallery exhibitions.

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

Perhaps the most well known and first formalised acceptance of street art was the work of Keith Haring (1958–1990). Haring was an art student in New York City when he became 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. He would produce up to 40 drawings a day and often people would stop and discuss the work with him. As he rose to fame, Haring became known for creating public works. These often held a strong social message and Haring was committed to many children's charities and orphanages. He aimed to allow his art to reach as wide an audience as possible. Haring was diagnosed with AIDS in 1986 and he spent the last years of his life dedicating his work to raise public awareness of the illness.



Figure 10.16
Keith Haring drawing on a subway platform in New York city, 1983

'I was learning, watching people's reactions and interactions with the drawings and with me and looking at it as a phenomenon. Having this incredible feedback from people, which is one of the main things that kept me going so long, was the participation of the people that were watching me and the kinds of comments and questions and observations that were coming from every range of person you could imagine.'

Keith Haring



Haring visited Melbourne in 1984 and was offered the wall at the Collingwood Technical College to create a project with the art students from the college. The wall features a millipede with a head in the form of a computer. Underneath it are repetitions of people jumping, dancing and performing acrobatics. At the time it was created, the mural sparked controversy over its use of imagery that was viewed as a misappropriation of Aboriginal symbols. The debate continues over the preservation of the mural. The mural has now faded and is peeling. However, it has been placed on the Arts Victoria register for preservation. Haring, who understood the transitory nature of his work, never intended his chalk drawings on the 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'*.

Figure 10.17
Keith Haring, *Mural at Collingwood Technical College*, 1984 © Keith Haring Foundation. Photograph by Kylie Gussett

However, art consultant John Buckley who managed the project said the following:

'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.'

Points of discussion

- Discuss the value of Haring's work as an artform. Compare his earlier subway works with his later commissioned public projects and commercial sale of T-shirts, mugs and paintings.
- Haring intended his work to reach as wide an audience as possible. However, by working in subways he was, in fact, working illegally. Compare some of Haring's later public projects which were commissioned with his earlier work.
- Discuss how Haring's art appealed to a wide range of people. Why do you think people related to the symbolism of his imagery?
- How is Haring's work different from the street art that we view today? Discuss his use of techniques and the manner in which he approached his art production.
- **Censorship** – do you think Haring's work is appropriate for certain venues? Is his imagery appropriate? Discuss the symbolism of examples of his work.
- **Ownership and collaboration** – if Haring uses others to create his public works, who owns the artwork? If the work is in a public space, is it Haring or the owners of the building who own it?

ACTIVITY 10.19

- 1 What imagery has Haring appropriated? Discuss Haring's use of imagery and his techniques as a form of appropriation using specific examples of his work.
- 2 Preservation – discuss Haring's work and the temporary nature of it. Should the works be preserved and how should this process occur? Look at a range of Haring's public works from various periods of time in your discussion.
- 3 Compare Haring's public projects with the work of Christo and Jean Claude. What are the similarities between the two artists' works? Discuss their use of the environment and the public statement they are making about their works. Refer to Christo's material on the Student CD-ROM.

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Banksy

'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



ACTIVITY 10.20

Compare some of Banksy's works using animals with the work of Damien Hirst. What are the similarities in the messages both artists are expressing?

Figure 10.18
Banksy, *Rat*
Photographer, c. 2006

Banksy (born 1974) is one of the most well-known contemporary street artists. He is best known for his stencil work and his placement of graffiti slogans in public places. Banksy's works use symbolism that comment 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. Banksy has a keen interest in animal welfare and animal rights – his images often use animals such as monkeys or rats; the monkey seen as being '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.



Figure 10.19
Banksy, *Flower Chucker*, c. 2006

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 abolishment of graffiti as an artform 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'. 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 hand grenade.

'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

'We are concerned that Banksy's street art glorifies what is essentially vandalism.'

Dianne Shakespeare, Keep Britain Tidy

Points of discussion

- **Ownership** – if Banksy's identity is not known, how is it he can prove his works are his? How does this cover the issue of artist's moral rights and copyright?
- Banksy's works have been sold by auctioneers on site and the image has been removed by the owner. If Banksy's works are created as public artworks, what would Banksy say about the sale of his work into a private collection?
- **Appropriation** – view some of Banksy's drawings on his website **www.banksy.org.uk**. How has he appropriated the images of some famous artworks or images? What has Banksy done to the image to re-create it in his own style? What meaning is he conveying with the artwork?
- **Censorship** – Banksy's stencils are often removed because of their controversial nature. What does this say about censorship in art?
- **The art market** – should Banksy's work be sold and valued as art? Discuss the sale of his work by auction houses such as Sotheby's and Christie's.



In recent years, Banksy has been also questioning 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.

Presented by the artist personally, 2003

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.

Points of discussion

- Visit **news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/3201344.stm** and discuss what Banksy is stating about the values placed by galleries and curators on artworks using some examples of Banksy's 'subversive artworks'.
- How has Banksy appropriated the imagery in these works and for what purposes? Use examples of the images to support your point of view.
- 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.



Melbourne has also had its own Banksy controversy. A 1-metre high image of a figure with a diving bell helmet and wearing a grey duffel coat was stenciled on a wall off Flinders Lane in 2003. It was believed to be the work of Banksy, who stenciled the image when he was in the city on a visit. When the value of Banksy's work began to increase, the City of Melbourne decided that the image needed to be preserved. There was controversy surrounding this action, as it is known that street artists do not necessarily create their works to last but to deteriorate over time.

Figure 10.20
Banksy, *The Little Diver*, after being painted over, c. 2008
Nicholas Building,
Melbourne

'It's strange because graffiti isn't meant to last, it's ephemeral, so trying to save it is a pretty funny thing to do. I'm sure that irony's not lost on Banksy. And there's a fair bit of irony in somebody selling a wall.'

Andrew McDonald, Street Art Site Manager



The council covered the work with a Perspex screen. However, in December 2008, grey paint was poured over the image and the tag 'Banksy woz ere' was tagged on the Perspex.

'Rumours say that the destruction of The Little Diver is an act of retaliation from a New Orleans figure touted by locals as the 'Grey Ghost'. He was mocked by Banksy in some artworks earlier this year during a visit to the city.'

www.pedestrian.tv

After Cyclone Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2007, there was much criticism of the way the Bush government supported the cyclone victims. Banksy was one artist who traveled to New Orleans and used his stencil art to make a comment on the issue. As a result, many of his stencils were painted over by an official known as 'the Grey Ghost'. Banksy has an image of this person in one of his own stencils, mocking the Grey Ghost and his actions. In street art culture, the use of grey or silver paint is symbolic of blood.



Figure 10.21
Banksy, *The Little Diver*, c. 2003
Nicholas Building,
Melbourne

ACTIVITY 10.21

View the Banksy website and the Keith Haring website. Compare the work of the two artists including their work as street art and the commercial value of their work. What are the similarities?



Figure 10.22
Banksy, *Grey Ghost*,
c. 2008

Points of discussion

- Should Banksy's work have been preserved as an artwork? Discuss the commentary by Andy Mac concerning this issue. Investigate other forms of street art, their value and whether they should be preserved.
- Discuss the actions of the 'unknown vandal' who has 'vandalised' a street artwork. What does this action say about street art? Is it linked with the attempts by the council to preserve the artwork because of its value or because of Banksy's actions in New Orleans?

References

Banksy, 2006, *Wall & Piece*, Century Publishing, London.

