



Saltbush Country

Education Resource

Acknowledgement of country

At Country Arts SA we pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, artists, communities, and recognise their continuing connection and spiritual relationship to these lands, waters and skies.

We embrace the principle of 'First Nations first', are committed to listening and helping care for Country, and to safeguard, share and celebrate First Nations' living cultures.



Resource developed by Deanne Bullen 2026.

Images: Cover and above – Photo: Sam Roberts.

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Exhibition overview



Photo: Sam Roberts

Saltbush Country provides a rare opportunity to experience the works and worldviews of seven dynamic Aboriginal women artists, all working independently across regional South Australia.

Curated by Marika Davies, a proud Wangkangurru curator and artist, the artists are Josephine Lennon, Marli Macumba, Juanella Donovan, Deanna Newchurch, Lynette Newchurch, Sandra Saunders and Heather Shearer. As the curator Marika supported the artists to develop their practice to create new work for the exhibition.

From many different language groups, residing in the townships of Ceduna, Point Pearce, Port Augusta, and Wangary, the artists bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their work.

The artists are connected through culture and storylines that crisscross regions, yet each language group is unique and different. Deep family bonds, generational sharing, connection with the land and waterways, as well as stories about our shared history, are all explored in the works throughout the exhibition.

Saltbush Country reflects the world as seen through the artist's eyes – a contemporary articulation of Aboriginal life in regional South Australia.

... Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is now critically acclaimed at home and internationally. It has also undergone a renaissance which has transformed contemporary Australian art.

Australian Academy of the Humanities

<https://humanities.org.au/power-of-the-humanities/recognising-aboriginal-art-transforming-australian-culture/>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are - Engaging with a diverse range of artistic processes, the current generation of artists is finding new methods of expression, challenging stereotypes and reaching out to audiences.

The art of aeons – National Geographic
<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/history-culture/2016/12/contemporary-australian-aboriginal-art-industry/>

Art and authenticity

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art is an expression of people's identity, culture, spirituality and relationships to Country. It tells stories of ceremony and Creation and connects people to ancestors and kin.

AIATSIS

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/art-and-authenticity>

Education resource overview

The Australian Curriculum 9.0

The *Saltbush Country* Education Resource is aligned to the Australian Curriculum 9.0

The activities have been developed in response to each of the artists' artworks providing:

- ideas and prompts to support discussions before and after attending the exhibition
- opportunities for:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to see themselves, their identities and cultures reflected in the curriculum
 - all students to deepen their knowledge of First Nations Australians and the oldest living cultures in the world
- information to support cultural safety and respect in the classroom
- scope to be adapted for students depending on their age or abilities.

There is a section for each artist with:

- a research activity supported by
 - artist bio
 - artist essay
 - link to further information about the artist
- an activity to explore the ideas, themes or concepts in the artist's work
 - for students to experiment with creating and making their own artworks.

Appendix 10

Australian Curriculum 9.0

Visual Arts

Subject achievement standard Visual Arts

A guide to using works of art as a starting point.

The following link to a blank flowchart provides a guide to make decisions about planning a unit of work and provides prompts to think about the 'what', 'how' and 'why'.

https://agsa-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/media/dd/files/EDU_21_HTTAA_Flow_Chart_BLANK_APR21.492854e.pdf

AGSA

Art Gallery of SA

The Education Resource is guided by the intensive work the AGSA education team has undertaken in the development of a framework to support teachers across the country with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art teaching and learning.

Volume 2 – <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/education/educators/tailored-sessions/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art-classroom/>



Cultural Safety and Respect

Cultural Safety and Respect in the Classroom

Supporting students to engage with the *Saltbush Country* exhibition and activities involves:

- ensuring culturally safe environments
- focusing on the artwork of each of the artists
- encouraging deep reflection
- facilitating active listening to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices in local, regional and national communities to understand contemporary Australia
- utilising available resources.

Culturally Responsive Framework – Aboriginal business is everyone's business

The South Australian Department for Education's Culturally Responsive Framework provides:

- information for ensuring culturally responsive classrooms
- a basis for building successful partnerships and action
- ways to work respectfully within schools and the broader community.

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/docs/p-and-c/culturally-responsive-framework.pdf>

Tip

If you invite a local Elder to speak or provide cultural guidance, always enquire about what their consultation fee is.



Relationships with community

Sharing information about the exhibition and the planned provides an opportunity to transform learning from an isolated school event into a collaborative, community-wide celebration.

The voices of Elders, traditional custodians and community experts will connect students to Country, local histories and diverse perspectives.

Building formal and informal relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, families and community members foster cultural respect and ensures schools provide culturally safe environments.

Ideas for building relationships

- Contact local Land Councils, Aboriginal Education and Traditional Owners.
- Connect with groups preserving local languages.
- Attend community events
- Develop a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Off to the gallery

For some students it might be their first visit to an Art Gallery. An understanding of the expectations and etiquette of an Art Gallery can avoid mishaps.

Observe – look – see

Slow down and take the time to look – this takes practice. Come back and look again. Did you miss anything. Can you see something you didn't see before.

Respect the art

- Unless you have been invited to handle an artwork make sure you do not touch it. Even the oils from your hands can damage an artwork.
- No eating or drinking in the gallery.

Noise level

Discussing what you are looking at is great. However, be aware of the other people in the gallery and speak in quiet tones.

Spatial awareness

Often there is artwork that you need to get up close to so that you can appreciate the detail. Make sure when you do that you:

- don't block the view for other visitors
- wait your turn to have a closer look if someone is already in front of you
- always walk inside the gallery.

Etiquette

From Old French meaning “little note” or “label”

Etiquette – set of expected and accepted behaviours and rules. Many of these rules are unwritten and complex.

Photo: Sam Roberts



Question

Is it okay to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols in my own works of art?

Answer

NO it is not okay to do this.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists are often deeply offended by this practice. It is considered cultural appropriation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art in the Classroom 2 (2023)
<https://store.agpsa.sa.gov.au/products/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-art-in-the-classroom-volume-2>

Before the exhibition



Photo: Sam Roberts

Connection to Country

Saltbush Country is an exhibition that reflects on how stories and connections to Country and culture are carried from childhood and retold in new ways. These stories, rich in memory and meaning, evolve over time, revealing deeper truths and greater understanding.

Many of the artists are connected through culture and storylines that crisscross the regions, but each group is different.

“The word Country is used to describe a connection to the land, as if it is a living being that you are related to. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, there is no separation between people, animals, plants, land, sea and sky. It is all Country. It is all family.”

Songlines: First Knowledges for younger readers
– Margo Ngawa Neale and Lynne Kelly 2023

The word Country

Before exploring the meaning of Country students spend time reflecting on and identifying:

- a physical space that is meaningful to them
 - is it indoors or outdoors
- the relationship to others they might share the space with
- how is this physical space used
- is it an everyday space or a favourite space
- where do I feel most connected to my family, and what symbols, colours, shapes and subject matter could I create to represent this connection?

After considering a 'physical space that is meaningful to them' students:

- Create an artwork of their physical space, (paint, draw, mixed-media montage, sculpt, digital art)
- Write or record a brief description describing the connection to their physical space.

Country – what it means for Aboriginal communities

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UpcEPxUQXI

As a whole class:

Ask students:

- When you think of the word Country what do you think of?
- Together or in small groups write down all of the words associated with Country.

Watch one or more of the videos

- Back to Nature A journey through the Australian landscape and the unique stories of the land, deepening our connection with nature. ABC iView (5min 36 secs) <https://iview.abc.net.au/show/back-to-nature/series/1/video/DC1909H003S00>
- Behind the News (BtN) Special – 20 July 2021 Connection to Country <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9Oi6pJqYcs>
The special has information about:
 - native title and Australia's long journey recognising land rights
 - Welcome to Country ceremonies
 - how the names of places help us to recognise the importance of connection to Country for First Nations people.
- Welcome to Country History – 5 May 2026

– Behind the News (4min 3secs)

<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/welcome-to-country-history/106640246>

Find out what Welcome to Country ceremonies are, why they're performed and how they became a regular part of Australian public life.

Discuss the videos

- What did the videos express about the importance of respect for the land and its people and connection to Country.
- Did the videos raise any questions for you?
- What did you learn about connection to Country from watching the videos?

In small groups consider the following question:

- Why is connection to Country special for Aboriginal people?

After discussing the question, students work in small groups to plan a short information text that responds to the question. The response could be presented as a poster a short video, or an animation.

Photo: Sam Roberts



Artist Josephine Lennon



Photo: Beaver Lennon

“I like the idea that the audience can feel connected when next travelling on Country, and maybe they can feel a part of something, that connects my history to the paintings and then to the audience: A belonging between my history, healing, Country and my artwork.”

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Josephine Lennon by:

- Reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her.
- Identifying the main ideas, themes or concepts in her artwork.

Information about Josephine Lennon

Appendix 1 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas, themes and concepts in Josephine's artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?
- What connection did the research have with your own life, experiences and existing knowledge?

Additional Resources

- Don Dunstan Foundation Award Winner – Josephine Lennon Solo Exhibition - <https://www.adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au/assets/volumes/downloads/Exhibitions/2017-OUR-MOB-2017-catalogue.PDF>
- Josephine Lennon - 2024 Artist Residency Program recipients – Nature Foundation - <https://www.naturefoundation.org.au/getattachment/9ed061c2-9e9a-4858-8e7a-8dadb15bb71c/Issue-2-2024.pdf>
- Malka Art Prize Announces 2024 Winners – by Melissa Smith, July 2024
- Josephine Lennon won the 2024 Malka Aboriginal Arts Prize with painting titled Fire (Waru) - <https://greatersa.com.au/malka-art-prize-announces-2024-winners/>
- Josephine Lennon artwork – Australian and New Zealand Art Sales Digest - <https://www.aasd.com.au/artist/18698-josephine-lennon/works-in-past-sales/>
- Aboriginal women share their bush medicine knowledge in upcoming art exhibition – October 2019 - <https://wchfoundation.org.au/tarnanthi-exhibition-2019/>
- Sculpture workshop highlights marine life threat - <https://www.marineparks.sa.gov.au/news/141027-whale-art>
- Saltbush awarded for telling important stories through art – December 2024 - <https://www.weare.sa.gov.au/news/saltbush-awarded-for-telling-important-stories-through-art>



Josephine Lennon, *Lake McDonnell (Point Sinclair)* (detail), 2022 - 2023, acrylic paint on Belgian linen 126 x 86 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

I have painted onto Belgian linen for this body of work, and have found it to be softer, and more workable as it has a smoother surface. The paint seems to dry quicker, giving a much better finished quality to the works.

Responding – Making – Creating

Strong Memories

Students discuss their research with another student who has researched the same artist.

- What ideas and information about Josephine Lennon's arts practice inspired you?
- What elements in Josephine's work caught your eye?
- Why did Josephine decide to paint on linen?
- How does the artist use her own unique visual language to communicate her story?

