



Artworks from the Coventry Exhibition

Primary + Secondary
Education Resource



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Front Page Features:

Tim Lewis

Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1974

Oil on Canvas

92 x 92.5cm

Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Teachers Notes

- The Coventry education resource invites students to engage with influential modern and contemporary art movements through responding and making.
- By participating in artmaking and art theory students will learn how different visual representations of art can communicate meaning.
- Both Primary and Secondary aged students are catered for in a range of sequenced activities: *Discussion, Observation and Make.*
- This resource is directly linked to the NSW curriculum and is designed to encourage students to engage with the ground-breaking artists and movements featured in the Coventry exhibition.
- It will assist in building conceptual, practical and critical skills enabling students to understand the visual and conceptual shifts that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s in Australia and around the world.

This resource is designed for:

- Primary and Secondary students and can be adapted for Early Learning or Tertiary students.
- It is aimed at Visual Arts students with relevance to English, Philosophy, Science and Humanities, and Social Sciences students.

This resource may be used:

- To complement an experience of the Coventry exhibition through activities and ideas to assist with preparation for the gallery visit.
- As a reference when students are viewing the work.
- To deepen understanding and engagement post-visit.
- To engage with the artists and movements in the Coventry collection in the classroom.

This resource includes the following learning activities:

Discuss: Talking points and research questions are provided to stimulate contemplation, investigation and understanding. Offering opportunities for students to engage with art theory, such as the critical and historical aspects in art through collaborative and independent inquiry.

Observe: Analysis of different aspects in creative artmaking, such as techniques, processes and visuals (art conventions). Investigation as to how different concepts and/or perspectives are explored by the artists.

Make: Responding to theoretical studies and the analysis of relevant artists and artworks through various artmaking activities.

NERAM values the feedback of students and teachers on the education resources we have produced. To share students' work, or provide feedback, email education@neram.com.au

Based on the NSW curriculum, the following areas are addressed in this education resource.

Primary K-6

Making

Outcomes: VAES1.1, VAES1.2, VAS1.1, VAS1.2, VAS2.1, VAS2.2, VAS3.1, VAS3.2

Students will have the opportunity to make art that investigates the world around them. They are encouraged to explore how abstract and conceptual art is created. This is done through a discovery of the many different techniques applied by artists featured within the Coventry exhibition. By participating in art making activities students experiment with colour, line, shape, form and texture further developing critical skills of self-expression.

Appreciating

Outcomes: VAES1.3, VAES1.4, VAS1.3, VAS1.4, VAS2.3, VAS2.4, VAS3.3, VAS3.4

Students will have the opportunity to engage with modern and contemporary art through viewing, discussing, researching and writing. Students are encouraged to understand the importance of the relationship between the audience member and the artwork. Information within this education resource will allow students to understand the techniques, elements and themes present in the Coventry exhibition. This improved theoretical understanding will then inform their artmaking.

Secondary 7-12

Artmaking

Outcomes: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6

By using this education resource students will further develop their artmaking **Practice** through an understanding of the various techniques of artists featured in the Coventry collection. Investigating the **Conceptual Framework**, students gain an understanding of the function and relationship between the featured Coventry collection **artists, artwork world and audience**. This will inform students own artmaking processes, representations, conceptual strength and meaning, and resolution of artworks.

Frames addressed in the Coventry exhibition are:

- **Subjective:** students will explore their personal interests, emotions and imagination to create art
- **Cultural:** how social constructs can influence their artmaking
- **Structural:** how the use of visual language can construct meaning into their artworks
- **Postmodern:** how the use of abstraction and/or conceptualisation can challenge their audience

Art Critical and Historical Studies

Outcomes: 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, P7, P8, P9, P10, H7, H8, H9, H10

Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills to critically and historically interpret modern and contemporary art by exploring aspects of **Practice** exhibited in the Coventry exhibition. The **Conceptual Framework** is addressed through critical and historical engagement illuminating the relationship between Coventry **artists, artworks, world and audience**. In their interpretations of artwork from the Coventry exhibition, students will address aspects of the **Frames**, importantly highlighting the significance of the art movements addressed in this resource and how they have impacted the art world today.



