



THE LAND IS US

STORIES, PLACE & CONNECTION

Artworks from the NGV Collection

30 March -
1 September 2024

Education Resource

sam
Shepparton Art Museum



Image above: *The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection* - Artworks from the NGV Collection, installation view, Shepparton Art Museum, 2024. Photo: Leon Schoots.

Cover image: Sidney Nolan, *Kelly with horse*, 1955, installation view, Shepparton Art Museum, 2024. Photo: Leon Schoots. © The Estate of Sidney Nolan/Licensed by the Copyright Agency, Australia

The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection **Artworks from the NGV Collection**

30 March to 1 September 2024

Curated by and presented exclusively at Shepparton Art Museum in partnership with National Gallery of Victoria, *The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection* brings together notable artworks from the NGV Collection that offer an expanded consideration of landscape art.

The exhibition weaves together complex and varied artistic approaches by Australian, First Nations, and international artists to present a range of perspectives surrounding our fascination and connection to the land. Significant paintings by artists Arthur Streeton, Frederick McCubbin, and John Brack are brought into dialogue with contemporary Australian and international artists, including Patricia Piccinini, Brook Andrew, Hoda Afshar, Ah Xian, and Destiny Deacon.

The Australian identity is entangled with the land. Even when not at the forefront of our minds, it is present in our stories, memories, histories, and places. Whether it be physically, spiritually, or economically, it informs and shapes our social and cultural relationships and our state of being.

The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection turns our sight, minds, and hearts to the land beneath our feet. Each artwork offers a place from which artists convey, re-interpret, or affirm the lived experiences of people and their stories of connection with the landscape.

Curators: Jessica O'Farrell and Belinda Briggs

SAM recognises the Yorta Yorta as the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the lands and water of the Country upon which SAM is built. We pay our respect to elders past, present and emerging.



The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection - Artworks from the NGV Collection.
Installation view, Shepparton Art Museum, 2024. Photo: Leon Schoots.

This education kit is designed to guide educators and students through the exhibition *The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection*. It covers key exhibition themes and highlights artworks within the exhibition.

For each theme there are discussion questions to help prompt conversation when viewing the artworks.

Additionally, there are activities to help dive into themes further with your students back in the classroom.

This booklet is aimed at students in Year 7-9 Visual Art. Please find Victorian Curriculum Outcomes on page 16.

Exhibiting artists

Hoda Afshar
Brook Andrew
Gordon Bennett
John Brack
Louisa Bufardecì
Destiny Deacon
Rosalie Gascoigne
John Glover
TreaHna Hamm
Taloi Havini and Stuart Miller
Hans Heysen
Beth Mbitjana Inkamala
Judith Pungkarta Inkamala
Rosemary Laing
Myoung Ho Lee

Frederick McCubbin
Trevor Nickolls
Grant Nimmo
Sidney Nolan
John Olsen
Lin Onus
Marylin Brown Petyarr
Patricia Piccinini
John Pule
Ben Quilty
Cliff Reid
Reko Rennie
Tom Roberts
Arthur Streeton
Jane Sutherland

Rahel Kngwarria Ungwanaka
May Vale
HJ Wedge
Fred Williams
Walter Withers
Ah Xian
John Young



Lin Onus
Yorta Yorta
Fire 2, 1989
synthetic polymer paint on canvas, bark, feathers
2002.140

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Presented through the NGV Foundation by Dr James Rowe, Governor, 2002.
© Estate of Lin Onus/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia
Image credit: Leon Schoots

Knowledge

This artwork reflects on the passing down of knowledge through generations of First Nations Peoples. It highlights the importance of the First Nations practice of conducting controlled fires to encourage bushland regeneration and regrowth.

Yorta Yorta artist Lin Onus (b. 1948, d. 1996) travelled to Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory and collected feathers, flowers, sand, and bark and then used them in this painting.

Onus' lived experiences and the traditional ways of First Nation Peoples helped his work to become a cultural bridge, sharing knowledge with First Nations peoples and non-First Nations people alike.

Discussion questions

- When looking at the artwork, how does the work make you feel? Why do you feel that way?
- What textures can you see in the painted element of the artwork?
- What textures can you see in the found objects?
- Why do you think it is important for knowledge to be passed down? How do you think this painting helps to pass down knowledge?

Make it at school

What knowledge and skills do you think should be passed down to the next generation?

Create a mixed media artwork focusing on knowledge that you would like to pass on, using items collected from around your home and school to help tell the story.



John Brack
The car, 1955
 oil on canvas
 3301-4

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1956.