Josephine's use of lines and colour evoke the undulating and changing land formations created from winds of change in her Munda. She states that her works are of the country around Ceduna South Australia which depict tali tjuta (many sand hills), walpa (wind) and kapi (water soaks), all important parts of the survival of her people.

She is also influenced by her mother's Tjukarpa (dreaming) stories of the Bunda Cliffs along the Nullarbor Plain.

Make and Create

From wardrobe to canvas

Just as Josephine Lennon chose linen as her canvas students will select a natural fabric like cotton or linen in the form of a secondhand garment as their canvas.

The image students paint on their garment will communicate their connection to Country or an important physical aspect of their life.

Natural fabric vs Acrylic

100% natural fabrics (like cotton and linen) are better to paint on than synthetic acrylic or polyester because their porous, fibrous structure absorbs pigments.

Individually students will:

Students select the image they will paint onto their garment.

Painting on Fabric

Resources needed

■ T-shirt or other fabric	■ Parchment paper
■ Acrylic paint	■ Tracing paper
■ Fabric/textile medium	■ An iron
■ A piece of cardboard	■ Paint brushes

Fabric (or textile) medium

An additive used to convert regular acrylic paint into permanent, flexible fabric paint.

Available at a number of suppliers such as Art to Art, Spotlight, Officeworks, Lincraft etc.

Preparation

- Wash and dry garment. DO NOT use fabric softener
- Place a piece of cardboard or a cutting mat paper inside the garment to stop the paint from bleeding through to the back.
- Use a water-soluble pencil to lightly sketch the artwork onto the t-shirt.
- Apply the paint:
 - Mix together acrylic paint and fabric medium (Usually 1:1 ratio) until smooth
 - Use paint brush or sponges to apply paint
 - Apply paint in light, thin layers. NOTE: Thick coats of paint will crack and peel off once dry.
- Leave the t-shirt to dry completely. Place parchment over design and iron on medium too high for 3–5 minutes to permanently set the design. NOTE: The fabric paint is fully heat-set when the design feels like an organic part of the fabric rather than a crust on top.

“I have strong memories of being at my grandmother’s homeland, Mable Creek, and looking down at the cracked textures of the dry land beneath me as well as the travels through Country with my family between Port Augusta and Pimba, the Gawler Ranges and Kingoonya, and the back track from Wirrulla to Kingoonya.”

Artist Marli Macumba



Photo: Sam Roberts

Marli Macumba's artwork tells the story of her life, her people and the land — from the present all the way back to the ancient past.

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Marli Macumba by:

- Reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- Identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Marli Macumba

Appendix 2 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Marli's artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?
- What connections did the artist's artwork or your research about the artist have with your own life, experiences and?
- What ideas and information about Marli Macumba did your research inspire you to make and create?

Additional Resources

- Marli Macumba art – Hahndorf Academy - <https://hahndorfacademy.org.au/tell-me-everything/2022/6/3/marli-milyika-macumba>
- Kurdinthi – National First Nations Weaving Symposium – Curated by Marli Macumba
- Saltbush awarded for telling important stories through art - <https://www.weare.sa.gov.au/news/saltbush-awarded-for-telling-important-stories-through-art>
- Marli Macumba awarded the Port Augusta NAIDOC Artist of the Year in 2019



“This piece is about passing down knowledge about Country to my daughters and weaving our story together.”

Left: Marli Macumba, *My three daughters*, 2022-2023, raffia, chicken wire, wooden frame, 105 x 105 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.



Marli Macumba, *Saltbush*, 2023, acrylic paint on Belgian linen, 100 x 100 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

“This painting is about me and my two sisters sitting in the creek at Fregon with my Aunty Ingrid Treacle while she draws in the sandy creek talking Tjukurpa to us. I have painted this from my memory, and visualising in colour the story she told us.”



Marli Macumba, *I love a sun burnt country*, 2023, acrylic paint on Belgian linen, 100 x 100 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

Responding – Making – Creating

Responding

Marli Marcumba has reflected on her childhood memories as an inspiration for her artworks.

Students will gather stories and memories from their childhood and use their memories to inspire them to create artworks.

Thinking about how and where they gather their stories:

- Photographs
- Videos
- Talking to family and friends
- Recalling their own memories.

The next step will be for students to transform memories into artworks. This could include:

- mixed-media collages
- shadow boxes
- digital art
- scrapbooking
- puppets
- video
- sculpture.

Instead of recreating the scene exactly as it looked students will focus on:

- how the memories made them feel
- what were the main emotions – warm and cozy or chaotic and energetic
- what colours reflect the mood.

“Wind rushing through the saltbush exposing old camp sites in the sandhills. Time reflecting on going out to Yorkeys Crossing for drives with my father. Us kids would get out of the car and dad would let us explore the sandhills. I would sit in the dirt and think and visualise the movement of wind through the saltbush.”

Memories

- Places with stories to tell
- A song
- A special friend
- Sounds and sights
- Favourite meals

Mixed-media collage

Go on a scavenger hunt and collect bits from magazines, post cards, tags, found objects, pressed flowers – anything that inspires you to create an artwork.



Artist Juanella Donovan



Photo: Sam Roberts

“... my grandmother was the most kind, forgiving and loving person that I was lucky enough to meet, know and love. The resilience of this beautiful woman cannot be described in words.”

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Juanella Donovan by:

- Reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- Identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Juanella Donovan

Appendix 3 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Juanella’s artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?
- What connections did the research have with your own life, experiences and existing knowledge?

Additional Resources

- Meet Breaking Ground Winner, Juanella Donovan - <https://www.nativetitlesa.org/meet-breaking-ground-winner-juanella-mckenzie/>
- Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA), Juanella Donovan - <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/whats-on/ramsay-art-prize/ramsay-art-prize-2021/juanella-mckenzie/>
- Regional Arts Australia - Juanella Donovan / Project: Mother - <https://regionalarts.com.au/people/juanella-mckenzie-24>
- Painting for Reconciliation - <https://www.miragenews.com/painting-for-reconciliation/>
- Juanella MacKenzie’s Hold Me – ABC interview – July 2022 - <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/awaye/juanella-mackenzie-talks-about-art-and-earth/13984240>
- Adnyamathanha Dreaming – Hawker Mural Walking Trail - https://www.frc.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0037/1664974/AdnyamathanhaDreamingHawkerMuralWalkingTrail.pdf
- Ngatchu Yarta – My Country: Juanella Donovan - <https://www.murraybridgegallery.com.au/exhibition-list/2022/5/21/ngatchu-yarta-my-country-juanella-mckenzie>
- SA Artist Wins the 2022 Telstra People’s Choice Award - <https://www.bandt.com.au/sa-artist-wins-the-2022-telstra-peoples-choice-award/>

Responding – Making – Creating

Responding

“The Narrow Line is a story of family connection, identity, survival, love and Country. Through sharing family memories of my grandmother Molly Lennon, I have been able to explore the memories that I hold dear. In this installation I am celebrating and acknowledging her resilience and strength and the legacy she has left behind.

In order to create this work, I visited the ruins of the Colebrook home in Quorn, situated on a hill near a tree lined creek, alongside the original Ghan railway line that ran between Port Augusta and Alice Springs. I collected original pieces of the Old Ghan line as it made me think how cruel it must've been for the children to see the narrow line of the train track every day, a constant reminder of their forced removal.”

The materials Juanella Donovan used in her installation to tell her story Narrow Line included:

- emu feathers
- hessian
- found broken pieces of ceramics
- mannequin frame
- railway tracks
- photograph printed on chiffon
- handmade cotton dress
- hemp thread.



Photos: Sam Roberts.



Juanella's story

Working with a partner or in small groups students:

- read Juanella Donovan's artist essay about Narrow Line
- identify from what point of view Juanella writes about her installation
- identify how she describes incidents
- discuss how they think she might have chosen the objects for her installation.

Making and Creating

Create your story

Working individually or with a partner students re-create a story or event that is meaningful to them using a visual story format.

Visual Story Formats

- Miniature Diorama
- 3D Assemblage
- 2D Collage or Mosaic

Working with a partner or in small groups students:

- decide on a story
- identify the visual story format they will use to tell the story
- identify the objects they need to collect, repurpose or make for their artwork

The visual story should repurpose everyday objects, discarded items, photographs, made items and nature to tell the story.



2D Collage



3D Assemblage



Diorama

Artist Deanna Newchurch



Photos: Sam Roberts

“I would like the audience to learn about Narungga culture, through the work we are creating and the stories we are sharing.”

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Deanna Newchurch by:

- reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Deanna Newchurch

Appendix 4 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Deanna's artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?
- When reading Deanna's Artist essay what did you find out about the connection to and importance of the painting of the family portraits.

Additional Resources

- Saltbush awarded for telling important stories through art - <https://www.weare.sa.gov.au/news/saltbush-awarded-for-telling-important-stories-through-art>
- Celebrating Culture and Community at Nharangga Cultural Day - <https://yorke.sa.gov.au/news/media-releases/celebrating-culture-and-community-at-nharangga-cultural-day/>
- Deanna Newchurch – costume consultant for Wild Dog - <https://www.countryarts.org.au/discover/first-nations-program/wild-dog/>
- Australian Rural & Regional News – Stenhouse Bay and rising full moon formed the stunning backdrop to the on-Country preview of Adelaide Festival production Guuranda – Deanna Newchurch was one of the cultural consultants for the production. <https://arr.news/2024/02/27/the-stories-of-us/>
- The Time is Now to celebrate Aboriginal art – by Anthony Caggiano October 2023 - <https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/8348334/the-time-is-now-to-celebrate-aboriginal-art/>
- Local artists featured in *Saltbush Country* exhibition – August 2025 - <https://www.ypct.com.au/local-artists-featured-in-saltbush-country-exhibition/>

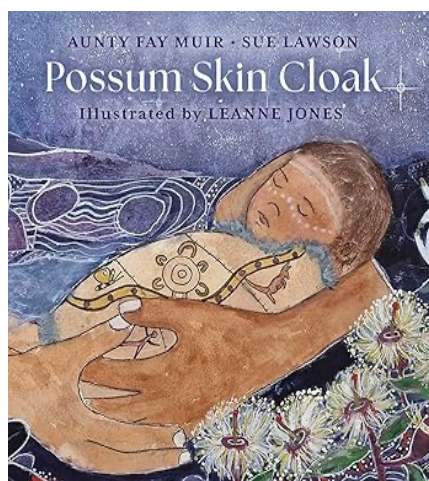
Responding – Making – Creating

Creating

“Initially I undertook a lot of research on the internet to find information on traditional possum skin cloak making practices. This project supported my sister and myself to travel to the Grampians to learn the practice of making possum skin cloaks first-hand from Gunditjmara Keerray Wooroong artist and knowledge holder Aunty Vicki Couzens.”

A possum skin cloak was an Aboriginal child's first blanket. Over time more possum skins and symbols would be added so that the cloak grew with the child. When creating a design and map for their own possum skin cloak they will find out about possum skin cloaks and learn about the significance of the possum skin cloaks.