Web resources



Weblinks

www.banksy.co.uk

www.theage.com.au/national/the-painter-painted-melbourne-loses-its-treasured-banksy-20081213-6xzy.html

www.theage.com.au/articles/2008/01/15/1200159449775.html

This website has images, issues and videos on Banksy: www.bbc.co.uk/80/london/content/image_galleries/banksy_gallery.shtml

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/arts/3201344.stm



Student CD-ROM

An exploration of the works of the following Australian street artists can be found on the Student CD-ROM:

- Rone
- Reagan 'Ha Ha' Taganui
- Ghost Patrol and Miso

[11]

Chapter overview

This chapter will prepare you to do the following for an example task for assessment of coursework:

- select an art issue to debate and discuss
- demonstrate how to use a range of resources, including commentaries, to examine, debate and evaluate different interpretations of an art issue
- demonstrate how to discuss, debate and compare two or more viewpoints regarding issues about art using the Analytical Frameworks
- demonstrate how to express a personal point of view regarding issues about art 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 language and vocabulary in your assessment task
- demonstrate how to use selected Analytical Frameworks in your analysis and interpretation of artworks.

ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 4

Unit 4 – Outcome 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 issues and the different interpretations of the role of art in society. You explored resources and commentaries about a range of artists and art issues. You also investigated how artworks were used as examples in these various art issues and how the artworks could be interpreted using the Analytical Frameworks; Formal, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary. In this chapter, you will be shown how to use the Analytical Frameworks to structure your analysis of art issues and what aspects you need to cover to complete the assessment of coursework for Unit 4.

Refer to Chapters 4 and Chapter 7 for information on Assessment for Units 1 and 2.

Refer to Chapter 10 for information on artists that you could use for your assessment task for Unit 4.

CONTENT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF COURSEWORK

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 4, Outcome 1 assessment of coursework. These have been set so that you provide an in-depth analysis and interpretation of your selected issue, artists and artworks. Throughout Unit 4, you must undertake the study of:

- a minimum of *one* selected art issue
- at least *one* artist *not* studied in Unit 3 and a minimum of *two* artworks by that artist
- a range of diverse viewpoints as seen in commentaries relating to artworks and issues. This means that you will need more than one point of view about your selected issue and artworks.

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. Here 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 issue, describing what the issue is and then providing examples of artworks that are relevant to the issue. You could then include various points of view about the art issue and the artworks and provide your own viewpoint. Using the examples of artworks, you can provide an analysis and interpretation of *two* artworks using the Analytical Frameworks. Two of the artworks must be by the *one* artist.

An extended response

You may be provided with a commentary or question about a particular art issue and you are required to respond to the question using examples of artworks and your own personal point of view. You will need to analyse the artworks 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 issue. You may also be given some commentaries regarding the art 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 issue and provide your own personal point of view. Usually the art issue, commentaries and artworks are given to you.

You can find information on the Analytical Frameworks, art language and commentaries in Chapter 1.

Annotated visual report

You need to provide examples of two artworks relating to a specific art issue. Using the artworks, you will analyse and interpret them in relation to the art issue and the Analytical Frameworks. You may refer to all aspects of the Formal, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary frameworks. You will also have to demonstrate how examples of or from the artworks relate to the art issue.

You will also provide your personal point of view using examples from the artworks.

A multimedia presentation

Using a program such as PowerPoint, Photo Story, or Movie Maker you will create a presentation on an art issue. You will provide information about the art issue and use a series of visual examples and artworks in your presentation. You need to analyse and interpret the artworks using the Analytical Frameworks and provide visual examples.

Commentaries and your personal point of view about the art issue could be provided as overlaid text, hyperlinks or voiceovers. This presentation could be conducted as a series of interviews about an issue and these could be recorded.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Here are some tips to help you prepare for any of the assessment tasks listed.

- 1 Select your art issue. Look through the list of issues in the last chapter and find examples of artworks that illustrate it. Remember you will need two examples of artworks from at least one artist that relate to the art issue.
- 2 Find a list of commentaries about the art issue. The commentaries could include any statements about the subject of the artworks, the techniques and materials that the artist uses, references to symbols or metaphors that the artist has expressed in their work or information about the ideas that the artist is expressing. Remember to write down who said the commentary, 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.

- 3 Analyse and interpret your artworks. Using two examples of artworks you have found analyse the artworks using the Formal Framework. Write a series of headings that you can put points under relating to design elements and principles, techniques, style and symbols and metaphors.

Then provide examples of these referring to your artworks. Consider how any of these may apply to the art issue you have selected, what the artwork is about or why the artist may have used these to convey their ideas.

- 4 Use any of the other Analytical Frameworks to interpret your artworks relevant to the art issue. You should refer to the questions used for the Analytical Framework section in Chapter 1. Apply the interpretations to the art issue you are exploring. For example: Banksy's use of stenciling in his work can be interpreted from a cultural perspective as this type of technique is often used in street art.
- 5 Develop your point of view regarding the art 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 design elements and principles. Link your points to those expressed in the commentaries.



RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 1

The Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority has a series of criteria that they provide 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, issues and/or arguments expressed in commentaries on art about the meanings and message of artworks.
- a range of relevant resources to support research
- opinions and viewpoints expressed in commentaries on an idea and issue about art
- art language appropriate to discussion and debate
- relevant aspects of each of the Analytical Frameworks.

Name: _____

Criteria for the award of grades	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the work demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 Critical discussion of an art issue supported by well selected commentaries							/5
Criterion 2 Application of relevant aspects of the Analytical Frameworks in the analysis of at least two artworks							/5
Criterion 3 Comparison of the differing viewpoints based on the chosen art issue as expressed in commentaries							/5
Criterion 4 Development and expression of a personal point of view about the art issue, supported with evidence and with reference to the opinions of others.							/5
Criterion 5 Reference to a range of artworks and commentaries to support a point of view							/5
Criterion 6 Use of appropriate art language and vocabulary when referring to artworks and issues							/5



These criteria have developed from the VCE Art Study Design. Teachers may choose to adjust them to suit the set task. This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

STUDENT SAMPLE RESPONSE

Task: Street art has developed its own style and is now recognised as an artform. However, street art is often considered a form of vandalism and many street artworks are removed by council officials. Discuss the validity of street art as an artform with references to artists and artworks. In your response, you must provide your own point of view, interpret the meanings behind street artworks and refer to commentaries on the artworks.'

Assessment comment:

For this response, the student selected street art as their issue and, primarily, the work of the British artist Banksy. The student has commenced their essay with an introduction stating the issue. Throughout the essay, the student has used a range of commentaries that provide differing points of view about the validity of Banksy's work as an artform, including commentaries by the artist himself.

Assessment comment:

As the essay progresses the student clearly states their point of view in the support of street art. The commentary about is defined and analysed by the student. The student has used a work of Banksy's as an example to support the commentary. The student has focused on the artist's comment that there is 'no elitism or hype' surrounding street art.

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 a developed form of graffiti and therefore it is often associated with vandalism. Hence, many councils and the owners of buildings try to have the images removed.

'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*

Banksy is perhaps the most well known street artist. He is best known for his stencil work, which began in the city of Bristol, the town where he was born, and has appeared worldwide. Banksy's images are created using stencils, which are sprayed through in layered templates. Therefore, the images he creates appear quite photographic. The commentary by Banksy justifies why he stencils on walls as he can exhibit his artwork publicly. He is making a comment about how often people have to pay to see art and to see artworks such as his you do not have to pay. A perfect example is the work of nine stencils that Banksy put on the wall that divides Israel from Gaza. The images were of people climbing over ladders to get to the other side. Banksy was

making a statement about improving relations between the two countries. If he can come at night and spray the stencils without anyone knowing, he is therefore also making a comment on the security that surrounds areas such as this. Banksy's works are deliberately provocative to spark comment.

'They exist without permission. They are hated, hunted and persecuted. They live in quite desperation among the filthy. And yet they are capable of bringing entire civilizations to their knees.'

