Secondary Education Kit
Sunshine Coast Art Prize | 25 July to 15 September 2019

Image credit: Monika Behrens | Vanitas (detail) | 2019 | oil on canvas
Understanding art

There are many ways you can develop your understanding and therefore appreciate artworks more.

- Reading the didactic (signage near the front of the exhibition and under some of the artwork) will give you a brief background about the artist, what ideas they are interested in and where they draw for inspiration from.
- The title of a work can sometimes reveal what the artist intends to communicate or provide a clue about the subject matter and their thought process.
- Looking at what has been used (and how) to create artworks can tell you more about the artist’s intention.
- Look closely at the artwork. Take your time to get close to the pieces and study all the details. Often, the more you look at a work, the more will be revealed to you.
- It is important to remember that looking at art is a subjective experience and the way that you see an artwork is unique to you. Certain works may “speak” to you more than others.

About the Sunshine Coast Art Prize

The Sunshine Coast Art Prize is a national competition attracting hundreds of entries throughout the country. The 2019 Art Prize exhibition showcases 40 selected finalists from which a winning entry will be selected.

The competition showcases contemporary art practices from a new generation of artists, as well as several established artists with strong national and international profiles.

Things to consider

It may be useful to discuss the concept of contemporary art before viewing the exhibition. Given its “art of today” definition, it may be useful to note that contemporary art has a history with major movements and artists who have paved the way.

The art gallery is an ideal space to discover how being a ‘viewer of art’ contributes to a creative society. As a viewer, we learn to value, make meaning and communicate our life experiences. Discussion can also include the process of critiquing artworks, why some artworks are selected and others are not, keeping in mind the Art Prize is about showcasing a variety of 2D contemporary art-making from all over the country.

After viewing the Art Prize exhibition, you may be inspired to hold your own art competition and exhibition at school. Decide on the criteria you will use to select artworks, and experience the challenging task of selecting and critiquing the artworks yourself.
How do I understand it?

There are many ways you can develop your understanding and appreciation of art.

Artists write artist statements to explain more about their artwork, processes and methods. Reading the statements and artwork titles give the viewer further insight into the minds of the artists.

Most importantly is to ‘learn to see’. You do this by looking closely at the artwork. When you practise looking closely at something, the artwork can reveal something new and offer multiple forms of interpretation.

When analysing the artworks in the exhibition, it is useful to divide the diverse themes into categories in order to help direct your viewing experience. The themes listed below have been selected to guide discussion and education content which have been designed in conjunction with the Australian Curriculum. You can refer back to the list when completing the tasks after your gallery visit.

- People and places
- Abstraction
- Something to say
- What’s the story?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People and places</th>
<th>People and places are often a source of inspiration for artists. Everyone has special people and places in our lives that make our lives richer.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstraction</td>
<td>Why do artists create abstract artworks? Even though abstract artworks are sometimes a little harder to understand at first, often if you put a little effort into understanding the artist’s motives, you will get a better appreciation of why an artist works in a particular manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something to say</td>
<td>Often artists use their artworks to say something they feel strongly about in the world in which they live. Social and political themes such as race, the environment and gender issues are a few areas explored in this way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the story?</td>
<td>We all love stories. Artworks can tell a story without using words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Artwork info</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Anderson</td>
<td>Floating Swamp Banksia with copy of Guy’s Balls Pyramid</td>
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**ABSTRACTION**

**Think + Talk**

In the artist’s statement, the artist says that the two small images of 1. Swamp banksia cone and 2. Copy of *Guy’s Balls Pyramid* are ‘seemingly unrelated’.

How are they unrelated?

Can you find a relationship between the two?

Visual Art Elements to guide thinking:

*Shape + Composition + Balance*
**Monika Behrens**  
*Vanitas* | 2019 | oil on canvas | 50 x 60cm.  
Image courtesy of the artist and Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney.

