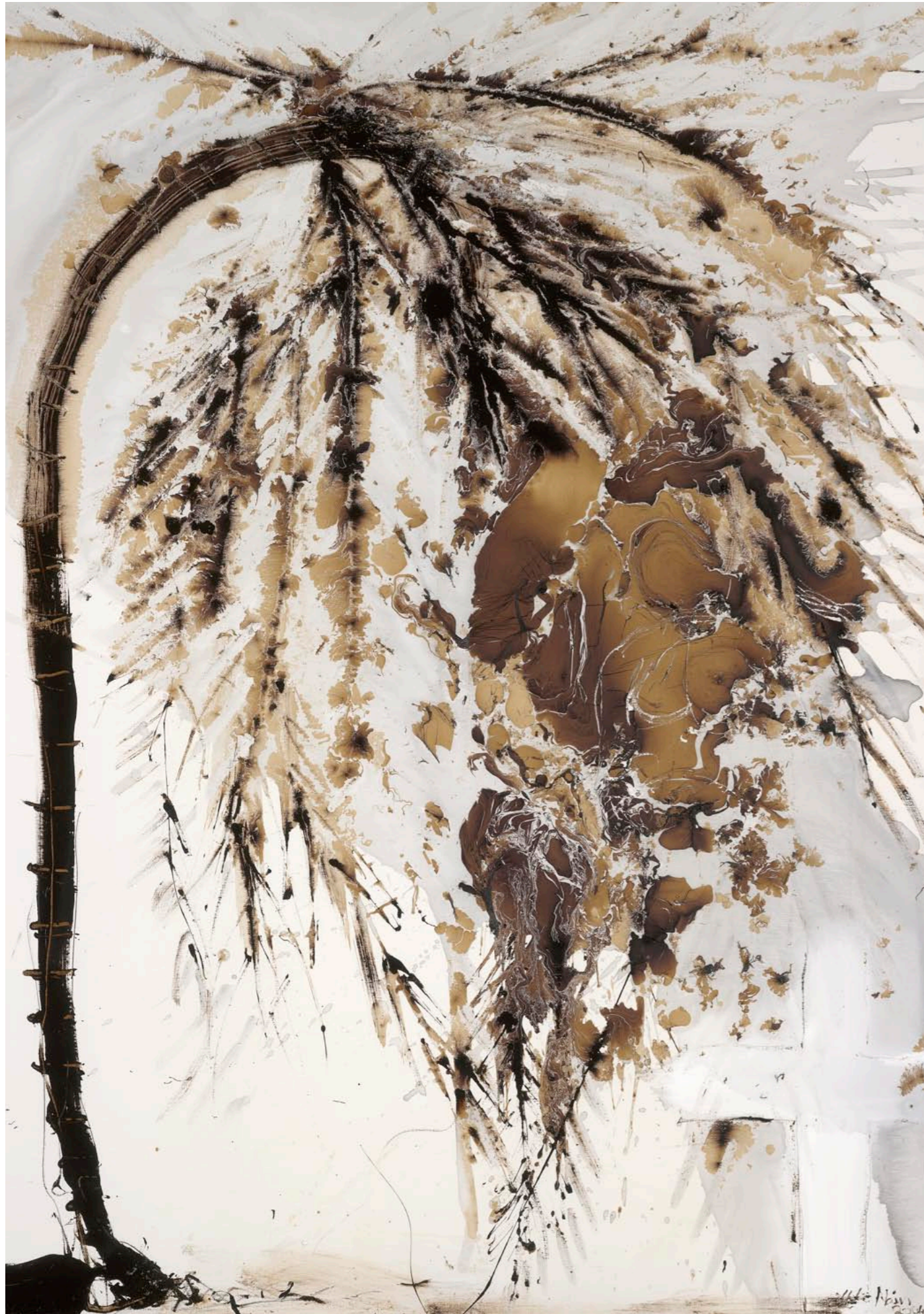


LIVES AND TIMES

A SELECTION OF WORKS ON TOUR FROM THE
VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR LIVING AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

EDUCATION RESOURCE





CONTENTS

04	An introduction to the exhibition
06 - 07	Clinton Nain: In Focus
08 - 13	An extended interview with Rosslynd Piggott
14 - 15	Bronwyn Oliver : Sculpting poetry – an artist's story
<i>Questions and activities for use before, during and after a visit to the exhibition, relating to works by featured artists</i>	
16 - 19	Bronwyn Oliver
20 - 25	Tim Johnson
26 - 29	Clinton Nain
30 - 33	Peter Graham
34 - 37	Rosslynd Piggott
38 - 40	Walangkura Napanangka
41 - 42	VCE Studio Arts: Art Industry Contexts - information related to the exhibition
43	Glossary
44-45	Artists' biographies

Clinton Nain
 Miriam Mer/Ku Ku born 1971
Erub has a bituman road now (detail) 2004
 synthetic polymer paint, bitumen,
 enamel paint on canvas (diptych)
 152.2 x 244.0 cm (overall)
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
 for Living Australian Artists, 2005
 © Courtesy of the artist and Nellie Caston Gallery, Melbourne

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

This education resource is designed as a starting point for teachers and students investigating *Lives and Times: a selection of works on tour from the VFLAA Collection*.

The resource is suitable for VELS (Levels 4-6) and VCE Art and Studio Art students.

It is suggested that teachers select relevant sections of the resource to suit their own curriculum requirements.

During the gallery visit, it is recommended that the *Looking and Thinking and discussing* questions are addressed as a class, or in small groups of students, so that they can learn from and build on each others' ideas.

KEY THEMES

Culture
 Nature
 Beliefs
 Identity

CURRICULUM LINKS

The Study designs for VCE Art and Studio Art, and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), in particular the domains of The Arts, English, Civics and Citizenship, Thinking Processes and Interpersonal Development underpin the suggested questions and activities relating to the key themes in this resource.

Cover: Bronwyn Oliver *Crazed* (2004)
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2005
 © Bronwyn Oliver, courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Prepared by NGV Education, Public Programs and Contemporary Art Department.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR LIVING AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS

In November 2002 the Victorian Government provided \$5 million to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) to establish the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists (VFLAA).

Key objectives of the VFLAA are to:

- extend the representation of important contemporary Australian artists in the state collection
- promote and support living Australian artists and the Australian visual arts sector
- support and enhance the collections of regional and metropolitan galleries

In 2005, the NGV matched the Government's contribution by adding \$5 million to the fund.

The NGV manages the VFLAA and utilises the interest generated by the fund to acquire new works on a quarterly basis. Purchases are of contemporary visual art works from living Australian artists.

VFLAA works are made available to regional and outer metropolitan public galleries through exhibition tours and loans.

This selection of works acquired through the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists reflects the vitality and dynamism of contemporary art in Australia today. The National Gallery of Victoria collects work in all media, by artists from across generations and from a broad range of social and cultural backgrounds.

The works in this exhibition represent aspects of the individual lives and times of the artists. They also communicate to the widest possible audience something of the beauty, enigma, fragility and history of the complicated times in which we live.

In painting, drawing, fashion and textiles, photography and sculpture, artists render images of their inner lives and external environments uncompromisingly, poetically, and experimentally. They do so with a sense that, while vision and experience are deeply personal, works of art have the capacity to connect with the wider world, universal human conditions, and provoke new ways of being and understanding.

Bronwyn Oliver

Australia 1959–2006

Vine 2005

aluminum

1650.0 cm

Hilton Hotel, Sydney

© Estate of Bronwyn Oliver, courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

**ARTS
VICTORIA**



Indemnification for this exhibition is provided by the Victorian Government



CLINTON NAIN : IN FOCUS

OCTOBER 2007



Clinton Nain's decision to become an artist was based on his fascination with art and artists and a desire to be surrounded by this culture. He was raised in a highly creative family and remembers looking up to his elder siblings, Destiny Deacon, a renowned contemporary artist and Johnny Harding, a playwright, author, activist and performer.

He was born in Carlton in 1971 and grew up in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. His mother, now deceased, was of the Miriam Mer (Torres Strait Islander) and Ku Ku (Aboriginal) peoples and his father is of Irish, Spanish and Danish decent.

Nain's mother Emily is a strong influence on his works, many of which pay homage to her life. He recalls how she instilled in him the notion that 'you can't respect yourself unless you can respect others' and describes how through her he learnt to respect cultures other than his own. Emily was a campaigner who was actively involved in organisations concerned with domestic violence and child welfare. She set up the first hostel for homeless Aboriginal girls in Melbourne.

Nain has a gentle empathetic nature which is at odds with some commentators' descriptions of him as an 'angry young man', whose powerful messages literally scream from the canvas. He laughs at this description but agrees, however, that his work is driven by a passion to make people aware of indigenous people's concerns through 'making sure that the past is part of the present and the present is brought into the future.' The often confronting imagery he employs reflects on his cultural heritage and the brutal consequences of European settlement on his people, communicating, often with raw painterly energy their sense of anger, grief and loss.

While his potent messages are often conveyed with stark and harrowing forms, his paintings have a beautiful meditative quality that suggests Nain's deep engagement with aesthetics; he strongly believes that an artist can portray ugliness and pain through beauty, a metaphor he uses for the potential to transform bad into good.

He is fascinated by other indigenous peoples in the world, who like him struggle to be 'heard' and keep their traditional cultures alive through their art.

Nain works in series and in preparation for each one he will typically spend six months travelling, meeting people and 'hunting and gathering' before he is ready to start work in his spacious studio, an old factory. Applying himself feverishly, (sometimes starting twenty canvases at once), he 'works all day every day until the series is finished.' He describes the process as 'like telling a story – I can't stop until I finish'.

Nain is a loyal champion of painting as an art form despite the fact that during his student days in the early 1990s, it was a medium that he explains was discouraged by his lecturers. He has been delighted to see its current resurgence in contemporary art and declares emphatically 'the more of it the better.'

