



***Rhythms of the Earth: Selected Works from
the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection***

Curated by Victoria Lynn

EDUCATION KIT

How to use this kit

This Education Kit has been developed to support learning alongside the exhibition *Rhythms of the Earth: Selected Works from the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection*, curated by Victoria Lynn. The content of this Education Kit is created for Year 10 students through to VCE and tertiary students, and for primary and secondary school teachers to select and adapt these questions and support materials for learning experiences in the classroom.

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Front Cover: Mandy Martin
Romantic Coastal Landscape 1986
oil on canvas
180 x 240 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2013

Acknowledgement of Country

This exhibition is presented on the lands and waters of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. TarraWarra Museum of Art acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the original custodians of this land, and we extend our respect to their community, their Ancestors, and their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Exhibition Introduction

Rhythms of the Earth: Selected Works from the TarraWarra Museum of Art Collection

Curated by Victoria Lynn

Earth encompasses terrain, flora, fauna, geology and climate. It is a cosmological concept, one that reaches to the sky and deep beneath the ground. The Earth has its rhythms—albeit irregular and at times volatile—as do the myriad visual productions made in response to this dynamic restlessness. Artistic interpretations of our landscapes have arguably been the most persistent form of artmaking in Australia. For millennia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have represented their integral connection to Country not only through dance, song and artmaking, but also through direct engagement with the walls and forms of ancient rock faces. Since colonisation, artists have been inspired to experiment with and respond to the diverse geological environments in our midst: deserts, dense foliage, mountain scapes, coastal waters and rivers.

Rhythms of the Earth draws on works from TarraWarra Museum of Art's permanent collection, celebrating leading figures in Australian art who have explored the rhythms of the Earth—Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Angelina Pwerle, Judy Watson, Rover Thomas, John Mawurndjul, Fred Williams, John Olsen, Mandy Martin, Brett Whiteley, Arthur Boyd, Godfrey Miller, and William Robinson. The exhibition also includes artists who have more specifically observed humanity's relationship to environments ravaged by drought, such as Russell Drysdale; the impact of industrialisation on the landscape, in the case of Robert Juniper and Jeffrey Smart; and the devastating effect that introduced species have on our ecosystems in the works of Clifton Pugh.

Artist & Key Artworks: Emily Kame Kngwarreye



Emily Kame Kngwarreye
Kame Colour IV 1995
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.0 x 122.0 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO 2001
© Emily Kame Kngwarreye/Copyright Agency, 2022

Renowned for her colourful and vibrant paintings, Emily Kngwarreye chronicled on canvas the ever-changing desert country of her homeland Alhalkere. Located at the western edge of Utopia this triangular shaped country was where Emily was born and where she lived in the traditional ways of the eastern Anmatyerr, following a way of life that had continued unchanged from long before European presence. Her mark making recorded the seasonal variations, sometimes subtle, often dramatic, of the harsh desert environment and the explosion of growth that occurred after rain. Referred to by Emily as the 'green time', the desert would come to life, wildflowers carpeting the red earth and plants and grasses flourishing, supplying the women with seeds, tubers and fruit.

Kame Colour, 1995, records the cyclical change as desert plants bloom after summer rains. Dots merge, separate and fuse into various configurations creating lines of colour. It is a time of ceremony and of the harvesting of wild fruits and vegetables. As Janet Holt notes, this painting records a time when 'life erupts and spreads forth' and the 'energy that exudes from this composition is undeniably strong with the palette highlighting the colours of the yam flower Kame', Emily Kngwarreye's totem. With its cascading layers of red, yellow, pink, white and orange lines, *Kame Colour* is a celebration of nature at its most potent.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Use descriptive language to describe the rhythms and gestures that are reflected in Emily Kame Kngwarreye's painting *Kame Colour IV*, 1995.
- What might the black painted background beneath the vibrant lines of painted colour symbolise?

Artist & Key Artwork: Angelina Pwerle



Angelina Pwerle
Bush Plum 2008
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
200x 126 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Purchased 2009
© Angelina NgaiPwerle/Copyright Agency, 2022

Angelina Pwerle lives and works in Camel Camp, Utopia, Northern Territory. She began producing batik works in 1986 alongside many of the women artists living at Utopia. When canvas and acrylic paint were introduced to her community, she worked solely in this medium. Angelina's work is predominantly concerned with bush plum dreaming. It is most often characterised by intense areas of dotting. She often uses a wooden skewer to create the tiny dots, that undulate in soft rhythms of alternating intensity across the surface, suggesting an infinitesimal notion of the cosmos. The pulsating energy in this painting suggests the life force of the bush plum dreaming. Bush plum is an Indigenous plant. The bush grows to about three metres in height and the flowers are small creamy-white with four petals. The fruit is olive-like in appearance, beginning as green and changing to purple and then black when they ripen. The fruit are eaten fresh or soaked in water if they are dry. At times the kernels were roasted and then ground to make an edible paste. The paste could also be used as a healing liniment. The fruit has also been used as a source of natural dye.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Describe how Angelina Pwerle's painting *Bush Plum*, 2008, represents both a micro and a macro view of Country where bush plum plants flower and ripen.
- Describe the different ways Angelina Pwerle and Emily Kame Ngwarreye have represented their Country in their paintings. Compare this with the approach to landscape painting by Arthur Boyd and Brett Whiteley who are also represented in this Education Kit.

