

Sustainable and environmental

Key curriculum links

Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority – Sustainability

Students will consider the following organising ideas:

- The biosphere is a dynamic system providing conditions that sustain life on Earth.
- All life forms, including human life, are connected through ecosystems on which they depend for their wellbeing and survival.
- Sustainable patterns of living rely on the interdependence of healthy social, economic and ecological systems.
- World views that recognise the dependence of living things on healthy ecosystems, and value diversity and social justice, are essential for achieving sustainability.
- World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.
- The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.
- Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.
- Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.
- Sustainable futures result from actions designed to preserve and/or restore the quality and uniqueness of environments.

AusVELS Design, Creativity and Technology

- Investigate everyday, familiar products and recognise the basic characteristics and materials/ingredients from which they are made and how they are used
- Explore how materials can be recycled and reused to produce new products
- Explore ideas and concepts about design, materials/ingredients and systems
- Consider how social, cultural, economic and environmental factors influence the development of design ideas
- Develop an understanding of the creative problem-solving process and the imaginative and innovative strategies used to develop creative design options and plans for production
- Explore and assess the consequences of technology on society, culture and the environment

Overview

Many *Melbourne Now* artists and designers address issues through their practices of what it means to live in the world today and the impact of our actions on future generations. They examine the ways in which we, as individuals and as communities, can contribute to more sustainable patterns of living that enhance the ongoing capacity of the Earth to maintain all life.

Many artists use materials that have been re-claimed from other uses: Slow Art Collective in their installation *Malarky* use recycled materials to make a quirky habitat that the viewer is invited to enter, asking us to think about our own living spaces; Elizabeth Gower recycles tags, bags, labels and other bits and pieces to create a composition of beautifully ordered, circular forms; and *The Donkey's Tail Jnr* is a kids commission in which participants are invited to perform on musical instruments fashioned from recycled materials.

A number of *Melbourne Now* artists explore the idea of how we produce energy, and how and why we generate products and consume them. Cameron Robbins' *Climate control* is a machine powered by the wind and the sun that draws a record of the temperature and humidity of the atmosphere. *Climate control* comments simultaneously on climate change, the use of alternative energies and the nature of art making.

Urging us to reconnect with the wealth of the natural world, Lauren Berkowitz uses plants that have medicinal properties in her *Physic Garden*. Her work also makes reference to Victory Gardens – food gardens that people were encouraged to plant in any available space to assist with food shortages during the Second World War. In a similar vein, *Urban Commons* foodscape looks at the ways contemporary technology can be used in the way we grow food and recycle waste.

Some artists look at our damaging relationship with the natural world. Nick Mangan's *A world undone* is a video work that focuses on the exploitation and destruction of the mineral resources of the planet, capturing the obliteration of a red rock sample from Western Australia in slow motion against a dark background.

Work by Indigenous artist Lorraine Connelly-Northey uses the waste of contemporary society – wires, springs and iron – to fashion 'containers' that recall the traditional techniques of her forebears, commenting on changing relationships to the natural world from the past to the present. Steven Rhall photographs the sites that form the boundary of Kulin Country in his *Kulin Project*, evoking the past and giving an alternative perspective on the changing urban environment.

Most of the many architects and designers within *Melbourne Now* address the need for design that is sustainable in terms of energy consumption, materials, life span and social and ecological impact. Among them the *Zoom* project looks at how we live in the city, and asks for our input into a vision for the future.

Starting points for discussion

- *The Secret Life of Things* and *Design Play Cards* are resources developed by award-winning design sustainability advocate Leyla Acaroglu. Watch one of the films or look at the cards and find something that designers might have to consider when designing a product. What other ideas do the cards and film give you?

- Look at the Design Wall at NGV Australia. Which objects are the most sustainable? Why?
- There are many opportunities in *Melbourne Now* to meet artists, designers and architects, including ARM's architects in NGV Studio; the graphic designers in the Bolwell *Edge* caravan in the Grollo Equiset Garden at NGV International; and artists working in exhibition spaces, such as fashion designer Susan Dimasi from MaterialByProduct. Visit an artist or designer and ask them how issues of sustainability affect their work – both in what they produce and how they produce it.

Suggested artists/projects

Some artists and projects that have strong links to sustainability and the environment 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

Bolwell EDGE caravan

Nick Mangan

MaterialByProduct (Susan Dimasi)

Cameron Robbins

Urban Commons

Zoom

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

ARM Architecture

Lauren Berkowitz

Trevor Turbo Brown

Maree Clarke

Lorraine Connelly-Northey

Donkey's Tail Jnr

Elizabeth Gower

Brian Martin

Melbourne Design Now – case studies

Melbourne Design Now – Design Wall

Steven Rhall

Slow Art Collective