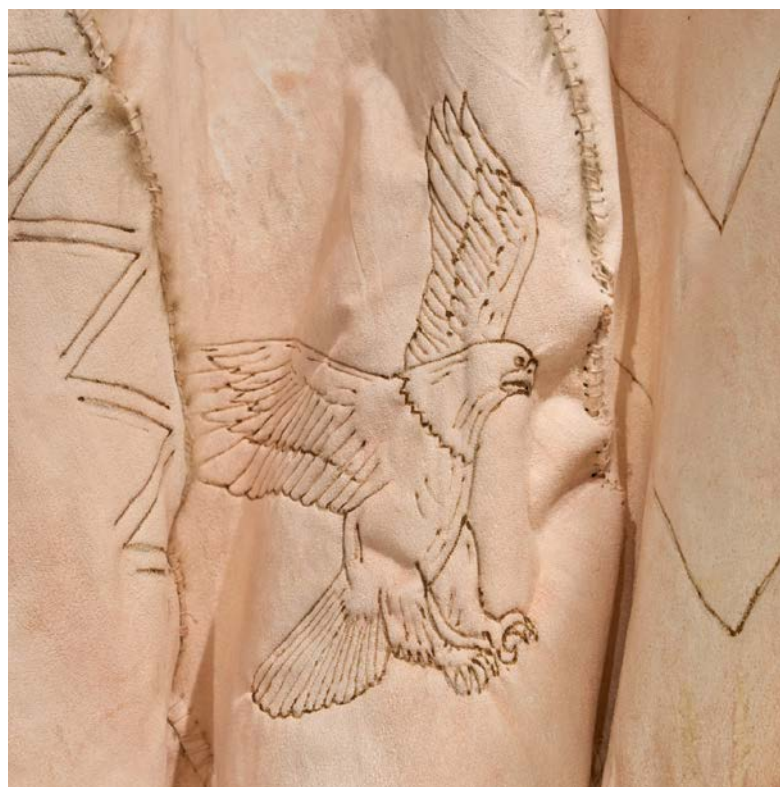
“For *Saltbush Country* I have used possum skins to make a cloak. I wanted to use all the skin so that the possum is clearly represented in the cloak.”



Read Possum Skin Cloak

By Aunty Fay Muir & Sue Lawson

<https://wdog.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Possum-Skin-Cloak-TNs.pdf>



Deanna Newchurch and Lynette Newchurch, *Our Mothers*, 2023, possum skins and thread, dimensions variable. Photos: Sam Roberts.

Find out about the possum skin cloak

As a whole class, students watch the following two videos:



Deep Time: Cultural significance of possum skin cloaks

Matt Pol from the Australian National Maritime Museum explains how possum cloaks are not only useful, but how they represent a map of a person's life and their personal connection to Country. ABC Education

<https://www.abc.net.au/education/cultural-significance-of-possum-skin-cloaks/13953560>

Suitable for Year 3 – Year 12

Duration: 4 minutes 13 seconds



What is a Possum-skin cloak?

Maree Clark, a Melbourne based artist and designer, who is a Yorta Yorta / Wamba Wamba / Mutti Mutti / Boonwurrung woman talks about the making of a possum skin cloak and its importance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qkV6tUqmJA>

Suitable for Year 3 – Year 12

Duration: 2 minutes 47 seconds

https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/KIDS_POSSUM_SKIN_CLOAKS.pdf

Discuss in small groups or as a whole class:

- What are possum skin cloaks?
- Why are possum skin cloaks important?

Create a design for a possum cloak

Individually students think of a journey or place they know well and write/note/sketch information about the special features.

- A walk, cycle, car drive or bus to and from school
- A visit to a place like a park or a grandparent, cousin, or friend
- Special holiday trips.

What are the things that help students remember the journey. This could include:

- familiar, special or repeated things on the journey
- people, places, animals, landmarks seen along the way.



Deanna Newchurch and Lynette Newchurch, *Our Mothers* (detail), 2023, possum skins and thread, dimensions variable. Photo: Sam Roberts.

Design, Sketch and Refine

Students select items from their journey and create a design that tells the story of their journey.

- Using a top-down perspective / bird's eye view.
- The images travel along the path of the journey.
- Create a journey line.
- Develop an initial sketch and develop the design, for example:
 - Turn the journey line into a shape
 - Make a pattern
 - Draw shapes multiple times
 - Group shapes
 - Add colour
 - Use symbols to create meaning.
- An outline of a possum skin is available on page 40 to photocopy for students. They will then be able to transfer their design on to the possum skin. Students might want to consider joining all of their designs together to make one big class possum skin cloak..

Additional Resources

- Possum skin cloaks then and now – same same but different. Dr Vicki Couzens is a Keeray Woorroong Gunditjmara multi-media artis. Couzens has been instrumental in the revival of the possum skin cloak making tradition in Victoria. <https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/possum-skin-cloaks-then-and-now/>
- Bendigo Possum Skin Cloaks Project <https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Bendigo-Possum-Skin-Cloaks-Project-2015.pdf>
- Narungga lifestyle, customs and environment <https://yorke.sa.gov.au/discover/local-history-and-heritage/indigenous-culture/the-nharangga/>
- The Possum Skin Cloak <https://taungurung.com.au/possum-cloak/>
- Coming Together: a Possum Skin Cloak, Cultural Exchanges and Caring for Country <https://blogs.unimelb.edu.au/livingarchiveofaboriginalart/2023/11/24/coming-together-a-possum-skin-cloak-cultural-exchanges-and-caring-for-country/>

- The timeless and living art of possum skin cloaks <https://museums victoria.com.au/article/the-timeless-and-living-art-of-possum-skin-cloaks/>

Historically, in the cooler climates of south-eastern Australia, Aboriginal people wore possum skin cloaks to stay warm. They were given a possum pelt at birth and, as they grew, more pelts were add-ed, and the cloak grew with them. Possum skin cloaks weren't only clothes; they were also used as blankets, to cradle babies and to wrap around the deceased in burial ceremonies. About the Possum Skin Cloak – National Gallery of Victoria (NGV)

Other Cultures & their traditional garments

The Andean Uncu -

<https://www.lacma.org/andean-uncu>

The Maori Kahu huruhuru

<https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/3633>

Mapuche textiles

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mapuche_textiles

The Norwegian Bunad

www.visitnorway.com/typically-norwegian/bunad/



Artist Lynette Newchurch



Photo: Sam Roberts

“I am a Narungga artist, with family connections to Ngadjuri, Kurna, Adnyamathanha and Ngarrindjeri peoples. I live and work in Port Victoria on the Yorke Peninsula and I am reviving cultural practices that acknowledge our history and traditions.”

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Lynette Newchurch by:

- reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Lynette Newchurch

Appendix 5 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Lynette’s artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?
- How did Lynette Newchurch find out about the steps and processes involved in making the necklaces?

Additional Resources

- Saltbush awarded for telling important stories through art - <https://www.weare.sa.gov.au/news/saltbush-awarded-for-telling-important-stories-through-art>
- The Time is Now to celebrate Aboriginal art – by Anthony Caggiano October 2023 - <https://www.thesenior.com.au/story/8348334/the-time-is-now-to-celebrate-aboriginal-art/>
- Australian Rural & Regional News – Stenhouse Bay and rising full moon formed the stunning backdrop to the on-Country preview of Adelaide Festival production Guuranda – Lynette Newchurch was one of the cultural consultants for the production. <https://arr.news/2024/02/27/the-stories-of-us/>
- Rare shell artefacts discovered on the Murray River South Australia by archaeologists (September 2021) - <https://news.flinders.edu.au/blog/2021/09/17/rare-artefacts-discovered-on-the-murray-river/>

Responding – Making – Creating

Caring for Country

“Walking Country with our mothers and family learning about our storylines and acknowledging our inheritance, we all have a responsibility of caring and protecting Land, Sea and what is sacred. Keeping connection to Country and reviving our cultural practices for future generations to inherit and keep our identity strong.

In South Australia 75-80% of our sea grasses are endemic to our waters. Sea grasses and seaweed need sunlight to grow and to provide food and habitat for the seashells that eat the algae on the seaweed. This is an important part of the balance of the ecological cycles in nature.”



Why collecting maireener shells is difficult

Collecting green maireener shells is difficult due to their rarity, which is linked to the declining health of the seagrass meadows they inhabit. Factors like poor water quality from pollution, coastal development, physical damage from boat moorings and rising ocean temperatures are causing seagrass meadows to decline.

Globally seagrass meadows are declining by 7% annually, which equals roughly two football fields every hour.

Finding the green maireener shells also requires an intimate knowledge of the local tides and weather patterns, as well as being prepared to search for them at the right time and not always return home with them.

“I create shell necklaces using the many different types of shells collected from the shorelines on our Country.”

Students will respond to Lynette’s call for us all to have responsibility for caring and protecting Land and Sea by finding out about the Seagrass meadows and how we can protect them. The next step will be will to create and make a poster to communicate this to the wider community.

Left: Lynette Newchurch, *Purple Shade* (detail), 2023, Patterned queen maireener shells, stainless steel nylon coated wire rope, 112cm length Photo: Sam Roberts.

Above: Lynette Newchurch, *Green seas* (detail), 2023, Green maireener shells, stainless steel nylon coated wire rope, silver lobster link, 56cm length. Photo: Sam Roberts.

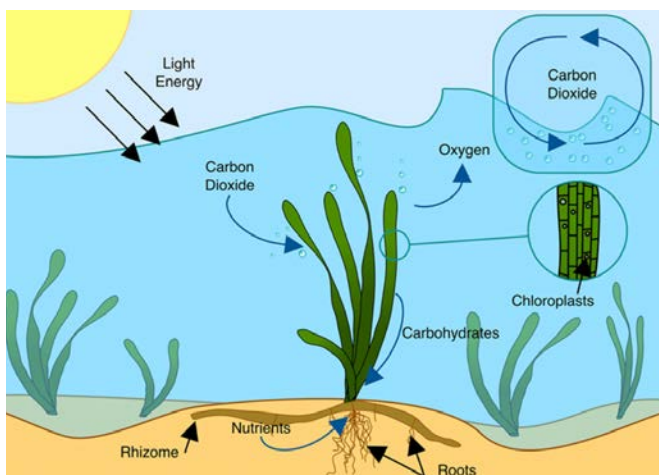
The Superheroes of the Ocean

The seagrass meadows are the silent superheroes of the ocean, fighting climate change, feeding marine life, providing protection and defending coastlines.

However, "toxic sulphide" is this superheroes "kryptonite". The plant can tolerate low levels but its defense crumbles when it becomes stressed by poor water quality, rising water temperatures or reduced light.

The BIG concern is that globally seagrass meadows are vanishing at a rate equivalent to two football fields every hour.

However, good news is Australia's biggest seagrass restoration project is happening in South Australia.
<https://www.environment.sa.gov.au/topics/coasts/explore-and-learn/seagrass-restoration-in-sa>



But everyone has a vital role in protecting and restoring seagrass meadows.

