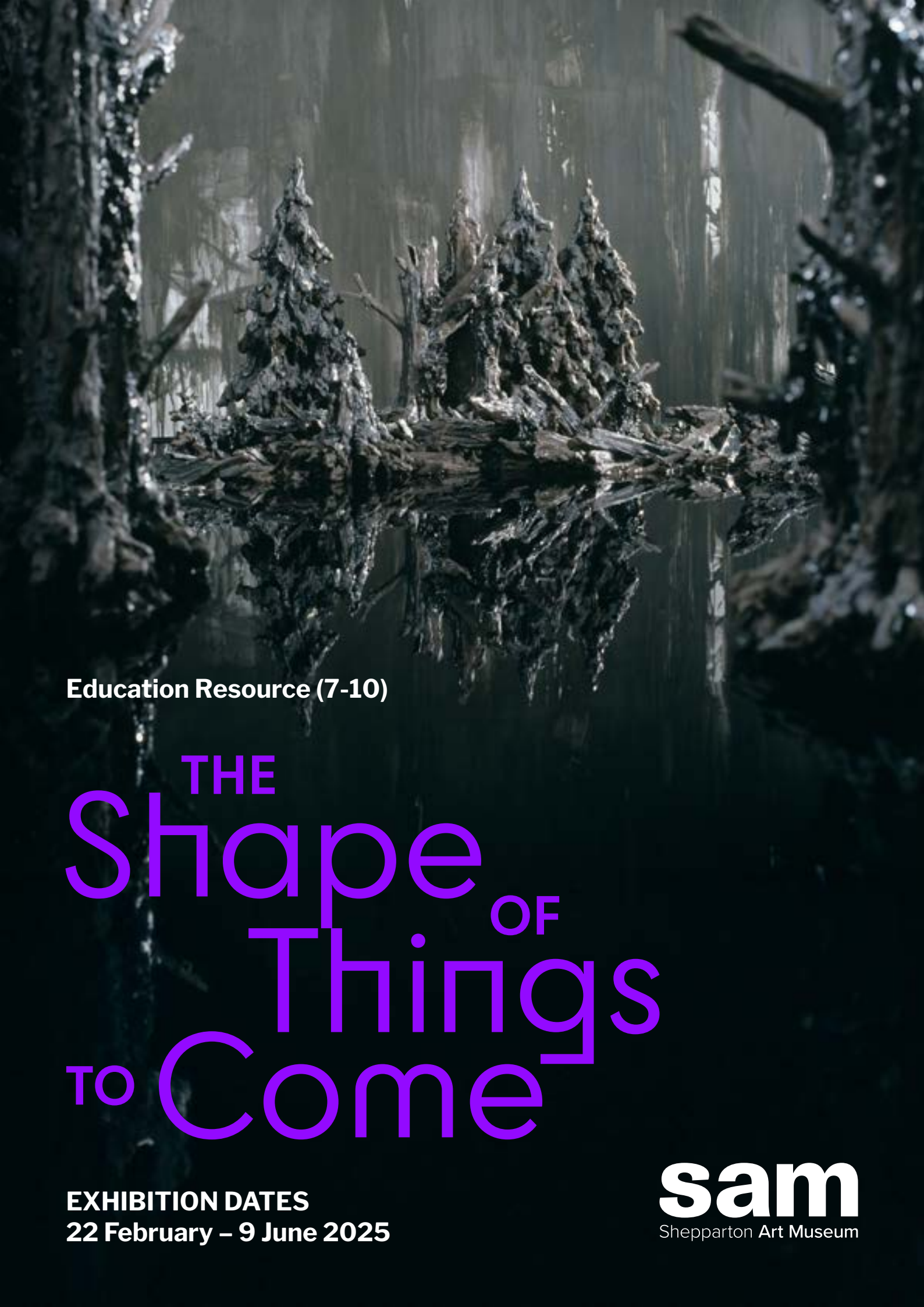




Education Resource (7-10)

THE Shape OF Things TO Come

EXHIBITION DATES
22 February – 9 June 2025

sam
Shepparton Art Museum

How to use this education resource

This education resource highlights artworks and themes in the SAM exhibition *The Shape of Things to Come* to expand classroom learning for Visual Arts and Humanities subjects. The resources introduces artworks within the exhibition, followed by discussion questions to help prompt conversations when viewing the exhibition with students.

