

Isadora Vaughan



Isadora Vaughan, *Gaia Not The Goddess*, 2019, curated by Brooke Babbington at Heide Museum of Modern Art
Photo: Christian Capuro

Contemporary Art on the Road is a unique program that provides access to artists and art experts from some of Melbourne's leading art institutions. This resource was created to introduce teachers to a range of hands-on, expertly designed strategies and resources for teaching contemporary art in their classroom.

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Contemporary Art on the Road is an initiative developed by Gertrude Contemporary and in partnership with Monash University Museum of Art, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.



About the Artist

Isadora Vaughan is a Melbourne-based visual artist whose sculptural works are characterised by the tension between materiality and form. Vaughan's research is driven by a curiosity to understand material intelligence and how matter can shift and escape control. She is drawn to the connoted and historical value of materials and laws of nature, which inform the processes she undertakes.

Vaughan's work oscillates somewhere between the formal and the alchemical. Through the adoption of scientific processes from an autodidactic position, Vaughan's current interest is to produce work that challenges animal/material understandings and evokes a sense of the complex intersection between living and non-living matter.

She employs a process of speculative questioning that draws influence from varied disparate ideas and anecdotes within geology, craftsmanship, and science. She is interested in the ability of materials to transform/transition from one state to another and how to convey this through both ephemeral and static sculptural installations that engage with the sensory capabilities of the body.

Vaughan has a Bachelor of Fine Art (honours) from The Victorian College of Arts, Melbourne, Australia. She is a current studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary and is represented by Station Gallery, Australia. She has exhibited extensively in Australia in state, regional, university and independent galleries and museums, including: The Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Shepparton Art Museum, Shepparton; TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; Latrobe University Gallery, Bendigo; Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne. Vaughan has been selected for numerous residencies, including the prestigious Skowhegan School of painting and sculpture in the USA in 2016, and in 2019 at Bemis Center, USA. In 2019 she was also selected as a finalist in both the Ramsey Art Prize, and the Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award.

What ideas/ concepts do you base your artworks on?

A huge range of things; ideas relating to expressions of nature and human interaction, where materials are from and the processes undertaken to get to you, the impact of extractive processes both literally and socially, the effect of material dissonance on how we engage with the world and how this is echoed in varied contexts, especially in how we conceptualise ideas of health and bodies and the materiality of treatments of care, emotionally and physically, the transformative capacity of engaging physically with the production of forms and materialities foreign to everyday life, the action and reactions between disparate technologies such as agriculture and ceramics.

Why are your ideas/ concepts/ discussion important to a contemporary audience or in a contemporary context?

Research into material cognition, multi species interaction, and imagining new and different forms of material technologies into the future is key to responding directly to the climate emergency we are currently in. My work directly problematises the production of waste and the value systems in art through the production of fully biodegradable installations, re-use and repurposing over the entirety of my practice and life. My work refuses to conform to classical ideas about 'high art' and sees the body as a the core viewer and responder to the work. Through collaboration and education from disparate skills such as apiary, mycology, geology, permaculture, masonry and metallurgy - I decenter the role of the artist as sole producer and platform the essential mesh-works required to generate new and interesting works.

How do you begin your studio practice? Where do you find inspiration?

I attempt to practice daily, to apply myself. I get inspiration from friends, documentaries, novels and theory.

How has your practice evolved over time?

I have been able to grow the scale and complexity of my work with time and more funding. I have learnt a lot and respond to each work I make uniquely.

Who are your biggest influences?

Meg Webster, Cathy Wilkes, Joanna Malinowska, Liz Lerner.

Artist Website: <https://isadoravaughan.com/>

Workshop Summary

In this workshop participants will use raw, basic materials to make a small abstract sculpture/assemblage. They will use primary casting techniques that require chance and openness to an unknown outcome. They will assemble their sculpture or assemblage using balance, pressure, gravity and ingenuity, again requiring an openness and capacity to respond and reflect while in the process of making.