The process of naming his paintings is an important aspect which he sees as akin to 'naming children that you have brought into being.' The titles are often poetic and hint at the meanings contained within the works.

Nain believes public art galleries have a vital role to play in the communication of important ideas to a broad audience - art, he says, has a unique capacity to 'speak many languages' and can be more accessible for many than reading a book. In his own practice, he is driven to 'hold that ground – to make sure that art is as important a communicator as books and film.'

He values the importance of diverse creativity and expresses his ideas through a range of mediums which he believes enrich each other and include painting, collage, mixed media, installation art, poetry, dance and storytelling.

He is not interested in engaging with the debate as to whether indigenous artists working today should refer to themselves as contemporary Australian artists or indigenous artists. He calls himself a black Australian artist but in his opinion, the headings are unimportant compared with the more important issue of breaking down the stereotype of an indigenous artist.

Nain is quick to acknowledge that the most uplifting experience of his young adult life was 'getting an education and going to university' where he deeply appreciated the value of studying, understanding and enjoying art in depth.

The most challenging aspect of being an artist for Nain is trying to be an indigenous artist in the suburbs of Melbourne, where he battles with 'not allowing politics to get you down so that you stop creating.'

Nain is remarkably free of a sense of bitterness and regards himself as an optimistic person who believes that life for all Australians can get better. He argues that if the Aboriginal culture was accepted and embraced, many of the pressing environmental challenges could be addressed by building a sustainable future based on ancient Aboriginal land knowledge.

In an interview for the *Age* newspaper in 2006, Nain evoked his love of the land when he described how he liked to relax and escape the world on a Sunday afternoon.

(I) jump on my bike and ride along the Yarra Trail. I love to ride my bike and follow the river. I ride along the track, the water follows me, and nothing else matters in the world. Once I'm done, it's like I'm on a high from the serenity around me.

My perfect weekend, The Age 1/7/2006

He also very much enjoys listening to music and has an eclectic taste which includes traditional indigenous, Reggae, Blues and Spiritual music.

Clinton Nain's message for young artists starting out today is to 'follow your natural instinct, your heart – what feels good for you.' He believes passionately that in order for an artist to express themselves successfully, they must be clear about their identity and who they are.

AN EXTENDED INTERVIEW WITH ROSSLYND PIGGOTT

OCTOBER 2007

Why did you become an artist? Were there any signs in your childhood that this was your destiny?

I was born into a family of artists. My mother and father, Owen Piggott and Lynette Moon, met at art school at RMIT and dad is a painter and my mother makes jewellery. My uncle, Milton Moon, is an Australian ceramicist. I've been going to galleries and openings and studios since I can remember, so that would probably be the main influence. Other members of the Moon family were talented and eccentric people. What can I say - in the DNA!

Who or what are the major influences on your work, for example, family, travel, other artists, art movements, music, literature, philosophy?

Family influence, from childhood, has been one of the main influences. As a family we always travelled. My parents were teachers so they always had the same holidays as us kids. They were very adventurous as parents and they took us to amazing places in the middle of the bush and desert trips. When I was two, my father did a one year teaching exchange in England and we travelled there by boat, as you did in those days.

Probably the most adventurous thing they did in terms of travel was when Gough Whitlam was booted out of power, they decided to sell the family home that they had built and designed themselves to live in Europe for a year. And so, as a family with three daughters they bought a campervan and we travelled around Europe. My father was passionate about art history which was great for me because we went through every major art museum in London, France, Spain and Italy and then across to archeological sites in Greece. I was seventeen going on eighteen and so that's been a pretty major influence. My eighteenth birthday was spent in Delphi!

As an adult I'm often thinking about the next trip. I am quite hooked into Europe. In the past 10 years I've been passionate about Japan.

In 1997, I had a four month residency in Japan and that had a profound effect on me as a person and also on my work.

My first contact with Japanese culture was through my uncle Milton. I used to stay with him and Bette and Damon, my cousins, in their beautiful restored barn in Summertown, in the Adelaide hills, when I was a teenager. Milton and Bette and Damon had spent time in Japan, particularly in Kyoto in the 60s and 70s. Their house is full of Japanese objects and wonderful art and I was instinctively attracted to them. Milton and Bette used to say to me even when I was a child, 'Ros, you would love Japan and they would love you'. I was very interested in the way the Japanese put things together aesthetically. The way they think about objects and making pictures is completely different to the Western view. From an aesthetic point of view, I was swept away by their approach to things like gardening. It really struck my senses, but appealed to my mind as well. It's an intellectual way of looking at nature, in particular, I'm attracted to their version of Nature / Culture - its incredibly refined. Primarily, like most foreigners, I have been interested in old Japan, pre-war Japan, but post war is pretty fascinating too - their incredible tenacious approach to technology, for instance.

How has teaching influenced your practice?

I enjoy the process of talking to younger artists and giving something to them. But it is a two way situation as well. It is great to be able to step out of the studio and to be in an environment where students are trying to figure out something as well. So it's great to have that kind of exchange of energy.

Some of your works have been described as the 'merest wisp of the ungraspable'. Can you discuss this?

It's always odd responding to other peoples' views about your work. Certainly I'm trying to work with the immeasurable in my work. My recent paintings are about a big space, perhaps an immeasurable space and then a kind of human attempt to grasp that.

What particular qualities do you strive to achieve in your work – do you regard these as universal qualities?

Yes I do. I would hope that when people look at the works that they can connect into some kind of universal place, perhaps one we all share. I'm interested in air and big space. This space is a very ancient space and of course that is where we all come from. I'm interested in science, to an extent. Of course, scientists are still, and perhaps always will be, trying to figure out where we come from. I'm interested in these areas of thought and inquiry that bump into each other! Buddhists have been deeply interested in time and space for many thousands of years. In some ways their thoughts on this pre-empted recent theories of physics.

Many artists today call their works, 'Untitled'. Your titles are like poetry – they capture a fleeting essence. How important are they to the appreciation and understanding of the work by the viewer?

Occasionally I've called my work 'Untitled' but not very often. I do think about the titles a lot and they are incredibly important for me and for the work. Many people don't read the title of the work, but if they do, they may find a point at which they could perhaps unlock it, so it's like taking a key and turning it and you get a little gap through the door into a space where I would hope to lead you.

You have created many art objects such as glass flasks filled with air from a Japanese temple garden. Can you explain your fascination with this process? Are there any bizarre or humorous stories attached to the making of these objects?

I've made quite a few editions of air collection and that is something that I will continue to do, it's a very fascinating thing for me. The first collection I made involved sixty-two test tubes which related to each day I was away on a journey between Melbourne and Europe. When I got home I labelled them with all the information. It was perhaps the air of Paris which was obviously influenced by Marcel Duchamp's 1919 work *The air of Paris* but others were very specific, for example, the air of the Sistine Chapel, the air of Rodin's *Gates of Hell*, air from the Arezzo Chapel, near Piero della Francesca's *Legend of the true cross* - from quite important art sites in Europe.

When I exhibited the work I really wasn't quite sure how the audience would respond to it, but people were lining up to read the information. I was blown away by what they were engaging with. It was the sign on the vessel initially but after that, the vessel itself actually had nothing in it to the eye. So they were engaging with invisibility. The idea was they would read the sign and look into this empty space and imagine what that space might be, or what that moment might be. In my paintings I'm interested in immeasurability and this was actually a physical way of doing that.

I've had very many interesting stories about the making of these works. One from the Japanese temple gardens was quite beautiful and it sums up how the Japanese, in contrast perhaps to Westerners, completely understand this process. I was collecting the air underneath the cherry blossom trees and I had all the vessels there and my father was helping me. This very elegant Japanese couple passed by and I was a little bit embarrassed, this funny lady with her bottles under a cherry blossom tree. I felt I had to explain myself,

"We're capturing the air here to take back to Melbourne". And they just looked and nodded and said, "Thank you".

Another story that might be of interest to you was when I exhibited the collection of air in Canberra. A scientist from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) was at the opening and he came up to me and said, "This is a fascinating work". I didn't know this but the CSIRO has air libraries. Scientists actually do collect air from various points on the earth and they are able to keep air libraries and test the air for future reference. He said that if they took one of these sealed test tubes into their labs they could extract the air from it and find out what the temperature was on the day of collection and which way the wind was blowing. I couldn't believe it! It just goes to show that sometimes as an artist you don't actually know what you are making, you are operating on an instinct and according to some poetic notion in your own mind. Yet in some other field, someone is doing exactly the same thing to a different end and it is quite fascinating.

What would you like viewers to discover or experience in response to your recent works such as *Unfolding flower – cloud space no. 2* ?

That particular work is about the experience of standing in front of the work and looking at it. I was very happy with that painting. It's quite a fine painting, if I can say so! I want the viewer to be immersed in a big space but it also works retinally on the eye so it's unfolding. It's literally and physically unfolding. It does this movement in front of you. So the viewer could become involved in this physical response, that may remind them of a nano or molecular space. It can become visceral, a body reaction, it can become a dreamy thing. You know, like lying on your back and looking into the sky. You almost become the sky – immersion. The reason why that painting is so large is so that the process of immersion can occur.

To what extent can your work be seen as a quest to make sense of the world or to find inner peace?

Certainly I think that most people who create are either trying to make sense of themselves or sense of the world. Artists do that in different ways. As a younger artist my work was much more about myself and in a sense it is still about myself. It's just that I am not pictured there. My paintings are really in opposition to the world out there, the world of the street. I guess it's something I can't help. For me it has to be that way, almost like a meditation, but in a sense I guess I'm also offering that space for other people as well. So I'm more interested in a kind of slow time. A lot of things in our world, especially in peoples' working lives are very much about the opposite and what can be done in the quickest time. I operate like that as well. We're all being sucked towards this super fast vortex but I think it's very important to have slow time in our lives and in our bodies.

What is the most challenging aspect of being an artist?

