

EDUCATION KIT

BASIL SELLERS ART PRIZE 2010

Designed mainly for years 7–10, this education kit incorporates activities and exercises designed for the Creating and Making and Exploring and Responding dimensions of the Arts domain of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. It also includes theory activities for VCE Art and Studio Arts. The education kit is presented in association with the major exhibition of the work of finalists in the Basil Sellers Art Prize at the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, from 6 August to 7 November 2010. The Basil Sellers Art Prize is an acquisitive prize of \$100,000, which is awarded to a single outstanding artwork displayed in the exhibition.

USE OF THE KIT

At the Ian Potter Museum of Art, this resource can be used to assist or enhance a self-directed visit to the Basil Sellers Art Prize exhibition, or a group discussion hosted by the Potter education officer.

The kit will assist students and teachers in understanding and interpreting the concepts and visual languages present in the exhibited artworks; in considering the approaches the artists have taken in making the works; and in discussing ideas around the theme of sport in Australian art.

CURRICULUM-LINKED GALLERY TOURS

A range of curriculum-linked gallery tour programs for class visits suitable for all levels are available. Advance bookings are essential for free guided school tours with the education officer.

School tours are available from 11 August to 15 September 2010 on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Times: 10–11 am, 11.30 am – 12.30 pm, 1.00–2.00 pm, and 2.00–3.00 pm.

For bookings: 03 8344 5148 or email <potter-info@unimelb.edu.au>.

For further information about the Basil Sellers Art Prize education program: Renee Atkinson, 03 8344 5148.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART

The University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010



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ABOUT THE PRIZE

Albert Camus, novelist and Nobel Prize laureate, once said: 'After many years, during which I saw many things, what I know most surely about morality and the duty of man I owe to sport'.

Not everyone would agree that sport is the key to understanding human experience. But it's certainly true that Australians connect sport with anything from community life and personal achievement through to historical and political controversies.

Sport has been a recurring theme in Australian art. For artists today, sport touches upon anything from everyday life through to globalisation, from the concrete experience of a game through to abstract notions like cheating and fair play. Sport is about winners and losers, individuals and teams, rules and penalties, equipment and architecture, fans and souvenirs, triumphs and scandals.

The Basil Sellers Art Prize defines sport in the broadest possible sense. In 2010, an acquisitive prize of \$100,000 will be awarded to a single, outstanding artwork displayed in an exhibition of shortlisted finalists at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

This prize is supported by businessman Basil Sellers in order to encourage contemporary artists to develop their practice, to engage with the many themes within sport past and present, and to contribute to critical reflection on all forms of sport and sporting culture in Australia.

Dr Chris McAuliffe

Director, the Ian Potter Museum of Art

Shortlisted artists for the 2010 Basil Sellers Art Prize:

Vernon Ah Kee

Eric Bridgeman

Juan Ford

Phillip George

Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont

Ponch Hawkes

Grant Hobson

David Jolly

Richard Lewer

Noel McKenna

Glenn Morgan

David Ray

Gareth Sansom

Tony Schwensen.

PRE-VISIT CLASS ACTIVITIES

The Basil Sellers Art Prize is an art competition for Australian artists who have made work that explores themes involving sport. Artists have either created new works specifically for the competition or they have submitted recent works. There are fourteen finalists, including two artists working collaboratively on the same entry. The finalists have approached the theme of sport with ingenuity and imagination, exploring diverse media and ideas. They have worked with the museum's curators to present their art in the exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art.

The following questions may be useful starting points for discussion and debate with students before visiting the exhibition:

1. What might be some of the reasons why Basil Sellers believes that artists need encouragement to accept the idea that sport can be the subject of great art?
2. How does sport relate to leisure, lifestyle, community, culture and politics?
3. The Basil Sellers Art Prize is an art competition; artists are competing like sportspeople for an award. What are some of the positives and negatives of competitions like this one for artists? Are they different for sportspeople?
4. Do you think it is fair that there is a single winning artwork, and therefore artist, selected from the exhibition? Why or why not?
5. Expert judges will select a winning artwork from the exhibition. How might the display of the artworks—the lighting, props and space provided—affect their judgement? What are some of the skills and experiences required to judge artworks in the Basil Sellers Art Prize?
6. 'The arena where athletes play is more than a mere backdrop to the contest—it is a place of great significance, even before the players make their appearance.' In what ways is the sporting arena like a theatre stage?
7. 'The mood of the crowd is an important theme in art about sport'. What are some of the possible ways an artist could represent a crowd of spectators in their work?
8. Define and discuss the term 'popular culture' and how it relates to sport.
9. Define and discuss the differences between a digital print on photo silkscreen and a duratran photograph on LED lightbox.

**THE ARTS:
EXPLORING AND RESPONDING**

—ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND
PERSONAL INTERPRETATION
OF ARTWORKS

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



VERNON AH KEE

Ah Kee presents a single-channel video with sound titled *waru*. The film documents the social dynamics of the Innisfail Waru cricket team, an all-indigenous team who are based in Innisfail, north Queensland. Footage of the cricket game and accompanying social interactions at a local park are interlaced with footage of the waru (turtle), which gives the team its name. Many of the people featured in the film are members of the artist's extended family, and Ah Kee saw this work as a special opportunity to connect his art practice with the lives of his family.