As Lynette Newchurch says, "...we all have a responsibility of caring and protecting Land, Sea and what is sacred."

Together we can help reverse the decline of these crucial "lungs of the sea".

Seagrass Superpowers

- 35 times faster at capturing and storing CO₂.
- Able to bury and lock away CO₂ for hundreds or even thousands of years.
- Stores up to 10% of the ocean's carbon.
- Able to survive in nutrient poor waters.
- Protects coastlines from erosion by stabilising the seabed.
- A home for baby fish and other marine life.
- Reduces disease causing marine bacteria by up to 50%.

Spencer Gulf

Recognised traditional Land and Sea Country of the Narungga people. Surrounded by large coastal saltmarshes, mud flats, seagrass meadows and mangrove forest, Spencer Gulf provides important habitat for a wide range of species, some of which live only in this area.





Photo: Sam Roberts

Protect the Seagrass Meadows

The more people know about seagrass meadows and how important they are, the more likely they will be protected.

The challenge

Create a poster to raise awareness of the problem and convince people to save the seagrass meadows.

- The aim of the poster is to grab the ATTENTION of the viewer.
- Have ONE key message
- Use minimal words
- Use eye-catching artwork/images
- Have a CALL-to-ACTION.

Designing the poster

1. Define your goal and audience
 - The Call-to Action - what you want the viewer to do
 - Know what will catch your audience's attention.
2. Have a catchy slogan
3. Minimal text
4. Use images to tell the story
5. Don't have too many colours
6. Tell the viewer of the poster what you want them to do.

Catchy Slogan

"Slip, Slop, Slap" is one of Australia's most successful slogans. It was memorable and easy to remember.

The two metre test

Once students have planned the draft of their poster ask them to:

- Place the draft on the floor
- Step back about 2 metres from the poster and ask the questions
 - Is the message clear
 - Is it easy to read.
- Depending on the answer the poster might need to be simplified.

Additional Resources

- Seagrasses of South Australia - <https://cdn.environment.sa.gov.au/environment/docs/seagrasses.pdf>
- Seagrass: A vital ally in climate regulation and ecosystem conservation - <https://hlw.org.au/news/seagrass-a-vital-ally-in-climate-regulation-and-ecosystem-conservation>
- Why is seagrass an unsung superhero? - <https://www.womeninoceanscience.com/blog/2018/12/7/the-unsung-superhero-of-our-seas>
- Seagrass: The Ocean's Superhero You've Never Heard Of - <https://www.thesaltylab.org/blog/seagrass-the-oceans-superhero-youve-never-heard-of>
- Our Big Blue Superhero - <https://www.marineconservation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Our-Big-Blue-Superhero.pdf>
- Seagrasses: The Ocean's Unsung Heroes - <https://www.ke.hku.hk/story/engagement/seagrasses>

Videos

- Seagrasses: Our Planet's Secret Climate Hero - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3MfEPjE8aw>
- Seagrass Superheroes - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUerJHqcQOM>

Artist Sandra Saunders



Photo: Sam Roberts

“My artwork has been inspired by current and past events in Australia especially the invasion by Captain Cook and the ongoing struggles faced by Aboriginal people. My painting, *The Time Is Now* reflects the significance of the referendum and the importance of giving Aboriginal people a voice in Parliament.”

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Sandra Saunders by:

- reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Sandra Saunders

Appendix 6 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

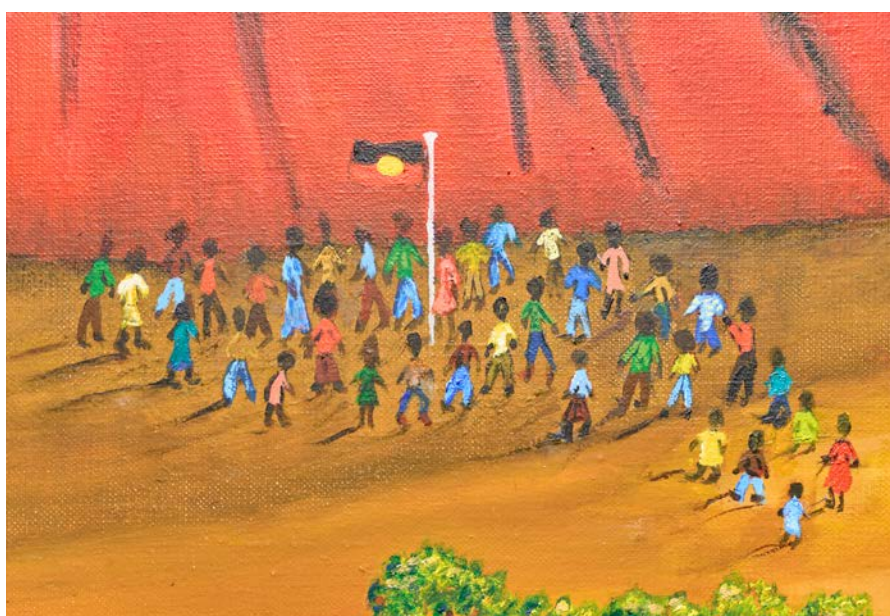
Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Sandra's artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?

- Describe what you see when you look at Sandra's artworks
- What do you think when you look at Sandra's artworks
- What do you wonder when you look at Sandra's artworks
- What is the source of inspiration for Sandra's artwork?

Additional Resources

- Kumarangk exhibition is headlined by a commission for artist and activist Sandra Saunders - <https://www.adelaidefestival.com.au/whats-on/season-2026/kumarangk/>
- Art – led learning and Sandra Saunders' history paintings – Artlink April 2025 - <https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/6119/art-led-learning-and-sandra-saunders-history-paintings/>
- Meet Your Maker: Sandra Saunders – The Adelaide Review – by Julianne Pierce October 2019 - <https://www.adelaidereview.com.au/arts/visual-arts/2019/10/31/meet-your-maker-sandra-saunders/>
- What does fair mean to you? Interview with artist Sandra Saunders - <https://indigenousartcode.org/news-article/what-does-fair-mean-to-you-with-sandra-saunders>
- Seven deadly women create Drifting Sands exhibition in a safe space - ABC News – by Georgia Roberts - September 2021 - <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-09-23/marika-davies-creates-safe-space-for-deadly-artists/100477270>
- Meet Your Maker: Sandra Saunders – The Australian Review by Julianne Pierce 31 October 2019 <https://www.adelaidereview.com.au/arts/visual-arts/2019/10/31/meet-your-maker-sandra-saunders/>



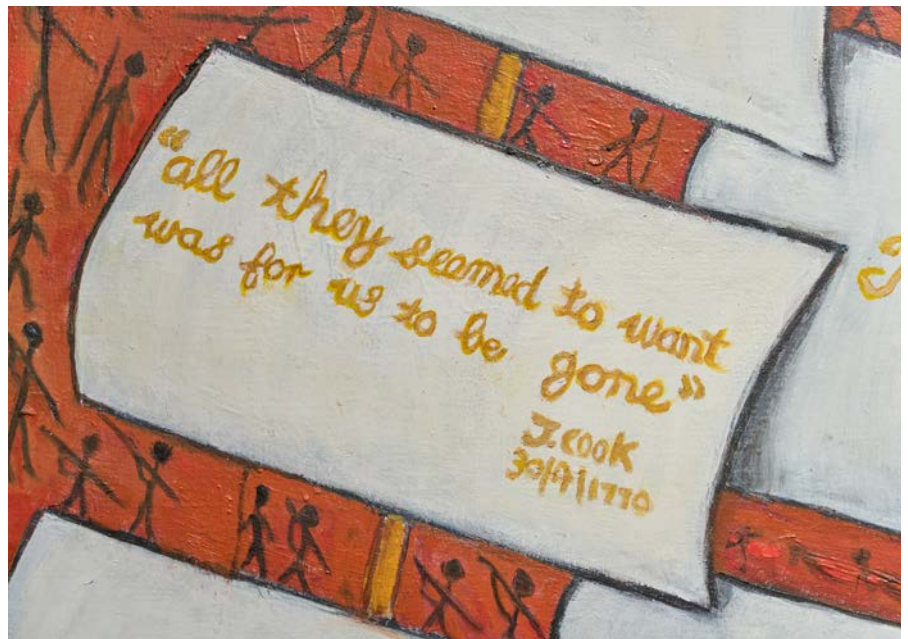
The Time is Now for change and action. The gathering at Uluru and the development of the Statement from the Heart, which was presented to Parliament, signifies a crucial moment in our history.

The shadows are falling, and the clock is ticking down at 11.57, symbolising the urgency for progress. It's up to the people to make their voices heard through voting at the referendum. The time is now to come together and create a better future for all.

Sandra Saunders, *The Time is Now*, 2023, oil paint on Belgian linen, 106 x 122 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

“To create these paintings, I have researched history books about Captain Cook’s voyages and explored Australian literature which gave me insight to develop the Finders Keepers painting.”

Working primarily in the medium of painting, Saunders’ work is politically engaged, commenting on themes of colonialism, climate change, land rights and social justice.



Sandra Saunders, *Finders Keepers* (detail), 2022 - 2023, oil paint on Belgian linen, 106 x 122 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

Responding – Making – Creating

A Moment in Time – Provoking Thought

“I hope the paintings captivate the viewers enough for them to question and delve deeper into the history of our country and the experiences of Aboriginal people. By sparking conversations and fostering understanding, I hope my art becomes thought provoking and a powerful tool for education and empathy.”

Finders Keepers depicts Captain Cook’s so-called discovery of Australia without considering the presence of Aboriginal people on the land. This painting reflects Aboriginal people’s resistance and their desire for Captain Cook to leave. The inclusion of quotes from Cook’s diary on the sails of the Endeavour adds meaning to the title of the artwork Finders Keepers because they claimed the land for England.

[net.au/btn/classroom/deep-time/105939326](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/deep-time/105939326)

- Deep Time – The story of Australia and its peoples. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/deeptime/>
- Behind the News (BtN) – Australian History - <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/australian-history/10629814>

Tell a story

Students create an artwork that tells the story of the particular moment in time they have connected with and researched. The artwork students create will use symbolism and colour to tell the story.

To begin students take a dive into Australia’s history and select and research a specific historical moment in time.

- National Museum of Australia – Defining Moments. Explore the hundreds of events, people and places of profound significance to the Australian people. <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/defining-moments-timeline>
- Deep Time Behind the News (BtN) <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/australian-history/10629814>

When undertaking research students will aim to:

- gain an insight into the particular event and the impact it had on people
- identify questions the research raises
- record keywords
- collect images that tell a story.