Gunter Christmann
Die schwarze sonne, 1974
Acrylic on canvas
270.6 x 170.5cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979

Introduction

The New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM) presents a major exhibition celebrating the diverse avant-garde works of art from the Chandler Coventry Collection. Curated by Belinda Hungerford, the exhibition highlights the dynamic and eclectic taste of respected gallerist and collector Chandler Coventry AM. The Coventry Collection was described by the former Director of the Australian National Gallery, James Mollison as “*one of the most important private collections of contemporary Australian art*”.

This education resource aims at showcasing key works and movements featured in the Coventry exhibition. It invites students to engage with influential modern and contemporary art movements through responding and making activities. It highlights art movements of the 1960s and 1970s with works by predominately Australian, artists including Wendy Paramor, Gunter Christmann, and Brett Whiteley. Notable International artists include Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Charlotte Moorman.

This resource addresses the following areas:

- Abstract Expressionism
- Hard Edge Abstraction
- Colour Field Painting
- Performance + Public Art
- Figuration: Portraits
- Sculpture
- Collage

Artists featured include:

- Albert Irvin
- Alun Leach-Jones
- Wendy Paramor
- Gunter Christmann
- Christo and Jeanne-Claude
- Charlotte Moorman
- Tim Lewis
- Brett Whiteley
- Angus Nivison
- Robert Owen
- Joe Brainard

Research links and related resources



Abstract Expressionism

- https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/tools_tips/
- Abstract Expressionism, Albert Irvin <https://youtu.be/hmntQbi56u8>

Hard Edge Abstraction + Colour Field Painting

- <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/the-field-revisited/>

Kaldor Project

- <http://kaldorartprojects.org.au/>
- The Kaldor Project, 40 years John Kaldor <https://youtu.be/UHTZSbBRAPY>
- Kaldor Public Art Project 1: Christo & Jeanne-Claude Wrapped Coast 1969: <https://youtu.be/dG3lpQV3lHk>
- Kaldor Public Art Project 5: Charlotte Moorman and Nam June Paik 1976: <https://youtu.be/-9lnbIGHzUM>

Christo and Jeanne-Claude

- <https://www.christojeanneclaude.net/>

Figurative Art – Portraits:

- <https://whiteleythefilm.com.au/>
- <https://www.portrait.gov.au/>
- <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/>

Sculpture + Conceptual Art:

- <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/movement/conceptual-art>

Collage

- https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/chance-creations-collage-photomontage-and-assemblage/
- <https://www.makeyourownbrainard.com/>

Abstract Expressionism

Emerging out of New York, Abstract Expressionism describes the gestural abstract art that developed after World War II and into the 1950s. The style arose from the social and artistic movements of the 1920s and 1930s and would not have emerged without the European émigrés, notably the Surrealists. Abstract Expressionism was unintentionally introduced by renowned artists living in New York, such as Pollock (1912-56), Kooning (1904-97) and Rothko (1903-70). It was about going against tradition, encouraging spontaneity, freedom of expression, interpretation and experimentation with techniques, materials and visuals. It was less about aesthetics and more about the artmaking process, portraying emotional and sensational responses on canvas. There is usually no direction, sense of control or stylistic features in Abstract Expressionism. However, significant characteristics include gestural, free moving and organic forms, as well as colour and composition. Abstract Expressionism is seen as the first major American art movement, marking the transition from Paris as the center of the Western art world.

Artist Focus | Albert Irvin

Albert Irvin 1922 in London, UK - 2015 in London, UK

British artist Albert Irvin was best known for his sensational paintings, watercolours, screenprints and gouaches. In the late 1950s Irvin caught a glimpse of the explosive Abstract Expressionist movement unfolding in New York and began conjuring spontaneity and emotion on his canvases. Large scale, bright colours and gestural energy in brush strokes identified his new method with a shift from oil to acrylic paint.