Monika Behrens is an artist working within the realm of still life painting. Over the past five years she has had an increased focus in traditional Dutch seventeenth century still life. She is interested in looking at these traditional paintings in a new way, thinking about how the compositional structures can be applied through a contemporary practice. Through her practice, she believes that still life painting presents both the painter and viewer with a new way of looking at objects. Although a highly descriptive genre of painting, the difference between the physical object and its representation in the image provides expansive possibilities for the artist to create a new reality. This painting explores the sub-genre of Vanitas, which often symbolised the transience of life and the vainness of pleasure. This work exaggerates aspects of the tradition.

**WHAT’S THE STORY**

**Think + Talk**

The artist is exploring a new way of looking at things through the sub-genre of Vanitas.

Research Vanitas and describe the essential elements.

**Task:** Create your own still life Vanita.

- Select between 5-10 objects that represent the pleasures in your life.
- Arrange, photograph and edit your photograph so as to keep in the style and mood of a typical Vanita artwork.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Black</td>
<td><em>The spring in a shadow</em></td>
<td>2019</td>
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**SOMETHING TO SAY**

**Think + Talk**

There is a strong message in this abstract painting. You’re an Art detective and need to find the hidden message within this artwork.

**Task:** Play Wagner’s epic piece of music whilst engaging in the task.

- Identify and find images of power. Consider value systems such as religion and government. Large public corporations such as banks, agriculture, food, pharmaceutical, technology, natural resources.
- Discuss and find images of how the love of these things can impact on people/humanity.
- Collage all images to create a powerful socio-political statement.
**Jeremy Blincoe**

*Chaosmos* | 2019  
pigment ink jet print | 100 x 150cm. Courtesy of the artist.

*Chaosmos* is taken from James Joyce who used the term to describe a “cosmos at the verge of chaos, one that is surging toward the exciting possibility of going out of existence, struggling onward at the edge of the existential abyss.”

**ABSTRACTION**

In this artwork, the artist is exploring concepts of the possibility of an edge to existence.

**Think + Talk**

Look into the artwork and describe what response you have. What is it that you respond to the most?

Is it what you see, the subject matter being explored, or how the painting makes you feel?

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**Mark Tweedie**

*A dream like this is hard to wake from #2* | 2018  
oil on canvas | 127 x 122cm. Courtesy of the artist.

Family connections are at the core of my practice. For my recent body of work, I have incorporated photo albums as source material to explore lineage and domestic life, set against the enduring narratives of love and loss. *A dream like this is hard to wake from #2* is based on an old polaroid; a nonna and nonno together, but soon to be apart.

**PEOPLE AND PLACES**

**Think + Talk**

With your understanding of Visual Arts Elements, discuss how the artist has used these to create emphasis of mood and emotion?

**Task: Learning to See and Seeing to Learn**

Find an old family photograph and draw/sketch your family connections.
I have an ongoing interest in the ways in which machines can be considered creatively and form part of a visual arts practice. This painting is a result of my ongoing ‘Painting Mill’ project in which a machine that I have made is used as both a studio work tool and a component of public performance. I have been curious to explore the possibilities of abstract painting that might combine machine-like marks within a range of more conventional painting processes and approaches.

ABSTRACTION

Think + Talk

Are machines helping humans be more creative or are they inhibiting our creativity?

Task: Collage and technology.

- Use the photocopier to enhance creativity.
- Take an image/drawing prepared earlier and reconfigure its proportions, colour, value, and contrast by using the photocopier.
- Use these different copies to collage a new artwork, re-imagining and revealing something new about the original image.
### Stephen Bush

**Levitate** | 2018 | oil and enamel on linen | 93 x 102 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.

Stephen Bush is a painter who explores modes of representational painting and its history. Known for his use of amplified colour and experimentation with the techniques and processes of painting, Bush reinvents its narrative possibilities. Revision, contradiction and juxtaposition are key elements of his work. Costumed figures, anachronistic characters and animals, often feature prominently in idealised landscapes. In *Levitate*, a costumed observer beholds an iconic object set within the terrain of a mountain valley. The familiar, dilapidated VW Combi Van speaks to ideas of social and cultural upheaval from past and present. A symbol historically associated with the rejection of the 1960s status quo, today the Combi Van has ironically acquired newfound capital. *Levitate* is a form of provocation, in this deceptively simple picture, Bush asks the viewer to question their historical values.