Artist & Key Artwork: Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri



Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri
Kangaroo Hunters Hiding at Mt. Allan 1980
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
122 x 120 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2013
© estate of the artist | Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, (circa 1932–2002, Anmatyerr language group) was born at Napperby Station, north-west of Alice Springs. Like many Western Desert artists, Possum Tjapaltjarri worked as a stockman from his teenage years until he became one of the founding members at Papunya Tula Artists in 1972. He had already been painting and carving in the 1960s before he created some of Australia's most renowned large-scale paintings depicting sites across Central Australia. Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's work centres on his Country—the Central Desert—punctuated by the ancestral trails. Distinguished by the steady rhythm of a geometric style, his is a cartographic representation of Country, which has been remembered through generations of mind-mapping—through sacred designs and songs. Marcia Langton has written, "these paintings are themselves ritual invocations of ancient peoples and places which are sensed and revered by the present-day inheritors of these art traditions". In the work, *Kangaroo Hunters Hiding at Mt. Allan*, we see a sacred site—perhaps a hunting ground or water hole—in the centre of the canvas, surrounded by markings that represent the tools for hunting.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri is renowned for mapping and representing ancestral sites across the Central Desert in his paintings. Closely observe the animal and human tracks that are evident in *Kangaroo Hunters Hiding at Mt. Allan*, 1980. Use your imagination and describe the terrain that Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri has represented in this painting.
- What do you think are the tools used by the kangaroo hunters and represented in the repeated, geometric groups of markings in this painting?
- Marcia Langton describes Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri's paintings as: "... ritual invocations of ancient peoples and places ..." Why do you think it important that these types of rituals are passed on to future generations of First Nations people?

Artist & Key Artwork: Arthur Boyd



Arthur Boyd
Variation 1982
oil on composition board
149.5 x 121.2 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001
© Bundanon Trust

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd purchased a run-down property, Riversdale, in a small valley next to the Shoalhaven River in 1973 and moved there in 1975. A few years later they purchased the nearby property, Bundanon. Gifted to the Australian government in 1993, Riversdale and Bundanon have since been transformed into a learning centre, museum and artist-in-residence program. From their living room, they could see the river, and experience the changes of seasons, times of day, the skies and native bush. The area continued to inspire the artist until his death. Boyd painted the rockfaces, waterfalls and scrubby bush that nestled the river. Rather than being an exact depiction of nature, the Shoalhaven Riverbank was used as a springboard for his own exploration of the allegorical. Its arid and impenetrable geometry are depicted as a sublime entity, the waterfall cascading with daunting force.

Student Prompt

Observe this painting carefully, and use art vocabulary and descriptive language to describe the:

- colours, landscape forms and features, the weather and season, the time of day, the mood and any signs of climate impacts on this painted landscape.

Artist & Key Artwork: Brett Whiteley



Brett Whiteley
Australia 1970–1974
oil, charcoal, dried reed, eucalypt branch,
rubber snake, taxidermied Scaly-breasted
Lorikeet, collage and plaster on plywood
203.0 x 324.5 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2008
© Wendy Whiteley

In 1974, Brett Whiteley completed the large-scale painting *Australia*. The densely populated cityscape of Sydney precariously clings to the coastline, as if on the edge of the world. The curvilinear tangle of eucalyptus branches and trees suggest the sinuous lines of the female body that distinguishes many of his works. On the other side of the trees is a portrayal of the Australian desert, featuring images of two Aboriginal men and a range of Indigenous plants and animals. The exploitation of the land is hinted at by a large tap emerging from the ground out of which oil flows freely.

Painted almost fifty years ago, it might seem curious that Whiteley is drawing on tourist images of Australia—such as Bondi Beach, the Opera House, gum trees and kangaroos. It is difficult to know if the intention of the work is to fully celebrate the Australian experience—the land and its icons—embracing the Northern hemisphere perspective that we are located 'on the edge of the world', or if the work embodies a wry critique of the ways in which Australia markets itself to a burgeoning global trade, with the inclusion of identifiable corporations such as Coco Cola, Pan Am, Dunlop and Fiat. The assemblage of a real branch together with a real parrot, in combination with the more familiar icons indicate Whiteley's concern for the ways in which our cities and land were being increasingly globalised at the time.

Student Prompts

Brett Whiteley has used mixed media to create the artwork *Australia*. Observe this painting closely and list the images and forms that have been created with these different art mediums and techniques: drawing, painting, collage, and sculptural techniques.

Often an artist is reluctant to convey in words the meaning or intentions of their artwork, preferring to leave this interpretation for the viewer to construct. A title nonetheless can give us clues about the artist's intention. Create your own narrative or interpretation of Brett Whiteley's *Australia*, 1970–74.

