

N G
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ACCESSIBLE LEARNING WITH

TREVOR
TURBO
BROWN

**ARTWORK
IN FOCUS**



Trevor Turbo Brown
Self-portrait, 'I am the Dingo Spirit' 2015
 synthetic polymer paint on canvas
 122.3 × 102.2 cm
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Gift of Vince Sinni in memory of Trevor
 Turbo Brown through the Australian
 Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2018
 2018.739
 © the artist's estate

OVERVIEW OF RESOURCE

The Accessible Learning with Art resources are designed to provide opportunities for students with diverse learning abilities to view and meaningfully respond to works of art and design from the NGV Collection. The resources promote the development of close looking skills and introduce strategies to encourage students to critically respond to visual elements, ideas and artmaking processes.

The video component focuses on a single artwork and is intended to be used as a starting point to inspire exploration, discussion and artmaking. Each self-contained video is accompanied by a PDF support document, which can be utilised by teachers and/or parents to scaffold and extend student learning. The level of support given should be adjusted based on the age and abilities of the students. Observe student engagement levels to inform how far to progress with the video and related activities. Each video can be watched in full or paused as needed.

In this video, students are invited to respond to a painting created by Latje Latje artist, Trevor Turbo Brown (1967–2017). The concept of self-portraiture and the relationship between artist and subject matter can be explored through the artwork in focus, *Self-portrait, 'I am the Dingo Spirit'*, 2015. Students are invited to consider their own personal preferences and characteristics as they respond to the eye-catching colours, symbolism and playful artistic style used by Turbo to express his identity and culture.

LEVEL

Foundation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the concept of 'self-portrait' as an artwork that reflects the artist and their identity.
- Demonstrate an understanding of self, strengths and challenges.
- Identify elements of art, including line, colour and shape, in an artwork.

CURRICULUM LINKS

VISUAL ARTS

Respond and Interpret

Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks ([VCAVAR020](#))

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

Self-awareness and Management

Identify their likes and dislikes, needs and wants, abilities and strengths ([VCPSCSE002](#))



NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

The following suggestions are offered to support teachers and parents to empower young people to actively engage with works of art and design, explore ideas and establish connections to their own lives and to each other.

PRIOR TO WATCHING

PREPARE YOURSELF

- Familiarise yourself with the content and structure of the Trevor Turbo Brown video resource.
- Identify and prepare any necessary visual cues required to further support student understanding of concepts explored in the video, guided discussion and activities.

PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS

- Introduce the activity when students are feeling calm and at ease.
- Explain to students that they will be looking at a painting and learning about the person who made it. A person who makes art is called an artist.
- Introduce art galleries as places for displaying works made by artists. Talk about what students might see if they were to visit an art gallery. This may include drawings, paintings, sculptures, photography and films.
- Look at photos of the NGV and/or navigate through [interactive virtual self-guided tours](#) accessible on the NGV website. Explain that the artwork students will be looking at, as well as other works of art and design, can be viewed in real life on display at the Gallery, where anyone can go and visit.
- Explore editable [social stories](#) about visiting the NGV to familiarise students with the gallery experience.
- Ensure adequate time is allocated for students to slow down and look at the artwork, with minimal distractions.
- Introduce the words 'portrait' and 'self-portrait'. Invite students to share what they know about the concepts.
- Familiarise students with a variety of animals by exploring visual features as well as key characteristics of each animal. Model descriptions such as *"This animal is a grizzly bear. It has big sharp claws, it is strong and fierce when it is protecting its baby cubs"*.
- Introduce an image of a dingo and invite students to name the visual features that they can see.
- Check for prior knowledge of feelings, including sad and lonely. Explore these feelings with students in the context of their own lived experiences.

DURING AND/OR AFTER WATCHING

GUIDED DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

The video covers three key themes that you may wish to explore in more depth. You will find suggested discussion points and activities to assist on the following pages. They are intended to be flexible, so choose the ones that best suit the interests and needs of your students. You may like to encourage their efforts by modelling your own responses to questions or by trying the activities together.

THEME 1: REPRESENTING SELF (SELF- PORTRAIT)

TUNING IN

Introduce the concept of self-portraiture by first unpacking the meaning of the word. The word 'self' means YOU! We use this word to talk about ourselves. A self-portrait is a portrait, or a picture, that a person creates of themselves. These days, we use cameras and phones to take pictures of ourselves. We can also look in a mirror. We are all different people, and we all look different. This is great because each person is special and interesting in their own way. Some people have long hair and some people have short hair. Some people have blue eyes and some people have brown eyes. Some people are little and some are big! Looking at self-portraits, or pictures of people, can be really fun and interesting, because there's always something new to see!

ACTIVITIES

- Support students to take a photo of themselves (a selfie), and where appropriate, give them complete control over the process. This may include creative control over what facial expressions they make and choosing when to capture the photo. Print these images and supply students with a sheet of tracing paper placed over their printed image. Encourage students to trace over the image of their own face, using a marker, to create a unique self-portrait. Invite students to then colour in, paint or collage their drawn image.
- Ask students to describe themselves. Scaffold the discussion with prompts such as:
 - > What shape is your face?
 - > What length is your hair? What colour is it?
 - > What colour are your glasses?
 - > What kind of clothes do you like to wear?

Create a written or visual list of the descriptions, if appropriate. Supply students with an outline of a face and invite them to draw or write the things they described about themselves into the template. Prompt students to consider if they have included everything? If they did a drawing, ask them to consider if it looks like them. Why/why not?

