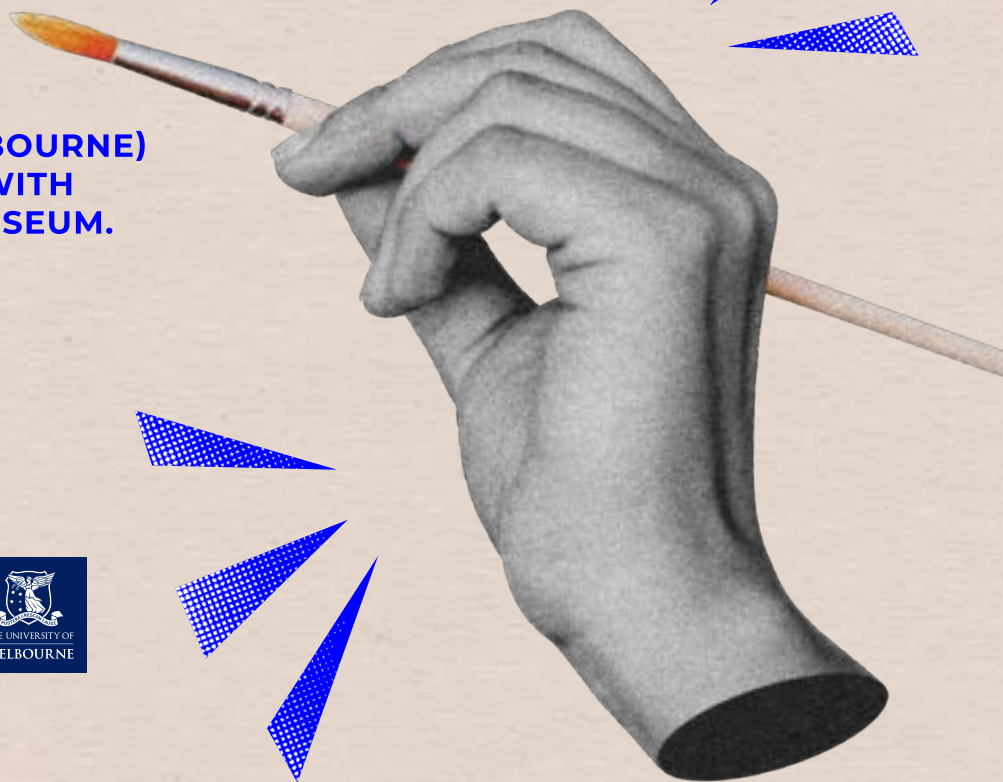


Art-Party like it's 1969: Australian Art in the 60s-80s

Featuring

DR LISA SLADE
(UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE)
IN COLLABORATION WITH
SHEPPARTON ART MUSEUM.

sam
Shepparton Art Museum



Are you ready to art-party like its 1969?



Shake up a cocktail and settle into the conversation pit, because together with Dr Lisa Slade, we've created a toolkit that invites you into the world of Australian art from the 1960s to the 1980s.

This engaging toolkit explores Australian art from the 1960s to 1980s through the creative practices of Brett Whiteley and his peers. Designed for lovers of art, avid learners, and educators, it includes readings, conversation prompts, retro recipes, and party tips—plus invitations to free upcoming talks for deeper insight into Whiteley's world.

How to use this toolkit

- 1) **Host an Art Party:** Gather friends, family or fellow creatives for a themed night in. Print the pack, read together, share snacks, and let the prompts guide your conversations!
- 2) **Go solo:** Make yourself a cup of tea or a glass of wine, read through the pack at your own pace, and journal your reflections.
- 3) **Join us online:** Use this pack to prepare for our online conversation with Dr Lisa Slade on Thursday 14th August.

What you need

To set the stage and spark your creativity at your art-party, we suggest having on hand:

- Paper and pen to jot down your thoughts
- A printed version of the pack
- Snacks and drinks
- A comfy spot to gather, think, and chat
- A speaker for a 70s/80s-inspired playlist (find the QR code below)
- And maybe some light banter over which cocktail or mocktail pairs best with Whiteley's work!

Your Reading List

BY DR LISA SLADE

Dr Lisa Slade is the Hugh Ramsay Chair in Australian Art History in the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. As both a curator and art historian, Dr Slade has played an active role and has a critical interest in how exhibition making and collection development make Australia's art histories.

Curated by Dr Slade, this selection of readings draws from the *Art + Australia* archive, a newly accessible treasure trove of Australian art writing, thanks to the University of Melbourne. This archive offers rich insight into the cultural and artistic landscape from 1963 to now, perfectly aligning with the timeline of Brett Whiteley's career.

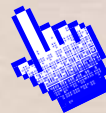
Whiteley himself is referenced across 150 issues, from exhibition reviews to tributes, offering a fascinating lens into his evolving place in Australia's art world. You can browse issues online or download them in full – think of it like flipping through the coffee table magazine at your very own Whiteley art party!

