### UNIT 4 – Ancestors and Family Members

#### Overview

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<th>Unit of work</th>
<th>Ancestors and Family Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
<td>One term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td>7 or 8</td>
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**Unit description**

Practice, artmaking and critical and historical studies

In this unit students use the cultural frame to learn about the sculptural practice of Lena Yarkinkura. The artist’s artworks and innovative use of materials communicate powerful messages about the continuing importance of Aboriginal ancestors. In artmaking students focus on their ancestors and family members, drawing images and objects recalling aspects of their life or interests, and collecting natural and manufactured materials to construct a figurative sculpture. The sculpture is painted with symbols to communicate messages about the history and culture of their ancestor or family member. Students use the agencies of the conceptual framework to explore the relationships between artists and artworks as a way to represent their world. They gain an understanding of the world of their family as their most direct cultural link. The students’ works are either exhibited as a memorial celebrating the achievements of people from different cultural backgrounds or considered as forms created for a ceremony commemorating or invoking the importance of the ancestor. In critical and historical studies they learn about Aboriginal artworks from the same region as Lena Yarkinkura and ancestral figures from other cultures. This study will allow students to compare Aboriginal, Eastern and European visual arts practices and beliefs as the transmission of cultural heritage.

**Forms**

3D – fibre, sculpture

**Frames**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
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**Conceptual framework**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Artwork</th>
<th>World</th>
<th>Audience</th>
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**Key artists**

Lena Yarkinkura (Rembarrnga/Kune language group). Other works by the artist include

*Navuhyungki Kun-Kod (Ancestors in Paperbark)*

Judy Watson (Waanyi language group). Other works by the artist include *The Guardians*, *Guardian Spirit*

Hossein Valamanesh

**Outcomes**

4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10
Specific content focus for Unit 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Students learn about:</th>
<th>Students learn to:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10</td>
<td>Artmaking</td>
<td>Artmaking</td>
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**Artmaking**

- the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by different values and beliefs

- the pleasure and enjoyment in making artworks

- the material, physical and virtual form of artworks intentionally made by artists

- artworks produced for exhibition and display

- how artists invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks

- artworks that relate to their own background and experience

- belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the cultural frame

**Critical and historical studies**

- how practice in the visual arts in different times and places is conditioned by a range of interests

- Australian and international artists, designers, architects from different times and places with a focus on those with an iconic status and others who are relevant to the cultural and personal interests of students. Consideration should be given to:

**Artmaking**

- investigate the field of visual arts and design and approximate some conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field to make art

- reflect on and interpret actions and choices, and document these in their diaries

- make artworks using a range of 2D, including drawing, 3D and/or 4D forms, materials and techniques and various investigations of the world

- identify the intention, audience and context for an exhibition and display of artworks

- adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks

- record investigations and information gathering in their diary

- use their cultural and community identities and social perspectives of interest to them in the development of ideas and interests to represent the world in the making of art

**Critical and historical studies**

- investigate a range of practices in the visual arts in different times and places

- discuss, consider and write about different aspects of practice

- discover how artists develop their intentions relative to their artworks, the audience and the world and recognise some of the constraints they work within

- recognise how different kinds of artists work individually and collaboratively
- contemporary artists and modern artists
- artists from different times and cultures
- Aboriginal and Indigenous artists
- female and male artists
- those who use conventional and/or more contemporary technologies

| ▪ different kinds of artworks in 2D, 3D and 4D forms including their symbolic, representational, physical and material properties | ▪ investigate the expressive and stylistic possibilities of different media and techniques used by artists and recognise how these aspects contribute to the kinds of artworks they make |
| ▪ belief, value and meaning about artworks from the **cultural** frame | ▪ identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences use cultural and community identities and social perspectives in making and responding to art |
Teaching and learning activities

1. Critical and historical studies

The artist’s use of traditional Aboriginal fibre practice

Students look at *Ancestors in Paperbark* (1994) and read the text about the artist Lena Yarinkura.

The teacher leads a discussion about the work using the cultural frame to introduce the ideas and questions below:

**How an artist’s practice can be conditioned or shaped by traditional practices.**  
**How an artist’s practice can be an adaptation of both traditional and contemporary material practices.**

- Aboriginal people have traditionally used fibre to construct containers such as string bags and coiled baskets. Students list some traditional fibre techniques, such as spinning, weaving, looping, knotting, folding and wrapping, in their Visual Arts diary. The teacher can refer to a range of traditional and contemporary fibre artists and objects from a variety of source materials.
- Why has Lena Yarinkura used natural materials such as paperbark and ochres? What do the ochres suggest? What kind of form does the paperbark suggest?
- Identify the source of the symbols used by Lena Yarinkura. Students could refer to the rarrk (repeated lines, cross-hatching and patterning) used in paintings to represent ideas about Aboriginal spirituality.

**The role of ancestral figures**

- Within Aboriginal communities, how are stories of Aboriginal ancestors maintained?
- Why did the artist construct these figures and how do they relate to traditional art practices?
- How are stories and other information about family members maintained in your own family? (for example photographs, family bible, birth and death records, diaries, letters, videos, DVDs).