Exploring Abstract Expressionism

Primary

Discuss: The painting featured in this education resource and the Coventry exhibition *Discoverer* by Albert Irvin. What Primary colours has he used? How has he used the elements line and shape in his painting?

Observe: Albert Irvin's painting *Discoverer*. What you can see? How does this make you feel?

Make: Create an abstract artwork using pencils and/or paint, depicting the visual elements observed in abstraction, such as colour, line and shape.

Secondary

Discuss: How did Abstract Expressionism impact the art world? In Albert Irvin's painting *Discoverer*, discuss the abandonment of identifiable objects.

Observe: What art conventions are depicted in Albert Irvin's painting *Discoverer*?

Make: Independently select an abstract piece from the Coventry exhibition. Research and incorporate the artmaking technique that your chosen artist has used into an abstract artwork of your own.



Albert Irvin

Discoverer, 1972

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas

243.5 x 440.4cm

Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Alun Leach-Jones
Cambrian green, 1972
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
242.5 x 243cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979

Hard Edge Abstraction

Hard Edge Abstraction is an abstract art movement which arose as a reaction to the painterly and gestural forms of Abstract Expressionism. A term coined in the 1950s by Californian art critic, Jules Langster, Hard Edge Abstractionists were recognised for their impersonal and sharp applications of colour. Hard Edge Abstractionists became widespread in the 1960s characterised by areas of flat colour with sharp, clear, 'hard' edges.

Exploring Hard Edge Abstraction

Primary

Discuss: The difference in mood and feeling between the Alun Leach-Jones' painting, *Cambrian green* (pictured to the left) and Albert Irvin's painting *Discoverer* (previous page).

Observe: List how the artists above use colour. What are the differences?

Make: Create a Hard Edge Abstract painting using masking tape. Mask off hard edged forms, such as lines and shapes to act as a stencil that will then be painted over.

