

**N G
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**ACCESSIBLE LEARNING WITH
ALAN
CONSTABLE**

ARTWORK IN FOCUS



Alan Constable
Not titled (Blue QKA SLR) 2013
 glazed earthenware
 12.8 × 25.3 × 9.7 cm
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Yvonne Pettengell Bequest, 2014
 2014.119
 © the artist, Represented by Arts
 Project Australia, Melbourne

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 clay sculpture, *Not titled (Blue QKA SLR)*, 2013, created by Melbourne-based artist, Alan Constable. Constable is an artist who lives with impaired vision. He has followed his passion for cameras, stemming from an early age, and uses them as inspiration throughout his artmaking practice. The detailed clay work made by Constable, paired with functional real-life inspirations, provides a visually rich starting point for students to develop an understanding of comparison and contrast. Through this resource, students are also encouraged to consider what it means to be passionate, what their own personal limitations and strengths are and how they can develop these into strategies and tools to help them achieve their goals.

LEVEL

Primary

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Observe and describe similar and different qualities in two or more objects.
- Identify and describe areas of personal interest.
- Identify their own strengths and limitations.
- Develop strategies to improve outcomes in areas of limitation.

CURRICULUM LINKS

VISUAL ARTS

Visual Arts Practices

Explore visual conventions and use materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to particular art forms, and to make artworks [\(VCAVAV026\)](#)

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to create artworks that express different ideas and beliefs [\(VCAVAE029\)](#)

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

Self-awareness and Management

Identify personal strengths and select personal qualities that could be further developed [\(VCPSCSE017\)](#)

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS

The following suggestions have been provided 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 Alan Constable video resource.
- Identify and prepare any necessary visual cues required to further support student
- Get to know the artist, Alan Constable, by reading through this short bio. Find it [here](#).
- Understand what legal blindness is, as defined [here](#) by Vision Australia.

PREPARE YOUR STUDENTS

- Introduce the activity when students are feeling calm and at ease.
- Explain to students that they will be looking at a sculpture 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.

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: COMPARING AND CONTRASTING OBJECTS

TUNING IN

When we notice aspects that are similar or different between two or more things, we are comparing and contrasting them. Introduce the concept of comparison by explaining that things can be the same, or different, or a mix of both. For example, chips and chocolate are both foods, but one is sweet and the other is savoury. Prompt students to think of other 'same but different' combos.

ACTIVITIES

- Show students images of Constable's series of cameras, found [here](#). What similarities and differences do they notice between the works?
- Look for a game of 'Spot the Difference' appropriate to the age and ability of your student online and play together as a group. Then, take a sheet of paper, fold it down the middle and use each side to draw your own version of 'Spot the Difference'. Once complete, students can swap pictures and play each other's games.
- Constable has used old cameras as his subject matter, even though he would have had many more modern cameras available. What other technologies can you think of that have evolved significantly? Examples may include phones, cars and sports shoes. Encourage students to explore this concept by doing an online image search to find two different photos to compare. For example, an old round dial telephone and the latest iPhone. Print these out so that both images are roughly the same size, and fold lengthways down the centre. Tape the two halves together to create an image of an object that is old on one side and new on the other. Using tracing paper, students can trace over the images to create their own drawing of this hybrid item. Images could be coloured or painted.



THEME 2: STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

TUNING IN

Invite your students to consider challenges and strengths by highlighting Constable's legal blindness and his artistic strengths and abilities. You could lead with a statement such as *"We saw in the video that Alan Constable is legally blind. This means that his vision is not as sharp and strong as some other people. He doesn't see what most other people do. But look at the amazing things he can make!"*.

We all have things that we are good at and also things that we wish we were better at. Sometimes people experience challenges that cannot be overcome by simply practicing, regardless of how hard they try. Instead, they can find accommodations or different ways to work with the things that they cannot change. Sometimes people experience a limitation, such as their age, height or disability, that cannot be overcome by simply trying harder. This does not mean they are unable to do things, or that they shouldn't attempt certain activities or tasks though. It is often a person's approach to doing the things that are important to them that makes their achievements interesting, unique and valid, just like Constable's cameras.

ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to brainstorm all the things they are good at. On blank slips of paper, have them anonymously write, or scribe, this list. Once the lists are complete, shuffle them and hand them out to the group. Ask one student at a time to read out the list of strengths in front of them while the rest of the class are challenged to guess who the list describes. This game can be modified with the teacher reading the lists one by one, or with students writing down the strengths of a partner instead of themselves.
- Students are encouraged to complete this task using their bodies in different ways, as appropriate. Choose a simple image to draw that is also appropriate to the group, for example a smiley face, tree or cat. Print this image as large as possible and display it where all students can see it clearly. Give each student a large piece of paper and ask them to fold it in half and half again, creating four quadrants for four separate drawings. Provide the following instructions, one at a time:
 - > In the first quadrant, copy the image with your non-dominant hand, the hand that you don't usually use to draw.
 - > In the second, copy the image again with the pencil in your mouth.
 - > In the third, draw the image with your eyes closed or looking away from the paper.
 - > In the fourth, copy the image holding the pencil with your toes.

When finished, display the images and discuss the difficulties faced and the ways students worked with their limitations to achieve the goal of completing the drawings. Verbalise relevant observations that you noticed and encourage student discussion around what emerged by doing things differently. Depending on time, space and ability, this activity can be modified by completing fewer drawings.

THEME 3: TURNING A PASSION INTO ART

TUNING IN

Begin to shape a discussion around the fact that we are all unique and have different likes and dislikes. Ask for a show of hands: *Who likes bananas? Who likes Star Wars? Who likes dogs?* Reinforce how not everyone always likes the same things.

Passion is when a like turns into a love. Describe this concept by providing examples such as *“Some people like cooking, but others love it so much that they go to cooking school and train to become chefs. Some people like PE at school, but others train really hard, they play sport on the weekends and represent their region at a competitive level. A passion is when you really, really love something”*.

Alan has a passion for old cameras, and so, he keeps making them repeatedly. Each one is different, and because he loves them so much, he never gets bored of making them.

Invite students to think about what they are passionate about. If they are not sure, encourage them to ask their friends by saying things like “What do I talk about a lot?” or “What do I spend my free time doing?”.

ACTIVITIES

- Ask students to think about a passion they have. Instruct them to collect different pictures of that object or activity through an online image search and then copy and paste the images into a single document to create a digital collage. Print and display the collages and encourage students to look at them closely. Ask the group:
 - > Who has passions in common?
 - > Have they chosen similar pictures or different ones?
- Invite students to bring a toy or object that they love from home to draw. Observational drawing is when an artist draws an object that is in front of them. Explain this concept and instruct students to look closely at their object from all angles, taking notice of how each angle looks different. Then, ask students to draw their object from as many angles as possible on a piece of paper folded or ruled into smaller sections. When they have finished, ask students to look at their drawings and decide at which angle their object is the least recognisable. If time permits, display these drawings and use them to play an object guessing game. When the object in their drawing has been identified, ask students to explain what they love about it and why they chose to bring it with them today.
- Using the search function on the NGV website, invite students to search for their various passions in the Collection online. Before they embark on their exploration, demonstrate an NGV Collection search, using a key word such as *horse*. As students look through the search results, ask them to consider:
 - > How many different artworks have been made about their passion?
 - > Which artwork from their search is their favourite? Why is this work a favourite?

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.