Banksy

Figure 11.1 Banksy, *Rat Photographer*, c. 2006



Assessment comment:

Throughout the essay, the student has used a wide range of artworks by Banksy to support their point of view (key skills). They have also cited where the commentaries have come from and who stated them. The student has also used a range of relevant resources to support their research (key knowledge).

Banksy is best known for his image of a rat. The rat symbolises for him that many consider street artists to be as the lowest form of life. Banksy's rat has appeared in many forms around cities of the world. The rat often has symbols from popular culture with him such as the camera of a press photographer, the tools of a road worker or is dressed as a burglar or criminal. These symbols represent the idea that the street artist is part of the culture of life on the streets or is part of the 'undersworld' of the city. However, to have him displayed in a large scale on city walls brings some of the issues Banksy is trying to communicate to as wide an audience as possible.

His comment 'bringing civilizations to their knees' could refer to the humour Banksy uses in his imagery. Another famous work of Banksy's was that of a naked man hanging out a window by one arm, while his lover and her husband look out the window, presumably for the man who has escaped. The artwork was removed by the Hackney council, the city where the image appeared, because the council felt the image was insulting, yet a council official referred to it as 'provocative but humorous'. Banksy is aiming for the viewer to comment on the work and by using humour and scale, he draws our attention to it.

However, the director of Keep Britain Tidy, Dianne Shakespeare, has referred to Banksy's art: 'We are concerned that Banksy's street art glorifies what is essentially vandalism'. It is unusual that Shakespeare has referred to Banksy's work as street art and vandalism in the one sentence. She sees street art as a form of vandalism because the artist is defacing property not because of the content of the imagery.



Figure 11.2
Banksy, *The Lovers*, c. 2007

Figure 11.3
Banksy, *Rat Girl*, c. 2008



Figure 11.4
Banksy, *Grey Ghost*,
c. 2008

Assessment comment:

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 an art issue.

The student has also used the Analytical Frameworks by citing these different examples. Banksy's work is cultural due to the comments on various political and cultural issues that it provides, it is personal as Banksy is often using his personal point of view in his work and it is contemporary as the street art form is a contemporary issue in art. Street art also reflects contemporary culture and social issues.

In 2008, Banksy travelled to New Orleans where Hurricane Katrina had devastated the area. There was much media controversy over the way in which President Bush had given aid to the area. Banksy created a series of stencils around the city that commented on what the government was doing to help the city of New Orleans. One image was entitled 'Rat Girl' and depicts a young girl standing on a stool screaming at the appearance of a small rat. Banksy has used the exposure of bricks in the wall where the rendering has fallen off to stencil his famous rat. On a much larger scale, the girl stands with her hand up to her mouth in horror. The image sprayed in black and white conveys a lot of power as the contrast of tone highlights the expression on the girl's face and makes the scene look dramatic. Many of Banksy's stencils appear much more dramatic because they have been rendered in black and white. Banksy has taken advantage of the texture of the wall and shape to create the rat. The tension in the image is also increased by the space between the rat and the girl and their size. It has been said that the girl does not look confident or strong and it could be that Banksy is commenting on the suffering of children in the area. The girl is also dressed like a conservative black American child who has been conformed by the ruling white class. Her expression could be symbolic for what many of the people in the area were feeling.

Some of Banksy's stencils in New Orleans were removed by officials because of their anti-government sentiments. As a result, Banksy created another stencil entitled 'The Grey Ghost' that depicts a man removing stencils. The image he is removing is a simple stick figure. In this work, Banksy is referring to graffiti tagging and the simple stick figures drawn by children. This could relate to a comment made by a resident in Hackney when another of Banksy's stencils was removed from a public wall in the city. 'We've been given a work of art, it's a shame the council defaced it'. This member of the public, like many others, appreciates the subject and the style of Banksy's artwork.

Assessment comment:

The student also uses the Formal Framework throughout their discussion. In the student's analysis of the image Rat Girl the student refers to formal elements such as colour, composition and shape in the work to discuss symbolism. In the discussion of the Little Diver, the student refers to the symbolism in the image and the use of grey paint.

The student, in their analysis, also uses art language to analyse the formal aspects of Banksy's work and clearly describes the images they are referring to.

Assessment comment:

In the conclusion, the student expresses their point of view. The writer finishes with a commentary by Banksy to support their point of view. The commentary also sums up what the student believes are the ideas Banksy is expressing in his artwork.

Banksy's creation of this stencil has led to a connection in Australia. In Melbourne, a 1-metre high figure of a diver was stencilled on the wall of a city laneway. Attributed to Banksy, who visited Melbourne in 2003, the image had a question mark in the diver's helmet. The symbol of the diver is again referring to the underworld of the city and the street art community that is active in Melbourne. The question mark refers to the fact that the identity of the creator of the work was unknown. As Banksy's work became more famous and was sold the Melbourne City council decided to cover the work with Perspex to preserve it. This caused controversy, as many street artists do not aim to have their work preserved and part of the culture is the temporary nature and gradual disintegration of the image as part of the city fabric. In December 2008, the image was damaged by the pouring of silver paint and the 'tag' 'Banksy rox ere' was marked on it. The relationship of this incident to New Orleans is that it was seen as retaliation for the damaging of Banksy's images by council authorities. It was also making a statement that vandalism can destroy even street art that is often seen as vandalism itself.

I do not believe that street art is a form of vandalism. If you analyse the works and the symbolism of the imagery Banksy uses, you can see that he is trying to convey a message using humour. His use of stencilling is a valid technique as he focuses on elements such as form, shape, balance and contrast in his work to create tension and atmosphere, which relate to the ideas that he is trying to express.

I agree with Banksy's statement: 'They say graffiti frightens people and is symbolic of the decline in society, but graffiti is only dangerous in the mind of three types of people; politicians, advertising executives and graffiti writers.'

The first two groups in this list are the people who Banksy is rebelling against through his imagery.

Jethro Duxton



Figure 11.5
Banksy, *The Little Diver*,
vandalised images c. 2003
Nicholas Building, Melbourne

[12]

INVESTIGATION, INTERPRETATION, REALISATION AND RESOLUTION

Unit 3 – Area of Study 2
Unit 4 – Area of Study 2

Chapter overview

By the end of Units 3 and 4, you will have progressively developed a body of work to explore personal ideas or concepts. In this chapter, you will explore ways in which you can:

- create a body of work
- prepare for Unit 3 – Summer holiday homework
- meet the expectations of Units 3 and 4
- be inspired by other artists while developing your own interpretation
- resolve and refine your ideas
- document your thinking and working practices
- structure and present a folio of work
- present your final artworks.

'Where the hand goes, the eye follows; where the eye goes the mind follows; where the mind goes, the heart follows, and thus is born expression.'

Sanskrit proverb

INTRODUCTION

Creating a body of work

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 the body of work is up to you, but this is an opportunity to apply the knowledge

body of work: a collection of visual and written material communicating thinking and working practices, which may include art journals in addition to exploring and resolving artworks

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.

The Study Design states that you should undertake a **conceptual** and practical investigation that explores personal ideas and concepts.

At first, it may appear prescriptive expecting 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 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, processes and artform/s. You may work in any medium or artform or a range of media but, whatever you choose, make artwork that best reflects 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 artmaking.

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 could approach your ideas and what artforms would 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. Starting to work during the Summer holidays is essential. In Activity 12.1 you will find a suggested list of things you must do so that you can hit the ground running when the school year begins and a list of some other activities you could attempt.

conceptual: concerned with ideas

conceptual art: art in which the creative thought and 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

Using the following table as a guide, complete the tasks listed in preparation for Unit 3.