One of the most challenging things about being an artist is money because you do have your down days and sometimes you have long down days, weeks, months and often that's about money. Sometimes I feel that an artist making subtle work is not entirely understood in this country. Sometimes one liner art receives the most attention. I get disappointed by that, but I'm also philosophical, at this point and almost resigned.

What has been the most uplifting experience of your career to date?

There have been many when I look back, and I am at the stage of my life where I am now looking back as well as looking forwards, coming towards another decade. I've been very fortunate to travel so much. My experiences of travelling and the residencies I have held. My residency in Italy in 1987 / 88 was really wonderful and my residencies in Paris, 1994 / 95 and in Japan, 1997. But also the experience of having my wonderful show at the NGV in 1998 was an extraordinary experience. I'd have to call that a princess moment of my career and working with Jason Smith (former Curator of Contemporary Art at the NGV) was fantastic. I have this other show coming up next year that I am sure will be a pretty amazing experience. Last year I exhibited overseas and I had three shows in Tokyo in one month. That was quite extraordinary and I had to pinch myself to see if that was really real.

In what ways has working in multiple mediums contributed to your development as an artist?

I am currently working on a big project. I'm collaborating with a film maker, a mirror maker, a glass blower, a diamond dealer, metal workers, an architect, a magnolia breeder. These projects are very challenging and very stimulating. The process of working as a painter is one on one, and very solitary. Of course I love painting and will always come back to that necessary and solitary space. For me as a person and an artist, I love dipping between the two ways of creating. I'm actually running off to the glass factory today to collect my work so that it can go off to an engraver tomorrow. So you are always uncovering new techniques and possibilities. Connecting with people and skills that can stimulate new ideas or ways of working.

Could you outline the working process involved in making works such as *Unfolding flower – cloud space no. 2* ?

At the moment I am having some canvases stretched for me, I have some very good people who make the canvases and bring them to the studio. I used to do this myself for very many years but now I have decided to let the experts do it. Then, initially I will put on a very loose, very broad sienna colored wash. I work with the oil paint in very, very fine and very thin layers. In some ways I work with the oil paint a little like water colour so it's just a process of building up layer over layer. Over the sienna wash I'll bring over thin layers of transparent whites so the background would probably be four or five layers of transparent white. Then



Rossllynd Piggott
born Australia 1958
Blossom face 10 2005-06
digital print on Hahnemule paper
34.0 x 48.0 cm (sheet) ed. of 10
© Courtesy of the artist

I make a grid over the painting with chalk which eventually disappears. I use paper stencils to make the cloud shapes. After I've put down the initial matrix of flower clouds then I bring the major shapes of large flower clouds over that. I do have to wait for them to dry in between, and then with each layer it's just one layer of thin paint until gradually you start to get this mesmerizing vibrating sort of thing happening. Some of the process is quite methodical and some of it is more intuitive, where I just put down shapes and watch to see what is happening.

Could you describe the qualities of your ideal studio environment?

I have still not found my ideal studio. I've gone around the compass now. I've had east, north, west and south. North light is definitely the most ideal because you get a consistent light from morning till evening. No stairways to climb. Ground floor, roll up the door, bring the canvas in, put it on the easel, thank you. Big space, a nice big space to work in with a good storage area, ventilation and wouldn't it be good to have that

roller door opened up onto a beautiful garden and maybe a little coffee shop not too far away. I'm still torn between the urban environment and country, but urban is right for me now.

How important is it for you to be involved in the display and presentation of your work in public spaces and galleries?

It depends on the type of work. With paintings, one would hope that the curators would have the sensitivity to locate the paintings with appropriate works. Recently when *Unfolding flower – cloud space no. 2* was exhibited at NGV Australia, Federation Square, it was hung well and I was really happy with that. In terms of installation works, as long as I'm alive I think it's very important that I am involved, so for instance at the end of this week I'm going up to the Art Gallery of New South Wales to set one up. They bought it a few years ago but haven't yet displayed it. So we'll set it up and make very detailed notes about how it all goes together.

How do you work – do you stick to a disciplined routine or are you more fluid in your approach?

I'm not an artist who has to be in my studio by nine or ten in the morning. I don't have the same routine from day to day. I swim at the start of the day and also listen to my own body. If I'm tired, I give myself time because hopefully, this is a long term path. There's a lot of work to make so I'd like be around for a long time. So I make sure that I'm working in sound mind and body. I do look after myself. Sometimes I just come into the studio for a couple of hours to do particular tasks. Other times, of course, I spend much longer. It really depends on what I am doing.

What do you believe should be the role of art in contemporary society?

I always think that the role of art in any contemporary society whether it's now, in the past or in the future, is to move against the current grain. In my view there is a lot of art around that illustrates contemporary society and its modus operandi. I'm not a really big believer in that sort of art. I think the purpose of art is to offer up something else – against the grain, to question not depict.

The best old art is still very much alive hundreds or maybe thousands of years later.

What effect, do you believe, globalization has had on contemporary art?

Globalization has had an effect certainly, due to the dispersal of information. It doesn't matter though because the best artists are always doing their own thing and that's what remains. There are obviously Aboriginal artists who are examples of that, people who are working with the substance of the land and there are other people round the world who are doing that.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the argument that we are so bombarded with facts and intellectual commentary when we visit an art gallery or art website today that we have forgotten how to look closely at art. We no longer appreciate the aesthetics and sense of humanity within it?

This has always been a bug bear of mine. I think, even within the art world, I find in my experience that there are precious few people who actually do know how to look. I think our society places too much value on words and the power of text. Looking is another form of knowledge. It is not necessarily highly regarded as a form of knowledge in our society and it is one

that takes a great deal of practice and a great deal of training. In the world of sport, to run a hundred metres in ten seconds, for example, which is an extraordinary feat, the athlete has to train very hard and over a long time. This is about training and a kind of faith in that training as well. Of course it's a difficult thing to teach and a difficult thing to know because we've lost somehow that ability to do it. This is a skill – the skill of looking.

This also goes back to slow time, taking time to connect, to look at a cloud or a flower. The Japanese people are very highly tuned in this area because in their culture the connection to Nature is highly valued. The every day person will notice very, very fine details that in our culture we miss. We're too busy getting somewhere to actually notice the petals on the ground or be bothered reporting when the cherry blossoms are opening throughout the country. Now that is what the Japanese do. (Strange because they too, are very often in a real hurry - as anyone who has been in Shinjuki Station at rush hour will tell you!) The weather reports in spring time will tell you when the cherry blossoms are opening from the north to the south of the country.

This is another level of awareness and so I think in relation to your question, the power of the word, the power of text, even the power of speech is more highly valued over that quiet contemplative space of connecting with the thing or the surface or the substance, whether it be natural or whether it comes after nature. So yes, I think there are few people in the art world who perhaps give the time to looking closely, or who have the experience on that level. I notice that when curators or people come into the studio. I'm in the studio all the time looking. That's what I do, so that particular sense is extremely heightened and so when other people come in I can tell if they're used to spending time looking.

Do you have a message for young people starting out as practising artists today?

I think you need to be very sure about what you want to do and perhaps keep an open mind, because it's a long path and it's not an easy path. I guess it's a path where you have to be prepared to go against the grain and in some ways it's like servitude and you have to be prepared for that. Also, I think the thing that has helped me a lot along the way is having friends and supporters around me. Some of those people are artists and some of them have been my friends since my twenties, which is pretty fantastic. I've been lucky to have friends who are artists and in many other professions. It is really important to achieve a balance that can give you a kind of perspective on your obsessional servitude. If you can achieve a balance like that in your life, then that is going to be one of your survival mechanisms.

SCULPTING POETRY – AN ARTIST'S STORY

Bronwyn Oliver had that rarest of all skills: she knew how to create beauty

Hannah Fink, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery website

As well as having a bold, classical symmetry, her sculptures have a private feeling about them, as of something freshly observed on a solitary walk.

Sebastian Smee, Nature of single minded devotion, *The Australian*, 14/7/06

I think about sculpture as a kind of physical poetry, and I construct my sculpture like constructing sentences, in the sense that I try to exclude associations that are clouding the centre and leave in only associations that add meaning to the core.

Felicity Fenner quoting* Oliver, 1995, *Möet & Chandon* Fellowship award catalogue.

Bronwyn Oliver has been described as one of Australia's most acclaimed and talented artists. Her delicate and finely wrought poetic sculptures, often echoing organic forms, are generally crafted from patinated copper and bronze. Their fragile appearance, which transcends the robust and industrial character of their material, belies a strength that is often based on successful geometry found in nature such as tubes, spirals and membranes.

Bronwyn Oliver was reared on a farm in Gum Flat in New South Wales. From an early age there were signs that she was destined to become an artist. She was fascinated by how things were made and remembers pulling things apart to see how they worked. At eight years of age she began Saturday art classes under the guidance of Ian Howard, now the Dean of the College of Fine Arts in Paddington.

As a result of her high school her parents had expected her to go to university but she was determined to pursue an artistic career and left home to study art at the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education in Sydney. An odd serendipitous event

determined her studies in sculpture, when a computer error put her in a sculpture class rather than the painting and drawing classes she had tried to enrol in.

Despite this, after her first class she was hooked and knew she was in the right place.

I'm a loner, I don't socialise very much. I just work. I love working.

Gum flat to grand Korea, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Joyce Morgan, quoting Oliver, 17/7/06

Oliver was an introverted person who shunned the social side of the art world. Making art was the driving force in her life and she spent up to fourteen hours a day in her studio. She was known for her disciplined daily regime which began with a jog before dawn.

For nineteen years she complemented her art practice with teaching at Sydney's Cranbrook Preparatory School where she is remembered as an inspiring and much loved teacher. She is known to have thrived on the energy and creativity of the five to eight year old students whom she taught art.

Oliver was influenced by the renowned sculptors Richard Deacon, Antony Gormley and Martin Puryear whom she studied under at Chelsea School of Art, London where she was awarded a Masters degree in 1983.

