



Conversations with the Collection

NEWCASTLE REGION ART GALLERY

INTRODUCTION

The following works of art from this year's *ARTEXPRESS HSC Visual Art Exhibition* have been compared to a selection from the Newcastle Region Art Gallery (NRAG) collection, which includes more than 5,000 works of art.

These works of art provide a conversation for exploring this year's *ARTEXPRESS* as well as the Gallery's collection comparing, contrasting and critically discussing a range of works across a variety of media, subject matter and techniques.

Explicit linkages to the senior secondary curriculum are invited through the inclusion of Frames, Conceptual Framework and Practice questions.

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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

Aleksander Danko is a key figure in the development of Conceptual Art in Australia. Conceptual Art champions idea over object and in 1970 artist and writer Ian Burn offered the following succinct conclusion on Conceptual Art: "Once one understands that art is not in objects but in the completeness of the artist's concept of art, then the other functions can be eradicated and art can become more wholly art."



Aleksander Danko

Danko is interested in both word play and in inverting the utility of an object. *Air off the top of my head* 1975 consists of altered chairs in varying states of deconstruction. This work plays with scale, creating an absurdist environment for the audience. The letters 'ch' are carved into the seats of the chairs, recalling school room phonics and the challenge of acquiring language.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

These works reflect my interest in traditional mosaic techniques and the mechanics of woodwork, by combining found and constructed objects and adopting aspects of Honeywill's diverse practice in exploring the concept of 'home'. Inspired by Hall, I have used fragmented duck eggshells to allude to the fragility and impermanence of Nature in the face of the intervention of man-made constructs. The sculptural book incorporates Le Corbusier's philosophies on architecture, influencing my approach in arranging images for the camera, simultaneously appropriating Casebere's postmodern practice as he manipulates the setting to create abstract shadows, patterns, lighting and textures in his photography.



Cathy Xu

Questions

Frames: Using the structural frame discuss how both artists have made use of similar materials and explored height and vertical space. Explore the similarities and differences between the two works using the structural frame.

Extension Frames: Both Xu and Danko are in some way referencing the idea of home and domesticity by using familiar everyday objects. Examine how the artists have subverted these objects by manipulating their form.

Conceptual Framework: How does the context of display effect meaning and influence reading by the viewer? Propose a range of other spaces to display these objects. Evaluate the difference in meaning if the objects appeared in a park or forest compared to the clean white gallery environment.

Practice: Research the materials used by both artists and consider how these works of art were constructed. Choose another functional object and design a work of art influenced by the object. Sketch your idea and write a rationale for your choice.

Research a well-known artist who uses functional objects in their sculpture, create a table of comparison and include your own work.

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Aleks Danko *Air off the top of my head* 1975
sculptural installation, embossed wooden
chairs, metal and perspex
290.0 x 300.0 x 300.0 cm
Gift of Frank Watters through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2002
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Cathy Xu

Sydney Girls High School

*Bird house: Homage to Honeywill, Hall,
Le Corbusier and Casebere 2009*

Sculpture



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Collection Statement:

Born in Moree and now based in Newcastle, Dallas Bray often sets his unusual narratives in the familiar landscape of the Hunter region with its unique combination of the rural, urban and industrial. Consistent across all of Bray's work is his quizzical eye and wry commentary and *Burning Bush* 2008 is no exception. Both title and subject allude to both the biblical story and to the end of George W Bush's American presidency. The backdrop for the painting is the city of Newcastle, viewed from Stockton, and the figure who wears a hat made from a feral cat is a reference to the artist himself.

Bray's works are allegories of human folly - but far from cruel or condescending, Bray sees himself as part of the absurdity that is humanity.



Dallas Bray

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

If a tree falls in a forest but nobody is there to hear it, does it make a sound? Should you feel scared or vulnerable for the woman who is unaware of her grave future? Each painting in my series contributes to the overall mysterious story. I have drawn inspiration from the American rural landscapes of Andrew Wyeth with their associated feelings of isolation and vulnerability, and Edward Hopper's realistic depictions of everyday life which evoke feelings of uneasiness and create a sense of mystery.

Questions

Frames: Evaluate the way in which Dallas Bray and Caryn Streeter have used colour to express emotion and ambience.

Conceptual Framework: After reading about Bray's painting *Burning Bush* 2008, discuss the work as a form of social cultural commentary.

Practice: With reference to the works of Bray and Streeter, explain how painters can use technique and medium to create a narrative.



Caryn Streeter



Dallas Bray *Burning Bush* 2008
oil on canvas
140.0 x 160.0 cm
The Kilgour Prize recipient for 2008 from the Jack
Noel Kilgour bequest as administered by the Trust
Company of Australia Limited
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Caryn Streeter
Kambala
Is ignorance bliss? 2009
Painting



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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

Before training as a painter Dani Marti spent time in Barcelona learning traditional tapestry techniques. In *George* 2001 Marti has woven together industrial polymer ropes in fluorescent yellow and orange to create a non representational portrait. In the plaiting and weaving of synthetic fibres we search for evidence of George and are reminded of how often we associate those nearest and dearest with their clothing, its texture and scent. Like a CSI close up, we are invited into a microcosmic and intimate encounter.