**Explain what Aboriginal people mean by sacred and secular art**

- Define the meanings of ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’. (In Aboriginal societies, ‘sacred’ refers to impermanent works and objects used in ceremonies and rituals; ‘secular’ refers to works created for non-Aboriginal audiences.)
- Why is Lena Yarinkura’s work regarded as secular?
- Explain the meanings suggested to an audience by Lena Yarinkura’s ancestral sculptures.
- Why do Aboriginal artists such as Lena Yarinkura exhibit works in the artworld/to the general public? (Students consider the cultural, economic and political role of Aboriginal art.)
2. **Artmaking**

**Developing a conceptual practice: ideas for a sculptural form based on students’ ancestors or family members**

**An historical profile of a family member or cultural ancestor**

Students research the history of a family member or a cultural ancestor. They:

- use the subjective frame to ask their parents and family members to recall stories about their grandparents, great-grandparents or a cultural ancestor. They should focus on one story and the personal qualities such as their sense of humour, their work, generosity, friendliness and interests
- collect biographical information, images (photographs, newspaper clippings and physical details) and acknowledge the sources in their Visual Arts diary
- represent important symbols. The cultural frame may also be used to position their research into the cultural origins of the ancestor. These origins can be represented in research drawings of the particular shapes of houses identified with that culture, symbols of money, religion, education, social status, material possessions such as land, livestock, cars and television
- display their drawings and talk about their research to other class members.

3. **Critical and historical studies**

**The meaning of ancestral figures in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures**

The teacher selects examples of two or three ancestral or guardian figures from other cultures (including Aboriginal) eg the Yakshi figure from the East Gate, Sanchi in India, the Kongorikishi guardians from the Kamakura period in Japan, Roman portrait busts, an interlaced animal head from a Viking ship, Inuit totems and animal sculptures.

Students use the cultural frame to position an exploration of the relationship between the artists and the artwork. They:

- explain the function of the selected works, focusing on the figure’s protective role, stories and beliefs associated with the figure and the world in which they were made
- compare the beliefs and ideas represented in Lena Yarinkura’s artwork with the other works studied
- look at the way materials and techniques have been used in relation to the role of that artwork within a culture. For example the use of permanent, semi-permanent or impermanent materials relates to issues of secular or non-secular significance and the role these figures can perform as part of ceremonial and sacred ritual within a culture.

4. **Artmaking**

The teacher and students discuss the particular actions and qualities of their ancestor or family member, such as soldier, convict, miner, mother, farmer, nurse, businessmen, elder, teacher or community leader. Through additional drawings students further refine and resolve how these qualities can be represented with material practices that relate to sculpture, assemblage and construction techniques using both natural and/or manufactured materials.
Students view 3D figurative works by a range of artists in different times and places, for example Mimi ancestral or guardian figures, Louise Bourgeois, Jutta Feddersen, Judy Watson, Hossein Valamanesh. Using the structural frame they discuss:

- the sculptural qualities of these works including construction techniques, materials and surfaces
- the use of a visual language associated with sculpture such as mass, void, texture, surface, three dimensions, in the round etc
- use and combination of materials and the contribution the particular use of a material makes to meaning in the artwork
- representation of symbols.

Students collect images and objects that symbolise their ancestor or family member and make sketches in their Visual Arts diary to plan their sculpture.

Students continue to develop a series of preliminary drawings and plans for their proposed sculpture representing their ancestor or family member. They develop an increasing intention in the way in which they will use visual qualities in their work to communicate meaning to an audience. They use a range of drawing media including pencils, charcoal, inks, pastels and collage and develop signs and symbols to communicate their subject’s qualities to an audience. Through teacher discussion students can be made more aware of some postmodern practices that incorporate a written narrative or text about the ancestor or family member including birth dates, significant characteristics, interests etc. Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley’s Edge of the Trees is a good example of textual materials used to enhance and contribute additional complex and layered meanings to an artwork.

3-D form using symbolic materials

The teacher demonstrates some construction, assemblage, cutting and joining techniques using a range of natural and manufactured materials. The Valamanesh and Watson examples provide a visual solution for students to create a simple figurative base around the notion of the silhouette that can be easily cut using either plywood or strawboard. The students then:

- experiment with different natural or manufactured materials eg fallen branches, leaves, plastics, fabric, papers, rubber, to construct, as a sculptural form, a family member or cultural ancestor figure. The symbolic aspects of the materials should be considered, for example materials may symbolise the ancestor’s culture or world, their work practices and interests
- make a sculpture using a range of construction techniques including gluing, binding, assemblage. They consider the texture and surface qualities of the sculpture and ways to represent and communicate the qualities of the figure, as well as the scale, height and base. They may return to their original drawings to consider how visual impact may be heightened
- use the language of the structural frame to document in their Visual Arts diary their construction techniques and evaluate and reflect on how materials are used and combined to create signs and symbols that communicate ideas to audiences.

Resolving the surface of the sculpture

The teacher demonstrates different ways that students could treat the surface of the sculpture to reinforce the symbolic meanings. For example, paint could be used in repeated lines or patterns to create a visual rhythm; symbolic shapes and surfaces could be used to represent
the cultural traditions and the history of the ancestor; layering effects could be used to represent the imagined ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ qualities of the ancestor; text and collage could be integrated, along with found and significant objects etc.

Students are encouraged to:

- organise the sculptures as memorial installations that celebrate the achievements of their family members or cultural ancestors
- construct a pageantry or ceremonial ritual around which their sculpture can be used to enact a story of personal or cultural significance. This may relate to some of the student’s subjective frame research into events and incidents in the life of their ancestor which they have chosen to represent in the work.
- install the sculpture within a specific site and document the work through drawing and digital photography. This could involve situating the figure within their own domestic world and recording the image.
- use digital imaging skills to layer or superimpose an image of the sculpture within existing historical or contemporary family photos creating a ghost image or reference to the past to enhance notions of presence and absence implied in the notion of the ‘ancestor’.