1. Introduction (30 mins): Isadora will begin the workshop by presenting her body of work to the group, discussing the historical and material references she draws from and the spatial and sculptural techniques she uses in her practice. Isadora will discuss the sources and evocations of her materials and how they can speak above and beyond their often humble beginnings.

2. Overview + Discussion (10 mins): The aim of this workshop is to explore the experimental possibilities of using simple materials and techniques to assemble a form is determined as much by its materials as by an overarching idea. Participants will be taken through simple ways of using materials that experiment with their intrinsic properties such as flexibility, weight, porosity and smell.

Isadora will present the materials participants will be working with and a selection of ways of manipulating them that participants will use as a guide for their own assemblage. Building on the discussion and understanding of the material participants should generate actions or techniques to alter or transform their materials that will result in various forms, that will then be merged together.

4. Production Phase (1 hour): During the creation phase participants will be given a variety of materials to manipulate and respond to. Materials will include beeswax, clay, sand and cardboard. The group/s will be assigned a space in the room where they can melt / mould / form their materials. They will be encouraged to use each material in conjunction with the others to expand their ideas of what each one can do.

Participants will have access to hot plates and hot knives to melt and fuse together wax. They may use clay to form shapes to pour wax into, form supports with sand to prop up cast wax or solid clay form. They may mix together the materials to make new composites and are encouraged to think openly about how each element will repel, absorb, respond to the others. During this process they will be guided by visual support material and conversation about ways of experimenting with familiar materials.

5. Documentation (15 minutes): In the final stages of the workshop, participants will be invited to photograph their work or to assemble the various materials into a sculptural assemblage that can be transported. This component of the workshop invites participants to explore the possible ephemerality or adaptability of their materials.

Outcomes of this workshop will either be in the form of a sculptural/assemblage or a photograph.

Summary

- **Introduction (30 mins):** Introduction to the artist's practice and materials that will be used in the workshop.
- **Overview + Discussion (10 mins):** Participants will speak about the intent of the workshop and be introduced to a variety of materials and techniques.
- **Production phase (90 Minutes):** Participants will experiment with materials provided to build their own sculpture.
- **Documentation (15 mins):** Photographic documentation of work and group discussion in response to activity, ideas presented and brainstorming for future experiments.

Equipment List

- Beeswax
 - Hot Plate or Rice Cooker
 - Hot Knives
 - Skewers
 - Sand
 - Clay
 - Seeds/Leaves/Petals
 - Cardboard or MDF boards (1per person)
 - Camera > iPhone, iPad or similar
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Goals and Objectives

- Through critical and creative re-thinking of materials students will learn how to think creatively about materials their artistic potential.
- Students will learn how to create and play with three dimensional forms.
- Students will learn how to develop conceptual ideas and allegories in relation to sculptural assemblage.
- Students are encouraged to think about how art can reflect and shape contemporary social issues and dialogue.
- Students are encouraged to think conceptually about art elements and principals like: shape, tone, colour and texture.

The activity aims to:

- Expand students' knowledge about artistic concepts and techniques.
- Encourage imagination and enjoyment through engagement with materials and working towards an open outcome.
- Teach students to express themselves through visual language and develop skills of working with three dimensional objects and space.
- Expand students' critical and creative thinking, using a variety of typical art and non-art materials, visual languages and art history.
- Teach students how to respond to space and material to create artwork.
- Provide students with confidence to communicate and describe social issues and ideas, and how their artworks relate to them.

Learning Activity

Discussion

- Discuss the artworks of Meg Webster, Cathy Wilkes, Joanna Malinowska and Liz Larner. How do they communicate emotions and ideas through spacial and sculptural play?
- How does Isadora use beeswax and clay in her artworks? Talk about her sculptural installations *Gaia Not the Goddess* at Heide Museum of Modern Art and *Bilirubin Bezoar* at Gertrude Glasshouse.
- What other artists do you know that use clay and beeswax in their work? If none, how would you go about researching this?
- Discuss how three-dimensional and two-dimensional outcomes differ in communicating meaning. What experiences do you get from a three dimensional object that you can't from a photo of that same object? Teachers, show students a photo of a chair, have them discuss what they see and feel, what connotations that chair may have (corporate or lounge for example). Then view that same chair in real life / three dimensional form. How has their perception of the object changed?