Dani Marti

Marti's tactile works are often associated with particular people in the artist's life and even though they refuse to portray a subject in the manner of conventional portraiture, they emanate with a sense of character and the feel of personality.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

Buddhists identified ignorance as the root of suffering. My artwork explores how ignorance can twist reality, cloud judgement and result in negative emotions. The mass media play a significant role in our society, informing and persuading a wide audience – but the truth is often blanketed by cynicism and ambiguity. It encourages society's ignorance. It dominates the space, but the blanket itself is fragile: the truth does escape. Each letter reinforces the other, some break away attempting to distinguish themselves. Attachments to the others restricts its meaning, urging resistance from worldly attachments.



Rebeca Senatilaka

Questions

Frames: How has Rebeca Nirasha Senatilaka explored the media as a source of information and truth? Discuss the influence of the media on artists in Western culture. Directly reference the work *Ignorance is Strength* 2009.

Conceptual Framework: Discuss how Dani Marti's work explores traditional craft practices such as weaving. How does his choice of industrial materials subvert conventional ideas? Continue this discussion to include an investigation of the material and methods employed by Senatilaka to create her work of art.

Practice: The art critic Paco Barragan says the following about Marti's practice " [they are a] series of allegorical and apparently minimalist 'paintings' – I say *paintings* as I consider Marti's work to be an exercise of 'expanded' painting and a clear example of what painting may mean these days."

(Paco Barragan, *The art of tying ends*, Exhibition catalogue, Sherman Galleries, Sydney, February-March 2006)

Debate the idea that a material other than paint can be considered painting. In your response make reference to Senatilaka's painterly use of paper.



Dani Marti *George* 2001
nylon, polypropylene and polyester on a wooden frame
201.0 x 610.0 cm (triptych)
Gift of the artist through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2005
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Rebeca Senatilaka
Hurlstone Agricultural High School Glenfield
Ignorance is strength (detail) 2009
Sculpture



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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

When Rosalie Gascoigne arrived in rural Australia from New Zealand one of the first things she noticed were the birds. Large and loud, Australian birds such as currawongs, magpies and cockatoos appeared so different to their New Zealand counterparts.

Birds are a recurring theme in Gascoigne's art and this sculpture is one of the earliest bird works made by the artist, who didn't start making art until she was in her fifties. Combining old materials including a weathered soft drink crate, Gascoigne constructs a rudimentary bird box, or bird cage. The birds themselves are fashioned from timber off-cuts, their wings are formed from the roughly torn edges of timber that carry painterly traces of their former life. Later works by Gascoigne used the Arnott's logo of the rosella as a symbol of Australian culture.



Rosalie Gascoigne

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My experience with an abused horse, its force and strength working against me instead of with me, led to this concept. After months of training I managed to develop a connection with the horse. But was this through force, or the horse's own willingness to learn? I wanted to convey the unbreakable ties to instinct by appealing to the concept of herd mentality and internal instincts such as the 'fight or flight' response and obvious containment which I have displayed both by metaphorical and literal allusions within the two boxes, and in the short film "Defeat or surrender"?

Questions

Frames: Artists who create assemblages compose their works of art from varied materials. How does the choice and combination of found objects change the original purpose of the found material?

Conceptual Framework: Eleanor Frances Miller and Rosalie Gascoigne have both used a box or frame to contain elements of their work. Discuss how the idea of the object displayed or framed references the collection of objects and how they are displayed in museums and galleries. How does this separation from the audience effect the interpretation of the work?

Practice: Discuss how Gascoigne has used discarded painted timber in *Italian birds* 1976, to capture the essence of a bird escaping or contained in a cage. Extend your discussion to compare Gascoigne's practice to Miller's where she has constructed a well-finished frame to house and display her found objects. How does the re-use of materials reflect the artist's intentions?



Eleanor Miller

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Rosalie Gascoigne *Italian birds* 1976
wood, metal, insect mesh, paint and fishing line
63.5 x 68.8 x 22.0 cm
Purchased 1976
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Eleanor Miller

Kincoppal-Rose Bay School of the Sacred Heart

Defeat or surrender? 2009

Sculpture



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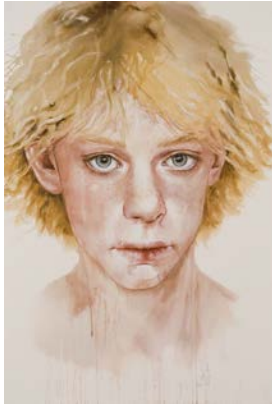
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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

Cherry Hood is a Sydney based visual artist who uses watercolor and pigment to make oversized figurative paintings and works on paper. A celebrated watercolourist, Hood rose to prominence with her Archibald Prize winning portrait of musician Simon Tedeschi in 2002 and is known for her portrayal of adolescent subjects.