Artist & Key Artwork: Mandy Martin



Mandy Martin
Romantic Coastal Landscape 1986
oil on canvas
180 x 240 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2013

Painted immediately after her series of brooding, industrial landscapes, Mandy Martin's *Romantic Coastal Landscape* adopts a tradition that, tellingly, coincided with the early Industrial Revolution. From a distance, the painting contains many of the characteristics one would expect from its title, a remote and rugged scene in which we are exposed to the dynamic interplay between the elemental forces of sea, sky and land.

In this imposing scene, human scale dwindles into insignificance amidst the rocky outcrops and eroded escarpments worn down over millennia by the ever-lapping tide, while threatening, Turner-esque storm clouds encroach along the horizon.

Closer inspection of its materiality reveals how Martin accentuates the tactile qualities of these elements, employing rich impasto and modelled paint layers to evoke the eroded surfaces of these ancient cliff faces, adding mixed media such as sand (and possibly earth) to suggest geological sedimentation, and allowing solvent to run over and dissolve the blue pigment to mirror the shimmering, reflective properties of the tidal water. In this Romantic reimagining of a primordial stretch of coast, Martin seems to ask whether—in the widely despoiled landscape of the late 20th century—such vistas of a seemingly unsullied environment have maintained their capacity to inspire awe and wonder in the viewer. Or is the situation more uncertain and illusory?

Student Questions and Prompts

- Describe your emotional response to this landscape painting *Romantic Coastal Landscape*. What pictorial elements and forms in this painting have influenced this emotional response?
- Does this coastal landscape feel romantic to you? Please explain your response.
- Mandy Martin has used the technique of impasto to create the surface and texture in this painting, using soil, sand, pigments and solvents mixed into the paint. Imagine and list which sections or forms in this landscape have been created using this impasto technique. Explain why you have made these choices.

Artist & Key Artwork: Fred Williams



Fred Williams
You Yangs III 1963
oil and tempera on composition board
133.4 x 176.8 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program
2008
© Estate of Fred Williams

By the late 1960s, Fred Williams was already widely acknowledged as one of this country's most significant artists. His highly innovative and uncompromising vision of the Australian bush completely dismantled traditional perspectives on the landscape. Re-visioning the tenets of abstraction, the picture plane of his canvas became a field for formal invention upon which he elaborated and orchestrated his concise considerations on the Australian terrain. Whether it was the claustrophobic environments of dense forest in the Sherbrooke series or the vast, open plains of scattered scrub in his *You Yangs* paintings, Williams translated his observations of the unruly, unpicturesque and often repetitive character of these landscapes into remarkably tactile paintings that eloquently evoke the experiential qualities of each place. Each of his paintings displayed here has a different pace and rhythm, ranging from intense and forceful to a sparse almost melodic energy.

Student Questions and Prompts

Research images of the *You Yangs* on the web and/or on Google Earth. Describe what viewpoint Fred Williams has used to paint this landscape representation of the *You Yangs*.

Create an imaginary map legend to list the abstract landscape forms that Fred Williams has painted in *You Yangs III*, 1963.

Artist & Key Artwork: John Olsen



John Olsen
Country Life Rydal 1998
oil on canvas
121.0 x 150.8 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of the artist 2003
Courtesy of the artist

John Olsen paints the Australian landscape with a sense of *joie de vivre*, celebrating its light, the native flora and fauna and the entangled lines of its bush landscape. He lived in Spain during the late 1950s at a time of the rise of European abstraction, and like many artists of his generation, was also influenced by non-Western philosophy and literature. Olsen's art shuttles between the abstract and the figurative with a Vitalist energy. Meandering lines can suddenly form into an image of an emu, or a fish, or dance around the intrepid sun. The works seem to be in a constant state of flux and flow. Our eye never rests in front of a work by Olsen. The sprawling asymmetry of these paintings signal a passion for the unregulated nature of the Australian bush and the harsh heat bestowed on it by the sun.

Student Questions and Prompts

- What figurative forms or symbols can you identify in John Olsen's painting *Country Life Rydal*, 1998?
- Why do you think John Olsen has titled this painting *Country Life Rydal*?

Artist & Key Artworks: Judy Watson



From left to right:

Judy Watson
mt donna buang 2016
pencil and synthetic polymer paint
on canvas
242 x 147 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of the artist 2021
Donated through the Australian
Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2021

Judy Watson
mt riddell 2016
pencil and synthetic polymer paint
on canvas
240 x 148 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of the artist 2021
Donated through the Australian
Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2021



Judy Watson
mt juliet 2016
pencil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas
242 x 148 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of the artist 2021
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Judy Watson's Aboriginal matrilineal family are from Waanyi country in north-west Queensland and her process involves working with stories and memories of Indigenous Country. In 2016 Watson created a specially commissioned installation and suite of paintings in response to the Museum's location in the Yarra Valley. Following lines of emotional and physical topography that centre on particular places and moments in time, she focused on the history of Coranderrk Aboriginal Station near Healesville (1863–1924), working with Wurundjeri educator Brooke Wandin and Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin AO. Watson created a series of paintings based on the contours of prominent mountains of the Yarra Ranges, invoking both the rhythmic and detailed work of the scarifier as it followed the plough and incised the landscape during the historic period of Coranderrk, along with a topographic view of Country.

