

# worksheets and research resources **get connected** exhibition starter pack

The following tasks are designed to be used by students in the exhibition.

They are designed to critically engage them with the works and involve them in active learning either as individuals or in small groups.

Most of the tasks are appropriate to Visual Art learning outcomes.

There are other tasks which are not learning area –specific and may be used as departure points for writing, media studies or drama-based projects.

## **First and Last Impressions**

- What did you think about when you first came into the exhibition and looked around?
- Was there any work in particular you wanted to look at or return to and look at again?
- Why do you think this happened?
- Is there a work in this exhibition that you think you will never forget or find hard to forget?
- Before leaving check out the exhibition one more time to see if there's an idea or technique in a work that you could try when you get back to school.

## **Think Abouts**

- When you find yourself wanting to look at some works in particular do you think it is because the image or subject is interesting or is it because of the artist's technique or way of interpreting the subject?
- If the building was falling down and you could save one work from this exhibition, which one would you save and why?
- Is there a particular work in this exhibition that contains or is saying things that you agree with or disagree with strongly? Talk to someone else in your group about what you've found
- Which work was the easiest and which work was the hardest to make – and why?

## **Men v Women**

This exhibition contains work by men and women artists. Is there any noticeable difference in this exhibition between the works made by these two groups?

## **Art Analysis and Response**

- Can you find an artwork that uses symbols to help tell a story or communicate an idea?
- Talk to someone else about this artwork and its use of symbolism.

## **Choose any work that attracts your attention and apply any or all of the following questions**

- Are the visual qualities of this work appealing in any way?
- Would this idea have been better expressed in a different way?
- Can you see any kind of connection between this kind of art and others you know about?
- What do you think this work is about or might be saying?
- Has this given you an idea for something you could make as part of your art studies?
- Why can't artists just say what they mean without using symbols or asking people to guess what the artwork might be about?

# worksheets and research resources

## thematix

### exploring the themes

In this exhibition there are a number of works that can be linked by theme or subject.

#### Beauty

Many contemporary artists are exploring the idea of beauty in a modern world. This exploration takes a diversity of forms.

One of the biggest challenges facing artists exploring this idea is that beauty, or the rules of what makes beauty, are largely determined by mass media advertising.

Examples: Bridget Currie, Akira Akira, Bianca Barling

Some works in *Snapshot* challenge accepted ideals or categories of beauty.

Examples: Marcin Kobylecki, Peter McKay, Paul Hoban, Rachel McElwee, Christian Lock.

#### Gender

How (male and female) gender is constructed within society has been one of the most significant lines of investigation for artists over the last thirty years. A number of *Snapshot* artists continue this tradition with contemporary twists.

Examples: Bianca Barling, Rachel McElwee, Jacqueline Knight, Andy Petrushevics, Mark Siebert.

#### Narrative

A feature of some recent art practice is the return of the narrative (story telling).

Examples:

Chris Flanagan - fictitious animation running on a 'Ground Hog Day' repeat loop

Viv Miller - the point of impact between two cars acting as a freeze frame for a bigger story

Bianca Barling - a 'frozen moment' from an unidentified film.

#### Everyday objects

In a throw-away contemporary world, the tradition of artists working with 'found' objects and materials is as strong as ever. Some commentators say that this is the 'new nature'.

Examples: Marcin Kobylecki, Peter McKay.

#### Street culture

A feature of the contemporary art world is that art is everywhere. There may be galleries showing art, but many (younger) artists prefer to make art on the streets or about their city and street-based world and culture. This art often borrows from the transgressive modes of graffiti art or simply 'art on the run', thus explaining the resemblance it has to 'pieces' and back street counter-culture murals.

Examples: Andrew Best, Blotchwoman, KAB101, Viv Miller, Andy Petrushevics, Mark Siebert, Paul Sloan.

#### Art medium

Many *Snapshot* artists have chosen to work with various paint and sculptural mediums in which the way the medium is handled becomes part of the meaning of the work. When looking at these works, be prepared to engage with such things as colour, texture, translucency, opacity and reflectivity.

Examples, Paul Hoban, Christian Lock, Akira Akira, Bridget Currie, Peter McKay, Katrina Simmons

Other works in the exhibition also incorporate strategic manipulations of the art medium to build the image.

Examples, Morgan Allender, KAB101, Alison Main, Paul Sloan.



# background briefing

## snapshot in context

Here are a number of considerations, or lines of investigation, which will help you to introduce your students to the idea that the art in this exhibition 'belongs' to a number of contexts.

