

Rosie Isaac



Rosie Isaac, *AGILE LIE*, 2017, installation shot at Westspace, Melbourne.

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:

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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 and three regional Victorian galleries: Latrobe Regional Gallery, Horsham Regional Art Gallery and Shepparton Art Museum.

About the Artist

Rosie Isaac's artistic practice incorporates performance, sculpture and text. Her works use language often written and performed as voice-over narration. The works draw out relationships between language, the voice and the body that speaks.

Isaac's work is heavily influenced by literature and structured through the use of word play, homonyms and allegorical figures. Currently she is thinking about lying down as a new position from which to speak and listen, and the shift it causes in the relationship between artist and audience.

Isaac's recent solo exhibitions and performances include: *Back Ward Play*, Gertrude Glasshouse, 2017; *AGILE LIE*, West Space, Melbourne, 2017; *There will be a lot of repetition here*, as part of Polyphonic Social, curated by Liquid Architecture, Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne, 2017; *Through flooding: A silent choral reading*, brainlina event for Next Wave Festival, Melbourne, 2016; *No, I couldn't agree with you more* (with Briony Galligan), TCB Art Inc., Melbourne, 2015. Recent group exhibitions include: *Gertrude Studio Artists 2016*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2016; *?!*, Performance Festival, The Pipe Factory, Glasgow, 2014; *Pardon me, but our position has been struck by lightning*, The Substation, Melbourne, 2014; *Coming Soon*, West Space, Melbourne, 2014; and *Hatched*, PICA, Perth, 2014.

Isaac is a current Gertrude Studio resident and Next Wave Kickstart artist. In 2018 Isaac will present a performance work in association with *Seeing Voices* at Mildura Arts Centre and a new performance commission for Next Wave Festival.

Artist Statement

“ My approach to work is slow, I like to build up ideas over long periods of time. Finding unusual connections between the spaces I'm working in, literary images, etymologies and snippets of history. Often this involves a lot of research and writing. I know this can make my practice intimidating to people who don't have much contact with contemporary art. However, the thing that I enjoy about art making is you don't always have to understand. Uncertainty and not-knowing can open up whole new ways of thinking and art making can leave space for ambiguity that we often try to remove from other parts of our lives. I'm interested in how this workshop could be a way to bring 'not-knowing' into the classroom as a generative place for making and thinking. ”

Rosie Isaac on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/user20795101>
Artist website: <http://rosieisaac.com/>

Workshop Summary

The workshop will begin with an artist talk. Isaac will provide an art historical context for her performance and writing practice. She will talk about Conceptualism in art practice and Feminist art performance. She will discuss artists that have influenced her art practice, including: Lee Lozano, Mary Kelly, Francis Stark, Jimmie Durham, Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley. Isaac will show examples of her work, with a focus on the importance of language and the body. Most often Isaac begins with a script, a form of writing that is always oriented towards speech.

Isaac will begin with an exercise in creative thinking and self exploration. First, participants will be asked to write the numbers 1-10 on a sheet of paper and write down 10 things they KNOW. Things you know to be true about the world, about yourself, things that you feel sure of. Next, participants will be asked to lie down on the ground, and write down 10 things they don't understand. They could be categories, for example, physics, or could be things you feel, eg: I don't understand why words are exciting.

Isaac will then speak specifically about her installation and performance work *AGILE LIE*. *AGILE LIE* is an installation developed in parallel with a script. The script's protagonists are an allegorical mother and daughter, Legal and Lie. Script and sculpture are not one body but two, they hold their own space. Isaac performed a reading on top of and alongside the installation.

During this section of the talk the artist will use her body to alter the dynamics of the workshop. Isaac will recline and participants will be invited to do the same. This reorientation of the body will change the relationship between speaker and listener, disrupting the formality of the workshop context.

Part One: (20 min)

The participants will then begin sifting through found materials such as magazines, newspapers, leaflets, old books etc. looking for words and phrases that interest them. These could be anagrams, word plays, rhymes etc.