Concept Development

Students should begin by discussing the practices of Isadora Vaughan, Meg Webster, Cathy Wilkes, Joanna Malinowska and Liz Larner. They should discuss how these artists communicate complex and conceptual ideas through colour, shape, form, material and space. They should select one image each and do an in-depth analysis in their visual diary.

Additional activity:

Students can photograph their sculptures and discuss how the two dimensional representation changes their perception if their creation? Does it help to communicate their idea or narrative by capturing the object from a specific angle?

Production

Students begin by selection which station they wish to start at: sand, clay or beeswax. They will play around with melting, moulding and forming the materials, getting a sense of how they feel and respond to touch and manipulation. As they move around from station to station or introduce the different materials, students should be encouraged to play with the form, and try not to lock themselves into a specific idea or outcome too early. Discussions should lead the students to think about how each material reacts to one another: do they repel, absorb or stick to one another? What other materials might they introduce? What effect would this have?

Students should reflect on how the students found the process of working with an undetermined outcomes. They should also discuss any revelations they made with regard to materials interacting with one another.

Links to Curriculum

PRIMARY & SECONDARY

Present & Perform

View the location and exhibition of Isadora's work. Students should plan their own exhibition of their artworks. They should consider the audience of the artworks and how they wish the audience to interpret the artwork.

Respond & Interpret

Level F – 6

Respond to Isadora's artwork by identifying and describing art elements and principals. Consider how she makes her work. Students could also discuss the range of aesthetic styles throughout art history, specifically conceptual and contemporary art.

Level 7 – 10

Analyse and interpret Isadora's artworks discussing ideas and viewpoints. Compare her work with works by other contemporary artists to identify characteristics and features of the works, think specifically about how they communicate or explore contemporary social issues and ideas.

Explore & Express

Levels F – 6

Investigate the ways in which Isadora explores ideas, techniques and materials in her artworks. How are these expressed?

Levels 7 – 10

Explore Isadora's art practice. Through a discussion of Isadora's use of organic / biodegradable materials discuss how she expresses her ideas and develops a particular style within her work. Discuss her work in terms of the themes that she explores. From this discussion students should develop their own artistic practice through the use of inspiration, materials, techniques and processes to develop their own artworks.

Visual Arts Practice

Levels F – 6

Based on the artworks of Isadora students should explore materials, techniques, processes and visual conventions. They should describe the use of these in the production of their own artworks.

Levels 7 – 10

Think about the intentions that Isadora has when she commences making her work. Discuss her artistic practice. Using the artworks of Isadora as a starting point, explore materials, techniques, visual conventions and processes to develop an individual artistic intention or aesthetic.

VICTORIAN CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (VCE)

Studio Arts

Unit 1 Area of Study 3: Interpreting art ideas and use of materials and techniques: The work of artists from different times and cultures is studied to gain a broader understanding of how artworks are conceived, produced and exhibited. Students discuss the way in which Isadora has used materials and techniques, and interpreted ideas and sources of inspiration in producing her artworks.

Unit 2 Area of Study 2: Ideas and Styles in Artwork: Students develop an understanding of the use of other artists' works in the making of new artworks, which may include the ideas and issues associated with appropriation such as copyright and artists' moral rights. Discuss how Isadora draws on the works of Meg Webster, Cathy Wilkes, Joanna Malinowska and Liz Larner as sources of inspiration.

Unit 3 Area of Study 3: Artists and Studio Practices: In this area of study students focus on professional studio practices in relation to particular art forms. Students investigate the ways in which artists have interpreted subject matter, influences, historical and cultural contexts, and communicated ideas and meaning in their artworks. Students should examine Isadora's artist biography and above interview questions to understand the path of her professional development and artistic intentions.