Student Questions and Prompts

- In the 2016 paintings *mt donna buang*, *mt juliet* and *mt riddell*, Judy Watson has used google maps to research and represent the contour lines of these mountains of the Yarra Ranges.
- Why do you think Judy Watson has created these contoured topographical paintings without the vegetation that usually covers these landscapes?

Artist & Key Artwork: Rover Thomas



Rover Thomas
Bedford Downs 1984
earth pigment on composition board
122 x 183 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001
© Rover Thomas/Copyright Agency, 2022

Born circa 1926 at Gunawaggi near Well 33 on the Canning Stock Route in the Great Sandy Desert of Western Australia, Rover Thomas is one of Australia's most significant artists.

He was of the Wangkajunga people on his father's side, and Kukatja on his mother's side. From a Kimberley perspective, he belonged to the Joolama language group. From the age of ten until he settled at Warmun, Turkey Creek, in 1975, he worked as a stockman at various pastoral stations. He was fully initiated into Aboriginal lore. In 1975 he had a visitation from a female relative killed in a car accident nearby. She related to Rover that she gave in to her injuries at the site of the whirlpool off the coast of Derby. The whirlpool is commonly believed to be the home of the ancestral creation spirit, the Rainbow Serpent. Over the next two decades, he and his uncle Paddy Jaminji,

produced paintings about this Kurirr Kurirr ceremony, given to him by his female relative.

This painting uses ochres found by the artist within the earth that he depicted. Bound with local tree gums, the surface is very fragile, expressing an almost velvet-like appearance. Sparsely decorated with line and dots, the painting refers to specific land fall on Bedford Downs Station. Thomas's works express the topographical, spiritual and parched desert landscape as a place of great strength and ancestral belonging.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Research images on the web and/or on Google Earth of the Kimberley at Bedford Downs Station, Derby, The Great Sandy Desert, Warmun Art Centre and Fitzroy Crossing, Country where Rover Thomas lived and travelled.
- What do you think the symbols in the painting *Bedford Downs*, 1984 represent? Remember your response is less about creating a right answer, and more about letting yourself inquire to learn about Rover Thomas's Country and culture.

From the age of 10, Rover Thomas settled at Warmun, in Turkey Creek. Today, one may visit the Warmun Art Centre, which was established by Rover Thomas, Queenie McKenzie, and other significant Aboriginal Elders who founded this ongoing painting movement.

- Research the Warmun Art Centre at <https://warmunart.com.au/about/> to learn more about this painting movement, and the artworks that are created by this community.
- Reflect on the visual research you have done of the Country around Warmun in the Kimberley. Choose a few artists represented by the Warmun Art Centre and describe how these artists represent their Country in their artworks. Consider the colours, symbols and compositions that are used as well as the titles that have been given to these artworks.

Artist & Key Artworks: Russell Drysdale



Russell Drysdale
The Boresinker and His Daughter 1964
oil on canvas
75.0 x 125.9 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2008
© Estate of Russell Drysdale

The depiction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australian landscape painting has a long and colonial history. Often First Peoples were depicted as part of the natural flora and fauna, relegating them to a status of 'otherness'. Drysdale's paintings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people focused on individuals with whom he spent considerable time. Tinged with a sense of both realism and romanticism, he expressed his view in 1956 after witnessing traditional ceremonies on Melville Island:

... in a way these people, they not only have to me a particular dignity and grace ... the way in which a man comports himself in an environment which is his and has

been his and his along, he's at ease in it ... they become part if you like, and yet they're not part of a landscape, they do stand out.

Drysdale's observations find expression in paintings such as *The Boresinker and His Daughter*, in which he merges part of the figure with the landscape whereby his hat and left shoulder are presented as a continuation of the black peaks of the rock formations behind.

Student Questions

Research and analyse images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in early colonial Australian landscape painting. Compare the techniques Russell Drysdale has used to create a more personal and intimate representation of the First Nations people in this painting *The Boresinker and His Daughter*, 1964. Consider the composition, the foreground and background and the colours, mood and narrative in this painting.



Russell Drysdale
Evening c. 1945
oil on canvas
50 x 60.5 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2013
© Estate of Russell Drysdale

The art of Russell Drysdale defined a particular image of the Australian outback: remote, drought-stricken and sparsely populated. This image was iconic and popular, and it became a national representation that other artists have both returned to and reassessed. His visions of isolated structures, gnarled and twisted tree trunks, barren hills, dusty vistas and solid, isolated figures represent the endurance of both the landscape and its inhabitants. Glowing with warm browns, reds, blacks and ochres, his paintings often depict people at the edge of society and at the border of a town. These works are not simple transpositions of scenes of country life. They are, instead, careful compositions drawn from decades of journeys in the Australian bush. Drysdale travelled to Cape York, Melville Island, and through the Northern Territory, spending months at a time in remote locations.