Waru challenges the accepted notions of what the game of cricket means to Australian popular culture and national identity.

Vernon Ah Kee.

Vernon Ah Kee
waru (production still) 2009–10
Producer and director/editor: Suzanne Howard
Camera: Jason Hargreaves, Justin Cerato
single-channel HD video
colour, sound
13:30 minutes
Courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

QUESTIONS

Write a detailed description of the *waru* video, focusing on the title, subject matter, composition and sound.

Is it usual to hold stumps and cricket bats like the men do in Ah Kee's video? What is the artist suggesting with these poses?

How do the people in the video interact with one another? Do their relationships appear casual and familiar or formal and staged? How do these considerations affect your overall experience when viewing the work?

Is this a video of the past, the present or the future? How does Ah Kee convey a sense of time in the work?

Does Ah Kee use cricket in an ironic way to comment on its British colonial heritage? If so, how?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Eric Bridgeman
'Wilma Jr. ("Blacky")' from the series *'The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules'* 2009
inkjet print on paper
140 x 120 cm
Courtesy the artist

ERIC BRIDGEMAN

For the Basil Sellers Art Prize, Eric Bridgeman has undertaken an ambitious departure from his video and photography practice. Bridgeman presents a life-size sculpture of one of the identities from his recent photographic portraits of fictional characters. The multi-component sculptural tableau continues Bridgeman's interdisciplinary project commenced in 2008 titled *The Sport and Fair Play of Aussie Rules*, which combines references to tribal identities, hyper-masculinity, sexuality and sport using a carnivalesque aesthetic.

Merging stereotypical symbols, designs and roles in a cross-cultural analysis of my own dual heritage from Australia and the Chimbu province of Papua New Guinea, these works consider the contemporary status of race, gender, sexuality and cultural identity, and our positions within it.

Eric Bridgeman.

QUESTIONS

Write a detailed description of Bridgeman's *Wilma Jr. ('Blacky')*. Comment on the imagery, the title and the composition. Why do you think Bridgeman has placed selected objects around the figure—on the floor, and suspended from the ceiling?

Choose one or two words from those below, taken from Eric Bridgeman's statement, and write an analysis of how these themes are considered in his work: race, gender, sexuality, cultural identity.

Bridgeman works closely with friends and family when producing his art. For *Wilma Jr. ('Blacky')* he produced a sculptural tableau using a life-size cast of his friend. Do you think working with people close to him makes for stronger work?

Select the most appropriate words from those below that you think best describe this artwork and state why: funny, realistic, critical, ironic, clever, chaotic, tribal, sporty, casual, friendly, proud.

Do you think the man in this work is wearing a mask? If so, what does the mask do?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Juan Ford
An aberrant history of sports hydration 2010
oil on wood, steel jug, steel sports bottle
35 x 90 x 60 cm

Courtesy the artist, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne;
Jan Manton Art, Brisbane; and Sullivan+Strumpf Fine
Art, Sydney

JUAN FORD

Juan Ford seeks to create new possibilities for realism in painting. In his recent works, Ford uses a traditional optical technique called planar anamorphosis, a distortion of perspective in an image so that it appears perfectly proportioned from only one angle or viewing position. This technique is also used in sports advertising to overlay a logo on a sporting field so that it works for a specific camera angle, therefore maximising its visual impact on the telecast. One of Ford's paintings for this exhibition incorporates this technique to depict a bird's-eye view of a game in play at a stadium—only to reveal (on closer inspection) something unexpected.

QUESTIONS

'Juan Ford seeks to create new possibilities for realism in painting.' What does 'realism' mean? What does this statement mean?

Describe the composition and painting style of *An aberrant history of sports hydration*. How does Ford create a sense of movement around the racing figures? How is the title of the work significant to the sporting subject matter of the artwork?

What is unusual about this artwork? Would you consider it to be a painting, sculpture, installation or a blend of these?

Describe how your perception of this artwork changes depending on your viewing position.

Consider the reflection, distortion and fragmentation of the imagery of these works. What techniques has Ford used to create these unusual visual effects?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Phillip George with *Inshalla surfboard*,
Bronte Beach, 2010
Photo: Lynne Roberts-Goodwin

PHILLIP GEORGE

Phillip George works across a variety of media including digital imaging, computer technology, painting and printmaking to explore issues relating to global conflict and, more specifically, misrepresentations of Arabic culture. In a recent series titled *Inshalla surfboard* (2009–10), surfboards are inscribed with Sunni, Shia, Ottoman and Christian designs. Bringing together ideas about photography, sculpture, sport and religion, George aims to challenge the borders that divide cultures.

QUESTIONS

What is the visual effect of George's use of a surfboard as 'canvas' for his image? Would the image be perceived differently if it had been printed on standard photographic paper?

What do you think George is communicating to the viewer about surfing culture with this artwork?

Why do you think George has used Islamic motifs in this artwork? What is the connection with surfing?

What is George communicating about religion, sport and belonging through this artwork?

