

SECONDARY

ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

Mosman Art Gallery
Art Education Series



Development of this resource was supported by The Balnaves Foundation as part of the Mosman Art Gallery Art Education Series. Resource text and design by artist Cameron Stead. Copyright the artist.

ETHEL CARRICK FOX, 'ON BALMORAL BEACH, SYDNEY', 1913



Scan the QR code to view this artwork

TOGETHER WE WILL

Respond to an artwork through gesture

Learn about the technique of divisionism

Create an impressionist style drawing outdoors

ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

'On Balmoral Beach, Sydney' is a 1913 painting by English artist Ethel Carrick Fox. The artist portrays elegant women with their young children beside the blue water of Sydney Harbour. She uses a vibrant palette, confident fluid brushmarks and spontaneity, which exemplify her Impressionist style of painting.

Ethel Carrick Fox created this painting during one of many trips to Sydney, while staying at the guest manor, 'Redcourt', across Middle Head from Balmoral, by the ocean at Manly. Many artists were attracted to the idyllic nature of this area, and this artwork forms an important part of The Balnaves Gift to Mosman Art Gallery, which allows us to observe artistic practices and responses of the landscape and daily life from the 1800s onwards.

LET'S RESPOND

1. Close one eye and raise an index finger to point at the painting.
2. Choose an area within the painting that interests you. Use your finger to follow the gestures of the brush marks, and emulate the direction and application of paint.
3. What is something that you notice about the physical quality of the paint and the colour that the artist uses? Share with the person next to you.

CONTEXT CLUES

Ethel Carrick Fox uses a technique called divisionism in her application of paint, which means paint colours and tones are applied separately and are not blended together or smoothly rendered (as was common for several centuries leading up to this period).

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

You will need:

A variety of coloured crayons or pencils (preferably oil pastels)

- 1 Find space to sit outside. Focus on something that interests you – it might be in the natural or built environment.
- 2 Spend time observing and naming the colours that you can see. Take a closer look and notice the variation of colours and tones within specific objects (for example, the various shades of green in a single leaf).
- 3 In the space below, use the method of divisionism to create a drawing of what you notice in the landscape. Focus on colour and tone, rather than shapes and outlines.

HINT: Think about the direction, size and intensity of the marks you are making and how they correspond with what you are drawing.

ELIOTH GRUNER, 'TAYLOR'S BAY', 1913



Scan the QR codes to view these artworks



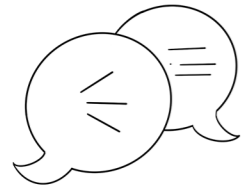
TOGETHER WE WILL

- Consider** the artist's intention
- Learn** about atmosphere and light in painting
- Create** a short piece of writing

ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

'Taylor's Bay' is a 1913 painting by Elioth Gruner, an artist celebrated for realistically representing atmosphere and light in his paintings of the Australian landscape. Located between Little Sirius Cove and Chowder Bay, Taylor's Bay is a south-east facing bay bordered by the densely vegetated slopes of the National Park. At the time of this painting, the quiet bay would have only been accessible by boat or by walking track.

In 'Taylor's Bay', Elioth Gruner captures the heat of the Australian midday sun, evident with the bleached colours of the landscape, while a sense of stillness and calm is only disrupted by the loose depiction of birds hovering over the water, and the faint stream of smoke rising from what appears to be a campfire in the centre of the composition.



LET'S DISCUSS

1. Spend time observing the artwork. What words would you use to describe the colours you can see?
2. What do you think the artist Elioth Gruner wanted viewers to feel when observing the painting, 'Taylor's Bay'?

CONTEXT CLUES

The quality and colour of natural light changes depending where you are located, the time of day and year, as well as weather conditions. Many early colonial artists found it difficult to accurately represent the feeling of sunlight in Australia, compared to where they had trained and practiced in Britain and Europe.

Elioth Gruner was renowned for his honesty in representing the Australian landscape, both natural and pastoral. His artworks appear to celebrate the harmonious and poetic qualities of the natural environment, and the ways in which people connect to it.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

You will need:
A pen or pencil



1 Think of a place in the natural environment that you have a strong connection with and imagine you are there now. What words would you use to describe this place? Write a list below.

2 How does this place make you feel when you are there? Write a list below.

3

Using the words you have written above as a starting point, create a short piece of writing that describes the qualities of this place and how it makes you feel. Your response can be poetic, abstract, instructive, or something completely different.