© National Gallery of Victoria
 Image credit: Leon Schoots

Community

John Brack (b. 1920, d. 1999) regularly featured Melbourne and its people in his artworks, often reflecting on city life and society's changing attitude towards consumerism following the Second World War.

He was inspired to make this artwork after watching a car pass him in the street one day in the city. When painting, he decided to change the background from a cityscape to the countryside so the family's faces would stand out more.

This scene is also making a commentary on society by depicting something that was becoming a new part of modern family life: taking a drive out of the city into the country on a Sunday afternoon.

Discussion questions

- If you were to stand on a street corner now with the idea to capture something similar, what would be the same? What would be different? Why do you think that is?

Make it at school

Take a photo of a car as it drives past the school. Using that photo as inspiration, create an artwork in John Brack's style that reimagines *The car* with a modern family. What is in the background, through the windows? What does the car look like? What are the family doing?



Image above: *The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection* - Artworks from the NGV Collection, installation view, Shepparton Art Museum, 2024. Photo: Leon Schoots.

The Australian Landscape

At one time in history, a new land was 'found' or 'discovered' just about every time a ship left port, whether it left from England or Spain. Then after a while, people were sent to these 'new' lands to find gold, to seek a better and new opportunities, or, as was the case for Australia, as punishment.

As many of these settlers were missing home, they would paint in the style that was popular in Europe. Throughout this period, Australian landscape art often represented the ideal landscape or green hills, and lush Australian bush. However, First Nations people were notably absent from many of these works or, when they were depicted, were portrayed negatively. In this section of *The Land is Us*, SAM has considered the perspectives of First Nations peoples alongside the colonial artists. The presentation of these works results in a unique experience in the space, particularly with the unusual lighting!

Discussion questions

Look through this section of the exhibition and consider:

- How have the artists represented the Australian landscape?
- Is there an artwork that reminds you of your home or parts of Shepparton and the Goulburn valley?
- How have artworks by First Nations people contrasted with the other artworks in this section?
- Does it make you see the artworks differently? If so, why?



Artwork from left to right:

Beth Mbitjana Inkamala
Arrernte

Footscray Bulldogs in Footscray, covered vase, 2015
earthenware
2015.467

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015.

© Beth Mbitjana Inkamala/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

Judith Pungkarta Inkamala
Arrernte

1948 VFL Grand Final, covered vase, 2015
earthenware
2015.457

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015.

© Judith Pungkarta Inkamala/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

Rahel Kngwarria Ungwanaka
Western Arrernte

Leon Davis and the Dream Team, covered vase, 2015
earthenware
2015.462

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2015.

© Estate of Rahel Kngwarria Ungwanaka/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

Image credit: Leon Schoots

Storytelling

Vessels and vases have been used as a canvas to aid storytelling since Ancient Greek times. These artworks were made by Beth Mbitjana Inkamala, Judith Pungkarta Inkamala, and Rahel Kngwarria Ungwanaka, who all belong to a group of artists known as the Hermannsburg Potters in Ntaria/Hermannsburg, Northern Territory.

The Hermannsburg Potters use hand-coil and pinch techniques to create terracotta pots, which are then painted to depict the Western Arrernte landscape, flora, fauna, history, and contemporary community life. The artworks featured here all tell the stories of trailblazing First Nations AFL players who have become important figures nationally, particularly amongst First Nations communities.

Discussion questions

- How are the vases created by the Hermannsburg Potters similar to those from Ancient Greece? How are they different?
- Why is this artwork important?
- What would you depict on a vessel? What do you think is important enough?

Make it at school

Design and create your own vessel using the hand coil and pinch techniques.



Patricia Piccinini
The Rescuers, 2021
 silicone, fibreglass, clothing, sneakers, hair, possum (fur),
 bandages, cotton, plastic, metal
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2024.
 © Patricia Piccinini
 Image credit: Leon Schoots

Environmental issues

Artist Patricia Piccinini is well-known for creating life-like sculptures that often merge together humans, animals, and objects. In *The Rescuers* (2021), Piccinini uses her art to draw attention to the topic of climate change. Inspired by footage of a woman rescuing a koala during the 2020 bushfires, Piccinini reimagines the event with two young girls in the place of the woman. She made this change to emphasise to the audience the negative impact climate change will directly have on young people and future generations.