### Video and photo-based contemporary art

Photography and video are not new forms of modern and contemporary practice. Within Australian contemporary art photography was extensively used and explored in the 1980s. Video came to prominence in the mid 1990s.

Video and photo-media works appear regularly in all major contemporary art exhibitions.

Photography and video have been impacted upon by the 'digital age'. The particular interest has been in the ability of technologies, particularly computer-based, to create powerful images of reality.

Today artists use a wide diversity of means to explore possibilities including:

- applications that allow the source image to be manipulated extensively
- traditional prints from negatives or transparencies
- a wide variety of digital printing processes (e.g. lightjet and lamda prints).

Think about:

- does this suggest that artists today are relying less on 'finding' subjects from the surrounding visible world and are now relying on technologies to invent their own realities?
- are computer games the real art forms for a new millennium?
- will the World Wide Web eventually become the primary source of all visual images required for daily living?
- will it transform art galleries into 21st century folk craft museums?
- when artists work with low-grade 'found' materials such as puddles of oil or paper bags, is this really a statement of defiance and a deliberate turning away from high technology?

### Social/political comment

Socio-political art is a robust, long standing tradition.

The emergence of new forms of mass communication and information exchange (e.g. the internet) has 'raised the bar' in terms of the extent of concerns about centralised control of news media and the power of global corporations to use the media to shape cultural and social values.

Many artists have responded by using the internet (and associated spin offs such as YouTube) to engage audiences and present alternative views.

Other artists work at 'street level' and make art works that are intended to be seen and responded to within local communities. Some of the artworks in *Snapshot* work the ground somewhere in between.

Think about:

- what images of the world appear in newscasts?
- is there any difference between those appearing in print as opposed to TV or Internet sources?
- What does the selection; editing and formatting of these images tell you about the intentions of the media? How do people 'consume' or respond to these images? Are people really affected by what they see?
- is it possible for any of these images or programs to become 'art'?
- can artists play an effective role in questioning media processes?
- does art change people's social values or responsiveness?
- are any of the strategies used by artists in this exhibition effective?
- do any of them introduce new ideas or a fresh way of looking social or political issues?



# background briefing

## snapshot in context

### High & Low Culture

High culture is often associated with art forms such as opera, classical music, ballet, literature and fine arts. It is widely understood as the work of professional artists and aimed mainly at an elite and educated audience.

By contrast, popular culture includes popular forms of entertainment, fashion, consumer goods and advertising.

The boundaries between high culture and popular culture have been blurred by many artists since the development of Pop art in the 1950s and 60s. Some of the art works in *Snapshot* are looking at the way popular culture exposes or raises questions about art or about the way we see the world.

Think about:

- does *Big Brother* or *Survivor* deserve to be treated as art?
- is *Dancing with the Stars* as culturally significant as an Australian Ballet performance?
- does a Rembrandt painting deserve to be looked at longer than a Toyota car ad?

### Humanity and the human condition

What does being human mean?

This question has emerged as one of the big ones within art of the last decade or so. Advances in cybernetics, robotics, genetic biology and modern medicine have raised questions about the meaning and upper limits of what it means to be human.

With this has come a sense of marginalisation - of some groups feeling (and being treated as) 'less than human'.

Sometimes, (as in selected works in *Snapshot*), the act of artists drawing attention to discarded items and casual (sometimes appalling) events, can be seen as a reflection of this unease.

Think about:

- does science pose a threat to humanity?
- can art be effective in exploring ideas related to concepts of humanity?
- can you think of any artwork which has made a difference in terms of changing/shaping social values or attitudes?
- is there any work in this exhibition that causes you to think about why people behave as they do?

### Gender

How (male and female) gender is constructed within society has been one of the most significant lines of investigation for artists over the last 30 years.

Many feminist artists have made this the central part of their art practice. A lot of art associated with this has concentrated on the role of the media and popular culture (TV, films and advertising) in shaping (or 'constructing') models of masculinity and femininity.

This also incorporates concerns of some artists who critique the way in which society regards gay culture.

Think about:

- has television advertising over your lifetime to date changed the way it depicts women, men, children or family life? If so what changes have you noticed?
- has any work in this exhibition caused you to think about the way men or women are depicted?
- do you think that making art about this will change people's way of looking at gender differences?

# worksheets and research resources

## art games

Play and games assist children's cognitive development, encourage the development of thinking skills and divergent thinking, promote social development and consolidate social and language development.

In terms of art-based learning, Art Games are a very successful strategy for engaging students with artworks and ideas associated with art making. Their particular value is in 'opening up' or 'unpacking' the experience of looking at and engaging with a wide variety of artworks. Art Games also encourage good routines of sharing and debating personal responses.

