

# CREAM

Four Decades of Australian Art

## Teacher's Notes

These teacher's notes support the exhibition *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. They act as a lesson plan, and provide before, during, and after gallery visit suggestions to engage your class with Australian modern art. This resource has been written to align with the draft version *Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 – 2 July 2013* for Visual Arts as standard reference at the time of production.

Used in conjunction with Rockhampton Art Gallery's *Explorer Pack*, educators can engage students with concepts of artists, artworks and audience. The questions and activities are designed to encourage practical and critical thinking skills as students respond to artworks in *Cream* and when making their own representations. *The Explorer Pack* is free and available upon request to Rockhampton Art Gallery or via the host gallery.

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# Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art

The story of Rockhampton Art Gallery's modern art collection is a tale of imagination, philanthropy, hard work and cultural pride. Led by Rex Pilbeam, Mayor of the City of Rockhampton (1952–1982), and supported by regional businesses and local residents, in the mid-1970s the Gallery amassed tens of thousands of dollars in order to develop an art collection. The Australian Contemporary Art Acquisition Program, run by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council, would match dollar for dollar (later doubled) all monies raised locally. In just one financial year, 1976–77, the Rockhampton community acquired modern Australian art worth around \$500 000 – a collection that today is valued at \$14 million. This achievement reflects the pride and generosity of Rockhampton residents and the civic devotion of Mayor Pilbeam.

To celebrate this remarkable collection, Rockhampton Art Gallery developed the travelling exhibition, *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. This exhibition is by no means a definitive history of Australian art from 1940 to 1980, but *Cream* does chronicle the development of modernism in Australia and articulate its stylistic diversity and its influences. *Cream* begins with Grace Cossington Smith's *Drapery in the studio* 1940, which demonstrates the predominance of post-impressionism and European influences in Australian art at that time. It also indicates an end point for euro-centric influences and the new era of a truly Australian style.

Visual themes that emerged after the Second World War include universal mythologies in an Australian context, a revised representation of the landscape, portraiture, and social realist depictions of marginalised Australians. Artists including John Perceval, Arthur Boyd, Charles Blackman, Sidney Nolan, Russell Drysdale, John Brack, Clifton Pugh, Sam Fullbrook, and Fred Williams are represented by mature, characteristic paintings.

Alongside the 'Melbourne moderns', *Cream* explores the development of modernism in other Australian centres. Donald Friend, Frank Hinder, John Coburn, James Gleeson, Lloyd Rees and David Aspden each represent a particularly Sydney alternative to modernism, through their varying pursuits of expressionism, futurism, abstraction and surrealism. Equally, the inclusion of Brisbane artists such as Vida Lahey and Jon Molvig, and Ray Crooke, Kenneth Macqueen, and Margaret Olley who are effectively Queensland artists, challenges the predominate view that Australian modernism belonged to Sydney and Melbourne.

Women, including Judy Cassab and Constance Stokes, who have previously received less recognition for their place in Australian modern art, are also represented. The exhibition ends in 1980 with William Robinson's *Four cows, one bulling*, which suggests a new direction for Australian painting at a time when the medium was being challenged by the art world.

# Glossary

## **ABSTRACTION**

Art that does not depict recognisable scenes or objects, but is instead made up of forms and colours that exist for their own expressive sake.

## **ANTIPODEANS**

A group of Australian painters who came into prominence in the late 1950's. The Antipodeans opposed abstraction and championed figurative art.

## **ALLEGORY**

A story in which the main characters and events are symbols that stand for ideas about human life or for a political or historical situation.

## **CONTEMPORARY**

Art that is produced at the present period in time or art that is produced at a time relative to a given circumstance.

## **CONTEXT**

The social, political and historical circumstances that exist where and when an artwork is made.

## **COMPOSITION**

The way in which an artwork is arranged.

## **DESIGN ELEMENTS**

Include line, colour, shape, texture, space and form found in artworks.

## **DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

Conventions used for organising design elements within an artwork, including unity, balance, scale, proportion, similarity and contrast

## **EN PLEIN AIR**

French for "open air". Artworks are made outdoors instead of a studio.