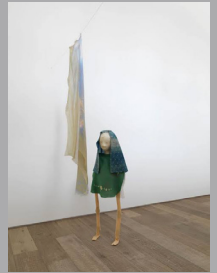
Unit 4 Area of Study 3: Art Industry Contexts: You will visit a variety of art exhibitions and examine the different methods and roles undertaken in the preparation and presentation of an art exhibition. Through Gertrude's website examine Isadora's exhibition *Bilirubin Bezoar* at Gertrude Glasshouse. Discuss her spatial intervention and things she made have had to consider in presenting this work. Why would this installation may have not been possible at another gallery?

Related Artists/Artworks



Meg Webster (1944 >)

Meg Webster is a sculptor who makes minimal art with natural materials to be directly perceived by the body. While her works span multiple media, she is most well known for her artworks that feature natural elements. She is closely affiliated with Post-Minimalism and the Land Art movement and has been exhibiting her work since 1980. Webster often employs industrial materials in her work juxtaposed with natural elements to create a visually complex space that provokes further thought on the intersection of nature and technology. Her artworks also often raise issues of global warming and the consequences of human interference with the environment.



Cathy Wilkes (1966 >)

Cathy Wilkes is a Northern Irish artist who lives and works in Glasgow. She makes sculpture, paintings, and installations. Her works often feature items from daily life or items of a domestic nature, such as baking parchment, cups, plates and biscuits. Her work recalls inchoate visions of interiors and places of loss, and meditates on the nature of love and the coexistence of life and death. She was commissioned to create the British Pavillion in Venice in 2019.



Joanna Malinowska (1972 >)

Her art oscillates between diverse media - sculpture, video, performance art - where she tackles subjects related to anthropology, culture clash and music. Joanna Malinowska's interest in anthropology has been visible in a variety of her works created since she graduated from university. The artist takes on a scientific-artistic approach during the preparation process that she likes to call 'field research'. She perceives her actions as a unique method of work, and sometimes even as an independent performative process, as a result of which, ideas for her next pieces crystalize.



Liz Larner (1960 >)

Liz Larner is an American installation artist and sculptor. Liz Larner's work both explores and expands the possibilities of sculpture by combining geometric formalism with notions of movement and change. Her use of lines, color and shape work to modify and reinvent the formal language of Minimalism, producing new relationships between viewer, sculpture and the surrounding environment. Drawing from a wide range of materials and narratives, Larner's work encourages new experiences of space along with a deeper meditation on the ways in which viewers understand and interact with it. Larner examined issues of transformation and decay in a series of petri dish cultures that she also photographed. Her subsequent installations and sculptures address the way an object defines the space it occupies and transforms the viewer's perception of that space.

Glossary

Materiality - to emphasize the material qualities of the mediums (art materials) employed.

Form - it can refer to the overall form taken by the work – its physical nature; or within a work of art it can refer to the element of shape among the various elements that make up a work.

Laws of nature - a natural instinct or a natural relation of human beings or other animals due to native character or condition.

Alchemical - any seemingly magical process of transforming or combining elements into something new.

Autodidactic - a person who teaches themselves, rather than being taught by a teacher.

Geology - the science which deals with the physical structure and substance of the earth, their history, and the processes which act on them.

Craftsmanship - means a skill or dexterity exhibited by a person for creating an artistic work with hands.

Ephemeral - usually used to describe a work of art that only occurs once, like a happening, and cannot be embodied in any lasting object to be shown in a museum or gallery.

Static sculpture - Sculpture is traditionally static art, meaning individual parts of it do not move. A traditional sculpture is made to be a single, stable, non-moving piece.

Sensory capabilities - brain's ability to receive, interpret, and effectively use information provided by all the senses: vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch

Material dissonance – seemingly contradictory meanings of a material; where a material takes on new forms, meanings or is manipulated to obscure a cohesive understanding of its nature.

