

Visual Language and Creative Writing

Literacy in the Gallery

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Literacy at AGSA

The F-10 Australian curriculum for English develops students' understanding of how to read, view and interpret texts - understanding how visual elements create meaning as well as create their own texts.

The suggested activities on the following slides respond to works of art in the collection and have links to the following English Sub-strands:

- *Texts in contexts*
- *Interacting with others*
- *Interpreting, analysing, evaluating*
- *Creating Text*

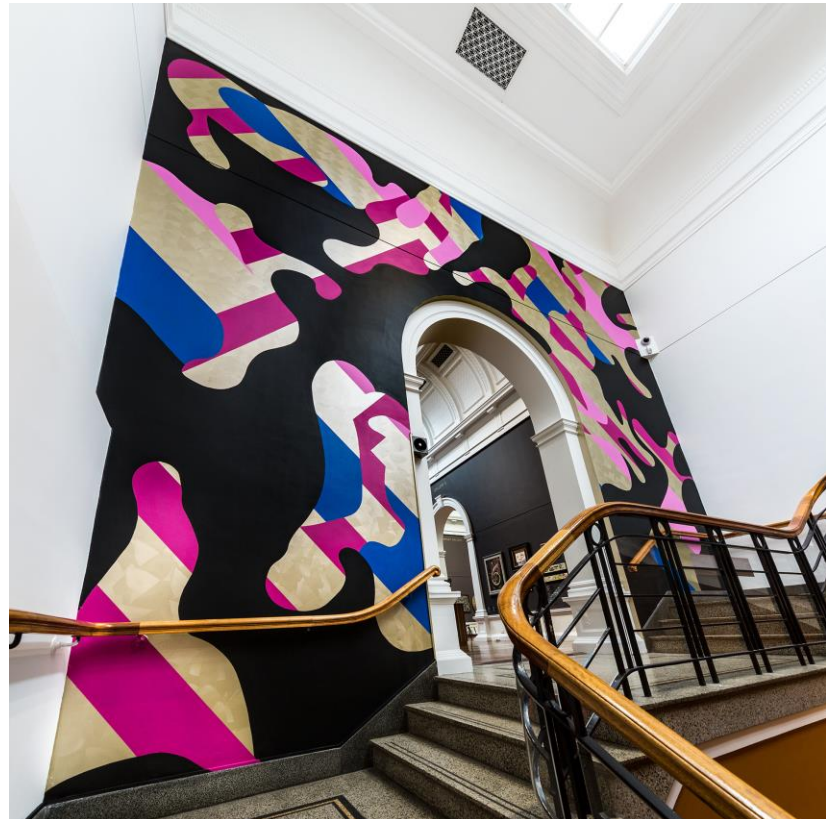


image detail: Reko Rennie, Kamilaroi people, New South Wales, OA_CAMO, Adelaide, 2017; Commissioned for TARNANTHI : Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art supported by BHP 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Courtesy of the artist and blackartprojects, Melbourne, photo: Saul Steed

Nongirrŋa Marawili

Marawili's Country is known for its lightning strikes during the wet season, from November to April. The artist captures the essence and energy of this natural phenomenon. Each painting, with its gestural line work and pulsating organic patterns, is rendered in different coloured natural earth pigments, allowing for a gradation of colour that creates a sense of movement.

Imagine you are one of the elements. Write a story or poem from the perspective of a natural phenomenon.

Marawili uses magenta pigment from discarded printer cartridges. Magenta dye was developed in 1856 and is named after a bloody battle in the Italian town of Magenta. Today the pigment is made using the organic molecule Quinacridone and is found in outdoor paints, inkjet printer ink and laser printer toners.

Investigate the history of pigments. What surprising or unusual stories can you discover? Write a narrative poem about the life of your favourite colour.

Australian Curriculum (CCP & GC):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Literacy – Visual & Word Knowledge (Composing texts)

Sub-strands

Creating texts



Nongirrŋa Marawili, Yolŋu people, Northern Territory, born 1938, Darrpirra, Northern Territory, *Baratjala*, 2019, Yirrkala, Northern Territory, earth pigments, recycled print toner pigment on stringybark, 202.0 x 96.0 cm; © Nongirrŋa Marawili/Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre.

Dorrit Black

The Bridge captures the energy of work in progress. Compare *The Bridge* to other representations of the same or similar subjects by Grace Cossington Smith, Max Dupain and Harold Cazneaux.

What elements and design principles have been used to capture the energy of modern Australia?

Sub-strands

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating



Dorrit Black, Australia, 1891 - 1951, *The Bridge*, 1930, Sydney, oil on canvas on board, 60.0 x 81.0 cm; Bequest of the artist 1951, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Christian Thompson



image: Christian Thompson, Bidjara people, Queensland, born 1978, Gawler, South Australia, Purified by fire, 2017, c-type print on Fuji metallic pearl paper, 120.0 x 120.0 cm; Courtesy the artist, Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne, Michael Reid Gallery, Sydney and Berlin

Songlines are an important way Aboriginal people preserve their history and pass down knowledge to younger generations. Combined with dance and objects, Songlines become a significant memory technique to recall information.