## **FIGURATIVE**

Art in which recognisable figures or objects are depicted. It can also be known as representational art.

## **MEDIUM**

Materials used in making artwork

## **MOTIF**

An important idea, theme or symbol in a work of art.

## **MODERNISM**

An art movement that arose to prominence in the early 20th century. Artists deliberately chose to break with the past and searched for new forms of expression. Typically Modernist art emphasised form over content.

## **NARRATIVE**

A depiction of an event or a story.

## **POST-IMPRESSIONISM**

A trend in painting that developed from Impressionism or in reaction against it. Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh were all Post-Impressionists.

## **SOCIAL REALISM**

Artworks that express a particular social, cultural, and political viewpoint that are typically left-wing, realistic in depiction and often associated with propaganda.

## **SURREALISM**

An art movement that developed in France during the 1920s that was concerned with exploring the irrational in every day life, but also the relationship between dreams and the human sub-conscious.

## **VIEWPOINTS**

A collection of perspectives, lenses, or frames through which artworks can be explored and interpreted.

## **VISUAL DEVICES**

Combination of approaches or techniques in compositions and representations.

# Early Years

These teacher notes support a classroom visit to view the exhibition, *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. They are guided by the draft version *Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 – 2 July 2013* for Visual Arts as standard reference at the time of production.

See: [http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/\\_resources/Australian\\_Curriculum\\_The\\_Arts\\_2\\_July\\_2013.pdf](http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Australian_Curriculum_The_Arts_2_July_2013.pdf)

## Visual Art Content Descriptors

### FOUNDATION TO YEAR 2

- 2.1 Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination visually to create visual artworks and design, including considering ideas in artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists
- 2.2 Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies and processes to make artworks
- 2.3 Create and display artworks to communicate ideas to an audience
- 2.4 Respond to a range of visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks, starting with visual artworks from Australia, including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

## Gallery visit aim

By viewing *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art* students will engage with artworks that focus on Australian modernism. This will allow for students to develop an understanding of the role of the artist in Australian cultural life, and also to explore how artworks are made and displayed. Through discussion and practical activities, students, both as viewers and artists, will communicate their ideas and observations about the different ways artworks are made, displayed, and interpreted.

## Gallery visit objectives

### BY THE COMPLETION OF THE GALLERY VISIT, STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- » Describe artworks by noticing details and using visual language
- » Identify some artworks and artists by name and/or title
- » Explain and share their understandings and interpretations of artworks
- » Represent their ideas visually

### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- » Rockhampton Art Gallery *Explorer Pack*
- » Student notebooks or scrapbooks
- » Pencils, fine line markers, crayons
- » A4 and A3 paper
- » 'I like it!' template
- » 'Conversation starters' template
- » 'Cube' template

# Before viewing *Cream*

Prior to visiting the gallery, teachers and students can familiarise themselves with the content and themes of the exhibition. Look through the *Explorer Pack*, which is available upon request to Rockhampton Art Gallery or the host gallery. Teachers can focus on a selection of artworks from the *Explorer Pack*, which contain information that encourages interpretation, discussion and participation.

## PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES COULD INCLUDE:

- » **EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT** with a range of different materials and techniques to draw different types of lines. Students can listen and respond to music by drawings lines (swirling, zig zag), and then use lines to describe emotions (happy, excited). Sample different materials and compare the qualities of each, asking students to consider the appropriate use. For instance a fine line marker might be best used for detailed drawings while crayons allow greater expressive representations.
- » **CREATE ARTWORKS** that experiment with mixing colours to create colour wheels. Use collage to explore organic and non-organic shapes.
- » Encourage children to **EXPLAIN AND SHARE** their artworks with classmates. **POSE QUESTIONS** about the choices children may have made in their own artworks, such as: choice of colours; types of lines; materials used. Discuss how artists can create artworks in different ways.