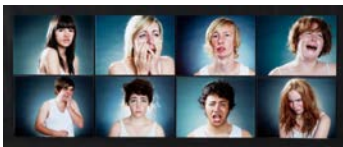


Cherry Hood

Harold's End which is in the Gallery's collection began as a series of illustrations made for the book by JT LeRoy's illustrated Cherry Hood 2005 novel. The prints, made from Hood's watercolours, provide great insight into her practice – they capture the expressive drips and veils of colour found in Hood's work. They also capture her empathy for her subjects and in this series, the adolescents are depicted with emotive power.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My work examines the mental and emotional state of modern teenage society. In a parody of Jill Greenberg's controversial 'End times', I have explored my teenage world where feelings are frequently suppressed, due to the 'need' for self-preservation. This social façade is represented by the figures with their polished skin and flawless features; however, these 'perfect' figures present us with intense emotions which deny this and confront us with what we all have simmering beneath our own mask. This is pertinent to teenagers during their transition to adulthood, as they learn to become comfortable in their own skin.



Yasmin McCall

Questions

Frames: Emotional vulnerability is openly expressed by the subjects employed by both Yasmin McCall and Cherry Hood. Identify the emotional impact of both McCall and Hood's work on the viewer.

Conceptual Framework: Evaluate how crucial you think the audience's reaction is to the success of the work. Do you think the artists are being deliberately confrontational? Why would the artist want to provoke a strong emotional response to their work of art?

Practice: Investigate the different media chosen by each artist. Suggest how these choices change the emotional impact of McCall and Hood's work. Discuss how Hood's painterly watercolour technique has heightened the feeling in her artwork and compare these to the techniques used by McCall.

Extension: In McCall's artist statement she refers to her appropriation of the visual aesthetics used by photo media artist Jill Greenberg. Research Greenberg's practice examining her visual elements as quoted by McCall. Artists are inspired by the world around them and what has come before them and it is unlikely that McCall has been inspired solely by contemporary artists practice. One possible influence for artists examining the subjective may be Charles Lebrun (French, 1619-1690) *Expressions of the Spirit's Passions* c1663, which are a series of engravings exploring the range of human emotions. Research and study Lebrun's engravings (using the internet) and describe the possible influences on McCall's work.

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Cherry Hood *Harold's End*: Oliver 2004
lithograph on paper, edition 39/60
Gift of Bruce and Susan Harrison through
the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Program 2009
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Yasmin McCall
St Francis Xavier's College
Perturbation 2009
Photomedia



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Collection Statement:

Peter Booth is best known for his bleak landscapes and apocalyptic visions. This large scale geometric abstraction was made as a commission when Booth was at art school and is markedly different to his now signature style. His art teacher at the time, John Brack, recommended Booth's skills to a soft drink company who were looking for a new logo.

In response to the brief Booth made this large hard edge painting. There are no visible brush marks or signs of the artist's hand. Instead *Untitled* 1962 carries the hallmarks of Pop Art where paintings aspire to being like consumer products, colourful, exuberant and seductive.



Peter Booth

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My artwork investigates the constructive elements of the industrial world, the overpowering strength of construction and the man-made world, with the use of strong, bold visual representations of shapes and patterns. The glazes and oxides are a tribute to the colours and textures of various inspirational construction sites – scrap yards, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the St Marys industrial area. Robert Klippel and the Constructivists encouraged my interests in observing the intricate details of the industrial fingerprints that depict urban society.



Brooke Tiana Mackay

Questions

Frames: How have both artists used colour and repetitive geometric shapes in their works? What is the impact of this repetition and how does it influence the visual appeal of the two works?

Conceptual Framework: Reading the collection statement you discover Peter Booth's *Untitled* 1962 was created in response to a brief for a new soft drink company logo. Research Booth's main art practice and compare and contrast it to this work. How do you think the design process may have influenced this particular work?

Practice: Clay has been used for thousands of years to create functional objects, as the industrial world grew so to the production of ceramics grew.

Study the statement above. How does it relate to Mackay's concept and choice of material. Write a paragraph examining this choice.



Peter Booth *Untitled* 1962
acrylic on canvas
160.0 x 267.0cm
Purchased 1994
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Brooke Mackay
Caroline Chisholm College
Under construction 2009
Ceramics

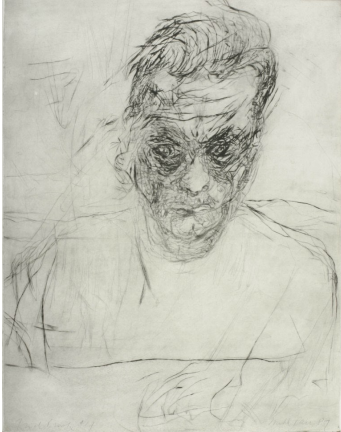


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Collection Statement:

Mike Parr has produced over 1000 works within the context of his self-imposed 'Self-Portrait' series, in a range of media that includes performance, installation, sculpture, drawing, etching and photography. In 2005, Newcastle Region Art Gallery held the survey exhibition, 'CUT YOUR THROAT AN INCH AT A TIME: A Survey of the Works of Mike Parr 1970-2005', at this time the etching, *Untitled self-portrait No. 4: from a series of six 1989*, was donated to the Gallery by Parr. Parr practice is influenced by his extensive reading of psychoanalytic theory evident in his demanding self-analysis included his work.