JASPER KNIGHT, 'SPIT BRIDGE TOWER', 2015



Scan the QR code to view this artwork

TOGETHER WE WILL

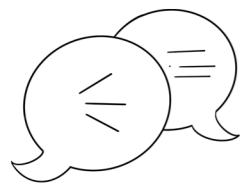
- Learn** about the relationship between a painting and its surface
- Consider** different ways of telling visual stories
- Create** an ephemeral paper collage

ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

'Spit Bridge Tower' is a painting by Jasper Knight created in 2015. The artist says: "My idea of a beautiful Sydney landscape is something like that tower, sitting in its waterway with a bit of bridge, and to me it's so very Sydney."

Jasper Knight has a strong connection to the waterways in Sydney's north. Having spent time there as a child, they now serve as inspiration for his paintings. Unlike many artists who paint on stretched canvas or timber panels, Jasper Knight creates his own surfaces using plywood, masonite, pegboard, Perspex, aluminium and old metal signs, in what he calls a collaged surface or assemblage.

LET'S DISCUSS



1. Spend time observing the artwork – not just the picture, but the painting as an object. What different elements has the artist used to create this painting?
2. Why do you think Jasper Knight paints on top of an assemblage of different materials, and how might this influence the way we interpret the artwork?

CONTEXT CLUES

Artists have traditionally painted on stretched canvases or timber panels, if not directly onto walls and ceilings. Properly prepared surfaces not only support a consistent application of paint, they are archival and easier to conserve.

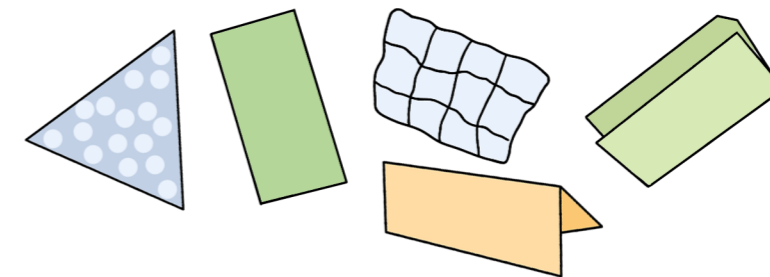
However, in the 1900s, artists began to experiment by painting onto unconventional surfaces, examining how the intended meaning of a work could be shared through its materiality and the associations or meaning conjured. Different surfaces may also influence the painting's composition, prompting the artist to respond in an intuitive way.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

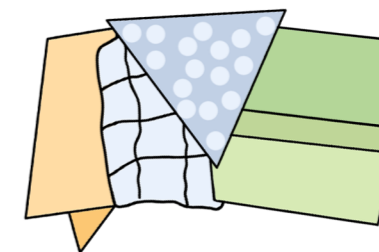
You will need:

A variety of coloured, patterned or textured paper

- 1 Think of a building or structure you have noticed in Mosman – or the place where you live – it could be anything from a water fountain to a towering skyscraper.
- 2 Choose three or more pieces of paper that embody the structure you are thinking of. They could relate to colour, texture, mood, purpose or something else.
- 3 Fold or tear your paper into a variety of shapes – once again thinking about how they might relate to the structure.



- 4 On a flat surface, arrange your shapes to make different patterns and compositions. Think of this process as a form of play, continuing to move and reposition the shapes until you feel that your arrangement is complete.
Hint: This should be abstract, rather than a literal representation of the structure you are thinking about.



- 5 Look at each other's compositions. What are you curious about? Can you guess the structure that someone else has been inspired by?

SUSAN ROTHWELL, 'BALMORAL SHARK NET'



Scan the QR code to view this artwork

TOGETHER WE WILL

- Consider** how art tells stories from different times
- Discuss** the relationship between artist and subject
- Create** a personal map drawing

ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

'Balmoral Shark Net' is a painting by Australian architect and artist Susan Rothwell. It depicts Balmoral Beach and its famous shark net, which has since been removed. The artist recalls visiting Balmoral Beach as a child, and the several occasions when sharks were either caught in, or on the wrong side of, the net, following heavy rain and storms.

The painting is an expressive rendering of the beach and seascape, in a warm and earthy palette, with a close observation of the quality of light. The artist says that drawing and painting can teach us to look at things carefully, and allow us to see things from a different perspective.

This artwork was donated to Mosman Art Gallery as part of The Balnaves Gift, which includes landscape paintings of the local area from the 1800s onwards. Artists have long been attracted to Mosman and its surrounding suburbs, and the resulting artworks form an important part of local and national history.

LET'S DISCUSS



1. Susan Rothwell has a personal connection with Balmoral Beach. How do you think this might have influenced her painting, compared to someone who might visit the beach for the first time?
2. Why do you think it is important for Mosman Art Gallery to have artworks like this as part of their collection?

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

You will need: A pen or pencil



- 1 Think about a beach or body of water that you have a strong connection with. Imagine you are there now – what can you see, hear, smell and touch?
- 2 In the space below, draw a basic topographical map or blueprint that describes the main features of the beach or body of water you are thinking of.
- 3 What other features of this place are important or unique? Think about things in the natural and built environment, as well as small details you may have noticed while visiting this place. Draw them onto your map.