These installations can be documented through photographs and form part of a ‘Memorials’ exhibition.

5. Evidence of learning

Student artworks and annotated diary entries, diagrams and drawings demonstrate an understanding of the structural frame and how meaning is created using a visual language of materials, techniques, signs and symbols. An understanding of how the cultural frame can be used to research and explore the role of ancestral or guardian figures within different societies and cultures is demonstrated in students’ work in highlighting and annotating texts, photocopies and other written research with their own explanatory notes and class discussions about the role and significance of these figures. Student explanations in their Visual Arts diary demonstrate an understanding of artmaking practice.

Figurative sculpture demonstrates students’ knowledge and understanding of sculptural practice and skills in assemblage techniques, the treatment of surfaces and their ability to combine and exploit the qualities of found and natural objects. Exhibited works demonstrate students’ understanding of relationships between artworks and the audience to represent a point of view about their world and culture.

Visual Arts diary entries, reflections and drawings demonstrate an understanding of how a visual language of signs and symbols can be developed to communicate ideas and represent the qualities of ancestors and family members.

6. Feedback

- Teacher observation and feedback of plans for sculpture in students’ Visual Arts diaries.
- Teacher observation and oral feedback of experiments with construction techniques, and during the making of the sculpture.
• Teacher observation and oral feedback in class discussions about traditional and contemporary practices and the representation of ancestors and family members.
• Teacher written and oral feedback and discussion of works for ‘Memorial’ exhibition.

7. Related activities

• Research the Myall Creek Massacre.
• View the Aboriginal Burial Poles, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.
• Teachers could organise an excursion to the Art Gallery of NSW in Sydney to view Aboriginal Ancestral figures.
• The Museum of Sydney – view the memorial artworks (outside).
• View the video Dreamings by Michael Riley.

Click here to go to Resources and Research.
UNIT 5 – Reconciliation

Overview

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<td>One term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>9 or 10</td>
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This unit focuses on Reconciliation and Reconciliation Week as a basis for artmaking. The cultural frame provides opportunities for this contemporary Australian issue to be seen as both celebratory and promotional within all Australian communities. In artmaking students make a poster that celebrates and promotes Reconciliation Week in their own community and provides opportunities for students to use information and communication technologies to make artworks in a graphic form. These representations are informed by critical and historical investigations about events and issues that have influenced the work of Aboriginal graphic artists and how they employ collaborative techniques. In critical and historical studies students investigate political comment in the work of Alice Hinton-Bateup and David Spearim (Fernando). These works are also compared with the work of other Aboriginal artists whose subject matter addresses social, political and historical issues of importance to their audience. The school community’s reception of the posters produced, forms part of the studying activities in the unit.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>2D – printmaking, digital media</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames</th>
<th>Subjective</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Postmodern</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual framework</td>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>Artwork</td>
<td>World</td>
<td>Audience</td>
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</table>

| Key artists | Alice Hinton-Bateup (Kamilaroi/Wonnarua language group) 
David Spearim (Fernando) (Kamilaroi language group) 
Robert Campbell Jnr (Ngaku language group) 
Redback Graphix |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------|

| Outcomes | 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10 |
## Specific content focus for Unit 5.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Artmaking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Artmaking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power</td>
<td>• investigate and apply selected conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field of visual arts and design to make art where meaning is shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• the pleasure and enjoyment in making artworks</td>
<td>• build their research, approaches to experimentation, procedures, skills and strategies and develop judgement in the practical action of using diaries and making of artworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• how artists work in groups and in collaboration with others</td>
<td>• make informed personal choices to shape meaning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• artists who make works shaped by subjective, structural, cultural and postmodern values and beliefs</td>
<td>• develop subjective, structural, cultural and postmodern approaches to making artworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the world as the source of ideas and concepts to make art</td>
<td>• develop research and investigative skills using their diary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• how artists invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks</td>
<td>• invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the ways in which particular artworks relate to their own background and experience</td>
<td>• utilise their diary to plan and conceptualise artworks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the <strong>cultural</strong> frame concepts of art as the aesthetic building and defining of social identity</td>
<td>• focus on issues of significance to their school and culture to generate ideas for artmaking and the conceptual interest of works for example: peer pressure, gender, politics, global warming, human rights, genetic engineering, the environment consider the social context for their developing practice and relations between peers, teachers, the school, community, galleries and artworld</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical and historical studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• how practice in the visual arts in different times and places is conditioned by a range of interests, including the artworld, artworks and exhibitions, galleries and museums, the art market, theories</td>
<td>• investigate a range of practices in the visual arts in different times and places</td>
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<tr>
<td>• the conceptual framework can be applied to understanding the practices of artists, critics and historians and the artworld</td>
<td>• recognise beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power when critically interpreting art</td>
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<tr>
<td>• selected artists, with a developing understanding of relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience</td>
<td>• investigate the role of the artist, including groups of artists, in different times and places and contemporary and historical contexts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• how the world can be interpreted in art and the ways in which ideas are represented</td>
<td>• explain how artists interpret the world in making artworks and how they seek to represent concepts through a range of styles and approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td>• different kinds of artworks in 2D, 3D and 4D forms including their symbolic, representational, physical and material properties</td>
<td>• further focus on the expressive and stylistic possibilities of different media and techniques used by artists and recognise how these aspects contribute to the kinds of artworks they make</td>
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<tr>
<td>• different audiences for artworks</td>
<td>• make comparisons between different kinds of artworks which take into account their symbolic and material properties</td>
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<tr>
<td>• belief, value and meaning from the cultural frame</td>
<td>• recognise how audiences contribute to the meaning of art and how their views of works may alter in different contexts and times</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences use cultural and community identities and social perspectives in making and responding to art</td>
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<td>• identify and account for cultural orientations to art</td>
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Teaching and learning activities