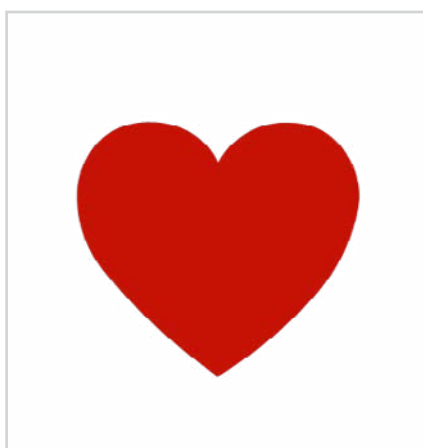
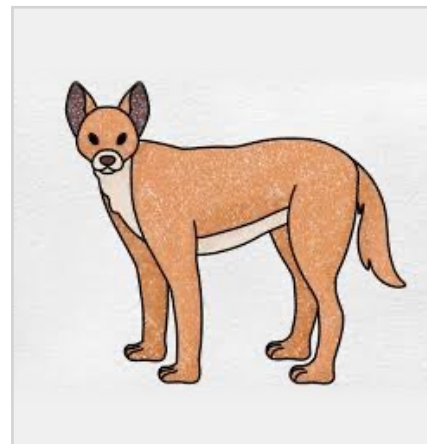
Symbolism warm-up

Supporting students to develop a deep understanding of symbolism requires scaffolding between literal representations and into visual storytelling. Developing meaning around images, identifying personal identifiers and mapping abstract concepts to objects, colours and compositions can assist with development of this knowledge.

1. Present students with a range of icons
2. Working in small groups students discuss what the images mean to them – what do they represent, what story do they tell.

What is a symbol

A symbol is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, signifies, or is understood as representing an idea, object, or relationship. Symbols allow people to go beyond what is known or seen by creating linkages between otherwise very different concepts and experiences. Symbolism in art can be seen in shapes, colors, lines, textures, space, etc.



Personal symbols

1. List things they identify with – family, hobbies, culture, goals, favourite memories, things that interest them, community. Circle three to five that are the most important to them.
2. List words, shapes, numbers or letters with the things they identify with. For example, for football they might list – a bouncing ball, the goal posts, the number of players in a team or the name of the team.

Symbolism Chart

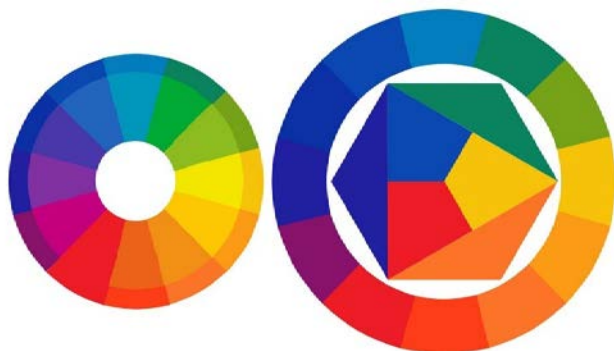
Students draw a two-column chart. On the left hand column they write an abstract concept or personal trait – on the right they sketch a simple, concrete object that represent it.

Concept	Object
Growth	A sprouting seed or plant
Love for travel	A wavy line
Family	A tree or a circle

Colour exploration

Working in small groups students discuss the colours in the colour wheel and how they suggest moods.

- Discuss the different emotions colours can suggest.
 - Red - passion or anger
 - Blue - sadness or calm
 - Green - nature, life and regrowth
 - Yellow - happiness and sunshine.



Right: Sandra Saunders, *The Time is Now* (detail), 2023, oil paint on Belgian linen, 106 x 122 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

Creating an artwork that tells the story of the moment in time

Discuss with students about taking inspiration from their research to help them create a symbolic artwork of their own. To assist with this process:

- Draw a picture of the moment in time
- Replace features in the picture with their own symbols, for example the branches of a tree could be arms reaching up to the sky.

Review and reflection

An important step in teaching symbolism is for students to develop the vocabulary to discuss their choices. This discussion reinforces how art is a visual language where shape, line and colour tells a story. This could include:

- Students presenting their artwork to the class or a partner and explaining the meaning behind their symbols and the colours they have used.
- Students writing a brief explanation paragraph to display with their artwork.



Artist Heather Shearer



As a member of the Stolen Generations much of Heather Shearer's work explores her history and identity, addressing themes of home, belonging, reconciliation and connection to culture. Working across the disciplines of painting and textiles she draws upon imagery from her Arrernte heritage from Ntaria (Hermannsburg).

Stories and Connections

Who is the artist

Find out about Heather Shearer by:

- reading about her life and what has inspired and influenced her
- identify the main themes or concepts in her work.

Information about Heather Shearer

Appendix 7 – Artist Bio & Artist Essay
Links in Additional Resources

Exploring ideas, themes or concepts

- What are the main ideas and themes in Heather Shearer's artwork?
- Did you have any questions you would like to ask the artist?

Additional Resources

- Architectus Reflects: a collaboration with Heather Kamarra Shearer - <https://architectus.com.au/latest/architectus-reflects-a-collaboration-with-heather-kamarra-shearer/>
- Troubled traces: painting and displaying intercultural traumas of Aboriginality – Open Arts Journal - <https://openartsjournal.org/issue-3/2014s35hs/>
- Empowering Art: Reconfiguring Narratives of Trauma and Hope in the Australian National Imaginary – Fiona Magowan – Open Arts Journal - https://pureadmin.qub.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/13699309/Empowering_art_reconfiguring_narratives_of_trauma_and_hope_in_the_Australian_national_imaginary.pdf
- History of the Hermannsburg Mission - <https://hermannsburg.com.au/stories/history-of-the-misison>

Responding – Making – Creating

Honouring Memories

When creating her artworks Heather Shearer not only used photographs of botanical images to get the most accurate colours she also researched the history of embroidery and the people who embraced the artform as a visual statement of their cultural heritage.

The embroideries are of flowers that remind me of, and honour my two Nana's, Maggie Cook Gillespie Lindquist (dec), my Nana from my adopted family in Adelaide who came from Glasgow, Scotland, and my Nana Suzannah Fly (dec), my mother's mother, a grand Arrernte woman from Ntaria (Hermannsburg) in Central Australia.

Ethnobotany

Ethno – people and culture

Botany – study of plants

Ethnobotany is the study of how people in different cultures and regions make use of plants. Thousands of years of knowledge provides information about which plants are edible and nutritious, which are poisonous, and which have healing properties.



2Pigface



Grevillea



Heather Shearer, *A Grevillea for Nana Suzannah*, 2023, Embroidery on cotton, 59 x 40 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.



Watch *My Garden Path* | Gerry Turpin Gardening Australia ABC

Meet traditional custodian and ethnobotanist Gerry Turpin, who works with a team at James Cook University to record cultural plant knowledge and to make sure this valuable resource is acknowledged.

<https://www.abc.net.au/gardening/how-to/my-garden-path-gerry-turpin/105134130>

Nature Exploration and Observation

Students combine close scientific observation with artistic techniques to:

- Study plant structures – stems, petals and roots
- Translating observations on to paper.

Observations

Observations of plants in the local environment can include:

- Creating herbarium sheets
- Photographing plants
- Botanical drawings.

Creating Herbarium Sheets

Herbarium sheets provide accurate identification and preservation of plant information.

1. Plant samples: Each sample should be approx. 30 centimetres long and include buds, flowers, fruits and stem sections.
2. Pressing: Place samples carefully in between folded newspaper and spread them out so they're not overlapping. Place in between books, or a traditional wooden press to dry. Takes about 2 – 3 weeks.
3. Sample information: Include information about where the sample is collected from including – date, collector, exact location, plant height, flower colour, and other local vegetation.

How to Collect Plants

Request a field collection notebook for recording plant specimens from the State Herbarium of South Australia

<https://www.botanicgardens.org.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/How-to-collect-plants.pdf>

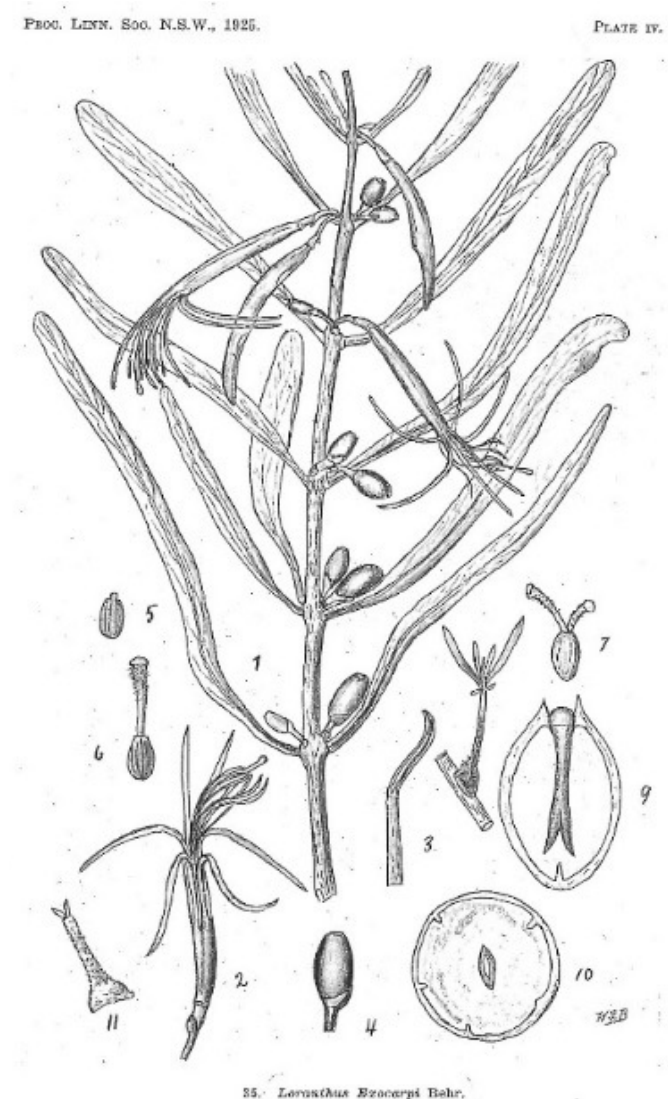
Email: botanicgardens@sa.gov.au
Phone: 8222 9311

Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney
How to Collect Plants

<https://www.botanicgardens.org.au/sites/default/files/2023-06/How-to-collect-plants.pdf>

Australia has a large collection of Herbarium sheets documenting over eight million specimens of unique flora.

- Australasian Virtual Herbarium - <https://avh.chah.org.au/>
- Australian National Herbarium – CSIRO - <https://www.csiro.au/en/about/facilities-collections/collections/anh>
- Herbarium collection – Botanic Gardens of Sydney - <https://www.botanicgardens.org.au/our-science/our-collections/herbarium-collection>
- Australian National Herbarium – CANBR - <https://www.anbg.gov.au/cpbr/herbarium/>
- Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium South Australia - <https://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/science/research/state-herbarium/collections>



Herbarium Sheet



A Thistle for Nana Maggie celebrates the majestic Scottish thistle. I remember her embroidered pieces throughout her house, some of which I now have in mine, and the thistle brooches I had pinned to my kilt skirts which I loved to wear. Nana was small by stature, but larger than life in feistiness and wit.