How would you categorise this artwork? Do you consider this to be a sculpture, a photographic piece or a functional object? Why?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont
Gymnasium (production still) 2010
single-channel HD video
colour, sound
3:52 minutes

Courtesy the artists and Goddard de Fiddes, Perth

TARRYN GILL AND PILAR MATA DUPONT

Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont are multidisciplinary artists, producers and performers with backgrounds in dance and music theatre. Since 2001 they have worked together in a practice that encompasses photography, performance, choreography, film, installation and design. Gill and Mata Dupont's staged investigations into nationhood interweave references to Hollywood glamour, burlesque, Australiana kitsch and social realism. In their recent work, Gill and Mata Dupont explore historical uses of a fascist aesthetic in propaganda, as well as the cult of the heroic Australian athlete.

QUESTIONS

Gill and Mata Dupont reference Hollywood glamour, burlesque, gender stereotypes, Australiana kitsch, social realism and the heroic Australian athlete. Choose one or two of these themes and give an explanation for how each is portrayed in the video *Gymnasium*.

What effect does the soundtrack have on your understanding of this video?

Describe the work in detail, focusing on subject matter. How do the gymnasts relate to one another and the space around them? Describe their facial expressions and costumes.

Why do you think Gill and Mata Dupont have focused on the sport of gymnastics? Are the gymnasts performing naturally or as if their movements have been choreographed?

Do you think this film has a contemporary or old-fashioned feel? Why?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Ponch Hawkes
'Untitled' from the series 'He never should have worn those shorts' 2010
duratran photograph on LED lightbox
100 x 100 cm
Courtesy the artist and Chrysalis Gallery & Studio,
Melbourne

PONCH HAWKES

Ponch Hawkes's photography has captured Australian culture and social and political life since the early 1970s. Mostly working in photographic series, Hawkes portrays athletes in staged scenarios involving physical performance and movement. Her recent work focuses on women and sport and the underrepresentation of women's sport in the media. The photographs for this exhibition prompt us to consider the difficult issues of violence, power, gender and alcohol abuse in team sports.

QUESTIONS

List everything that you can see in *'Untitled' from the series 'He never should have worn those shorts'*.

Imagine you are one of the women in *'Untitled' from the series 'He never should have worn those shorts'*. Use your written description of the image as a starting point for a short opinion piece that describes the incident depicted, what you and the other characters are doing and why the story is worth bringing to the public's attention.

Hawkes portrays 'athletes in specific staged scenarios, her theatrical portraits often depict moments of physical performance and movement'. What is a 'theatrical portrait' or 'staged scenario' in photography and art? How would you describe these terms?

What tonal range or shades of colour has Hawkes used in this artwork: bright, dull, light, dark? Do you think the colours of the sportswomen's uniforms are significant? Why?

What effect does this image have on you emotionally? What does it suggest about men's and women's team sports?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



GRANT HOBSON

Photographer Grant Hobson explores issues relating to Australian identity and culture. These works depict the west coast of South Australia, particularly the Eyre Peninsula near Sceale Bay, and continue Hobson's ongoing twenty-five-year project documenting the culture and places of this precious and remote environment.

This pristine marine environment was the site of a controversial motorised jet ski 'tow-in' style of surfing competition. Hobson's work investigates the controversial decision to hold this event on the Eyre Peninsula and its effect on the local environment, the surf industry, the act of surfing and the broader surf culture in Australia.

Grant Hobson
Cyan—tyringa (detail) 2010
digital print on photo silkscreen with
fluorescent light
150 x 200 x 50 cm
Courtesy the artist

QUESTIONS

Photographer Grant Hobson explores issues relating to Australian culture and the environment. How does *Magenta—Sceale Bay* represent ideas of Australian culture and the environment?

Underline the words that best describe this photograph:

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|------------|------------------|
| Long shot | Mid-shot | Close-up | Extreme close-up |
| Figurative | Abstract | Landscape | Expressive |
| Geometric | Organic | Motionless | Rhythmic |

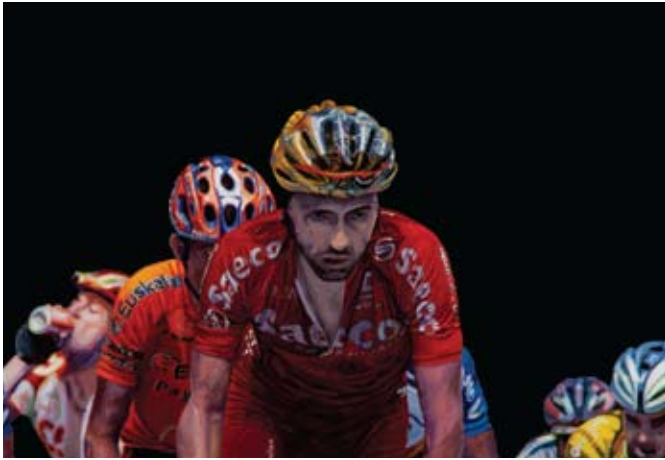
Describe the composition of the subject matter. What is the man doing and why is he facing towards our right? Why do surf-industry brands feature so prominently in the image?

What does Hobson's photograph communicate to you about issues relating to the surf industry and its impact on the environment?

Do you think this surfer dude looks handsome? Is he really a surfer or is it a pose?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



DAVID JOLLY

Rendered in oil on the reverse side of glass, David Jolly's paintings establish a compelling encounter between the luminous depth of painterly space and the mirror-like surfaces of screen culture. Jolly's recent paintings reflect on the theatrical staging of sporting events held at venues such as Melbourne's Albert Park and the landscape and drama of the Tour de France.