ACTIVITY 12.1

Table 12.1 December/January holiday work

<p>MUST</p> <p>You must complete the following work.</p>	<p>COULD</p> <p>You would also benefit from completing the following work.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You must decide on the central idea or concept that you wish to explore in your body of work. • Do a mind map/brainstorm to explore your selected idea or concept. • You must take a large number of photographs that will act as stimulus for further exploration, reference 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. • You must visit at least one exhibition and annotate things of interest in regards to imagery, style, techniques, approaches or media. • 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. <p>N.B. Avoid plagiarism – you can include other people’s art as inspiration but DO NOT COPY.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit three or more exhibitions and make annotations of your observations. • Begin creating a visual brainstorm through drawing, painting, collage, and so on to create visual interpretations of your ideas/ concepts. • Research artworks and images that relate to your ideas, concepts, interests, media, approaches and so on. • Start exploring your ideas in a range of media or approaches of your choice. • Do lots of drawing. • Take part in life drawing or art classes. • Attend a summer school. • Read up on art issues in the newspaper, magazines or other resources.

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 the requirements and expectations of Units 3 and 4.

UNIT 3: INVESTIGATION AND INTERPRETATION THROUGH ARTMAKING

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 and processes. 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 that you can refer to over 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 produced at least one finished artwork.

ACTIVITY 12.2

Decide what you would like to achieve in your folio. Are you aiming to:

- develop a folio of aesthetic exploration?
- develop a folio that visually interprets ideas, concepts or issues?
- explore the elements and principles of art?
- explore a particular subject matter that appeals to you?
- work in a style or approach to making art?
- work in a specific medium or artform?

UNIT 4: REALISATION AND RESOLUTION

In Unit 4, you will continue to develop the body of work begun in Unit 3, while you progressively realise and resolve a body of work that communicates ideas, directions and/or personal concepts, using Analytical Frameworks as tools to support and guide reflection and documentation. 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 where this line of exploration is taking you. This could be considered the completion of that avenue of thought and, therefore, a resolution. By the conclusion of this unit, however, you are also required to have produced at least one finished artwork other than the work that was completed for Unit 3. You are able to explore ideas and concepts in a number of artforms or use a range of approaches to a single artform or medium.

resolution: an idea that that you have explored and refined to the point that it is considered complete.

Application of the language of Analytical Frameworks to support reflection

You are required to apply the language of the analytical frameworks to support your reflection during artmaking. This can be achieved in a number of different ways through discussion and in writing. You are not required to apply all Analytical Frameworks to your artmaking but, more importantly, you are required to select the appropriate Analytical Frameworks that are relevant to your work.

The process of making art

There is no one way of creating a body of work (see Chapter 6 for two possible approaches), but, however you choose to approach your creative process, certain activities, such as brainstorming, researching, trialling and refining, should be included. It is also 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 formal qualities. As part of your body of work you are required to reflect, analyse and evaluate the progressive development and refinement of your ideas.

When choosing the concept/s or idea/s you plan to explore, focus on things you are passionate about; events, issues or experiences that are important to you. 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 your body of work to assist in the development of your artmaking. Ideas and concepts can be both broad and definitive, developed by you through personal research and thinking.

Inspired to create?

Before beginning your exploration, it may help to collect images that relate to the ideas and concepts that 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. 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 that have explored similar concepts or ideas.

It is very useful to research artists and artworks from the past that present what 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, how they have manipulated the elements and principles of art in their work. Look at the subject matter they selected and the techniques they applied to achieve the resolved works they presented.

ACTIVITY 12.3

Choose a concept or idea you feel that you could explore for the year. It may help to focus on something you are passionate about 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.

ACTIVITY 12.4

- 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 artform, the artists do not have to use the same artform. If you want to paint, you may be inspired by the emotion achieved by a sculptor with the body language and expression they used. You may be inspired by the techniques employed by Dali to produce his surreal paintings and you want to recreate these using digital photography and Photoshop.
- 3 Annotate 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?



Figure 12.1 Diana Mejia – Correa, *Photoshop image in six parts*

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 you reinterpret their approach in a personal way. (See page 25–26 in Chapter 1 for information on plagiarism).

VCE student Diana Mejia-Correa was inspired by the surrealists when she created a personal interpretation on aspects of seeing, using digital photography and Photoshop.

Nicky Purser, another VCE student, 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.

'I copied a charcoal sketch I did in life drawing ... working quickly; the contour line sketch took about 30 seconds and the watercolour about 2 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.'



Visit Charles Reid's website at www.charlesreidart.com to see a collection of his work

Figure 12.2 Nicky Purser, *Charcoal 1*



Figure 12.3 Nicky Purser, *Watercolour 1*

Nicky decided to use tubes of watercolour rather than the palette she had been using to see if 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.'



Figure 12.4
Nicky Purser, *Charcoal*
of Reclining Figure



Figure 12.5
Nicky Purser, *Watercolour*
of Reclining Figure

ACTIVITY 12.5

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 artform.

Nicky achieved a resolved artwork based on a 10-minute gestural contour line drawing of a model 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 12.6
Nicky Purser, *Charcoal of Standing Nude*



Figure 12.7
Nicky Purser, *Watercolour of Standing Nude (Final)*

Investigating, trialling and applying materials, techniques and processes to concepts and ideas

Your folio can take many different directions and explore a range of artforms 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).

Resolving and refining your ideas

Your artwork should display technical skill and the most appropriate materials. 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 formal elements. You should produce solutions that demonstrate considered and well-developed responses to the stages of artmaking.

Jess Maguire, a VCE student, explored abstract painting through the use of line, colour and texture. In one exploration (See Figure 12.8), she cut one of her acrylic trials into strips and arranged them in different ways.

'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 want to physically break up the canvas by painting onto more than one stretched canvas.'

She used drawing to experiment with different compositions.

'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 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 thinking and working process.

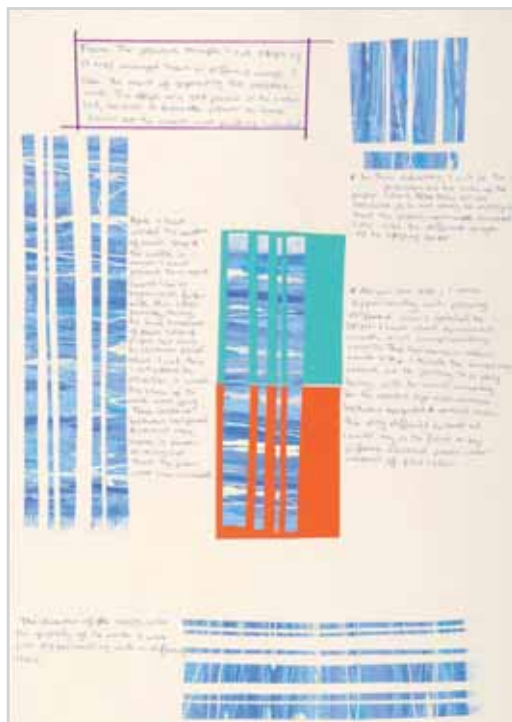
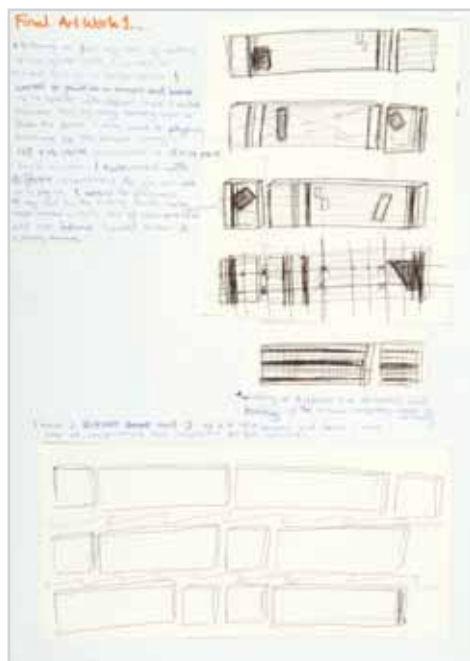


Figure 12.8
Jess Maguire,
Experimentation with
strips from acrylic trial

Figure 12.9
Jess Maguire,
Compositional drawings



Even though Jess had resolved many of the issues she was exploring her final painting 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.

