

# Jahnne Pasco-White



Jahnne Pasco-White, *Being here is everything*, 2018, wall painting: cement oxide, cotton and synthetic fabrics, fabric dye, pencil, crayon, acrylic, paper, bamboo, clay and rice starch, installation view at Gertrude Contemporary part of *Gertrude Studios 2018*. Photo: Christo Crocker.

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.

Contemporary Art on the Road is funded by the Department of Education and Training Victoria (DET) through the Strategic Partnerships Program (SPP) and partnered with the following organisations:



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

Jahanne Pasco-White's expanded painting practice considers the intersections between temporality and materiality. Her work is characterised by the labouring of delicate supports. Specifically, she is interested in the layers of authorship that are variously evidenced and concealed by the artist's mark-making, as well as their continual processes of decay and renewal. "Centred around process, the outcome of my paintings is therefore often put to chance, as I move between norm and improvisation, the final work has dynamic, highly-textured surfaces that vacillate between flat and sculptural."

Jahanne's has held solo exhibitions in: 910 Lofts, New York; Daine Singer at Spring 1883, Sydney; Artspace, Auckland; and Daine Singer, Testing Grounds, Bus Projects, Long Division, C3 Contemporary Art Space, Brunswick Lake in Melbourne. She has participated in group shows at Pulse Art Fair, New York; Honey Space Gallery, New York; Westpol A.I.R. Space, Leipzig; LIA, Spinnerei, Leipzig;

Artspace, Auckland; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo and in Melbourne at The Honeymoon Suite, Assembly Point, Town Hall Gallery, Incinerator Gallery, Counihan Gallery, Slopes, Brunswick Sculpture Centre and Gertrude Contemporary.

In 2018 she was the recipient of the Australia Council for the Arts, *Marten Bequest for Painting* and has been awarded a 2019 scholarship at the Art Gallery of New South Wales' Moya Dyring Memorial Studio at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. She has also completed residencies in Germany, Italy, Iceland, New Zealand, and Australia. Most recently she was announced the winner of the *Arthur Guy Memorial Painting Prize* at Bendigo Art Gallery. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Art in Drawing from RMIT University (2010) and First Class Honours (2015) from the Victorian College of the Arts.

### **What ideas/ concepts do you base your artworks on?**

My abstract painting practice is characterised by the labouring of delicate supports, through which I explore both the material and temporal limits of paint(ing).

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

Through my process-based practice I look to explore ecological systems that both tangle with and interrupt each other, that leave behind the idea of hierarchy as the norm and adopt a symbiotic stance. To learn from these systems as a metaphor for making kin with the microbial, fungi, plants, animals and the environment, in which we both shape and are shaped by. I am influenced by Myra Hird for whom such bodily encounters make plain that 'we are not autonomous individuals who subsequently interact: we interact, gifting things calculable and incalculable, and this ongoing process creates our individuality, to be created with every encounter.'

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

I often begin reworking an old painting, cutting it up or using the reverse side. I sometimes begin with found fabrics, drawing from observation, and experimenting with different materials. I find inspiration through reading, listening and learning from other fields of research such as history, literature, science, geology and ecology.

### **How has your practice evolved over time?**

My practice has evolved to a much larger scale and more rigorous theoretical component that informs the way I research and come to make work now. Earlier in my practice I was concerned with undoing traditions of conventional painting practice; whilst this still informs the way I approach paintings, I have developed a more rigorous theoretical component. Applying a conceptual lens of ecology and feminism through which my work is made allows for dialogue with intersecting disciplines such as the arts, social sciences and humanities.

### **Who are your biggest influences?**

Female painters from the Abstract Expressionist movement in New York, such as Joan Mitchell and Helen Frankenthaler as well as more contemporary painting practices of Molly Zuckerman- Hartung and Vivian Suter.

**Artist Website:** <https://jahnnepascowhite.com/>

# Workshop Summary

In this workshop students will explore a range of natural dyeing, and plant pigmentation as well as various methods to approach abstract painting and colour making, that has an emphasis on the process. Taking time to create a work that evolves through material experimentation.

