

**Safe Space**  
contemporary  
sculpture



**Safe Space** is an initiative of Museums & Galleries Queensland developed in partnership with Logan City Council through Logan Art Gallery, and curated by Christine Morrow. This travelling exhibition is supported by the Visions regional touring program, an Australian Government program aiming to improve access to cultural material for all Australians; the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland; the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory governments; and is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



# ARTISTS

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah

Alex Seton

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro

David Cross

Franz Ehmann

Karla Dickens

Keg de Souza

Michelle Nikou

Rosie Miller

Tim Sterling

Will French

Curated by Christine Morrow

# FROM THE CURATOR

*Safe Space contemporary sculpture* brings together three-dimensional art works by twelve Australian artists that explore psychological aspects of physical space. It features a range of figurative elements and narrative themes with social, and sometimes political, resonances. Many of the works in this exhibition take as their point of departure: the human body, its dimensions, the spaces it occupies, the narratives that contain it and the theatre or spectacle that unfolds around it.

Works reflect a wide range of approaches that represent the breadth of contemporary sculpture in Australia, spanning: colourful, pop, smooth, clean, commercial finishes to more subdued, monochrome, textured and rough aesthetic styles. The artists also use materials as diverse as concrete, stone, plastic, wood, wax, air, neon, bronze, steel, feathers, lead and leather.

The tone of the exhibition ranges from humour and playfulness, nurturing and warmth, through to unease, psychodrama and melancholy. The social themes touched on include privacy versus public space, refuge and sanctuary, agoraphobia and claustrophobia. These blur into psychological themes of risk, exposure, harm, frailty, isolation, suffocation and protection. Political themes include sexual and labour exploitation of Aboriginal women in Australia's colonial history and the fate of refugees who come to Australia in boats: being turned back, detained or drowned at sea.

The materials and approaches encompass a number that can only be considered as sculpture in the expanded field that it has come to occupy with the advent of minimalism and other later-twentieth century art movements—those that have blurred the demarcations between the plastic arts that were a feature of modernism. But to honour sculpture's past as a distinctive discipline, key works are included in *Safe Space* that use one or other of its enduring foundational processes, those that may be grouped under the categories of 'additive' and 'subtractive'.

The exhibition can't be defined according to these techniques and motifs alone, though, as most of the works embrace multiple methods within a single piece, while others span whole environments and performative approaches to three-dimensional space.

The title of the exhibition coaxes viewers to consider the ways these art works engage the themes of safety and its lack; space in all its rich possibility and—perhaps unexpectedly—in all its difficulty. Sculpture is conventionally defined by the way it occupies three dimensions. Yet these works project into other psychological and cultural dimensions; those that cannot be contained within the physical realm.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow**

**Curator**

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**Education Resource prepared by Kerry-Anne Reeves, with  
Rebekah Butler, Debra Beattie, Christine Morrow.**

**PUBLISHED BY MUSEUMS & GALLERIES QUEENSLAND, 2018**

122 Gerler Road, Hendra Qld 4011

P: 07 3059 9740

E: [information@magsq.com.au](mailto:information@magsq.com.au)

W: [www.magsq.com.au](http://www.magsq.com.au)

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This Education Resource supports the touring exhibition *Safe Space contemporary sculpture*.

The contents align with the *Australian Curriculum*, specifically Years 5 – 10. Key Ideas from each of the Learning Areas – English, Mathematics, Science, Humanities and Social Sciences, The Arts, Technologies, Health and Physical Education, Languages – are implemented throughout this Education Resource. Suggested questions and tasks integrate one or more of the General Capabilities and/or Cross-Curriculum Priorities.

Educators are invited to select and modify the questions and tasks in this Education Resource to provide opportunities for different levels of engagement for both phases of learning. Whether the suggestions are employed before, during or after a visit to the exhibition, is at the discretion of the individual.

The following Content Descriptions, sourced from the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts – Visual Arts*, have been used to formulate questions and tasks in this Education Resource.

## Years 5 and 6 Content Descriptions

- Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions (ACAVAM114)



- Develop and apply techniques and processes when making their artworks (ACAVAM115)



- Plan the display of artworks to enhance their meaning for an audience (ACAVAM116)



- Explain how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (ACAVAR117)





## Years 7 and 8 Content Descriptions

- Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork (ACAVAM118)



- Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes (ACAVAM119)



- Develop planning skills for art-making by exploring techniques and processes used by different artists (ACAVAM120)



- Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-marking (ACAVAM121)



- Present artwork demonstrating consideration of how the artwork is displayed to enhance the artist's intention to an audience (ACAVAM122)



- Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks (ACAVAR123)



- Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making, starting with Australian artworks including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (ACAVAR124)



## Years 9 and 10 Content Descriptions

- Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (ACAVAM125)



- Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions (ACAVAM126)



- Develop and refine techniques and processes to represent ideas and subject matter (ACAVAM127)



- Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention (ACAVAM128)



- Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks (ACAVAM129)



- Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making (ACAVAR130)










- Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)






## ICONS USED IN THIS RESOURCE


### GENERAL CAPABILITIES

-  Literacy
-  Numeracy
-  Information and communication technology capability
-  Creative and critical thinking
-  Personal and social capability
-  Ethical understanding
-  Intercultural understanding

### CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

-  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
-  Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
-  Sustainability

### TEACHERS' HELP



-  This Helping Hand icon will appear when notes or answers are deemed to assist educators.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

WORD	MEANING
Additive sculpture	A sculptural technique where materials are added in order to create an artwork. Assemblage, construction and modelling are common examples.
Assemblage	A non-traditional sculptural process whereby objects, often everyday articles or found items, are arranged to create a three-dimensional composition. This art form seeks to create meaning through juxtaposition of the objects.
Carving	A subtractive method whereby a solid material such as stone, wood, marble or concrete is reduced to reveal the sculpture, using tools including chisels, files, knives or scrapers.
Casting	A substitutional form of sculpture whose purpose is to make replicas from an original. Materials for casting include molten metals, Plaster of Paris, liquid wax, resins and epoxies.
Construction	An additive method whereby materials are combined to build up a sculpture; e.g. gluing, tying, welding, fusing, modelling, assembling.
Design elements	The design elements found in artworks include line, colour, shape, texture, space and form. Also known as "visual elements".
Design principles	Accepted conventions associated with organising design elements. Principles can include unity, balance, hierarchy, scale, proportion, emphasis, similarity and contrast.
Elements of sculpture	There are considered to be two major elements of sculpture: mass and space. Mass refers to the solid part contained within a sculpture's surface. Space is the air around or between the sculptural elements.

<b>WORD</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
Ephemera	Something that is transitory/short-lived. For example, air, clouds, a footprint on the seashore, an ice sculpture.
Modelling	A sculptural technique, like carving, where portions of the art medium are cut away to reveal form. Unlike carving, modelling allows the artist to manipulate the form because the medium is more pliable and can be easily shaped. Clay, wax and plaster are common mediums for modelling.
Modules	Independent units that are massed to construct a complex, multi-part structure.
Sculpture	An art form where materials are shaped and/or combined to create a three-dimensional piece. Traditionally, sculptural processes included carving and modelling with materials such as stone, metal, ceramics and wood. Modern techniques of assemblage, construction and casting redefine the term "sculpture" with its use of plastics, Styrofoam, papier mâché, 3D light projections (e.g. holograms).
Substitution sculpture	A sculptural technique that is neither additive nor subtractive because it replaces one material with another, e.g. casting where plastic, molten metal or fluid is transformed into a solid state. (See "Casting".)
Subtractive sculpture	A sculptural technique where materials are removed in order to create an artwork. For example, when carving, the artist removes portions of wood or stone.
Time-based process	Where an artwork has duration as a dimension and where it unfolds to the audience over time. Digital animation, digital media, film and/or video may be fundamental to the artwork. In sculpture, this may refer to an ephemeral sculpture that weathers or erodes over time.
Visual elements	See "Design elements".

# GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓		✓	✓	✓					
2	✓		✓	✓	✓					
3	✓		✓	✓	✓					
4	✓		✓	✓	✓					
5	✓		✓	✓	✓					
6	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
7	✓			✓	✓					
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
10	✓		✓	✓	✓					
11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
13	✓		✓	✓	✓					
14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
18	✓	✓		✓	✓					
19	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
21	✓			✓	✓					
22	✓			✓	✓					

# GENERAL QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. **Identify the artworks which exhibit traditional sculptural processes such as carving, modelling and/or casting.**



Students may need to refer to the Glossary of Terms on pages 12–13 of this Education Resource. Modelling helped to create *Fourteen Days*, although not by the artist but by his bees. The subtractive method of sculpture is evident in the carving of *The boy who couldn't sleep*. Casting, as a substitutional method, is seen in *Vacancy*, *Knot set in stone*, *Please turn over, please* (sketch), as well as in the paddle ends of *Someone Else's Problem*.