Additionally, there are activities to help dive further into this area of study with your students in the classroom.

This education kit is aimed at students in levels 7 – 10, Visual Art and The Humanities. Please find Victorian Curriculum outcomes on page 12.

For questions or to book your students in for a tour email: education@sheppartonartmuseum.com.au

The Shepparton Art Museum (SAM) is on the traditional lands of the Yorta Yorta people. The SAM building, and art museum within it, is located close to the Goulburn River, which is known as Kaiela to the Yorta Yorta.

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, and that sovereignty of this land has never been ceded

Cover image:
Anne Wenzel *Silent landscape* (detail), 2006-2010,
ceramic, resin and wallpaper, Shepparton Art Museum
Collection, acquired through the 2010 Sidney Myer
Fund Australian Ceramic Award – International Artist
Category, 2011. Photo: John Stoel

GREATER
SHEPPARTON 

CREATIVE VICTORIA 

sam
Shepparton Art Museum

The Shape of Things to Come

22 February – 9 June 2025

The Shape of Things to Come presents a diverse collection of artworks that encourage students to reflect on the future, exploring everything from apocalyptic visions to hopeful portrayals of sustainability and harmony with nature. These works inspire critical thinking on themes of transformation, resilience, and our connection to place.

Featuring a wide range of mediums and artistic techniques, the exhibition demonstrates how art can act as both a warning and a catalyst for change. Students will have the opportunity to examine how artists address complex global challenges through various forms of expression, while also exploring potential solutions and pathways forward. The exhibition fosters discussions on the role of creativity in confronting environmental issues, promoting sustainability, and encouraging environmental stewardship, offering students valuable insights into the intersection of art, activism, and the future.

Curator: Danny Lacy

Exhibiting artists

Penny Byrne
Penny Evans
Bridget Hillebrand
Locust Jones
Douglas Kolk
Lin Onus
John Perceval
Annika Romeyn
Anne Wenzel



The Shape of Things to Come, installation view, Shepparton Art Museum 2025. Photo: Leon Schoots

Penny Byrne



Penny Byrne *The Four Horsemen of the 21st Century Apocalypse*, 2009, found ceramic, re-touching medium, powder pigments, epoxy resin, lentils, corn, rice, kidney beans, glass, silicone, metal and plastic, Water: 66 x 24 x 44cm, Oil: 55 x 27 x 37cm, Food 63 x 23 x 48cm, People: 52 x 22 x 40cm Shepparton Art Museum Collection, purchased, 2009. Image credit: Shepparton Art Museum

Artist Bio: Penny Byrne (b. 1965) is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist whose practice is informed by her background in ceramics conservation.

The Four Horsemen of the 21st Century Apocalypse, 2009, is a striking artwork that brings the biblical tale into the context of contemporary global crises. Through a complex yet playful assemblage of objects, each piece is meticulously crafted to evoke the destructive forces at play in today's world—water shortages, peak oil, food scarcity, and overpopulation. It invites viewers to question not only the future of the planet, but also our collective responsibility in shaping a world that can withstand the weight of these impending disasters.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why has the artist chosen the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, and how does their version differ from the original Biblical tale?
- What is the tone of the work? Is it positive or pessimistic? What elements of the work contribute to this reading?
- What is the significance of using ceramics and found objects?
- How do these four global issues interact with and affect each other?
- What are the potential effects on a local and global scale?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Design a horseman that represents an issue that is important to you.

- Does it concern the environment, or focus on human rights?
- Undertake research, looking at its historical context, current impact and potential solutions.
- Use the provided visual map to identify images, colours, textures, and objects you associate with this issue.

Visual Brainstorm Map

COLLAGE

Find images online and in books or magazines that represent and symbolise your chosen issue



WORDS

Write words, thoughts or a poem.

OBJECTS

Draw objects and forms that come to mind

MATERIALS AND TEXTURE

Glue textures here



COLOUR

List three dominant colours



Anne Wenzel



Anne Wenzel *Silent Landscape*, 2006-2010, ceramic, resin and wallpaper, 46 x 210 x 300 cm, Shepparton Art Museum Collection, acquired through the 2010 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award – International Artist Category, 2011. Photo: John Stoel

Artist Bio: Anne Wenzel (b.1972) currently resides in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She predominantly works with clay to create ceramic sculptures and installations, often large in scale.