1. Critical and historical studies

Understanding Hinton-Bateup’s work

The teacher shows *Ruth’s Story* (1989 screenprint) to the students and reads the text about Hinton-Bateup from the *Gallery and Artists* resource. The teacher provides a range of stories about personal experiences of children of the stolen generation. These stories can be sourced from a variety of websites including:

- **Australian Indigenous Stolen Generation**
  - *Stolen* from under the Quandong tree *For A Change* Jean Brown; *Whitewashed Bill* Simon True
  - *Stories Churchlink; Stories of Stolen Generation* Mission Voices ABC ...
  - [www.trinity.wa.edu.au/plduffyrc/indig/stolen.htm](http://www.trinity.wa.edu.au/plduffyrc/indig/stolen.htm) - 50k - Cached - Similar pages

- **Stories of Stolen Generations, Koorie Heritage Trust**
  - Mission voices – Culture and history of Victorian Aboriginal people and communities - oral history - online documentary - audio and text stories by Elders ...

- **Stories Of The Stolen Generation :: ABC Radio Regional Production Fund**
  - Stories from a 3-day event which brought together members of the Stolen Generation of Kimberley people.
  - [www.abc.net.au/radio/rpf/stories/s1314445.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/radio/rpf/stories/s1314445.htm) - 9k - Cached - Similar pages

- **Australia's 'Stolen Generation'**
  - He and other historians began to tell the stories of the stolen generation - the beatings they had suffered in state homes; the rapes, identity crises, ...
  - [www.culturewars.org.uk/2002-12/stolengeneration.htm](http://www.culturewars.org.uk/2002-12/stolengeneration.htm) - 14k - Cached - Similar pages

- **ncca - Stolen Generations**
  - But the fundamental truth of the stories of the Stolen Generations, and their pain, cannot be denied. As representatives of the churches, we call on our ...

- **Stolen children: their stories - Carmel Bird**
  - *Stolen* children and their stories Bird's introduction to the stories ... Our state of mind: racial planning and the stolen generations. ...

- **The "Stolen Generation" - Aboriginal Art Online**
  - The Dreamtime The Stolen Generation of Aboriginal Children ... has become an anthem for the many Aboriginal people who identify strongly with its story. ...

- **Stolen Generation - www.didjshop.com**
  - *Stolen Generation* is a term used for a generation of Australian Aboriginal ... I wish to thank Bob for sharing his stories with us and for his compassion ...
  - [www.didjshop.com/shop1/stolen_generation.html](http://www.didjshop.com/shop1/stolen_generation.html) - 20k - Cached - Similar pages

- **Laceweb - Old Man - His youth as a Stolen Generation Member**
  - *Stolen Generation* Member. Written from stories told by Geoff Guest. Geoff Guest A.O.M., has Aboriginal, Irish, and Scot forebears and is now in his ...
  - [www.laceweb.org.au/gsg.htm](http://www.laceweb.org.au/gsg.htm) - 21k - Cached - Similar pages

[Other related websites can be accessed by doing a global search for stories of the stolen generation.]
The teacher uses the following questions to promote discussion.

- What was the government policy that allowed children to be removed from their homes that the stories highlight? When did this take place?
- How effective is the work in portraying the policy’s impact on the lives of Aboriginal people?
- Why do you think Alice Hinton-Bateup describes screen-printing as a medium particularly suited to delivering a message to a wide audience?
- How does Hinton-Bateup aim to make the wider society aware of ‘hidden’ Aboriginal culture, to make known Aboriginal lives and views, whilst contributing to the revitalisation and strength of Aboriginal people and their culture? How effective is she in doing this?

**Historical and political events in Aboriginal art**

Referring to the success of Aboriginal artists who were involved in the ‘Koori’ art movement founded in the 1980s, the teacher leads an exploration of some other artworks and sources that are a part of this movement. For example, the teacher shows *Invasion Day 1988*, acrylic on canvas, and reads the text. Students answer the following questions to inform their understanding of the relationship between artists and artworks as ways to interpret their world:

- What event does David Spearim (Fernando) interpret in his artwork? How is the view of the artist represented in this work?
- Why has the artist titled the work *Invasion Day 1988*?
- What historical and political event affecting Aboriginal people is portrayed in this artwork?
- Why is the artwork significant to different audiences within Aboriginal culture and within the broader Australian culture?
- What is the purpose and meaning of Australia Day for non-Aboriginal Australians?
- What is the Aboriginal viewpoint and why?