Jahnne will begin the workshop with a brief introduction to natural dye and colour making. The aim of the activity is experiment with the process of natural dyeing and pigment rubbings. Taking a ten minutes exercise asking the group 'what colours can we make from plants and vegetables?' Showing a range of test colour palettes Jahnne has previously made the group will discuss different outcomes.

Jahnne will introduce her practice through images, of previous works. She will talk about career to date, and in particular she will discuss different approaches to making paintings, application methods, texture, rethinking ways to use traditional painting mediums and create catalyst for experimentation. Jahnne will discuss female painters from the Abstract Expressionist movement in New York, such as Joan Mitchell and Helen Frankenthaler as well as looking at contemporary painting practices of Molly Zuckerman- Hartung and Vivian Suter.

## **Instruction and demonstration: 10 minutes**

Jahnne will introduce the range of different materials participants will be working with during the activity. She will do a few samples of plant and salt rubbing onto silk, cotton and paper and will discuss the way each pigment responds differently to the material eg. beetroot, dandelion leaves and olives. As well as a brief sample of frottage, cutting and collaging with the dyed fabrics. Working in response to the discussion this should enable the participants to explore a range of experimental processes of colour making and painting collage.

## **Work time: 90 minutes**

With the range of vegetables, plants and traditional painting and mark-making materials provided the students are encouraged to experiment with colour and texture. They should experiment with a range of different material and textured surfaces. Once students have a collection of samples segments they are happy with they can then cut, rip and layer materials onto a piece of cardboard or MDF to create their own collage/painting work. After or even during the collage process; students can continue to draw, paint or add mark-making according to their own aesthetic preferences.

## **NATURAL DYES**

Dyes are not like paints: dyes combine with fibres to give character and personality, depth and texture. They do not produce a uniform, even, shade. The dye colourant always needs to be extracted from host material (roots, barks, petals, or leaves), usually this extraction happens in the dyebath.

Always use clean non-reactive vessels for dyeing: stainless steel, unchipped enamel. Iron or copper vessels can also be used but the metal will react with the dyebath.

It is optional to pre soak fabric in a warm salt bath mixer with water 1/16 salt(or vinegar) to water ratio. This process tends to hold the colour longer and less fading particularly if you are going to wash the fabric.

## **BEETROOT DYE RECIPE**

You can either use chopped beets or beet root powder to dye natural fabric to a dusty pink.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup beetroot powder or 1 whole beet chopped

5 cups water

2 tbsp white vinegar (optional)

Method:

Bring water to a boil with beets. Reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes. Strain the beets from the pot, leaving only liquid in the pot. Add damp fabric and simmer 10–20 minutes. Rinse, or leave in bath overnight and rinse with hot water until water runs clear. Dry. Heat set by ironing for 5 minutes.

### **GROUND TURMERIC DYE RECIPE**

Through experiments Jahnne has found turmeric and onion skins created the richest, boldest colorfast swatches. Plain turmeric yields an orange-yellow like the swatch.

Ingredients:

1 tbsp ground turmeric  
3 cup water

Method:

Bring water to a boil with ground turmeric. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Add damp fabric and simmer 10-20 minutes. Rinse, or leave in bath overnight and rinse with hot water until water runs clear. Dry. Heat set by ironing for 5 minutes.

### **SALT RUBBING**

Ingredients:

Fresh olives / or other plant matter  
Salt  
Water

Method:

Mix olives (or other plant matter) in bowl with a little water and pinch of salt. Massage fabric into the the olives, as it releases the pigment- do so until the desired colour is reached.

### **Group reflection: 15 minutes**

Students should engage in discussions about how they found this process of experimentation and their personal response to the task. Where they comfortable experimenting? Did they find themselves trying to compose a finished work in their head? Did they resist or embrace this? Students can also brainstorm other materials or tools they could use in this process ( eg. leaves, charcoal, food products).