'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'. (See Figure 12.10)

'By using different tones of orange it gives more interest to the work. I chose orange as it is the complementary 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'. (See Figure 12.11)

'After playing around with patches of canvas I decided against their inclusion because it was becoming busy, making it difficult to look at'. (See Figure 12.12)

'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. (See Figure 12.12)



Figure 12.10
Jess Maguire, Process
documented with
photographs 1



Figure 12.11
Jess Maguire, Process documented with
photographs 2

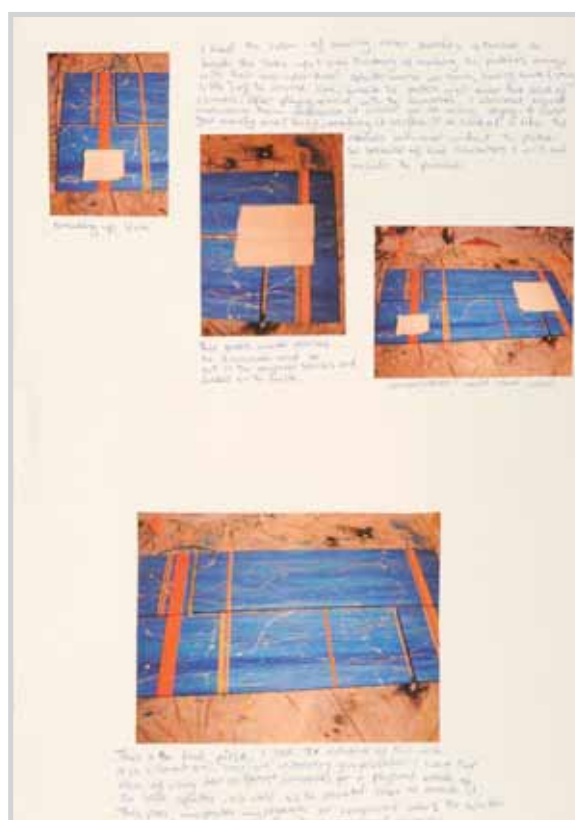


Figure 12.12
Jess Maguire, Process documented with
photographs 3

Documenting your thinking and working practices

Self-reflection should occur regularly throughout the creative process. Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is the focus of my work?
- How can I best express that?
- What methods, media and techniques 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 formal qualities to emphasise the messages and meaning in your artwork/s
- the reason for making decisions and choices in your folio
- symbolism you have made use of.

ACTIVITY 12.6

Use a digital camera to record your working process and use written annotation to record your thinking practice.

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 viewer with all the information they require to navigate your body of work.

There are a number of ways to do this. The study requires you to document the development of investigation and application of materials, techniques and processes in written and visual form.

To document does not only mean to write, but 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 dumps or *maquettes*.

Images on their own are, however, open to interpretation by the viewer. In order to clearly communicate your thinking and working process, it is important to combine written annotation with your visual documentation.

Elisa Bongetti included an oil painting study of her cat (Figure 12.13), as evidence of having explored the medium. Her accompanying annotation, however, communicates her thoughts while doing so and evaluates the result.

Annotate each image with information that includes details about how the ideas can be treated and further developed and include information that reflects the language of the Analytical Frameworks. Your annotation must make use of the art language that you have been developing during theory. Ensure that the terminology is appropriate to this study.

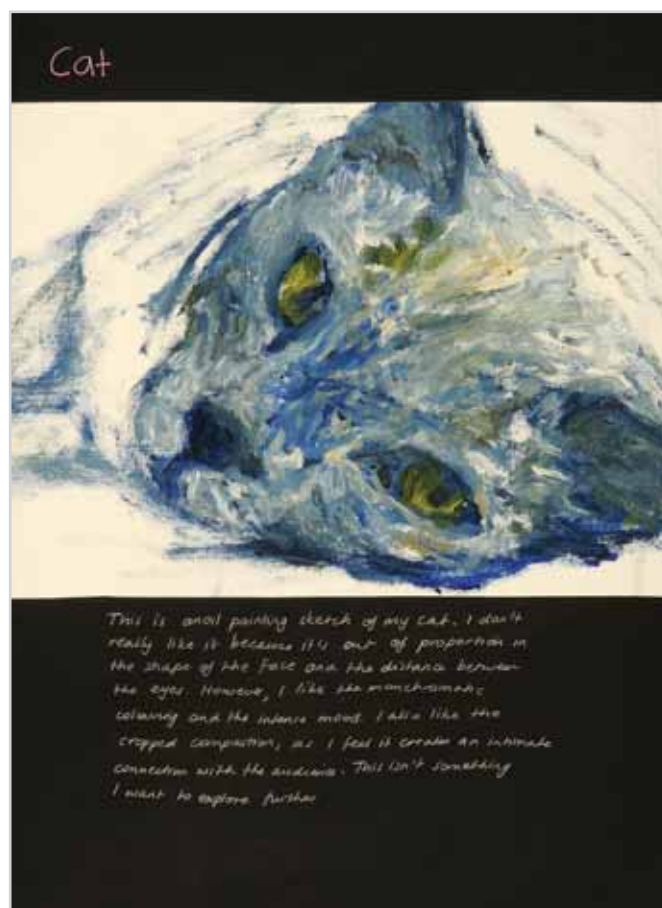
When annotating your body of work it is important to keep it relevant and to use ‘real-time’ annotation. Keeping it relevant to you and the viewer is important. Do not annotate purely because it is one of the assessment criteria. Annotation serves many purposes. It can provide you with a means of working through a problem. Many students find that it helps 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. It will also guide them through your process of creating a body of work.

‘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. I like the monochromatic colouring and the intense mood. I think the cropped composition creates an intimate connection with the viewer’.

maquettes:

a small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

Figure 12.13
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. Screen dumps 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 appear to be a quick resolution. The screen dumps 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.



Figure 12.14
Elisa Bongetti, Painting 1



Figure 12.15
Elisa Bongetti, Painting 2



Figure 12.16
Elisa Bongetti, Digital final



Figure 12.17
Elisa Bongetti,
Screen dumps 1

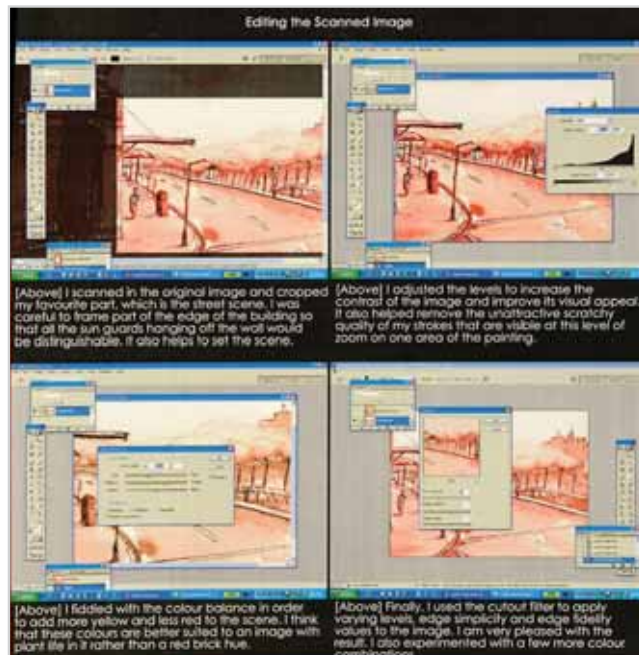


Figure 12.18
Elisa Bongetti, Screen
dumps 2

By presenting your original image and all steps in the process, you can show how you created your final artwork. The student Elisa Bongetti used screen dumps to demonstrate how she combined two watercolour paintings to create a final digital image.