David Jolly
Allez allez allez (details) 2010
oil on glass
48 x 72 cm
Courtesy the artist, Sutton Gallery,
Melbourne; and Emmanuel Walderdorff
Galerie, Cologne

QUESTIONS

Jolly's painting for this exhibition, *Allez allez allez*, evokes the drama, theatricality and intense energy of the Tour de France cycling competition. How does it do this?

Describe this artwork. What effect does the black background have against the figures? List the vibrant colours employed in the work. Do you think the use of different colours identifies the different cyclists and onlookers? If so, how?

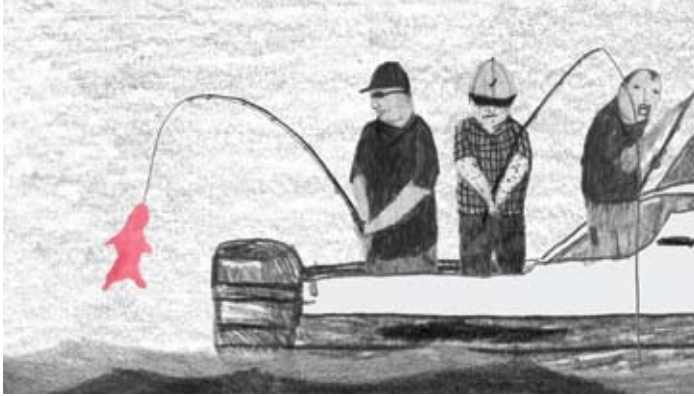
Describe the composition and painting style of *Allez allez allez*. How does Jolly direct our attention to different parts of the artwork?

Jolly paints on the reverse side of glass. Do you think that by doing this he makes a convincing connection to televised images—specifically coverage of events like the Tour de France—that are viewed on a screen?

List in order the most important to the least important elements in *Allez, allez, allez*: line, tone, form, shape, colour, pattern, texture, space, perspective, composition.

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



RICHARD LEWER

Richard Lewer's personal mantra, 'skill, discipline and training', is analogous to both his art making and pursuit of sport. For Lewer, sport is about relationships and community, camaraderie and belonging. Working in painting, drawing, video and animation, Lewer has literally integrated athletic training into his practice, which has culminated in performances incorporating boxing, wood-chopping and table tennis.

Richard Lewer
The sound of your own breathing (production stills) 2010
Animation: Jonathan Nichol
Sound: Wax Sound Media
digital video animation
colour, sound
10 minutes
Courtesy the artist, Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne; and
Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

QUESTIONS

Beginning with descriptive words (adjectives), write a paragraph describing the subject matter and also what you see and hear in Lewer's video. What are some of the activities depicted? How does this artwork relate to sport?

Describe the colours and tones that have been used. Where has colour been applied in the animation? Does the tone and limited use of colour create a certain mood or atmosphere?

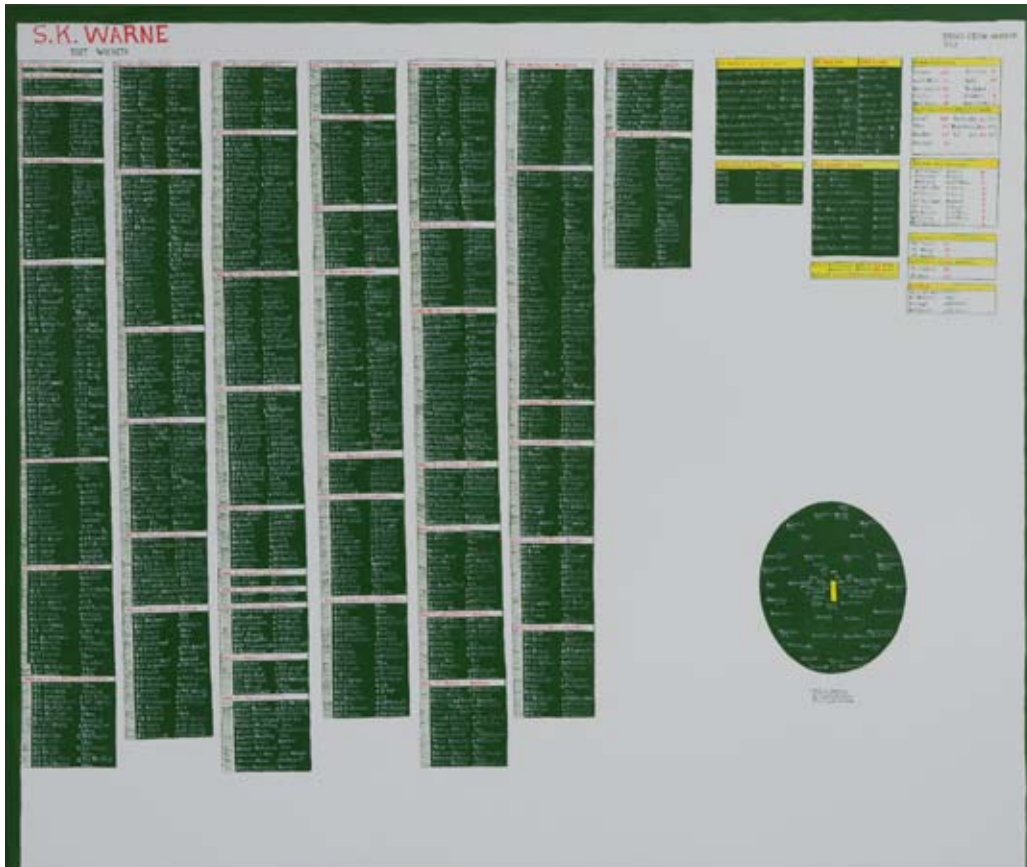
Has texture been considered in this animation by Richard Lewer, even though it is a video? If you could touch the surfaces of the original drawings what would they feel like? Rough or smooth?