### **Summary**

- Introduction (10 mins): Introduction to the artist's practice and materials that will be used in the workshop.
- Production phase (90 Minutes): Participants will experiment with dyes, rubbings and materials to build a collection of colour samples they can then use to collage.
- Discussion(15 mins): Group discussion in response to ideas presented and brainstorming.

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## Equipment List

Steel Pot	Burner/ hot plate	Salt
Water	Vinegar	Scissors
Cardboard / MDF	Paper	PVA Glue
Canvas	Silk	Muslin
Crayons	Oil pastels	Soft pastels
acrylic paints	Sand	Soil
Fresh plant matter (flowers, weeds, berries, olives etc)		

# Goals and Objectives

- Through critical and creative re-thinking of the typical mediums of visual art - students will learn how to experiment with different media and materials.
- Students will practice and develop processes for creating without specific visual outcomes in mind.
- Students will develop skills in creative and conceptual thinking towards mark-making and material.
- Students are encouraged to play with colour, line, tone, texture and shape.

## **The activity aims to:**

- Expand students' knowledge about materials and techniques.
- Encourage imagination and enjoyment through engagement with unusual mark-making materials.
- Teach students to express themselves through abstract and expressive mark-making and composition.
- Expand students' critical and creative thinking, using visual languages and art history.

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# Learning Activity

## **Discussion**

- Discuss Abstract Expressionism and the radical ways these artists experimented with material and technique eg. using house paint or dropping/spashing paint. Who are artists that were part of this movement? (Teachers think: Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Lee Krasner and Joan Mitchell).
- How does Jahnne use her paintings as a vehicle for ideas of ecology and feminism? Do you think this is a good way to communicate these ideas? Why? Why not? In what ways can you read these ideas in her work?
- Talk about the use of craft in the arts. Look at the history and crossover of craft and the visual arts. Who are some contemporary artists that use craft methods in their practice?
- Look at different ways Jahnne has displayed her work in the gallery (painting directly on a wall, hanging from the roof). What are the advantages and disadvantages of each display technique? Do they help to communicate or alter the meaning of the work?

## **Concept Development**

Students should begin by examining Jahnne's previous works, her use of materials and Abstract Expressionism. They should discuss significant artists that were in this movement or contemporary artists that are inspired by it. Students should build a collection of images from both contemporary and historical artists they like. (Teachers: examples to get them started are in the attached artist list).

## **Production**

Students should begin with a collection of assorted materials: plants, food products, paints, pencils, pens that they wish to experiment with for mark-making and dyeing. They should also collect a series of materials they wish to use as surfaces: old tea towels, old cotton shirt, silk, canvas, paper etc. They should follow instructions in the workshop summary section to experiment with both natural dyes and salt rubbing. Once students have a collection of experiments on different surfaces, they can work on a piece of cardboard or MDF to build a collage, using PVA to stick it all down. They can cut, rip, or tear their pieces to create interesting layering. Students should also be encouraged to continue to draw and mark the surfaces as they build their collage.

# Links to Curriculum

## PRIMARY & SECONDARY

### **Present & Perform**

View the location and exhibition of Jahnne's work. Students then plan an exhibition of their own artworks. They should consider the audience of the artworks and how they wish the audience to interpret the artwork. They should decide how they can/should display their work and explain why they have chosen that particular display method.

### **Respond & Interpret**

Level F – 6

Respond to Jahnne's artwork by identifying and describing technique and ideas. Consider how she makes her work. Students could also discuss Abstract Expressionist art history.

Level 7 – 10

Analyse and interpret Jahnne's artworks discussing ideas and viewpoints. Compare her work with works by other contemporary artists to identify characteristics and features of the works.

### **Explore & Express**

Levels F – 6

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

Levels 7 – 10

Explore Jahnne's art practice. Through a discussion of her use of natural materials like plants, 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 ideas 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 Jahnne students should explore materials, techniques, processes and visual conventions. They describe the use of these in the production of their artworks.

