

ALASDAIR MACINTYRE: THE ADVENTURES OF AECAP

Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre

8 December 2017 - 25 February 2018

A Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre touring exhibition

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EDUCATION KIT: 7 - 12

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

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Brisbane-based artist Alasdair Macintyre creates miniature theatrical scenarios that are played out by sculpted figurines in the form of highly detailed tableaux or dioramas. The artist traverses many themes, satirically interrogating politics, current affairs and art history. His sculptures are intricate, playful and inventive. He uses signs and symbols from popular culture and high art, while also focusing on the fears and anxieties that pervade an artist's psyche.

The Adventures of Aecap is an exhibition for children and families that takes visitors on a journey with Aecap, Alasdair Macintyre's self-referential character, as he explores what it means to be an artist. Through a series of dioramas, larger-than-life sculptures and hands-on activities, the exhibition captures the essence of life in the artist's studio and the pursuit of an artistic vision.

ARTIST STATEMENT

AIMS AND INTENTIONS

"Aecap' is my self-referential character, whom I have used in numerous artworks, in varying forms, since the 1990s...I hope to capture the essence of life in the studio, and the various sojourns that the artist takes in the pursuit of their vision..."

"The body of work...will deal with various artists from art history, and the way in which they produce art. I intend to have Aecap travel through a portal in his studio to other places and artist's studios in other places and times (such as Jackson Pollock's barn studio in the Hampton's)".

The artist's aim is for the exhibition to appeal to young children, to be "semi-educational" and "semi-autobiographical" (*Alasdair Macintyre*) and to be easily viewed and experienced with lower plinths, lower hanging wall pieces, and interactive sculptures and 2D works.

(References from Alasdair Macintyre conversations with Carrie Kibbler, Curator, 2016)

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The *Alasdair Macintyre: The Adventures of Aecap* Education Kit contains background information on the exhibition as well as selected images. This Education Kit aims to facilitate learning under NSW Visual Arts Syllabus requirements for Years 7 – 12. This is done by providing information about the Artist's Practice, Artist's Statements, questions regarding the Frames, the Conceptual Framework and Practice. Suggestions for relevant Artmaking activities are also included. It may be used in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition or as pre-visit or post-visit resource material.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Stage 4

Artmaking Outcomes 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6	Critical and historical studies 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10
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Stage 5

Artmaking Outcomes 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6	Critical and historical studies Outcomes 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10
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Stage 6

Artmaking Outcomes P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6 and H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 (If developed into a body of work)	Art Criticism and Art History Outcomes P7, P8, P9, P10 and H7, H8, H9, H10
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PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

1. Look at Alasdair Macintyre's artist practice and visit his website to be familiarised with his work. Eg.
 - <http://www.alasdairmacintyre.com/>
 - <https://sullivanstrumpf.com/exhibitions/alasdair-macintyre/the-adventures-of-aecap/art>
 - <https://sullivanstrumpf.com/artists/alasdair-macintyre/>
 - <https://sullivanstrumpf.com/artists/alasdair-macintyre/exhibitions>
2. Discuss how Alasdair Macintyre references popular culture and other artist's work. What themes has he explored and what materials does he use? How does he use humour in his narratives? What 'adventures' has Aecap had in previous exhibitions?
3. Discuss: What is an installation? What makes Macintyre's art interactive?
4. **Key Words - Definitions are available in Vocabulary/List of Terms**
 - Interactive art
 - Installation art
 - Diorama
 - Self-referential/alter-ego
 - Artist's psyche

ARTIST PRACTICE

Macintyre's practice is represented in an imaginative way through self-referential characters that inhabit dioramas, and his use of non-traditional materials and techniques. He approaches his practice primarily as a sculptor with a focus on 3-D works. He sketches plans for his small dioramas, paintings, and large figures before he makes them. Macintyre's practice involves multiple and time consuming processes such as planning, casting, moulding and painting.

Macintyre makes miniature interpretations of issues relevant to his view of the world, presenting them as dioramas. He has made some of his sculptures larger than life by using a 3D Printer. *Art Stop* and *Senior Custodial Public Liason Interface Officer* were scanned from a maquette, then enlarged and printed by a 3-D printer from high density polystyrene. The artist then finished the surface and painted the figures with resin and acrylic.

QUESTIONS Years 7 to 12

Describe the characteristics of Alasdair Macintyre's work.

- Scale of work:
- Height of plinths :
- Materials:
- Elements (colour, line, shape):
- Style:
- Sculptures:
- Dioramas:

SUBJECTIVE FRAME Years 7 to 12

A Sky Full of Splats, 2016

Polymer clay, polyurethane resin, wood, acrylic latex, acrylic paint, *The Art Book*, canvas, felt, paper.

The baby artist and his dog Impasto are dreaming. What are these objects that surround him and what has he repeated?

How has the artist playfully used objects to show his feelings about his own personal memories and experiences?



Alasdair Macintyre *A Sky Full of Splats*, 2016

STRUCTURAL FRAME Years 7 to 12

In the depths of the forest, 2016

Polymer clay, polyurethane resin, wood, acrylic latex, acrylic paint, paint brushes, stones, soil.

Aecap and Impasto run the gauntlet in the forest of paint brushes. What materials has the artist used and how do these act as a sign of his artistic journey?

Senior Custodial Public Liaison Interface Officer, 2016

High density polystyrene, resin, wood and acrylic paint and plastic acrylic

The artist uses symbols and layers references to the art world and his own personal experience. Look at the Gallery Guard. Describe how he appears, referring to colour, surface treatment, size, expression, display and use of text. What materials has he used? How is the Gallery Guard's scale and presentation significant to how the audience interacts with it?