After initially working with paper, cane and fibreglass, she was inspired to use copper wire following a visit to the British Museum and the Louvre in Paris where her imagination was caught by ancient metalwork from Egypt, Sumer and Britain. Often made from twisted coils of wire and rivets these works were intended for domestic use.

She enjoyed bush walking in the Blue Mountains, New Zealand and Tasmania and remembers being so inspired by an object she found while on a rare holiday that her inclination was to return home immediately to work on it.

Rather than a definitive chronological progression, her work can be described as the continual evolution of a theme guided by constant innovation in her techniques.

The intricate webbing and meshing in Oliver's sculptures required extraordinary technical virtuosity involving the manipulation of materials such as copper wire, bronze and aluminium. The process of constructing intricate labyrinths of interlocking cell-like structures was painstaking and physically laborious.

Surrounded by plasticine models and tanks of oxygen and acetylene she was able to construct the smaller sculptures by using the techniques of soldering and brazing in her own studio. However, her larger, sturdier pieces were for seventeen years constructed at Crawfords Casting in Enfield, a foundry where she directed welders who would transform her tiny, copper wire maquettes into sculptures of imposing scale.

Just as one finds an object washed up on the beach and examines it for clues as to its past, I hope my works will ask questions of the viewer. Where did it come from? What kind of history does it have?

Artist's statement in *The Third Dimension: Sculptures, Assemblages and Installations, Post -1960*, The Womens's Art Register Inc. Melbourne, 1992, p. 30

It is significant that Oliver was an admirer of Australian artist Rosalie Gascoigne's work *Great blonde paddocks* which evokes the landscape through an arrangement of pieces of discarded wooden crates. Oliver was fascinated by their evolutionary journey from wood to crates to rubbish to art. She wanted her own works to spark the imagination of viewers in the same way as poetry, simultaneously distilling an essence whilst opening doors to multiple interpretations.

Oliver is known to have disliked the intellectualisation of her work and would prefer to talk about the process rather than any layers of meaning.

Some commentators suggest her work is inspired by nature. However, although some of her work relates to botanical forms such as fronds or veins of leaves, this idea suggests too literal an association and fails to acknowledge her much deeper concern with structure and the natural properties of the materials she used. Rather than mimicking or abstracting nature, her works

suggest a profound interest in the timeless forms of geometry occurring in the natural world. This is perhaps best expressed in words written by Hannah Fink shortly after her death:

Her most successful works are like a flourish, a single expressive gesture. The idea of the work was always perfectly worked out which gave the finished object a wholeness, an authority and sense of inevitability, as though it had always existed.

Hannah Fink, July 2006, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery website

The delicate tracery of the shadows cast by her sculptures is integral to the works themselves, lending them a quiet, meditative quality. Oliver's sculptures have the ability to complement the environment and some of her best known works grace the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney. *Palm*, 1999, and her gigantic two metre high *Magnolia* bud, 1999, which rises from a clump of agapanthus, exemplify the tranquil beauty of her works. *Vine*, 2005, the most technically challenging project of her career and one of the longest sculptural works in Australia hangs in Sydney's Hilton Hotel. Spanning 16.5 metres and made from aluminium weighing 380kg it is a feat of engineering which took a team of welders and an engineer nine months to install. This monumental yet seemingly light and floating sculpture is suspended from a specially designed rod fixed to the ceiling. It was intended by the artist to suggest a giant tendril spiralling up to the light echoing the path of guests as they meandered through the four-tiered foyer.

Oliver died in 2006. She had a surety of vision which was totally unique and utterly free of association with a particular school or movement. Her timeless sculptures which fuse a sense of humanity, wit, optimism and elegance survive her.

BRONWYN OLIVER CRAZED

Bronwyn Oliver

Australia 1959–2006

Crazed (2004)

copper

205.2 x 21.4 x 18.6 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds from the Victorian

Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2005

© Estate of Bronwyn Oliver, courtesy of

Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Crazed is a sinuous, elongated copper vessel constructed from wire brazed to construct a crazed pattern. Open at the top, the form tapers to a pointed end. The object resembles an indigenous Australian woven fish trap, but also evokes curves and patterns found in nature.

LOOKING

- What are your first thoughts when you look at this work?
- How does it make you feel? What does it make you think or wonder about?
- Explore the sculpture from as many different angles as possible – front on, from either side, looking up. Explain which view you prefer and why.
- How would your appreciation of the work change if it was hung upside down or sideways?
- Look closely at the art elements of the work including line, shape, colour, texture, pattern. Discuss all the things that they remind you of:
 - What does the shape remind you of e.g. an eel, a calligraphic mark, a root or a gazelle's horn?
 - How would you describe the colour?
 - Trace the outline of the sculpture in the air with your finger. What words would you use to describe the way the line moves?
 - Is the pattern regular or irregular? What is it similar to e.g. veins on a leaf, a cell structure?

- Discuss which art element you believe is most important in the artwork and why.
- Look at the qualities of the patinated copper (see glossary), that the work is made from. How does it contribute to the atmosphere of the work?

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- Why do you think the artist has called this work *Crazed*? What ideas does the word suggest to you?
- Think of all the words you can find to describe the work. Try also to find opposites of those words in the sculpture e.g. delicate/sturdy, soft /hard.
- Discuss to what extent you believe the shadow is integral to the essential character of the work? Consider whether it contributes to the mood or atmosphere of the work.
- Oliver's work is sometimes described as open-ended, with no beginning or end. Discuss why the artist might have wanted to evoke this feeling.
- Artists can be inspired to create art by many things, such as current issues, philosophies, religions, the beauty of nature, music, science. What elements of the work might suggest that the artist was inspired by ancient artefacts in museums? Discuss what other stimuli may have influenced her.

I think about sculpture as a kind of physical poetry, and I construct my sculpture like constructing sentences, in the sense that I try to exclude associations that are clouding the centre and leave in only associations that add meaning to the core.

Felicity Fenner quoting* Oliver, 1995,
Möet & Chandon Fellowship award catalogue.

* *Möet & Chandon Touring Exhibition*, published by Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation, 1994



- Why does the artist liken her work to poetry? Consider what makes poetry different from other forms of writing, such as narratives or magazine articles.
- Discuss what you think the artist would have liked viewers to feel, understand or learn by looking at this work.
- Does anything puzzle you about this sculpture? If you could interview the artist about this work, what questions would you like to ask her?

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

Just as one finds an object washed up on the beach and examines it for clues as to its past, I hope my works will ask questions of the viewer. Where did it come from? What kind of history does it have?

Artist's statement in *The Third Dimension: Sculptures, Assemblages and Installations, Post -1960*,
The Womens's Art Register Inc. Melbourne, 1992, p. 30

- Read the article *Sculpting Poetry – an artist's story* in this education resource.
- Find an object that you have gathered on a walk in the bush or by the sea. Look at it very closely. Imagine you are describing it to someone who has never seen it before and write a detailed description which would 'paint a picture' of it in their imagination.
- Imagine you are the object – allow your imagination to run free and write a short story about the journey of its life and how it has been changed over time.
- Use the object as inspiration for a sculpture – consider the art elements, materials and techniques which would best express the character and structure of the object. Consider how you might place or hang the sculpture to cast an interesting shadow.
- Photograph or draw the shadow. How might you repeat,

enlarge, colour the shadow to make an interesting two-dimensional work which evokes the original found object.

- Oliver's works reveal a deep interest in the mathematical structures underlying nature. Research the Fibonacci Sequence, well known in different areas of maths and science. Work as a group to prepare a video or Powerpoint presentation which explores how the sequence occurs in nature. Consider organising a field trip to collect real examples.
- Use the internet and/or libraries to find out about some of Oliver's most famous works such as *Palm* and *Magnolia* in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney and *Vine*, one of the longest sculptures in Australia which hangs in the foyer of the Hilton Hotel, Sydney.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

- Read the article *Sculpting Poetry – an artist's story* in this education resource.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- Research the work of twentieth-century British sculptors Henry Moore and Andy Goldsworthy. Locate more images of works by Bronwyn Oliver. Compare and contrast a work by Moore or Goldsworthy with one by Oliver. In what ways are they similar or different? Consider the art elements, purpose, meanings, materials, style and technique.
- Research the work of Australian twentieth-century artist Rosalie Gascoigne. What qualities do you believe her work might have in common with Oliver's? Discuss with reference to a work from each artist. Consider meanings and influences in particular.

MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

- The artist uses the technique of brazing (see glossary), a process similar to welding, to join the individual copper wires in her work. Tanks of oxygen and acetylene are utilised in this process. Discuss the physical demands on the artist and the safety implications of this practice.
- Find out about the making of Oliver's *Vine*, which hangs from the roof to the ground, in the foyer of the Hilton Hotel, Sydney. Discuss all the facets of organising the installation of this work. Consider types of people she needed to liaise with, technical difficulties, safety issues, time and costs.

ART AND BEAUTY

Bronwyn Oliver had that rarest of all skills: she knew how to create beauty.

Hannah Fink, Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery website, 2007.

- How do you define beauty in art? With reference to an artwork by Oliver explain what criteria you use to decide if an artwork is beautiful or not.

COMMENTARIES AND OPINIONS

At a deeper level, they strike an emotional chord in viewers hardened by the cynicism of much contemporary art practice. The poetic resonance of her deftly imaginative and delightfully quirky creations provide rare moments of reprieve from today's didactic obsession with lobbying socio-political issues.

Felicity Fenner quoting* Oliver, 1995,
Möet & Chandon Fellowship award catalogue.

- Read this text describing Oliver's work when she won the Möet & Chandon Fellowship award in 1994. Do you agree with the author's perspective? Discuss with reference to works by Oliver and other contemporary artists.