Heather Shearer, *A Thistle for Nana Maggie* (detail), 2023, Embroidery on cotton, 59 x 40 cm. Photo: Sam Roberts.

Photographing samples

Photographing plants helps with archiving, identification and research. Photographing a plant also provides information about colours, growth habits and local habitats.

Capture Key features

Photograph multiple features of the plant including:

- The whole plant
- The top and underside of leaves
- Stems
- Flowers and fruit.

Show the scale

- Use a ruler or hand next to the plant as a reference.

Close-ups

- Close ups of plants will reveal hidden elements – leaf veins, bark features, pollen.
- Make sure that close-up shots are in focus.

Show the habitat

- Including photographs of the local habitat will show the other plants growing around the area, the surrounding soil and exposure to sun.

Apps for Identifying Plants

iNaturalist – a large peer-reviewed Australian database.

Pl@ntNet – provides clear images of flowers, leaves and fruit and doubles as a citizen science project tracking plant biodiversity.

Botanical drawings

A botanical drawing is an artwork that shows the form, colour and distinguishing features of a plant. Explore the plant and imagine you are the first person to have ever seen it.

Observing a plant specimen

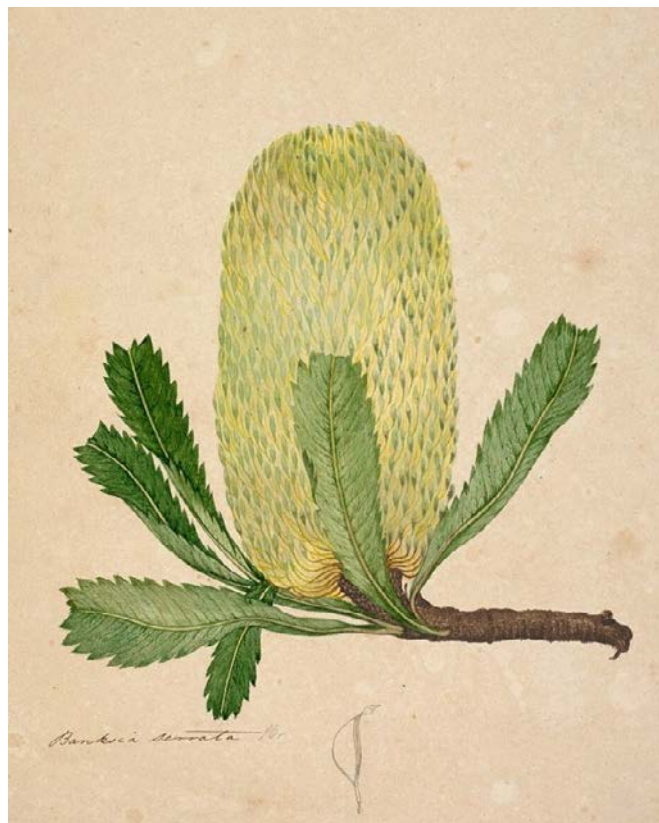
- Look at a plant specimen very closely using a magnifying glass.
- How does it grow
- Shape of the petals and inside the flower
- Leaf shape and arrangement and the veins

Materials

- A sharp 'B' pencil
- Felt tip pen
- A4 watercolour paper

Resources to support teaching and learning about botanical drawings.

- Australian National Botanic Garden - Top Draw – Drawing Aussie Flora - <https://visit.anbg.gov.au/static/dcaa0d7cc4ad72a85b735da37560ea0f/anbg-document-topdraw.pdf>
- Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium of South Australia offer a range of digital learning resources developed especially for classrooms. Each unit is designed to encourage students to explore the natural world. The resources cover a variety of curriculum areas and year levels and are aligned with the curriculum. - <https://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au/learn/for-schools/learning-hub>
- Australian National Botanic Gardens – Learning Resources - <https://visit.anbg.gov.au/schools/learning-resources/>
- Great Art Ideas for Teacher – Australian Flora Print: inspired by printmaker and painter Margaret Preston - https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/18_GreatArtIdeas_AUSTRALIAN-FLORA_V2.pdf



Banksia serrata

Curate your own exhibition



When students know that their artwork will be publicly displayed with a real audience it can motivate students to extend their practice, depth of exploration and quality of work.

As a whole class:

- Students discuss how they will curate an exhibition of the artwork they have completed.
- Find an exhibition space in the classroom or another place in the school to exhibit the artworks
- Identify the tasks they will need to complete to mount the exhibition:
 - Invitations for other students, community members or parents and families
 - planning the exhibition space, including any resources required and how artworks will be displayed, for example do some pieces need to be on a stand
 - Creating posters, labels and supporting material that provide information about the theme of the exhibition

Exhibition opening

The exhibition opening could be as simple as the class going on a gallery walk to view their work or students could invite other classes to view their work. Students could consider activities for the exhibition opening including:

- artist talks to describe the development of the exhibition
- inviting someone from the community to open the exhibition.

Sharing

Country Arts SA we would love to see photographs of your artworks.

Please send us photographs of your exhibition to education@countryarts.org.au

After the exhibition



Photo: Sam Roberts

Saltbush Country and Connections

The visit to the Saltbush Country exhibition provides an opportunity for students to see the artworks of the artists they have explored up close. They can see the colours, scale and the textures.

Encourage students to connect their artist research and the experience of the exhibition.

- What did they see when they were looking at the artworks that they might not have seen if they hadn't known about the artist?
- How does the learning and the experience of going to the exhibition change the way they think about creating their own artworks?

Having a Yarn

Working with a partner students yarn about the experience of the exhibition visit.

- Select one or more of the artists in the exhibition and:
 - Yarn about the artists
 - What are the first words they think of when remembering the artists work.

Yarning is about sharing knowledge, stories, experience, and building relationships. A safe space for everyone to share and be part of the conversation.

Provide a copy of Appendix 8 to students to help them have deeper conversations.

Appendix 8

- A statement from the artist and images to jog their memories.
- Questions to support students to go a little deeper in their conversation.

Pair up with another pair:

- What artists did they yarn about?
- What was their experience?

Write a thank you letter to an artist

Often artists don't get to hear how people have connected with their artworks. Hearing from exhibition visitors can be a great experience for an artist.

The following activity – Write a Postcard invites students to respond to an artist's artwork.

- A printable postcard has been created to make writing a bit more fun.
- Students can respond to the questions on the postcard – save it – and then email it to Country Arts SA – we will pass it on to the individual artist.

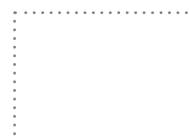
Write a postcard to an artist



Dear

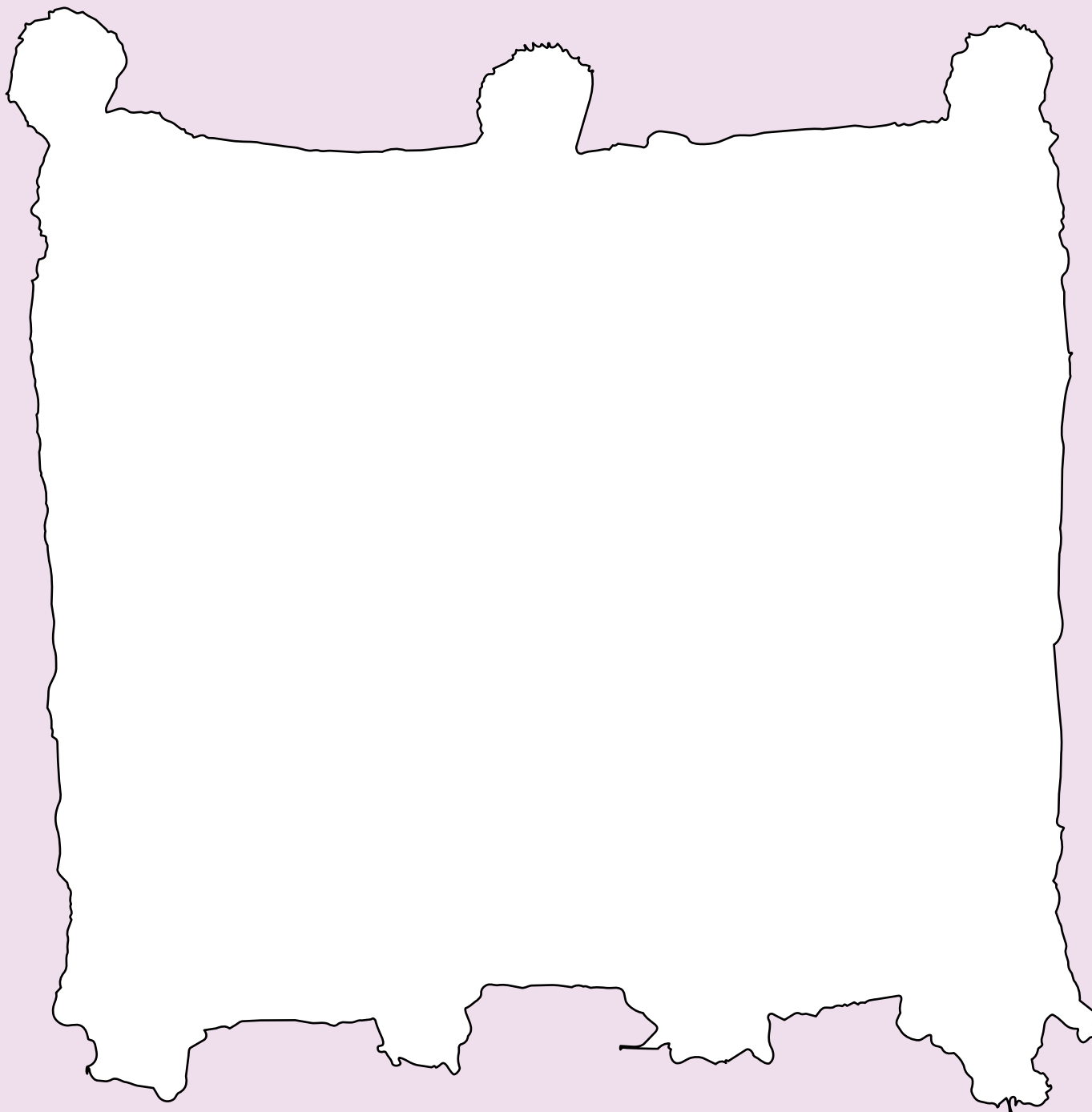
Your artwork really connected with me because...

It made me wonder



From

Design your own possum skin cloak



Appendix 1:

Josephine Lennon

Artist bio

Josephine Lennon is a Mirning and Antikirinjara artist born in Port Augusta, South Australia, living in Ceduna with her family. As a self-taught artist, Lennon is inspired by traditions passed down by family members. Working with acrylic paints on canvas, Lennon's unique style includes the careful application of fine lines and dots to depict the undulating and changing land formations of her Country and the landscapes that surround her. In addition to painting, Lennon enjoys applying acrylic paint to different materials such as wooden board and ceramics.