2. **Identify the artworks which exhibit sculptural processes such as assemblage and/or construction.**



Students may need to refer to the Glossary of Terms on pages 12–13 of this Education Resource. *B.E.L.T.* and *Vanishing Point* are examples of construction, whereas assemblage is represented by *Clipped Wings II*, *Work Horse II* and *Someone Else's Problem*.

3. **Identify the artworks which exhibit performance, audience participation, time-based processes and/or ephemera.**



Students may need to refer to the Glossary of Terms on pages 12–13 of this Education Resource. Answers may include: *Red Stroll*, *Paper Town*, *Living Under the Stars*.

4. **Locate and list items associated with living things in some of the artworks.**



Answers may include: buffalo horns in *The boy who couldn't sleep*; bee products in *Fourteen Days*; octopus in *Downstairs Dining Room – Octopus*; snake in *Hallway / Rear Entrance – Snake*; feathers suggesting birds in *Clipped Wings II*; the unseen horse in *Work Horse II*. Students may also list items associated with humans.

5. **Locate and list common household items incorporated into some of the artworks.**



Answers may include: clothing, fabric, wood, screws, nuts, bolts, elastic, Lego, furniture, plant pots, chain, glass jar, cable ties, lights, computers, paper, adhesive tape, vinyl.

6. **Identify artworks which deal with mental health issues, such as anxiety disorders, melancholy, depression, psychological fragility. Consider how you would approach one of these issues through sculpture. Share your ideas with others.**



Refer to notes on individual artists written by the exhibition Curator throughout this Education Resource. Answers may include: *Vacancy*, *Just a little bit longer*, *Vanishing Point*, *B.E.L.T.*

7. **Imagine if one of the exhibition artists could be your mentor. Who would you choose? Why?**
8. **Draw or write a plan to show how you would communicate your views about one of the following in a three-dimensional artwork: the current driving age / social media / live animal exports. Consider the materials and technologies you would use to fulfil this plan. How might you display the finished artwork?**
9. **Identify artworks that include repetition, replicas, modules and/or multiplicity.**



Students may need to refer to the Glossary of Terms on pages 12–13 of this Education Resource. *Fourteen Days* has numerous hexagonal modules, *B.E.L.T.* and *Vanishing Point* are created from multiple hollow wooden blocks and wooden spools respectively. *Red Stroll* has replica pods. *Downstairs Dining Room – Octopus* and *Hallway / Rear Entrance – Snake* each include many Lego bricks to construct the animal forms. *Someone Else’s Problem* is an assemblage of 300 identical paddles as shown in the installation on page 23 (the number may vary depending on the configuration of the sculpture at each venue).

10. **Identify the collaborative artworks in this exhibition.**



Answers may include: artworks by Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro. Rosie Miller identifies children as collaborators in her artwork. Keg de Souza and David Cross rely upon participants as collaborators. In the same vein, *Fourteen Days* could be considered a collaboration between the artist and – albeit unknowingly – his bees.

11. **In which artworks do you perceive humorous elements?**
12. **Traditionally, sculptural artworks are displayed so that the viewer must encircle the artwork to fully appreciate it. What is required of the viewer in the case of the artworks by Rosie Miller, Keg de Souza and David Cross? Write a short paragraph by way of explanation.**



Answers should reflect an understanding of the audience participation element of each of these artworks and that the audience member is required to be immersed into the sculpture so that the sculpture encircles the viewer.

13. **Identify artworks which include the human form as part of the sculpture.**



Answers may include: *The boy who couldn’t sleep* or *Self portrait with pickles*.

14. **Which artworks suggest the human form through its absence rather than its appearance?**



Answers may include: *Work Horse II*, *Clipped Wings II*, *B.E.L.T.*, *Fourteen Days*, *Someone Else’s Problem*.



15. Enclosed spaces recur throughout the exhibition's artworks. List the artists who have explored this concept.



Answers may include: Franz Ehmann, Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, Karla Dickens, Keg de Souza, David Cross.

16. Consider how you might use both additive and subtractive sculptural techniques in the same artwork to convey the message "Stay safe". Write a description or sketch your vision.

17. Open and empty spaces are explored by which artists?



Answers may include: Tim Sterling, Will French, Michelle Nikou.

18. Identify exhibition artworks that began as open spaces but became more closed as they neared completion.



Answers may include: *Fourteen Days*, *Paper Town*.

19. The exhibition's title summons up thoughts about the concept of safety and lack of safety. Reflect upon a time when you may have experienced one or both in your personal life. (Avoid examples already covered in this exhibition.) Select one to use as a basis for a sculptural artwork. Consider the psychological implications of the presence or lack of safety in your experience. How will you represent these through your artwork?

20. Think of something that you really dislike, for example: broccoli, sport, sand, the colour orange, snakes. Imagine you have been invited to create an artwork for this exhibition *Safe Space*, based on your dislike. What will your artwork look like? What materials will you need? What technique/s will you explore? How will your audience perceive your intentions? Present your ideas as captioned drawings, a list or as an oral presentation. Be prepared to respond to questions from others regarding your choices of materials, techniques and message/s.

21. With which form of sculpture do you, as an artist, prefer to work? Why?

22. Make a list of the safe spaces in your home or school. What makes them safe? Are they safe for people? Animals? Objects? Everything? From what do they provide protection?

## ABDUL-RAHMAN ABDULLAH

**Abdul-Rahman Abdullah** is represented in the exhibition by the work *The boy who couldn't sleep*. It takes the form of a life-sized child figure made from carved and painted wood to which the artist has added buffalo horns. We sense that the reason the child cannot sleep is because of night-terror. His body is wrapped in a bed sheet from the neck down, and the way the sheet falls tells us that he has drawn his knees up and clasped his arms around them—both to make himself a small target, and as a form of self-soothing. But huddling is not this child's only protective mechanism; the horns are another—equal parts display and defence. The work's title and the addition of these horns shift an otherwise realistic sculpture into the fantasy realm of storybook narrative. The work was one of a series originally shown in a solo exhibition by Abdullah called *Among Monsters* that addressed supernatural themes in an urban domestic setting. These monsters are more than the imagined creatures that lurk under the bed and loom out of dark corners in everyone's childhood. These are concealed, shapeless spirits and demons that haunt the world. Supernatural elements known as *djinn* (an Arabic word with variant spellings, sometimes also translated as genie), they are resonant with unseen psychological power.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

***The boy who couldn't sleep***  
**by Abdul-Rahman Abdullah**













**Abdul-Rahman Abdullah**  
***The boy who couldn't sleep***  
**2017**

Painted wood, buffalo horn  
56 x 127 x 74 cm

Photograph by Abdul-Rahman Abdullah

Image courtesy of the artist and Moore Contemporary

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓	✓		✓	✓					
2	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
6	✓		✓	✓						
7	✓			✓	✓	✓				

1. Name the materials used in this artwork. How have they been worked by the artist? Which materials have been added? Which materials have been removed? Discuss this artist's technique.



In reference to the removal of materials, encourage the students to think in terms of *subtractive* method of sculpture. The addition of the horns represents an *additive* method. Refer students to the Glossary of Terms on pages 12–13 of this Education Resource.

2. Reflect upon the sculptural form: its size, the space it occupies, the story it tells. Record your reflections of this artwork so that others might understand how you formed your judgement.
3. Explain how the artist communicates the idea of fear in this artwork.



Answers may include: the boy's huddled posture; the use of a shroud to hide behind / for protection; the horns may have been added to serve as the child's only defence against an unseen predator, whether real or imagined; the horns may suggest to some that a beast or monster is thought to be nearby.

4. **Consider your own fears. Write about, or illustrate, how you might communicate one of your own fears through the medium of sculpture. Be prepared to explain why you have elected to use specific visual conventions and processes.**



You may need to prompt some students with common examples of human fears (rational and irrational): snakes, storms, failure, being alone, darkness, clowns, heights, being trapped, sharks.