Art Games are based on a constructivist learning approach which actively uses individual knowledge and imagination to construct possible meanings and to explore ideas. They are fun to play, but, to maximise learning outcomes, teachers will need to use the learning experiences in Art Games as opportunities to extend knowledge, language, imagination and social skills. Scribing, individual and group work, listening, brainstorming, designing, reporting, debriefing and evaluating should be built into the Art Games routines.

Art Games can be played in a school or art gallery setting.

### Learning level:

Art games can be played from early years of schooling to secondary.

**Take Ten** and **Card Connections** provide the resources and routines on which many other games-based learning activities can be based. Many teachers have found these to be engaging and successful strategies for preparing students undertake a wide variety of looking and research tasks within an exhibition.

### Take Ten

**Resources:** A 'gallery space' somewhere in a classroom or art room. Extra lighting (such as a reading lamp or spotlight) for dramatic effect is optional. Some painted cardboard boxes or blocks of wood to act as display units. Objects (art/non art) as selected.

**Group size:** Class

**Learning level:** Mid primary–junior secondary

**Take Ten** is a classroom-based activity which

builds familiarity with the routines of looking at groups of objects. The Take Ten principle is that this activity can take place for ten minutes, once a week. It might also involve ten objects.

Set aside a corner of the classroom. This is now a 'gallery'. Students can decide how it is to be set up to look like a display space. Into this space is placed, week about, a number of objects. An easy rule is to use 5–10 items. This number (approximately) will allow for a variety in selection but not put pressure on individual students to collect a lot of things. It also keeps the focus tight, which is part of the strategy.

Take ten minutes out of the classroom routines to spend time looking at, and discussing, this selection. The teacher will usually set the parameters by running a 'pilot program' which is designed to introduce the language and processes of interpretation and debate.

### Card Connections

#### Resources:

Postcards or laminated card-sized images.

**Group size:** Class

**Learning level:** Middle primary–junior secondary

A random selection of cards is laid out on a table. Individual students or small groups (of about 3 students) take turns to make groupings based on similarities and differences between the images. The time allowed for each group is short. At the end of this time the group reports, giving reasons for their decisions. Someone scribes, noting the reasons for the selection. At the completion of the session, the teacher or some students summarise and draw conclusions about the classification of images and the kinds of classification words used.

This activity can be extended by investigating, (through looking at books and web sites), how the 'art world', or galleries in particular, classify and identify groups of artwork.

**Note:** The images used in this game can be varied or restricted as required. They could all be images of artworks. In this case the discussion will cover the conventions of art classifications. If the images are mixed (art and non-art items), the challenge component will be higher and the implications wider. Complexity can be added by mixing 3D objects with cards.

### **Playing Card Connections in an Art Gallery/Exhibition Setting**

Each student is given a card. On each card is a visual image. Students are asked to make connections between the cards and artworks on display. The 'rules' and criteria for making selections change. The card image selections could mix art with non-art subjects to increase the challenge.

The task is to find the artwork which is as close a match as possible. Once this has been done students can swap cards and continue the game. A group debrief will identify some of the selection criteria. A variation requires individual students to present their match-up to the rest of the group. But the group has to guess the reasons why the match was made.

Later at school, discussion should focus on the different aspects of the works which were identified during the game. This will probably uncover the fact that artworks have many different component parts, including subject, formal elements such as shape and colour, style, personal appeal and so on.

### **Word Wars**

This is an excellent way to generate a lot of words which can be associated with one selected work. It's effectively a brainstorming strategy. It involves 'close focus' looking, listening and lateral thinking. Its primary outcome is to set up a sequence of explorations based on the words generated during the game. This is an excellent 'warm up' activity for students within an exhibition. It sharpens observation skills and generates language and terminology that resources follow-up learning activities back in the class room or art room.

**Resources:** An artwork (or reproduction). Cards and markers for scribing words.

**Group size:** Class or smaller (for example, partners).

Two teams (one way would be to divide the class) look at the same artwork. Choose an artwork which is visually complex. One student from each team gets to call out a word which can be associated with the work. A time limit (10 seconds or forfeit a turn) will keep things moving. If the words are written onto cards, these can be looked at again at the end of the game and assembled into groupings (such as colour words, natural objects, action words). These same words can be taken back to school and used to resource a creative writing project. Or each student can take one word card and make his or her connection with artworks on display. A group debrief will allow all students to share in the thinking processes.