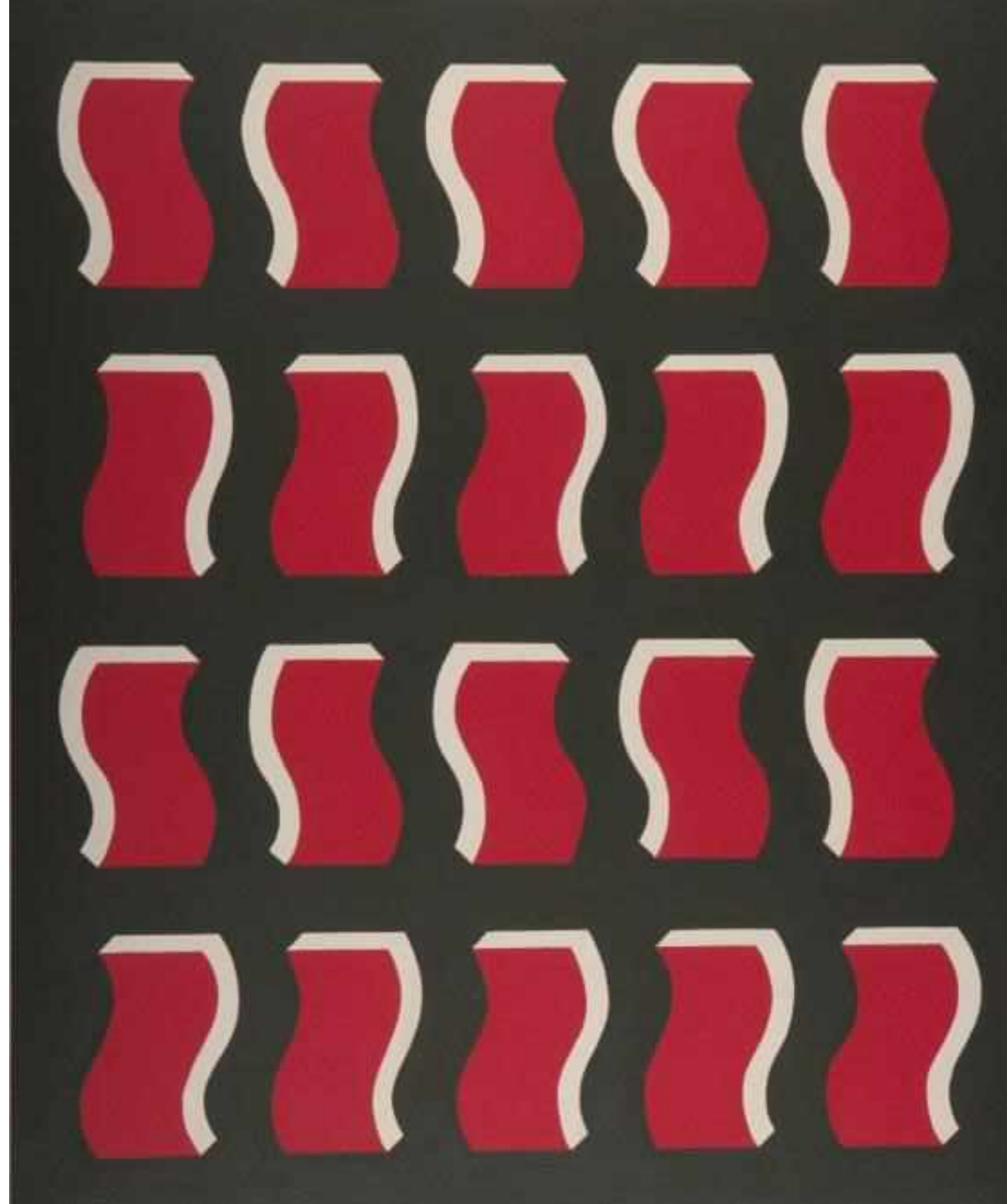
Secondary

Discuss: How Hard Edge Abstraction is different to Abstract Expressionism? What artmaking techniques are used by the artists?

Observe: What visual conventions are used by Hard Edge Abstractionist Wendy Paramor in the Coventry exhibition? (Painting, *Zion* featured on the next page).

Make: Create an artwork inspired by the Hard Edge Abstraction movement. Incorporate various artmaking techniques used by the Hard Edge Abstractionists featured in the Coventry exhibition.

Wendy Paramor
Zion, 1968
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas
182.8 x 152.6cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Colour Field Painting



The term Colour Field painting was originally used in the 1950s to describe the work of three American painters Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman and Clyfford Still. The works produced by these artists differed from Abstract Expressionism in that they eliminated both the emotional, mythic, or religious content of the earlier movement, and the highly personal and painterly or gestural application associated with it. Colour Field painting removes the signs of the action of the painter's hand, and instead contains broad expanses of deep, flat and often intense colour. They do not contain figurative or representational elements and have no clear foreground or background. When looking at a Colour Field painting in close proximity the viewer may be enveloped within the fields of colour that seem to spread beyond the edges of the canvas or peripheral vision, suggesting a sense of the infinite. The works question what colour may express without representing anything external.

A Shift in Medium

Colour Field painting emerged alongside technical advancements in modern synthetic paint such as Liquitex, that were fast drying, could be diluted with water, achieve a matte finish and had better colour retention. Scale, purity of colour and an impeccable finish were ideals that artists tried to achieve.

Exploring Colour Field Painting

Primary

Discuss: Why is colour so important in art? Using a colour wheel list the Primary and Secondary colours.

Observe: What can colour show, and how does it make you feel?