The students evaluate and explain the significance and meanings of other artworks by Aboriginal artists in this kit that explore historical and political issues, eg Robert Campbell Jnr, *Death in Custody*, Isabell Coe, *Tent Embassy*, H J Wedge, *Captain Cook Con Man*. Students consider the following questions:

- What techniques are used to communicate a message?
- Why were these artworks made and who is the intended audience?
- What do these artworks tell us about attitudes to Aboriginal culture and people?
- How do they make a political point and represent the beliefs of Aboriginal people?
- When did Aboriginal artists begin making artworks about social and political issues? Why did this tradition emerge?
- When did these artists first become recognised as significant within the national and international artworld? What factors contributed to this?
2. Artmaking

Ideas for a poster

The teacher explains that students will be designing a poster to encourage their school community to participate in the celebration of Reconciliation Week. Then, as a class, students focus on the relationship between artworks and audiences by:

- brainstorming issues that relate to Reconciliation, e.g. shared land – shared histories, diverse cultural values, working towards better relationships and a united future. They decide which issues are relevant to their school community, decide on a range of images, signs and symbols they may need to source and collect which could be used to best represent these ideas
- discussing the characteristics of political posters that are effective in communicating a message to an audience, e.g. size of image, text, realisation or stylisation of the image, use of colour, layout and orientation of the work
- listing these ideas in their Visual Arts diary and considering the information to be displayed on their poster and which information will be more prominent.

3. Critical and historical studies

The teacher uses the relationships between the agencies of the conceptual framework to assist students to consider the ways artists communicate ideas or points of view to an audience through artworks. Referring to Hinton-Bateup’s work *Ruth’s Story* these relationships may be understood through, for example, her use of symbols, colour, narrative content, cultural relevance and understanding the visual conventions that are in circulation at the time of making the work. Students are asked to explain:

- the possible messages that Alice Hinton-Bateup communicates in her artworks
- the significance of the picture of Ruth in her artwork and the symbolism of the story being written in the hair
- the social significance of events that are interpreted by the artist in the artwork
- the use of compositional and other devices such as rhythm, colour, repetition and pattern
- the effectiveness of the work in terms of communicating ideas to audiences and the factors that contribute to this.

Students are set a written task to evaluate and explain the significance of two of the other selected artworks. They may also research the significance of poster design in Aboriginal communities, e.g. Marie McMahon, *You are on Aboriginal Land* (Redback Graphix, 1986).

4. Artmaking

Visual images for a poster

As part of their practice students investigate, source and collect images for their poster about the issues previously explored by:

- collecting photographs (copyright should be checked before using images)
- sourcing diverse representations from the world of mass media, historical imagery, artworld, popular culture etc
Students develop a range of ideas for their poster considering relationships between size, colour, text, image in addressing layout issues for compositions. At this point the work could either be developed using a range of printmaking techniques (reduction lino print, photo-silk screen, hand-cut stencils etc) or as a digital image using appropriate software applications.

The teacher demonstrates how images can be enhanced and manipulated, and photographs combined with drawn images using scanning, selection and layering techniques. Students scan and manipulate images and experiment with various layout options.

The teacher also demonstrates ways to manipulate the text by enlarging or reducing, setting as bold, shadow, outline, strike through. Students review their work with the teacher as it develops and consider such aspects as the visual impact of the work, readability of text and font size, whether the poster clearly communicates a message suited to their intentions (the targeting of the school community).

Students complete their posters and exhibit these around the school community, celebrating Reconciliation Week.

5. **Critical and historical studies**

Students undertake research into the effectiveness of the posters in communicating with the local school audience.

Working in groups, they devise a form of research that will provide information about audience response. This can be through questionnaire, interview or taking orders for copies of the posters.

Each student documents a reflection of their own learning in the production of the posters and of their group’s research findings on audience response to the posters.

6. **Evidence of learning**

Student’s participation in discussion and their written responses demonstrate an understanding of the cultural frame and relationships between agencies of the conceptual framework to interpret and explain an artist’s practice.

The selection and analysis of images demonstrate an understanding of the significance of poster design in Aboriginal communities. Poster designs, diary entries and manipulated images demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of poster design including layout, text and graphic techniques, and an understanding of relationships between artworks and audiences. Digital manipulations of images demonstrate an understanding of the use of software programs, tools and techniques and the persuasive powers of images and how meaning can be communicated through signs, symbols and codes.
7. Feedback

- Teacher observation and oral feedback about the development of plans for poster designs and experiments with combining and manipulating images.
- Teacher observation and oral feedback in class discussions about contemporary design practices, the significance of poster design and how posters communicate meaning to audiences.
- Teacher written and oral feedback about research into conceptual framework relationships and the effectiveness of posters.

8. Related activities

Research the importance of posters in Aboriginal art and communities. Start collecting posters about Aboriginal issues.

As part of this unit, students can develop an understanding of Reconciliation and Reconciliation Week and the role they can personally play. This can happen at various points throughout the unit.

Invite guest speakers from the local community to talk to students; this would be a valuable experience. The following organisations are useful for current information:

- Reconciliation Australia is the body established to provide a continuing national focus for reconciliation following the end of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in December 2000. Reconciliation Australia produces a quarterly magazine that includes articles that can be used in classrooms.

- Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR) (see Resources and Research for addresses).

Display Reconciliation posters and information in the classroom and around the school.

Reconciliation Week is recognised and celebrated annually. Students discuss or research the following questions:

- What does the word Reconciliation mean?
- What are the issues connected with Reconciliation, Native Title, Mabo, High Court rulings and the Stolen Generations?
- Who is involved in Reconciliation and why? Look at recent events and marches. Why were so many people involved in these public expressions of Reconciliation?
- What role can students play in promoting and working towards Reconciliation and why?