# Viewing *Cream*

## LESSON SEQUENCE

- A** Discuss with students expectations when visiting an art gallery. This can include: why it is important not to touch the artworks; showing respect and courtesy to other visitors in a public space; use 'inside voices' so others may also enjoy the artworks. Discuss with students the conventions of gallery display, such as: reading labels; hanging height of artworks; lighting; frames.
- B** Group children in pairs and instruct them to walk quietly around the gallery and stop to look at each artwork. Encourage the students to discuss in their pairs what they are seeing, thinking and feeling.
- C** Invite the students to regroup. Gather their initial reactions to the artworks by asking such questions as:
  - » Have you found an artwork that you liked?
  - » Do you know the name of the artwork, or can you describe it to us?
  - » Did anyone else like this artwork?
  - » What did you like about it?
  - » Do you remember the name of the artwork?
  - » What colours has the artist used?
  - » How did these colours make you feel?
- D** View a selection of student-nominated artworks as a group and initiate a class discussion (works featured in the *Explorer Pack* offer prompts, or activities).
- E** Encourage students to re-visit their favourite artwork near the completion of the visit. Students can complete the 'I like it!' worksheet to use back in the classroom.

# After Viewing *Cream*

Review the artworks from the exhibition. Ask the children to **SHARE** which artwork was their favourite and **EXPLAIN** why. Children can select from the *Conversation Starter* template to focus their answer.

Use the *Explorer Pack* cards to create an exhibition. Discuss ways that the class could **DISPLAY** these cards for others to view. What would you place next to each other and why? Create labels for each 'artwork'.

## Extension activities

Invite the school principal or someone important to the class to sit for a portrait drawing session. Children can **CREATE** a series of portraits by **EXPLORING** and **EXPERIMENTING** with different mediums and techniques. Explain that, depending on where the student is sitting, their representation will look different, for example front on, or profile.

**EXPERIMENT** with materials and techniques as students create a *conversation cube*. Using the cube template, children draw different aspects from artworks they saw in *Cream* on each panel. Once finished, assemble the cube. The cube becomes a tangible discussion prompt for children to reflect and talk about artworks experienced in the exhibition.

# Curriculum Connections

In addition to the draft Australian Curriculum for Visual Arts, teachers may also incorporate viewing *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art* through the below learning areas. To inform further curriculum planning and to access specific cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

(F) FOUNDATION, (1) YEAR ONE, (2) YEAR TWO

## ENGLISH

Students engage with a variety of multimodal texts for enjoyment. They develop an understanding and ability to create imaginative, informative and persuasive multimodal texts.

*Students should be able to:*

- » Identify some familiar multimodal texts and the contexts in which they are used (F)
- » Respond to multimodal texts drawn from a range of cultures and experiences (1)
- » Discuss different multimodal texts on a similar topic, identifying similarities and differences between the texts (2)

## MATHEMATICS

Students develop an increasingly sophisticated capacity for logical thought and actions, such as analysing, proving, evaluating, explaining, inferring, justifying and generalising.

*Students should be able to:*

- » create patterns, describe and name familiar two-dimensional shapes (F)
- » explain patterns that have been created, recognise and classify familiar two-dimensional shapes (1)
- » describe and draw two-dimensional shapes, with and without digital technologies (2)

## HISTORY

Students develop historical understanding through key concepts including continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance.

*Students should be able to:*

- » learn about their own history and that of their family; this may include stories from different cultures and other parts of the world (F)
- » learn about similarities and differences in family life by comparing the present with the past (1)
- » explore, recognise and appreciate the history of their local area by examining remains of the past and considering why they should be preserved. (2)

## GEOGRAPHY

Students develop curiosity and wonder about the diversity of the world's places, peoples, cultures and environments

*Students should be able to:*

- » explore the place they live in and belong to (F)
- » learn that places can have natural, managed and constructed environmental features (1)
- » understand that the concept of interconnection is developed by investigating their links with places locally and globally as well as the connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain with Country/Place (2)

