



Learning Resource

James C Sourris AM Collection education resource: Years 9 and 10, Visual Arts

Years 9 and 10: Visual Arts

The visual arts has the capacity to engage, inspire and enrich the lives of students, encouraging them to reach their creative and intellectual potential by igniting informed, imaginative and innovative thinking.

Through Visual Arts, students make and respond using visual arts knowledge, understanding and skills to represent meaning associated with personal and global views, and intrinsic and extrinsic worlds. Visual Arts engages students in a journey of discovery, experimentation and problem-solving relevant to visual perception and visual language. Students undertake this journey by using visual techniques, technologies, practices and processes. Learning in the Visual Arts, students become increasingly confident and proficient in achieving their personal visual aesthetic, and appreciate and value that of others.

Visual Arts supports students to view the world through various lenses and contexts. Students recognise the significance of visual arts histories, theories and practices, exploring and responding to artists, craftspeople and designers and their artworks. They apply visual arts knowledge to make critical judgements about their own importance as artists and audiences. Learning in the Visual Arts helps students to develop understanding of world culture and their responsibilities as global citizens.

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

Unit of Work	Art and science
Key inquiry questions:	How does Sandra Selig challenge my understanding of what art is and how it is made? What is a drawing machine?

What is kinetic sculpture?

Content Description

ACAVAM126 Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions;

- experimenting with a variety of techniques and processes when exploring their intentions as artist

ACAVAR130 Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making;

- Considering viewpoints – meanings and interpretations: For example – Has the artist used visual metaphors to express meaning and persuasion? What metaphor/s could you use to express our ideas about persuasion?

ACAVAR131 Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks;

- identifying how visual arts professionals embed their values and beliefs, and how audiences react and interpret the meaning and intent of their artworks differently

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

Learning Objectives and Success Criteria

Learning Objectives

Students are learning to:

- analyse Sandra Selig's and other artists' practices of using drawing machines to create artworks
- analyse artworks, interpret meaning and evaluate artistic intentions, including their own
- experiment with and manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes that relate to kinetic sculpture and drawing machines

Success criteria

Students will be successful when they can:

- talk and write with confidence about Sandra Selig's artworks, use of visual language, and making practices
- analyse and interpret the use of metaphor in Sandra Selig's artwork

- manipulate art making materials and appropriate processes, technologies and techniques to realise their own intentions in the building of a drawing machine prototype

Teaching Notes

Timing

3 – 4 x 1 hour lessons

Resources

Lessons 2 – 3

- a copy of Table 1 so students can write into it, or a copy on the board for students to refer to
- simple, available and recycled materials, such as pencils, inks, charcoal or pastel, paper, card, string, rope, cardboard boxes, fishing line, sticks, cardboard tubes that can be made into cogs or wheels, split pins, thread, old machinery, tape and so on. Battery operated motors and associated equipment if the school has access to this. Liaise with science and physics staff.

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.

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

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 and 2

Inquiry question: How does Sandra Selig challenge my understanding of what art is and how it is made?

Before viewing the video

Students all view the same online image of one of Selig's pendulum drawings such as ["Returning eye", 2020](#)

Carry out a [Whip-around activity](#) while students look closely at the artwork: In the Whip-around each student has a turn describing what they see using only the first word they can think of, while looking closely at this work of art. The only rule is no repeating of words. The word can be something that they see in the work of art or a descriptive word. It allows for every student to speak and there are no wrong answers.

As students speak the teacher writes their words on the white board or on post-it notes to make a visual reminder of their combined thoughts.

View video

Students view [Sandra Selig digital story: The James C Sourris AM Collection](#)

After viewing the video

Ask students to discuss the following questions with a partner and then choose a few to share their response with the class:

- Were they surprised by the way a pendulum was used to make artworks?
- Why is this art?
- How does the movement and speed of the pendulum impact the look of the finished drawing?
- Can they remember how Selig described the pendulum artworks?