Teachers and students think about how to involve their own school community and Aboriginal community in celebrating Reconciliation or Reconciliation Week. Where? When? Who will be involved? How to involve everyone?

Click here to go to Resources and Research.
## UNIT 6 – Objects in the Landscape

### Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit of work</th>
<th>Objects in the Landscape</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>One term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>9 or 10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Unit description

**Practice, armtaking and critical and historical studies**

In this unit students use the structural and cultural frames and the agencies of the conceptual framework to investigate the fibre arts of Yvonne Koolmatrie and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. The investigation of these artists can be an inspiration for the students to explore constructed 3D forms and the representation of objects in the landscape.

In their armtaking, students explore traditional and innovative notions of constructed and woven structures and surfaces that have some connections to the traditions of textiles and fibre practices. Students develop a range of contemporary material practices and a visual vocabulary of signs, symbols and meanings. They experiment with natural and manufactured materials and found objects to construct a 3D form that represents ideas about the landscape. Students consider the relationships between artists and artworks and how artists make artworks to communicate ideas about the world to an audience. In critical and historical studies students use the structural and the cultural frames to investigate the function of artworks and audiences through an investigation of traditional and contemporary fibre practices and the practice of situating sculptural objects in the landscape. An historical study of Aboriginal community art provides students with the opportunity to consider the significant cultural and economic roles of art for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>3D – sculpture, fibre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frames</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual framework</td>
<td>Artist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key artists**

- Yvonne Koolmatrie (Ngarrindjeri language group). Other works by the artist include *Eel Traps*
- Bronwyn Oliver. Other works by the artist include *Seed and Palm*, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney
- John Davis. Other works by the artist include *Fish and Pebbles*
- Keren Ruki
- Lorraine Connelly-Northey (Wiradjuri language group). Other works by the artist include *The gatherer: Narrbongs (String bags), Hunter-gatherer*
- Sue Pedley. Other works by the artist include *Sri Lankan works*

**Outcomes**

- 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10
### Specific content focus for Unit 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Students learn to:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10</td>
<td>Students learn to:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artmaking</th>
<th>Artmaking</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ the field of visual arts and design as comprising conventions, activities, traditions and customs shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power</td>
<td>▪ investigate and apply selected conventions, activities, traditions and customs of the field of visual arts and design to make art where meaning is shaped by values and beliefs about the individual, social structures, the artworld and power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ the pleasure and enjoyment in making artworks</td>
<td>▪ build their research, approaches to experimentation, procedures, skills and strategies and develop judgement in the practical action of using diaries and making of artworks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ the world as the source of ideas and concepts to make art</td>
<td>▪ develop research and investigative skills using their diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ how artists invent, adapt and develop strategies and procedures to investigate the world to make artworks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ how artists develop their intentions</td>
<td>▪ develop their artistic intentions in the making of art and how practice becomes more informed as they continue to make art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the cultural frame concepts of art as the aesthetic building and defining of social identity</td>
<td>▪ further focus on how cultural and community identity and social perspectives contribute to the development of ideas and making of art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ belief, value and meaning in artmaking in the structural frame concepts of art as a system of symbolic communication through which particular forms of aesthetic information are transmitted</td>
<td>▪ focus on issues of significance to their school and culture to generate ideas for artmaking and the conceptual interest of works, for example: peer pressure, gender, politics, global warming, human rights, genetic engineering, the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ consider the social context for their developing practice and relations between peers, teachers, the school, community, galleries and artworld</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ▪ employ a range of conventions including codes, symbols and signs         | ▪ consider how communication is embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of their own artworks eg the choice of paint and placement of an image relative to others in the composition |
| ▪ consider how communication is embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of their own artworks eg the choice of paint and placement of an image relative to others in the composition | ▪ use a range of styles that make use of the conventions of the field |

<p>| ▪ use a range of styles that make use of the conventions of the field | ▪ use a range of styles that make use of the conventions of the field |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical and historical studies</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• how practice in the visual arts in different times and places is conditioned by a range of interests, including the artworld, artworks and exhibitions, galleries and museums, the art market, theories</td>
<td>• investigate a range of practices in the visual arts in different times and places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• artistic practices, conventions and procedures that inform the approaches to artmaking of different artists, group of artists and artistic movements</td>
<td>• seek to explain the different artistic practices of selected artists and groups and different artistic movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• how the frames offer alternative ways to think about the purposes of practice including those of the artist, critic and historian</td>
<td>• consider how practices can be interpreted from different points of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• selected artists, with a developing understanding of relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience</td>
<td>• investigate the role of the artist, including groups of artists, in different times and places and contemporary and historical contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• artists and groups of artists working in Australia, international artists, designers, architects from different times and places with a focus on: – contemporary artists and modern artists – artists from different cultures – Aboriginal and Indigenous artists – female and male artists – those who use conventional and/or more contemporary technologies</td>
<td>• investigate how different artists in different times and places develop their intentions and recognise some of the constraints they work within</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• different kinds of artworks in 2D, 3D and 4D forms including their symbolic, representational, physical and material properties</td>
<td>• further focus on the expressive and stylistic possibilities of different media and techniques used by artists and recognise how these aspects contribute to the kinds of artworks they make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• belief, value and meaning from the cultural frame concepts of art as the aesthetic building and defining of social identity</td>
<td>• make comparisons between different kinds of artworks which take into account their symbolic and material properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• belief, value and meaning from the structural frame concepts of art as a system of symbolic communication through which particular forms of aesthetic information are transmitted</td>
<td>• identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences use cultural and community identities and social perspectives in making and responding to art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• explain how critical and historical accounts provide a way to understand social conditions, perspectives and the social construction of meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identify and seek to explain how artists and audiences can read artworks as images or texts by understanding conventions including codes, symbols and signs and how these are embedded in the material and conceptual organisation of artworks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching and learning activities