Part Two: (40 min)

In reference to Isaac's work *AGILE LIE*, participants will use colour pencils and paper to make drawings of one word or phrase they have selected. They will experiment with the text in both two-dimensional and three-dimensional space, and will consider how spatialising, repeating or fragmenting these words can alter their meaning.

Materials List

A4 paper
Pens
Stanley knives
Glue Sticks
Old books

A3 Paper
Colour pencils
Cutting Mats
Magazines
Leaflets or similar

A3 Graph Paper
Scissors
Rulers
Newspapers

Goals and Objectives

- Students will learn how spatialising, repeating or fragmenting text can change its impact or meaning.
- Through critical and creative re-thinking of found text, students will learn to perceive text as more than just a tool for communication.
- Students will analyse the crossover of language in art practice and its potential.
- Students are encouraged to think about and challenge the function of text and language.

The activity aims to:

- Expand students' knowledge about art histories, concepts and techniques.
- Encourage imagination and enjoyment through engagement with found text.
- Teach students to express themselves through language and develop performance skills and strategies.
- Expand student's critical and creative thinking, using visual languages and theories.

Learning Activity

Discussion

- Discuss performance as an art form, its influences and links to art history. Who are significant artists that use this method?
- How do gestures communicate meaning? Discuss how different body movements or posture can act as sites for alternative meanings.
- How does Isaac use found text? How does spatialising, repeating or fragmenting these words alter their meaning?
- Discuss how text and language can be used in unconventional ways to produce performance or installation.

Concept Development

Students should begin by looking at the history of performance art and the use of text in art. They should discuss significant historical and contemporary examples of artists that use both performance and text. Building upon their research, students should look in magazines, books, flyers etc. for words or phrases that interest them. Writing down between 7-10 examples.

Production

Using colour pens and pencils students should draw out one chosen word or phrase. Using techniques like repetition, fragmentation and writing the text backward they will experiment with the text in two-dimensions. Again, using colour pens and pencils students should draw out their chosen word or phrase. By folding scrunching, chopping it up or spatializing paper/s students will then experiment with the text in three dimensions.

Additional activity: Students can write a short play or story inspired by their word or phrase and perform it to the class.

Links to Curriculum

PRESENT AND PERFORM

View the location and exhibition of Rosie Isaac's work. The students then 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 Rosie Isaac's artwork by identifying and describing technique and ideas. Consider how she makes her work. Students could also discuss the range of performance styles throughout art history.

Level 7 – 10

Analyse and interpret Rosie Isaac'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 Rosie Isaac explores ideas, techniques and materials in her artworks. How are these expressed?

Levels 7 – 10

Explore the practices of Rosie Isaac. Through a discussion of Isaac's use of language and use of performance, discuss how she expresses her ideas and develops a particular style within her work. Discuss his 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 Rosie Isaac 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 Rosie Isaac has when she commences making her work. Discuss her artistic practice. Using the artworks of Isaac as a starting point, explore materials, techniques, visual conventions and processes to develop an individual artistic intention.

Glossary

Anagrams - word or phrase formed by rearranging the letters of a different word or phrase, typically using all the original letters exactly once, eg. anagram = nag a ram.

Conceptualism - Conceptual art, sometimes simply called conceptualism, is art in which the concept or idea involved in the work take precedence over traditional aesthetic, technical, and material concerns.

Installation - Installation art can be either temporary or permanent. Installation artworks have been constructed with a particular site in mind, they are site specific.

Performance art - a performance presented to an audience within a fine art context. It is an interdisciplinary medium and can be predetermined or spontaneous, scripted or abstract. Performances also often incorporates audience members. Marina Abramovic is a prominent figure in performance art.

Rhymes - correspondence of sound between words or the endings of words, eg. float, boat, moat.

Spatializing - to give form to an object; existing or happening in space.

Three-dimensional - an object with depth, height and width.

Two-dimensional - a shape with depth and height but no width.

Word plays - is a literary technique and a form of wit in which the words that are used become the main subject of the work, primarily for the purpose of intended effect or amusement, eg. puns, double entendres or phonetic mix-ups.