Mike Parr

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My artwork evolved from the theme of identity and self-expression. My initial frustration at having a broken collarbone and a non-functioning drawing hand, was an emotional experience: learning to use my other hand led me through a journey of self-discovery in which I developed an intuitive drawing style that I found very exciting. Later in the healing process I was able to draw using both hands simultaneously, helping me realise that my hands are merely tools for my mind.

Questions

Frames: Describe Le and Parr's use of line to create depth and intensity in their drawings. How does the density of line in Parr's work differ from the more tonal line work of Le?



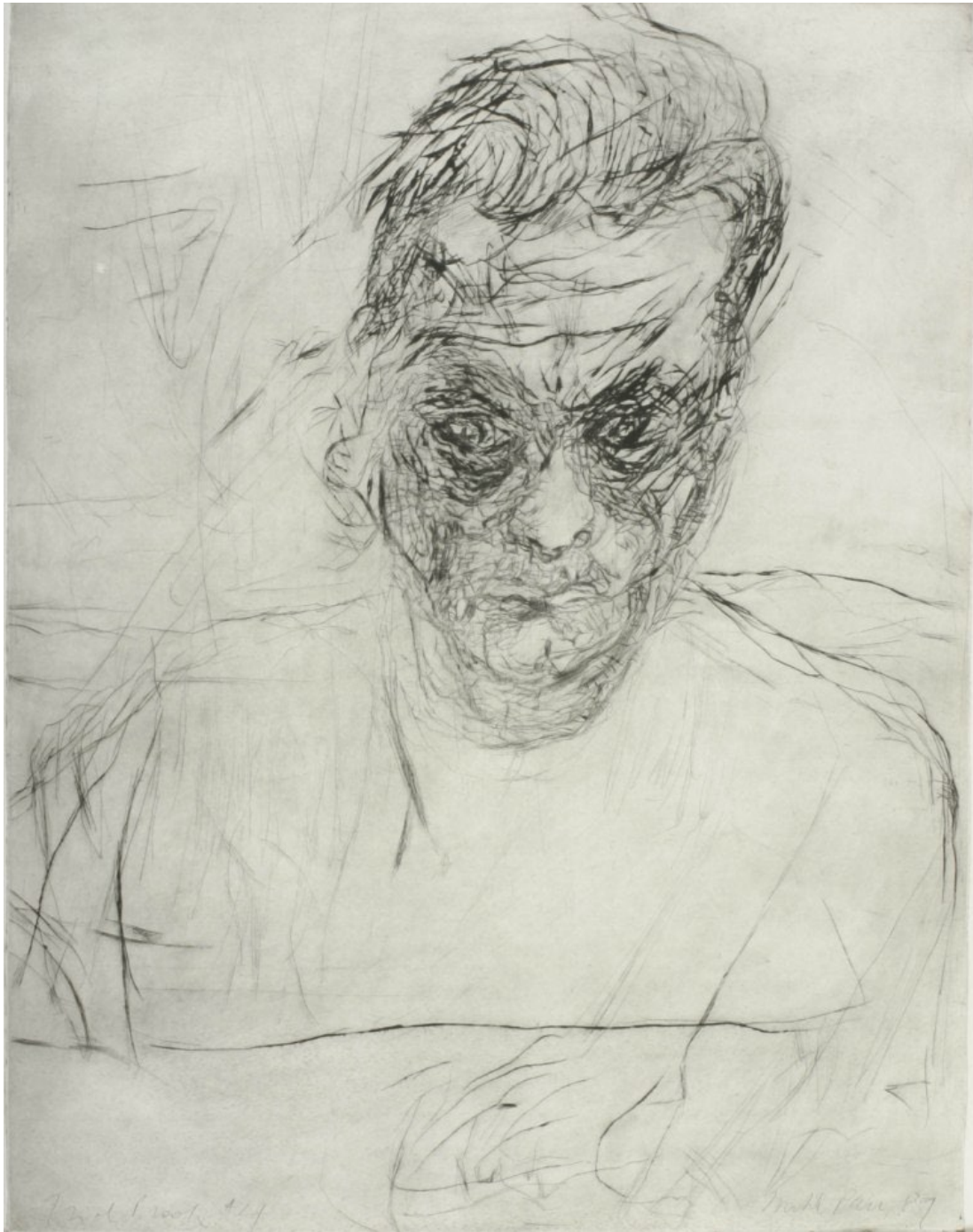
Minhky Le

Conceptual Framework: Historically drawing was considered preparatory work for painting or sculpture. Contemporary artists now create drawings as finished artworks in their own right. Justify the artists' choice of drawing as a media for delivering their ideas to an audience.

Practice: Both artists rely on the use of gestural mark making in their work. Le's work is a drawing and Parr's printmaking. Debate the advantages and disadvantages of these two practices in representing this style.

