

## Art and ideas

### Key curriculum links

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#### AusVELS The Arts

- Identify and describe key features of works of art, including the ways elements, principles and/or conventions, skills, techniques and processes are used
- Investigate and talk about the purpose of different works of art
- Discuss how observations, ideas, feelings, things imagined and purpose are conveyed in works of art
- Learn about how works of art can be designed and made to fulfil particular individual and community needs
- Talk about the way the arts connect to personal experiences and cultural and social events in the community
- Explore contemporary art forms, materials and technologies
- Analyse works of art to interpret and compare key features, symbols and cultural characteristics
- Discuss and express opinions about arts ideas
- Identify and explain personal preferences in responding to works of art
- Reflect on features in works of art and links to own art making
- Use arts language to describe, analyse and interpret the content, structure and expressive qualities of works of art
- Consider the relationship between works of art and the audience
- Explore the impact of works of art, art forms and art practices on other works of art and society in general
- Learn about the places where works of art can be found

### Overview

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With a focus on current creative practice and featuring more than 340 artists and projects, including commissions for kids and an exciting diversity of art forms, *Melbourne Now* provides many starting points for exploring art and ideas.

The works in *Melbourne Now* offer new perspectives on traditional art forms. Many works blur the boundaries that once existed between art forms such as painting, sculpture and drawing. Mira Gojak's sculptural work looks like a drawing suspended in space. Starlie Geikie creates a work that combines aspects of drawing, painting, textile design, installation and craft.

A number of artists create immersive sensory experiences. Richard Lewer presents an immersive re-creation of a gymnasium, featuring a large-scale charcoal wall drawing accompanied by mirrors, sound and a sweaty boxing bag. Marco Fusinato's *Aetheric plexus (Broken X)* responds to the presence of the audience with dramatic sound and light effects.

Participation is a strong theme in *Melbourne Now*. A number of artists and projects, including Darren Sylvester, Laith McGregor, Slave Pianos, The Telepathy Project, Tom Nicholson and Zoom, provide opportunities for viewers to actively engage with their work.

Many works in *Melbourne Now* reflect a strong connection to community and/or place. For example, Ash Keating and Bianca Hester present photographs and videos that document works that were performed or created in urban and civic spaces. *On Top of the World: Flags for Melbourne* is a public art project. It presents artist-designed flags that are flown from flagpoles across the city of Melbourne and concurrently in the Great Hall at NGV International. *ALLYOURWALLS* is an offsite project that acknowledges and celebrates the vibrant street art culture of Melbourne.

A strong sense of cultural identity is evident in many works in *Melbourne Now*. For example, Phuong Ngo's works investigate both his personal identity as the son of Vietnamese refugees and his collective identity as a member of the twentieth-century Vietnamese diaspora. Cultural background and identity are also key ideas in the works of Malaysian-born Sangeeta Sandrasegar and Samoan-Australian artist Maryann Talia Pau. For Indigenous Australian artists, including Trehna Hamm, Yhonnie Scarce, Steaphan Paton and Reko Rennie, references to cultural identity are also often closely connected to issues related to colonisation.

Many artists in *Melbourne Now* are involved in interdisciplinary research and practice that explores contemporary issues and ideas and presents new ways of seeing and understanding the world. Stelarc, Lucy McRae and Patricia Piccinini each explore aspects of science and its relationship to the human body. Tom Nicholson and Brook Andrew create works that engage with aspects of history to present new perspectives on the past.

Everyday life is an important source of inspiration for many artists in *Melbourne Now*. In different ways, artists can make the ordinary seem extraordinary and create moments of poetry, beauty and humour from the familiar. Elizabeth Gower uses everyday detritus, including tea-bag tags and elements cut from junk mail catalogues, to create works of great formal beauty. Spiros Panigirakis creates work based on abstract patterns identified in the underlying structures of groups and places. The Hotham Street Ladies take their inspiration from their experience of living together in a shared house. For *Melbourne Now* the group transforms the foyer of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia into an icing-bombed domestic wonderland.

Ideas and forms from popular culture provide inspiration for many contemporary artists. Chris Langton creates larger-than-life sculptures inspired by manga that comment on our relationship to technology and consumer society. Influences on Jess Johnson's drawing and installation practice include science fiction, mythological cosmology and comic books. Her work in *Melbourne Now* includes an installation of ten drawings that depict the imagined formation of a future civilisation.

Many artists in *Melbourne Now* engage creatively with the history of art. The work of Sam Leach includes references to Dutch still-life painting,

modernism and abstraction. Nick Selenitsch creates a playful interactive work that combines references to modernist art with the aesthetics of public sporting fields and playgrounds. Agatha Gothe-Snape considers the physical, emotional and historical responses to the reception of art in her work *Powerpoints*, an ongoing series of unlimited-edition digital works that utilise the basic communicative tools of Microsoft PowerPoint.

Patrick Pound, The Telepathy Project, Arlo Mountford and MaterialByProduct all engage with works from the NGV collection, offering new and idiosyncratic ways of seeing and understanding familiar works.

## Starting points for discussion

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Exploring contemporary art:

- What does 'contemporary' mean?
- Based on your observations of a range of works in *Melbourne Now*, discuss how contemporary art differs from art of the past.
- Consider materials, techniques, art forms, ideas, subjects and themes.

Exploring immersive and participatory art:

Find an example of an immersive work and an example of a participatory work.

- Explain what makes each work participatory or immersive.
- What meanings or ideas does each work suggest to you?
- What makes you think this?

Connecting to community and culture:

Find a work that reflects a connection to community or culture. How is this connection reflected in the work?

Seeing the world in new ways:

Find a work that provides an example of how art can help us

- see the past in new ways
- find beauty, humour or poetry in everyday things
- imagine the future

Explain your reasons for each choice.

Select a favourite work:

- Identify and describe the key features of this work of art, including the ways elements, principles and/or conventions, skills, techniques and processes are used.
- What ideas or meanings are being communicated by this work and how are they communicated?
- What may have influenced the subject or form of this work?
- What do you admire about this work?
- What can you learn from this work for your own art making?

### **Suggested artists/projects**

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Some artists and projects for investigating the theme of art and ideas are listed below, but there are many more. You can use the *Melbourne Now* microsite or app to find more information about these artists as well as a map showing the location of their work.

#### **NGV International**

Brook Andrew

Marco Fusinato

Starlie Geikie

Agatha Gothe-Snape

Bianca Hester

Ash Keating

MaterialByProduct (Susan Dimasi)

Laith McGregor

Tom Nicholson

*On Top of the World: Flags for Melbourne*

Robert Owen

Patrick Pound

Sangeeta Sandrasegar

Darren Sylvester

*Zoom*

#### **The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia**

Mira Gojak

Elizabeth Gower

Treahna Hamm

Hotham Street Ladies

Jess Johnson

Christopher Langton

Sam Leach

Richard Lewer

Lucy McRae

Arlo Mountford

Phuong Ngo

Spiros Panigirakis

Steaphan Paton

Maryann Talia Pau

Patricia Piccinini

Reko Rennie

Yhonnie Scarce

Nick Selenitsch

Slave Pianos

Stelarc

The Telepathy Project

#### **Offsite**

*ALLYOURWALLS*

*On Top of the World: Flags for Melbourne*