You can find all three readings (and many, many more) here:

artandaustralia.com/archive/

Reading One

Humphrey McQueen, 'Brett Whiteley',
Art and Australia, vol. 17, no. 1, 1979, pp. 45–51



This reading showcases historian and cultural commentator Humphrey McQueen's written response to seeing Brett Whiteley's solo exhibition at the Robin Gibson Gallery in Sydney.

[Excerpt] *Neither the orange picture nor anything downstairs could prepare the senses for the enchanted world beyond that doorway. On all four walls are paintings of birds. Blues. Greens. Orange. White. Silver. Down the middle of the slender room are six blue and white pots and three fantastic sculptures including a stuffed, headless emu with an extended wooden neck. On top of a tall pedestal there is an eyrie with a gigantic egg. A sound system plays Japanese Buddhist temple music and, later, the sounds of Dylan.*

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

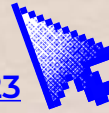
[Prompt 1] Without looking at the images from the article, draw what McQueen describes using only the colours he lists. Then, compare drawings as a group – what's similar or surprising?

[Prompt 2] Now view the actual installation photographs in the article. How close were your interpretations? What's different in mood or detail?

[Prompt 3] Find a piece of Japanese Buddhist temple music and a Bob Dylan track from the 60s-70s. Listen together. What kind of mood do they create? What might have drawn Whiteley to both?

Reading Two

Robert Gray, 'A Few Takes on Brett Whiteley',
Art and Australia, vol. 24, no. 2, 1986, pp. 216–223



In 1986, poet Robert Gray visited Brett Whiteley's studio. In his reflective essay, Gray contemplates Whiteley's artistic influences, his expressive approach, and the flowing, sinuous forms that recur throughout his work.

[Excerpt] *Whiteley and his work are always provocative and much has been said and written over the years, but one thing is certain, he possesses, and continues to exploit, a remarkable ability to focus on the essence of things and his paintings are truly and openly expressionist.*

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

[Prompt 1] Elsewhere in the article, Gray speaks of the sinuosity in Whiteley's work. Find examples of this sinuosity in his drawing, painting and sculpture.

[Prompt 2] Find sinuous forms in nature and use drawing and/or photography to capture and document these forms.

[Prompt 3] Gray lists Whiteley's many influences – among them artists like Lloyd Rees, William Dobell and Francis Bacon, as well as poets and musicians. List your own influences. Rule out nothing and no one.

Reading Three

'Tributes: Brett Whiteley',
Art and Australia, vol. 30, no. 2, 1992, p. 193



Following Brett Whiteley's death in 1992, *Art and Australia* published three tributes from prominent figures in the arts:

[Excerpts]

"...he added a personal vision of men and women and the physical world to twentieth-century figurative art."

Bryan Robertson, British curator and gallery director who exhibited Whiteley's work in London

*"His major painting of the early 1970s, *Alchemy*, is probably the ultimate Australian 'Sex 'n drugs 'n rock 'n roll' piece."*

Joanna Mendelssohn, Sydney-based academic, art critic and curator

"...extraordinary talent which explored, probed and pummelled to the very edge of existence with such tireless dedication..."

Lawrence Daws, Australian artist and close friend of Whiteley

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

[Prompt 1] Choose your favourite obituary quote from the three above. Why do you like it? What stands out to you?

[Prompt 2] Compose an obituary for a prominent artist, musician or writer who has inspired you. What would you say about them if you were given only 20 words to do so?

RUN YOUR OWN

art-party at home!

A SUGGESTED SCHEDULE FOR THE ART-PARTY.

A potential creative itinerary
for a lively and inspiring night in.



Time	Activity	Details
6.30pm	Welcome & Drinks	Set the mood with music, lighting, and your signature cocktail. Let guests settle in and mingle.
6.45pm	Reading One & Creative Prompts	Read the excerpt aloud and dive into the first creative prompt. Sketch imagined spaces before revealing the images.
7.15pm	Reading Two & Drawing/ Photography Activity	Read Robert Gray's piece, then invite participants to respond through drawing, photography or conversation.
7.45pm	Refresh & Refuel	Break for snacks and drink top-ups. Encourage informal conversation – maybe play some Dylan here!
8pm	Reading Three & Writing Prompt	Read the tribute texts. Prompt participants to write a 20-word tribute. Invite sharing.
8.30pm onwards	Open Studio Time	Let the space stay open for ongoing sketching, journaling, reflection, or sharing.

COMPLEMENT YOUR ART PARTY WITH A
WHITELEY-INSPIRED COCKTAIL OR A CLASSIC 70S SNACK!

Food & Drink

SIGNATURE COCKTAIL

Blue Egg Martini

Ingredients

- 45ml gin
- 15ml blue curacao
- 15ml dry vermouth
- Ice
- Orange zest or edible flower

Instructions

Shake all ingredients with ice and strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish and serve with a surrealist flourish!