The devastating aftermath of fire and the resilience that emerges in the wake of catastrophe are present in Anne Wenzel's work *Silent Landscape*. Considering the deeper ecological and environmental shifts at play, this work allows us to confront the reality of bushfire not just as a natural disaster, but as a symbol of the larger crisis of climate change, and to reflect on our collective responsibility in the face of a rapidly changing world.

In addition to evoking the apocalyptic aftermath of a bushfire, this haunting scene is one of stillness and silence, offering a space for reflection and contemplation. Fire, when harnessed with knowledge and respect, can be a powerful force for good. Indigenous fire practices such as cool burning, developed over thousands of years, offer valuable insights into how fire can be used as a tool for land management and biodiversity conservation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does this artwork make you feel? How do the use of the art elements and principles contribute to this feeling?
- What makes the landscape 'silent'?
- How might *Silent Landscape* be interpreted as a commentary on the cumulative impact of human actions on environmental systems?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Create a regenerative landscape using clay

- Research post-disaster ecosystem regeneration, focusing on human intervention in aiding recovery.
- Collect images of landscapes post-recovery.
- Roll and cut a 10x10cm clay base.
- Create small sculptures based off your images and attach them to your clay base by scoring and applying slip.
- Glaze and fire the piece.
- Combine sculpture with classmates to create collaborative landscapes.

Materials needed: Clay, clay tools, glazes, rolling pin, kiln. In the absence of a kiln, use airdry clay and acrylic paint.

Lin Onus



Lin Onus *Floodwater 'Woorong Nucko'*, 1995, synthetic polymer paint on Italian linen, 200 x 300cm, courtesy of Carrillo Gantner AC and Ziyin Gantner.

Artist Bio: Lin Onus (1948-1996) was a Yorta Yorta artist recognised for his distinctive visual language which fused traditional and contemporary imagery.

In *Floodwater 'Woorong Nucko'* Lin Onus depicts a scene closely tied to the Barmah Forest, a place which holds deep cultural and spiritual significance for Yorta Yorta people.¹ Masterfully combining Western-style landscape painting with traditional Aboriginal imagery, the artist expresses both a personal and collective connection to Country. This convergence encourages reflection on the impact of colonisation on the Australian landscape, current environmental challenges, and potential pathways for its protection.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do people paint landscapes?
- What feelings does this landscape evoke, and what can this say about the artist's relationship to this particular site?
- How has the artist combined Western-style landscape painting with elements of traditional Aboriginal art?
- How does this affect the way we interpret the work?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Use *Floodwater 'Woorong Nucko'* as a springboard to explore the following:

- The historical and cultural significance of the Barmah Forest to Aboriginal people.
- The effect of early European settlement on Aboriginal people, their culture, and the landscape.
- Research floodplains and their formation, focusing on the Barmah Forest wetlands. Explore how drought and extreme rainfall can affect this ecosystem and how climate change impacts hydrological regimes.
- Discuss the role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have played in land management and environmental sustainability, both historically and present day.

John Perceval



John Perceval *Black and Gold*, 1961, oil on canvas, 76 x 102 cm, Shepparton Art Museum Collection, donated by Mr. E. McKeon and Mr. W. E. Petherick, 1965
Photo: Leon Schoots

Artist Bio: John Perceval (1923-2007) is widely recognised as one of Australia's most formative Modernist painters.

This painting, executed *en plein air*, embraces the essence of Impressionism, capturing the immediate atmosphere and natural light of the landscape. This artwork challenges traditional landscape painting by reducing the spatial planes of the scene to just the foreground and middle.² The result is an emphasis on the undergrowth, inviting the viewer to consider the subtle, yet dynamic, activity that occurs within this often-overlooked space.

The artist's use of layering adds depth, while dynamic brushstrokes convey a sense of movement, infusing the scene with energy and life while enveloping the viewer. The result is a vibrant depiction that draws attention to the intricate, lively world beneath the surface of the broader Australian landscape.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Is this a landscape? Argue for or against.
- How does this artwork differ from Lin Onus' *Floodwater 'Wooroong Nucko'*? Consider texture, colour, focal point etc.
- How does this work make you feel and how do the art elements and principles contribute to this?
- What role does landscape painting play in shaping national identity?