Student Prompts

Use your imagination and compose a poem or narrative about the figure depicted in this painting *Evening*, c. 1945. Consider the climate, the daily life of this person, the landscape and its remoteness that are reflected in this painting. Share your poem or narrative with your class community.

Artist & Key Artwork: Robert Juniper



Robert Juniper
Rock Pools on the Helena 1981
oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas
triptych, overall: 166.0 x 362.4 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001
Courtesy of the artist

Robert Juniper spent his early childhood as a 'pipeline gypsy' as his father worked as an itinerant maintenance welder along the C.Y. O'Connor pipeline. This pipeline was built between 1898 and 1903 pumping water from the area of the Helena River to the Goldfields of Western Australia. The pipeline features in *Rock Pools on the Helena*. In this tender and lyrical painting, the landscape is divided into three panels. On the left hand panel,

we see the rocks, pools and trees along the banks of the river, each painted with a soft brushwork that evokes the delicacy of the scene. Nature is depicted without interference of human beings. In the central panel, figures meander through the rocks, one having thrown a pebble into the surface of the water to create a concentric ripple. Their shape and form are at one with the angular rocks. The third panel shows the ways in which a road has been carved through the landscape, the boulders have been moved to the edge, and the pipeline works its way awkwardly alongside the road. As Elwyn Lynn has suggested, the rock pools are black triangles that add a 'funereal note'. Rather than a strident protest, Lynn suggests that Juniper's painting is 'full of tender regret'. Indeed, Juniper's depiction is tinged with both familial reminiscence and an environmental lament.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Robert Juniper has created a landscape that has been altered by the impact of human interference with the natural forms and rhythms of this landscape. Closely observe the three different panels that depict *Rock Pools on the Helena*, 1981, and describe the changes in the landscape affected by human impact or interference.
- Why do you think Robert Juniper has painted this painting with the restricted colour palette that he has used? Consider the sky, water, tree foliage and other features in the landscape in your response.

Artist & Key Artwork: Clifton Pugh



Clifton Pugh
Memory of a Feral Cat 1960
oil on composition board
91.0 x 137.1 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001

Clifton Pugh's engagement with landscape extended further than most artists. A deep-seated concern for the natural environment and native flora and fauna not only formed a major preoccupation of his artistic practice, it saw him become an early and devoted environmental activist. In 1951, the artist purchased a fifteen-acre block of land at Cottles Bridge, forty kilometres north-east of Melbourne, the site on which a new artist's community dubbed 'Dunmoochin' (a pun on the Australian slang phrase 'done with moochin' around') was formed. Living and working in this landscape, Pugh observed

up close the devastating impact and invasiveness of introduced species, and this understanding soon translated into an ongoing series of paintings which confront the viewer with their stark imagery of a compromised ecology.

Memory of a Feral Cat vividly recreates Pugh's direct experience of sighting such creatures in the bush. As the artist was well aware, left to fend for itself in the wild, the strayed or abandoned domestic cat quickly adapts to its new environment where it becomes an adept predator who wreaks havoc on populations of small native mammals, birds and reptiles. Appearing front and centre in a close up view of a tract of scrub, the lean, angular form of the striped feline stands poised with its sharp claws extended, while its wide, nonchalant gaze points directly back at the viewer, as if we have intruded on its territory. As the artist James Gleeson has observed, Pugh was unflinching and uncompromising in his endeavour to present his firsthand experience of the landscape awry, depicting the bush as 'a battlefield' full of 'tension and conflict'.

Student Questions

- What natural occurrence might have recently taken place in *Memory of a Feral Cat*, 1960, for Clifton Pugh to choose this palette of tonal colours in this landscape?
- Why do you think Clifton Pugh has painted this feral cat in this landscape after this natural occurrence has taken place?
- What do you think we should do to manage the big population of feral cats living and hunting in the Australian bush?

Artist & Key Artwork: Philip Wolfhagen



Philip Wolfhagen
Night Beacon V 2005
oil and beeswax on canvas
201.3 x 214.6 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Purchased 2005
Courtesy of the artist

Living and working in the Tasmanian countryside, Philip Wolfhagen derives constant inspiration from his immersion in and connection to these natural surrounds. *Night Beacon V* is one of numerous series which he has worked through to explore the distinctive features and qualities of the Tasmanian landscape. As in many of his works, we are presented with a distant view of slightly indeterminate topography where the lines between the land, hills, and sky are not sharply defined. It is a quiet nocturne whose stillness is broken by the strange appearance of a fire-like flare of glowing red and orange which faintly illuminates a lone homestead huddled in the vast undulating tract of land. The light source actually comes from a set of car headlights, which for anyone who has driven through the bush at night, can be quite an eerie and even unsettling experience as the tangled forms of trees and scrub temporarily flash before one's eyes.