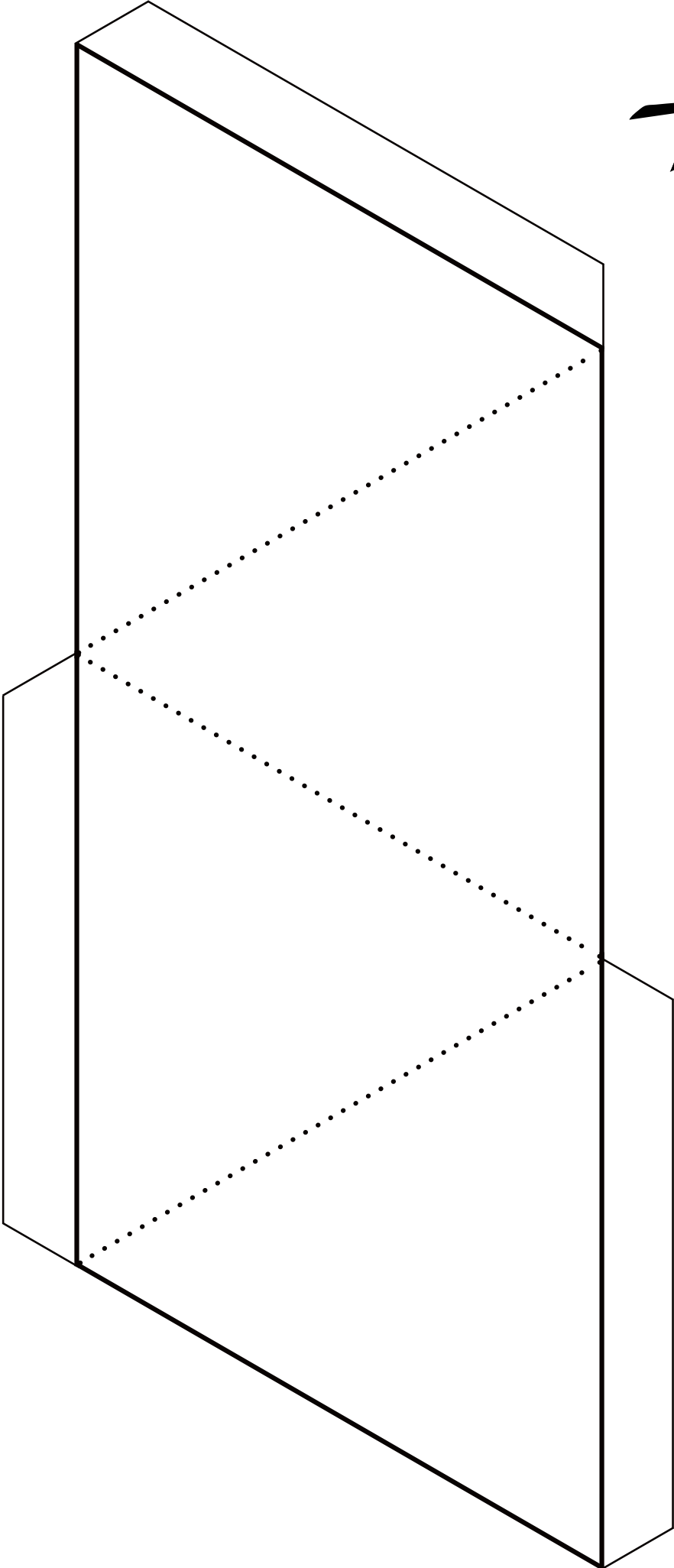
Discussion questions

- What emotions do you feel now, knowing the story? Have they changed?
- What changes can you make to the current climate? What can you teach your parents?
- What lesson does this artwork teach us?
- What do you think of the facial expressions of the people?

Make it at school

Working in groups of three, make a pyramid diorama about climate change or an environmental issue. On one side, pick a natural or urban setting and show what it looks like now. On the second side, show what this setting will look like in the future if we don't take care of the environment. On the third side, show what this setting will look like in the future if we make positive changes to preserve the environment.

Make it at school – Cut, draw and fold the paper. (Works better on A3)





Rosemary Laing
groundspeed (red piazza) #2, 2001
type C photograph
2004.620

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
for Living Australian Artists, 2004.

© Estate of Rosemary Laing
This digital record has been made available on NGV
Collection Online through the generous support of
Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest



Myoung Ho Lee
Tree... #7, 2014
inkjet print
2015.484

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Purchased with funds donated by the Gjergja Family, 2015.
© Myoung Ho Lee, courtesy Yossi Milo Gallery, New York
Photo: Shepparton Art Museum

The Natural World

Rosemary Laing explores the relationship humans have with the environment through the medium of photography. She makes comment on how the lifestyles of the early European settlers in Australia impacted the land's native flora and fauna, to negative effect. Compare this to the work of Myoung Ho Lee, who places white canvases behind trees before photographing them to highlight their uniqueness and beauty.