5. **Create a fictional story around Abdul-Rahman's artwork. Present it in an oral, printed or graphic form of your choice.**
6. **Abdul-Rahman's work has been described as 'magic realism'. Research the meaning of this term in art and discuss your findings.**
7. **What is your opinion of this artwork? Give reasons for your answer. Question others so that you become aware of their opinions.**

## ALEX SETON

**Alex Seton's** installation *Someone Else's Problem* is a heaped pile of oars constructed from wood and marble dust embedded in resin and joined together by cable ties. Oars signify water-borne journeys and here they are apparent in such vast numbers and such a state of mounting disorder they can only signify one thing: mass capsizal. Somewhere, some vessels have encountered disaster and people have come adrift. And the magnitude of the pile bears witness to the scale of the catastrophe. This work explores Australia's politics of turning back asylum-seekers. An oar is a device touched and used by the hands of a human being. The people whose hands have plied these oars are symbolically joined to one another, to the artist and to the audience through this motif of human touch—a gesture that traditional sculpture enshrines more than any other of the plastic arts apart from drawing, because of the way it relies on, and leaves marks of, hand labour. The 'refuge' part of the word *refugee* and the 'asylum' part of the term *asylum-seeker* are words that signify spaces of protection and sanctuary, but the people whose hands have paddled these oars remain 'offshore' which is not a space or place at all but a mere state of being *outside* or *away*. It is one of the most unsafe spaces possible: a space following departure that may never lead to any ensuing arrival.











**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# **Someone Else's Problem** **by Alex Seton**



**Alex Seton**  
***Someone Else's Problem***  
**2015**

Marble dust, epoxy resin, Tasmanian Oak, cable ties  
Dimensions variable (approximately 300 x 200 x 200 cm)  
Photography by Mark Pokorny  
Image courtesy of the artist and sullivan+strumpf

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓			✓						
4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
5	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
6	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

1. What does the title of this artwork suggest to you?
2. This artwork makes a social and political comment on a contemporary issue that has been widely publicised and much-discussed both in Australia and internationally. Through peer discussion, identify the issue conveyed by the artwork and its title.



Students should recognise this artwork as a response to the Australian Government's policy/policies – historically and contemporarily – regarding “boat people” and/or refugees.

3. In using marble dust and epoxy resin to create each paddle, which sculptural technique has the artist employed?



Casting.

4. Estimate the number of paddles on display. Comment on the impact of using multiples of the same object.



There are 300 paddles used in this sculpture as shown in the installation on page 23 (the number may vary depending on the configuration of the sculpture at each venue).



5. Search online to view more of Alex's artworks related to the plight of asylum seekers coming to Australia. In his body of work titled *The Journey*, the artist has employed emotional words and phrases in the title of each artwork, which in themselves elicit a response from the viewer. List any titles that resonate with you.



Answers may include: *Refuge*, *Deluge in a Paper Cup*, *Refoulement*, *Someone died trying to have a life like mine*. (<http://www.alexseton.com>)

6. With others, brainstorm reasons why a person might risk getting into a boat and travelling long distances to another country, in the hope that they might be granted asylum.



Answers may include: political persecution in the home country; to escape from war; freedom to practise their religion.

7. Discuss how you feel about refugees coming by boat to Australia. Be sensitive to others' opinions and experiences.
8. Think of ideas for an original artwork based upon a topical issue of interest to you. Present your ideas as a digital storyboard, a written description (minimum 300 words) or a three-dimensional model. Be sure to consider your materials, your techniques and your opinion.



Depending upon the maturity of your students and/or their current study topics, suggested issues include: homework; helmets for cyclists and motorbike riders; healthy body image; students' mental health; the wall between USA and Mexico; global warming in the Pacific region; feeding an expanding population.

9. Make a sculpture about a refugee's boat journey. For example, it could depict passports, an overcrowded or sinking vessel, an escorted return voyage to a country of origin. Create a title, such as "Lost Hope". Ensure that you plan how best to pass on your thoughts, beliefs and opinions to your audience.

10. Reflect upon how the pieces in this artwork might have been transported. List at least three factors you would consider before packing and moving this artwork to ensure safe arrival at the exhibition venue.



Answers may include: the weight of each paddle and their combined mass; the type of transportation required and its capacity; lifting and carrying the paddles; keeping the marble sections apart to avoid the possibility of breaks, chips and/or cracks; need for specially-constructed packaging.

11. Think about how this artwork was installed in the exhibition. What would the Curator need to consider? Discuss.



Answers may include: allowing adequate space; use of lighting to illuminate the paddles; how the paddles are held together; placing the individual paddles so that the marble sections do not come into contact with each other.

## CLAIRE HEALY & SEAN CORDEIRO

**Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro's** works stage a home invasion through the motif of décor. The sculptures are simultaneously creepy and funny in the way they address physical threat. An octopus has managed to clamber onto a chair and there is something particularly horrible about the way its tentacles writhe off the edges of the seat and out into the space of the viewer. Elsewhere, a snake has insinuated itself under the wall shelf as if lying in wait, ready to strike out at unsuspecting passers-by. The titles of the individual works are both narrative and documentary, since they give the name of the animal and the location in the house where the infiltration is occurring. We can't help wondering whether multiple invasions aren't secretly happening simultaneously elsewhere around the home. And whether the invasions are really by animals at all, rather than powerful global consumer brands. Although ready-mades have long been part of the sculptural tradition, there is something about the two brand name products—Lego and IKEA—that seems to subvert the idea of the ready-made. More like *un-readymade*, the whole point of both of these types of merchandise is that they require elaborate effort in their constructing.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

***Downstairs Dining Room – Octopus***  
**by Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro**













**Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro**  
***Downstairs Dining Room – Octopus***  
**2014**

Lego, IKEA chair and plant with hanger

96 × 100 × 72 cm



Photograph by Ivan Bulijan

Image courtesy of the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES						CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES			
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓				
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓			✓	✓					
5	✓			✓	✓	✓				
6	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
7	✓			✓						
8	✓		✓	✓						

***"Lego, which we grew up with, represents the dreams and fantasies of a child; IKEA furniture, which has become so ubiquitous, represents the dreams and fantasies of an adult. By meshing these two objects together we can think about the gap between our fantastic dreams and our ordinary longings."***

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro  
(Roslyn Oxley9 press release)

1. How does the exhibition's Curator connect Claire & Sean's artworks with the title and themes of the exhibition *Safe Space*? Discuss.
2. Why do you suppose the artists have constructed dangerous animals for these artworks? (Think about the title of the exhibition.)
3. What do you do to protect your personal space from being invaded by other people?  
 Answers may include: stepping or leaning back; avoiding eye contact; holding an article (e.g. ball, book, large toy, backpack) between yourself and the other person.
4. What measures do you and your family take to protect your domestic space (i.e. your home)?  
 Answers may include: door locks; security screening; boundary fencing; alarm system; guard dog.

5. **Invasion of personal space can be confronting to some people, whereas an invasion of domestic space by a stranger is threatening to almost everyone. Consider how you might feel as the victim of a home invasion. Furthermore, imagine if the invasion was not perpetrated by humans but by dangerous animals. Consider how you might react if wild dogs entered your domestic space. Or a crocodile. Or a rhinoceros. Would your response be the same to each of these threats? Discuss.**
6. **Claire & Sean frequently collaborate to make their artwork. Find someone with whom you believe you could collaborate on a sculptural artwork about home invasion. Your selection of materials, techniques and title should pay homage to the artists.**
7. **Recreate this artwork in essence, but use different sculptural techniques and different materials from those of the artists. For example: model the animal in wax, clay or papier-mâché; assemble the plant from found objects; construct soft furnishings from fabric and stuffing.**
8. **Write a list of words and/or phrases to describe how the octopus looks and how it might feel if you were able to touch it.**

**Hallway / Rear Entrance – Snake  
by Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro**



**Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro**  
***Hallway / Rear Entrance – Snake***  
**2014**

Lego, IKEA shelf with drawers and plant  
147 × 115 × 30 cm

Photograph by Ivan Bulijan

Image courtesy of the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓				
2	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
3	✓		✓	✓						
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓	✓				✓
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
7	✓			✓	✓	✓				
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
9	✓		✓			✓	✓			

***"Lego, which we grew up with, represents the dreams and fantasies of a child; IKEA furniture, which has become so ubiquitous, represents the dreams and fantasies of an adult. By meshing these two objects together we can think about the gap between our fantastic dreams and our ordinary longings."***

Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro  
(Roslyn Oxley9 press release)

1. **Debate:** The artists' intention for this artwork is to question the perceived safety of the home.
2. Do you consider the shadows projected by the venue lighting to be important to the display of the artwork or do you see it as an unrelated element? Justify your opinion.
3. Write a list of words or phrases to describe how the snake looks and how it might feel if you were able to touch it.
4. The artists have incorporated materials with popular brand names. **Debate:** This was a deliberate decision, designed to make comment on the invasion of our domestic lives by big corporations.