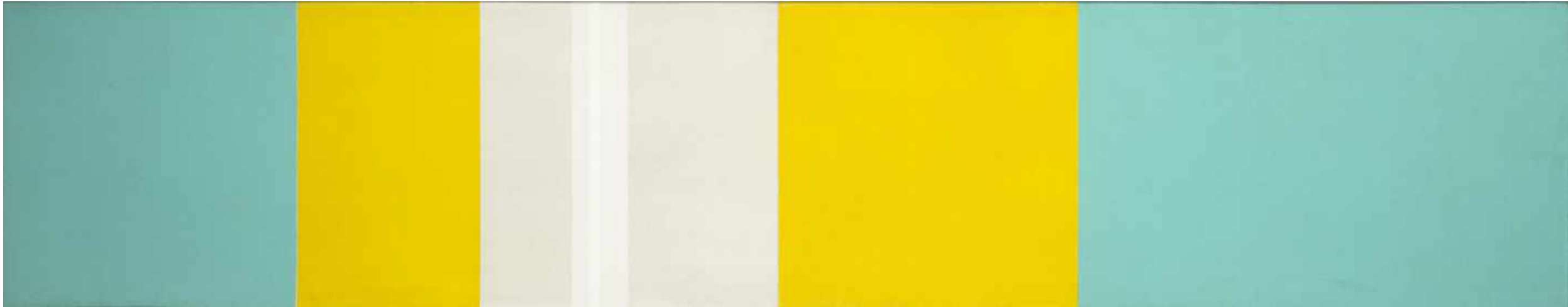
Make: Get students to practice mixing Secondary colours using Primary colours. Student can then create a layered artwork of simple shapes using their Primary colours for the first layer, then Secondary colours for the second layer.

Secondary

Discuss: What are primary, secondary and tertiary colours? Why is colour so important in art, particularly in Abstract art?

Observe: What colours are often depicted in Colour Field painting? How are they applied and what do they represent?

Make: Students will select up to four colours that they have mixed to create an artwork that depicts emotion. Playing with composition, shape, proportion, space and repetition.



Gunter Christmann

Satori, 1966

Acrylic on canvas

279.60 x 53.1cm

Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979

Public Art

Public Art can take many forms in unlimited materials. It can be permanent or temporary, site specific or non-site specific. Generally, Public Art is found in public spaces and buildings located outside of a museum and gallery environment. Public Art can be executed by an individual, group or organisation and can be free standing or integrated into existing architectures or natural features of the land. Performance works can also be executed in public spaces.



Artist Focus | Christo & Jeanne-Claude Kaldor Public Art Project #1

Christo Javacheff 1935 in Gabrovo, Bulgaria - 2020 in New York, USA

Jeanne-Claude de Guillebon 1935 in Casablanca, Morocco -2009 in New York, USA

Public art pioneers, husband-and-wife team Christo and Jeanne-Claude have been creating ambitious alterations of public places since 1961. With a focus on temporary large-scale environmental works, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installations have elements of painting, sculpture, architecture and urban planning. The duo are most famous for wrapping buildings and landscapes in fabric, secured with rope. Upon invitation from Australian art collector John Kaldor the New York based artists arrived in Australia in 1969 and proposed the concept for *Wrapped Coast*. Originally proposed for a section of the Californian coast-line, Kaldor secured a site for the environmental installation at Little Bay, 14.5km south-east of Sydney CBD with a team of more than 100 workers and 11 volunteers. The team spent 4 weeks climbing, wrapping, sewing and securing 2.5km of Australia's coast-line with cliffs up to 26 metres high. To raise funds for the project, an exhibition was held at Sydney's Central Street Gallery including Christo's preparatory drawings, photographs of *Wrapped Coast* in progress as well as other installations. Attracting thousands of visitors, this groundbreaking public art installation opened on the 28th of October 1969 and became the first large-scale public art project presented anywhere in the world. It was also the first time an international contemporary artist had created a new work in Australia. Inspired by the success of this project, Kaldor Public Art Projects became a pioneering organisation, dedicated to taking art outside the museum walls and transforming public spaces with innovative contemporary art projects.