# I like it!

Artwork

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Artist name

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I like it because

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It makes me feel

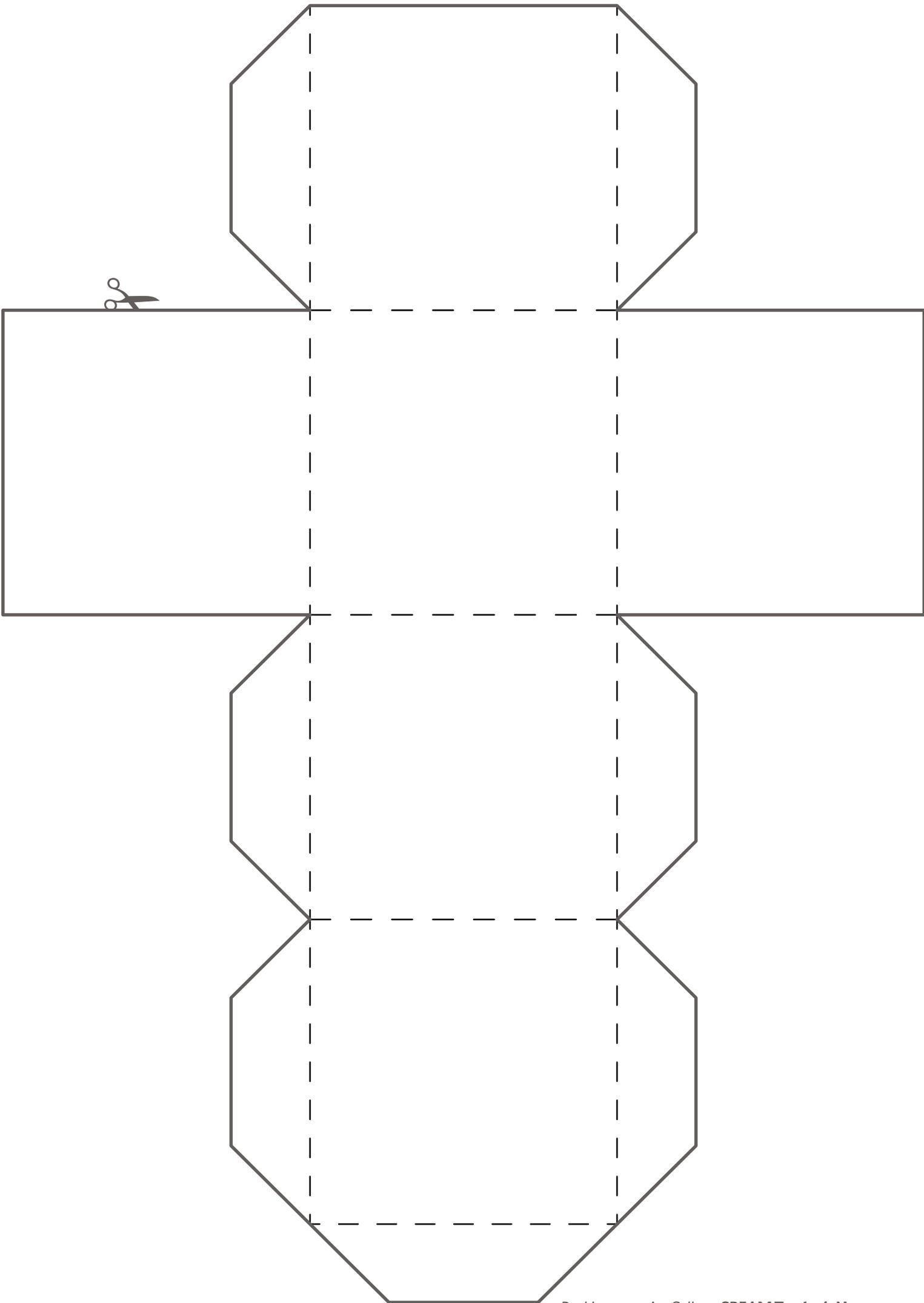
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## *Draw it*





**My favourite  
artwork was ...**

**I liked the colours in ...**

**The artwork made  
me feel ...**

**The artist I liked the  
most was...**

# Primary

These teacher notes support a classroom visit to view the exhibition, *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. They are guided by the draft version *Australian Curriculum: The Arts Foundation to Year 10 – 2 July 2013* for Visual Arts as standard reference at the time of production.

