

Melbourne then, Melbourne now

Key curriculum links

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

'Melbourne then, *Melbourne now*' is a theme that can be explored through the work of many artists in *Melbourne Now*. An investigation of this theme could also include a viewing of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Australian art relating to Melbourne on display on the second floor of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

The Kulin Nation encompasses much of Melbourne and central Victoria, and includes five Aboriginal groups: the Wathaurong, the Woiwurrung (of which the Wurundjeri are a clan), the Boonwurrung, the Taungurong and the Dja Dja Wrung. Contemporary Taungurong artist Stephen Rhall grew up on Wathaurong Country and now lives and works in Footscray, Melbourne, on Boonwurrung land. His *Kulin Project* comprises photographic images of the sites and boundaries of the five Kulin peoples. Although the sites have been transformed by colonisation, echoes of traditional Koori diamond designs can be found in patterns and shapes in the urban environments he records.

The distinctive structures and forms of the contemporary city are the subject of a number of artists' works in *Melbourne Now*. Jan Senberg's *Extended Melbourne labyrinth* maps the sprawling city and highlights the relationship between the built environment and the natural forms of the landscape. Louise Forthun's painting of the city hovers between abstraction and representation, and interweaves details drawn from an aerial plan of Melbourne with more familiar representations of its landmarks. David Jolly creates paintings from photographic and video images he has collected of the city, often focusing on detailed views of his subjects.

Several artists in *Melbourne Now* have created works that feature buildings that have, or have had, an important role in the cultural life of the city. Ross Coulter's work documents a playful intervention orchestrated by the artist at the State Library of

Victoria that involved 165 volunteers launching thousands of paper planes into the La Trobe Reading Room. David Chesworth and Sonia Leber present a video set in the former Age newspaper headquarters on the corner of Spencer and Lonsdale Streets.

Melbourne Now also includes documentation of performative projects created by artists such as Bianca Hester, Ash Keating and Emile Zile in public and civic spaces in Melbourne and its surrounding suburbs.

A video work by Daniel Crooks presents a dynamic, shifting perspective on the nineteenth-century laneways that play an important role in the twenty-first-century city. *ALLYOURWALLS* is an offsite *Melbourne Now* project that brings together some of Melbourne's finest street artists and graffiti crews in a major makeover of Hosier Lane that celebrates the significant role street art and graffiti continues to play in the cultural life of the city.

Melbourne data artist Greg More, in collaboration with sound artist Marco Cher-Gibard creates a dynamic tapestry of data that makes visible systems and patterns of information related to the city. This work plays a central role in the *Zoom* project, which looks at how we live in the city and asks for our input into a vision for the future.

The work of architects, who play a key role in shaping the city, is featured in several projects in *Melbourne Now*, including *Sampling the City: Architecture in Melbourne*. ARM Architecture will set up office in NGV Australia, establishing NGV Studio as an incubator for urban research.

Starting points for discussion

Based on your observations of works in *Melbourne Now*, how do you think the way contemporary artists engage with and contribute to the city compares with the way artists did in the past?

Find a work or project that reflects a connection with Melbourne.

- Explain how you think this work reflects a connection with the city.
- What ideas or meanings does this work communicate?

Suggested artists/projects

Some artists and projects for investigating the theme of Melbourne then, *Melbourne Now* are listed below, but there are many more. You can use the *Melbourne Now* microsite or app to find out more about these artists as well as a map showing the location of their work. You might also like the *Representations of the City* tour on the *Melbourne Now* app.

NGV International

Ross Coulter

Daniel Crooks

Louise Forthun

Bianca Hester

Ash Keating

Greg More

Stephen Rhall

Jan Senbergs

Zoom

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

ARM Architecture

David Chesworth and Sonia Leber

David Jolly

Sampling the City: Architecture in Melbourne

Emile Zile

Offsite

ALLYOURWALLS