



Learning Resource

James C Sourris AM Collection education resource: Years 5 and 6, Visual Arts – William Robinson

Years 5 and 6: Visual Arts

In Years 5 and 6, students draw on artworks from a range of cultures, times and locations. They explore the arts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and of the Asia region and learn that they are used for different purposes. While the arts in the local community should be the initial focus for learning, students are also aware of and interested in the arts from more distant locations and the curriculum provides opportunities to build on this curiosity.

As they make and respond to the arts, students explore meaning and interpretation, and social and cultural contexts of the arts. They evaluate the use of forms and elements in artworks they make and observe.

Students extend their understanding of safety in the arts. In Years 5 and 6, their understanding of the roles of artists and audiences builds on previous bands. They develop their understanding and use of performance or technical skills to communicate intention for different audiences. They identify a variety of audiences for different arts experiences as they engage with more diverse artworks as artists and audiences.

<https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>.

Unit of Work	Art as story
Key inquiry questions:	How does William Robinson depict his subject matter? What techniques does William Robinson use to create interest in his works?
Content Description	

ACAVAM114 – Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions:

- exploring cross-media effects and characteristics of representation when making artworks inspired by observation or imagination, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from the local community, graffiti art, graphic design, or manga art
- considering viewpoints – materials and technologies: What is the artwork made of? How does the choice of material enhance the audience's understanding of the artist's intention? What made you want to touch this sculpture?
- trialling different ways to represent views, beliefs, or opinions in their artworks in response to exploration of how artists communicate their views, beliefs, and opinions through art.

ACAVAR117 – Explain how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural, and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks:

- explaining the artistic vision of artists from different contexts, particularly referencing the meaning their artworks convey, for example, Aboriginal rock art, graffiti art, Egyptian art
- considering viewpoints – meanings and interpretations: For example – What is this artwork about? What visual conventions have been used to convey meaning? How did the artist represent their subject matter? How does the artwork reflect the artist's perspective about the environment? How did the audience react to the artwork when it was first displayed?

<https://australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Learning Objectives

Students are learning to :

- explore the ideas and practices of William Robinson
- explain how artists can manipulate artistic conventions to make their work more personal and interesting .
- explain how a subject matter can be represented in a range of diverse ways.

Success criteria

Students will be successful when they can:

- observe and explain the subject matter in a painting
- reflect on the way an artist can create meaning through different ways of seeing and representing subject matter, lines, colours, and the application of art media
- explain the ways their own work is influenced by William Robinson's practice.

Teaching Notes

Timing

2 - 3 x 1 hour lessons

Resources

Lessons 1

- A view finder for each student. Make simple view finders for each student by cutting a small square out of the middle of an index card or rolling up a piece of A4 paper into a telescope.
- Paper for drawing on, drawing pencils

Lessons 2-3

- Paper or other surface to draw or paint on
- Coloured media such as coloured pencils, pastels, oil pastels, or paint and brushes if you have access to it. If painting you will also need recycled plastic containers and lids for water containers and palettes, rags or paper towel, access to water to clean up
- Camera or other image capture device for making a postcard as reflection tool.

Teaching Notes

To get the most out of this resource, become a State Library member today for free and immediate access to digital resources

Once you have set up your free State Library Membership you will be able to access the eBooks and data bases referred to in this resource, as well as the quality on-demand streaming video platform, Kanopy.

Learning Activities

Lesson 1

Inquiry question: How does William Robinson depict his subject matter?

Before viewing

Explore prior student knowledge of William Robinson. To orientate students and inspire curiosity, show the class Robinson's Archibald winning self-portrait painting, on the Art Gallery of NSW Archibald Prize website, "[Equestrian self-portrait](#)"

Provide each student with a viewfinder (or use a piece of A4 paper to roll-up into a view finder). This will focus the viewing experience. Allow students a few minutes to observe this painting through their view finder and discuss what they see in the painting.

View video

Show students the **William Robinson interview: The James C. Sourris AM Collection**

<https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/research-collections/art-and-design/james-c-sourris-am-collection>.

After viewing

On the board/projector write the following:

- **Subject matter** is what you can see (or what is happening) in an artwork.
- What are some of the subjects William Robinson has depicted in his paintings?

Students discuss the question in pairs and share their thinking with the class.

Search the [QAGOMA collection](#) for William Robinson's painting, "**William and Shirley, flora and fauna,**" 1985,

Project this painting and facilitate the following memory activity:

Memory activity

Ask students to look at the painting for 30 seconds. Then, instruct all the students to turn around with their backs to the painting. Ask the students what they saw and what they remember in the painting. Let the students share what they remember in random order. Students will quickly realise

that they need each other's help to remember the subject matter of the painting. Invite the students to turn around and look at the painting again allow them a minute or so this time. This activity promotes close observation which will aid the development of their analytical skills.

