



Learning Resource

James C Sourris AM Collection

Senior Visual Art: Unit 4 (Fiona Foley and Sebastian Di Mauro)

Senior Visual Art

Learning in Units 3 and 4 provides opportunities for highly personalised responses. Teachers provide stimulus and guide students as they independently define their ideas through phases of intellectual and artistic investigation. Students develop one focus for exploration in a body of work that evolves over two concepts. Unit 3 includes learning experiences that support students to realise their individual expression. Unit 4 provides opportunities for students to reflect on and exploit existing approaches as they extend their focus. They apply new knowledge, skills or processes that enrich meaning in their body of work to determine alternate resolution of their ideas. By the end of the course, students resolve one body of work with a focus developed from an investigation of a self-directed inquiry question. Inquiry questions provide opportunities for students to define their focus, synthesise existing and new knowledge to inform their own art practice, analyse and interpret artists' work and art practices in different contexts, and evaluate and draw conclusions as they resolve artwork. (QCAA, Visual Art General Senior Syllabus 2019 version 1.1. <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/the-arts/visual-art/syllabus>)

Unit of Work

Unit 4: Art as alternate

Key inquiry questions:

- Developing — how do artists generate solutions to visual problems?
- Researching — how do artists react to stimulus?
- Reflecting — how do artists consider ideas and information, media techniques and processes?
- Resolving — how do artists communicate individual ideas as visual, written or spoken responses?

Content Description

1. implement ideas and representations that challenge, extend and refine existing knowledge
2. apply literacy skills to communicate knowledge of art practices and individualised ideas
3. analyse and interpret the impact of contemporary context on visual language, expression and meaning in artworks and art practices
4. evaluate art practices, traditions, cultures, and theories to inform an alternate approach
5. justify new viewpoints and evolving ideas
6. experiment with familiar or alternate media to solve visual problems informed by research of contemporary art practice
7. create meaning through knowledge and understanding of materials, techniques, technologies and art processes to support alternate approaches

<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/senior/senior-subjects/the-arts/visual-art/syllabus>

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Learning Objectives

Students are learning to:

- implement - alternate ideas to extend their focus through exploration of divergent approaches and key contemporary artists, including artwork by Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, artwork by artists from the Pacific Islands and/or artwork by artists from Asia
- research alternative associations with artists and knowledge to evolve their focus and artmaking, and build deeper connections as they react to stimulus
- experiment with
 - familiar or alternate media to extend ideas, knowledge and working methods informed by research of contemporary art practice
 - visual language, expression and meaning in contemporary art images, objects and experiences and the way they can be used to subvert literal meaning
- evaluate - how contemporary artists enhance and communicate alternate meaning through innovative art practices and exploitation of audience expectations

Success criteria

Students will be successful when they can:

- analyse and interpret the artworks of Fiona Foley and Sebastian Di Mauro's and evaluate their exploitation of symbolism in materials and subject matter
- evolve their own focus by applying research of Foley's and Di Mauro's practices as they develop potential ideas
- experiment with symbolic materials to subvert literal meaning
- evaluate how an audience might react to their manipulation of an unusual and symbolic material

Teaching Notes

Timing

2-3 x 1 hour lessons

Resources

Students will require paper or visual diary and pencils and access to a range of materials that suit their individual inquiries.

Teaching Notes

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

<https://patron.slq.qld.gov.au/Register>

Once you have set up your State Library Membership you can access Kanopy, ebooks and databases including those referred to in this resource.

Kanopy is an on-demand streaming video platform that offers classic films and documentaries. It's free with your State Library membership. Kanopy films can be streamed in your classroom, or students can access via their personal devices using their State Library membership.

To access Kanopy, databases and other e-resources suggested in this resource, ensure students are logged in with their State Library membership before following the resource link.

Learning Activities

Lesson 1

Inquiry question: how does Fiona Foley use symbolism in her works to communicate alternative views of history?