Discussion questions

- What can we learn when we stop and think about how our actions and lifestyles can impact our environment?
- What changes did the European settlers make to the land? What are the lasting effects of this?
- What art elements are present in Laing's photograph?
- What art principles are present in Laing's work?

Make it at School

Laing: Pick something built by humans that has a negative impact on the environment but a positive impact on human life and blend it into the natural landscape.

Ho Lee: Take a walk outside and pick a plant and make it the hero by placing a white card behind it to make the plant stand out from the background.

Discussion questions after task

- What are you trying to draw attention to? Did it work?
- Now swap with a friend. What are they trying to draw attention to? Did it work? What made it successful or unsuccessful?



Ah Xian
China China – Bust 71, 2002
 porcelain
 2006.182

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
 Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
 for Living Australian Artists, 2006.
 © Courtesy of the artist
 Image credit: Leon Schoots

Traditions

Artist Ah Xian moved from China to Australia in the early 1990 through seeking political asylum. He now collaborates with artists in Jingdezhen, China, to create porcelain busts modelled from plaster casts of real-life people. Xian applies traditional designs and materials from his Chinese heritage, including hand-painted landscapes on porcelain, to the Western art form of busts, which originated in Ancient Rome. By blending these two traditions together, Xian reflects on his experience as a migrant, with his own cultural background and history, living in a foreign country with a very different cultural heritage.

Discussion questions

- What is a tradition? When does something become a 'tradition'?
- If you could work with any artist, who would you choose and why?
- What would be some challenges of working with another artist?
- What would be the benefit of working with another artist?