5. **By using these materials, do you think the artists are commenting on social or environmental issues and/or the homogenisation of society? Discuss.**



Discussion may include: impact of global markets, consumerism, plastics in the environment.

6. **Using Lego blocks, or similar construction blocks, construct a variety of dangerous creatures. Before disassembling each one, photograph it in an area of your home. Create a digital photo montage.**
7. **How do you perceive your own home? Is it a safe place? Write or draw a response.**
8. **Sketch or write a description of an imagined assemblage sculpture titled "Home Alone ... but not for long". In response to the work of Claire & Sean, select mass-produced materials which require assembling.**
9. **Research other artists who use ready-made materials.**



Answers may include: Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray, Damien Hirst, Sakir Gökçebag, Tracey Emin.



## DAVID CROSS

**David Cross's** work *Red Stroll* is a type of performance event that takes place between two collaborators, each inside an inflatable sculpture, both transparent, but one with a red-tinted lining. At first, these appear as protective devices, offering a space that is literally safe since the inflatable acts as a protective barrier and provides a padded layer that would absorb the impact of a tumble. Cross sets up some rules for the performance. On the outward journey from the gallery, the person in the transparent pod is instructed to follow where the other—who sees the world with a rosy tint—leads. Ideally, the two should be strangers to one another. The pods are swapped and the roles are then reversed half-way through the performance so that the follower becomes the leader for the walk back to the gallery. Each of the wearers must place trust in the other without knowing whether the trust is merited. This creates a situation of mild risk as there is just the slightest likelihood that the follower will be led into danger. But the risk is more symbolic than actual, and there have hitherto been no reports of a squashed pod-person on any busy dual-carriageway. The pods compromise the wearer's safety in other ways, though, because they impose physical clumsiness and impede the wearer's vision. Ensnared in the pods, it's hard to move and hard to see. Which is ironic, because the wearers themselves achieve the highest visibility possible; they become spectacles for others as they parade themselves in public. So, these pods and their elaborate ritualised performance represent a trade-off between protection and risk, interiority and exteriority, privacy and exposure.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# Red Stroll by David Cross



**David Cross**

***Red Stroll***

**2015–2018**











PVC vinyl

Two works, 160 x 120 cm each

Left: Detail of the work. Image courtesy of the artist

Above: Performance by David Cross and collaborator outside Logan Art Gallery, QLD

Photograph by Andrea Higgins

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓					
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
4	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
6	✓			✓	✓					
7	✓			✓	✓	✓				
8	✓			✓	✓	✓				

1. What do you believe to be the artist's intention when creating the artwork?
2. State your opinion regarding how this artwork qualifies for inclusion in a sculptural exhibition.



Encourage the students to think in terms of *additive* sculpture, where gas/air has been added to the existing materials to create the artwork, or where the human body has been added to animate the artwork.

3. David challenged traditional ideas about sculpture when he chose these materials. Look at two other sculptures in this exhibition. How have each of the artists used volume in these works?
4. Imagine a dialogue between two participants who are animating this work. Create a possible scenario with a classmate. Record the imagined interaction in print or make an audio recording.
5. List alternative materials in which air – or other gases – could be used as a sculptural medium. Envisage how you might use one of these materials in an art performance/installation. (Hint: You may want to think along the lines of Sumo suits or giant inflatable balls which roll down hills with a person inside; using a vacuum cleaner on reverse to blow out air and move objects; filling a room with balloons.) Sketch your vision or write a 200-word (minimum) description. List the potential risks related to your performance/installation.

6. List examples of where air is used to fill spaces and subsequently alter the airless shape – thus “sculpting” the outer skin – around your home and community. Compete with others to see who can identify the most examples.



Answers may include: pool floats, bouncy castles, party balloons.

7. Develop an alternative set of rules for the use of the pods.
8. List the risks – physical, emotional and psychological – which are inherent in this artwork.

## FRANZ EHMANN

**Franz Ehmann's** series, collectively titled *Fourteen Days*, was made in a unique partnership between the artist and his backyard bees. Ehmann folded men's cotton business shirts into neat rectangles and coated and stiffened them with wax before inserting them in place of the frames in the honey box of his beehive. When he drew them out after a fortnight, the insects had built up wax cell structures all over the cloth, encrusting their surfaces with a delicate, geometrically-precise, three-dimensional hexagonal honeycomb design. Through the ornamental coating, you can still recognise the outlines of the original garments. Fittingly they are displayed in the gallery with a flat frontality like traditional bas-relief sculptures which, in some strange sense, they are. The beehive is a safe space that is defended determinedly by the bees. They emit pheromones to warn one another of attacks, and also sting intruders. The artist nonetheless succeeds in invading their territory. The social arrangement of a bee population is called a colony and Ehmann's artistic approach is to perform, ever-so-subtly, a colonising act on the bees; intruding into and occupying their space so as to exploit their labour in the making of his art. The bees' secretions that smother the shirts may appear as a type of defensive mechanism to contain and neutralise an invasive threat.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

**Fourteen Days**  
**by Franz Ehmann**



**Franz Ehmann**

**Fourteen Days** (detail)

**2018**











Detail: One of four works

Beeswax on cotton shirts with resin buttons

Four works approximately 41 x 46 x 7 cm each

Courtesy of the artist

Photograph by Andrea Higgins

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓			
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
3				✓	✓					
4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			
6	✓			✓	✓	✓				
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
8	✓	✓		✓	✓					
9	✓	✓		✓	✓					
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
11	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			

1. Identify the materials in this artwork.



Answers may include: fabric, men's shirts, bees' wax.

2. Investigate the technique/s used by the artist to create this artwork.



View this online video to learn more about the chemical composition of honey: <https://www.beeeculture.com/the-chemistry-of-honey/>



View this online video to learn more about the density of honey: <https://youtu.be/MFHrmb09vlw>



For a high-speed summary of how honeycomb is built inside the hive, go to: <https://youtu.be/821uVRAcZ1l>



The artist folds and coats the shirts in bees' wax before inserting them into the hive. He says that the shirts must be made of a natural fibre and be chemical free, otherwise the bees will not construct honeycomb over the shirts.

3. **Would you like to touch the artwork? Predict how it might feel.**

4. **Why do you suppose the artist named this artwork *Fourteen Days*?**



The shirts were in the hive for 14 days, allowing the bees to “sculpt” the wax onto the shirts (although the shirt with the least amount of honeycomb took just 8 days).

5. **Using a Venn diagram, compare this artwork with a traditional bas relief. How are they the same? How are they different?**

6. **The artist invaded the bees’ safe space (i.e. the hive) and, in return, the bees have unwittingly helped him to create a sculptural artwork. Is this an example of exploitation or collaboration? Discuss.**

7. **Identify the shapes that the bees have created on the shirt. Research to discover why honey bees make cells of this shape when constructing the honeycomb.**



For a brief explanation of the roles of each type of bee, plus a closer look at the structure of the honey cells, go to: <https://youtu.be/b0iirSRd8hg>

8. **Hexagons are generally strong structures. Explain why.**

9. **Create a sculpture using modules as your foundation. Select your materials carefully, in order to make a robust sculpture.**

10. **Imagine you are a bee in the hive where the artist has placed the shirt. Find a partner “bee” with whom you can have an impromptu conversation about what you see. You may wish to make a voice recording of your conversation. Upon conclusion, write a script, draw a cartoon strip, or perform for others, using some or all of the dialogue from your earlier conversation.**

11. **Franz’s work is based on foods and materials related to cooking. Research other artists who explore the relationship between food and art in their practice.**



This may include artists who depict images of food, or artists who use food products as a part of their practices.



## KARLA DICKENS

**Karla Dickens'** works, *Clipped Wings II* and *Work Horse II*, speak of institutional captivity as well as the domestic and sexual servitude that has characterised the lives of Aboriginal women in Australia since colonisation. Dickens' works give commanding expression to physical, emotional and psychological threats. Most of her assemblage work is made from bits of popular colonial-era bric-à-brac as well as more damaged and less desirable bits of detritus. She reclaims Aboriginal meanings for them because the original objects, some of which are considered 'collectable', are too often fetishised through a lens of White nostalgia that she refuses to leave unchallenged. In Dickens' hands these objects, rescued from rusting away in dark spaces and developing a romantic patina, are shown as the material residue of violence and exploitation, brutality and trauma. In *Clipped Wings II* it is her own grandmother's domestic enslavement that she addresses. A cage for the human body, it speaks of confinement and torture. Dickens harnesses the power of assemblage to recombine disparate elements in unexpected ways that generate startling and disruptive meanings. Old cricket stumps and horse yokes may fetch prices as collectables on websites like eBay and Gumtree, but here they are reconfigured as a powerful and disturbing representation of rape.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# **Clipped Wings II** **by Karla Dickens**













**Karla Dickens**  
***Clipped Wings II***  
**2015**

Mixed media  
200 x 60 x 50 cm

Photograph by Karla Dickens

Image courtesy of the artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			

1. Consider how you might feel if you discovered that your grandmother had been forced into domestic enslavement in times past. Write your response as a short play and perform.
2. The artist wants her audience to empathise with her grandmother's plight. Does she achieve this? If yes, how?