What parts of Lewer's animation do you focus on the most? Why?

List in order the most important to the least important elements in *The sound of your own breathing*: line, tone, form, shape, colour, pattern, texture, space, perspective, composition, sound.

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Noel McKenna
Shane Keith Warne, test record 2010
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
150 x 180 cm
Courtesy the artist, Niagara Galleries,
Melbourne; Darren Knight Gallery,
Sydney; Greenaway Art Gallery,
Adelaide; and Heiser Gallery, Brisbane

NOEL MCKENNA

Noel McKenna works in a variety of media, including painting, ceramics, sculpture and printmaking. McKenna's works centre on key moments in different sporting histories. In his painting for this exhibition, McKenna honours the Australian cricket team by listing the test records, bowling and batting averages of Shane Warne. However, the numbers themselves can be somewhat lifeless. Those columns of figures add up to an astounding career but can never convey the gob-smacking achievement of Warne's 'ball of the century' in the 1993 Ashes series.

QUESTIONS

In this painting titled *Shane Keith Warne, test record*, Noel McKenna honours Shane Warne by listing his test records, bowling and batting averages. What is it about Shane Warne that may have inspired this work?

Why has the artist incorporated lists of information created in his own handwriting instead of printed or computer-generated text? Does McKenna's use of his own handwriting and simple means of communication say something about how he thinks about Shane Warne as a man?

McKenna is described as 'a tonal painter rather than a colourist, he achieves a metaphysical stillness, a silence, within his work.'—Gregory O'Brien.

What does 'tonal painter' mean? What does 'metaphysical' mean? Describe how these words relate to a Noel McKenna painting.

Do you think it is correct to say that McKenna's paintings have a quality of 'ordinariness' about them? What is your opinion of his technique? Do you think it is effective?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



GLENN MORGAN

Sculptor Glenn Morgan is known for his witty dioramas of concerts and sporting events. One of Morgan's three works for this exhibition takes the form of a tin and wood bus full of Geelong AFL premiership players after the grand final. Through this work he celebrates the spirit and energy of AFL culture. These large multi-component sculptures are made from painted tin, wood and wire.

Glenn Morgan
Steve Waugh's final test 2004
painted tin, wood, wire
85 x 200 x 40 cm (irreg.)
Courtesy the artist, Place Gallery,
Melbourne; and Ray Hughes Gallery,
Sydney

QUESTIONS

Why do you think Morgan has used painted tin, wood and wire in *Steve Waugh's final test* and other works? What visual effect do such materials have on his work? What is interesting about the structure of this artwork? Do you think it is a sculpture or a painting?

Describe the artwork in detail, focusing on the subject matter. What is Morgan communicating to the viewer about sport and community, and barracking and celebrating as a member of a group?

What do Morgan's sculptural tableaux remind you of?

Morgan works in detail at small scale, but his ambition is to convey a sense of the whole crowd and the expanse of the arena. How has he achieved both detail and overall scale in the same work?

How do the table-top supports affect your perception of Morgan's work? Is their height important?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



DAVID RAY

Ceramicist David Ray layers an abundance of colours, textures, and decals onto hand-crafted ceramic vessels. Ray's recent work incorporates painting, moulding and glazing techniques in the creation of sports trophies that symbolise alternate views of triumph: coming second in a competition, being delusional about one's abilities, or the simple achievement of just turning up at a sports event.

My work mimics the style of seventeenth and eighteenth-century European factory ceramics. Traditionally these works represented good taste, wealth even status in society.

David Ray.

David Ray
Champion (details) 2010
aluminium, glass, porcelain,
glaze, gold, decals, plastic
approx. 70 components, each
15–22 cm high; display unit:
200 x 80 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist and Nellie
Castan Gallery, Melbourne

QUESTIONS

Describe how the style of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European factory ceramics has influenced Ray's work.

'My work is hand-built from clay to create objects that use pictorial patterned decoration to tell a story.'—David Ray.

Examine the artistic use of materials and techniques. How has Ray created meaning and expression in his work through his hand-building technique and the use of porcelain clay and underglaze?

Trophies are generally associated with victory. How do you think Ray has interpreted the meaning of the trophy in this artwork?

Describe some of the sporting activities Ray's trophy-like figures are performing.

Consider the title *Champion*. Why are Ray's ceramic pieces created imperfectly despite the title and themes of the work?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Gareth Sansom
Damn my darling doosra 2009–10
oil, enamel, straw coaster and laminated
digital photographs on canvas
195 x 195 cm
Courtesy the artist, John Buckley Gallery,
Melbourne; Milani Gallery, Brisbane; and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

GARETH SANSOM

Gareth Sansom is one of Australia's most highly regarded painters. For over five decades depictions of the human body have remained central to his practice. His painting for the Basil Sellers Art Prize is a combination of collage and painted elements focusing on a spin bowling delivery called the doosra, and the physical and mental contortions required to master this technique. Sansom's work also references his youth when he was a leg-spin bowler for Essendon Cricket Club in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

QUESTIONS

Sansom's art employs both figurative and abstract techniques. Define these terms and discuss how they are reflected in this painting.