### **Word Wars Plus**

The following Art Games are based on Word Wars. The first two (I Can See and Remember) work well with younger students.

#### **I Can See**

In this picture I can see... Each student in a group gets a chance to say something, which he/she has 'found'. To add complexity each student could be asked to also mention things found previously (for example, 'In this picture we / I can see: a cat, a tree, a cloud, some water and a gate').

#### **Remember**

A group of students sits in front of a work. The group has two minutes to look hard; trying to see everything there is to see. Then the group faces away and different students take turns to say what they can remember seeing. Repeat one more time to extend the number of items observed and remembered. The students cannot repeat items already 'called' - so they all need to listen to each other.

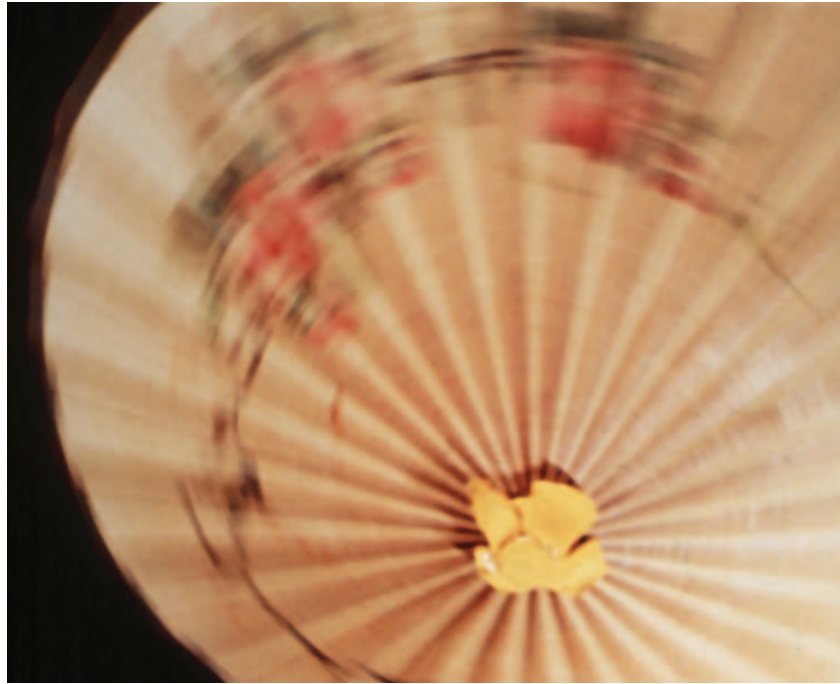
#### **Perfect Match**

The word/cards produced during a Word Wars game are redistributed to the group. Each student has a card. Within a gallery area each student tries to match the word with a work in the area.

# d

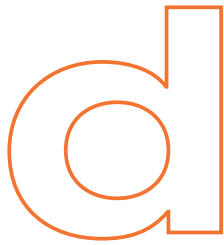
## worksheets and research resources **take a look: fast track**

JACQUELINE KNIGHT, JAPANESE FAN, PHOTOGRAPH 2001 (DETAIL)



This method involves using the three enquiry modes (SEE, KNOW, FEEL) as broad fields for quick information gathering.

This is a stripped down version of the full **Take a Look Enquiry Map** and can be fine-tuned by a teacher into a research proforma as the example below shows. Select questions from the full version map. This method suits fast researching of a larger number of works to resource later discussion at school.



# take a look: fast track

Artist	
--------	--

Work	
------	--



## see

Describe the work

What is it about or what does it show?

How has it been designed or composed?

What kinds of materials and techniques have been used?



## know

What kind of artwork is this?

Who made it?

Have you seen art work like this before?

Does it have a particular style?

Do you know why artists make these kinds of art works?



## feel

Are you curious or interested in this work?

Can you imagine what it is about?

How would you rate this work?

Do you think you will remember it?

Has it given you an idea?

# d

## worksheets and research resources **take a look: key concepts and language**

This is a fast track method of gathering information for later discussion concerning the meaning and relevance of works of art.

The aim is to identify the key features and aspects of a number of different works then compare the findings.

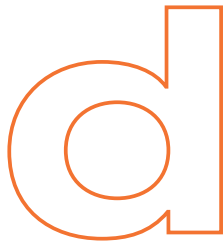
The research tool is the Key Concepts chart which allows small groups to work independently on different works and note their findings as they progress. A standard Key Concepts chart will look like this example.

This is a problem solving, brainstorming exercise with one person in each group noting points of agreement (or otherwise) within the group. All three columns will be filled out, mainly in single dot point words or brief phrases.