Reflect

Have students reflect as a class through a teacher-led discussion prompted by questions such as the following:

- Do you notice more detail now?
- Is there anything you missed when you looked at the artwork the first time?
- How many different animals can we see and name in this painting?
- Who are the two people?
- What do you think they are doing there? What can you see that makes you say that?
- Describe the landscape in this painting? Do you think it's flat or hilly? What can you see that makes you say that? What clues are in the painting?
- Does Robinson like this place? What can you see that makes you say that?

Explain to students:

When this painting was made, Robinson and his wife Shirley were living on an eighty-hectare property near Beechmont in Queensland's Gold Coast hinterland. This area is very mountainous, with gullies, steep slopes, waterfalls, thick bush, and narrow, winding roads that have views on both sides. Robinson developed a way of painting this landscape showing multiple points of view all at the same time.

Show students "**William and Shirley, flora and fauna**," again, and ask them to think about how the viewer might seem to be looking up at the trees but down on the birds at the same time.

Ask students:

- Can you see other points of view or perspectives? What can you see that makes you say that? What more can we find?
- What effect does Robinson's way of seeing his subject matter have on your understanding of this place?

Making

Students will respond to Robinson's work by making an artwork that illustrates the scene that happened directly before or directly after the scene in "**William and Shirley, flora and fauna**."

Show students an example of a comic strip to illustrate this idea. For example, <https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2018/01/teachers-guide-to-use-of-comic-strips.html>

Ask students to imagine what might have happened before or after William and Shirley sat on the log.

Inspire and encourage student creativity by asking questions such as:

- How did William and Shirley get here? Did they walk, ride, fly?
- What were they doing before they sat down?
- Where could William and Shirley go next?
- What time of day is it in your picture?
- How would Robinson show the time of day?

Allow students some thinking time and ask them to make some thumbnail drawings of their ideas.

Reflect

Students share their subject matter, use of different perspectives and narrative ideas with each other.

Lessons 2 and 3

Inquiry question: What techniques does William Robinson use to create interest in his works?

(Continuation of making task in lesson 1)

Once students have an idea of their subject matter, talk to them about Robinson's technique of using small brushstrokes of different colours over the top of a surface of another colour to make the surface of the painting lively. If you are able to project and zoom in on the painting, invite your students to explore the artist's process more closely.

The following resource at QAGOMA has links to details that illustrate Robinson's technique.

http://www.visualarts.qld.gov.au/content/robinson_standard.asp?name=Robinson_Beechmont_c77

Have students use a similar technique to apply colours to their own works.

Encourage students to:

- use multiple view-points- looking up and looking down and into different parts of the scene
- observe the colours in the painting and try to match the colours
- use small strokes of colour to fill in large areas.

**Students may need to draw one colour over another or mix colours to achieve colour matching. Encourage them to explore their drawing or painting medium. Artists rarely use colours straight from the paint tube, so encourage them to create their own colours.*

Begin students working on their drawings/painting with coloured pencils, pastels, oil pastels, or paint. Start by laying down base colours to fill the page, then work back over the top with the smaller strokes to build up the surfaces where required.

Suggestion: Play classical music to students while they work. Explain to students that William Robinson almost became a professional pianist but chose visual art instead, and that he listens to music when he paints.

Reflect

When the drawings are complete, have students photograph their artworks beside *'William and Shirley, flora and fauna'*. Print them and write a postcard on the other side to William Robinson, explaining how they have been influenced by his subject matter and techniques.

Facilitate a session where the students show their works beside, *'William and Shirley, flora and fauna'* and tell their classmates about the narratives they have created. Additionally, students could combine their narratives with other students and create an even longer story about William and Shirley.

Extension

- Students write William and Shirley stories and collate them, with their artworks, into a book.
- Students research the geography, weather, flora and fauna of the Gold Coast hinterland and explore maps and photos of the region. They research additional Robinson paintings of the Beechmont landscape. Then students write a poem about how they might feel in this place.
- Students make a painting of an area in your school grounds. While working on the painting they turn the paper 90 degrees every 10 minutes and work over the top or around the previous layer, building up a surface that suggests place rather than realistically rendering it.
- Students write a story in response to the subject matter of a different William Robinson painting.
- Students visit the [William Robinson Gallery](#) in Brisbane, or explore the gallery's website and take a virtual tour online.

References

Art Gallery of NSW Archibald Prize <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/1987/18269/>

Educational technology and mobile learning

<https://www.educatorstechnology.com/2018/01/teachers-guide-to-use-of-comic-strips.html>

QAGOMA Collection search <http://collection.qagoma.qld.gov.au/qag/imu.php?request=search>

QAGOMA, William Robinson Resource. http://www.visualarts.qld.gov.au/content/robinson_standard.asp?name=Robinson_Beechmont_c77

QUT William Robinson Gallery resources <https://www.wrgallery.qut.edu.au/learn/resources>

State Library of Queensland acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their continuing connection to land and as custodians of stories for millennia. We are inspired by this tradition in our work to share and preserve Queensland's memory for future generations.

Date prepared: 7 August 2020

Date revised:

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