Through a variety of techniques, Wolfhagen deliberately draws attention to the painterly qualities of his works, creating tension between the illusion of a space for the viewer's gaze to roam and the recognition of this as a construct. By refraining from painting to the edge of his canvases, he acknowledges the limitations of representation. A palette knife is used to apply oil paint mixed with beeswax in thick swathes adding to what the artist describes as 'the sculptural presence of the painting as an object'. Informed by Minimalist abstraction, the limited palette, nuanced gradation of colour, and diffused, softened light, enhance the painting's ambience and mystique which are the essence of Wolfhagen's sublime landscapes.

Student Questions and Prompts

- List the limited palette of colours that Wolfhagen has used in *Night Beacon V*, 2005. In your own words describe the effect this limited palette has on the ambience, ambiguity and subtle narrative that is conveyed in this painting.
- Does this painting have any relationship to a cinematic image? Please explain your answer.

Artist & Key Artwork: William Robinson



William Robinson
Purling Brook Escarpment 2005
oil on canvas
128.5 x 183.6 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2008
© William Robinson

Since the mid-1980s, when the artist and his family first moved to a property in the Gold Coast hinterland of Queensland, William Robinson has been creatively entangled with the dense rainforest environments of this region. In his paintings the natural world appears to be in a state of constant metamorphosis, reflecting the artist's continuing and changing observations of place. A distinctive feature of Robinson's landscapes is their unconventional composition which depict multiple points of view simultaneously. In *Purling Brook*

Escarpment, this multidimensional perspective confronts the viewer with a sense of both enclosure within a steep, plunging gully of abundant trees and foliage, and disorientation, as the sky and ground undergo multiple inversions. For the artist, this sense of fluctuation and instability is one that he has come to understand from living close to nature and witnessing its rhythms unfold both spatially and temporally.

For Robinson, his time in the landscape has not only transformed his understanding of the larger cycles of the cosmos, but also enhanced his appreciation for its minutiae of forms and textures. With a rich palette of delicate impasto paint work, he treats each discrete tree fern frond and drooping eucalyptus leaf with the same intimate attention to detail, conveying his appreciation for their small but intrinsic presence within this complex ecology. Looking up to the revolving sky through the tangled foliage and towering canopy of this sprawling web of interacting lifeforms, the viewer is drawn to contemplate the grandeur of this ancient forest and instilled with a sense of reverence for its numinous beauty.

Student Questions

- How do the multiple points of views or perspectives that Robinson has used in *Purling Brook Escarpment*, 2005, make you feel when you look at this painting? Do you feel you are looking down at the landscape or, are you positioned in the landscape, or both?
- Where is the water and the sky in this landscape painting?

Artist & Key Artwork: Godfrey Miller



Godfrey Miller
Forest c. 1957–1961
oil and pencil on canvas
52.0 x 42.3 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of EvaBesen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2009
©Estate of John Henshaw. Courtesy of Charles Nodrum Gallery

The art of Godfrey Miller is characterised by multifaceted compositions, where line and colour intersect in a rhythmic structure within the works. Based loosely on landscapes, these works pulsate with a quiet energy, seeking to evoke the transcendent character of the natural world. At times they glow with a colourful luminosity, as if lit from within. The artist said: 'When you have solid things you have no unity, when you draw them out to their parts you leap from solidness to an openness, a web or lattice.' Miller's work was informed by his lifelong study and absorption of Theosophical principles, sacred geometry, speculative science and mathematics and Eastern and Western cosmologies. Miller sought a spiritual dimension in his work, in which all matter is inextricably connected and integrated into a tremulous dynamism.

Student Questions and Prompts

- Using art vocabulary, describe the art elements and geometric forms Godfrey Miller has used to create this painting titled *Forest*, c. 1957–1961.
- Godfrey Miller artwork was heavily influenced by speculative science and mathematics as well as Eastern and Western philosophies and spirituality. Can you perceive any of these influences in *Forest*? Try to explain your answer.

Artist & Key Artwork: John Mawurndjul



John Mawurndjul
Mardayin Design 2002
natural earth pigments on stringybark
170 x 60 cm
TarraWarra Museum of Art collection
Gift of Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AO.
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program 2013
© John Mawurndjul/Copyright Agency, 2022

John Mawurndjul was born in freshwater country in Arnhem Land in 1952 and lived in his home community Mumeka, which was established by his father as one of the first outstations for the Kuninjku language group. In 1992–93 he was able to establish his own new outstation at Milmilngkan adjacent to a sacred waterhole on his own clan lands. Bark painting is a significant form of expression and perhaps uniquely associated with Aboriginal artists. In 1963, bark painting was used by the Yolngu people of Eastern Arnhem Land to state their rights in the form of the Yirrkala Bark Petition.