Levels 7 – 10

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

## 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 Jahnne has used materials and techniques, and interpreted ideas and sources of inspiration in producing her artworks.

**Unit 2 Area of Study 2: Exploration of Studio Practice and Development of Artworks:** Students focus on developing artworks through an individual studio process based on visual research and inquiry. Using this workshop as a catalyst for self experimentation and play with media, students develop their own aesthetic style.

**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 should 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 Jahnne's artist biography to understand the path of her professional development, people she has exhibited alongside or collaborated with.

**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 art to the public. Through her website examine Jahnne's exhibition outcomes. Discuss the presentation methods she has used and what they communicate to the viewer.

## Related Artists/Artworks

### Joan Mitchell (1925-1992)



Joan Mitchell was a French-American Abstract Expressionist painter. She was born in Chicago but spent much of her life in France. She was a member of the second generation of Abstract Expressionists and was a prominent member of the New York art scene, exhibiting in the “9th Street Show” in 1951. Her paintings are expansive, often covering multiple panels. Landscape was the primary influence on her subject matter. She painted on unprimed canvas or white ground with gestural, sometimes violent brushwork. She has described a painting as “an organism that turns in space”.

### Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011)



Helen Frankenthaler was an American painter born in New York City. She was among the second generation of postwar American Abstract painters and is known for her Colour Field paintings. Frankenthaler is identified with the use of fluid shapes, abstract masses, and lyrical gestures. Frankenthaler began exhibiting her large-scale abstract expressionist paintings in contemporary museums and galleries in the early 1950s. Frankenthaler is known for her ‘stain’ painting technique, which was influential to artists that formed the Colour Field School of painting.

### Molly Zuckerman-Hartung (1975 >)



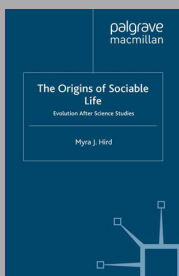
Molly Zuckerman-Hartung is an American Artist, her work pushes the boundaries of gestural abstraction and her paintings often incorporate collage and found materials. She was appointed critic in Painting and Printmaking at Yale University in 2015. She is known to push the boundaries of traditional two-dimensional painting with abstract sculptural works that embrace collage, incorporate found objects, and entail cutting, weaving, layering, and scraping.

### Vivian Suter (1949 >)



Suter creates abstract painting installations, which are as she describes, “depictions, commentaries and interpretations of her outer and inner surroundings”. The colours, motifs, and movement of her brushstrokes are influenced by organic shapes, with a palette that ranges from various shades of green to dominant reds and yellows. Allowing the environment to become an active agent in the creation of the work, her paintings incorporate natural substances such as volcanic and botanical matter as well as micro-organisms. Occasionally, remnants of the surrounding landscape can be found in her paintings - leaves or twigs congealed onto batches of thick paint, or random imprints of her dog’s paws.

### Myra Hird (1950 >)



Myra Hird is a Canadian writer and Professor of Sociology at the School of Environmental Studies, Queens University. She has written a number of books and articles on subjects such as gender, social sciences and environmental studies. She is also director of Canada’s Waste Flow, an interdisciplinary program researching waste as an acute environmental and human health issue.

## Glossary

**Abstract Art** – A term generally used to describe art that is not representational or based on external reality or nature.

**Abstract Expressionist Movement** – The dominant artistic movement in the 1940s and 1950s, Abstract Expressionism was the first to place New York City at the forefront of international modern art. The associated artists championed bold, gestural abstraction in all mediums, particularly large painted canvases.

**Ecological/Ecology** – Ecological art is an artistic practice that seeks to preserve, remediate and/or vitalize the life forms, resources and ecology of the Earth.

**Expanded Painting Practice** - An expanded painting practice is attuned to a tension between the presence and absence of painting. Creating hybrid works between painting, objects, media and text, challenging their object and image status.