Agriculture - the science, art, or practice of cultivating the soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and in varying degrees the preparation and marketing of the resulting products

Ceramics - is art made from ceramic materials, including clay. It may take forms including artistic pottery, including tableware, tiles, figurines and other sculpture.

Material cognition – receiving sensory impressions of things and occurrences in our surroundings; where a material imparts a conceptual understanding.

Multispecies interaction - composed of, containing, or involving two or more species and especially biological species.

Material technologies – materials that bridge electronic and mechanical domains, that have the capacity to transfer tactile or sensory information.

Biodegradable - capable of being decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms and thereby avoiding pollution

High art - was a term used to describe the most aesthetically pleasing and challenging. High art is appreciated by those with the most cultivated taste.

Apiary - a place in which a colony or colonies of bees are kept.

Mycology - is the branch of biology concerned with the study of fungi.

Permaculture - the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.

Masonry - the art and craft of building and fabricating in stone, clay, brick, or concrete block.

Metallurgy - art and science of extracting metals from their ores and modifying the metals for use.

Evocations - The act of evoking. Creation anew through the power of the memory or imagination.

Porosity - is the quality of being porous, or full of tiny holes. Liquids go right through things that have porosity.

Starting task – Explore & Express, Respond & Interpret



Isadora Vaughan, *Gaia Not the Goddess*, 2019, Installation view
<https://isadoravaughan.com/GAIA-NOT-THE-GODDESS>

1. Collect a series of artworks by artists who natural materials in their work including Andy Goldsworthy, Robert Smithson, Lauren Berkowitz, Fiona Hall, Cathy Wilkes, Felix Gonzales-Torres, Joanna Mainowska and Liz Larner.
2. These images will form the basis for a work that is inspired by the work of Isadora Vaughan. The steps will be included in your visual diary to plan and evaluate your artwork.
3. Annotate the images drawing on the following steps. You can consider:
 - the materials and techniques the artist has used
 - their use of visual conventions
 - the influences of ideas on the work of the artist.
 - What ideas the artist was trying to express? How have they used materials, techniques and visual conventions to express these ideas.

To develop the artwork, here are some steps for annotation, generation and evaluation.

Research

- I chose this image because.....
- This image gave me the idea to
- Here (the art elements and principles) are used to.....

Idea Generation – media and artwork trials – the students can do some small sketches of their ideas or photograph some trial sculptures.

I came up with this idea from looking atin my research. It links to these artworks because

Artwork development – evaluation of selected media trials and development of artwork.

I have chosen this as my final design because.....as it includes all the visual conventions/materials/techniques that I came up with in my artwork trials (the student can refer to the use of materials, techniques and visual conventions that relate to their expression of ideas.

Evaluation of final artwork

- My final artwork looks like/doesn't look like I thought it would because.....
- During the making of my artwork I found it easy to.....because
- During the making of my artwork I found it challenging tobecause.....
- If I could make the artwork again, I would change

Throughout this unit of work, I have learnt how to/ about.....

Achievement Standard Extract Addressed

Levels 7 and 8

- Students identify and analyse how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to convey meaning.
- Students plan and make their artworks in response to the exploration of techniques, technologies and processes used in the work of other artists.

Levels 9 and 10

- Students analyse and evaluate how artists communicate ideas and convey meaning in artworks.
- Students identify the influences of other artists and analyse connections between techniques, processes and visual conventions in artworks to develop their own art practice.