Known for his meticulous use of cross-hatching or rarrk, Mawurndjul harvests bark, wood and ochre from his Country to create works that express the cultural authority of Aboriginal people. This work depicts the secret Mardayin ceremony in a way that he sees as a 'kind of magic'. He has explicitly stated that the designs he has painted are not exactly the same as ceremonial paintings. Luke Taylor writes:

'The designs can be read in multiple ways. They were first created by the original Djang, the bodies of these beings glistened with the iridescence of these designs. When Djang sunk into the ground to create important waterholes the Mardayin power became fused with the earth and was covered by its waters. The ceremony draws this power out into the world... At one level the designs can be read as Ancestral landscape, at another level, as showing the features of the body of the Ancestor itself, and still further as revealing parts of the inside of the initiate's body.'
(Luke Taylor, 'Enthusiastic Spirit', *Between Earth and Sky*, TarraWarra Museum of Art, 2015)

Student Prompts

- Reflect on the artworks of Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Judy Watson, Rover Thomas and John Mawurndjul in this Education Kit. Summarise the different approaches and media these artists used to create their artworks.
- Research and describe the parallels that can be made between the Yirrkala Bark Petitions from 1963 and the Uluru Statement from the Heart from 2017.

Support Materials

Links:

<https://www.twma.com.au/exhibitions/rhythms-of-the-earth/>

Curriculum Links

VICTORIAN CURRICULUM

VISUAL ARTS

Foundation

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination to create visual artworks (VCAVAE017)

- viewing a range of artworks with a common theme or subject matter, and make their own interpretations based on their experiences, observations and/or imagination
- identifying and using visual conventions in their artworks after investigating different art, craft and design styles from other cultures and times, for example, and styles from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and Asia

Visual Arts Practices

Experiment with different materials and techniques to make artworks (VCAVAV018)

- exploring a range of materials and technologies to visually express their experiences, for example, paint, pencils, ink and photography

Present and Perform

Create and display artworks (VCAVAP019)

- viewing an exhibition at a gallery and museum and discussing the expression of ideas in the artworks exhibited.

Respond and Interpret

Respond to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks (VCAVAR020)

- identifying the subject matter of a series of artworks based on the same theme
- identifying how design elements, such as line, shape, colour or texture, are used in their artworks and in the artworks of others
- identifying and describing the expression of ideas in a selection of artworks, for example, considering the subject matter, styles and techniques of a selection of artworks from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists

Years 1 and 2

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination and express them through subject matter in visual artworks they create (VCAVAE021)

- looking at an artwork and present a range of interpretations of the subject matter based on their ideas, experiences, observations and/or imagination
- exploring the use of visual conventions in artworks, for example, what colours were used, and how, why is the colour it used in this way?, and express these conventions in their own artworks

Visual Arts Practices

Experiment with different materials, techniques and processes to make artworks in a range of art forms (VCAVAV022)

- experimenting with a range of materials, processes and technologies to visually express their experiences, ideas and emotions

Present and Perform

Create and display artworks to express ideas to an audience (VCAVAP023)

- discussing specific themes when displaying artworks, for

example, at the local gallery or in their classroom

- discussing an exhibition of artworks surrounding a theme and consider the visual conventions of the artworks and how they convey meaning, for example what an artwork or design makes them think about and why?

Respond and Interpret

Respond to visual artworks, including artworks by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, by describing subject matter and ideas (VCAVAR024)

- describing how visual conventions are combined in their artworks and in the artwork of others to express ideas and concepts, for example how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists use visual conventions to express ideas
- describing and interpreting ideas in a selection of artworks, for example, considering the subject matter, styles and techniques of a selection of artworks, and how the artworks make the viewer think and feel in response to the artists' intentions

Years 3 and 4

Visual Arts Practices

Explore visual conventions and use materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to particular art forms, and to make artworks (VCAVAV026)

- discussing the materials and techniques used to make artworks and developing artworks based on this investigation, for example, what the artwork is made of, what choice of material is used to enhance the audience's understanding of the artist's intention

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times as inspiration to create visual artworks (VCAVAE025)

- researching artworks of different styles and artists from different times and cultures, to inspire their own expression of ideas, for example, in forms such as printmaking and

drawing, and styles such as realism or expressionism

- discussing the role of the artist and artworks as an expression of society and culture, for example, discussing the role of artworks from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the stories they tell

Visual Arts Practices

Explore visual conventions and use materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to particular art forms, and to make artworks (VCAVAV026)

- discussing the materials and techniques used to make artworks and developing artworks based on this investigation, for example, what the artwork is made of, what choice of material is used to enhance the audience's understanding of the artist's intention

Respond and Interpret

Identify and discuss how ideas are expressed in artworks from a range of places, times and cultures (VCAVAR028)

- describe subject matter and identify in artworks from different social, cultural or historical contexts
- discussing how artworks are made as expressions of a particular culture or identity, for example, a style of artwork that expresses the identity of their community
- evaluate artworks from different cultures and histories using inquiry, for example, explain which artworks they like the most and why.