Answers may include: yes, the title suggests that freedom has been curtailed; yes, the feathers in the cage suggest a bird, representing its confinement/entrapment/life in a restricted space.

3. How does the artist evoke thoughts of physical, emotional and psychological threat? Discuss. Does your response change after reading the artist's poem accompanying this artwork in the exhibition?
4. Study the artwork to identify the materials used. How does the choice of materials help you to understand the artist's intention?
5. The artist uses found objects to create her artworks. What might you find in your own environment to create a sculpture about a significant moment in your family's history?



Suggestions for "significant moments" might include: moving to a new neighbourhood; medical emergency; new pet; death of a pet; birth of a child; starting at a new school or job.

6. **If you were able to drop into another environment to collect found objects for a sculpture, where would you choose? Beach? City streets? Playground? Forest? Desert? Mars? Describe how you would assemble your objects to create a sculpture.**
7. **Think about how you might use familiar household materials to construct a sculpture. What could it say about where and how you live?**

# **Work Horse II** **by Karla Dickens**



**Karla Dickens**

***Work Horse II***











**2015**

Mixed media

86 x 60 x 38 cm

Photograph by Mick Richards

Image courtesy of the artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
3	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
4	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

1. What does the artist want you to see and understand in this work?
2. This artwork is a political commentary on an historical issue that has been widely publicised and much-discussed in Australia. Through peer discussion, identify the issue conveyed by the artwork and its title.



Students should recognise this artwork as a response to the exploitation of Aboriginal women for sex and labour, in Australia's colonial history. The extent of this discussion should be age appropriate.

3. Discuss the artist's choice of materials. How was each one originally used? Where might the artist have found them?



Answers may include: the leather and wooden horse collar was placed around a horse's neck in colonial Australia for farm work and cartage of goods. The wooden spikes are old cricket stumps. The metal pieces may have come from a decorative gate or verandah ballustrade. These items may have been purchased from an antiques shop or online sellers. The fur is from Karla's grandmother's fur coat.

4. Karla's motivation for this artwork is her awareness of non-consensual, violent treatment of Aboriginal women. Use this knowledge to re-evaluate what you see in the artwork. How do you feel about the sculpture?

5. What elements are used in this artwork to encourage an emotional response from the audience? Apply this understanding to the creation of your own sculpture, based on the theme of exploitation.



Answers may include the use of metaphor i.e. the use of the horse collar may be a metaphor for hard labour/a workhorse; entrapment/being harnessed.

## KEG DE SOUZA

**Keg de Souza's** art work *Living Under the Stars* (LUTS) relies on the human body being cocooned in a protective tent structure that is reminiscent of the snug play spaces of childhood. The viewer is invited to lie down and look up at the canopy where a light display on a timed sequence mimics the constellations seen in the Southern hemisphere's night sky. Keg de Souza trained as an architect and this work reminds us that architecture can be transitory. In this case, it's deflatable, relocatable and adaptable to different situations and environments. And it collapses together outer and inner space. The space it is ideally designed for is an urban setting where stars aren't easily visible because of light pollution. LUTS offers a simulated substitute for people who are deprived of the real thing, or for those who find it too dangerous to venture into the great outdoors. We can't help but think that it's a version of the night sky that only an overprotective parent or a nanny state would offer, or that only an agoraphobic person would settle for. Protection can be nurturing and protection can be limiting. The participant in LUTS accepts a packaged version of stargazing; sacrificing freedom and expansiveness by choosing cosiness, nearness and containment.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# ***Living Under the Stars*** **by Keg de Souza**













**Keg de Souza**  
***Living Under the Stars***  
**2012**

Mixed media  
485 x 485 x 250 cm

Image above courtesy of the artist  
Left: Detail of the interior of the work.



QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓					
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓	✓				
6	✓			✓	✓	✓				
7	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
8	✓			✓						
9	✓			✓	✓	✓				

1. Did you ever sleep outside under the stars? Does this artwork evoke memories of those experiences? Share your thoughts with others.
2. How has the artist interpreted "safe space" through this artwork?
3. Why do you suppose Keg chose these materials for this artwork?
4. How has the artist displayed her personal views, beliefs and opinions in the artwork? Do you agree or disagree with these views? Why?



Refer to the notes written by the Curator on page 47 of this Education Resource. Keg also discusses her views in a panel discussion with the *Safe Space* artists and Curator, which is available on video on an iPad travelling with the exhibition. The video is also available on Museums & Galleries Queensland website, <http://www.magsq.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=9321>.

5. Reflect upon your emotional reaction to *Living Under the Stars*. Brainstorm words and phrases which describe your feelings.
6. How might a person who has claustrophobia react to this artwork?
7. Keg trained as an architect and is interested in alternate housing structures. Do you consider inflatable housing as a viable form of shelter for people? What are some of its limitations? Discuss.

8. **The artist has recreated the constellations of the night sky inside this artwork. Consider where you live and whether or not light pollution impacts your ability to see these constellations.**
9. **State your opinion regarding how this artwork qualifies for inclusion in a sculptural exhibition.**



Encourage the students to think in terms of *additive sculpture*, where gas/air has been added to the existing materials to create the artwork. The participant may also qualify as an additive, without whom the interior space has no audience.

## MICHELLE NIKOU

**Michelle Nikou's** sculpture *Vacancy* is an installation of seven cast-lead containers resembling pitchers and cooking pots. These are garlanded together by neon lettering spelling out the word that gives the work its title. The vessels are interspersed here and there by found objects: imitation slices of white bread moulded in latex. With its humble domestic forms, the enormous weight and toxicity of its main material (lead) and its location on the floor, this work feels subdued, abject and mournful. Each of the seven elements operates like one entry in a communication string that punctuates a space of emotional vulnerability and risk. And neon signs typically conjure loneliness because of the way they speak their messages into the empty night. By incorporating the word *vacancy*, the sculpture broadcasts its own sad emptiness, evoking loss and longing. The vacancy referred to is literal as well as psychological. The sculpture has a loose and open structure in the way its elements are spread over the floor by lines of cable that link them together while simultaneously spacing them apart. But the heaviness of the art work's mood and material suggests the space is not vacant at all but overburdened with fullness. Perhaps it is both, simultaneously, filled and evacuated.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# Vacancy

by Michelle Nikou



**Michelle Nikou**

**Vacancy**

**2014**











Left: Detail of the work

Cast lead alloy, lead, neon, latex

Dimensions variable

Photographs by Simon Hewson

Image courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓				
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
5	✓			✓	✓					
6	✓			✓	✓	✓				
7	✓	✓		✓	✓					
8	✓			✓	✓	✓				
9	✓			✓	✓	✓				
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

1. Identify the materials used in this artwork. Where might they usually be found? Has the artist used each item in its original form or in an altered state? Is there evidence of process? Explain your answer.



Answers may include: cast lead alloy, lead, neon, latex. Uses of neon include signage, lighting. Uses for lead include fishing sinkers, weights, batteries, pigments, metal alloys. Uses for latex include gloves, balloons, swimming caps, casts, mattresses.

2. What are the risks associated with the materials used in this artwork?




Answers may include: toxicity, excessive weight, electrification.

3. Search online to view Michelle's related artwork *No Vacancy*. Compare the two artworks in terms of materials and techniques.