Feminist art performance - The Feminist art movement emerged in the late 1960s amidst the fervor of anti-war demonstrations and civil and queer rights movements. Performance became a popular mode of expression for the feminists in the 1970's. Carolee Schneemann, is a significant Feminist performance artist.

Lee Lozano - American painter and conceptual artist. Her works revolve around a kind of activism, in her most popular piece Decide to Boycott Women began as a one-month experiment intended to improve communication with women wound up as a twenty-seven year hiatus from speaking or otherwise relating to them. Her systematic rejection of all members of her own gender lasted for the remainder of her life.

Mary Kelly - American feminist conceptual artist, she creates large-scale narrative installations. Kelly deals with collective memories of women. Her discourse examines what defines and regulates feminine identities.

Francis Stark - Is an interdisciplinary artist and writer, whose work centers on the use and meaning of language, and the translation of this process into the creative act. She uses these hand-traced words, often in repetition, as visual motifs in drawings and mixed media works that reference a subject, mood, or another discipline such as music, architecture, or philosophy.

Jimmie Durham - Sculptor, essayist and poet, Durhams works are plagued by controversy. He claims to be Cherokee (Native American) but is publically rejected by those communities and labelled a fraud. His sculptures challenge conventional representations of North American Indians.

Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley - are a Melbourne based collaborative art duo, and have worked together since 1985. They have had numerous individual and collaborative solo exhibitions both in Australia and overseas. Burchill and McCamley's conceptual art practice interlaces feminist, psychoanalytic, filmic, semiotic and spatial concerns. Language and the language of art have often been central tenets in their work.

Victorian Curriculum Unit Planner – Title: Rosie Isaac – Word and body sculptures

Level: 4

Weeks of Unit: 3 - 4

Learning Areas:

Arts Disciplines: Visual Arts, Media Arts, Music, Dance, Drama, Personal & Social, Ethical, Critical & Creative thinking.

	Learning Intentions (for the development of assessment criteria)	Achievement Standard Level 4 – Visual Arts
1	View a performance work by Rosie Isaac. Collaboratively make an artwork based on the concepts of Isaac's work.	Plan and make artworks that are inspired by artworks students experience.
2	Make a performance work using sound, movement, form and shape.	Use materials, visual conventions and techniques in artworks.
3	Students describe how the process of making the artwork, the ideas expressed and the materials and techniques used to make it.	Discuss and evaluate the art making process, materials and techniques used to express their ideas.

Focus artworks

Artist website: <http://rosieisaac.com/>

Unit Content – Learning Activities

Learning Activity	Content Descriptor
Explore & Express	
Explore the works of Isaac and identify the use of materials and techniques and the concepts expressed in the work. Students view the artworks of Isaac from her website and then brainstorm ideas using butchers paper and post it notes.	Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times to express ideas in visual artworks.
Visual Arts Practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the brainstorm plan a student performance based on a series of words decided by the group. • Students research the words using magazines, newspapers or an internet search. They select a range of words that use different colours and fonts and identify in a visual diary what personal ideas the words mean for them. • Students select three words and create a series of thumbnail designs for the words: at least one has to be in 2D and one is in 3D. They should consider the options of materials to use including coloured pencil, paint, collage, photography and three dimensional representations using card and folding. (They can complete the activity using digital tools such as iPad Apps or a simple drawing package on the computer such as Google Sketchup, Paint.Net, Gimp). • Students create an artwork from their thumbnails considering the different use of materials and how they have created the work. They consider the use of art elements and principles that express their ideas. 	Use materials, techniques, technologies and processes, and explore visual conventions to make artworks.
Present & Perform	
Students plan an exhibition or performance of their final artworks. They write a descriptive statement about their work for an audience.	Create and display artworks, describing how ideas are expressed to an audience.
Respond & Interpret	
Students identify the ideas expressed in performance works by artists such as the Surrealists and contemporary artists. They list the key visual conventions and techniques the artists use to express their ideas.	Identify and discuss how ideas are expressed in artworks from a range of places and cultures.

