

INGE KING *Blue and yellow*

Inge King (1915–2016) was a leading Australian sculptor. Born in Berlin, King migrated to Melbourne, Australia in 1951 after studying in London and New York, where she was influenced by other abstract artists such as Alexander Calder, Robert Klippel, Henry Moore and Mark Rothko.

King began making sculptural works of art from wood and stone. Early in her career she made jewellery as a means to generate an income. However, after purchasing a welder in 1959 she taught herself how to weld and began creating works of art from steel and aluminium. Although her initial sculptures were rough and textural, King soon simplified her forms and refined her surfaces. As well as exhibiting regularly, King produced numerous public commissions in Australia, including *Forward Surge* (1974) at Melbourne's Victorian Arts Centre, *Sentinel* (2000) on the Eastern Freeway in Melbourne and *Rings of Saturn* (2006) at Heide Museum of Modern Art, in Victoria.

Migrating to Australia had a profound effect on King both personally and professionally. Although she thrived when experimenting with new materials and techniques, she found the Australian cultural environment challenging. King was fascinated by the harsh and unfamiliar Australian bush, which in turn inspired her to create bold monumental forms that contrasted with her new environment.



image: Inge King, Australia, 1915–2016, *Blue and yellow*, 1985, Melbourne, polychrome steel, aluminium, 35.0 x 60.0 x 18.0 cm; South Australian Government Grant 1997, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

DID YOU KNOW?

Although welding is a very physically demanding activity, King was still welding well into her 90s.

RESOURCES

BOOKS

Grishin, S. *The Art of Inge King: Sculptor*, Australian Macmillan Art Publishing, Melbourne, 2014

VIDEOS

Inge King – Thousand Different Angles
<http://bit.ly/2whURuU>

WEBSITES

Sydney Morning Herald – Australian Sculptor Inge King Dies Aged 100
<http://bit.ly/2i9JAHU>

KEY LITERACY WORDS

Abstract	Public art
Balance	Proportion
Composition	Scale
Commission	Sculpture
Maquette	Site specific
Movement	Welding
Negative space	

EARLY YEARS

RESPONDING

Look carefully at *Blue and yellow* by Inge King. How many shapes do you see? Do these shapes remind you of any other objects?

Move around King's sculptures. How do they change when you look at them from different angles?

Invent a new title for King's *Blue and yellow*.

PRIMARY

RESPONDING

Do you think King's sculptures are playful or powerful? Or can they be both? What other words could you use to describe them?

Write a poem about King's work using some of these key words: energy, imagination, power, negative space, movement.

The two circular forms in *Blue and yellow* extend out from its base. Despite being made from a heavy material like steel, the sculpture does not topple to one side. How do you think King achieved this balance?

Although welding is a very physically demanding activity, King was still welding well into her 90s. What activity would you still like to be doing when you are 90 years old?

King created monumental sculptures for public spaces across Australia. What site specific sculptures have you seen in South Australia or interstate that have abstract qualities like King's sculptures?



MAKING

Collect a range of container and lids and small boxes. Select three objects to create your own sculpture. Use glue or tape to hold your sculpture together. Name your sculpture and present your work of art to the class.

MAKING

King stated that '*sculpture is like drawing from a thousand angles*'. Select one of King's sculptures and draw it from at least five different positions.

Look for unusual or irregular shapes in the negative spaces in *Blue and yellow*. Draw these shapes in your sketchbook. Using these shapes as inspiration create a new sculpture from aluminium foil.

King was inspired by the rough and arid nature of the Australian landscape and she created works of art that would sit confidently in their locations. Go on a nature walk and create a series of drawings of native plants. Simplify these drawings onto cardboard. Cut the shapes out and join them together to create a small freestanding abstract sculpture. Experiment with balance and negative space. Rotate the sculpture – is the composition interesting from all angles?

Take note of the shadows cast by King's sculptures. Sometimes shadows created by sculptural works of art are as interesting as the works themselves. Manipulate a piece of wire or pipe cleaner into an interesting composition and arrange it on a white sheet of paper. Use a direct light source to cast shadows on to your paper and trace around the shapes. Move the light source to create a different shadow on your paper. Repeat this process until you are satisfied with the final composition.

image: Inge King, Australia, 1915–2016, *Curves*, 1971 72, Warrandyte, Victoria, steel painted black, 50.0 x 61.0 x 35.5 cm; Gift of Inge King through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2015. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

SECONDARY

RESPONDING

What criteria would we use to judge or assess the skills of an abstract artist?

King was fascinated by the vast Australian landscape. She found the bush intimidating due to its harsh appearance and sought ways to offset this environment by creating large public sculptures that provided counterbalance. Research *Rings of Saturn* (2006) and *Forward Surge* (1973). Discuss how King created a sense of movement using static objects placed within contrasting environments.

After fleeing Germany in the 1940s, King studied at the Abbey Arts Centre in London where she met Australian artist Robert Klippel and British artist Henry Moore. Research these artists and discuss how they may have influenced King's arts practice.

In 1960 King was a founding member of the Centre Five who were a group of Melbourne sculptors who aimed to push contemporary sculpture into the public domain. Research some of the earliest examples of public sculptures in Australia. Were these works of art criticised or welcomed by the public? Has public opinion changed over time? Find other examples of public works of art that have caused controversy in Adelaide.



image: Inge King, Australia, 1915–2016, *Druids*, 1986, Warrandyte, Victoria, polychrome steel, 54.0 x 50.5 x 35.0 cm; Gift of Inge King through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2015. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

MAKING

Make a formal sculpture with cardboard using only folding and cutting.

Propose a public work of art for your school or local council. Consider your proposed site and how your sculpture responds to this environment, like King did. After following the design process, create a maquette from cardboard.

Imagine drawing a rectangle around King's sculptures to create negative spaces. Move around the sculpture and continue to draw the changing shapes.

King began making jewellery before moving into public art. Design a piece of jewellery that draws inspiration from both King's sculptures and the Australian landscape. Using recycled materials such as aluminium cans or cardboard create a prototype of your design.

THINK AND DISCUSS

How does the function of public art differ to the experience of works of art on display in an art gallery?



The Art Gallery of South Australia gratefully acknowledges the support of the Wood Foundation in the development of this resource.

The Gallery's Learning programs are supported by the Department for Education and Child Development.

Information and hyperlinks correct at time of print. Art Gallery of South Australia staff Kylie Neagle and Lisa Slade contributed to the development of this resource.