Extension: *What makes critics uncomfortable is Parr's refusal to accept the notion that art practice is a search for some essential essence or quality found only in particular art mediums. His alternative quest for a genuine nexus between thinking, feeling and doing is particularly disruptive to the idea that the artist's role is to express personal vision through contrived artifacts. This is precisely because he often begins with the artist's body as the medium to be manipulated, tested, mutilated and progressively dismantled and reconstituted as process, intellectual schema or text. The confronting nature of many of Parr's performance works shatters the established limits of the artist as politely disruptive outsider.* –Extract from *Mike Parr's Problem*, Ross Woodrow 2005

Read the statement above. Debate the role of the artist in contemporary society.



Mike Parr *Untitled self portrait No. 4:*
from a series of six 1989
drypoint etching on paper, edition 5/8
107.0 x 78.0cm
Gift of the artist and Veridian Press 2005
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Minhky Le
Canley Vale High School
Injury – before and after
Drawing



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Collection Statement:

To produce this work, Hany Armanious has cast the negative space within each glass, the space usually reserved for liquids, in a liquid form of petroleum called 'hotmelt'. The cast space - which has become solid emptiness - is placed on top of each inverted glass. The glass therefore becomes a tiny pedestal for each mould, a clever play on the traditional sculpture and plinth.



Hany Armanious

By altering the physical presentation of a found object, Armanious transforms the everyday. The banal form and function of the drinking glass and the formless quality of liquid petroleum are transformed into a sculptural presence. Armanious is obsessed with the magical properties of the casting process and many of his works deal with the alchemical transformation of one substance into another, via what the artist describes as the 'cult of casting'.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

The way we express our existence can be conveyed by a dynamic approach, reflecting on the past to make sense of the present and developing a new perception of life. The forces linking our reality with the natural world should intertwine to formulate our introspective transition to the past. My work embodies the multidimensional nature of humanity's sense of identity and how we must grasp the past to nourish a new understanding of our present surroundings and discover our own utopia.



John Kang

Questions

Frames: In his artist statement John Kang makes reference to the nature of human existence and an individual's search for identity. How has Kang expressed this idea with his collection of works?

Conceptual Framework: Discuss the visual impact of Hany Armanious' work *Untitled (snake oil)* 1998. How has the artist chosen to engage the audience, through his choice of displaying the mould (the glasses), from which the objects were cast?

Practice: Both Armanious and Kang have explored positive and negative space, the idea of external and internal voids. Kang hints at the hidden internal void while Armanious explicitly documents the internal negative space. Explain how both artists use positive and negative space to express their ideas in their artmaking.

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Hany Armanious *Untitled (snake oil)* 1998
hotmelt and glasses
dimensions variable
Purchased 2003
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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John Kang
Cherrybrook Technology High School
Expression identity 2009
Collection of Works



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Conversations with the Collection

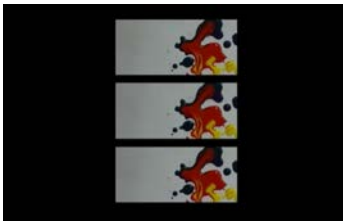
Collection Statement:

Deborah Hart, Senior Curator Australian Paintings and Sculpture after 1920, at the National Gallery of Australia wrote the follow text to accompany an exhibition of John Olsen's ceiling works at NRAG in 2007: *A sense of joie de vivre is implicit in Olsen's dynamic ceiling painting Life burst, commissioned for the hallway of Thelma Clune's residence in 1964. The subject was particularly pertinent to Olsen's life, as the work was painted at the time his daughter Louise was born. As Thelma Clune recalled:*

[Olsen] was trotting off to his wife in the hospital in the evening and painting my ceiling in the day ... It was an opportunity to rejoice in him having a daughter. He didn't get down and do it on the floor or on the table. It all went up on the ceiling by his own hand ... I don't know how he could paint for so many hours looking up.



John Olsen



Seraya Harding

Olsen wanted the Life burst ceiling, now in the Newcastle Region Art Gallery, to be a welcoming feature to Thelma Clune's apartment. Here paint has been pulled along from the right – dabbed, twisted, scratched into, squeezed from a tube and layered, culminating in a dramatic burst of life. For Olsen, the celebratory emotional tenor of this work was closely allied to Gerald Manley Hopkins' poem Spring: 'What is all this juice and all this joy?' The fact that Olsen was looking up at the ceiling while painting, meant that he was continually thinking about the viewer below. As opposed to the Renaissance conception of perspectival space Olsen wanted to create 'an all-at-once world'.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My work explores how ideas and beliefs are formed. Focusing on universal issues, the audience is presented with the frustration of questions without answers. Why is religion such an integral part of life? When does society give us the freedom to make decisions and choices? I have incorporated elements of the art of Kara Walker, Len Lye and Marie Taylor: silhouette images, expressive abstract ink drawings and experimental film-making, combined with minimalist soundscapes and the flowing spiritual aspects of calligraphy within Zen philosophy, are all integral aspects of my practice.