* *Möet & Chandon Touring Exhibition*, published by Möet & Chandon Australian Art Foundation, 1994

TIM JOHNSON *IMITATING ART*

Tim Johnson
 born Australia 1947
Imitating art 2005
 synthetic polymer and metallic paint on canvas
 183.2 x 592.3 cm (overall)
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
 for Living Australian Artists, 2005
 © Courtesy of the artist

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

Imitating art was painted in collaboration with fellow artists Karma Phuntsok (a trained thangka painter from Tibet), Brendon Smith and My Le Thi. The nine panels comprising this work are indicative of what has been described as Johnson's 'floating worlds' – spaces in which the artist brings together symbols from a variety of cultural backgrounds and iconography representing diverse spiritualities and religions. In this work he juxtaposes Australian indigenous painting of Papunya Tula, the deities of Tibetan Buddhism, and the pop cultural cyborg figures of Japanese animé. *Imitating art* was inspired by Johnson's experiences of travel in central Australia, India, Nepal, China and Japan. The title of the work refers in part to the global circulation of images and symbols, and the ways in which we come to understand their meaning.

A detailed description of each panel provided by the artist can be found at the end of this section.

LOOKING

- Hold a community of inquiry in front of this work. Without consulting existing knowledge, such as information on the didactic panel, discuss as a group how the work makes you feel and what it makes you think or dream about. Build on others' ideas to create a comprehensive 'picture' of all the issues and ideas the work raises. Discuss how your original ideas about the work may have changed after listening to your peers discuss the work.



Many of the responses to the following questions may arise in the community of inquiry. If not, they may be used to further understand and appreciate the artwork.

- What can you see in the work? What stands out and why?
- Look closely at the art elements of the work including line, shape, colour, texture and form. Give examples of where you believe the artist has used them effectively.
- How can you tell this has been made by four different artists?
- Identify the characteristics of the different styles of art in this work?
- The artist has used two of the eight Tibetan Buddhism auspicious symbols in his work. Find the wheel and lotus flower. Discuss what they might represent.

- Choose a panel of the work that particularly interests you. What signs, symbols or images do you recognise? How can you tell which cultures they come from? What do you think they represent?
- What are the advantages of coming to a gallery to see the actual work of art rather than looking at a reproduction of it on the internet, a postcard or a book?

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- Why do you believe the artist called this work *Imitating art*?
- What clues would suggest that this work was made in the twenty-first century?
- What message or meaning might the artist be communicating? Consider what he hoped viewers might discover by looking and thinking about this work.

- Discuss whether or not the meaning of the work would alter if the panels were placed in a different configuration.
- What might be the benefits of working collaboratively on a painting like this one? Consider what Johnson might have learnt from the other artists.
- Johnson is a great admirer and collector of Aboriginal art. In his earlier career, he used to appropriate images from Aboriginal and other cultures in his paintings. In this work the background resembles Papunya dot paintings. Discuss what issues this may raise.
- Discuss in what ways the cultures you have identified in this work may be similar or different.
- Locate the UFOs in Panel 9. Discuss what you know about UFOs already and why the artist might have included them.

- *Imitating art* and other Johnson paintings in this style have been called 'floating worlds'. Think about all the possible meanings of a 'floating world'. Consider natural phenomena like shadows and reflections, technology like the internet and aspects of being human like states of mind. Explain how you think the term 'floating worlds' applies to this work.

Like a one-man UN, Johnson crosses the borders, eschews the bureaucracy and gets down to the real feat of presenting a world that is multi-hued in every way – from the colours of religious icons to the skin colour of those who have made them. All of a sudden these ideas are redundant; on his canvases they live without mistrust or clash, without petty differences. Just a sublime beauty.

Ashley Crawford reviewing *Imitating Art* @ Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne, *The Age*, 2005.

- Discuss Crawford's idea with reference to this painting. Why do you agree or disagree with him?
- Discuss what the artist might have meant when he said:

Creating images, like music and writing, is a way of looking into your soul.

Nevill Drury and Anna Voigt, *Fire and Shadow: Spirituality in Contemporary Australian Art*, Craftsman House, Sydney, 1996, p.114

- Discuss whether or not contemporary art can play a part in encouraging peace and harmony in the world.
- Discuss whether or not looking at and discussing this artwork made you consider a new point of view or idea.
- Imagine you were living in Australia in the 1940s – how would you have found out about other cultures and religions? How would you gain the same knowledge today? Consider the similarities and differences. Consider the internet and the impact of globalisation.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

- Research the practice of Tibetan Buddhist thanka painting.
- Choose one of the art styles pictured in Johnson's work – research the materials, techniques and principles which underlie the style. Prepare a presentation on the style that includes visual material and written or spoken texts.
- Create an artwork based on the theme of an imaginary world. Consider dreams, your ideal world or a fantastical or surreal story from your imagination.
- As a class, work out how you might create a collaborative work of art which could represent the nationalities or cultural backgrounds of everyone in your class.

Discuss which medium would best suit your project – consider a mural, a mosaic of ceramic tiles, a collage of photographs and text manipulated on a computer program such as Photoshop or a performance which includes dance and music.

- Research the eight auspicious symbols of Tibetan Buddhism which represent aspects of Buddhist teaching.

In small groups, discuss what key principles should be taught to ensure that people live a rewarding, unselfish life that will promote harmony and tolerance in the world.

Decide on eight principles that you believe are most important. Design and make a visual symbol for each one. How might you present them as a charter which will communicate your ideas to a broad audience? Consider creating a blog about the charter to encourage debate about your ideas.

- Research the life and heritage of the fourteenth Dalai Lama who is pictured in Johnson's *Imitating art*. What is his role and why is he so important to the people of Tibet?

- Locate some traditional stories from Aboriginal, Tibetan or Chinese cultures. How are they similar or different? Prepare an oral presentation about one of the stories – consider using drama, music and visual imagery to engage your audience.
- Find out about the role of the United Nations. Visit the official UN website: <http://www.un.org/english/>
- Prepare for and hold a debate on the positive and negative aspects of religion.
- Choose one of the issues that arose from the community of inquiry in the gallery. Clarify, research, and if applicable, act on some of your ideas or conclusions.
- Have your ideas changed since you first began to consider this issue? If so, how and why has this happened? Consider what types of thinking you have used in this project.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

- Locate the Tim Johnson art site on the internet to discover more about his varied career and other interests: <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~tmjohnsn/home.htm>
- Research the work of the other artists involved in this work: Sydney based artist Brendan Smith, My Le Thi, originally from Vietnam and Karma Phuntsok, a Buddhist thanka painter originally from Tibet.
- Johnson compares painting with the process of performing music. Why might this be? Discuss the similarities.

COMMENTARIES AND OPINIONS

...It would seem that for Johnson art is simply the most liberating way of traversing and transcending time, difference, restriction, culture and space – here virtually anything and everything is possible in the journey towards enlightenment.

Anna Voigt, Laura Murray Cree and Nevill Drury, *Australian Painting Now*, Craftsman House, North Ryde, 2000, p. 164

Discuss this view with reference to *Imitating art*.

ART ISSUES

- Discuss what may have led Johnson to stop the practice of appropriation and work collaboratively with artists from different cultural backgrounds.
- Discuss the issues raised by Johnson's collaborative practice.
- What effects, if any, do you think globalisation could have on traditional art styles from around the world?

INTERPRETING ART

Discuss what factors may influence the way different people interpret *Imitating art*, such as age and cultural background.

- Analyse and interpret *Imitating art* using three different interpretive frameworks. Include a formal interpretation (art elements, principles of design, style and technique) and two other frameworks such as culture and Post-modernism.

MEANINGS AND MESSAGES

- Identify two opposite concepts which can be found in this work (e.g. tradition/modernity, unified/segmented). How do you believe they add to the meaning of the painting?
- Find five images in the work which particularly appeal to you. What do you believe each of these symbolize in Johnson's work?

MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

- How do the qualities of paint add to the atmosphere of this work? If you were making a work of art on the same themes as Johnson, what medium would you choose and why?

PANEL 1

Green Tara (source: Ebay) who is shown in the centre is the Tibetan "mother of the Buddhas". Below her is an appliqué textile showing a "wheel of law" and a "vajra", symbols of Buddhist teaching. There is a Vietnamese woman (from a Hong Kong movie called *The Vietnamese Lady*), a Japanese woodblock print of a traditional musician and in the top half a bird taken from a 19th century embroidered Chinese rank badge.

PANEL 2

Manjusri, bodhisattva of wisdom, holds a sword that is used to cut through ignorance. He is Tibetan. Below him are three traditional Japanese musicians and below them is an 8th century statue of Ashura, a "divine warring being" with three heads and six arms. Below that is a traditional Chinese design used in textiles depicting sea, clouds and mountains. At the top is another rank badge bird and a stamp of Mt Meru, the Buddhist centre of the universe.

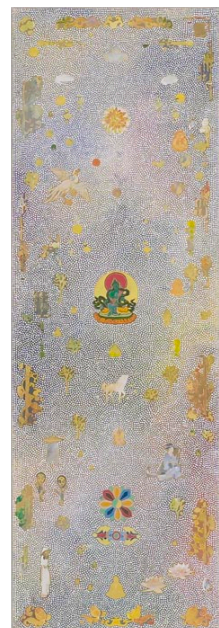
PANEL 3

The deer in the centre is the Kasuga Deer and is from Japanese paintings of Mt Kasuga. He is a Shinto deity and there are deer at the temple in Nara even today. Below this, on the right, are the chakras and to the left a group of Aboriginal men painting at Papunya. This comes from a photo I took in 1981. They were working on a large canvas. The group includes (left to right) senior Pintubi artists Yumpululu, Yala Yala Gibson, John Jagamarra, Anatjari No1, Uta Uta Jangala and Timmy Payunka. Below them is a Tibetan ascetic (source Ebay). Top left is a ten syllable Mantragram that combines the ten syllables of the essence mantra of the Kalachakra Buddha deity. These letters form a matrix that holds together the elements of earth, water, fire, air, consciousness and wisdom which sustains the universe as a theatre for the enlightenment of all beings.