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## Visual Art Content Descriptors

### YEARS 3 – 4

- 4.1** Investigate ideas and artworks from different cultures and times, including artwork by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to use as inspiration for their own representations
- 4.2** Use materials, techniques and processes to experiment with visual conventions when making artworks
- 4.3** Present and explain artworks that represent their ideas using visual arts terminology
- 4.4** Observe and identify intended purposes and meanings of artworks using visual arts terminology to compare artworks, starting with visual artworks in Australia including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

## Visual Art Content Descriptors

### YEARS 5 – 6

- 6.1** Experiment with ideas and practices, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different viewpoints
- 6.2** Develop and apply techniques and processes to predict and innovate when making their artworks
- 6.3** Plan and display artworks to enhance their meaning for an audience
- 6.4** Explain how visual arts practices communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks

## Gallery visit aim

By viewing *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*, students are provided with the opportunity to engage with artworks that focus on Australian modernism. This will allow students to respond to artworks based on past histories and consider their own cultural and social heritage. Through observational and cognitive investigations, students may extend their understanding of visual arts practices and language, including style, technique, visual devices and materials. In upper primary, through considering meaning, interpretation, and historical context, students can question and explore the relationship between artistic practices and viewpoints.

# Gallery visit objectives

By the completion of the visit, the students should be able to:

- A** Identify artworks and artists by name and or title
- B** Describe artworks by observing and identifying ideas and symbols that the artist has used
- C** Use visual arts language to describe the artists intentions for theme, concept or subject matter
- D** Represent their own ideas visually and make connections about their own intentions as artists
- E** Explore the concept of identity and landscape in artworks (Years 5-6)
- F** Consider different audience viewpoints for interpreting artworks and analyse artist intentions (Years 5-6)

## MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- » Rockhampton Art Gallery *Explorer Pack*
- » Student notebooks or art books
- » Pencils, fine line markers
- » A4 and A3 paper

## Before visiting *Cream*

Prior to visiting the gallery, teachers and students can familiarise themselves with the content and themes of the exhibition. Look through the *Explorer Pack*, which is available upon request to Rockhampton Art Gallery or the host gallery. Teachers can focus on a selection of artworks from the *Explorer Pack*, which contains information that encourages interpretation, discussion and participation.

## PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES COULD INCLUDE:

- » **EXPLORE AND EXPERIMENT** with realist and abstract styles as students create still life drawings. Use realistic drawing techniques such as applying tone to create form. Apply abstract concepts by limiting drawing to the use of simple shapes.
- » **EXPERIMENT AND INNOVATE** by mixing and using colours that convey emotions. This could be achieved by 'painting imagery' such as *green with envy, as free as a bird, brighter than the sun*. Discuss and generate word charts to describe colours, and then extend the word charts to incorporate other visual devices such as shape, line, and textures. Encourage students to use descriptive language as they share and explain their own and each other's artworks.
- » **CREATE REPRESENTATIONS** by experimenting with various visual devices. Assemble found objects such as leaves, branches, bottle tops, fabrics and containers and create sketches of enlarged sections of the object (as if under a microscope or magnifying glass). Encourage the students to observe details as they explore different lines, shapes, textures and patterns.
- » **CREATE REPRESENTATIONS** of literary texts relevant to the class. Explore themes, concepts or subject matter and create an artwork for a book cover. Ask students to justify their aesthetic choices by writing an artist's statement.

# Viewing Cream

## LESSON SEQUENCE

- A** Discuss with students expectations when visiting an art gallery. This can include: why it is important not to touch the artworks; showing respect and courtesy to other visitors in a public space; use 'inside voices' so others may also enjoy the artworks. Discuss with students the conventions of gallery display, such as: reading labels; hanging height; lighting; frames.
- B** Invite students to walk quietly around the gallery space and stop to look at each artwork. After approximately 10 minutes, ask students to regroup at a nominated artwork.
- C** Gather student's initial reactions to the artworks by asking them to identify a favourite artwork. Encourage students to share what they specifically like about the artworks in relation to:
  - » visual devices such as lines, shapes, colours, tone
  - » the medium of the artwork, such as printmaking or painting
  - » subject matter that may be based on a personal or sensory connection. For example, *Does the artwork remind you of anything? How did the artwork make you feel?*
- D** Guide the students around the exhibition. Stop at selected artworks and use the prompts from the *Explorer Pack* to discuss artworks and participate in activities.
- E** Select two portraits, or two landscapes, then compare and contrast style, technique, materials, and possible meanings.
- F** Invite students to reflect on their favourite artwork from the beginning of the lesson and consider if it remains a favourite after viewing and analysing other artworks in the exhibition. *Do they now have a favourite artist?* Ask students to record the artist's name, title of the artwork, and also their own ideas about why and how the artist created the artwork.