Assessment Task	Achievement standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual diary with research on Rosie Isaac. • Artwork research – word lists, documentation, process description, thumbnails. (Digital or in hard copy) 	Plan and make artworks that are inspired by artworks students experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word based artwork or performance. • Exhibition planning with artwork descriptions. 	Use materials, visual conventions and techniques in artworks.
Research of performance artists listing processes, techniques and use of visual conventions to express ideas.	Discuss how artists use materials techniques and visual conventions in artworks.
Evaluation of art making process in Visual Diary.	Discuss and evaluate the art making process, materials and techniques used to express their ideas.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC - PERFORMACE ART - ROSIE ISAAC PERFORMANCE WORK			
Criteria	Towards Level 3	Level 4	Towards Level 6
Research of Rosie Isaac work with development of ideas for artwork.	Identification of the ideas in Isaac's work. Demonstration of some links between the artist's work and the student's development of ideas.	Discussion, using specific examples, of the ideas in Isaac's work. Development of ideas in the student's own work showing brainstorming and the selection of suitable ideas.	Discussion and evaluation of the representation of ideas in Isaac's work referring to visual conventions, materials and techniques. Development of ideas in the student's own work showing brainstorming, analysis and evaluation of some ideas.
Use materials, visual conventions and techniques in artworks.	Use of selected materials and visual conventions in a performance work or collage demonstrating some links between their use and the expression of ideas.	Some skill demonstrated in the application of materials and techniques and visual conventions with clear links to ideas in the artwork.	High level of skill demonstrated in the use of materials, techniques and visual conventions to convey ideas in the artwork.
	Some consideration of the ideas and links between artworks in planning an exhibition. Identification of the ideas, use of materials and processes in the artwork.	Evaluation of the ideas and links between artworks in planning an exhibition considering the use of materials and visual conventions of artworks. Description of the ideas, use of materials and processes in the artwork.	Demonstration of clear ideas and links between artworks in planning a cohesive exhibition of artworks. Comprehensive description of the ideas, use of materials and processes in the work.
Discuss how artists use materials techniques and visual conventions in artworks.	Identification of the use of materials, techniques and visual conventions in a range of art and performance works.	Discussion of the use of materials, techniques and visual conventions in a range of art and performance works.	Comprehensive discussion of the use of materials, techniques and visual conventions in a range of art and performance works.
Discuss and evaluate the art making process, materials and techniques used to express their ideas.	Identify, using simple language the ideas in the artwork, the art making process, the use of materials and techniques	Discussion of the ideas expressed in the artwork and the use of materials techniques and the art making process.	Comprehensive discussion using sophisticated language of the ideas in the artwork, the use of materials, techniques and the art making process.

Victorian Curriculum Unit Planner –
Title: Rosie Isaac – Word and body sculptures
Level: 8
Weeks of Unit: 8 - 10
Learning Areas: Visual Arts, Media Arts, Music, Dance, Drama, Personal & Social, Ethical, Critical & Creative thinking.

	Learning Intentions (for the development of assessment criteria)	Achievement Standard Level 8 – Visual Arts
1	Explore the use of text in Rosie Isaac’s work and how she uses the concept of space, movement and her body. Collate a research diary of Isaac’s work focusing on the use of text and literary influences.	Identify, analyse and evaluate how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to express ideas and convey meaning.
2	Research magazines to find words that inspire works that may have a personal meaning for the student. Develop ideas for an artwork using the words. Document the influences of Isaac on their own artworks.	Plan and make art works in response to the exploration of techniques, technologies, and processes used in their own and others’ artworks.
3	Create a performance based artwork using text and sound based on experimental works created in response to viewing a range of works by performance artists as well as the student personal response to their environment.	Demonstrate the use of materials, techniques, processes, visual conventions and technologies to express ideas and convey meaning in their artwork.