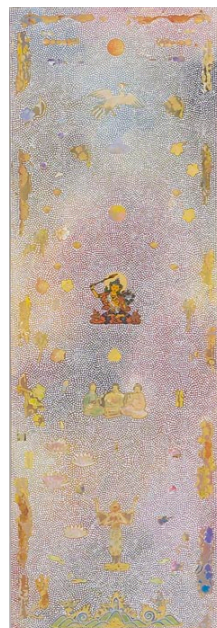
PANEL 4

Buddha is shown in a teaching pose, making the Dharmachakra mudra with the hands. Below are a Vietnamese woman on the left and a Papunya artist on the right. Below them are offerings to the Buddha, wish-fulfilling gems and other sacred objects. Top centre is the earth.

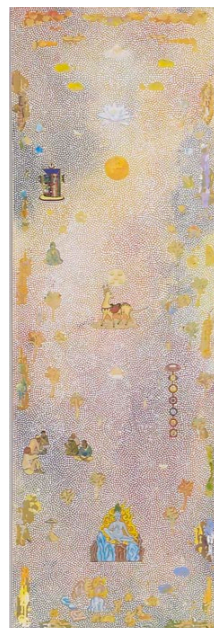
PANEL 1



PANEL 2



PANEL 3



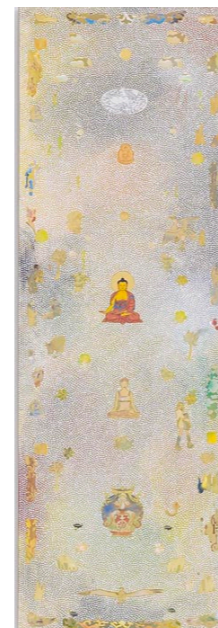
PANEL 4



PANEL 5



PANEL 6

**PANEL 5**

The central image shows a stupa or chorten, a Tibetan receptacle for sacred relics. It can be aligned with the body (the chakras) and Mt Meru (when aligned with the earth's axis as the centre of the universe) and it symbolises from bottom to top, the 4 continents and the 4 directions, 13 steps of enlightenment, twin unity (the sun and the moon at the top) and enlightenment. Below is a Vietnamese boat and below that a Tibetan medicine illustration showing parts of the body. Below that are girls wearing traditional Vietnamese clothing and Thai monks. In the top half are details from temple complexes in Nara and in the centre an astrological symbol from a new "antique" Ebay thangka.

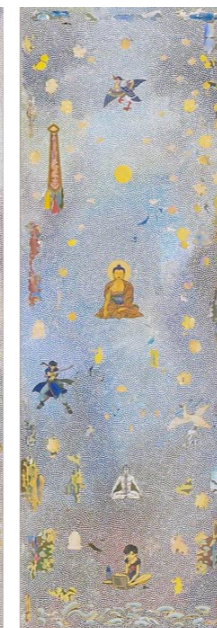
PANEL 6

The Buddha is making a mudra of renunciation with the right hand and a gift-bestowing gesture with the left hand. Below him is a girl doing yoga and on her left a modern Japanese girl wearing fashionable shoes. Below them is a Tibetan offering vases made with the 8 auspicious symbols. Below this is a giant Albatross with outstretched wings. In the top half are more birds.

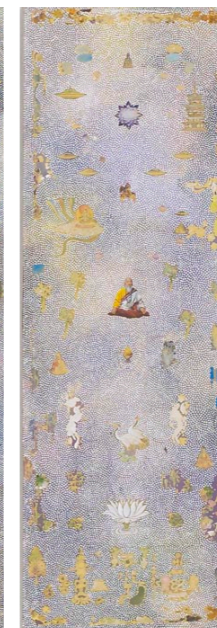
PANEL 7



PANEL 8



PANEL 9

**PANEL 7**

Another Tibetan medical diagram is at the centre of this panel. It concerns organs found in the head. Below are two anime figures from the cult Japanese anime movie *Neon Evangelion*. They are evangelions - "a thing created by man in man's image". The one on the right is a test model designated as number 01 and the one on the left is a production model designated as number 02. Below them is a black and white version of a Japanese Buddhist angry deity with an aureole of flames. Below that is a digital lotus. At the top of the painting is a depiction of the Medicine Buddha, coloured blue and the Dalai Lama. To the left is a mediaeval angel.

PANEL 8

The Buddha is Shakyamuni, making the earth touching mudra and holding a vase. Below him to the left is a "sword master" from *Fire Emblem*, a Nintendo video game. I was looking at examples of anime on the internet and liked this image because of its visual connection to Manjusri. Below him is a meditating figure showing the chakras and below him another anime/manga drawing of a small girl using a laptop computer. At the top is a rank badge bird, this time a mandarin duck and a Tibetan banner with auspicious symbols embroidered on it.

PANEL 9

The central image is of a Tibetan holy man. Below him are 2 cranes, a lotus flower and various traditional offerings that are usually shown in Tibetan thankas. In the top half is a small stamped Tibetan wish-fulfilling pony or "wind horse", a Buddha on a cloud with rainbows and a group of stamped UFOs. (1)

(1) Correspondence with the artist. From Tim Johnson's written notes on *Imitating art* 2005, supplied July 2005 [NGV artist file].

CLINTON NAIN

ERUB HAS A BITUMEN ROAD NOW

Clinton Nain

Miriam Mer/Ku Ku born 1971

Erub has a bitumen road now 2004

synthetic polymer paint, bitumen,

enamel paint on canvas (diptych)

152.2 x 244.0 cm (overall)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation

for Living Australian Artists, 2005

© Courtesy of the artist and Nellie Caston Gallery, Melbourne

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

This diptych describes the island where Nain's mother was born. It contains the very best elements of Nain's work including strong emotional content, compositional integrity, dynamic shifts in perspective and immediacy of gesture. It focuses on issues of family, identity and history and the notion of appearing and disappearing.

During a recent trip to Erub for his mother's funeral, Nain was so concerned about a bitumen road that was being built through his family's village that he painted this work.

The left hand panel presents a bird's eye view of Cemetery Road (as it is known) on Erub (Darnley Island) along which Clinton's mother was carried for the last time. While it is a bird's eye view, the viewer's eye is captured by aspects shown in lateral perspective, documenting areas that surround this road. The houses in the lower centre of this panel image the village where Clinton's mother grew up. The beginning of the road in the upper left eventually leads travellers past the cemetery and to the local airport.

As one travels from the houses in the direction of the airport, one stumbles upon what appears as a garden of hibiscus flowers, where Clinton's mother's ashes are strewn. Heading in the other direction, as the viewer travels along the road and past the houses and into the right hand panel, the planar perspective shifts and the viewer is found in front of an Erub palm tree, from the leaves of which the figure of his mother cascades and disappears into the water.

LOOKING

It is suggested that students look at this work closely before reading the didactic panel next to it.

- What are your first thoughts when you look at this work?
- How does it make you feel? What does it make you think or wonder about?
- What shapes can you identify?
- Describe the colours the artist has used. What mood or atmosphere do they evoke?
- Which words would you choose to describe the prominent lines in this painting?
- Describe the brush strokes you can see. What sort of tools do you think the artist used, for example paint brushes, sticks. Describe how you think he created the textural effects.
- What clues are there to suggest this painting illustrates a landscape?
- What do you notice about the types of view the artist has recorded in each panel? Explain with reference to the images you see.
- Why has the artist used a diptych format for his painting?

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- Read the didactic panel next to the painting.
- How does this change your interpretation of the work?
- Why might the artist have been upset that a bitumen road has been built through his mother's village?
- Explain what messages you believe the artist is trying to communicate through this work.
- Which of the art elements in particular contribute to conveying his message? Consider tone, colour, line, texture and shape.
- How might the title communicate the artist's feelings?



- Do you believe the artist has suggested strong emotions in this work? If so, how has he achieved this?
- Why do you believe the artist has chosen to paint with bitumen as well as paint?
- Why has the artist depicted his mother after her death as falling in a cascade from the palm tree into the water below? What might this event symbolize?
- What other aspects of the painting suggest the artist is reflecting on his cultural heritage?
- Discuss which aspects of the painting you find beautiful and/or ugly.
- The artist believes art is a powerful way to communicate because it can 'speak many languages'. Explain what he means? How is visual language different from written and spoken language, such as books, plays and films?

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

- Read the article *In conversation with Clinton Nain* in this education resource.
- The artist's painting *Erub has a bitumen road now* is a very personal work which describes a place of great significance to him.

Create an artwork which maps a place very special to you. Consider the media, viewpoint and style that would best express the atmosphere of the place.
- The work of many indigenous artists today is concerned with communicating a sense of anger, grief and loss caused by the effects of colonisation on their people.
- Research the work of artists such as Julie Dowling, Julie Gough, Gordon Hookey and Brook Andrew. Choose a work by one of these artists which particularly interests you.

Read the following poem by Clinton Nain. Discuss the messages conveyed in it and how they relate to Nain's *Erub has a bitumen road now* and the work by another artist you have chosen.

*I am the target I wear it on my face.
My heart is in here, inside my chest.
My skin is the Mission Brown Colour.
Fences surround me and I have to wear this dress.*

*Paramatta Red,
Over my head.
Brunswick green, a place I've never seen.
Colonial Crème,
It makes me want to scream.*

*Coming down the track we have black beauty,
Followed by black velvet.
Next around the bend is Touch of the Tar,
Followed by a police car.
Well I suppose it is Better than being dog food.*

- Discuss the continuing hardships facing Aboriginal people. What creative new measures do you believe the government should take to address them?

Compile your ideas clearly and document them in a letter to your local MP.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

MEANINGS AND MESSAGES

- The artist has explained that he likes the texture of bitumen but that he also uses it metaphorically. Discuss what it might symbolise with reference to *Erub has a bitumen road now*.
- In the description of *Erub has a bitumen road now*, the curator describes Nain's strong emotional content, compositional integrity, dynamic shifts in perspective and immediacy of gesture.

Make an annotated sketch of the work which explains where these qualities occur.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- Research the work of contemporary indigenous artist Julie Dowling. Select one of her works and compare it with *Erub has a bitumen road now*. Discuss the similarities and differences. Consider the art elements, materials, style, meaning and mood.