<https://netsvictoria.org.au/exhibition/michelle-nikou-a-e-i-o-u/>

4. **Imagine an original three-dimensional artwork which aims to communicate the same ideas as this artwork, but differs in one or more of the following: materials, technique and/or medium. Make a sketch or describe how your artwork looks.**
5. **What sculptural forms and techniques have been employed by the artist?**  
 **Forms = vessels, lettering, light. Techniques = casting and assemblage.**
6. **Why might Michelle have chosen this style of representation? What other sculptural forms and styles suit her message?**
7. **Comment on how space is used in this artwork.**
8. **Speculate as to how this artwork relates to the curatorial premise of *Safe Space*.**
9. **Michelle often uses metaphor and symbolism in her artworks. Is there evidence of one or both in this artwork?**
10. **Discuss the Curator's placement of this artwork within this exhibition space. Has the placement served to enhance the artwork or does it detract? Has the juxtaposition of the surrounding artworks been successful? If you were the Curator, would you place it differently?**
11. **Single words or phrases often appear in Michelle's artworks. Choose a word or phrase with which you have a personal connection. Plan an artwork that includes both casting and assemblage. Present your plan as a written description, a drawing of your ideas or as a maquette/model.**
12. **Create an artwork that incorporates the word "Surprise!" You may choose any sculptural technique but you must use common household items to create it.**

## ROSIE MILLER

**Rosie Miller** facilitates workshops with children who play with materials in the space, often constructing environments that ensnare their own bodies. Typically, she may set up certain conditions by erecting a structure or armature out of cardboard or lines of plastic or paper tape. She provides kilometres of materials in the form of rolls of this tape, paper or streamers. The children stretch, drop or throw them in the space. Over time, what started as a light structural outline in three dimensions condenses to function as a drawing in space and then fills more solidly so that it develops further mass and volume and becomes architectural. The artist only nominates a few parameters for the work. It is the children who collaborate with her in its making and they do so in the most dynamic way possible, with whole-body gestures in a kind of 'action sculpture'. But through a type of entropy, the more they move and the more active they become in the making of the art, the more their bodies eventually become framed and sealed within the space—to the point of entrapment and immobilisation. Sometimes, the material Miller uses (called 'safety' or 'barrier' tape) even names and amplifies these ideas of protection, containment and limits.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

***Paper Town time-based installation for Tinkering Tank (made in conjunction with participating children at Tanks Arts Centre during the 2018 Cairns Children's Festival)***

**by Rosie Miller**



**Rosie Miller**

***Paper Town time-based installation for Tinkering Tank (made in conjunction with participating children at Tanks Arts Centre during the 2018 Cairns Children's Festival)***  
**2018**











Time-lapse digital animation on flat screen

4 min 18 sec

Dimensions variable

Photograph by Lily Castleman



QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
2	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓			✓	✓					
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓					
6	✓			✓	✓					
7	✓	✓		✓	✓					
8	✓	✓		✓	✓					
9	✓			✓	✓	✓				
10	✓			✓	✓	✓				
11	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			

1. Rosie Miller is the facilitator of this performance artwork. Discuss the pre-planning required before this artwork became a reality.
2. What do you suppose was the artist's intention for this artwork?
3. What did Rosie expect from her collaborators (i.e. the children)?
4. Identify potential risks during the planning and development stages of this artwork. How might they be overcome?
5. Describe what you see as the outcome of "materials + movement" as depicted in this artwork.
6. What might occur as the participants become more active?



Answers may include: chaos, increased creativity, more tangents enabled, spaces are created, people become territorial, participants respond to each other's ideas, small societies/communities are formed.

7. Describe how space is fundamental to this artwork.

8. Identify spatial concepts which might be explored by, or taught to, the children engaging in this performance sculpture.



Answers may include: positive and negative space, depth, height, geometrical shapes, line, vertical, horizontal, angles.

9. Do you believe that Rosie has used the “safety tape” ironically? Justify your response.

10. Which of the following is the best answer?

- a. There is an ephemeral quality to this artwork because it has ceased to exist, except on film.
- b. There is an ephemeral quality to this artwork because the children are not real.
- c. There is an ephemeral quality to this artwork because the performance has been staged.



Answer: a

11. What do you suppose attracts participants to engage with this artwork? Discuss.

## TIM STERLING

**Tim Sterling's** sculptures loosely represent a portal and a barrier. Both sculptures relate to movement: one hampers it while the other precipitates it. As a portal, *B.E.L.T.* creates a dynamic relation between the sculpture and the body of the viewer who is tempted to imagine moving through it. *Vanishing Point*, an irregular fragment of wall that protrudes across the gallery space, blocking the viewer's egress, seems to have an immobilising effect. Yet this is opposed by a counter-tension within the work. Each individual module takes the form of a spool or spindle and they appear to be held together by elastic cord, a material held under tension that comes with the risk of breakage. The knots could unravel and the spindles would spill. First shown in an exhibition called *Platzangst*, the German name for agoraphobia, *B.E.L.T.* and *Vanishing Point* are described by Sterling as being trapped between two states—anchored to the ground while simultaneously being caught up in movement. The ideal viewer for Sterling's sculptures will sense themselves overwhelmed by the material or the environment. The agoraphobia the artist is referencing relates to spaces that feel so open, infinite and limitless that they represent risk. They leave the human subject bereft of a physical and psychological anchor. But claustrophobia is referenced too: the heaping up of undifferentiated details that threaten to swamp the viewer.

**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

**B.E.L.T.**  
**by Tim Sterling**



**Tim Sterling**

**B.E.L.T.**











**2012**

Plywood, hardwood, MDF, screws, nuts, bolts

307 x 170 x 84 cm

Photograph by Tim Sterling

Image courtesy of the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓					
2	✓	✓		✓	✓					
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓					
6	✓	✓		✓	✓					
7	✓	✓		✓	✓					
8	✓	✓		✓	✓					
9	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
10	✓			✓	✓	✓				
11	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				

1. Why do you think Tim chose construction for this sculpture?
2. Discuss the use of space in this sculpture.
3. Speculate as to what the artist intended for his audience to gain from this artwork.
4. Tim replicated numerous standardised units, or modules, which were then used to construct a sculpture which fills a space and yet creates space. Discuss.



Students might comment on: the spaces between each of the modules; the space around the artwork; the amount of gallery space taken up by the artwork; how the construction almost seems to invite viewers to walk through the centre gap.

5. What has been used to join the modules?



Answer: nuts, bolts, washers, screws.

6. **When a belt is tightened more and more and more, what occurs?**



Answers may include: an escalating sense of constriction, of tightening, of squeezing.

7. **When a belt is loosened more and more and more, what occurs?**



Answers may include: an increasing feeling of release, of liberation, of escape, and relief.

8. **Look at the angles formed in the spaces between the modules. Are they all the same? Are they acute, obtuse or right angles? Sketch one curve of the sculpture, taking care to reproduce each angle as precisely as possible.**

9. **Construct a free-standing sculpture made of multiple modules which highlights either "safety" or "the absence of safety". Decide whether the sculpture will be figurative or abstract. Choose modules which are easily-obtained in large numbers; for example, bottle tops, pool noodles, ping pong balls, playing dice, rubber thongs, plastic forks, wooden beads, buttons, yoghurt pots, rubber chair tips, polystyrene packing peanuts, pegs. Your selection of materials should complement the message you wish to convey to the audience; for example: "Pool noodles can be life-savers but also life-takers."; "Playing with dice is risky business."; "Packing peanuts are a recycler's joy but are a serious safety hazard to small children." It may be helpful to draw your ideas beforehand. Decide how you will join the modules and how you will display them.**