### WHAT’S THE STORY?

#### Think + Talk

The artist has used historical elements in this artwork to provoke the viewer to look deeper into the story.

Identify the historical symbols in the artwork and discuss the possible relationship between the man and the van.

**Task:** If the artwork came to life what would happen next?

#### Present and Perform

In small groups of 3-5 present and perform these little creative skits to your class.
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<td>Ray Coffey</td>
<td><em>Untitled</em></td>
<td>2019</td>
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**SOMETHING TO SAY**

There appears to be a type of struggle going on in this artwork...

Violence is generally about power, the loss of it or wanting more of it. However, we know that violence is never a solution to any problem.

**Think + Talk**

Think about a time in your life when you have felt powerless.

What positive solution did you use to get your power back?

**Task:** Creative imagination is a positive and powerful way to regain your personal power.

Create a list of creative things you could do instead of acting out when you feel angry and powerless.
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<td>Gerwyn Davies</td>
<td><em>Sir Joh Heslop</em></td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In an age of endless self-imaging, this work is part of a wider practice that aims to explore the boundless new potential for performing and framing the self that emerge on the stage of the digital image. Invoking the irony, artifice and theatricality of a Camp sensibility, the work centres around the conjuring of multiple selves before and through the camera. In doing so it relies on the photograph as a highly artificial and fictitious space that is apt for performance and masquerade, a myth-making device. Using readymade and everyday materials, an inventory of characters is assembled through costume that simultaneously conceal, transform and abstract the body. These ‘self-portraits’ draw attention toward the vibrant surfaces and spectacular material excess of their artificial second skins. <em>Sir Joh Heslop</em> is part of a series of parodic re-imagineings of Queensland iconography that was developed from a residency with the Museum of Brisbane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT’S THE STORY?**

**Think + Talk**

The artist has used a vibrant camouflage to re-imagine himself.

**Q:** Do you think the artist is trying to conceal his true identity or show you something inside of him that you can’t already see?

**Task:** If you were to choose a mask/costume what type of character would you choose to be and why?

Create an artwork or write a response.
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<td>Chris Dolman</td>
<td><em>Falling from a broken ladder</em></td>
<td>2019</td>
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**SOMETHING TO SAY**

**Think + Talk**

The artist invites you to appreciate the skilled labour and time that has gone into the process of making art and curating an art exhibition.

**Q:** Identify the labour that has gone into;

1. Creating this artwork.
2. Installing the artworks on the gallery walls.

**Task:**

Express your gratitude through art (visual, media, writing, dance, music etcetera) for the time and labour your teachers put into their lessons.
### Name

- Diena Georgetti

### Artwork info

- **TALISKA | 2018**
  - acrylic on canvas, custom frame
  - 106.5 x 81 cm.
  - Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney.
  - Photography credit Alex Kiers/The Commercia.

### Artist Statement / Activity

PROOF OF LIFE

- My apartment is a bleak residence for humans. I over clean, removing any signs of life that would expose my existence. The apartment is where the furniture lives, the objects of decoration and function. They live here rather confidently together. It’s their home. They are more installation than furnishings. There is no comfort to be found in the minimal arrangements. I was once told I treat objects like people and people like objects. I am more generous in my paintings. I allow the studio marks and mistakes to be seen as a kind of proof of life, because this is where we are endeared to connect in the humanity of failure.

**ABSTRACTION**

**Think + Talk**

Read the artist’s statement.

What comment does the artist make about the furnishings in their apartment? Do you feel the same way about the objects in your home? Are objects and people interchangeable?