Lennon has won numerous awards, including the prestigious 2016 Don Dunstan Art Prize presented as part of the Our Mob Aboriginal Art Exhibition at the Adelaide Festival Centre. In 2019 she was awarded runner-up in both the Malka Art Prize at the Yarta Purtli Gallery in Port Augusta and the Port Lincoln Art Prize..

Artist essay

I was born in Port Augusta in 1972, and I am the second child to my parents who were both artistic. I remember when I was around 9 years of age, watching my father while he painted the landscapes in Kimba, and my sister doing dot painting at the old Port Augusta women's group. My mother is still painting and is a recognised, talented practicing artist.

Losing my two sisters and my father deeply impacted my life and I needed to paint to help with my grief. My mother supports my painting knowing that it helps me to deal with my emotions and pain. The works in *Saltbush Country* were inspired by my travels with family through the back tracks on Country, through the Gawler Rangers, Coober Pedy and Port Augusta areas. I also grew up in Ceduna and spent time with the youth group traveling to Point Sinclair, swimming

in the Blue Lake and driving through Lake McDonald, which has inspired one of these paintings. Painting this work has given me a stronger connection and has allowed the healing process to happen through memories.

I have painted onto Belgian linen for this body of work, and have found it to be softer, and more workable as it has a smoother surface. The paint seems to dry quicker, giving a much better finished quality to the works. My use of paint has grown, and I am experimenting with different kinds of paints including metallics. They give an impression of movement and life, and I am also combining primary and secondary colours.

I have strong memories of being at my grandmother's homeland, Mable Creek, and looking down at the cracked textures of the dry land beneath me as well as the travels through Country with my family between Port Augusta and Pimba, the Gawler Ranges and Kingoonya, and the back track from Wirrulla to Kingoonya. To assist and inspire my paintings for *Saltbush Country*, I have taken trips back to this Country with my family.

There are many layers to each of the paintings, each representing the layers of land, salt, water holes and wind. Land is represented by brown, salt is represented by white and dried salt pigment is represented by pink. Waterholes of fresh water are represented for community as circles and wind is represented by undercurrent swirls of colour. In Lake McDonnell the U shapes represent the youth swimming in the Blue Lake.

I like the idea that the audience can feel connected when next travelling on Country, and maybe they can feel a part of something, that connects my history to the paintings and then to the audience: A belonging between my history, healing, Country and my artwork.

Appendix 2:

Marli Macumba

Artist bio

Born in Alice Springs, Marli Macumba is from Iwantja (Indulkana) on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in northern South Australia, and is descended from Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara, Arrernte, Gurindji People. Currently living and working in Port Augusta, Macumba works across the disciplines of painting, weaving and fibre art.

Painting in a bright and vibrant style, Macumba draws upon traditional storytelling practices to create new ways of sharing cultural knowledge. Her skills have been passed on through Tjukurpa, the Law and way of life governing her Country. Her work often depicts themes of family, imagination, stories of Country and elements of nature, including imagery of the desert flowers that she grew up with.

Macumba has a strong history of community leadership and socially engaged practice, including through work at Kokotha Aboriginal Corporation and as a member of the Aboriginal Working Group at Port Augusta City Council. In 2019 Macumba was awarded the Port Augusta NAIDOC Artist of the Year. Macumba's exhibition history includes solo exhibitions MILYIKA at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery (2021) and the self-titled Marli Milyika Macumba at Hahndorf Academy (2022), and group exhibitions including Drifting Sands as part of the 2021 Tarnanthi Festival.

Artist essay

My name is Milyika Marli Macumba, and I am originally from Indulkana, in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands in northern South Australia. My family are Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people from South Australia as well as Arrernte and Gurindji people from the Northern Territory. I am currently living and working as an artist and community leader in Port Augusta in the Mid North of South Australia.

I am inspired by the Country I live and work on including the APY lands, Barngala and Nukunu Country. My skills have been passed on to me through the Tjukurpa, the law and way of life governing my Country. I use traditional story telling techniques to create new ways of sharing cultural knowledge. These paintings and woven work come from reflecting on my time when I was a child growing up in Fregon and Indulkana communities. Stories shared traditionally by Elders drawing in the sand a technique known as Milpatjunanyi

Appendix 3:

Juanella Donovan

Artist bio

Juanella Donovan is an Adnyamathanha, Luritja and Lower Southern Arrernte artist living and working in Port Augusta. McKenzie has multidisciplinary practice working across mediums of weaving, painting, sculpture and installation where she combines ancient and modern practices to tell the stories of her people. McKenzie spent much of her childhood on Country, where she learnt cultural practices from her Elders, which she now passes onto her children.

In 2020 McKenzie was the recipient of the Country Arts SA Breaking Ground Award which culminated in her major solo exhibition Ngatchu Yarta – My Country at Light Square Gallery the following year. In 2021 she was selected as a finalist for the Ramsay Art Prize at the Art Gallery of South Australia and then in 2022 the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards (NATSIAA) where she won the People's Choice category. McKenzie is the winner of the 2020 Malka Art Prize's Marvin McKenzie Senior Award. Her work is held in private and public collections nationally and internationally.

Artist essay

The Narrow Line is a story of family connection, identity, survival, love and Country. Through sharing family memories of my grandmother Molly Lennon, I have been able to explore the memories that I hold dear. In this installation I am celebrating and acknowledging her resilience and strength and the legacy she has left behind.

Molly was born in 1919 in Eringa, in the far north of South Australia, where she lived a traditional life until she experienced the trauma of losing her mother to tribal law. Following this tragedy in 1926, she was taken from her family to Oodnadatta children's home, then onto Colebrook children's home in Quorn, where her name was changed from Molly to Ruth.

In order to create this work, I visited the ruins of the Colebrook home in Quorn, situated on a hill near a tree lined creek, alongside the original Ghan railway line that ran between Port Augusta and Alice Springs. I collected original pieces of the Old Ghan line as it made

me think how cruel it must've been for the children to see the narrow line of the train track every day, a constant reminder of their forced removal. Many children were taken by force away from their families along this train line to homes scattered throughout the country, children taught to be stockman or house servants, for little or no pay. These children who mostly never found their way home to their families. These remnants help to shape the stories of lost identity, language, family and culture.

My family and I also found shattered shards of porcelain plates and cups scattered throughout the site. Pretty patterns with a grim history. My grandmother told me how she would pick the mice faeces from her porridge as a child and if they didn't eat the porridge they would be beaten.

The Cross represents the negative impact of Christianity and how it has been used in the colonisation process to try and stop the continuation of cultural practice. Stolen children were punished for speaking their own language, a story repeated worldwide by first nations people.

My grandmother told me how she would play with gum leaves and pretend they were her family, she stopped speaking language aloud as when she was caught her tongue was scrubbed with soap and a steelo until it bled, by the ladies who 'cared' for the children.

I am drawn to this photograph of her, taken when she was around 6 or 7 years old. Every time I see this picture the mother in me wants to hug this child. She had gotten in trouble for eating some fruit in the toilet and leaving the peels behind and was made to clean the toilets carrying a large box almost bigger than herself, full of cleaning gear.

The box is a metaphor for the burden that these children have carried throughout their lives, not just by my grandmother in the picture, but by all the stolen children who carry the trauma, and the absolute horror that they have experienced by the government and so-called protectors of the time. Despite this, my grandmother was the most kind, forgiving and loving person that I was lucky enough to meet, know and love. The resilience of this beautiful woman cannot be described in words.

Appendix 4:

Deanna Newchurch

Artist bio

Deanna Newchurch is a Narungga artist living and working in Point Pearce on the Yorke Peninsula. Newchurch's practice is inspired by her deep knowledge of Narungga Country, where as a child she learnt how to survey the land for remains of significant cultural sights and artefacts. Making maireener-shell necklaces and learning the practice of possum and wallaby-skin cloaks alongside her sister Lynette, Newchurch seeks to preserve and restore traditional making practices, strengthen cultural identity and bring to life Narungga creation stories.

Newchurch is an active member of the Point Pearce Narrunga community. From 2020 – 2022 Newchurch was a key contributor to Wild Dog, a cultural maintenance and revival project led by Jacob Boehme and produced by Country Arts SA and Insite Arts and was the costume consultant on the Wild Dog Dreaming film. In 2023 Newchurch and her sister Lynette undertook a mentorship with highly respected Gunditjmara Keerray Wooroong artist and knowledge holder Aunty Vicki Couzens to learn the practice of making possum skin cloaks.

Artist essay

I am a Narungga woman who has lived on Narungga Country all my life, leaving only for a short time to attend school before returning home to Point Pearce. I am inspired to make work that revives Narungga cultural practices and acknowledges our history. For *Saltbush Country* I have used possum skins to make a cloak. I wanted to use all the skin so that the possum is clearly represented in the cloak.

Initially I undertook a lot of research on the internet to find information on traditional possum skin cloak making practices. This project supported my sister and myself to travel to the Grampians to learn the practice of making possum skin cloaks first-hand from Gunditjmara Keerray Wooroong artist and knowledge holder Aunty Vicki Couzens.

This cloak has women's symbols and totems of Country burnt onto the underside. These types of lines are typical of Narungga artwork. I would like the audience to learn about Narungga culture, through the work we are creating and the stories we are sharing.

Appendix 5:

Lynette Newchurch

Artist bio

Lynette Newchurch is a Narungga artist living and working in Port Victoria on the Yorke Peninsula. Best known for her maireener-shell necklace making, Newchurch's artistic practice includes time spent collecting shells from beaches on Country around her home on the Yorke Peninsula. Alongside her sister Deanna, Newchurch seeks to preserve and restore traditional making practices, strengthen cultural identity and bring to life Narungga creation stories.

From 2020 – 2022 Newchurch was a key contributor to Wild Dog, a cultural maintenance and revival project led by Jacob Boehme and produced by Country Arts SA and Insite Arts. This year Newchurch worked with South Australian jeweller Lauren Simeoni to learn and strengthen her technical jewellery-making skills. Most recently she undertook a mentorship with highly respected Gunditjmara Keerray Wooroong artist and knowledge holder Aunty Vicki Couzens alongside her sister Deanna to learn the practice of making possum skin cloaks.

Artist essay

My name is Lynette Newchurch and I am a Narungga artist, with family connections to Ngadjuri, Kurna, Adnyamathanha and Ngarrindjeri peoples. I live and work in Port Victoria on the Yorke Peninsula and I am reviving cultural practices that acknowledge our history and traditions. Along with my sister Deanna, we hand collect shells off the beaches on our Country. Walking on Country with our mothers has been a true inspiration, we are their legacy, and we have the responsibility of sharing knowledge and cultural practices, so that in the future we will keep our Aboriginality for the generations to come.