Prompt students to remember the following quote (perhaps write it on the board):

"it's like a universal pattern of movement, because it always goes from the outside into a loop towards the centre. So, it's the same universal movement, that happens every time".

Students look for any similarities or differences between their descriptive words from the beginning of the lesson, and Selig's own description of the universal pattern of movement.

Analysis

To illustrate this idea of a universal pattern of movement, students trace the linear pattern in “**Returning eye**” with their hands in the air, starting from the outside, while they look closely at the image. They will need to jump to another line when their first line runs out. Continue for a minute so that the repetitive nature of the pattern is understood.

Making

In groups of 3 or 4, students choreograph a brief performance artwork or a series of movements that show their understanding of the idea of a universal pattern of movement. Their series of movements will act as a metaphor for an everyday activity, such as cleaning their teeth. For added complexity the group should also respond to the space they are working in e.g. architecture in the space, garden, furniture and so on. Students will be building a pattern and could think of themselves as the salt in the Selig work.

Remind students that their work doesn't need to be spiralling like Selig's but it does need to be repetitive and communicate the everyday activity through their choice of actions.

Encourage students to be as creative as possible with their art media which is their own bodies. Encourage students to incorporate sound into their performance and to practice it until it communicates their intention in a creative way.

Students share their performance artwork with their classmates who are challenged to guess the everyday activity that is depicted.

In their groups students evaluate their work by discussing and then sharing their responses to the following questions:

- How well did your own and other groups communicate their intentions?
- How easily did the class guess the everyday routine?
- How did sound enhance or confuse the intention of the work?
- How has my understanding of art been challenged by Sandra Selig's practice?

Research and deeper analysis

Students carry out research in teams or as individuals to answer the following questions:

- What connections can you make between the materials used by the artist (salt and steel), and human bodies?
- What connections can you make between Selig's process, physics, energy, life and matter?
- What does Selig mean by, “*the universe is here as well as out there*”?

Suitable sources include: (log in using SLQ membership)

- [Minerals](#) [Video file]. Learning Seed. Retrieved June 16, 2020, from Kanopy.
- [Oxford reference library database](#)
- [Britannica Library](#)

**Students might need to research what raw materials are used in steel. Students should make a connection that the materials used in the work also exist in the human body. For instance, iron is in our blood, salt is in tears, we move and exist in rhythms e.g. walking, waking and sleeping; there is also a connection between physics, energy and matter that everything is made of*

Reflecting

Facilitate a simple debate on the topic, *a drawing made by a pendulum is not real art.*

Divide the students into two groups. Give the students a short amount of time to gather together proof in defence of their position. Teams list their evidence using their knowledge of Selig's practice, their evidence from their research and from the observable evidence in "**Returning eye**". As the debate begins, one team starts with one point. The second team then responds with their counterpoint. Teams will go back and forth, sharing the proof of their stance. Ensure students listen respectfully and encourage them to consider multiple points of view.

When everyone has had a turn ask the students which team 'won' or if any students have a different opinion.

Extension

Video the performance works and experiment with slowing down and speeding up the movements to create new meaning; splice different performances together to create a new performance entirely

Lessons 3 and 4

Inquiry question: What is a drawing machine?

On the board write the question, "What is a drawing machine?"

Ask students to consider:

- that Selig uses a pendulum as a type of drawing machine.
- that drawing machines can range from simple to complex.

Show students Selig's wind-assisted drawings at the following site:

http://www.sarahcottiergallery.com/exhibition/217/Sandra_Selig/SANDRA_SELIGwind_assisted_drawings_21_March_18_April_2019.htm#e217

Students should discuss in pairs how they think the artist made these. Students share responses with the class.

Analysis

1. Students choose one of Selig's wind-assisted drawings to analyse.

Provide students with the table below so they can add their ideas as dot points. Students use this information to write a comparative paragraph evaluating the impact of the energy source on the visual language in both Selig's "**Returning-eye**" and the wind-assisted work.