To engage students further, display the finished works and ask them to guess who is responsible for which work. This can facilitate conversation between peers and promote opportunities students to talk about their work with a group.



THEME 2: VISUAL CLUES

TUNING IN

Encourage students to inspect the artwork to discover information about the artist. You may wish to generate a sense of suspense and mystery to hook students in, as you guide them through a close looking exercise. This could be done through an introduction such as

“Did you know that art works can talk? Well, not really, but they can tell us lots of interesting things about the person that made the art, the place where the art was made, and when it happened. All we need to do is LOOK. Looking carefully at an artwork can tell us so much, it’s a bit like a treasure hunt, or looking for clues.”

In this picture, there are lots of clues about the artist and their life. Invite students to share what clues they can see using guiding prompts such as:

- > “Look at the artwork really closely. What do you think the artist used to make this picture? Do you think he used paint? I can see brush strokes. What do the brushstrokes tell us? Do you think it was a big brush, or a little brush? Do you think it was painted quickly or slowly?”
- > “What is this a picture of? I think it looks like a happy dog. Another name for this type of dog is a dingo. It looks happy because it has a big smile on its face. I wonder if the artist painted a happy dingo because he liked dingoes.”
- > “Look even closer – can you see writing down the side of the artwork? It’s a bit sneaky in there, but it says “Turbo Brown” which is the name of the person who painted it.
- > “What other clues can you discover in this painting?”

This guided discussion and questioning is intended to generate a curiosity and an attention to detail when students are looking at an artwork.

ACTIVITIES

- Explain the concept of nicknames, or shortened names for people. You could use the example of students in the class, grandparents that go by Nana or Pop, or pets’ names. Draw connection to the artist’s name here, Turbo. Brainstorm with students why he may have been called this nickname. What do they think of when they hear the word Turbo? Play a game where the teacher describes a person’s characteristics, and students are to think of a corresponding nickname. For example, *“I have a little dog who thinks he’s really tough and scary and he barks at the bigger dogs. What would be a good name for him?”*
- When people do something they are proud of, they often put their name on it for others to see. Turbo has done this with his painting. Ask students if they have ever seen graffiti and if so, where they saw it. Show examples of graffiti tags. Sometimes graffiti artists draw their nicknames in a fancy way and try and write their name or ‘tag’ on as many things as they can. Invite students to consider what their graffiti name would be and why. Provide textas or paints for students to develop and illustrate their own tag.



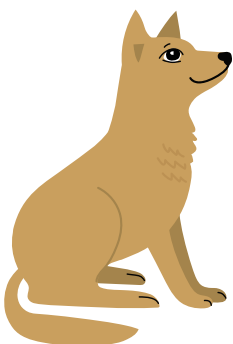
THEME 3: ANIMALS

TUNING IN

The use of animals in art can allow students to positively reflect on themselves and to understand their perceived strengths and begin to develop their concept of self and self-esteem. However, making connections between animal attributes and personal qualities can be quite an abstract concept for some students. You could lead with a statement such as *“Turbo painted a picture of a Dingo because he felt like he had lots of things in common, or the same, with the dingo. Is there an animal that you think you have something in common with? Can you run fast, like a cheetah? Are you sleepy all day like a sloth? Are you tall like a giraffe, or funny, like a monkey?”* It may be helpful to model this, and offer one of your own animal-like attributes.

ACTIVITIES

- Show students a collection of images of different animals with varied body types, such as a giraffe, monkey and cat. Ask them to tell you about the first thing they notice when they look at each image. Guide the discussion by modelling if needed, for example *“Look at those long legs! Giraffes are so tall!”*.
- Use students’ responses for drawing prompts. For example, *“Draw a person who is as tall as a giraffe”*.
- Ask students what their favourite thing about themselves is and encourage them to think of an animal that shares that characteristic. This could be done in pairs, or groups, so students can ask peers what they like about each other. Students may wish to make a collage, drawing or painting of themselves and this animal.



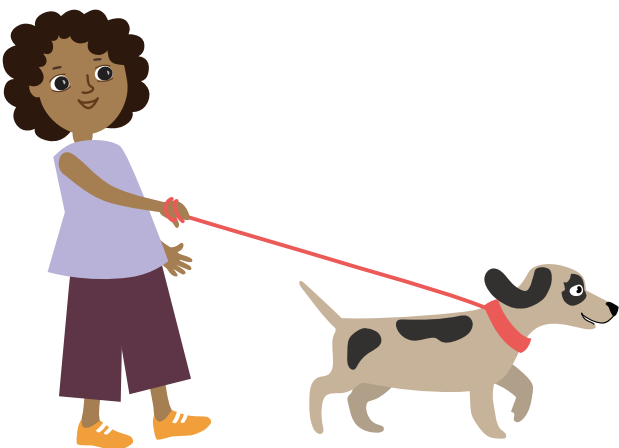
EXTEND THE LEARNING

Plan a visit to the NGV for your students to see the artwork they have learnt about on display.

Please note that sometimes artworks are moved around the Gallery or are taken off display. We recommend checking their location in advance by searching [Collection Online](#).

For information on accessible programs, services and facilities at the NGV, visit the website or email education.bookings@ngv.vic.gov.au to talk to our bookings staff or NGV Educators about program options for your group.

A range of resources to help you prepare for your visit are available on the NGV website.



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Developed in collaboration with Specialist Art Educator, Karlee Sangster, Croxton Special School.