1. Critical and historical studies

**Traditional fibre arts in contemporary Aboriginal art practice**

Students view a range of traditional and contemporary fibre works from selected artists focusing on *Eel Traps* (1993) by Yvonne Koolmatrie. The teacher leads a structural frame investigation about the artwork to develop an understanding of conceptual framework relationships and how contemporary art practices are informed by traditional art practices. Students respond to questions in a written account.

- What was the traditional purpose of the work and does the work retain this purpose today? How has the meaning of the work changed over time for different audiences?
- Describe the materials and the source of these materials. (Students could locate the Ngarrindjeri community and the Lower Murray River on the map of Australia.)
- Explain the techniques used to construct the work and consider how effective these are.
- Outline the artist’s practice, including her interests and the influences on her work such as traditional Aboriginal fibre art practices.
- Why was Yvonne Koolmatrie’s work chosen to represent Australia in the 1997 Venice Biennale?

2. Artmaking

**Fibre construction**

The teacher provides a range of examples of three-dimensional traditional and contemporary sculptural works where the notion of the woven surface has been explored in its broadest sense. To expand the field from traditional concepts of woven objects and structures students could view examples of work by Bronwyn Oliver, John Davis’s *Fish and Pebbles* and other fish sculptures, Sue Pedley’s site-specific Sri Lankan series, *Sound of Bamboo* and *Sound of Lotus*, etc. The teacher assists students to explore a range of different materials that can be used to construct an object. Students could collect natural fibres such as reeds, sticks, bamboo, cane and raffia or more contemporary manufactured materials such as wire, plastic tubing, netting etc. Alternatively students could use recycled materials such as torn paper or fabric strips, paper or cardboard tubing, plastic straws and found objects.

The teacher demonstrates a range of construction techniques (some may be traditional Aboriginal fibre practices) to students, and/or invites or employs an Aboriginal fibre artist to teach students some traditional techniques. Other techniques may be of a more contemporary nature such as joining, looping, weaving, stitching, coiling, knotting, folding, wrapping or rolling manufactured materials together. For example:

- Rolled paper or fabric (tubes). Draw, paint or computer-generate an image onto paper. Roll the paper with the image or text turned out around a paper tube, twig or piece of dowel and paste. Plastic or fabric can also be used; see, for example, works by contemporary Maori artist Keren Ruki where images are ironed onto fabric and then rolled around small lengths of cane.
- Manipulate traditional methods of weaving, knitting, sewing materials together and experiment with ways to join cane, wire, fabric strips or plastic tubing.
Students evaluate the techniques demonstrated and the different effects achieved through manipulating and combining colours, textures and materials. They experiment with a range of techniques and combinations of techniques to make some sample pieces. Students document their procedures in their Visual Arts diary using sketches, photographs and annotations using the language of the structural frame. Students may also find examples of works by Aboriginal artists who use these and similar techniques. The experiments may be used later by the students in the construction of their object. As part of these annotations students could also explain how the use of certain materials contributes specific meaning to artworks.

3. Critical and historical studies

Through reading accounts of Yvonne Koolmatrie’s work and practice, including text from this website, students understand that part of the artist’s intention in her practice is to revitalise traditional techniques that are in danger of becoming lost as the effects of colonisation prevent skills being handed down from generation to generation in a traditional way. In a traditional Aboriginal culture the fish traps were crucial to survival and the provision of food for the tribe.

In a contemporary world artworks such as Koolmatrie’s can enjoy quite a different role and function from the traditional tribal function and social context in which the works were first made. The teacher leads a discussion about the relationship between artworks and audiences using the 1997 Venice Biennale (where Koolmatrie, Judy Watson and Emily Kngwarreye represented Australia) and the recent addition of the Musée du quai Branly in Paris in terms of a new thinking about Indigenous art both locally and in Europe. Students respond to guided questioning in a written account. The questions could include:

- What is the Venice Biennale?
- Who decides what is exhibited at the Venice Biennale?
- The curators’ theme for the 1997 Venice Biennale was ‘Future, Present, Past’. Interpret the title of this theme to build a possible account for the selection of the three Aboriginal artists to represent Australia in Venice in 1997.
- What was happening in the world of Australian politics in relation to issues of Aboriginal land rights and self-determination around 1997 that connects to the selection of these artists for Venice?
- What is the Musée du quai Branly?
- Who are the Aboriginal artists whose work has been chosen for exhibition there?
- How have new materials and technologies facilitated the adaptation of work by Australian Aboriginal artists as architectural elements at the Musée du quai Branly? (Gulumbu Yunupingu’s Garak – The Universe is painted on a walkway and ceiling, Tommy Watson’s Central Desert painting has been transferred to metal sheets and installed on a ceiling and Paddy Bedford’s work is reproduced as a glass installation.)
- How does the use of new media within the traditions of Aboriginal art and culture create a new way for audiences to view and interpret these works?
4. Artmaking