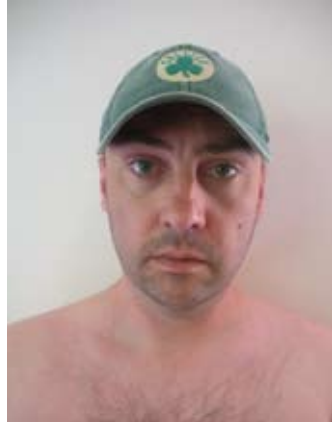
Sansom portrays the human body in his art. Why has he combined photographs of himself with abstracted figures and shapes? Who is the character in the top right-hand side of the painting?

Describe the composition of *Damn my darling doosra*. What is the focus in the artwork? How has Sansom directed your attention to the figures in the artwork? Why has he segmented the painting into shapes of different sizes?

Describe the colours that have been used. Where and how are they used? What role does colour play in *Damn my darling doosra*?

THE ARTS: EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

ANALYSING, EXPLORING AND PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF ARTWORKS



Tony Schwensen
*Attempting to approach fanaticism (Boston
Bruins, Boston Celtics, New England
Patriots, Boston Red Sox) 2010*
single-channel HD video
colour
2 hours
Courtesy the artist, Sarah Cottier Gallery,
Sydney; and Uplands Gallery, Melbourne

TONY SCHWENSEN

Tony Schwensen's ongoing artistic project charts contemporary culture through the use of his own body as a performative object. His observations about contemporary culture are absorbed and reworked as cultural gestures, and form part of a non-judgemental commentary. For the Basil Sellers Art Prize, Schwensen's single-channel video self-portraits are displayed on plasma screens. These artworks document the artist's attempts to learn the vernacular and lore of New England sports, and are part of a body of videoperformance that investigates the nature of fandom, the relationship between fans and a team's performance, and the impact of sports teams upon local and regional cultural identity.

QUESTIONS

Why do you think Schwensen uses his own body in his videoperformances? What do you think the artwork means? Give your own personal view.

Why is Schwensen facing the camera? What type of expressions does he show on his face? What do these suggest to you?

What feelings, moods and ideas has the artist communicated to you through the video?

What do these videoperformances communicate about the language of sports fans? Do you think this language changes depending on which country or city you live in?

GALLERY ACTIVITIES

Choose two artworks and compare and contrast their media, subject matter, composition and meaning.

Artwork 1

Artist:

Title:

Date:

Media:

Dimensions:

Artwork 2

Artist:

Title:

Date:

Media:

Dimensions:

Similarities

Media:

Subject matter:

Composition:

Meaning:

Differences

Media:

Subject matter:

Composition:

Meaning:

ACTIVITIES

Choose an artwork in the exhibition that interests you. Complete the following details:

Artist: _____

Title and date: _____

List all the materials the artist has used to create the work: _____

Does it differ from how you imagined it would be? Has anything surprised you about this artwork after reading about it?

Does this artwork remind you of any others you have seen in the exhibition? How?

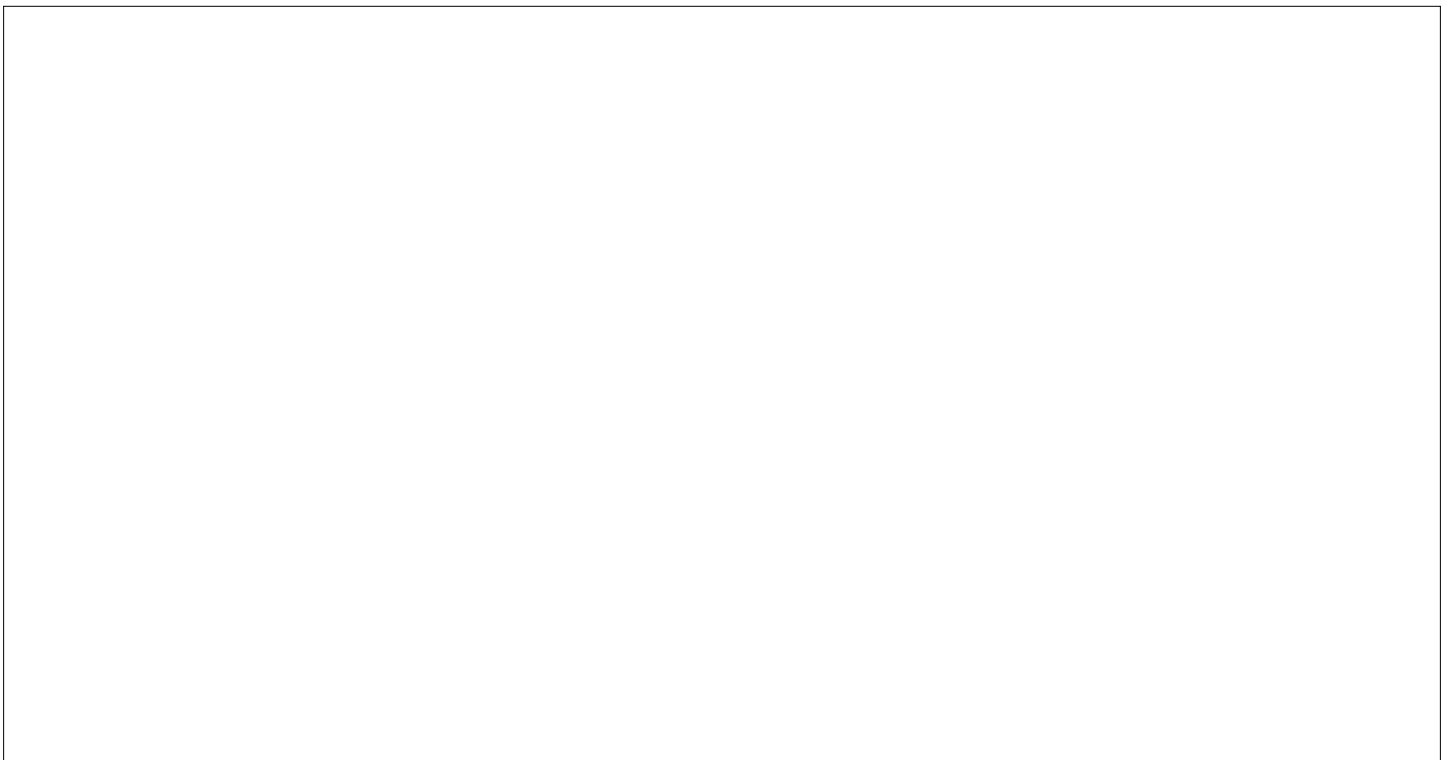
What do you think the artwork means?