**Feminist Art** – Art seeking to challenge the dominance of men in both art and society, to gain recognition and equality for women artists, and to question assumptions about womanhood.

**Frottage:** the technique or process of taking a rubbing from an uneven surface to form the basis of a work of art.

**Geology** – The science which deals with the physical structure and substance of the earth.

**Improvisation** – A spontaneous, unplanned, free-ranging performance without specific or scripted preparation.

**Mark-making** – A term used to describe any art material on any surface, not only paint on canvas or pencil on paper.

**Materiality** – A more 'material' object is viewed as being something physical. To speak of 'materiality' in art is to emphasize the material qualities of the mediums (art materials) employed.

**Microbial** – Artwork that is created by culturing microorganisms in certain patterns. The microbes can be chosen for their natural colours, or can be engineered to express fluorescent proteins and viewed under ultraviolet light to make them fluoresce in colour.

**Symbiotic** – Interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association.

**Temporality/Temporal** – Temporal Art is an artwork that has only temporary existence as the medium (material) it is made in. An example of temporal art is ice sculpture - the sculpture will exist only as long as the ice melts. Live performance of art or temporary installations may be cited as other examples of this art form.

**Theoretical** – Aims to shed light on some aspect of the project of defining art or to theorize about the structure of our concept of 'art'.



## Starting task –Abstract Expressionism Research

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**Jahnne Pascoe-White** , messmates 1, (2019), synthetic polymer paint, fabric, dye,oil stick, crayon, pencil, paper, canvas, cotton, linen, pva, masking tape and bamboo on canvas.

<https://www.art-almanac.com.au/jahnne-pascoe-white-wins-2019-arthur-guy-memorial-painting-prize/>

1. Collect a series of artworks by Abstract Expressionist and contemporary artists including Jahnne Pascoe-White, Helen Frankenthaler, Joan Mitchell, Molly Zukerman-Hartung, Vivian Suter and Myra Hind, who draw on an abstractionist style.
2. 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 artist what ideas the artist was trying to expressThe steps will be included in your visual diary to plan and evaluate your artwork.

### Annotation steps

#### 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

I came up with this idea from looking at .....in my research

#### Artwork development

I have chosen this as my final design because.....as it includes all the colours 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 to .....because.....
- If I could make the artwork again, I would change .....

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

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

Curriculum Continuum Example – Level 8 Visual Arts

Curriculum Level 8				
<b>Content Description</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks.</li> <li>Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in art works.</li> </ul>			
<b>Achievement standard extract</b>	Students identify, analyse and evaluate how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to express ideas and convey meaning.			
<b>Learning continuum</b>	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>
	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.

### Formative Assessment sample Level 8 – 10

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<p><b>Learning continuum:</b> Students express personal styles, themes and concepts in planning an artwork.</p> <p><b>Levels 7 and 8</b> 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><b>Levels 9 and 10</b> 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>	<p>Phase 1</p> <p>Presents existing imagery and re-states information by identifying the influences of other artists and sources.</p>	<p>Phase 2</p> <p>Explores existing imagery and analyses it to represent ideas and convey meaning in their own art works.</p>	<p>Phase 3</p> <p>Analyses existing imagery and expands on it to express themes, concepts in planning for an artwork</p>	<p>Phase 4</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
Expresses ideas	1 Concept development using imagery as inspiration	1.0 Insufficient evidence	1.1 Lists some information
	2 Planning for an artwork	2.0 Insufficient evidence	1.2 Presents information related to inspirational imagery 2.2 Generates an idea for an artwork that links to inspirational imagery
	3 Annotates ideas	3.0 Insufficient evidence	1.3 Makes connections between inspirational imagery 2.3 Generates imagery that expresses a concept 3.2 Presents information related to proposed artwork
			1.4 Expresses personal ideas by synthesizing different sources of imagery 2.4 Generates imagery that demonstrates a personal style 3.4 Evaluates meaning of proposed artwork



**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?

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### **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.