2. L. De Neeffe, John Perceval: *Black and Gold*, in R. Coates & S. Gory eds., *Eighty Years of SAM: The Collection*, Shepparton Art Museum, Shepparton, 2017, p98.

IN THE CLASSROOM

- Central to Impressionism, *plein air* painting is the practice of painting outdoors. The French term *en plein air* translates to 'in the open air'.

As a class, paint *en plein air*.

- Experiment with various painting techniques using a palette knife, such as dragging, scraping, scumbling, and dabbing.
- Choose an outdoor location for *plein air* painting and prepare a canvas with a base coat. When selecting your base colour, consider the dominant and less prominent colours of the location.
- Create a *plein air* painting using only a palette knife and applying the techniques practiced earlier.

Annika Romeyn



Annika Romeyn *Black Cypress (Old Mutawintji Gorge)*, 2023, watercolour monotype on paper, 170 x 227cm, courtesy of the artist. Photo: Leon Shoots

Artist Bio: Annika Romeyn (b. 1986) is a Kamberri/Canberra-based artist whose practice combines drawing, painting, and printmaking.

Annika Romeyn's multi-panel monoprints of Mutawintji Gorge in North Central New South Wales offer both a replication and amplification of the natural spaces she captures. Through delicate layering of ink and texture, Romeyn transforms these scenes into dynamic, tactile impressions of the environment, allowing the viewer to experience the landscape as a heightened version of itself. Through repeated visits to the site and capturing a landscape that has slowly evolved over thousands of years, Romeyn's detailed prints magnify the subtle beauty and complexity of the land, drawing attention to the interplay of light, form, and space. This technique invites us to engage more deeply with the landscape and reflect on the quiet majesty and fragility of nature.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does Romeyn's work capture both the majesty and vulnerability of the natural world.
- What compels the artist to revisit this location, and how is this reflected in the work?
- How does the layering technique help shape our understanding of the landscape?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Leave a mark with a trace monotype:

- Return to a location multiple times and photograph it. Print two images on cartridge paper that are most contrasting.
- Roll out printmaking ink on acetate or glass. Place paper over ink and tape down.
- Position the first photograph on top, tape down, and trace the most compelling elements with a pencil, fork, back of a spoon, finger, etc.
- Once your monotype has dried, repeat the above steps using your second image and a different ink colour.
- Remove the image and paper from the ink and consider whether your monotype successfully reflects the changing aspects of your chosen location.

Materials: Printmaking ink, roller, glass or acetate, cartridge paper (80 GSM), printing paper (125 GSM), pencil and mark-making tools.

Bridget Hillebrand



Bridget Hillebrand *River*, 2023, linocut on washi paper, 380 x 305 x 1500cm (dimensions variable), courtesy of the artist. Photo: Leon Schoots

Artist Bio: Dr Bridget Hillebrand (b. 1963) is an interdisciplinary artist based in Naarm/Melbourne, Australia.

River, 2023 is a breathtaking 12-metre-long paper sculpture that intricately weaves together the essence of a river's life force. Created in reference to the changing ecology of the Birrarung (Yarra River), the artwork speaks to the significance of river systems throughout history, driving economies, shaping agriculture, and serving as spiritual symbols.

Drawing attention to their ongoing vulnerability in the face of environmental challenges, *River* serves as a powerful reminder of the vital role rivers play in sustaining life. SAM is fortunate to be located next to the mighty Kaiela (Goulburn River), an important life force for the Yorta Yorta people and the prosperity of our region.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Does this work remind you of a river or other body of water? If so, how has the artist achieved this?
- What is washi paper? Why has the artist chosen this material for the work?
- What role does scale play?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Use the installation as a starting point to research the following:

- Explore the ecosystem of the Goulburn River.
- What impact does the Goulburn River have on the local community and economy?
- Explore the historical and cultural significance of the Goulburn River to Aboriginal people.

Design an immersive installation:

- Choose an outside location in nature that resonates with you.
- Take photographs, videos, record sounds, write, do sketches, or create rubbings.
- Explore incorporating these elements into an immersive installation by considering scale, sensory engagement, and audience interaction.
- Create a 3D model installation of your work and present to class for feedback.