Christo and Jeanne-Claude
Wrapping of Little Bay, 1969
Black and white photograph
60.3 x 76cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1975

Performance Art



Performance art describes an art form created through actions performed by the artist or other participants. Generally 'live' to an audience, these performances or actions may be recorded, spontaneous or scripted. Widely used in the 1970s, the history of performing in the visual arts is often traced back to Dada cabarets and Futurists products of the early 1900s. Seen as a non-traditional way of making art, performance art offered artists alternatives to the static nature of painting and sculpture. Often immaterial in nature, Performance Art became aligned with ideas and notions of conceptual art. Now a popular art form among contemporary artists, performance art is a term also used to describe film, video, photographic and installation-based artworks through which the actions of artists, performers or the audience are conveyed.

Artist Focus | Charlotte Moorman Kaldor Public Art Project #5

Charlotte Moorman, 1933 in Larkansas, USA - 1991 in New York, USA

After 10 years of video and performance collaborations across Europe and America, in 1976 artist Nam June Paik and cellist Charlotte Moorman are invited to Australia by John Kaldor for Project number 5. With Kaldor's inaugural projects' success in 1969 Kaldor Public Projects went on to hold more international artists in Australia with the fifth project using Nam June Paik's video art and Charlotte Moorman's 'new music'. This exhibition included 40 performances across Adelaide and Sydney. Accompanying Nam June Paik's video sculptures were artistically and physically daring performances by Charlotte Moorman. These performances were co-written by world renowned artists including Joseph Beuys, Yoko Ono and John Cage. They captured the attention of the Australian media as Charlotte Moorman performed naked with a cello carved from ice, swinging from a 12-metre trapeze, smothered in 13 kg of chocolate fudge, and suspended from balloons drifting about the Sydney Opera House forecourt.

Primary

Discuss: Where would you find Public Art. Who has access to it?

Observe: The materials used by Christo and Jeanne-Claude in their Public Art Installation, *Wrapped Coast*.

Make: As a class, create a Public or Performance art piece (installation) using recycled materials and/or found objects.

Secondary

Discuss: What is Conceptual art? How are the Coventry exhibitions Public and Performance artworks conceptual?

Observe: What artmaking processes are used in the Coventry Collections Public and Performance art pieces?

Make: In groups, students will design and construct a public installation somewhere on the school grounds that reflects an environmental concept they have chosen. Each group will have one main recycled material to work with, (e.g. newspaper, plastic bottles, plastic bags). Creativity is encouraged.

Further Learning: Visit Kaldor Public Art Projects website and focus on one project and its importance to the Australian art world today.



Charlotte Moorman
Balloon piece, 1976
Cibachrome print by Matt Kelso
49.4 x 38.1cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Charlotte Moorman
Ice cello, 1976
Cibachrome print by Matt Kelso
26.1 x 54.4cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Charlotte Moorman
Candy (The Ultimate Easter Bunny), 1976
Cibachrome print by Matt Kelso
37.4 x 67.9cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979



Tim Lewis
Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1974
Oil on Canvas
92 x 92.5cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979

Figurative art

In contrast to abstract art is figurative art. It describes any type of modern art depicting strong references to the real world, particularly to the human figure. An example of Figurative art is Portraiture.

Portrait | Self Portrait

A Portrait is a representation of a person. Before the invention of photography, a Portrait was the only way to record someone's appearance. However, Portraits have always been more than just a record. Throughout history they have been used to show importance, power, wealth virtue and beauty of the subject. Flourishing into the 20th century, leading modern and contemporary artists changed the nature of Portraits by painting their friends and partners however the artist wished.

A Self Portrait is when the artist creates a Portrait of themselves. Alike that of a Portrait, a Self Portrait can be an abstract or symbolic interpretation on any medium. It does not have to be of just the artist on their own, it may include other figures or elements of a landscape or still life.



Brett Whiteley
Self portrait, c 1972
Ink on linen,
242.7 x 146.9cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979

Exploring Figuration + Portraiture

Primary

Discuss: How the Portraits (pictured) by Angus Nivison are abstract. What elements in art has the artists used to make them abstract?

Observe: Brett Whiteley's, *Self Portrait* (featured on the next page). How has the artist used line and shape to create his Self Portrait?