ACTIVITIES

Box A: Draw a sketch of the overall composition of the artwork.



Box B: Now look closely at the composition of the work and sketch a detail or part that takes your attention.



POST-VISIT RESEARCH FOR SENIOR-YEAR STUDENTS OF VCE ART AND STUDIO ARTS

1. Select two artists from the exhibition and compare and contrast how each has represented sporting themes in their work.
2. Research the work of Juan Ford and David Jolly and compare the similarities and differences in their style, composition and subject matter.
3. Gareth Sansom's early work was influenced by the work of famous artists such as Francis Bacon and Jean Dubuffet. Sansom employs both figuration and abstraction. Choose and research either Bacon or Dubuffet and compare and contrast Sansom's painting in terms of his style, use of the figure and use of abstraction.
4. Interpret the meanings and messages of Eric Bridgeman's *Wilma Jr. ('Blacky')* using the interpretive frameworks of either gender or symbolism.
5. Research Vernon Ah Kee's video and write your analysis referencing Australian cultural identity. What symbols or messages are communicated about the idea of being Australian?
6. Write an analysis of Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont's video using a political framework.
7. Journalist John Mangan wrote that Ponch Hawkes 'uses her camera to turn the ordinary into something special'. Research Ponch Hawkes's twenty-five-year photographic practice and discuss and interpret her choice of subject matter.
8. Juan Ford's painting *An aberrant history of sports hydration* uses mirror anamorphosis. Research artists' use of this technique in history. How does the technique allow Ford to convey a sense of movement and dynamism in his art?
9. Choose one of the following works and write a formal interpretation. Plan your response by completing a table like the one below.

Noel McKenna, *Shane Keith Warne, test record* 2010

Glenn Morgan, *Steve Waugh's final test* 2004

David Ray, *Champion* 2010

Gareth Sansom, *Damn my darling doosra* 2009–10

Artist:	Visual analysis	Style	Technique	Meanings & messages
Title:				
Date:				
Media:				
Dimensions:				

THE ARTS: CREATING AND MAKING — PRACTICAL ART ACTIVITIES

1. Choose a sport that you play or follow as a fan and develop an artwork that could be used to educate or inform the community about an issue relevant to your sport. The artwork may take the form of a painting, video, sculpture or installation.
2. Using the techniques of drawing, painting or collage, create an artwork that comments on the role of sport in the Australian community.
3. Research, collect and document articles and images that involve sport and gender, sport and popular culture, sport and identity or sport and history. Brainstorm words and collect small objects linked to your research. Create a sculpture or collage from your collected words, images and objects.
4. Collect images and photographs of sporting events and sporting heroes in action from sports magazines and from newspaper sports pages. Use these as inspiration for a drawing in the style of Richard Lewer's hand-drawn animation. Using few colours, concentrate on variations of tone and line, expression, and simple figurative shapes.
5. Select a photograph of your favourite sportsperson and create a colourful, expressive painting that incorporates your photograph in the style of Gareth Sansom.
6. Explore an issue in sport that you feel strongly about and create a painting or series of small paintings inspired by the questions and issues raised. You may like to work in a realistic style like Juan Ford or David Jolly.
7. Select a team sport and create a diorama that features the whole team using cardboard, foil, paint, etc. in the style of Glenn Morgan. Your diorama may also represent spectators.
8. Like Eric Bridgeman or Ponch Hawkes, use the idea of dressing up a model to create a series of staged photographs that explore issues of race, gender, identity or violence in sport. Your model may be a real person or a stand-in, such as a doll.
9. Like Noel McKenna, create a painting about sport that uses text. You may write in a language other than English but use your own handwriting. Before you begin, think carefully about the overall colours and composition of the artwork, and the size and shape of the letters or characters.
10. Refer to Phillip George's artwork for inspiration. Research the iconography and designs used to decorate different spiritual places, such as the walls of temples, churches or mosques. Use your research to create a sculpture or painting that references sport and incorporates designs taken from the built or natural environment.
11. Choose your favourite sport and find an image of a trophy associated with winning in that sport. Use this image as a reference to create a ceramic or sculptural piece in the style of David Ray.