Questions

Frames: Both artists use vivid primary colours. Why do you think they have chosen to do so and how may their choice of colour relate to the title of each work? In your response make certain you reference elements depicted in the film still from Seraya Harding's *Creation Of Beliefs* 2009 and elements from the painting *Life burst* 1964 by John Olsen.

Conceptual Framework: To explore her concept Seraya Harding has created a video work by filming paint, ink and a paintbrush in use. John Olsen on the other hand has used paint and paint brushes in a more traditional method to create a painting on canvas. Explain how these two very different artists have engaged with the world through their practice.

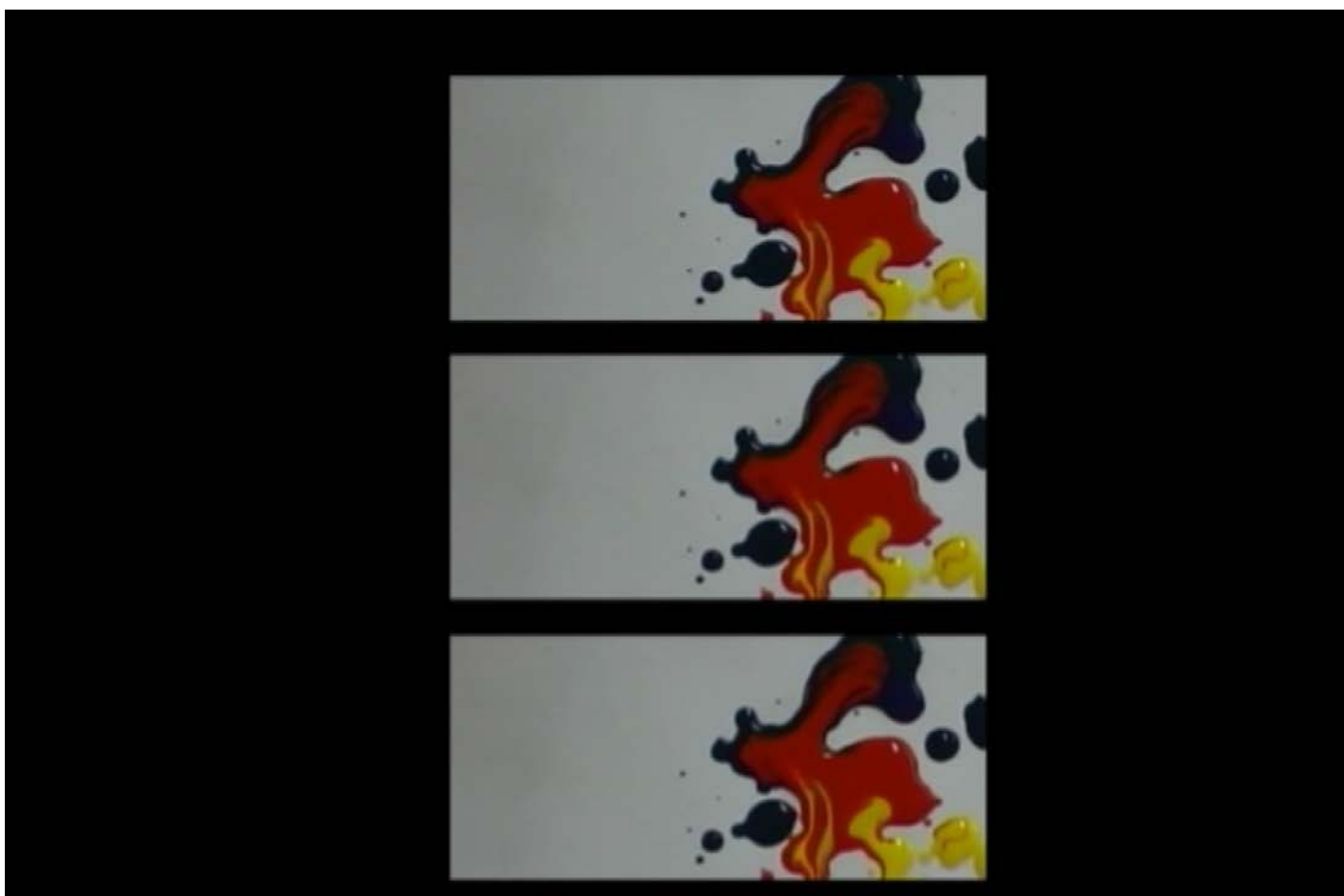
Practice: Olsen's work *Life burst* 1964 exhibits a sense of spontaneity, vigour and movement. How has Olsen communicated these ideas through his use of materials? Make reference in your response to the effectiveness of the open or negative spaces as well as the use of paint.

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John Olsen *Life burst* 1964
acrylic on plaster on hardboard
146.4 x 639.2 cm
Gift of the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation 1976
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



Seraya Harding
Presbyterian Ladies College Sydney
Creation of beliefs 2009
Time Based



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Collection Statement:

Although John Turier was born in Sydney, he has lived and worked in Newcastle since 1976. Recently Turier has moved away from cast metal forms towards construction in timber and cloth, with the addition of found materials. *Bat Bat* combines found marine materials with the delicacy of silk stretched across a timber carapace to make a whirly gig. This work exemplifies Turier's capacity to balance whimsy with a poetic sensibility.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

I created my artwork from discarded and found objects – seed pods, old tools and unwanted fabric, among other things. Cast away is a play on words, describing the cast-off mediums I used, as well as 'shipwrecked person'. The work was inspired by my interest and involvement in boating and water sports, and my other passion for woodworking and creating things with my hands enabled me to combine both of my interests.