Make: In pairs, use crayons to draw your partners Portrait. Encourage students to loosen their hand movement while drawing to create a figurative depiction of their partner. Perhaps place a time limit so students don't overthink their work. Get students to practice this several times.

Secondary

Discuss: What does it mean to be representational in art? How is representation used in the Coventry exhibition Portraits?

Observe: Look at the Portraits (pictured) by Angus Nivison in the Coventry exhibition. How has the artist combined elements of Abstract and Figurative painting? Contrast and compare the Portraits featured in the exhibition.

Make: Create several Self Portraits inspired by the Figurative Paintings in the Coventry collection. Select an art convention that will be the dominant feature (e.g. line, colour, shape) in each Self Portrait.



Angus Nivison
Portrait of Chandler Coventry, 1998
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5cm



Angus Nivison
Last portrait of Chandler Coventry, 1999
Oil on canvas
206 x 92cm

Forms of art | Sculpture

Sculpture can be traditionally described as a three-dimensional art form made by way of different processes – carving, modelling, casting or constructing. Yet with 20th century contemporary and modernists movements such as Abstract Expressionism, Installation Art, and Public Art we start to see sculpture as something no longer representational of the world around us. By the 1960s artists began experimenting with a wide range of new materials, and sculpture in its most reduced form dominated. Elements from movements in Abstract Expressionism, Geometric Abstraction and Minimalism thrived with a clear abandonment from representational forms.

Exploring Sculpture

Primary

Discuss: What is sculpture? What are the different types of traditional sculpture?

Observe: List the elements you can see in Robert Owen's sculpture? (Pictured opposite) Elements include colour, line, shape, form and texture.

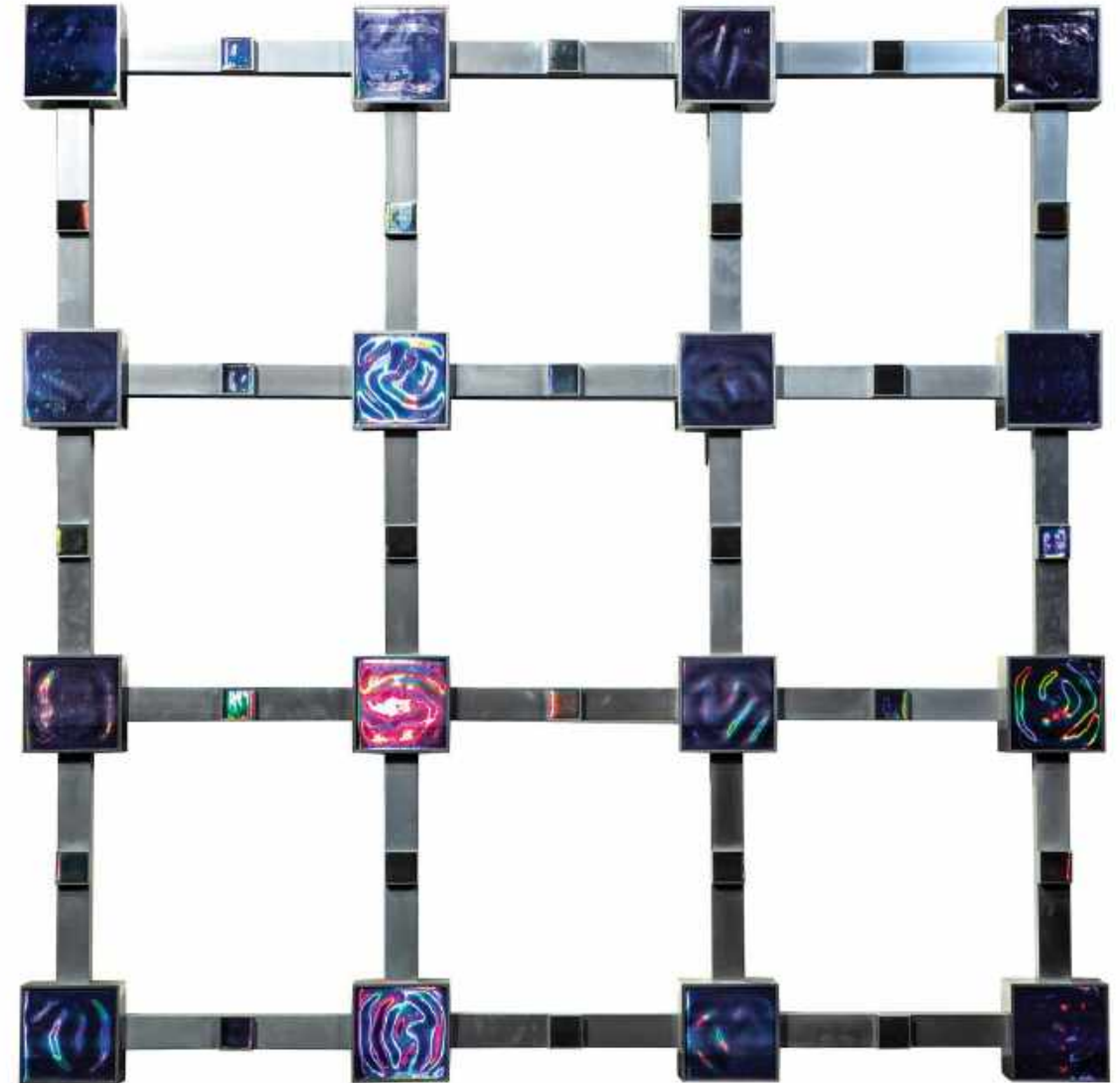
Make: Create a small-scale sculpture inspired by Owen's work, using different materials (e.g. skewers, foam, cardboard).