## After viewing Cream

- » **EXPLORE** different ways of presenting artworks. Ask students to choose an artwork from *Cream* and consider different places and ways that this work could be displayed. **DISCUSS** the reasons for their choices, and encourage comparison of ideas with other students.
- » **EXPERIMENT AND TRIAL WITH IDEAS** to represent views, beliefs and opinions as students create representations of familiar and unfamiliar landscapes. Encourage students to challenge audience viewpoints or interpretations by experimenting with materials, styles, techniques and visual devices.
- » **IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE** ways that the display of an artwork can enhance its meaning for an audience. Ask students to select an artwork from the *Explorer Pack* then design a postcard and write a slogan to use as a promotional tool for regional or outback Australia.

## Extension activities

Reflect on the idea of *Burke in central Australia* by Sidney Nolan as a history painting, and discuss why an artist might paint an historical scene. Students can then create their own artwork based on the story of a well-known Australian identity from our past or present. Students should prepare a written statement to **DESCRIBE AND DISCUSS** their art making processes and their intended meanings in the artwork.

**REFLECT AND EVALUATE HOW AN AUDIENCE READS AN ARTWORK.** Generate a mock twitter session for students to reflect, comment and offer interpretations of selected artworks. On strips of laminated card, Post it notes or via electronic devices, allow students to post status updates in response to teacher 'posted' images from the *Explorer Pack*. Students are invited to express an opinion limited to 140 characters. Encourage students to respond and justify using appropriate visual arts language.

# Curriculum Connections

In addition to the draft Australian Curriculum for Visual Arts, teachers may also incorporate viewing *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art* through the below learning areas. To inform further curriculum planning and to access specific cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities see <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

(3) YEAR THREE, (4) YEAR FOUR, (5) YEAR FIVE, (6) YEAR SIX

## ENGLISH

Students engage with a variety of multimodal texts for enjoyment. They develop an understanding and ability to create imaginative, informative and persuasive multimodal texts. In upper primary, students interpret and evaluate spoken, written and multimodal texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade.

*The students should be able to:*

- » identify the point of view in a multimodal text and suggest alternative points of view (3)
- » identify and explain visual language features of multimodal texts from earlier times and compare with contemporary multimodal texts (4)
- » use objective and subjective language to show ideas and points of view (5)
- » compare multimodal texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches (6)

## HISTORY

Students develop historical understanding through key concepts including continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy and significance. They pose questions about the past and identify different points of view.

*The students should be able to:*

- » identify the role that people of diverse backgrounds have played in the development and character of the local community (3)
- » discuss the diversity and longevity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives (4)
- » identify the impact of a significant development or event on a colony; for example, frontier conflict, the gold rushes, the Eureka Stockade, internal exploration, the advent of rail, the expansion of farming, drought (5)
- » explain the contribution of individuals and groups, including Aboriginal people and/or Torres Strait Islanders and migrants, to the development of Australian society, for example in areas such as the economy, education, science, the arts, sport (6).

## GEOGRAPHY

Students develop curiosity and wonder about the diversity of the world's places, peoples, cultures and environments.

*The students should be able to:*

- » explain similarities and differences between places in terms of their type of settlement, demographic characteristics and the lives of the people who live there (3)
- » identify the influence of the environment on the human characteristics of a place, the impact of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond (5)
- » discuss the effects that people's connections with, and proximity to, places throughout the world have on shaping their awareness and opinion of those places (6).