I create shell necklaces using the many different types of shells collected from the shorelines on our Country. Aunty Lola Greeno and her beautiful work making shell necklaces has been an ongoing inspiration. I have had the great privilege of looking and holding my ancestors' shell necklaces at the South Australian Museum, where I have undertaken research on Narungga culture. Creating these necklaces is a reflection of our ancestors. For this project I worked with South Australian jeweller Lauren Simeoni, to learn and strengthen my technical jewellery-making skills

Appendix 6:

Sandra Saunders

Artist bio

Sandra Saunders is a Ngarrindjeri and Buandig artist living and working in Wangary on the Eyre Peninsula. Saunders has a background in community organising and activism for Aboriginal rights and was a vocal leader of the Hindmarsh Island Bridge protests. Working primarily in the medium of painting, Saunders' work is politically engaged, commenting on themes of colonialism, climate change, land rights and social justice.

Saunders has an extensive exhibiting history which began through her participation in the Our Mob exhibitions at the Adelaide Festival Centre. Her recent exhibition history includes the group shows Drifting Sands at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery as part of the 2021 Tarnanthi Festival and Country Arts SA's VIETNAM: ONE IN, ALL IN at Tandanya (2019), as well as her 2017 solo exhibition They Came Like a Tsunami at ACE Gallery.

In 2019 Saunders was awarded a Guildhouse Catapult mentorship to work with Dr Jess Wallace which resulted in a presentation outcome at the Art Gallery of South Australia. In 2022 she was one of four First Nations artists selected by the National Gallery of Australia to design a custom pair of sneakers for the 'walk in their shoes' initiative offered in collaboration with Volley.

Artist essay

I am 76 years old and I am a Buandig, Ngarrindjeri and Scottish woman. I live at a place called Wangary just out of Port Lincoln. I have four children and many grandchildren and great grandchildren. I am a self-taught artist and began painting many years ago. I use painting to heal and express myself especially during difficult times like the Hindmarsh Island saga. I take particular interest in issues and events that have an impact on Aboriginal people, and this has an impact on what I paint.

My artwork has been inspired by current and past events in Australia especially the invasion by Captain Cook and the ongoing struggles faced by Aboriginal people. My painting, The Time Is Now reflects the significance of the referendum and the importance of giving Aboriginal people a voice in Parliament.

To create these paintings, I have researched history books about Captain Cook's voyages and explored Australiana literature which gave me insight to develop the Finders Keepers painting. I've informed myself on the up-and-coming referendum by watching tv and talking to people which has helped me to create the painting, The Time is Now that reflects the present.

Using Belgian linen, oil paint and good quality brushes has been an absolute game changer for my painting practice. The texture of the linen and the layers you can build with the oil paint create an incredible sense of depth, taking the paintings to a whole new level.

I hope the paintings captivate the viewers enough for them to question and delve deeper into the history of our country and the experiences of Aboriginal people. By sparking conversations and fostering understanding, I hope my art becomes thought provoking and a powerful tool for education and empathy.

Appendix 7:

Heather Shearer

Artist bio

Born as 'Tanya Fly' in Alice Springs, Heather Shearer is an Arrernte artist living and working in Port Augusta. As a member of the Stolen Generations much of Shearer's work explores her history and identity, addressing themes of home, belonging, reconciliation and connection to culture. Working across the disciplines of painting and textiles she draws upon imagery from her Arrernte heritage from Ntaria (Hermannsburg).

Shearer is a strong advocate for Aboriginal rights and cultural protection and has held roles with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement and Aboriginal Child Care Agency, as well as sitting on boards and committees within South Australia and nationally, including the Country Arts SA First Nations Advisory Committee and National Sorry Day Committee.

In 2022 Shearer was awarded a Guildhouse Catapult mentorship to work with renowned textiles artist Dr Sera Waters to learn new and advanced embroidery techniques. In 2012 she was nominated for a National DEADLY award. Shearer has exhibited locally, nationally and internationally including the group exhibitions Four Circles/Souring Vision at Tandanya in 1998 and Drifting Sands at Port Pirie Regional Art Gallery as part of the 2021 Tarnanthi Festival, as well as a major international solo exhibition Four Directions of Social Justice at Naughton Gallery, Queen's University (2016, Ireland UK).

Artist essay

I am a 63-year-old grandmother who has had a varied life, laced with trauma, commitment, advocacy, love and art. As a member of the Stolen Generations, I accept that at this stage in my life I will never recapture the full knowledge, place or participation I was denied as a result of my removal. Yet I know in my mind, heart and spirit that I have carved out a life that I am proud of. I have shared the ups and downs of my journey in words and through my art - for truth to be heard, to make change, 'keep the

bastards' honest and to assist others to find their paths towards healing with compassion, honesty and respect.

Art is my release. It is my healing.

I chose embroidery for this exhibition as I have always wanted to get into it, but I didn't know how or where to begin. In 2022 I attended a workshop with Dr Sera Waters in Port Pirie and I loved it. The work I produced was instrumental in me securing a Catapult mentorship with Guildhouse, where I have had the pleasure of undertaking a formal mentorship with Sera.

The embroideries are of flowers that remind me of, and honour my two Nana's, Maggie Cook Gillespie Lindquist (dec), my Nana from my adopted family in Adelaide who came from Glasgow, Scotland, and my Nana Suzannah Fly (dec), my mother's mother, a grand Arrernte woman from Ntaria (Hermannsburg) in Central Australia. Both countries are renowned for their saltbush landscapes, and both are harsh and isolating. The thistle and grevillea thrive, providing bursts of colour and texture to an unforgiving landscape that stands proud, unique and stunningly beautiful – just like my Nana's.

I have researched the history of embroidery through the people who have embraced the artform as a visual statement of their cultural heritage. I have used my own photographs of native Australian flowers as well as examples of botanical images to get the most accurate colours. Through the making of these works, I have formed a newfound respect for the time-consuming process this work takes.

I hope this series of works takes the audience back to their childhood to remember the old-fashioned ways of making our homes both personal, functional and pretty – to refresh, renew and reinvigorate passions that are long forgotten.

Much of my art has been about the harsh times in my journey, this is to remember the good times of innocence and beauty.

Appendix 8: Artist Quotes

Artist statements and Student observations

What did you notice?	
Artist statements	Student observations
Heather Shearer The embroideries are of flowers that remind me of, and honour my two Nana's, Maggie Cook Gillespie Lindquist (dec), my Nana from my adopted family in Adelaide who came from Glasgow, Scotland, and my Nana Suzannah Fly (dec), my mother's mother, a grand Arrernte woman from Ntaria (Hermannsburg) in Central Australia. Both countries are renowned for their saltbush landscapes, and both are harsh and isolating. The thistle and grevillea thrive, providing bursts of colour and texture to an unforgiving landscape that stands proud, unique and stunningly beautiful – just like my Nana's.	
Sandra Saunders I hope the paintings captivate the viewers enough for them to question and delve deeper into the history of our country and the experiences of Aboriginal people. By sparking conversations and fostering understanding, I hope my art becomes thought provoking and a powerful tool for education and empathy	
Lynette Newchurch I have had the great privilege of looking and holding my ancestors' shell necklaces at the South Australian Museum, where I have undertaken research on Narungga culture. Creating these necklaces is a reflection of our ancestors. For this project I worked with South Australian jeweller Lauren Simeoni, to learn and strengthen my technical jewellery-making skills.	
Deanna Newchurch I am inspired to make work that revives Narungga cultural practices and acknowledges our history. For Saltbush Country I have used possum skins to make a cloak. I wanted to use all the skin so that the possum is clearly represented in the cloak.	
Juanella Donovan The Narrow Line is a story of family connection, identity, survival, love and Country. Through sharing family memories of my grandmother Molly Lennon, I have been able to explore the memories that I hold dear. In this installation I am celebrating and acknowledging her resilience and strength and the legacy she has left behind.	

What did you notice?	
Artist statements	Student observations
Marli Macumba I am inspired by the Country I live and work on including the APY lands, Barngala and Nukunu Country. My skills have been passed on to me through Tjukurpa, the law and way of life governing my Country. I use traditional story telling techniques to create new ways of sharing cultural knowledge. These paintings and woven work come from reflecting on my time when I was a child growing up in Fregon and Indulkana communities. Stories shared traditionally by Elders drawing in the sand a technique known as Milpatjunanyi.	
Josephine Lennon There are many layers to each of the paintings, each representing the layers of land, salt, water holes and wind. Land is represented by brown, salt is represented by white and dried salt pigment is represented by pink. Waterholes of fresh water are represented for community as circles and wind is represented by undercurrent swirls of colour. In Lake McDonnell the U shapes represent the youth swimming in the Blue Lake.	

Students observations – Question prompts
How does the artist communicate meaning to the viewer? Why did the artist select particular content for their artwork? What historical influences are evident in the artwork? What political ideas and perspectives can you see in the artwork and how might it influence the audience? How have materials been used to make the artwork? How effective do you think the artwork is in meeting the artist's intention? What ideas does the artwork express about the future? How does the artwork relate to my culture? How does this artwork tell its story? How is the artist's connection to Country central to their artwork? What clues does the title of the artwork give about its intended meaning? What do we see? – What have we learnt that makes us think this? What does this work make me think about my own connections to significant places? On what Country was the artwork made?

Appendix 9: Discussion prompts

How does the artist quote show the person's connection to country/place?

How does the artist express their perspective of connection to Country?

What emotions do you think are expressed in this perspective?

How does the artist's quote express the environment or landscape?

Does the artist mention the flora and fauna feature and what meaning does it have for them?

Does the artist make any reference to connections beyond the land and the living?

What similarities or differences are there between your understanding of 'place' and the artist quote?

How is the artist's connection to Country central in their artwork?

How do the artist's perspective challenge our thinking about what it means to belong to a place?

Appendix 10: Australian Curriculum 9.0

The Arts – Visual Arts – Content Descriptions	
Year 3 & 4	Exploring and Responding - AC9AVA4E02 - Explore how First Nations Australians use visual arts to communicate their connection to and responsibility for Country/Place Creating and Making - AC9AVA4C01 - Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning Presenting and performing - AC9AVA4P01 - Share and/or display artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings.
Year 5 & 6	Exploring and Responding - AC9AVA6E02 - Explore ways that First Nations Australians use visual arts to continue and revitalise cultures Creating and Making - AC9AVA6C01 - Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning Presenting and performing - AC9AVA6P01 - Select and present documentation of visual arts practice, and display artworks in informal and/or formal settings
Year 7 & 8	Exploring and Responding - AC9AVA8E02 - Investigate the diversity of First Nations Australians' artworks and arts practices, considering culturally responsive approaches to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights Creating and Making - AC9AVA8C02 - Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning Presenting and performing - AC9AVA8P01 - Curate and present examples of their visual arts practice to accompany exhibits of their artworks to communicate ideas, perspective and/or meaning to audiences.
Year 9 & 10	Exploring and Responding - AC9AVA10E02 - Investigate the ways that First Nations Australian artists celebrate and challenge multiple perspectives of Australian identity through their artworks and visual arts practice Creating and Making - AC9AVA10C02 - Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that reflect personal expression, and represent and/or challenge ideas, perspective and/or meaning. Presenting and performing - AC9AVA10P01 - Evaluate art exhibits to inform the curation and exhibition of their own and/or others' artworks and/or visual arts practice