What are some techniques you use to remember important information?

Devise your own strategy for remembering something important to you – perhaps a series of special dates or the journey to an unfamiliar destination. Use a combination of song, rhymes, objects or movement to build your strategy.

Australian Curriculum (CCP & GC):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Literacy – Visual & Word Knowledge (Composing texts)

Sub-strands

Text in context (language features)

Richard Lewer

Brainstorm what it means to be Australian. Make a list of things which are iconic to Australia. What features in Lewer's painting are typically Australian?

Label each panel with a different word you think best summarises what you see. Write your nine words in a single line. Share your words with the class.

Sub-strands

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Identify the major events in each of Lewer's panels. Research one of these significant events. What changes occurred during this time? How did these changes impact people, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and the natural environment?

'Australia' is just over 200 years old but scientific evidence tells us that Aboriginal people have been here for at least 50,000 years. Why do you think the majority of events depicted in *The History of Australia* are from the last 200 years?



Richard Lewer, Australia, born 1970, *The history of Australia*, 2017, Melbourne, oil on steel, copper and brass, 141.0 x 720.0 cm (overall); Gift of Helen Bowden 2018, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Courtesy the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide, photo: Andrew Curtis.

Tamara Dean



Tamara Dean, Australia, born 1976, *Reflection*, from the series *Ritualism*, 2009, Tumut, New South Wales, inkjet print, 75.0 x 100.0 cm (image); Gift of the artist through the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2018. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gift Program, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, © Tamara Dean.

Select your favourite painting by Tamara Dean and write a story to accompany it.

Imagine removing your shoes and stepping inside one of Dean's photographs. What would this environment feel like underfoot? What might this place smell like? What sounds would you hear? Share your responses with the class.

Australian Curriculum Links (GC):

- Literacy – Visual & Word Knowledge (Composing texts)

Sub-strands

Interacting with others

Creating texts

Ben Quilty (primary)

Find a glossary of words used to describe food. Using words from this glossary, write a story or poem that describes Quilty's paintings.

Australian Curriculum Links (GC):

- Literacy – Visual & Word Knowledge (Composing texts)

Sub-strands

Creating texts



Ben Quilty, Australia, born 1973, *The lot*, 2006, Bowral, New South Wales, oil on canvas, 150.0 x 160.0 cm; Gift of Ben Quilty through the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2016. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Courtesy the artist.

Ben Quilty (secondary)

Official war artists are commissioned by the Australian War Memorial and play a significant role in Australia's interpretation of wartime history. Investigate Australian war artists who have been commissioned under this scheme since the First World War to today. How has their role and style changed over time?

Images of war flood our television, newspapers and social media feeds. Why is the role of war artists still relevant? Divide the class and conduct a debate with the topic '*The Australian War Memorial needs to continue funding for official war artists*'. Use a variety of artists to support your arguments for and against.

Discuss the following statement: '*Artists have the power to portray the chaos, calamity and reality of war*'. Use works of art by Quilty and other war artists to support your argument.



Ben Quilty, Australia, born 1973, *Captain S, after Afghanistan*, 2012, Southern Highlands, New South Wales, oil on linen, 210.0 x 230.0 cm; Private Collection, Courtesy the artist

Sub-strands

Interpreting, analysing, evaluating

Text in Context

Interacting with others

Curiosity Cards

- Cross disciplinary opportunities
- Formative learning
- Develop critical and creative thinking
- Spark curiosity, create life long learners
- If children can unpack works of art they can unpack ANY visual information.

Available for \$14.95 from the Gallery Store



New Programs for 2020

Dancing in the Gallery

Our program *Dancing in the Gallery* is a great way to incorporate multiple arts learning areas into a visit to the Gallery. Students will respond to works of art through the medium of dance, manipulating movement to create meaning individually and in collaboration with their peers.

Writing in the Gallery

Using works of art as a prompt, students will be led through a series of writing exercises designed to delve into their imagination and extend their critical thinking skills.

Visit the website for booking details



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ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

photo: Nat Rogers

Teacher Resources

[AGSA online interpretive resources](#)

A variety of resources responding to works of art in the collection

[AGSA for educators](#)

Professional development sessions held throughout the year

[AGSA online collection](#)

Range of high resolution images to use as prompts in the classroom

[Sound Cloud – AGSA Account](#)

Archive of artist and curator talks

Education resources have been developed by AGSA Education in collaboration Dr Lisa Slade, Assistant Director, Artistic Programs and Kylie Neagle, Education Officer. Education programs at AGSA are supported by the Government of South Australia through the Department for Education.

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