Mocktail Version: Mix lemonade, a splash of blue food colouring, orange juice, and soda water over ice (Yum!)

SNACK IDEAS

Pineapple Hedgehog

This retro sculptural snack is equal parts tasty and absurd!

You'll need

- 1 whole pineapple (medium to large)
- 100g cheddar cheese, cubed
- 100g ham or salami, rolled or cubed (can use pickled onions for a veggie version)
- 1 punnet of cherry tomatoes
- 1 bunch of green grapes
- Toothpicks

For optional flair:

- Cocktail umbrellas
- Gherkins, olives, or baby bocconcini

To assemble

1. Slice the base of your pineapple to create a flat, sturdy surface. Optionally remove the leafy top (or keep for funky decoration!)
2. Prepare your ingredients by cutting everything into bite-size pieces
3. Skewer a mix of cheese, fruit, and meat (or veggie substitutes) onto individual toothpicks
4. Stick the toothpicks evenly into the pineapple's surface, covering it like spines on a hedgehog
5. Add cocktail umbrellas or extra garnish for a little bit extra!

SNACK IDEAS

'Alchemy Bites'

A rich, sensory grazing board inspired by Whiteley's 1973 *Alchemy*.

Gather the following

- Blue cheese & figs
- Charred orange slices
- Candied nuts
- Dark chocolate shards
- Sea-salt crackers
- A small bowl of edible flowers or petals for garnish



SET THE SCENE

Atmosphere & Styling Ideas

Curate your own Whiteley-inspired world with sound, style, and flair.

Dress Code Themes: Go Bold or Go Home!

1. **Studio 54 Glam** – Think sequins, flares, disco balls, velvet jackets and platform shoes
2. **Art School Fit** – Oversized shirts, paint-splattered denim, sunglasses (indoors, of course!), scarves and linen.
3. **Boho & Beatnik** – Try turtlenecks, paisley, wide-leg pants, floppy hats, and anything that flows!
4. **Whiteley-Inspired Whimsy** – Get weird and wonderful by dressing as a bird, an emu, a sculpture, or a pot.

BONUS! You could even offer a prize for the best dressed!



Soundtrack

THE NIGHT

Music was a major part of Whiteley's creative practice – his studios were filled with Bob Dylan, Miles Davis, and Buddhist temple music. Set the tone with a curated playlist:

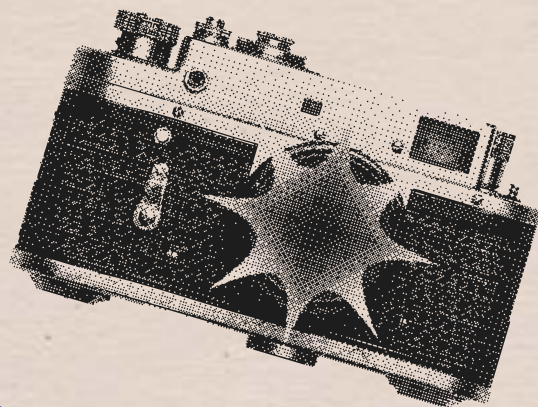
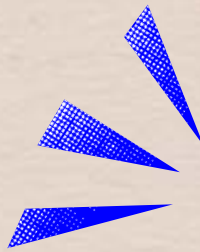
Scan the QR Code to access a Whiteley-inspired playlist on Spotify, or search **'Brett Whiteley Studio Playlist'**



Suggested Artists

- Bob Dylan
- Miles Davis
- Velvet Underground
- Nina Simone
- Nick Cave
- Japanese temple bells & ambient soundscapes
- Fleetwood Mac
- Eurythmics
- Blondie
- Prince

Share your Party!



We'd love to see how your DIY Whiteley Art Party went – tag us on Instagram [@sam_shepparton](#) and [@unimelb](#)

Or share your photos, comments and feedback to publicprograms@sheppartonartmuseum.com.au



What's Next: Keep the Art-Party Going!

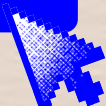
Your Whiteley Art Party doesn't have to end here
– there's plenty more to get involved in!



Save the Dates!

SAM Deep Dives:
Art Down Under in the 60s-80s
with Professor Lisa Slade (online)
Thursday 14th August
6 – 7.15pm | Zoom

REGISTER HERE



SAM Deep Dives:
The Many Shades of Blue
with Professor Lisa Slade
Thursday 4th September
6 – 7.15pm | SAM

REGISTER HERE



We have even more Brett Whiteley programs and events coming up at SAM [check our website for more details](#)

Brett Whiteley: Inside the Studio is on show at SAM every day (excluding Tuesdays) until 5th October [grab your free ticket here](#)



The Art-Party Like Its 1969:
Australian Art in the 60s-80s – Free
Downloadable Toolkit was created
by Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) in
collaboration with Melbourne Public
Humanities Initiative, University of
Melbourne and Dr Lisa Slade.



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