GLOSSARY

Animation: The rapid display of sequences of static imagery in such a way as to create the illusion of movement.

Body of work: A specific collection of artworks such as a related series, or works made during a particular period of the artist's lifetime.

Composition: The way that objects and/or visual elements are arranged within an artwork.

Curator: Person responsible for the care, collection, interpretation and display of artworks or objects in a museum or gallery. The term is also used in parks and zoos. Curators of contemporary art liaise with artists, write texts about the art, and work with other departments in the museum to arrange installations and public projects, as well as exhibitions in the gallery.

Decal: Also known as 'transfer'. Plastic, cloth, paper or ceramic substrate that carries a printed pattern that can be moved to another surface upon contact, usually with the aid of heat or water. The word is short for decalomania (from the French *decalquer*), the technique of transferring engravings and prints to glass, wood, china etc., using prepared paper.

Diorama: Small-scale representation of a scene, often depicting a historical event, where three-dimensional figures are displayed in front of a painted background.

Duratron photograph: Brilliant display material when illuminated from behind or in a lightbox. Most commonly found at promotional events such as exhibitions and tradeshows. Duratrans are graphics made on transparency material. The word duratron evolved from the material's unique property of 'durable transparency'.

Expressionistic: Art that emphasises the expression of emotions, particularly through the use of gestural brushstrokes.

Installation art: Artwork involving multiple components, often site-specific. The artwork is usually created for a specific interior space, art gallery or outdoor site. Elements of installations are not viewed as individual works in a space, but rather are intended to be perceived together as an ensemble of related elements.

LED: Abbreviation for light-emitting diode. A semiconductor device that converts electricity to light by using the movement of electrons as opposed to incandescent or fluorescent light bulbs. LEDs produce a very bright light for a small amount of power and are often red and used in car brake lights and traffic lights.

Performance art: Used to describe any live artistic event, especially experimental and innovative work. It is not theatre but is traditionally defined by the incorporation of four basic elements: time, space, the performer's body and the audience. See also videoperformance.

Polystyrene: An inexpensive and hard plastic. It is a polymer of styrene; a rigid transparent thermoplastic. Model cars, aeroplanes, foam packaging, clear plastic drinking cups and insulation are made from polystyrene. Polystyrene is also used in toys, and the housings of equipment such as hairdryers, computers and kitchen appliances.

Porcelain: A translucent ceramic material made by heating clay (in the form of kaolin, a fine white clay) in a kiln. Originally used for making vessels.

Postmodernism: Art style of the late twentieth century that reacted against modernism. Postmodern art challenges traditions, such as concepts of originality, history and progress. Humour, irony and appropriation are common stylistic features of postmodernism.

Silkscreen print: A print made using a stencil process in which an image or design is superimposed on a very fine mesh screen and printing ink is squeegeed onto the printing surface through the area of the screen that is not covered by the stencil.

Single-channel: Video images from a mono or single source; designating sound transmission or recording or reproduction over a single channel.

Style: The characteristics of an artwork that make it identifiable to a particular artist, movement or school.

Subject matter: The objects, forms or events represented in an artwork.

Synthetic polymer paint: Also known as acrylic paint. Synthetic polymers are used in high-performance latex or water-based paints. A type of synthetic polymer is used as the binder for water-based paints and sealants.

Technique: The way an artist uses media (art materials and technology).

Videoperformance: Tony Schwensen's preferred term for his performance-based videos.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- The Ian Potter Museum of Art: <<http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/>>
- Basil Sellers Art Prize: <<http://www.sellersartprize.com.au/>>
- Vernon Ah Kee: <<http://www.milanigallery.com.au/artist/vernon-ah-kee>>
- Eric Bridgeman: <<http://www.ericbridgeman.com/>>
- Juan Ford: <<http://www.juanford.com/>>
- Phillip George: <<http://www.breenspace.com/artists/16/phillip-george/>>
- Tarryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont: <<http://www.heartofgold.net.au/>>
- Ponch Hawkes: <<http://www.chrysalis.com.au/Artist-Ponch-Hawkes-32.htm>>
- Grant Hobson: <www.chainofbays.com.au>
- David Jolly: <<http://www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/artistprofile.php?id=26>>
- Richard Lewer: <<http://hugomichellgallery.com/artists/richard-lewer/>>
- Noel McKenna:
<<http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/theartists/mckenna/mckennaframe.html>>
- Glenn Morgan:
<http://www.placegallery.com.au/2009/artists/glenn_morgan/glenn_morgan.htm>
- David Ray: <<http://www.davidray.com.au/>>
- Gareth Sansom: <<http://www.johnbuckley.com.au/artists/sansom/index.html>>
- Tony Schwensen: <<http://www.uplandsgallery.com>>