Years 5 and 6

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to create artworks that express different ideas and beliefs (VCAVAE029)

- exploring ideas and expressions when making artworks inspired by observation or imagination, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art from the local community, graffiti art, graphic design, or manga art
- analysing the materials used by artists in artworks to enhance

the meaning of the work, for example, the choice of material to enhance the viewer's understanding of the artist's intention

Visual Arts Practices – *Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks (VCAVAV030)*

- making informed choices about using elements to express a concept or theme
- explaining influences of other artists on their own art making

Present and Perform – *Create and display artwork considering how ideas can be expressed to an audience (VCAVAP031)*

- analysing and interpreting an exhibition of artworks, investigating the intentions of the artist, for example, what did the artist want the audience to see and understand?

Respond and Interpret – *Identify and describe how ideas are expressed in artworks by comparing artworks from different contemporary, historical and cultural contexts (VCAVAR032)*

- comparing artworks from different cultures and identifying the ideas expressed by the artist, for example, when comparing paintings from India and Australia, what do they recognise, what is new, what are the different meanings the artists are expressing?
- explaining the artistic vision of artists from different contexts, particularly referencing the meaning the artworks convey, for example, what the artwork is about, what visual conventions are used to convey meaning, how the artist has expressed their subject matter
- analysing how symbolic meanings or metaphors are constructed in their own artworks and artworks of others
- expressing an opinion about the way numerous artists communicate their viewpoints through their artwork

Years 7 and 8

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and

develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks (VCAVAE033)

- combining and adapting materials, techniques, technologies and art making processes to explore ideas
- discussing how artists have applied materials and techniques to express emotions and consider this in their own art practice, for example, why and how artworks make them feel emotional, and can they apply a similar technique to their artworks?
- observing and investigating how artists select and apply different visual arts techniques to express themes, concepts and ideas and considering how they could use these in their own art making

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes to realise their intentions in artworks (VCAVAE034)

- investigating the viewpoints of several artists and how they express a theme, concept or subject matter in different contexts by using different styles with different materials and technologies
- exploring how artists have used different materials and symbols to express cultural identity for example, identifying implied meaning through the symbols in the artwork, such as a universal symbol that reflects contemporary youth culture, or the symbols of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- applying critical theories to the analysis and interpretation of artworks, for example, identifying explicit and implicit meanings in artworks

Respond and Interpret

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in art works and how they are viewed by audiences (VCAVAR038)

- critically analysing an artist's intention for an artwork and their use of visual conventions
- discussing and identifying how artists express cultural identity in their artworks, for example, how artists from different cultures express the concepts of place and country

Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (VCAVAR039)

- comparing and contrasting different visual images and interpretations of place and country, starting with the local Koorie people, from a range of viewpoints and contexts
- researching, analysing and examining the way an artist's cultural experiences have influenced the expression of ideas and concepts in their artworks
- recognising how different factors contribute to the ways in which visual artworks are judged to be meaningful by an audience
- analysing how artists have expressed historical and social value and influences in their artworks

Years 9 and 10

Explore and Express Ideas

Explore the visual arts practices and styles as inspiration to develop a personal style, explore, express ideas, concepts and themes in art works (VCAVAE040)

- exploring and applying ideas inspired by the style of other artists in their own artworks
- exploring and reflecting on the connections between their own artworks and artworks from different contexts and cultures
- exploring the practices of a range of artists and identifying the influences on the development of the artists' personal style.

Explore how artists manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and express their intentions in art works (VCAVAE041)

- deconstructing and appropriating a range of images, objects and/or spaces to express viewpoints, concepts, purposes and/or meanings
- using selected techniques, technologies and processes to explore personal expression of a theme, concept or subject matter

Conceptualise, plan and design art works that express ideas, concepts and artistic intentions (VCAVAV043)

- analysing and documenting the practices of selected visual artists and designers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to investigate their use of materials, technologies, techniques and processes, when developing their intentions
- documenting experiences and observations from visiting an exhibition and apply this knowledge to develop a physical or virtual exhibition of their own or others' artworks

Present and Perform

Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artwork considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience (VCAVAP044)

- visiting galleries, art museums and public art displays, in formal and informal settings, to research the role of the curator and the evaluate the effective display or exhibition of artworks
- discussing the presentation and relationships of artworks in an exhibition, and how the display enhances the relationship between the artist and audience

Respond and Interpret

Analyse and interpret artworks to explore the different forms of expression, intentions and viewpoints of artists and how they are viewed by audiences (VCAVAR045)

- discussing artists' use of metaphors in artworks to express ideas and influence the viewer, for example, the artist's use of visual metaphors to express meaning and persuasion
- investigating the practices of artists from different cultural groups, including artists from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and their use of persuasion, communication or expression in artworks

Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints (VCAVAR046)

- analysing the role of visual arts as a means of challenging prevailing traditional ideas, for example, how contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks challenge prevailing traditional ideas about traditional art styles from this culture

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Visiting TarraWarra Museum of Art

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twma.com.au/education

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Back Cover:

Jeffrey Smart

Mount Tom Price 1966

oil on composition board

61 x 76 cm

TarraWarra Museum of Art collection

Gift of Eva Besen and Marc Besen AO 2001

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