Materials: Paper, pencils, phone (to photograph, video, and record sound), printer, foamcore, Stanley knife, tape, scissors, glue.

Douglas Kolk



Douglas Kolk, *Bugs*, 2006, collage and mixed media on paper, 195 x 160cm, courtesy of the ARNDT Collection. Photo: Leon Schoots

Artist Bio: Douglas Kolk (1963-2014) lived and worked in Boston, USA. His practice primarily included drawing and collage.

Douglas Kolk's captivating collages create a sense of unease through their intense subject matter. By drawing from the constant flow of mass media, advertising, and consumer culture, Kolk explores alternative cultures of identity, resistance, and protest. His use of various materials and media evokes the way we consume images and information, recontextualising them to provoke new meanings. The dystopian future Kolk portrays aligns with the grit and tension within contemporary culture, seen in Cormac McCarthy's post-apocalyptic novel 'The Road', the video game/television series 'The Last of Us', and the cinematic world of 'The Matrix'.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Identify all the different media the artist has used to make this work
- What words would you use to describe this composition?
- What effect does recontextualising an image have?
- Based on your answers to these questions, what might the artist be saying about how we consume media and information?

IN THE CLASSROOM

Use Kolk's work as a starting point to explore the following.

- Research the emergence of collage and photomontage in relation to social, political, and cultural contexts.
- Explore how collage questions truth and authenticity, and how this relates to the impact of social media and AI today on the shaping of personal political choices.

Experiment with collage:

- Source images and text from mass media.
- Cut, rearrange, paint over, or draw elements of what you've collected. Is a theme emerging or are you guided by aesthetics?
- As a class, interpret each other's collages. What feelings and meanings emerge? How do they differ from the original context of the images and text?

Materials: Paper, magazines, newspapers, pencils, paints, brushes, scissors, glue.

Glossary

Victorian curriculum links

Art element

Line, shape, form, space, texture, value, colour

Art principle

Pattern, contrast, emphasis, balance, scale, harmony, rhythm, movement, unity, variety

Ceramic

An object made of clay and permanently hardened by heat.

Climate change

A change in the typical weather of a region – such as high and low temperatures and amount of rain fall.

Collage

Both a technique and an artwork, created by arranging and attaching different media onto a surface.

Glaze

A paint-like substance that coats ceramic objects, which becomes fused to the object once fired.

Hydrology

Branch of science concerned with the properties of the Earth's water.

Impressionism

A style of painting that emerged in nineteenth-century France which aimed to capture the impression of its subject, rather than a true reflection. It is characterised by thick, quick brushstrokes that focus on light and colour. The primary subjects include landscapes and scenes from everyday life, with artists often painting outdoors.

Landscape

A depiction of a nature scene.

Mass Media

Channels of communication, such as television, radio, newspapers, and the internet to reach large audiences.

Mixed Media

Art that uses more than one type of medium or material.

Monotype

A printmaking process in which only one print is created.

Natural disaster

An event caused by natural forces that results in great damage or harm.

Photomontage

An artwork created by combining and often altering images to form a new composition.

Plein air painting

The practice of painting outdoors. The term 'plein air' is French for 'outdoor'.

Printmaking

An artistic process that involves transferring designs or marks using ink or paint from one surface onto another surface, like paper or fabric.

Washi paper

Traditional Japanese paper made by the fibres of trees, such as the mulberry tree.

Visual Arts

Level 7-8

[Explore & Express Ideas](#)

VCAVAE033

VCAVAE034

[Visual Arts Practices](#)

VCAVAV035

VCAVAV036

[Present and Perform](#)

VCAVAP037

[Respond and Interpret](#)

VCAVAR038

VCAVAR039

Level 9-10

[Explore & Express Ideas](#)

VCAVAE040

VCAVAE041

[Visual Arts Practices](#)

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The Humanities

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[Geographical Concepts and Skills](#)

VCGGK135

VCGGK137

VCGGK138

[Government and Democracy](#)

VCCCG030

[Historical Knowledge](#)

VCHHK134

**Free Entry. Open 6 days. Closed Tuesdays.
530 Wyndham St, Shepparton VIC 3630**



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