I think he's the Brett Whiteley of Aboriginal artists.

Councillor Claude Ullin defending his wish that Stonnington Council should purchase a work by Clinton Nain, Council art split *Stonnington Leader*, 2006

Research the work of Whiteley. Compare and contrast a landscape by Whiteley with *Erub has a bitumen road now*. Consider the cultural backgrounds of the artists, style, materials, techniques and mood.

COMMENTARIES AND OPINIONS

Indigenous people were killed with bullets and books, and it's taken the art of painting to be able to see it.

Robert Nelson, Agonised voice of scream and howl,
The Age, 2006

Using the internet, locate other paintings by Nain. Discuss one or more of these works with reference to the commentary above. Consider their meanings and the unique qualities that paint brings to them.

INFLUENCES

- Nain expresses his ideas through a range of mediums that include poetry, dance and storytelling. Discuss in what ways they might influence his art practice.

PETER GRAHAM

WHEN MY DESERT BLOOMS

Peter Graham

born Australia 1970
When my desert blooms 2005
 oil on canvas
 191.4 x 152.0 cm
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
 Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation
 for Living Australian Artists, 2005
 © Peter Graham, courtesy of Kaliman Gallery, Sydney
 and Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

In this painting a large group of skulls, open at the top like vessels, are massed at the foreground of the canvas. From these forms emerge conical open-ended shapes that seem to evoke a sense of growth and new life. Desert flowers bloom throughout the work, patterning the surface, and a peacock floats across the scene, proudly displaying its decorative tail.

LOOKING

- What are your first thoughts when you look at this work?
- How does it make you feel? What does it make you think or wonder about?
- Describe all the shapes you can see in the painting.
- How many different ways can you describe the colours (e.g. chalky, misty, like lichen)?
- Describe a texture you can see in the work. Where else might you have seen a texture like this?
- Describe the patterns you can find in this painting.
- How can you tell from the painting that the artist is particularly interested in drawing?
- Describe the different mediums the artist has used in this work.
- What aspects of the painting do you most appreciate and why?
- What words would you choose to describe the mood or atmosphere of the painting?

- Does the work remind you of a book or film that you have enjoyed? Discuss.

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- Discuss the different ways the title of this work, *When my desert blooms*, could be interpreted.
- How has the artist used colour, form, pattern and line to create mood and atmosphere?
- This painting has been described as shimmering. How has the artist achieved this effect?
- What evidence is there to suggest that the artist is inspired by natural forms?
- Which images in the painting could be regarded as symbols of death and new life?
- Why do you believe the artist has made the skulls look like open-ended vessels?
- Imagine you have climbed into the painting. What aspects of it intrigue you and why? What time of day is it? What do you hear, feel and smell?
- What aspects of this work could be regarded as similar to a traditional Aboriginal painting depicting the land?
- Create your own title which suits the atmosphere of the work.
- Imagine this image was used as the front cover of a book – what might the book be about? Consider fiction and non-fiction topics.



- The artist is interested in the creative process and how our imagination transforms an idea into a physical form such as a work of art. He says:

The art of this extraction is laborious, so that images may be borne up like sweat on the brow. Images are spells, sparking from our heads like fire from stone, igniting darkness so that we may see.

Peter Graham in Charles Green (ed.), *2004: Australian Culture Now*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004, p. 146.

The head is a thinking rock. It is a magic stone...

Peter Graham in Charles Green (ed.), *2004: Australian Culture Now*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004, p. 146.

Think of a work of art or piece of writing that you have created. Describe the creative journey you took. Where did the idea come from? Did you exaggerate or distort it? What sort of difficulties did you encounter when you tried to make the idea a reality, a finished work? Was it an easy or difficult process?

- Discuss what you think the artist would like viewers to feel, understand or learn by looking at this work.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

- Make a collection of natural forms which inspire you. Look at them closely and think about their particular qualities of line, shape, colour, texture and pattern. Make detailed drawings and photographs of them. How could you use these as inspiration for an artwork that suggests a surreal or dreamlike quality? Consider the materials and techniques that would best suit the mood you have in mind.
- The vocabulary game – make a list of all the images you saw in the painting during your visit to the gallery. Make another list of words and phrases which also express those images (e.g. skulls, like bony flower pots, broken heads, volcanic rocks). Write a surreal poem based on this collection of words.
- Imagine you are a butterfly sitting on the edge of a skull in the painting. Describe what you would see from the perspective of this insect.
- Imagine this painting is a chapter in a fantasy novel. Write the chapter before or after it, as if you were the author.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- Compare and contrast Rosslynd Piggot's work, *Unfolding flower- cloud space no. 2*, (also in the exhibition and education resource), with Peter Graham's *When my desert blooms*. In what ways are they similar or different? Consider the titles, purpose, meanings, materials, style and technique.

MATERIALS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCESSES

- Make an annotated sketch which explains where you can see evidence of the drawing, painting and printmaking in the work.

MEANINGS AND MESSAGES

- What do you believe the skulls, peacock and desert flowers might symbolize in *When my desert blooms*? How do you believe the materials and techniques the artist has used contribute to the power of their symbolism?

COMMENTARIES AND OPINIONS

Discuss both of these commentaries with reference to *When my desert blooms*

The head is a thinking rock. It is a magic stone, though it may weep and mourn, abandoned by everything it imagines. It is a radiant conductor, yet it is constructed from the same material decay that surrounds it. My work describes the processes through which images come into being, unearthed from the dry loam of the head; from inanimate matter, animated forms that are spirited. The art of this extraction is laborious, so that images may be borne up like sweat on the brow. Images are spells, sparking from our heads like fire from stone, igniting darkness so that we may see.

Peter Graham in Charles Green (ed.), *2004: Australian Culture Now*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2004, p. 146.

This is a garden of dangerous delights. A fin-de-siecle phantasmagoria of excess where thoughts and dreams are the rancid fertiliser of new growth. These are worlds that have been explored before to be sure, in recent times in such literary works as J. G. Ballard's *The Day of Creation* and Neil Aiman's epic graphic novel series *The Sandman*. These are pagan dreams that filter through the history of painting. They are also post-millennial tapestries of angst, of alien abductions and shifting realities.

Like the recall of powerful dreams, Graham has illustrated a world that we rarely see in waking hours.

Ashley Crawford, Peter Graham: Fertile Ground, *The Sunday Age*, April, 2005.

ROSSLYND PIGGOTT

UNFOLDING FLOWER - CLOUD SPACE NO. 2

Rossllynd Piggott

born Australia 1958

Unfolding flower - cloud space no. 2 2005–06

oil on canvas

185.6 x 370.2 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation

for Living Australian Artists, 2006

© Courtesy of the artist

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

The work is a large scale painting with a light pink ground. Over the ground Piggott has used variously scaled stencils to mark out a repeating pattern of stylized floral forms. The background is a uniformly gridded pattern of these floral forms, painted in translucent white oil paint. The pictorial field is made dynamic with the application of multiple layers of increasingly larger floral motifs in a seemingly random pattern. The resulting field is one in which optical dynamism is achieved through the overlaying of primarily spherical forms, and the varying opacity and translucency of the motifs. The painting has been made in Piggott's typically ordered working process. It poetically evokes shifting clouds, ethereal atmosphere and the transience of the blossom, while in formal terms it extends Piggott's long-term researches into minimalism, abstraction and permutations of the still life and landscape genres.

LOOKING

- Look at the work first without reading the title.
- What are your first thoughts when you look at this work?
- How does it make you feel? What does it make you think or wonder about?
- What images can you see in the work?
- Now read the title. In what way does it affect the way you appreciate and understand the work?
- Piggott's work has been described as fragile and airy. Discuss what other qualities you believe this work has.
- Does the work have any strange effects on your eyes? Discuss.

- The artist says in her interview, in this education resource, that she wants 'the viewers of this work to feel immersed in a big space'. Discuss whether or not you feel this way when you look at the work.
- What effect does the scale of this work have on the way you appreciate it?
- What sort of flowers does this work remind you of and why?
- Without using the words 'pink' and 'white' describe the colours in the painting as creatively a possible (e.g. magnolia, pearl, mist, porcelain).
- Are line, shape, colour, texture and tone important in this work? Why?

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- What techniques has the artist used to create a shimmering, optical effect?
- The artist has called this work *Unfolding flower - cloud space no. 2*.
Discuss how you believe she has suggested the quality of 'unfolding'.
- Could this work be described as abstract? Discuss why or why not.
- In what ways has the artist suggested her love of nature in this work?
- Compare this work with the sculpture *Crazed* by Bronwyn Oliver, in this exhibition and education resource. Discuss in what ways you believe they are similar and different.
- Colours can convey emotions and suggest particular objects. Discuss all the things that the colour pink suggests to you.
- Piggott has said that she loves perfume – discuss what smells this work evokes for you.
- What sort of music do you believe would reflect the qualities of this work?
- Close your eyes and imagine you are floating in this painting. Describe what you would see, feel, touch and hear.



- What states of mind does this painting convey to you?
- What does infinity mean? Discuss why this might be a difficult concept for humans to understand or grasp. What aspects of this dilemma might be represented in this work?

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

- The artist has said that she has been influenced by traditional Japanese culture. Research the beliefs that underlie this culture. Discuss what aspects of Japanese culture are suggested in *Unfolding flower –cloud space no. 2*.
- Brainstorm all the words that come to mind when you think of clouds. Consider their particular qualities, such as the way they move, their shapes, textures, associations with weather. Draw and photograph clouds at different times of day and in different environments. Create a sculpture or two dimensional work that evokes clouds. Consider an installation which could include photography, found objects, poetry and sound effects or music.
- Research the structure of a haiku poem and its importance in traditional Japanese culture. Below is an example:

*One magnolia
Landed upon another
In the dew-wet grass.*

www.terebess.hu/english/haiku/wright.html

In what ways could this form of poetry be compared with *Unfolding flower –cloud space no. 2*.