It is not only important for you to record your process for the viewer's benefit, but as a backup for yourself. 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 step of the process. When your folio is assessed, your documentation will 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. Just as important, however, the documentation, whether written, typed or provided by means of screen dumps (Figure 12.19), 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 had done 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 when 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 you have used, or the amount of time you have exposed your paper for.

Writing down your ideas makes them more visible, more 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. 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 you should

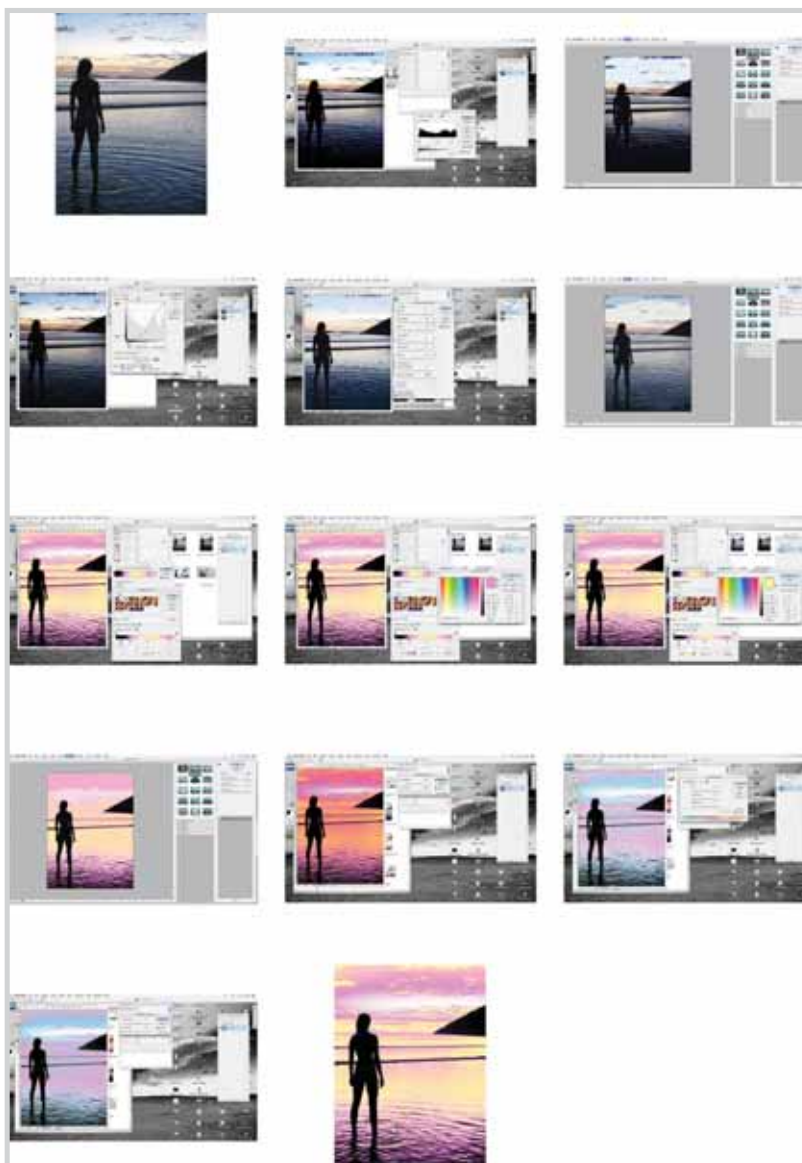


Figure 12.19,
Documentation of
VCE Student Bronwyn
Ward's process

rather ask yourself, 'How much written annotation do I need to record my thinking and working process to help me to produce the body of work I want 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.

Remember, when annotating your folio the assessor or viewer will not have time to read everything that you write. 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.

Another idea to differentiate between various annotations, is to use one colour for each of the Analytical Frameworks you have used and a different colour to highlight your processes and decisions.

Throughout your folio you are required to apply the language of the Analytical Frameworks to reflect upon your own artmaking. The Formal Framework allows you to analyse how you have used the formal elements, style 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 contemporary culturally linked events that reflect upon your artmaking. The Contemporary Framework can be used to discuss the impact of contemporary media, processes, ideas and issues on your exploration of artforms, media and techniques. You could also deal with a 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 artmaking and may be intentionally 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.



Figure 12.20
Elisa Bongetti's key to exploring her folios

As you explore your ideas, materials, techniques and processes, you will use annotation to explain your journey and assist the viewer in navigating 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 how these relate to your current working and thinking practices.

Presenting a folio of work

There is no prescribed method of creating a folio and although most students may find it easiest working in a sketchbook, you can organise your exploration in a number of ways. 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 easily navigate through your folio.

Many students choose to work in a sketchbook as a means to structure their folio and to collect and document their exploration.



This method will tend to be presented 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, you could 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 the next idea starts.

Some students choose to break the exploration up into multiple sketchbooks. One book is for general idea generation. When ideas are established, the student then works each idea through to completion in separate books. New ideas continue to be placed into the first book as they occur.

Another way that some students work is to use presentation folios. This allows for free exploration and development of ideas, media experimentation and refinement to occur in the one sketchbook or outside the sketchbook. Once the work is completed, the pages are removed and presented in a presentation folder in chronological order for each idea, which is placed in its own section of the folder. You could use this approach but instead of using a folder the work can be re-bound in book form. It is important that if you are using either of these systems, you only work on one side of a page to ensure flexibility in the appropriate positioning of the individual pages.

Headings for each section of your folio also help the viewer to navigate your body of work. You should clearly annotate changes in direction and how you have resolved your exploration. It is important to identify any areas of your body of work where you revisit and rework earlier ideas. Provide links to these ideas explain how they have added to your current working practices.

ACTIVITY 12.7

- 1 View the Top Arts exhibition and look through the folios on display. Alternatively, visit www.ngv.vic.gov.au/toparts.
- 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 navigate their folio?
- 4 How do they provide you with insight into their thinking and working practices?



Weblink



Figure 12.21
Elisa Bongetti,
examples of works
in the folio with
annotation

Presenting your final artworks

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 in the assessment criteria to the presentation of your artworks but it is still an important part of your artmaking. 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 it is placed on. Poorly mounted work – mounts that are cut skew, are ripped, uneven or an unsuitable colour are far worse than presenting a work unmounted. Many artists prefer their artworks to interact with the



Figure 12.22
Constantin Brancusi, *The Beginning of the World*, 1920
marble, nickel, silver and stone,
76.2 x 50.8 x 50.8cm, Dallas
Museum of Art, © Constantin
Brancusi/ADAGP, Licensed by
VISCOPY 2009

surroundings and the surfaces they are presented on and therefore leave them unmounted and unframed.

The way 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. 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 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 Figure 12.21 *The Beginning of the World* (1920), 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. 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. 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.

It is important to explore different media and surfaces for your artworks. The surface

Find Constantin Brancusi's *King of Kings* (c1938) at www.guggenheim.org/new-york



Figure 12.23
Fiensted Mobiles, *Flowing Rhythm (red)* in the style of Alexander Calder



ACTIVITY 12.8

- 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 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.

you work on 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 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 you work on and the medium you work with. 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 imbedded 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 artform, medium and surface you are working on. 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 12.23). 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. By piling all these, almost sacred, images on top of each other they 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'.



Figure 12.24 Penny Siopis, *Patience on a Monument: A History Painting*, 1988, oil paint and collage, 200 x 180cm, William Humphries Art Gallery, Kimberly, South Africa

ACTIVITY 12.9

- 1 Find artworks that have used a medium or that have been created on 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.