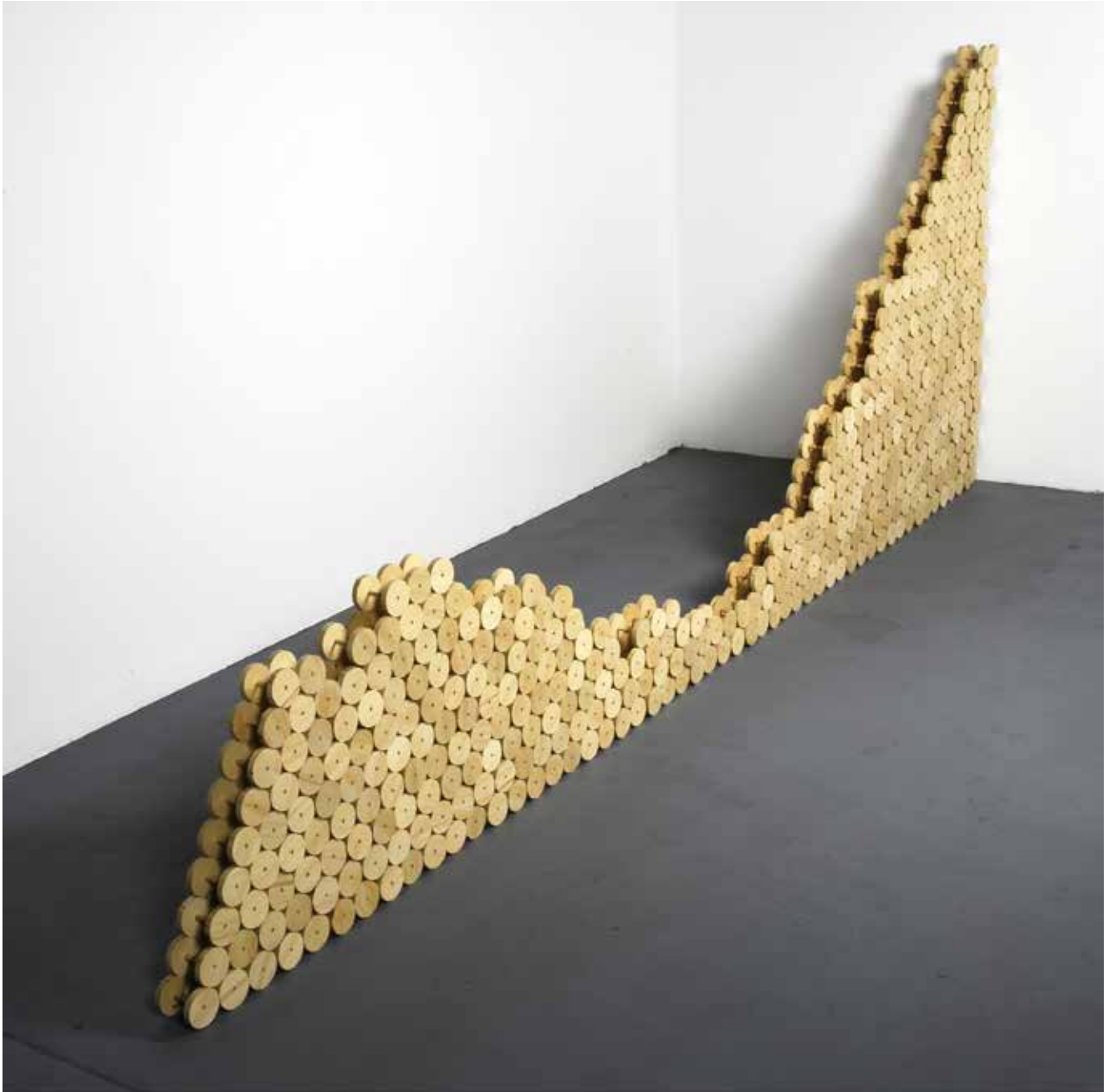
10. **If you could ask Tim one question, what would it be?**

11. **Consider the use of the plinth in this artwork. Discuss.**



A plinth is a piece of exhibition furniture used to display an artwork. This work rests against the side of the plinth, breaking with convention.

# **Vanishing Point** by Tim Sterling



**Tim Sterling**  
***Vanishing Point***  
**2012**

Plywood, dowel, elastic  
140 x 335 x 7.5 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓	✓		✓	✓					
5	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
6	✓			✓	✓					
7	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
8	✓			✓	✓	✓				
9	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			

1. This artwork appeared in an exhibition in Germany called *Platzangst*. The English etymology of this title is *platz* = space and *angst* = fear. Consider how the artwork reflects this concept.

2. Identify at least 3 fears related to spaces. List names and definitions.



Answers may include: agoraphobia = fear of open spaces, fear of being crowded, fear of leaving a safe space; claustrophobia = fear of confined spaces; cleithrophobia = fear of being enclosed or trapped; fear of being locked in.

3. Imagine you have agoraphobia. List or discuss some of the day-to-day limitations and/or challenges.



Answers may include: leaving your house; attending school; having a job; shopping; meeting friends; attending a concert; playing in a busy playground; walking across an open field; participating in sports such as golf or football.

4. Tim uses modules to construct his artworks. Find other artworks in this exhibition that use modules. Compare and discuss.



Franz's work, Claire & Sean's work; Alex's work.



5. **Where does replication occur in this artwork? Speculate as to why the artist has chosen to repeat these modules over and over again.**

6. **What has Tim used to join the modules?**



Answer: dowel, elastic.

7. **Consider the spaces in and around this sculpture. Why are they there? How are they formed? Were the spaces planned or were they incidental? Do you think the spaces drive the artwork or are they a by-product of the artwork? Explain your answer.**

8. ***Vanishing Point* forms a barrier to ... what? Record your answers.**



Answers may include: the space beyond the artwork; overcoming one's fears; the future.

9. **Suggest alternative forms of sculpture which could relay a similar message to the audience.**

## WILL FRENCH

**Will French's** art work explores personal and private vulnerabilities. His works resonate with: doubt, insecurity, humility, hesitation, fear and regret. In *Uncollected Works (you win)*, French resigns himself to the fact that his art work will never make its way into important public collections—except via the back door. He presents tokens souvenired by him from famous art museums by leaving an identical parcel behind in the cloakroom of each institution: a rolled-up white flag of surrender that is simultaneously one of his art works and a signal of his own defeat. His work *Knot set in stone* explores the public space of civic architecture. French has imposed a permanent distance—i.e. a safe space—by embedding a bronze-cast rope in between two chunks of rock associated with different Australian cities; the sandstone that is associated with Brisbane and Sydney, and the bluestone that features prominently in Adelaide and Melbourne. French artificially imposes an unbridgeable distance between the two as if fearful of their commingling. *Just a little bit longer* uses the language of public signage and corporate building codes around the topic of egress. But instead of a concern with physical safety, it speaks of emotional safety. It is sorrowful, rueful and tender; made by French in response to a break-up, it is a plea from a man, to the woman who is leaving him, begging her to remain. Even something that we think is solid and has mass and immobility, like a tombstone, is inconstant, mobile and insecure. This one's particularly shoddy-looking, like the marker for a pauper's grave. *Please turn over, please* (sketch) speaks of churned-up earth, unstable ground, and restless souls. But it's comical as well as sorrowful. Just looking at that 'PTO' message is like seeing the earth fall away. It's a riposte to Piero Manzoni's *Base of the World*. It even pokes fun at the idea of a travelling exhibition. If there's one thing in the world that is meant to be immobile and eternal, it's a tombstone. The reason it's not meant to budge is because it accompanies the dead; and the dead don't do somersaults and the dead don't do road trips.











**Christine Toussainte Morrow, Curator**

# Uncollected Works (you win) by Will French



**Will French**  
***Uncollected Works (you win)***  
**2010**

Coat check tags from MOMA, Guggenheim, Metropolitan Museum of Art, DIA Beacon, New Gallery, PS1, Whitney Museum of American Art; black-and-white-photograph  
20 x 90 x 30 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
4	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
5	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
6	✓		✓	✓						
7	✓			✓	✓	✓				
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

1. What do most people usually do with cloakroom tokens?



Answers may include: many buildings have a cloakroom/coat room where, upon arrival, visitors may leave their belongings whilst they are in the building. Upon departure, visitors generally hand in the cloakroom token to collect their belongings.

2. Name some items which may be accidentally left behind at a public building. What did this artist leave behind in the cloakrooms of famous art museums? What message do you think he intended?



A white flag was left at each of the museum's cloakrooms by the artist. The artist considers this to be a symbol of surrendering.

3. This artwork has an interesting backstory. Look at the exhibition catalogue, or listen to the video online of the exhibition Curator and artists in conversation to discover how the artist came to souvenir these cloakroom tokens.



Will French tells this story in a panel discussion with the *Safe Space* artists and Curator, which is available on video on an iPad travelling with the exhibition. The video is also available on Museums & Galleries Queensland website, <http://www.magsq.com.au/cms/page.asp?ID=9321>. The story is also told in the exhibition catalogue.

4. **Identify at least 3 of the buildings visited by the artist. The clues are in the artwork.**



Answers may include: Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art, Whitney Museum.

5. **What did the artist mean when he included the words “(you win)” in the title? Note that there is a photograph in this artwork which suggests surrender.**

6. **Which of the following best describes this artwork: casting, assemblage, modelling or carving?**



Assemblage.

7. **What do you think that Will communicates through this artwork?**

8. **Do you have a collection of connected objects? Why did you begin your collection? How might you display your collection in this exhibition space? Sketch or list your ideas.**

***Just a little bit longer***  
**by Will French**













**Will French**

***Just a little bit longer***

**2013**

Exit sign light box with translucent green vinyl  
15 x 30 x 12 cm

Image courtesy of the artist

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓					
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓		✓	✓	✓					
6	✓			✓	✓	✓				
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
8	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				

1. Identify the materials used in this artwork.

2. What is conflicting about this artwork?



Answers may include: the light box reads "Stay" instead of the usual word "Exit".