Questions

Frames: Many artists since the early 20th century have used found objects in their work. Outline how both John Turier and Jarred Fehlberg have used recycled materials effectively in their work and speculate on where these objects may have originated. Discuss the value found or recycled objects may have both materially and conceptually.

Conceptual Framework: What message do you think Fehlberg and Turier are sending to their audience? What can these two artists tell us about the world today?

Practice: Investigate the process of selecting, collecting and processing found objects. How does this differ from buying new materials? Discuss how both artists create new meaning for found materials. How could you use found objects in your art making practice?



John Turier



Jarred Fehlberg

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John Turier *Bat Bat* 2006
silk, timber and paint
131.5 x 101.5 x 5.0 cm
Gift of Jackson Smith Lawyers Pty Ltd
through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2009
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Jarred Fehlberg
Central Coast Adventist School
Cast away 2009
Sculpture



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Collection Statement:

White Aborigines (No. 2) 1983 uses the artist's now well known canvas board system, where pre-made canvasses, in this case 100 of them, are combined to create the overall picture. The background or landscape is created by a repetition of the artist's hand prints in a limited palette over the entire surface. This method recalls the stenciled hand prints found in rock sites across Australia that testify to Aboriginal ownership of the land.



Imants Tillers

Two large non Aboriginal figures, inspired German cartoonist Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908), cavort and combust in the middle of the painting. This imagery, in conjunction with the title of the work, invites us to read the work as an ironic comment on our troubled sense of belonging and the ongoing tensions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My artwork is about the introduction of the European rabbit into Australia and its destructive effect it has had our environment. I have examined the issue of preserving, preventing or exterminating introduced species. This is important to me because I sympathise with the rabbits. My work relates to personal choices I have made, such as becoming a vegetarian in support of animal rights; yet, I do also understand the value of preserving the natural landscape and indigenous species. Therefore I am left in conflict, just as the audience is left puzzled by the opinions I have expressed.



Holly Mae Farrell

Questions

Frames: Look quickly at the works *24 Rabbits* 2009 and *White Aborigines (No.2)* 1983. Now write a list of ten words about how the works make you feel. After you write your list closely examine each work and consider if your first impression was accurate. Use the words from your list as the basis for a paragraph explaining how you feel when you view these works. Also consider how each artist may have felt while making these works.

Conceptual Framework: Both Holly Mae Farrell and Imants Tillers comment on emotive topics in their work. Farrell comments on the introduction of the European rabbit as a pest in the Australian environment and mass extermination efforts that now take place to try to reduce their impact. The audience could also read Farrell's rabbits as a metaphor for the impact of European settlement and its repercussions, while Tillers' work directly comments on Australia's colonial past. Brainstorm how these two artists have, through the medium of paint, engaged with and created a discourse around sensitive cultural issues.

Practice: These two works enlist repetition in their creation. Discuss how repetition can be used to give a work layers of conceptual meaning and visual impact. Make specific reference to Farrell and Tillers' works of art.

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Imants Tillers *White Aborigines (No. 2)* 1983
acrylic on 100 canvas boards
255.0 x 380.0cm
Purchased 1983
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Holly Farrell
Warners Bay High School
24 Rabbits
Collection of Works

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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

Laing's large-scale photographic panoramas absorb the body of the viewer and invite a potent re-reading of landscape traditions. *bulletproofglass #3* is a staged performance that centres on what Laing describes as "our fraught sense of belonging". A bride somersaults, falling through the air after being shot. Black birds encircle the falling figure and there is no sign of the horizon to quell our unease or provide a sense of scale of the tragedy before us. The motif of the bride continues Laing's fascination with romantic and nostalgic imagery. Here the bride as a symbol of purity and promise is defiled; once again virgin territory is desecrated. Laing is not the first to tackle this imagery, Arthur Boyd's (1920-1999) flying brides and half-caste bride series as narratives of displacement are invoked here.



Rosemary Laing

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

This is a story that contrasts a young woman's fashion-conscious existence with her daily life played out against archetypal Australian male activities – lawn mowing, cricket playing, barbecuing Fictitious Decay achieves a strong contrast between her clothes, her background story and context. Her dreams and imagination influence the images, seen for example in the animal life going on around her. This creates a kind of magical realism, bringing the characters to life with the aid of high dramatics and bringing a serial quality to life.



Imogen Darling-Blair

Questions

Frames: In these works both Imogen Hope Darling-Blair and contemporary artist Rosemary Laing have depicted women. Discuss how Laing and Darling-Blair have explored ideas surrounding gender and the traditional role of women in our society?

Conceptual Framework: Explore how these artists manipulate the audience's reaction to the work through composition and technique.