[13]

ASSESSMENT FOR UNITS 3 AND 4 – OUTCOME 2

Chapter overview

In this chapter, you will read how your creative responses will be assessed. Your responses need to:

- demonstrate your exploration of personal ideas or concepts
- show how you have trialled techniques, materials and processes to produce a body of work
- include at least two artworks.

INTRODUCTION

The school-assessed task contributes to 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 external review by a panel appointed 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.

CONTENT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL ASSESSED TASK

To successfully complete Outcome 2, you are required to develop a body of work that you have worked on progressively throughout the year, exploring personal ideas or concepts to produce at least two finished artworks. Your finished artworks are not assessed individually, but will be assessed as part of your body of work. It is important that you present evidence of a broad innovative investigation, the trialling of materials and techniques and show documentation of your thinking and working practices in your body of work.

Although they 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 these to determine how effectively you have met the criteria of the study design.

Key knowledge

- materials, techniques, processes and art forms appropriate to artmaking
- technical applications to demonstrate a visual language and formal qualities
- elements and principles of art in practice
- visual language that reflects imagination and the development of skills
- selected Analytical Frameworks as a guide for reflective annotation
- art language for the purpose of documentation and annotation.

Key skills

These skills include the ability to:

- make creative personal responses to explore, investigate and experiment with materials, techniques, processes and art forms
- progressively develop and refine ideas and personal concepts
- manipulate formal and technical qualities to produce creative responses
- reflect on personal ideas and concepts
- employ the language of selected Analytical Frameworks as a tool to support reflective
- annotate
- document the development and refinement of their work 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 mark sheet while you are developing your folio. Use this to ensure that you are meeting the requirements of this unit in your body of work.

In addition to your practical exploration of materials and techniques 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 and the mark sheet 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. A focused and imaginative investigation of your selected art form/s and/or media 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 artforms and the development of related technical skills

Very high

Your body of work documents a broad and creative 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 demonstrated a thoughtful and appropriate use of the formal elements and made skillful use of materials and techniques throughout the folio; 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 which progressively realises and resolves your responses and which reflects personal concepts, ideas, direction, aesthetic qualities, art form/s and/or media explorations. Detailed evidence is provided of your thinking and working practices. The development and refinement of your ideas and directions is progressive, innovative and highly imaginative. The application and refinement of techniques and processes demonstrates a very high level of technical skill in the use of materials and tools.

Criterion 4: Understanding and appropriate manipulation of formal elements and principles to produce a creative visual language

Very high

Your application of the formal elements to visually communicate ideas and concepts is insightful, conceptually appropriate and demonstrates excellent aesthetic awareness. The clear annotation throughout your body of work demonstrated a very high level of understanding and control of the formal elements and aesthetic qualities.

Criterion 5: Employing art language and selected Analytical Frameworks as tools to support reflective annotation and the documentation of thinking and working practices

Very high

Your written annotation makes effective use of art language and combines with your visual documentation to clearly communicate your thinking and working processes. Your annotation effectively communicates your application of the analytical frameworks throughout your body of work.

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 innovative thinking and working practices with sustained and critical reflection and evaluation of the development of the work. This work is comprehensively 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 formal elements in the resolution of concepts and ideas is evident.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: OUTCOME 2

SCHOOL-ASSESSED TASK

Name: _____

Outcome 1: Analyse and interpret artworks using the Formal and Personal Frameworks.

Assessment criteria	Very high	High	Med	Low	Very low	Not shown	Marks allocated
The extent to which the work demonstrates:							
Criterion 1 Exploration of creative personal art responses, ideas, concepts and observations							/5
Criterion 2 Experimentation and investigation of materials, techniques, processes and artforms and the development of related technical skills							/5
Criterion 3 Evidence of a progressive development and refinement of skills, ideas and personal concepts							/5
Criterion 4 Understanding and appropriate manipulation of formal elements and principles to produce a creative visual language							/5
Criterion 5 Employing art language and selected Analytical Frameworks as tools to support reflective annotation and the documentation of thinking and working practices							/5
Criterion 6 Resolution of ideas, directions and/or personal concepts in a body of work that includes at least two finished artworks							/5



These criteria have been developed from the VCE Art Study Design. Teachers may choose to adjust them to suit the set task. This criteria sheet is also available on the Student CD-ROM.

GLOSSARY

A

abstract: not representing outward appearances, having no recognisable subject;

abstraction: an artwork that has had elements removed by the artist to create a simplified form

action painting: a painting style developed by Jackson Pollock where the artist would move or 'dance' to apply the paint to the canvas and the painting reflected the action of the painter

aerial: viewing an artwork from directly overhead; a bird's eye view

aerial perspective: the use of atmospheric haze to enhance the illusion of depth; distance appears to be lighter, bluer and 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 the picture is completed in one sitting

allegory: a representation of an abstract idea in concrete form

analysis: a stage in art criticism, following the description of an artwork, and preceding its interpretation and judgement, in which one focuses on the relationships between the elements of art and principles of design in order to gain an understanding of the work's design qualities, or how well the work is ordered

anamorphic: a distorted image that appears normal when viewed from a particular point or with a suitable mirror or lens.

anime: a Japanese style of animation and film

annotate: to write brief notes about your observations and to communicate your thinking and working practices

anthropomorphise: to give human features to an animal or object

antithesis: the opposite of

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

archetype: an original model that is a universal image

art criticism: the description, 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
artform: the specific shape, or quality an artistic expression takes – two-dimensional artforms include painting, drawing, printmaking, collage and photography; three-dimensional art forms include sculpture, ceramics and construction; four-dimensional artforms include those making use of time, such as; performance, video and installation.

asymmetrical: opposite of symmetrical, the objects in an image are not balanced; each half of the image does not resemble the other

atmosphere: emotion created in an artwork by the techniques or formal elements that an artist uses

avant garde: art that is ahead of its time; innovative art that explores new ideas and techniques

B

backlighting: light coming from behind the subject

Baroque: art style or movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries where artists used strong contrasts, emotion, movement, exaggeration and theatrical effects

batik: a process which involves using wax on fabric; the fabric is dyed and the wax removed using heat; a pattern is formed where the wax covered the fabric and resisted the dye

body of work: a collection of visual and written material communicating thinking and working practices, which may include art journals, in addition to exploring and resolving artworks

C

calligraphic: lines that are usually flowing like the brushstrokes used in Asian characters or writing

chiaroscuro: Italian for 'light-dark', refers to the contrast of light and dark to make forms look three dimensional

cinematic: having qualities specific 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

collaboration: two or more artists working together to create an artwork

collage: a term used to describe both the technique and the resulting artwork in which pieces of

paper, fabric and other materials are arranged and stuck down on a surface such as paper or canvas

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

commissions: situations in which an artist is paid or requested by another person to create an artwork; often the benefactor will state what the subject matter of the artwork will be and the techniques that the artist will use

conceptual: concerned with ideas

conceptual art: art in which the creative thought, the concept and the process are considered to be more important than the product

constructivist: an art movement formed in Russia; artists from this period believed that art should represent the industrial developments in the modern world

contrast: when two very different elements are used in the same work specifically to emphasise the difference between them, for example the use of light and shade or such as contrasting colours blue and yellow

conventions: accepted rules

co-operative: a group of artists working together

cropping: to trim parts of an image to remove unwanted sections

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

D

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 artistic value and had little or no aesthetics

depict: show, represent or demonstrate

depth of field: photographic term to describe the distance between the nearest and furthest points that are in acceptably sharp focus in a photograph

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

design principles: balance, focal point, unity (including harmony), variety, rhythm and space

development works: sketches or small artworks that assist in the development of techniques and ideas for an artwork