The primary objective is to identify and isolate the most relevant or significant concepts that come to mind. The person scribing needs to be alert to the language being used particularly the words the other students use to communicate what they see and think.

Later, in the exhibition or back at school the groups pair off and compare findings. During this process the alternative scribe watches to see if the other group has identified similar concepts or used similar terms.

The particular outcomes of this mode of researching art works is to alert student to the possibility that works which at first appearance look different may in fact be linked by similar ideas or strategies. It also stresses the value of language in articulating ideas.



# take a look: key concepts and language

Artist		
Work		
Work	Key Concepts / Aspects	Key Terms / Terminology
 <p><b>see</b></p> <p>What does it look like? What does it show? What can you see in it?</p>	e.g. big blob, lots of smoke	e.g. floor sculpture
 <p><b>investigate and analyse</b></p> <p>How is it designed or organised?</p>	e.g. intruding into viewer's space	e.g. organic shapes, swelling
 <p><b>evaluate and respond</b></p> <p>What does it mean? or What is this work about? or What do you think the artist is saying?</p>	e.g. like a model island, ooziiness, shininess is beautiful	e.g. model, symbol

# d | snapshot image list

**Akira Akira,**

*Spillberg,*  
automotive paint on jelutong and aluminium,  
1m x 2m, 2006

**Morgan Allender**

*When the earth moves: Monsoon,*  
oil on vinyl, 198 x 152cm, 2006

**Bianca Barling,**

*Electric Ladyland,*  
DVD, (edition of 5), 2005

**Andrew Best,**

*Fall Series (Knox) III,*  
lightjet print. 2004

**Blotchwoman,**

*Mer!*  
acrylic and automotive paint on canvas,  
45cm x 45cm, 2005

*Sleeping blotch,*  
acrylic and automotive paint on canvas,  
45cm x 45cm, 2005

**Matthew Bradley,**

*Findon Skid Kids jump through the wall of fire at  
the boys home in Wistow,*  
oil in canvas, 110 x 206cm, 2006

**Bridget Currie,**

*Cosmic Spade,*  
glitter, felt, ribbon, thread, 1.5m x 1.5m, 2005

**Chris Flanagan,**

*More Fiyah,*  
DVD, 2005, photo based-stop motion animation,  
painted paper hut and trees, corn silk ground,  
paper clouds and digital sky. Audio Score by  
Daniel Nichols and Chris Flanagan. Thanks to Dan  
Monceaux for the photos. For Daniel Nichols  
1979-2005

**Loene Furler,**

*The place within,*  
oil on linen, 182cm x 152cm, 2006

**Julie Henderson,**

*illuminati (why let space secrete through  
the mind?),*  
(edition of 5) + artist proof, DVD 4.24 minutes, 2005

**Paul Hoban,**

*Quartet 1,*  
acrylic & spray enamel on canvas, 90cm x 60cm,  
2006

**KAB101,**

*The Study of History,*  
mixed media, 2006

**Jacqueline Knight,**

*Firefighter,*  
Photograph, 2001

*Bingo,*  
Photograph, 2001

*Japanese Fan,*  
Photograph, 2001

**Marcin Kobylecki,**

*The bag,*  
oil on canvas, 40 x 46cm, 2006

**Christian Lock,**

*Beautiful Days,*  
polyester resin, acrylic paint on holographic  
sticker and boards, 2005, 84cm x 53cm

**Alison Main,**

*Potboiler Fantasies: Plotting Chapter 5,*  
oil on acrylic on canvas, 150 x 110cm, 2006

**Rachel McElwee,**

*Urban Boy Myths Exposed,*  
digital print, 100 x 100cm, 2006

**Peter McKay,**

*2006-13-04\_3797 (Man Blowing Bubbles),*  
digital C-type print on Fuji crystal archive,  
122 x 162cm, 2006

**Viv Miller,**

*Car Crash,*  
oil and enamel on canvas, 240 x 150 cm, 2002

**Andy Petrushevics,**

*Lil Adolf, I'm So Uber Now,*  
acrylic and oil on canvas, 100 x 60cm, 2006

**Mark Siebert,**

*Dig!*  
oil on canvas, 205 x 100cm, 2006

**Paul Sloan,**

*Severed Head,*  
acrylic on canvas, 50x50cm, 2005

*Untitled,*  
acrylic on canvas, 50x50cm, 2005

*Just Before the Damn Bats Appear,*  
acrylic on canvas, 50x50cm, 2005

**Katrina Simmons,**

*Locus,*  
circular light-box, 2006

