

# MINNA GILLIGAN



*You're lovely, but it's not for sure*, 2016, acrylic and collage on paper, courtesy the artist and Daine Singer Gallery.

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.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Minna Gilligan works primarily with painting, drawing and collage. Her practice speaks of fleeting, personal encounters with the past and present, and manifests in a tumultuous reconciliation of both. Her works are playgrounds of colour, often inhabited by lone protagonists trapped in states of longing, sadness or exhalation. Though her paintings reference 1960s/ '70s psychedelia and evoke a nostalgic romanticism - with lone women floating in technicolor dreams - her work is atemporal, existing in a utopian space of imagery filtered through the digital realm.

Minna Gilligan has a Bachelor of Fine Arts (First Class Honours) from the Victorian College of the Arts. She has held solo exhibitions at Daine Singer, Melbourne Art Fair, Spring 1883, West Space, TCB Art Inc, Rear View and Dudspace (Melbourne) and participated in group exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Heide Museum of Art (Melbourne), Alt Space (New York), Ontario College of Art and Design (Canada), Space 15 Twenty (Los Angeles), PICA (Perth), Papermill ARI (Sydney), and in Melbourne at Knight Street Art Space, TCB Art Inc and Arts Project Australia.

In 2015 Gilligan published her first book, *Time After Time* (Hardie Grant Australia/ Rizzoli New York), as well as the artist book, *Poems, Prayers and Promises*, commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria. Her latest artist book 'So Far' launched at the New York Art Book Fair in September 2016. Gilligan is a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary and teaches at Monash University. Her work is in the National Gallery of Australia and Deakin University collections.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

"My own aesthetic definitely came intuitively, however its direction was reliant on outside stimulus that I subconsciously soaked up like crazy at the time. I was well into second year at VCA and was expanding my mind in ways only a space like art school could facilitate. I didn't socialise a whole lot, and subsequently spent heaps of time on Tumblr and Instagram and would watch films and read books I'd borrow from the library having these kinds of epiphany experiences visually and melodically every second of the day. It was definitely this type of renaissance period I went through that forged the path for the work I respond to and the work I make now. I don't think that's an individual experience somewhat, but it's individual in what results, in the curated sparks you inexplicably extract from the mess and subsequently interpret."

Artist website: <http://www.minnagilligan.com/>

Gallery representation: <http://www.dainesinger.com/minna-gilligan/>

## WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Participants will firstly begin painting and drawing somewhat abstract backgrounds for their collages to exist on. The backgrounds explore ideas of setting and scenery, and are inspired by Minna's heavy use of psychedelic colour.

While the backgrounds dry, participants will spend time going through old books and selecting imagery to use in their collage compositions. The process of going through the books is to be treated as relaxing and meditative.

The images selected will be referred to as protagonists or focal points, and participants will be encouraged to construct a narrative within their work. Composition will be encouraged as something to approach intuitively, as with the drawing and painting of the background.

Once composition has been constructed in the backgrounds, participants will then commit to sticking down their imagery and discuss what the narrative or overarching theme is in the work.

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## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Students will develop evocative narrative that link conceptual ideas and expressions into a visual collages that they develop.
- Students are challenged to think critically and creatively about the materials, colours and composition of selected ephemera for the work to visually represent their intended narrative.

The activity aims to:

- Expand students knowledge about art histories, concepts, techniques
- Encourage imagination, enjoyment and a personal aesthetic through engagement with visual arts making, discussing, interpreting and evaluating
- Teach students to express themselves through visual language and create visual narratives
- Expand student's critical and creative thinking, using visual languages and theories

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## LEARNING ACTIVITY

### DISCUSSION

Discuss collage as an art form? It's influences and links to other art histories? Who are significant artists of this medium?

Discuss narrative devices and the role of a motif or protagonist in art? What are some examples?

How can abstract things communicate meaning? Discuss how different materials and colours can act as sites for alternative meanings - for example certain materials can be nostalgic, trigger memories or reflect on specific roles. In the same way colours can infer different meanings - what are some of these?

How does Minna Gilligan use materials and colours in her work to express ideas and narratives?

### CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Building on the discussion and research undertaken earlier generate a short story incorporating a protagonist, a setting and narrative for the collage.

### PRODUCTION

Using the narrative as a starting point, create an abstract background using a variety colours, paints, pencils and textas to informs the setting and scenery for the work and explores the themes and ideas the students are wishing to convey.

From here, students will build their narratives by arranging compositions with the cut out material that locates their protagonist within the work.

### MATERIALS

Scissors	Coloured textas
Glue	A selection of old books and magazines to cut out from (allow for 2/3 per person)
A3 Plain paper for backgrounds	
Acrylic paint	
Paintbrushes	

## LINKS TO CURRICULUM

### PRESENT AND PERFORM

View the location and exhibition of Minna Gilligan'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 Minna Gilligan's artwork by identifying and describing subject matter and ideas. Consider why and where she makes her work.

Level 7 – 10

Analyse and interpret Minna Gilligan'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 Minna Gilligan explores ideas and experiences in her artworks. How are these represented?

Levels 7 – 10

Explore the practices of Minna Gilligan. Through a discussion of Gilligan's use of inspiration and use of collage discuss how she expresses her ideas and develops a particular style with her work. Discuss her work in terms of the themes that she expresses.

From this discussion students 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 Minna Gilligan, students 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 Minna Gilligan has when she commences making her work. Discuss her artistic practice. Using the artworks of Gilligan as a starting point, explore materials, techniques, visual conventions and processes to develop an individual artistic intention.

### GLOSSARY

Protagonist: the leading character or one of the major characters in a play, film, novel, etc.

Atemporal: independent of or unaffected by time.

1960's & 70's psychedelic art: an art style influenced by the prevalence of hallucinatory drugs, especially LSD, with typical designs featuring abstract swirls of intense color with curvilinear calligraphy reminiscent of Art Nouveau.

Abstract art: is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its ideas and effect.

Expressionism: is an artistic style in which the artist attempts to depict not objective reality but rather the subjective emotions and responses that objects and events arouse in them.

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.