Assessment Criteria

Concept development using imagery as inspiration
Planning for an artwork
Annotates ideas

(*Worksheet based on material developed by teachers involved in the VCAA Formative Assessment project, 2019)

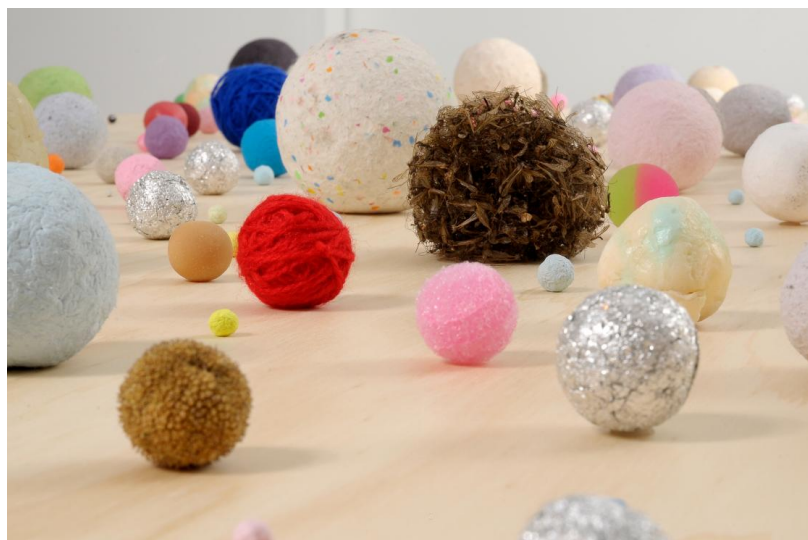
Formative Assessment sample Level 8 – 10

<p>Learning continuum: Students express personal styles, themes and concepts in planning an artwork.</p> <p>Levels 7 and 8 Students identify and analyse how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to convey meaning. Students plan and make their artworks in response to the exploration of techniques, technologies and processes used in the work of other artists.</p> <p>Levels 9 and 10 Students analyse and evaluate how artists communicate ideas and convey meaning in artworks. Students identify the influences of other artists and analyse connections between techniques, processes and visual conventions in artworks to develop their own art practice.</p>	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
	<p>Presents existing imagery and re-states information by identifying the influences of other artists and sources.</p>	<p>Explores existing imagery and analyses it to represent ideas and convey meaning in their own art works.</p>	<p>Analyses existing imagery and expands on it to express themes, concepts in planning for an artwork</p>	<p>Synthesises inspirational imagery, by analysing and evaluating concepts and themes to develop personal styles in their own art work.</p>

Organising element	Action	Insufficient evidence	Quality criteria			
Explores and expresses ideas	Concept development using imagery as inspiration	1.0 Insufficient evidence	1.1 Lists some information	1.2 Presents information related to inspirational imagery	1.3 Makes connections between inspirational imagery	1.4 Expresses personal ideas by synthesizing different sources of imagery
	Planning for an artwork	2.0 Insufficient evidence	2.1 Reproduces imagery	2.2 Generates an idea for an artwork that links to inspirational imagery	2.3 Generates imagery that expresses a concept	2.4 Generates imagery that demonstrates a personal style
	Annotates ideas	3.0 Insufficient evidence	3.1 Labels imagery	3.2 Presents information related to proposed artwork	3.3 Explains concepts conveyed in proposed artworks	3.4 Evaluates meaning of proposed artwork

Curriculum Continuum Example – Level 8 Visual Arts

Curriculum Level 8				
Content Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks. • Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in art works. 			
Achievement standard extract	Students identify, analyse and evaluate how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to express ideas and convey meaning.			
Learning continuum	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
	Presents existing imagery and re-states information by identifying the influences of other artists and sources.	Explores existing imagery and analyses it to represent ideas and convey meaning in their own art works.	Analyses existing imagery and expands on it to express themes, concepts in planning for an artwork	Synthesises inspirational imagery, by analysing and evaluating concepts and themes to develop personal styles in their own art work.



Charlie Sofo Balls 2010

Found objects, paper, wool, electrical tape, foil, wood, stone
Courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery

<https://www.heide.com.au/exhibitions/charlie-sofo-i-wander>

Visual Arts

Levels 7 and 8 curriculum links

Strand:

Explore and Express Ideas

Content descriptions:

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks ([VCAVAE033](#))

Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in artworks ([VCAVAE034](#)).

