

Melbourne Now for VCE Art

Key curriculum links

Interpreting art

Students will use the Analytical Frameworks (Formal, Personal, Cultural and Contemporary) to analyse and interpret the meanings and messages of a variety of artworks, including:

- visual analysis, technique, style symbols and metaphors
- factors that influence responses to artworks
- social and personal interests, experiences and intention of artists
- social, historical, political, cultural or religious contexts of artworks
- contemporary art ideas, issues, subject matter and presentation
- art language appropriate to the analysis, interpretation, comparison and contrast of artworks
- substantiated personal opinions with reference to artworks.

Discussing and debating art

Students will:

- discuss and debate art issues, referring a range of artworks and commentaries to support a point of view.

Art making and personal meaning

Students will investigate:

- visual language to explore issues and ideas of personal interest and imagination
- qualities and characteristics of materials and art forms and how they may be used to present concepts and images
- art materials, techniques, processes and art forms

- formal elements and principles of art in practice
- technical applications to achieve effective visual language
- reflective annotation and documentation using art language and selected Analytical Frameworks.

Overview

Melbourne Now offers a rare opportunity to view a concentration of diverse contemporary art practices and ideas. The assembled artists include those working in a formalist manner using traditional materials and techniques, and those whose methods centre on group participation, the world of ideas and the ephemeral or intangible.

Personal experience is the starting point for some artists: *At Home with the Hotham Street Ladies* is an installation by the Hotham Street Ladies art collective that transforms the foyer of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia with humorous imagery of domesticity and share housing. In *the fall (set one)* Brent Harris uses monotypes to explore the dark aspects of human psychology. Brooding skies, amorphous figures and faces emerge from abstract forms.

Many artists use their work to engage with issues related to both art and the wider world. Cameron Robbins' *Climate control* is a drawing machine based on the thermohygrograph, a machine traditionally used in galleries and museums that measures the temperature and humidity of the environment and traces the information onto a chart. Robbins' work simultaneously asks questions about art making and our relationship to the environment.

Penny Byrne, Sam Leach and Arlo Mountford use existing artworks as the starting point for their works of art. Penny Byrne in *iProtest* uses her skills as a ceramics conservator to alter mass-produced porcelain figures, imbuing them with humorous political or social messages. Sam Leach draws

from Dutch still-life and landscape painting with reference to the ideas of Thomas Sebeok, a pioneer of communication through signs and symbols in the natural world. Arlo Mountford's video installation *Walking the line* takes us on a walk through iconic works of art in the NGV collection, creating moments of humour and reflection, and asking us to consider the changing value and meaning of art.

Many artists express deeply personal or political concerns. Yhonnie Scarce's *Blood on the wattle* (Elliston, South Australia 1849) – 400 black blown-glass yams, encased in a Perspex coffin – recalls a massacre of Aboriginal people that occurred in coastal South Australia. Julia deVille expresses her beliefs about death and animal rights in *Degustation*.

As inspiration for folio development, as a resource to explore contemporary art ideas and issues, as an opportunity to engage with artists and designers and as a source of artistic practice to compare and contrast with that of the past, this exhibition is rich and surprising.

Starting points for discussion

Formal analysis:

Choose a work that interests you.

- What materials and techniques are employed in the work?
- What is the main idea of the work of art and how do we know this?
- How do the formal qualities of the work contribute to the meanings and messages of the work?

Analytical Frameworks:

Choose a work that interests you.

- What does the artwork convey about our society and time?
- What aspects of the artist's personal beliefs, ideas or preoccupations are evident in the work?
- In what ways does the presentation of the subject matter reflect or challenge social traditions?
- How does the background and expectations of the viewer affect the interpretation of the work?
- How are new media employed in the work and how do they challenge traditional ideas about art?
- How do the ideas present in the work reflect broader social issues or concerns?

Suggested artists/projects

Some artists and projects related to VCE Art 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 to design a tour that fits your specific needs and interests.

NGV International

Brook Andrew
Ash Keating
Peter Kennedy
Cameron Robbins

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

Penny Byrne
Julia deVille
Hotham Street Ladies
Brent Harris
Sam Leach
Arlo Mountford
Yhonnie Scarce

Offsite

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