Objects in the landscape

Students investigate the local landscape, its features and the objects found in it such as rock formations, flora, shells, seed pods, cocoons etc. Students collect some of these objects and found materials from the landscape to use for their preliminary drawings for a sculpture. In their drawings the development of conceptual practice is present though the choice and selection of materials to represent ideas about and aspects of the relationship between the natural environment and humankind, cultures and beliefs. Objects and what they are made of can act as a link to a culture, they become icons of significance and connection points between people. Students can:

- make a series of sketches of objects, recording skeletal structures and frames, surfaces, patterns, linear qualities, colours and scale and compositional aspects
- investigate a range of 3D artworks representing ideas about the objects in the landscape by a range of artists such as Bronwyn Oliver, John Davis (eg Fish and Pebbles), Brett Whiteley (eg Nest) and Rosalie Gasgoine (eg Feather Fence) where artists have woven, threaded and joined found natural materials to form a structure reminiscent of the landscape in which these materials are found
- develop a preliminary plan and drawings for a sculpture (a single work or a series of works) to accompany these drawings. Students start to plan and experiment with materials to weave, loop, stitch wrap and join to create the structure of their sculpture
- review diary reflections and annotations about their experiments with materials, and develop their initial plans considering the constraints and advantages of the materials they are using
- focus on particular structural aspects such as skeletal structure and frame, textures, patterns, shapes of objects in the landscape and in the 3D forms
- consider the role of scale and how a change in scale can alter the way we see and interpret familiar objects. Using the visual language of scale could also involve students considering the role of memory and how the distance of time can make things seem what they are not – often larger than life. Students are encouraged to think about how an unexpected use of material and scale can challenge an audience’s expectation and reading of an artwork
- collect a range of natural and manufactured objects, such as twigs, feathers, papers, fabric, plastics, twines, string, beads and buttons, to be used to construct the sculpture
- select and use one or more fibre construction techniques to make their 3D form(s)
- document their intentions, procedures used, decisions and judgements in their Visual Arts diary.

5. Critical and historical studies

Study of significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art movements

The teacher introduces the various movements using artworks from this resource and the Timeline of Events. Significant artistic cultural practices include:

- Ernabella Arts
  Batik on silk organza by Angkaliya Purampi
  Batik on silk crepe and satin by Alison Carroll and Angkuna Kulyuru
Woodcarving: Large piti by Dora Haggie
Ngalpi (Leaf) by Nyuwarra Tapaya
Minyma Kaanka (Crow Woman’s Story) by Awulari

- **Utopia Arts Community**
  Untitled (Alhakere) 1990
- **Mangkaja Arts**
  Payarr by Paji Honeychild Yankarr
- **Oenepelli**
  Kunj 1984
- **Tiwi People**
  *The Kurlama* 1995
- **Papunya Tula**
  Untitled 1990, acrylic on canvas, courtesy of Utopia Art Sydney
  Untitled 1994, acrylic on canvas, courtesy of Utopia Art Sydney
- **Warlukurlangu Artists**
  Ngapa (water), Pamapardu (flying ant), Wardapi (goanna), Ngarkirdi (witchetty grub) Dreaming by Jeanie Nungurrayi Egan and Thomas Jangala Rice.

Students can:
- identify how traditional practices and practices from other cultures have informed the practices of these artists
- explain the material qualities of the works including the use of particular techniques and processes and comment on their cultural significance
- consider how practices are exchanged amongst different cultural groups
- identify the individuals, community members and agencies who have supported the artists and helped to market their work.

### 6. Artmaking

**Constructing the object**

Students make their works and place them in the selected site. They document the works, and audience reactions and interactions with the works, through drawings, photographs, written anecdotes and video footage. Students can prepare a written statement that records their intentions and the ideas they are seeking to represent in a 3D form. They can compare their fibre works with those by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Students construct the object and consider how they can:
- incorporate found objects to enhance the ideas and the aesthetic qualities of the materials
- take advantage of unexpected mistakes that might lead to new ideas or welcome adaptations
- use new and novel techniques.

Students exhibit the work and compare it to fibre works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.
7. **Evidence of learning**

Oral responses and class discussion demonstrate student understanding of the cultural conventions of traditional fibre practices, and contemporary sculptural practice, the use of found objects and construction techniques. Visual Arts diary entries, annotated sketches and diagrams demonstrate an understanding of planning, design and sculptural practice. Experiments with techniques and combinations of materials demonstrate students’ skills in construction and assemblage techniques and the selection of appropriate materials to represent aspects of their world to an audience.

Written accounts in response to questions demonstrate an understanding of how the cultural and structural frame and the conceptual framework can be used to interpret an artist’s practice. Students demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of critical and historical writing as a means of informing an audience about an artist’s practice.

8. **Feedback**

- Teacher observation and feedback during class discussion.
- Oral feedback and written feedback in students’ Visual Arts diary and teacher observation during discussion and written activities.
- Teacher observation and oral feedback during making the sculpture, written feedback about the resolved sculpture.

9. **Related activities**

Employ an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander fibre artists to run a workshop at school. Visit an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Gallery that is exhibiting fibre art. Attend workshops run by various community fibre artists (eg Casula Power House Museum runs fibre art workshops). Visit the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney and other sites to view sculptures.

Click here to go to Resources and Research.