## Gallery visit aim

By viewing *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*, students are provided with the opportunity to engage with artworks that focus on Australian modernism. Students can further develop their awareness and extend their understanding of how and why artists realise their ideas through different representations, practices, processes and viewpoints. Students in Years 9 and 10 can critically reflect on the contributions of visual artists within an historical context. Students are able to consider the significance of this exhibition and the role of curator when making decisions about displaying artworks.

## Visual Art Content Descriptors

### YEARS 7 – 8

- 8.1** Combine, adapt and manipulate visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork
- 8.2** Develop new ways of expressing meaning, through exploration of how artists' practices are informed by manipulation of materials, techniques, technologies and processes, to enhance their intentions as artists
- 8.3** Structure and design artworks in different forms and styles by applying perceptual and practical skills, techniques and technologies
- 8.4** Practise and refine application of visual conventions, techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art making
- 8.5** Present artwork demonstrating consideration of how the artwork is displayed to enhance the artist's intention to an audience, reflecting social relationships between cultures in Australia
- 8.6** Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks
- 8.7** Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art making, starting with visual arts in Australia and including visual arts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

## Visual Art Content Descriptors

### YEARS 9 – 10

- 10.1** Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to explore their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists
- 10.2** Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes and apply viewpoints to develop and represent their own artistic intentions
- 10.3** Develop and refine use of visual conventions, perceptual and practical skills, and selected techniques, technologies and processes to represent ideas and subject matter
- 10.4** Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention

- 10.5** Present and evaluate curatorial ideas for displaying artworks to enhance the relationship between the artist and audience, and to communicate with and challenge an audience
- 10.6** Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view so as to inform their future art making
- 10.7** Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual arts making, starting with visual artworks from Australia and including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider visual artworks in international contexts

## Gallery visit objectives

**BY THE COMPLETION OF THE VISIT, THE STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:**

- A** Respond to and reflect on the influences and intentions of artists
- B** Observe how artists select and apply different techniques to represent themes, concepts and ideas relating to Australian modernism
- C** Use their historical and conceptual knowledge of Australian modernism to analyse and document the practices of selected artists (Years 9 – 10)
- D** Document experiences and observations from visiting the exhibition and consider the role of the curator (Years 9 -10)

### MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

- » Rockhampton Art Gallery *Explorer Pack*
- » Student visual diaries
- » Pencils, fine line markers
- » 'Visual Diary Prompt Notes'

## Before visiting *Cream*

Prior to visiting the gallery, teachers and students can familiarise themselves with the content and themes of the exhibition. Look through the *Explorer Pack*, which is available upon request to Rockhampton Art Gallery or the host gallery. Teachers can focus on a selection of artworks from the *Explorer Pack*, which contain information that encourages interpretation, discussion and participation.

### PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES COULD INCLUDE:

- » **RESEARCH** the beginnings of modernism in Australian art and investigate the viewpoints of artists and how their practices informed a distinctive style of art. Students can summarise their findings by writing a series of newspaper headlines and by-lines that may have featured in the media at the time, for example, 'Not just a pretty picture: Australian art takes a new direction'.
- » **REFLECT** on examples of the 'everyday' from artists and artworks in the *Explorer Pack*. **RECREATE REPRESENTATIONS** using similar ideas and concepts for our world today. For example, consider modern day urban and rural settings and the people, places and events within these contexts. Students should **EXPLORE WAYS** to challenge and extend relationships between the artist and the audience.

- » **RESEARCH AND EXPLORE PROCESSES AND TECHNIQUES** for post-impressionism and abstraction to create a series of experimental representations in a visual diary. Ask students to reflect and comment on the significance or perhaps controversy of such styles in the historical context of post-Second World War Australia. Students can extend their exploration by **RESEARCHING AND COMPARING CONTEMPORARY STYLES** such as multimedia storytelling, film art or animation and include examples and annotations in their visual diary. (Years 9 – 10)
- » Consider how Australian modernist artists reflect the society of the time. Students can participate in a class debate to examine the **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ARTISTS** when making commentaries about social, environmental and sustainability issues in contemporary times. (Years 9 – 10)