Secondary

Discuss: What materials has Robert Owen used, and why is his sculpture, 'Lisa's Lake' deemed conceptual?

Observe: What art conventions has Robert Owen used in his sculpture? (Pictured opposite)

Make: As a class, create a large-scale appropriation of Robert Owen's sculpture out of cardboard. Think about allocating roles to different groups of students (e.g. cutting, folding, gluing, assembling) and encourage them to think about how they can create shadows using their constructed cardboard forms, and the installation space.



Robert Owen

Lisa's Lake, 1972-75

Mixed Media - Chrome plated aluminium,
synthetic polymer paint and glass,
167.1 x 167.5cm

Gift of Chandler Coventry 1975

Forms of art | Collage

Collage, derived from the French word *coller* meaning 'to stick' describes a technique in which pieces of paper, cloth and other objects are pasted onto a flat surface.

The Cubists are said to be the first to use Collage as a significant artistic technique. Inspired by the Cubists, artists associated with the Dada movement across Europe began incorporating Collage into their work. Emerging amid the brutality of World War 1, Dadaist used Collage to express their discontent toward war and violence. Often using prefabricated sources, particularly magazines, newspapers and other printed mass media, Dadaist incorporated popular culture, and social and political views into their work of art.

Primary

Discuss: The colours and shapes in Joe Brainard's *Red poppies and butterflies* Collage (pictured opposite). How do you think the artist made this Collage?

Observe: The direction in Joe Brainard's Collage. As the audience, are we looking up or down at the objects? How does this perspective make you feel?

Make: Create a Collage using old magazines and newspapers. Select an opposite colour theme for your Collage (e.g. yellow and purple, red and green or blue and orange).

Secondary

Discuss: When was Collage introduced and how did it influence contemporary art practice?

Observe: There are two Collages featured in the Coventry exhibition. What art conventions are present in these two Collages?

Make: Use the featured Collages in the Coventry exhibition as inspiration to construct a Collage of your own using old magazines and newspapers. Select a theme (e.g. colour, form or subject) that will be reflected in your Collage.



Joe Brainard
Red poppies and butterflies, 1969
Collage
73.7 x 58.5cm
Gift of Chandler Coventry 1979