**Task: Hypothetical game**

Suppose there is a fire at your home and you have time to collect just three objects to save and take with you. What are they and why have you chosen these?
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<tr>
<td>Neil Haddon</td>
<td><em>We will bring our own trees</em></td>
<td>2019</td>
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**SOMETHING TO SAY**

**Think + Talk**

The artist has chosen some interesting symbols to represent different themes associated with displacement.

Read the artist statement to understand why they chose these as metaphors.

**Task: Whole Class**

Can you be physically distant yet feel connected?

Physically represent and demonstrate your understanding.

Can you be in close proximity and feel disconnected?

Physically represent and demonstrate your understanding.
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| Helga Groves  | *Ocean Memory Stone* | 2018 | iridescent oil paint, wax and medium on linen | 90 x 90cm.  
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane. Photography credit Andrew Curtis.  
The painting *Ocean Memory Stone* belongs to a series of mixed media artworks I created in 2018, that extend my exploration of geophysical processes and geological time, informed by firsthand observations of specific rock specimens housed in geological museums around the world.  
The artwork endeavours to reanimate ‘The Great Oxygenation Event’, an occurrence of deep geological time around 2.5 billion years ago, when early lifeforms in our young oceans began photosynthesising, producing oxygen and initiating earth’s early atmosphere. Oxygen began combining with dissolved iron in the sea to form insoluble iron-oxide which separated out as sedimentary layers settling onto the sea floor. Over geological time Banded Iron Formation rocks resulted, physically registering how a fluid event becomes permanently set in stone as a form of visual inscription.  
*Ocean Memory Stone* recalls this event as a reminder of earth’s constant flux, its series of continuing processes and cycles.  

**SOMETHING TO SAY**  
Read the artist statement.  

**Q:** What great event has the artist reimagined?  

**Think + Talk**  
Through which Visual Art Elements has the artist used to depict the:  

- a) Sedimentary layers settling onto the sea floor  
- b) Continuing processes and cycles  
- c) Early lifeforms
Laith McGregor

‘A Thousand Tears’ | 2019 | oil on canvas, found objects and custom frame | 145 x 138cm. Courtesy of the artist and STATION, Melbourne.

The new body of work follows on from previous research and explorations surrounding the grey area between fiction and non-fiction. This inquiry has led to a study of intuitive mark-making and the use of the subconscious as a means to guide, express and perform spontaneous form. The bulk of the practice consists of the line as a starting point for exploration. I have used negative space as a way of delineating what is there, but also not there, exploring a grey area that is in between.

The line as a symbolic gesture dates back to our primitive origins and has filtered into the fabric of everyday life. A primal instinct, the line is used to map, guide, express and converse. It is an immediate action that bridges consciousness. With this in mind I have endeavoured to create the semblance of a fictitious character at one with his surroundings, as if merging with the landscape. I have conjured and channelled the new work to its natural conclusion. With no preconceived ideas of how the work would look and/or turn out. This phantom initiates questions for the viewer: are they seeing something? Or not?

The space between the real and unreal opens the work up for different interpretations. I hope to alter the audiences’ environment and elicit a meditative state, by allowing a series of visual clues that then act as correspondence between us, so together, we create an apparition.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Think + Talk

The character in this picture appears to have been born from the same source as the plant. Have you ever had an experience where you have felt deeply connected to something or someone?

Q: What techniques did the artist use to create this affect/feeling?

Use Visual Art Elements to guide your thinking Line + Space + Colour
For Teachers

**Australian Curriculum Overview**

- **Learning Areas**
  - The Arts | English | HASS

- **General Capabilities**
  - Critical and Creative Thinking
  - Ethical Understanding
  - Personal and Social Capability
  - Intercultural Understanding
  - ICT Capability

**Visual Arts - [Years 7-10 Content Descriptions]**

**Dance - [Years 7-10 Content Descriptions]**

**Drama - [Years 7-10 Content Descriptions]**

**Language/Literature/Literacy - [Years 8 and 9 Content Descriptions]**

Expressing and developing Ideas | Interacting with others | Interpreting, analysing and evaluating | Creating texts

**Hass - [Year 7 Content Descriptions]**

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