## Viewing Cream

### LESSON SEQUENCE

- A** Discuss with students expectations when visiting an art gallery. This can include: why it is important not to touch the artworks; showing respect and courtesy to other visitors in a public space; use quiet voices so others may also enjoy the artworks. Discuss with students the conventions of gallery display, such as: reading labels; hanging height; lighting; frames.
- B** Allow the students ten minutes to view the exhibition. Instruct the students to meet at the *Portrait of Rex Pilbeam* by William Dargie. As an introduction to the exhibition, provide a brief overview of the exhibition, discussing origins and the significant role of Rex Pilbeam in the collection's history.
- C** The students then re-view the exhibition individually or in pairs. Students should make annotations in their visual diaries using the Visual Diary Prompt Note. Allow approximately twenty minutes for students to view the artworks and record their observations.
- D** Regroup students and gather their responses to the exhibition. Ask students to identify common themes, subject matter and artist styles.
- E** Guide students around exhibition using the *Explorer Pack* for discussion and activities.
- F** Students may also discuss the role of the curator and make observations about the importance, relevance and relationships of the selected artworks. Invite students to 'short list' a smaller collection of works based on their own identified similarities in themes, artists styles or other contexts. Document and justify their choices. (Years 9 – 10)

## After viewing Cream

Consider the value of travelling exhibitions to regional centres in Australia. Ask students to write a letter to the curator or the director of their local gallery that **PRESENTS AN INFORMED OPINION** about the importance, or success of the exhibition *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. Student could research similar exhibitions to assist in presenting their position and beliefs.

Research formal and informal settings, and elements of good exhibition display as students consider alternative ways to exhibit collections of artworks in school spaces. Using artworks from the class or their 'short list' collection from *Cream*, students design a 'gallery space' using digital technologies, models or blueprint drawings to **ENHANCE AND ESTABLISH INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE ARTIST AND THE AUDIENCE**. Explanations of their decision should be documented.

# Extension activities

Create a gallery book or children's catalogue specifically for young children to engage with the exhibition. The students should design the format, cover, content and activities appropriate for a specific age group. The children's book or catalogue should be designed to help the children view and respond to selected artworks from the exhibition. The students should be able to **JUSTIFY THEIR CHOICES**.

Develop an individual focus for a series of artworks based on themes showcased in *Cream: Four Decades of Australian Art*. These themes include Australian landscape, portraiture and social realism. Guide students to **PLAN AND DESIGN REPRESENTATIONS**, to be **IMAGINATIVE WHEN APPLYING A PERSONAL AESTHETIC** and to **USE MATERIALS, TECHNOLOGIES AND PROCESSES** in a contemporary context.

## Curriculum Connections:

Acknowledging that specialised delivery of the visual arts curriculum is established at a secondary level, the following provides an overview of cross curriculum links relevant for further exploration of Australian modernism. Go to <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> to inform further curriculum planning and to access specific cross-curriculum priorities and general capabilities.

| CURRICULUM AREA  | STRAND/S                                 | SUB-STRAND/S                             | YEAR LEVEL   |
|------------------|--|--|--------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b>   | Literacy                                 | Texts in context                         | Years 7 – 10 |
|                  |  | Interpreting, analysing and evaluating   |              |
| <b>HISTORY</b>   | Historical inquiry                       | How do historians use visual documents?* | Years 7 - 8  |
|                  | Historical Knowledge and Understanding   | Depth Study - 1 Making a Better World?   | Year 9       |
|                  |  | Depth Study – 3 The globalising world    | Year 10      |
| <b>GEOGRAPHY</b> | Geographical Knowledge and Understanding | Unit 2: Changing nations                 | Year 8       |
|                  |  | Unit 2: Geographies of interconnections  | Year 9       |

# Visual Diary Prompts

- 1 Record title of exhibition and details.
- 2 View the artworks and record the title and the artist's names of the artworks that interest you.
- 3 Make quick sketches of artworks – make note of composition, specific details, use of symbols, use of specific visual devices use of techniques, materials and technologies.
- 4 Comment on subject matter and the artists' intentions.
- 5 Record your own personal response or interpretation of the artwork.