- 4 Once you have finished, share your map with the person next to you. What do you notice about their drawing? How is it similar and different to your own?

IMANTS TILLERS, 'FACTUM 1,' 2021



Scan the QR code to view this artwork

TOGETHER WE WILL

- Learn** about appropriation and Postmodernism in visual art
- Discuss** artistic processes and intentions in relation to meaning-making
- Create** a guide for the application of appropriation techniques

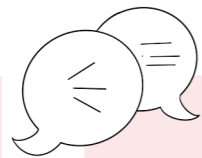
ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

Imants Tillers is a celebrated Australian artist who is known for incorporating references to historical artworks and other media in his multilayered paintings, which are created on grids of individual canvas boards. The artist lived in Mosman in the early 1980s, and draws upon works by landscape painters Arthur Streeton (1867-1948) and Tom Roberts (1836-1931), who also had a strong connection to the area and created many paintings of the local landscape.

The title of this painting, 'Factum 1', is a reference to the 1957 mixed media artwork by American artist Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008), who was a pioneer in assemblage and Pop Art. Both artworks appropriate existing media (or 'texts') to convey a rich narrative that incorporates many stories into one work.

On the topic of appropriation, Imants Tillers says: "... when you do appropriate something, you want to add to it or you want to change what you're using. You want to kind of produce something more."

LET'S DISCUSS



1. How does Imants Tillers reference or appropriate elements of other artworks, media, texts, or ideas in his painting 'Factum 1'? How might this inform the meaning of the artwork?
2. How does the artwork break, challenge, or re-interpret any artmaking rules, traditions or conventions? What might have influenced the artist's decisions to do this?

CONTEXT CLUES

The art movement of Modernism (roughly 1860s-1970s), is characterised by a series of shorter movements that built upon and aimed to supersede one another (such as Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism and Futurism). In the era of Postmodernism (roughly 1960s-1990s), many artists claimed that there weren't any new or unique avenues for artistic expression. Instead of looking to the future, as was the case during Modernism, Postmodern artists began to sample (appropriate), remix and reinterpret media from the past.

INFORMED RESPONSE

You will need: A pen or pencil

- 1 Break into small groups. **Develop a set of guidelines** for artists who wish to sample, remix and reinterpret media from the past (this can include visual art, music, film or writing). What do artists need to consider in this process, and are there any limitations in the type of media they source (such as works by people from minority groups or different cultural backgrounds)?

- 2 Present your guidelines to the other groups and discuss.

MATTHEW CHARLES MEERE, 'VIEW OF MOSMAN', 1940



Scan the QR code to view this artwork

TOGETHER WE WILL

- Discuss** the role of subjectivity in artmaking
- Consider** the intention of an artwork's title
- Develop** responses relating to subjectivity in art

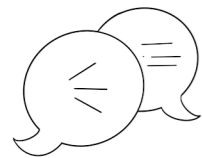
ABOUT THIS ARTWORK

'View of Mosman' is a painting by Matthew Charles Meere, created in 1940. The work offers a perspective of the artist's home in Mosman, looking into Sydney Harbour. Meere painted landscapes throughout his career, although these were primarily for pleasure, as portraiture provided his main source of income.

'View of Mosman' is an example of his firmly structured and carefully rendered modernist style, where the natural and built environments are brought together in a harmonious and balanced composition.

Oil on Composition Board
39cm (height) x 32cm (width)

LET'S DISCUSS



1. Spend time observing the artwork. What words would you use to describe the mood or feeling of this painting?
2. This artwork is titled 'View of Mosman', yet a single house and garden dominate most of the composition. Why do you think the artist gave the artwork this title? Can you think of a different title that would also be appropriate for this artwork?

CONTEXT CLUES

Although 'View of Mosman' is painted in a realistic style, Matthew Charles Meere is subjective in his interpretation of the landscape, offering us his own perspective through composition, colour and painting style. All artists are informed by their personal experiences, thoughts, emotions, memories and imagination. Additionally, the artist's intention or purpose for making the work may inform the process, scale and pictorial outcome of the painting.

INFORMED RESPONSE

You will need: A pen or pencil

1

Spend time re-reading the description of this artwork. In your own words, describe below how you think the artist's subjectivity is evident in the artwork, 'View of Mosman' (1940).

Hint: It might help to circle words or phrases that you think are relevant.

2

Drawing from the information presented here and your own knowledge of the Australian art, what other elements or influences might have informed the artist's approach for making this painting? For example, you could discuss the composition, style or scale of the painting, or the materials used.

3

Share your responses with a partner and discuss.