Focus artworks

 Artist website: <http://rosieisaac.com/>

Unit Content – Learning Activities

Learning Activity	Content Description
Explore & Express	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List all the visual conventions, techniques and processes of performance art. Explore the works of Rosie Isaac and consider the themes she expresses in her artworks. Compare her work to the practice of other performance artists such as Julie Rrap, Jill Orr, Mariana Abrovich, Angela Tiatia, Gabriella & Sylviana Mangano, Super Critical Mass. Consider the artists' use of materials, techniques and processes and how they convey ideas. Think of aspects and ideas that might formulate the basis for the student's own work. 	Explore the practices used by artists to develop expression of themes, concepts or ideas in their own artworks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the use of text, movement and performance as artistic processes. Investigate the use of recording equipment to capture audio and visual imagery of the work. 	Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their own intentions in artworks.
Visual Arts Practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using two to three artworks from the student exploration on performance art, experiment with similar materials and techniques that the artists use. Document and evaluate these experiments in the visual diary. Discuss how they relate to the artist's work the students have researched. 	Experiment with materials, techniques, technologies and processes to express ideas, concepts and themes in their own artworks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate a series of words and experiment with the words to create artworks based on personal responses to the environment. Brainstorm how the words could form the basis of a performance. The performance could be a stop motion film of the words, or use the student's bodies as an artwork. Document the ideas in the student diary. 	Develop skills in planning and designing artworks and documenting practice.

Present & Perform	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an artwork from the student experiments in the visual diary. Consider the location of the performance and how this will affect the audience engagement, viewing and interpretation of the work. Document the location of the performance and plan it in the visual diary. • Perform the work and collate feedback from the viewers. Students may wish to collate responses from viewers about their work and place them in their visual diaries. • They could complete a digital portfolio of the artwork, its development and the audience responses. 	Present art work considering how ideas can be expressed to an audience.
Respond & Interpret	
Analyse how Isaac and other performance artists express their ideas and viewpoints about society in their works discussing the use of materials, techniques and processes.	Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks.
Compare the main features of three performance artists from different periods of time.	Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times.

Assessment

Project	Achievement standard
Research project in Visual Diary.	Identify, analyse and evaluate how other artists use materials, techniques, technologies, processes and visual conventions to express ideas and convey meaning.
Artwork planning in Visual Diary. Performance work based on the work of Rosie Isaac and other performance artists.	Plan and make artworks in response to exploration of techniques, technologies and processes in their own and others' works.
Performance artwork with evaluation and feedback by audience of the student work. Presentation of final artwork, development and review in a digital portfolio.	Demonstrate the use of materials, techniques, processes, visual conventions and technologies to express ideas and convey meaning in their artwork.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC – PERFORMANCE ART – ROSIE ISAAC PERFORMANCE WORK			
Criteria	Towards Level 8	Level 8	Towards Level 10
Analysis and evaluation of performance artists work discussing use of materials, techniques and processes to convey ideas and meaning.	Identification the ideas in the work of performance artists. Explanation of the use of materials, techniques and processes. Identification of visual conventions in the works.	Identification and analysis of the use of materials, techniques, processes and visual conventions to convey ideas and meanings in the work of a range of performance artists.	Analysis and evaluation of the use of materials, techniques, processes and visual conventions to convey ideas and meanings in a range of performance artists works.
Planning and development of performance artwork.	Some planning of the artwork with limited reference to the works of performance artists as inspiration.	Planning of the performance work with reference to the artists researched is evident.	Planning of artwork in response to research is evident. There are clear references to the artists researched.
	Some exploration of techniques and processes used by performance artists is evident.	Exploration of techniques and processes with documentation and links to the performance artists researched is evident.	Comprehensive exploration of techniques and processes with evaluation and links to meanings is evident in the visual diary.
Presentation of Performance work.	Some aspects of the performance work demonstrate an understanding of materials, techniques and processes to convey student ideas.	Performance work demonstrating the sound application of materials, techniques and processes to convey a clear idea.	Performance work demonstrating a sophisticated understanding of the application of materials, techniques and processes to convey innovative ideas.
	Presentation of the work in a digital portfolio with some evidence of evaluation of the final artwork.	Presentation of the development and presentation of the work in a digital portfolio demonstrating an understanding of the development and presentation of the work in a digital format.	The final presentation in the digital portfolio demonstrates a thorough understanding of the development, refinement and presentation of the artwork.