Viewing

Show students the video, **Fiona Foley interview: The James C Sourris AM Collection**

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

After viewing

1. Students should discuss the following ideas from the video:

- In the video Foley says, *in Government reports, it was spoken of in terms of dispersed, dispersing and dispersal*. What is 'dispersed' a euphemism for?
- Why do you think Foley talks about "*hidden stories*"? Who hid them, from whom and why?
- Describe Foley's connection to her Aboriginal culture and K'gari/Fraser Island.

2. Students search for online images of the following artworks, which provide an alternate, contemporary view of history:

DISPERSED, 2008 in QAGOMA Collection, **NB Students will need to search for the artwork in the QAGOMA collection -*
<http://collection.qagoma.qld.gov.au/qag/imu.php?request=search>

and

Black Opium, installation at SLQ <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/plan-my-visit/spaces-visit/black-opium-fiona-foley>

Students spend time closely observing the works.

Before doing any reading about these works, students complete the following task in pairs by discussing their ideas and taking notes; they should justify their viewpoints by referring to the artworks and their own prior knowledge of cultural symbols:

- The 'D' in **DISPERSED** is covered in replica .303 inch gun cartridges while each letter is made from charred wood capped with a highly polished cast-metal frontispiece. Analyse and interpret how these materials might be significant or symbolic in providing a contemporary view of past history. Evaluate how they strengthen the concept of revisiting hidden stories.
- **Black Opium**, an installation at State Library Queensland is comprised of 777 cast poppies, arranged on the ceiling, in the form of an infinity symbol. Evaluate the significance of the three symbols in this work - the poppy, the number 7 and the infinity symbol; the significance of the placement on the ceiling and the title in providing an alternate view of history.

After completing these tasks, invite students to read about the artworks online and reflect on their own interpretations of the two works.

Lessons 2-3

Inquiry question: How can Sebastian Di Mauro's practice inspire symbolic use of materials?

Before viewing

Students find images of Di Mauro's **Respire**, 1999 and **Greenback**, 2018-2019. Both are available on his website, <https://sebastiandimauro.com/>

Students observe these works carefully and take note of the materials used to create meaning.

Provide students with the following questions to consider while viewing the video:

- Which contexts inform Di Mauro's practice?
- List the materials he uses to communicate his ideas?
- List dominant visual language and expression in the works seen on screen?

Students view **Sebastian Di Mauro interview: The James C Sourris AM Collection**.

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

After viewing

Ask students to share their answers to the questions. Lead a discussion to encourage students to compare Di Mauro's and Foley's symbolic use of materials to communicate meaning. This could involve the whole class making notes of similarities and differences on the white board.

Working in a small group, students help each other to reflect on their evolving body of work and their focus. Groups work together to make a list of materials that are associated with each student's inquiry. For instance, a body of work about the environment might have a list of materials such as oil, machinery, plastic, bones, water, sand, salt, coral, plants, feral animals, weeds, domestic animals, grain crops, flour, bread or even sounds.

Once each student has a list, they should make links between materials and ideas in their inquiry, considering how a material can stand in for an idea, a place or a person.

Students should document this thinking, through notes or sketches, then experiment with materials to challenge their own art practice and develop alternate possibilities. Students source materials that are appropriate to their inquiry or discuss their needs with the teacher so they can assist.

Explore textures, qualities, and the extent of what can be done with a material. For instance, can it be dissolved, how runny is it, does it stretch, melt, roll into a ball, does it dry out, shrink, go rotten? Can it be stitched, glued, stapled, poured, sifted, stuck to itself, deconstructed?

Students visit <https://newprairiepress.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1416&context=oz> to find Richard Serra's *Verb List*, 1967-68. Encourage them to investigate their materials by applying several of the actions.

Students continue experimenting, then document their experiments through photography or video and evaluate their success in terms of communicating non-literal meaning.

Additional Resources

SLQ, Hidden histories from Queensland Islands, <http://islands.slq.qld.gov.au/#Fraser-Island-KGari>

Humfress, P. (Director). (1988). Boomalli - Five Koorie Artists [Video file]. National Film and Sound Archive of Australia. Retrieved May 28, 2020, from Kanopy.

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.

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