Practice: Laing and Darling-Blair have both chosen photography to explore their ideas and concepts. Referring to both works discuss how these artists meticulously stage and arrange their subjects to convey meaning.



Rosemary Laing *bulletproofglass #3* 2002
Type C photograph on metallic photographic paper,
edition 7/10 124.0 x 193.0 cm
Purchased 2003
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Imogen Darling-Blair
Queenwood School for Girls
Fictitious decay 2009
Photomedia



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Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

John Brack's interest in the human condition is evident across all of his work. He is the quintessential artist-observer and his drawings, prints and paintings capture his aloof observation and often sardonic wit. In *The artist's children* 1959 Brack depicts his own daughters lined up as if for a family photograph. However, Brack denies us the pleasantries and uniformly smiling faces. Instead we experience the tensions, jealousies, self absorption and humour of his young family. Brack simplifies his daughters' faces, using line and tone, to focus on their personalities rather than their outward appearance.



John Brack

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

My work inquires into our reasoning for fighting in wars, as well as the wisdom behind them, by examining the motivations of monarchs in the First World War. The presentation in illustrated book form is aimed at making my work accessible to a wide audience. My intention is to educate and, in doing so, challenge the audience to re-evaluate their understanding of the responsibility and trust we place in our leadership and in our leaders' faith in the reasonings on whose basis they decide to involve us in wars.



Olivia Cox

Questions

Frames: There are many visual similarities between the work of Olivia Simone Cox and John Brack including a similar palette. However, there are also contrasting elements to their works. Using the structural frame compare and contrast the two works, *All the king's men* 2009 and *The artist's children* 1959.

Conceptual Framework: What device or techniques have been used by these two artists to engage the audience. Discuss the deliberate use of simplified figuration and the tonal qualities of the works.

Practice: In this work Brack has used a carefully selected and limited range of colour. Why do you think he has painted in this way? Justify your argument with reference to *The artist's children* 1959.

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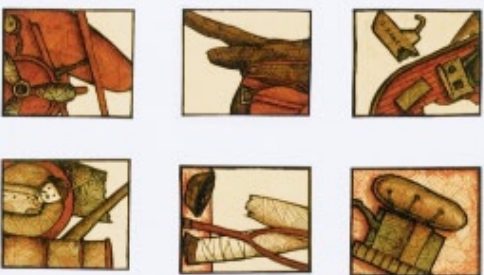
NEWCASTLE REGION ART GALLERY



John Brack *The artist's children* 1959
oil on hardboard
36.8 x 76.2 cm
Purchased 1959
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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It was not to be. A long stalemate ensued, forces unable to make headway and, because of this, there were many casualties, thrown mercilessly into the fray to try and tip the balance. In an effort to do so, Woody finally joined the allies and Nick left, torn apart by the wreckage. An unheard of amount of broken logs amounted and carnage lay everywhere. The damage was beyond repair. Eventually, Will began to feel some turmoil about this war, so much had been sacrificed for pride. Overwhelmed and broken, all reserves gone, Will finally admitted defeat.



Olivia Cox
 Singleton High School
All the king's men 2009
 Drawing





Conversations with the Collection

Collection Statement:

Satoru Hoshino was among a group of Japanese potters who were seeking to use clay as an expressive medium in its own right without the need to conform to a functional aesthetic. This group collectively exhibited their work as the Sodeisha Group in the 1950s.



Satoru Hoshino

In 1978 an exhibition of works by Sodeisha artists toured Australia, organised by Newcastle Region Art Gallery. On completion of the tour the group donated work to Newcastle Region Art Gallery in recognition of the Gallery's commitment to Japanese ceramics. The Sodeisha Collection held by Newcastle Region Art Gallery consists of purely sculptural or non-functional objects that still express the particular qualities of clay and glaze that has influenced contemporary ceramics.

ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:

The inspiration for my three sculptures came mainly from my love of simple, modern sculpture and design. The work was constructed with clay coils and slabs blended together, then highly polished by burnishing the fired work with stones and further polishing. The final black surface was achieved in the black fire kiln.



Georgia Alexander

Questions

Frames: There are many cultural and social connotations that can be perceived in the use of clay to create a sculptural artwork. Describe what these may be. Discuss why these connotations are not an issue with these two works.

Conceptual Framework: Many artists are inspired to create work that references art history. Georgia Annette Alexander states a love of modern sculpture as one of her influences. Research modern sculpture from the 1930s and locate a female artist who may have inspired the creation of her work.

Practice: In Alexander's artist statement discussing her practice, she describes many of the methods she used to construct her ceramic sculptural works. Look at the work by Satoru Hoshino and examine the statement about the work. Using these as a guide, imagine you are the artist and write an artist statement for Hoshino, refer to methods used and his possible inspirations for the work.

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Satoru Hoshino *God and his medium* not dated
earthenware with iron glaze and wire
55.5 x 36.8 x 44.4cm
Gift of the members of the Sodeisha Group 1981
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection



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Georgia Alexander
Pymble Ladies' College
Modern trilogy 2009
Ceramics



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