3. Appreciation of an artwork can be enhanced by knowing the story behind it. The background story for this artwork involves a relationship break-up between a man and a woman. How is this represented in the artwork?

4. The artist chose the title from a song called "Stay". It's a plea to a loved one as he/she is about to walk out (or exit) the door for the final time. What feelings might this evoke in an audience?

5. Assign a mood 'emoji' to this artwork. Explain your choice.

6. What is ironic about this artwork?



Answers may include: the artwork uses public signage for a private interaction.

7. By manipulating an "EXIT" sign light box, a common sight in many buildings, the artist has transformed the light box into a unique artwork. Create your own transformational artwork by making minimal changes to common materials. Be sure

**to consider what you want your artwork to convey to your audience. Reflect upon the skills and techniques you may need to manipulate and/or join the materials.**



Students lacking inspiration may require suggestions such as: transform a hat into a bag or a planter; place small related items, other than chocolates, inside a chocolate box; find a new or unexpected use for an umbrella / a sock / a pair of tongs.

- 8. Like Will's altered light box message, personal comments are sometimes displayed to the general public via social media platforms. Locate examples of these comments and use them to create an assemblage sculpture based upon the concept of relationships.**



Note: This activity is to be undertaken only by children over the age of 13 who are legally able to access social media. It should be monitored to ensure the appropriateness of comments viewed online.



***Knot set in stone***  
**by Will French**



**Will French**

***Knot set in stone***

**2014**

Bronze cast rope, sandstone, bluestone

9 x 30 x 9 cm

Image courtesy of the artist

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓				
2	✓			✓	✓					
3	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
4	✓			✓	✓					
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
6	✓			✓	✓					

1. **What is ironic about the title of this artwork?**



Answers may include: playing on the homonym “NOT set in stone” the artwork actually IS set in stone. Or it could reference the fact that the cast metal rope connecting the two stones is not ‘set’ or ‘fixed’ but rather rests inside hollows made inside each of the stones.

2. **Name the stones used in this sculpture. Where in Australia has each of these stones been quarried? Look around your community for evidence of either of these stones having been used for building and/or landscaping.**



Bluestone comes from Melbourne and Adelaide regions. Sandstone comes from Sydney and Brisbane regions.

3. **The stones have come from two regions of Australia. What has the artist used to signify distance between the two areas? Architecturally, what has the artist created between the stones?**



Answers may include: the stones are set apart, creating space between them. The knotted rope acts as a bridge connecting the two regions.











4. **Does the rope act as a bridge – a connection – between the two, or do you think the artist intended a different message? Discuss.**

5. The artist has used molten bronze to cast the rope in this artwork. You can explore a simplified version of casting by following these directions:
  - a. Find an object such as a seashell, a small toy or even use your foot!
  - b. Place some fine sand into a disposable container that is larger than the object. **Note:** The finer the grade of sand, the greater the level of detail in the finished piece. Sand used in bird cages is very suitable.
  - c. Add a small amount of water to the sand so that it can be compacted and holds its shape.
  - d. Smooth the surface of the sand with the back of a metal spoon or a trowel.
  - e. Gently press the object partially into the sand then lift it up carefully, creating an imprint of the object. You have made a sand mould and the imprint of the object is now ready for casting.
  - f. In another disposable container, mix some Plaster of Paris according to the instructions on the packet.
  - g. Gently pour this into the space made in the damp sand.
  - h. Leave to dry for approximately half an hour.
  - i. Remove the hardened plaster from the mould.
  - j. Using a soft paintbrush, brush away the loose sand.
  - k. Set aside to dry completely.
  - l. If desired, you can paint the casting.
6. Using this experience of making a partial casting of an object, speculate as to how the artist made a three-dimensional casting of the rope.

***Please turn over, please (sketch)***  
**by Will French**



**Will French**  
***Please turn over, please (sketch)***  
**2014**  
Chalk on cast concrete  
75 x 45 x 9 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓	✓				
2	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
3	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			
4	✓			✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓	✓				
6	✓			✓	✓	✓				
7	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
8	✓			✓	✓	✓				
9	✓			✓	✓					
10	✓			✓	✓					
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
12	✓		✓	✓	✓					

1. To whom, or what, might the title refer?
2. Images of tombstones, or headstones, are sometimes shown inscribed with the three letters: R.I.P. The artist's text is suggestive of another three-letter acronym: P.T.O. For what do each of these acronyms stand?



*Rest in Peace and Please Turn Over.* The latter is usually associated with the pages of a text.

3. How does this artwork address the exhibition's title, *Safe Space*?
4. Once again, Will has used irony in a title of one of his artworks. Discuss.



Answers may include: perhaps the artist is suggesting that the occupant of the grave should turn over. Maybe the artist is telling the viewer to turn over the stone. The person in the grave may be restless due to regret, unfinished business or a life lived badly.

5. What emotions does this artwork evoke in you? Why?

6. **Debate: The artist intended his artwork to be humorous.**
7. **Choosing your own materials and techniques, create a miniature response to this artwork. Inscribe with your own text to evoke a response from your audience.**
8. **Generally, a tombstone is seen as having permanency. How does this fit with the concept of the artwork being part of a touring exhibition?**



Here again, there is irony in that the artwork is a tombstone that is not intended to move once installed, but it is part of a travelling exhibition.

9. **Name the materials normally used to make tombstones. Why do you think these are preferred materials?**



Answers may include: concrete or stone such as granite and marble.

10. **Suggest some lightweight alternatives for making a tombstone. If the materials are readily available, make a sample tombstone. Which sculptural technique/s is/are best suited to your materials?**
11. **Write a script for an audio/visual/print advertisement to sell your lightweight tombstone. What materials have you used? Why did you choose them? What are the advantages of having a lightweight tombstone? How will you play down the disadvantages? You may wish to record your advertisement.**
12. **This artwork was developed as a 'sketch' or maquette for a finished artwork of the same title, made from terazzo and brass. Search online for an image of this work and compare the two.**













The finished artwork, *Please Turn Over, Please* (2014) can be found online at <https://www.willfrench.com.au/selected-artwork>

# **Self portrait with pickles** **by Will French**



**Will French**  
***Self portrait with pickles***  
**2013**

Hand carved enamel-painted alloy figure, gherkins,  
brine, dill in 1-litre glass jar  
18 x 9 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

QUESTIONS AND TASKS	GENERAL CAPABILITIES							CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES		
										
	LITERACY	NUMERACY	ICT CAPABILITY	CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY	ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING	INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES	ASIA AND AUSTRALIA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ASIA	SUSTAINABILITY
1	✓			✓	✓					
2	✓			✓	✓	✓				
3	✓			✓	✓	✓				
4	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓				
5	✓			✓	✓	✓				
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

1. In this self-portrait, the artist has used four traditional sculptural techniques: carving, modelling, casting and assemblage. Look for these techniques and identify where each is evident in the artwork.
2. Why might Will have chosen pickles to accompany his self-portrait? Can you think of a reason? If not, create a fictional backstory to explain why.
3. The artist makes miniature versions of real objects. Why do you think he does this and how might it affect the way an audience perceives his work?
4. From your perspective, is the jar half full or half empty? Explain your answer.
5. Reflect upon how the artist may have been feeling when he created the artwork and/or what he wanted his audience to consider.
6. In response to Will French's art work, sculpt a small object to put in a jar. The artist carved the original in clay and then cast it in metal. Carve your object from a rectangular bar of inexpensive soap. Before you start, reflect upon what you would like to express to your audience.
  - a. Start with a piece of paper cut to the same size as the largest face of the soap.
  - b. Decide whether you will make a vertical or a horizontal carving.
  - c. Draw a simple outline (e.g. car, dog, mobile phone, flower, shell) on paper then transfer it to the face of your soap.



- d. Carefully begin to scrape, shave and carve along the lines to create the soap sculpture. Your carving tools might include a potato peeler, teaspoon, skewer, ice-block stick, fork, toothbrush or plastic knife.
- e. Round out the figure, turning the sculpture as you work. Be sure to cut away from yourself if you are using sharp tools.
- f. When you have finished carving, polish the soap by wetting a finger and gently smoothing out the surface of the sculpture.
- g. Fine details can be made using a toothpick or metal nail file.
- h. Place your carved object in a jar. Do not add any liquid. (Why?) Choose a jar with which you have some level of connection. For example: a jar of coins, a lolly jar, a jar of coloured sands, a jar of olives, a marble jar, a jam jar, a jar of seashells.
- i. You may wish to add other materials such as sand, pebbles or feathers, or decorate the jar to help convey your message.
- j. Upon completion, ask others to guess your message.