Table 1

Title of work	Process or energy source used	size	Materials and techniques used	Where is it displayed? Wall/floor	Formal or random pattern	Describe the Lines used	Describe the composition	Meaning interpreted
Returning eye								
	Wind - assisted							

2. Students spend some time researching drawing machines. There are four possible sites below as starting points:

<http://roberthowsare.com/rational-aesthetics/drawing-apparatus/>

<https://vimeo.com/44489751>

http://www.niklasroy.com/project/149/cardboard_plotter

<https://cameronrobbins.com/videos/>

In pairs, students analyse and evaluate drawing machines by talking or making notes about the following, and report back to the class:

- How does the energy source of the drawing machine dictate the composition and the marks in the drawings?
- Where is the artist's hand in these works?

- What is the art?

3. For further research into kinetic sculpture, students work in a group of four and each person researches a different artist/artwork from the list below.

- [Robert Andrew](#)
- Naum Gabo, [“Standing wave”](#), 1919-1920
- Alexander Calder, [“Night and day”](#), 1964
- Conrad Shawcross, [“The nervous system”](#), 2003

Evaluate

Group members reconvene to show and discuss with each other what they found. They answer these two questions:

- How does a drawing machine differ from kinetic sculpture?
- Can they be both?

Making

NOTE: To enrich the activity below, teachers could refer to online resources at the [Asia Pacific Design Library](#) and implement some [specific strategies](#) to teach students [Design Thinking](#) processes. This could extend the activity over several lessons or a whole unit of work

Students use their new knowledge of drawing machines and kinetic sculpture to make a prototype of a drawing machine. They might work in small groups, pairs or individually.

Begin by inviting students to experiment with simple, available and recycled materials to evaluate the potential for making components of a drawing machine. Materials could include pencils, inks, charcoal or pastel, paper, card, string, rope, cardboard boxes, plastic containers, fishing line, bamboo sticks for levers, cardboard tubes that can be made into cogs or wheels, tape that can be used to create hinges, split pins, thread, rubber bands, old machinery and so on. Students will need to consider the type of energy that will be used to move the parts of the machine that will be required to move to make a drawing. This could range from simple wind assistance and human assistance by pushing or pulling, to more complex energy forces/ motors created by batteries, if the school has access to this type of equipment.

As they work with the materials students reflect on the success of the machine and continue to refine and alter it as they work, so that it will successfully make drawings.

They may need to research simple mechanical devices and consider how to make them from the available materials.

Evaluate

When students have a successful prototype, they are each given a minute to show the class what it can do.

Students write an artist's statement that will provide a way for audiences to understand the machine, the drawings and the artist's intentions.

Extension

Students develop their work into a finished and more durable drawing machine with a focus on the sculptural aesthetics as well as the ability to draw.

References

Asia Pacific Design Library <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/research-collections/art-design/asia-pacific-design-library-collection>

Asia Pacific Design Library, Design Thinking <http://designonline.org.au/toolkit-getting-started-with-design-thinking/>

Asia Pacific Design Library, Design online <http://designonline.org.au/education/>

(2009). Minerals [Video file]. Learning Seed. Retrieved June 16, 2020, from Kanopy. <https://slq.kanopy.com/video/elements-human-nutrition-minerals>

Oxford reference library database <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.slq.qld.gov.au/>

The Teacher Tool Kit, *Whip around* <https://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/whip-around>

Additional Resources

(2008). Conrad Shawcross [Video file]. Illuminations Media. Retrieved June 12, 2020, from Kanopy. <https://slq.kanopy.com/video/theeye-conrad-shawcross>

Asia Pacific Design Library, Design online <http://designonline.org.au/category/disciplines/design-thinking/>

Ressler, S. (Director). (2015). Simple Machines around the House [Video file]. The Great Courses. Retrieved June 16, 2020, from Kanopy. <https://slq.kanopy.com/video/simple-machines-around-house>

Science Beyond, 2012, Make a Pendulum: a fun at-home science experiment

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xX5GqPGxfJQ>

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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