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

E

earth art: an art movement which emerged in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which landscape and the work of art are inextricably linked

ephemeral: an artwork that is temporary and lasts in the site for a short period of time; works such as installations are ephemeral

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

F

figurative: representing objects in a way that they can be easily recognised

firing: the process of hardening clay by putting it in a kiln at very high temperatures

foreground: space created in the front area of an artwork, particularly in landscape works

foreshortening: shortening or distorting objects to create an illusion of depth and make them look like they are coming towards the viewer

found object art: artworks created in this style are usually objects found by the artist and treated as artworks; the artist will place the object in a gallery to place value on it or use the object as inspiration for other artworks

fourth dimension: the element of time in a contemporary artwork

framing: to isolate and draw attention to the most important part of an image by surrounding it with a visual 'frame'

G

gekiga: adult-oriented Japanese graphic novels

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

geometric: mathematical shapes often used in the structure and composition of artworks

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: a thin translucent layer of oil paint

Gothic Revival: a nineteenth-century style inspired by the Gothic period and known for its sense of fantasy and whimsy

H

hand coloured gelatin silver prints: black and white prints that are coloured using watercolour paints or drawing inks; it is important to hand colour subtly by patiently layering transparent layers of colour into the light, areas of the print

hand colouring: many black and white wood block designs are coloured by hand; the artist will paint in the white areas of the print

harmony: an artwork has harmony when its elements fit well together

high key: composed mainly of light tones

highly refined: highly polished; highly developed

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

Humanist: one who gives priority to human endeavours and values rather than religions or spiritual beliefs

I

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

ideal: perfect

idealised: treated as perfect

impasto: Italian word that refers to thick, textured paintwork with visible brush strokes

Impressionism: a French art movement in which artists represented everyday scenes in an attempt to capture light, surface and atmosphere

in the round: freestanding three-dimensional form that can be viewed from all sides

incised: cut into

incubus: demon or evil spirit

installation: three-dimensional artwork designed for gallery space or other environment for a specific period of time; these artworks are designed to be walked through or around so the viewer becomes immersed in the experience of the work

K

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

L

land art: an art movement which 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 or edges

linear perspective: the illusion of spatial depth created by parallel lines that appear to converge as they move towards the horizon

low key: using mainly dark tones or tints with few highlights

M

Madonna: the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus

manga: Japanese comic books or graphic novels

maquette: small-scale model made as a preliminary study for a larger work

materials: what an artwork is actually made of, not to be confused with technique, which is how the materials are used

medium: the canvas, board or paper that an artwork can be painted or drawn upon; most mediums are prepared with a surface that allows the paint, pencil or charcoal to adhere to the surface

metaphor: one thing used to represent or symbolise another with similar qualities

minimalist: an artwork that uses the smallest range of art elements and materials possible

mise-en-scene: the arrangement of performers and properties on stage or before a camera in a film

modernist: an art style that uses simple elements of art to represent ideas

monochromatic: consisting of only one colour and its tints and shades

monumental: resembling a monument; grand or imposing

motifs: signs or symbols that represents a personal idea for the artist, their beliefs and culture

mythological: relating to myths; imaginary

N

narrative: telling a story

narrative qualities: artworks that feature narrative qualities tell a story through the subject matter or symbols created by the artist

negative space: the space around, between or through objects (which occupy positive space); a technique used in sculpture where the space within the sculpture creates balance in the work

Neoclassical: revival of the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome

Neo-expressionism: Expressionist artworks produced after the Expressionist movement in the early twentieth century

O

oeuvre: French word describing the collected works of an artist

open composition: composition in which the objects in the image extend visually beyond the edges of the frame

overlaid: placed over the top of one another; overlapping

P

painterly: painting with visible brush strokes that create areas of colour and tone that merge rather than being contained within outlines

palette: the range of colours used by an artist; surface on which paints are mixed

panning: moving the camera horizontally to follow a moving object

paradox: a contrast created in artwork by using materials to convey opposing ideas

patron: person who supports the arts, especially financially

Performance Art: art events involving time, space, the performer's body and a live audience

persona: a perceived personality or role

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

perspective: see linear and aerial perspective

photogram: an image, similar to those created by Man Ray, where objects are placed on photographic paper and exposed to light, leaving the silhouettes of the forms on the surface of the paper

photomedia: the use of photography, rather than traditional tools of art, to create images

photorealism: style of painting that resembles a photograph in its reproduction of accurate and realistic detail; sometimes called super realism

pietà: Italian word meaning 'pity' or 'compassion', usually applied to an image of the Virgin mourning over the dead body of Jesus

Postmodern: art style that challenges traditions and the idea of originality by using non-traditional materials, appropriation or humour; artworks in the Postmodern style collapse the differences between what is known as high art and the visual imagery of popular culture; Postmodern artists often break the rules of art to provoke a reaction from the viewer – the artworks are intended to be interpreted differently by different people

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

prosthetic: a device that substitutes for or supplements a body part

psyche: Greek translation of the Latin *anima*, which means soul; it refers to the human spirit or mind

R

Rayograph: placing of objects on photographic paper and then exposing the paper to light; this process was discovered by Man Ray and the images are often called photograms

readymade: a found object displayed as an artwork; see found object art

realism: reality as seen by the eye; naturalism

relief carving: a process in sculpture where a block of stone or wood is carved; relief carvings are viewed from the front only and are usually created on the sides of buildings, particularly in ancient and classical cultures

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 the student has explored and refined to the point that the artwork is considered complete

Rococo: an eighteenth century art style noted for its delicacy and elegance

S

secular: worldly, materialistic; 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

shallow space: limited depth in an image

site specific: an artwork created for a specific site; the artwork will relate to various aesthetic qualities of the site or the environment in/for which it is created

slip: liquid made by mixing finely ground clay with water, used for decorating or joining clay

solarisation: a process introduced by Man Ray whereby photographic paper is exposed to light during the developing process; as a result the image on the paper often has a silver 'halo' or ring of light

storyboard: series of sketches that depict the changes to the scenes and action of a planned film or video production

stylise: simplify using a set of rules

stylised: a simplified style where the artist removes all detail so the artwork is reduced to a series of shapes and lines (e.g. Egyptian art)

stylised brushstrokes: brushstrokes that are simple lines or shapes

subject matter: the content or subject of an artwork

subjective: based on personal feelings rather than external observation

surreal: having a dreamlike quality

Surrealism: an art movement launched in Paris in 1924 that was based on dreams and the creation of artworks based on irrational thought

symbols: signs that represent ideas

symmetrical: where one side of an image mirrors the other. A work can have symmetry in the way it is arranged without the items in each half of the image being identical: rather it is their size and position that creates the symmetry, creating what is known as 'formal balance'

T

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

tangible form: providing a visual symbol of an idea, words or lyrics; the artist creates this form by using materials and techniques that they feel represents the idea

techniques: the manner in which the artist applies materials to the artwork

tempera: paint made by mixing powdered colour with a water-soluble binder such as egg yolk

terracotta reliefs: terracotta is a red clay that is soft and easy to carve; many medieval villages in Britain carved decorations, known as reliefs, on the outside of their buildings out of terracotta

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

translucent: a material that allows limited light to pass through it; translucent sculptures appear to shine

triptych: an artwork in three panels or parts

U

unity: when a work has a sense of wholeness; when its elements are balanced and harmonious

V

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: variety is created by using a different element in a repetitive pattern (e.g. a square in a pattern of circles)

visual elements: formal elements of an artwork such as line, shape, colour, tone, texture and form

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

visual rhythms: arrangement of elements that create movement or repetition in an artwork

vitrine: glass cabinet or showcase

voyeur: French term for an obsessive, often secretive, watcher

Z

zooming: photographic term: to bring a subject into close-up without losing focus

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