Strand:

Visual Arts Practices

Content descriptions:

Experiment with materials, techniques, technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts and themes in artworks ([VCAVAV035](#))

Develop skills in planning and designing artworks and documenting artistic practice ([VCAVAV036](#))

Strand:

Present and Perform

Content description:

Create and display artworks, describing how ideas are expressed to an audience ([VCAVAP037](#))

Strand:

Respond and Interpret

Content description:

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks and how they are viewed by audiences ([VCAVAR038](#))

Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ([VCAVAR039](#))

Relevant achievement standard extracts:

- [Students] identify, analyse and evaluate how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to express ideas and convey meaning.
- Students plan and make their art works in response to exploration of techniques, technologies and processes used in the work of other artists.
- They demonstrate the use of materials, techniques, processes, visual conventions and technologies to express ideas and convey meaning in their artworks.
- Students identify and describe artworks and exhibitions from different cultures, times and places and how ideas are interpreted by audiences.

Sample key concepts and ideas

- Critical and creative thinking can be used to discuss how artists express ideas about contemporary issues in society in their work.
- Critical and creative thinking can be used in art-making activities, for example using materials and techniques to express ideas on contemporary issues.

Discussion

Lead a discussion about everyday materials and words.

- What is the main concept behind the artwork?
- How do you think the artist has expressed the idea?
- Consider the materials and techniques the artist has used to make the work and why he chose those materials.
- Describe how the artist has expressed the concept using visual conventions.

Critical and Creative Thinking

Levels 7 and 8 curriculum links

Strand: Reasoning

Content description: Consider how to settle matters of fact and matters of value and the degree of confidence in the conclusions
([VCCCTR038](#))

Relevant achievement standard extract:

Students explain different ways to settle matters of fact and matters of value and issues concerned with these.

Sample key concepts and ideas

- Different disciplines have different ways of engaging with issues of fact and value, but they may share elements such as quality of evidence and its sources, and dispositions such as open-mindedness.
- Resolution of fact or value does not necessarily mean complete consensus. How much disagreement to tolerate is often determined within different disciplines (for example, an agreed process of peer review in science) or may depend on context.

- In an issue involving several stakeholders and several experts and non-experts, it should be considered who has authority over what and the best mode (citizen forum, academic papers) for reaching a resolution.

Sample learning activities

Using a contemporary artwork discuss the concept of 'kitsch' and the role it might play in artworks.

Initial discussion

Before engaging with the artwork explore the concept of 'kitsch' in general with students.

- Ask: What is 'kitsch'?
- Consider related concepts, such as 'tacky' or 'cheap' or any similar terms students are inclined to use.
- Ask: How much is being 'kitsch' a fact about a work? How much is it a value judgment?
- Even if being 'kitsch' is overall a value judgment, are there certain qualities that 'kitsch' objects have? What are they?
- Are these things qualities in the object (colours, forms) or facts about the purpose or some other aspect of the work?

Responding to the artwork

Present the artwork to students.

Ask students to look at the artwork and read its didactic label.

Further discussion

Students discuss the following in small groups and report back to the class:

- Why has the artist chosen these particular 'kitsch' objects?
- What makes these particular objects 'kitsch'?
- How does the choice of these items contribute to the message of the work?
- How important is it that the viewer shares the artist's interpretation of these works as 'kitsch'?

Following reports from the small groups, prompt the class as a whole to consider:

- Where are the points of agreement and disagreement between groups?
- Are there areas of disagreement about particular facts or are the disagreements about value judgments?
- How important is it to resolve these disagreements?

Additional Visual Arts and Critical Creative Thinking learning activities

Explore how text has been used by artists in the history of art. Look at artworks by Andrew Atchison, Lawrence Weiner, Joseph Kasuth, Angela Brennan, Agatha Gothe-Snape, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, Roy Lichtenstein, Lawrence Weiner, Ed Ruscha, Bob and Roberta Smith, Jon Campbell and Jean Michel-Basquiat. Complete the activities in this resource using some of the artworks.