Left to right: Alasdair Macintyre *In the depths of the forest*, 2016; *Senior Custodial Public Liaison Interface Officer*, 2016

CULTURAL FRAME Years 9 to 12

Hampton's photo bomb, 2016

Polymer clay, polyurethane resin, wood, acrylic latex, acrylic paint.

Describe what you see. Consider the identity of Jackson Pollock: who was he and when did he live? Why has Aecap set out to meet this artist? How has the artist incorporated cultural values of his contemporary world in this artwork?



Alasdair Macintyre *Hampton's photo bomb*, 2016

POSTMODERN FRAME Years 9 to 12

Hug Monster, 2016

Fake fur, stuffing.

The Splatmobile, 2016

Repurposed children's ride with sound.

Junior Artist and Masterpiece, 2016

Wood, acrylic paint, Perspex.

Looking at these works, consider how Alasdair Macintyre has challenged mainstream values by creating art works that are reminiscent of a carnival and playground rides, and not what you might expect in an art gallery. Is the artist challenging the concept of high art?

Consider and comment on how the interactivity of these works, allowing children to play, touch and interact with the art works, is a contemporary idea. How does it challenge notions of art?

In *The Adventures of Aecap* how has the artist appropriated the style and conventions of Jackson Pollock, a prominent figure in modern art, referencing his artworks and art practice?



Left to right: Alasdair Macintyre *Hug Monster*, 2016; *The Splatmobile*, 2016. Bottom left: Alasdair Macintyre *Junior Artist and Masterpiece*, 2016.

Alasdair Macintyre's *The Adventures of Aecap* is a journey of self discovery as he navigates the artworld in his quest to become an artist.

Discuss how he strives to discover his place in contemporary art culture, the stereotype of the artist, and where he is situated as an artist. Where does his practice sit in the realm of high art and popular culture?

What are some of the unconventional materials, objects and techniques the artist has used? What is a 'splodge'? How does 'Whack a splodge' relate to the artist Jackson Pollock, his ideas and practice?



Alasdair Macintyre *Whack a splodge*, 2016

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (artist, artwork, world, audience) Years 7 to 12

Who is the audience and how has he engaged them? (Look at the artworks. Consider theme, subject matter and methods of display.)

Do you think Macintyre has been successful in engaging the audience? (Look at the artist's statement).

How has Macintyre made the subject matter in these intriguing miniature and oversized works relevant to himself and his audience?

ART CRITICISM Years 9 to 12

Consider the Artist's Statement:

"'Aecap' is my self-referential character, whom I have used in numerous artworks, in varying forms, since the 1990s...I hope to capture the essence of life in the studio, and the various sojourns that the artist takes in the pursuit of their vision..."

Critically analyse the artist's practice with reference to this statement and works in *The Adventures of Aecap* exhibition. Has Macintyre been successful?

Critically evaluate this statement below and assess if the artist has been successful in his aim:

The artist's aim is for the exhibition to appeal to young children, to be "semi-educational" and "semi-autobiographical" (Alasdair Macintyre) and to be easily viewed and experienced with lower plinths, lower hanging wall pieces, and interactive sculptures and 2D works.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES: ARTMAKING Years 7 to 12

- Create a character to represent yourself as an artist and draw the figure in a comic book- cartoon style to sequentially narrate your experience with art that is either real or imagined.
- Make a diorama of you as the artist working in your ideal studio space.
- As a class, make a life-size cut-out of a stereotypical artist figure and use acrylic paint to colour it in.
- Choose an artwork or artist that you have been impacted by (eg. Macintyre references Jackson Pollock) and write about what you have learnt about art from this artist's practice.
- Find toy figurines that you own (eg. Smurf toys, star wars figures, lego people, small dolls) and using photography, painting or drawing make an imaginative backdrop to put them in. In groups, photograph them acting out different scenarios.
- Use photo series of toy figures to create a stop-frame animation.
- Who is your favourite artist of all time? Imagine the journey you might take to meet them, the places you will go, and the 'journey' when you create art. Be imaginative and playful. Write a short story. Then make art inspired by this journey and your story.

Vocabulary/List of Terms

Diorama – a model representing a scene with three dimensional figures, normally miniature, but may be on a large scale.

Interactive art – art which involves the spectator through a variety of ways such as walking in or on, becoming part of, touching, looking and triggering a sensor.

Installation art – art designed for a specific site that may involve many different forms of artmaking.

Self-referential – making reference to ones' self, author or creator.

Alter-ego – a second self. A part of one's personality that is not usually seen by others.

Artist's psyche – the soul, spirit or mind of the artist.

Maquette – a small three dimensional model used as a basis for a sculpture or architectural project.

Popular Culture – culture based on the tastes of ordinary people rather than an elite or specific group.

High Art – art dealing with lofty and dignified subjects, often in an elevated style.

Figurine – a small statue that represents a human or animal.

Tableaux- a group of models or figures representing a scene from a story or from history.

Signs and Symbols – things that represent or stand for something else.

Autobiographical – marked by or dealing with one's own experiences or life history.

Non-traditional – not bound by traditional ways or beliefs.

Scale – the relation between the real size of something and its size on a map, model or diagram.

Cultural Values – Commonly held standards of what is acceptable or unacceptable.

Stereotype - a set idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong.