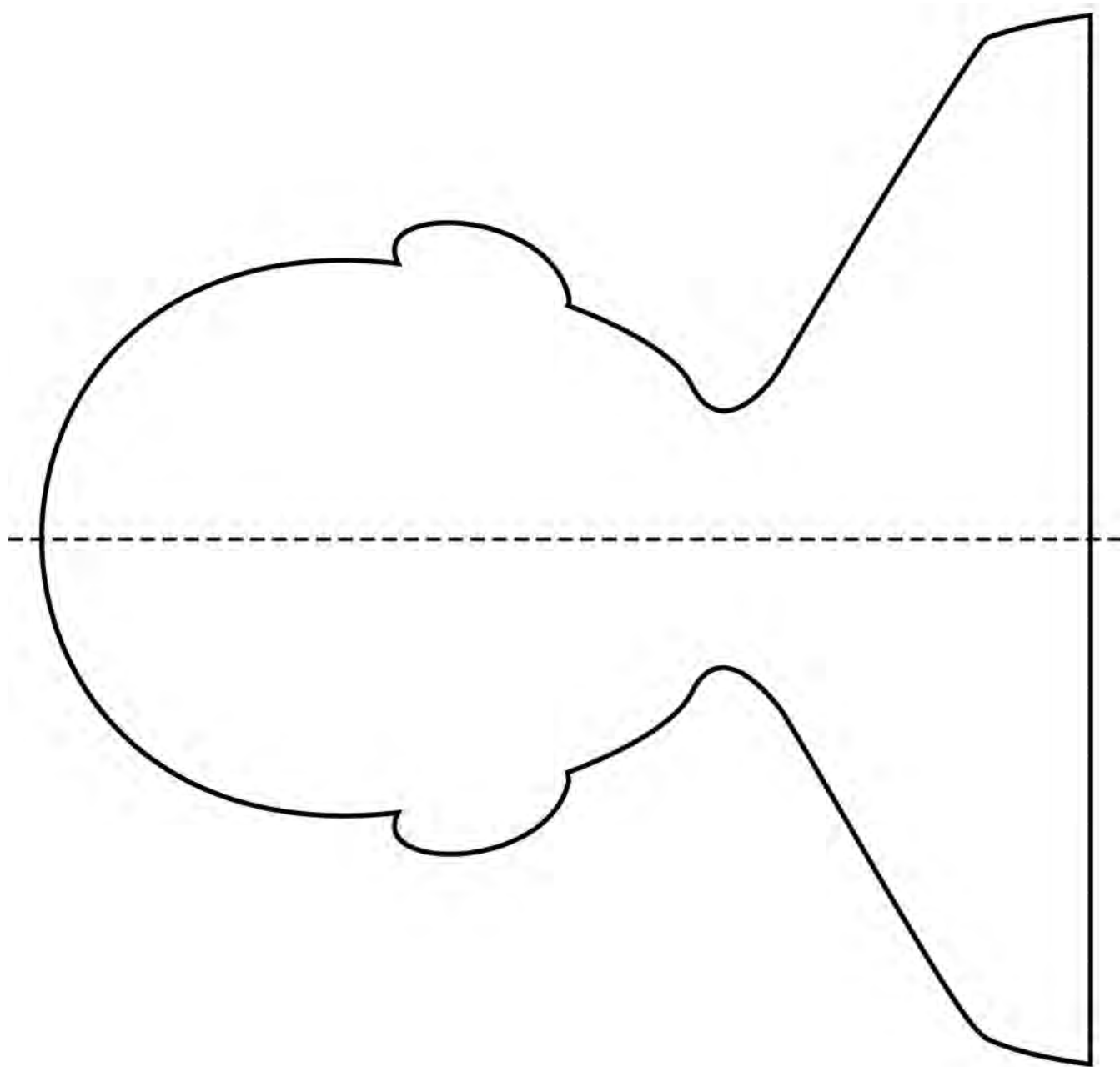
Make it at school

Make a collaborative artwork bust with a partner. In pairs, decide on a topic for your artwork and discuss what your collaborative artwork will look like. Then sit on opposite sides of the room and complete your half without discussing again with your partner. Once completed, bring your halves together. How similar or different are the two final artworks?

Discussion questions after task

- What worked with your partner? What didn't?
- Now swap with a friend. What are they trying to draw attention to? Did it work? What made it successful or unsuccessful?

Make it at school – Cut along the dotted line to split the bust, and draw or colour on each half separately.(Works better on A3)



Glossary

Asylum

Protection or safety given to people who have been forced to leave their own countries due to violence or war.

Canvas

A strong, coarse, unbleached cloth made from hemp or something similar (for strength) used as a surface for artworks.

Climate change

A change in the typical weather for a region — such as high and low temperatures and amount of rainfall — over a long period of time.

Collaboration

The action of working with someone to produce something.

Contemporary

Relating to events or people living in the present time.

Consumerism

The buying and using of goods and services.

Culture

The ideas and social behaviours of a group of people or society.

Depiction

Representation of a person, story, building, etc. in an art form.

Fauna

Animals and animal life. Often used when referring to a particular region, habitat, or historical period.

Flora

Plants and plant life. Often used when referring to a particular region, habitat, or historical period.

Glaze

A glass coating on ceramics. It can be colourful, clear, glossy, matte, or textured.

Medium

The material used by an artist, such as oil paint, clay, or glass.

Mixed Media

A type of visual art that combines more than one medium or material, such as fabric, paper, or plastic.

Monotone

Using different shades of the same colour, most commonly black or white.

Porcelain

A hard, white, shiny type of ceramic that is commonly used to create plates and dishes.

Regeneration

A process where plants and animals regrow lost or damaged parts.

Sculpture

A 3D art form that can be realistic or abstract, that is usually carved in wood, stone, casting metal, or plaster.

Terracotta

Fired clay, typically brownish/red in colour that is unglazed and used as ornamental building material or in building.

Themes

Reoccurring ideas within artworks, either from the same artist or within an exhibition.

Traditional

To act in tradition, which is a long established custom (or art form) that has been passed down through the generations.

Vessels

A hollow container to hold liquid, such as a bowl, cask, or vase.

Victorian Curriculum Outcomes

This booklet is aimed at students in Year 7-9 Visual Art.

Level 7-8

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks. (VCAVAE033)

Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in artworks. (VCAVAE034)

Experiment with materials, techniques, technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts, and themes in artworks. (VCAVAV035)

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks and how they are viewed by audiences. (VCAVAR038)

Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. (VCAVAR039)

Level 9-10

Explore how artists manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and express their intentions in art works. (VCAVAE041)

Select and manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts and themes. (VCAVAV042)

Conceptualise, plan and design artworks and express ideas, concepts and artistic intentions. (VCAVAV043)

Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artworks considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience. (VCAVAP044)

Analyse and interpret artworks to explore the different forms of expressions, intentions and viewpoints of artists and how they are viewed by audiences. (VCAVAR045)

Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints. (VCAVAR046)

Exhibition acknowledgement

The Land is Us: Stories, Place & Connection is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria's Fine Arts Indemnification Scheme.

Exhibition Partner:



Government Partners:



Exhibition Supportor:



FREE ENTRY

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