

## Melbourne Now for VCE Studio Arts

### Key curriculum links

---

#### Developing art ideas

- Generate ideas and identify and respond to sources of inspiration
- Use a variety of methods to translate ideas, observations and experiences through a visual language or art form
- Select, create, organise and use visual reference material to support art making

#### Materials and techniques

- Investigate, research and explore materials and techniques of particular art forms, including characteristics and properties of particular materials and techniques

#### Analysing and interpreting art

- Research, identify and describe sources of inspiration for artists' ideas and production
- Compare and contrast the ways in which artists from different cultures and times have interpreted ideas and used materials and techniques
- Identify and discuss ways in which artists have used materials and techniques in making works of art in particular art forms
- Identify and discuss art elements and where appropriate other principles in works of art
- Identify and discuss signs, symbols and images used in artworks for their implied meanings
- Discuss ways in which works of art reflect artists' interpretations of subject matter, influences and cultural contexts
- Analyse ways in which aesthetic qualities and styles are developed

### Professional art practices and the art industry

- Analyse and discuss the legal obligations and ethical considerations involved in the use of the work of other artists in the making of new artwork
- Discuss curatorial, exhibition design and promotional methods and considerations involved in preparing and presenting an exhibition and/or displaying artworks

### Overview

---

With a focus on current creative practice, and featuring more than 340 artists and an exciting diversity of art forms, *Melbourne Now* offers valuable and inspiring insights into many different approaches to art making.

*Melbourne Now* includes works in traditional art forms such as painting and sculpture but highlights a range of creative ways that artists work in these art forms. The stencil painting processes used by Louise Forthun to build up layers of information about the city in her panoramic painting of Melbourne create hypnotic visual effects. David Jolly focuses on more intimate views of the city, and uses a labour-intensive painting technique that involves painting on the reverse of glass to create paintings with a distinctive visual quality.

The figurative ceramic sculptures of Stephen Benwell are informed by traditional classical sculpture but reflect the artist's highly individual and expressive style. While the subject matter of Patricia Piccinini's sculpture of a bear-like figure carrying an old woman may seem inconceivable in real life, the startling realism of this work convinces us to seriously consider the scenario that the artist presents to us.

Within *Melbourne Now* there are a number of smaller exhibitions that focus attention on particular art forms. *Drawing Now*, curated by artist John Nixon, brings together drawings from a cross-section of Melbourne artists. Although drawing is not the primary practice for these artists and the works are not what they would usually display, the exhibition highlights the role that drawing plays in the work of many different artists. A variety of drawing styles are showcased. In *Designer Thinking*, the different conceptual and practical approaches of a number of emergent local fashion designers are explored in an installation of street wear and formal wear that mixes the utilitarian with the sculptural. Other exhibitions within the exhibition that highlight the creativity of Melbourne designers and makers are *Shoemakers and Contemporary Jewellery*.

The practice of many contemporary artists is interdisciplinary and involves working in multiple art forms. 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.

Many artists in *Melbourne Now* work in innovative ways with materials, and present and communicate their ideas in creative ways. Icing and traditional icing techniques are important in the installation work of the Hotham Street Ladies, and reflect the artists' interest in the domestic environment.

Lauren Berkowitz creates a sensory garden of edible and medicinal plants that reflects her ongoing interest in issues and ideas related to the environment. Yhonnie Scarce's work is informed by research into the experiences of her Kokatha/Nukunu family. Her highly symbolic work is a clear perspex coffin containing nearly 400 black blown-glass yams, made in response to a mid nineteenth-century massacre.

*Melbourne Now* includes the work of a number of artists who use the work of other artists in some way to contribute to the meaning and form of their own work. Sam Leach creates layered meaning in his paintings through combining a traditionally painted landscape background with brightly coloured targets, a symbol often used by the American Pop artist Jasper Johns. Arlo Mountford creates a video installation work which features a stick-figure character exploring various works from the NGV collection. Susan Dimasi of fashion label MaterialByProduct has created a workroom in the

gallery space where she will weave motifs borrowed from eighteenth-century brocaded silk fragments from the NGV collection into new works. Patrick Pound offers us a new way of looking at and thinking about the NGV collection in his installation, which includes works and objects drawn from across the collection alongside objects and pictures from his own collection.

## Starting points for discussion

---

Explore the exhibition by focusing on an art form that interests you and/or that is relevant to your own art-making practice.

- Look for the different ways that the artists in the exhibition have worked with this art form.
- Note materials and techniques that interest you. What is it about these that interest you?
- What can you learn from these works that will help your own art making?.

Explore the exhibition by focusing on an idea or theme that interests you.

- Consider how different artists have explored this theme or idea.
- What works related to this theme interest you the most?
- What is it about these works that interest you?
- How have ideas, meanings and feelings been communicated in this work? Consider art elements, materials and techniques, and the presentation of the work.

Find a work in the exhibition where the artist or artists have used the work of other artists to make a new work.

- What work has been used to make the new work?
- Describe how it has been used.
- Why do you think the artist used the work in this way? How has it added to the meaning or the form of the new work?
- What legal or ethical considerations may have been involved in using an existing work to create this new work?

Based on your observations of how work in the exhibition is presented, what observations can you make about curatorial decisions, exhibition design and promotional methods and considerations?

## **Suggested artists/projects**

---

Some artists and projects relevant to VCE Studio Arts 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**

*Contemporary Jewellery*

Louise Forthun

Richard Lewer

MaterialByProduct (Susan Dimasi)

Patrick Pound

*Shoemakers*

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

Stephen Benwell

Lauren Berkowitz

*Designer Thinking*

*Drawing Now*

Hotham Street Ladies

David Jolly

Sam Leach

Arlo Mountford

Patricia Piccinini

Yhonnie Scarce