Write a haiku poem in response to this painting. Consider incorporating words from the title.

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

INFLUENCES

- Research the beliefs that underlie Buddhism. With reference to *Unfolding flower –cloud space no. 2*, and one other work by Piggott that you have located, discuss where you can see evidence of Buddhism in her practice.

COMMENTARIES AND OPINIONS

Rosslynd Piggott works slowly and subtly so that the tonal differences in her paintings can be barely visible. Long influenced by Japanese culture (she has a show lined up in Tokyo immediately after this one ends), her pictures are delicate and airy, offering the merest wisp of the ungraspable. She takes observations of nature as her starting point (a blossom for instance), but her interpretations aren't literal so much as open-ended and metaphorical. Lightness and darkness, as well as our human relation to the endlessness of space, are the sort of themes visited here.

Megan Backhouse, *The Age Magazine* March 2006

Discuss this commentary in relation to *Unfolding flower –cloud space no. 2*.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- Piggott believes that engaging in multiple practices has been a strong influence on the development of her art (see interview in this resource). Research another Australian contemporary artist who also works in several different fields, such as Fiona Hall. Choose one work by each artist. Compare and contrast the works. In what ways are they similar and different? Consider atmosphere or mood, meaning, materials, style and technique.

ART ISSUES

I always think that the role of art in any contemporary society whether its now, previous or in the future, is to move against the current grain. I think that in my view there is a lot of art around that illustrates contemporary society and its modus operandi. I'm not a really big believer in that sort of art. I think its purpose is to offer up something else.

The best old art is still very much alive hundreds or maybe thousands of years later.

Interview with Rosslynd Piggott published in this education resource, 2007

Discuss whether or not you agree with Piggott's comments on contemporary art.

WALANGKURA NAPANANGKA

OLD WOMAN'S TRAVELLING STORY

Walangkura Napanangka

Pintupi born c. 1946

Old woman's travelling story 2004

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

182.2 x 244.0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds from the Victorian Foundation

for Living Australian Artists, 2005

© Walangkura Napanangka, courtesy of Aboriginal Artists

Agency Ltd, Sydney

DESCRIPTION OF WORK

This painting depicts designs associated with the area through which an old woman, Kutungka Napanangka, passed during her travels from the west. The roundels depict rockholes.

She travelled from Malparingya, north-west of the Kintore Community and visited the site of Tjintjintjin, where there is an underground cave, also the soakage water sites of Ngatanga and Yaranga which are all west of Mantati Outstation, which is approximately seventy kilometers west of the Kintore Community. She then travelled further east to Muruntji, south-west of Mt. Liebig.

At Muruntji she was accosted by one of a group of boys so she chased them and caught all but the culprit who managed to escape. She killed the others and cooked them in a fire. She then travelled to Kaltarra where she entered the earth.

LOOKING

- What are your first thoughts when you look at this work?
- How does it make you feel? What does it make you think or wonder about?
- What elements of this work might suggest it is painted by an Aboriginal artist?
- Look closely at the lines in the painting – are they continuous or broken?
- Which words would you use to describe the movement of the lines in this painting (e.g. meandering, swirling).
- Find words to describe the qualities of the line such as thin, fragile, delicate as lines on a spider's web.

- Identify the patterns in the work – how would you describe them? What do they remind you of?
- How would you describe the mood or atmosphere of this painting? How does the colour contribute to this?
- How would the atmosphere of this painting change if it was painted in bright colours?
- Discuss how the scale of this painting might contribute to your feelings about the work.
- Discuss which art elements you believe are most important in the artwork and why.
- From what perspective has the artist painted this work?

THINKING AND DISCUSSING

- What clues does the title of this work, *Old woman's travelling story*, give to the possible meaning of the lines and patterns?
- Discuss whether you can see any patterns in nature within this painting (e.g. ripples on water, trails left by grubs crawling under bark).
- The artist was only ten years old when her family walked hundreds of kilometres across the land in order to reach the supplies of food and water at the settlement of Haasts Bluff. What can you see in the painting that may suggest the artist has strong memories of her journey?
- Discuss the difficulties the artist may have encountered when she was painting on this large scale.
- The artist has used synthetic polymer paint for this work. Discuss how Aboriginal artists traditionally made their own paints.
- What is the purpose of traditional Aboriginal art? Discuss how it compares with the purpose of Australian colonial art.
- Why would it be inappropriate to copy the patterns and lines of this painting in your own artwork?



SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES MIDDLE YEARS (LEVELS 4-6)

- The artist began to paint with the Papunya Tula Art Movement in 1996. Research the history and significance of this movement.
- Compare *Old woman's travelling story* with *Erub has a bitumen road now* by Aboriginal contemporary artist Clinton Nain, also in this exhibition. In what ways are they similar and different? Consider atmosphere or mood, meaning, materials, style and technique.
- Locate a traditional Aboriginal work in your local public gallery, or in a book. Research the Dreamtime story behind it and the materials, style and techniques particular to the clan to whom the artist belongs. Imagine you are a guide in a gallery presenting the work to members of the public. Consider how you would show respect for the artist's culture, how you would engage your audience and what questions you might ask them.
- Discuss all the patterns in nature you can think of. Build up a portfolio of natural patterns. Use the internet and libraries to discover more patterns in nature that you may not have considered. Photograph and sketch patterns in nature first hand. Photograph them in close-up and from unusual angles.
- Some of the artists in this education resource have used nature as inspiration. They extract an essence or sense of structure in nature, without actually copying it directly. Create an artwork which celebrates the beauty of nature in this way. Consider using your resource material in interesting ways (e.g. changing the scale or colour dramatically, repeating or manipulating with a computer program such as Photoshop or creating a motif for lino printing).

SUGGESTED POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES VCE

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- Research the work of indigenous artist Emily Kngwarreye. Compare and contrast a work that appeals to you by this artist with *Old woman's travelling story*. Discuss the similarities and differences. Consider materials, style, meaning and purpose.

ART ISSUES

- The artist paints with Papunya Tula artists, whose painting style is based on knowledge of traditional body and sand painting associated with ceremony. Research why it is necessary for the artists who portray these Dreamtime creation stories to remove the sacred symbols and carefully monitor the ancestral designs that are presented in artworks for the general public.
- Research and discuss the issues which surround the sale of traditional Aboriginal art.

VCE STUDIO ARTS: ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS INFORMATION RELATED TO THE EXHIBITION

CURATORSHIP

How were the works selected and by whom?

Curators from the department of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria selected the works to reflect the diversity and dynamism of contemporary Australian art. The works were acquired through the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists. The curators intention was to select a broad range of works of art including photography, paintings, drawings, fashion and textiles and sculpture by a range of artists from different generations and from diverse cultural backgrounds. Works were selected with the overall theme of the exhibition in mind: that is, our world, our lives and the times in which we live.

Who is responsible for writing the wall texts and didactic panels for each work?

Curators are responsible for writing texts for individual works and didactic panels that explain the thematic sections of the exhibition.

As the selection of works varies slightly from one venue to another, who oversees the curation and exhibition design at each gallery on the tour?

Curators from the National Gallery of Victoria liaise with curators and directors from the host venues to finalise the selection of works that tour to each regional gallery. Staff members from the NGV and the host venues also work collaboratively during the exhibition design and installation stages. With this particular exhibition, an NGV curator will be present for the installation or the "hang".

What particular challenges are associated with a touring exhibition?

Given that exhibition spaces differ from gallery to gallery, hanging an exhibition in exactly the same way each time is almost impossible. Curators and exhibition designers must be flexible, often working with the architecture of each individual space to ensure the best possible result.

Travelling works of art involves inherent risks. Works of art must be packed and handled carefully according to conservation standards to ensure that they arrive and return in the same condition that they left the NGV. Each of the galleries provides the NGV with a facilities report. This report covers information regarding temperature and humidity controls, access points for delivery, security arrangements and storage.

What, in your opinion, is the value of touring NGV exhibitions?

The NGV is committed to making its collection accessible to the broadest possible audience. Touring exhibitions are an excellent way of connecting with communities in regional areas and providing opportunities for new audiences to engage with the latest developments in visual culture.

What are the associated costs involved in running an exhibition?

Some of the primary costs involved with touring exhibitions include packing, transportation, handling and installation.

EXHIBITION DESIGN

What factors have influenced the presentation and display of this exhibition?

Each gallery undertakes their own design that is sympathetic to both the works and the gallery in which it is installed. Particular works require specific mounts and attachments to enable them to be displayed, such as *Crazed* by Bronwyn Oliver. Fashion and textiles require mannequins for their effective display.

CONSERVATION

What are the conservation procedures put into place when the works travel from one gallery in Victoria to another?

The National Gallery of Victoria supports an active loans program, including loans for touring exhibitions such as *Lives and Times*. The Gallery needs to balance the work involved with touring exhibitions with its own program of internal exhibitions and gallery displays.

All of the works have condition reports completed before they leave the NGV, upon arrival at the host venue, prior to departure from the host venue and upon arrival back at the NGV. This ensures that any changes in condition or damages are noted immediately and any areas of concern can be addressed.

The works are packed and transported in a climate controlled truck and are packed appropriately, either on travelling frames or in archive boxes.

The NGV undertakes to compile information about the gallery to whom the works are to be loaned. This is referred to as a facilities report. This details everything about the host gallery including information about environment controls, security and fire protection arrangements, staff details, insurance, through to materials the building is constructed from.

The majority of items on display are paintings and works on paper including photography. What specific conservation requirements do they have?

A curator and conservator will check each work on paper to decide if it is suitable for loan for a specific length of time. Works on paper are generally only loaned for a maximum of three months, which is why some works on paper are not travelling to all venues.

All works on paper for the tour are mounted and framed.

Works on paper must be displayed at a temperature between 20 +/- 2° C and relative humidity of 50 +/- 5% with no more than 3% change in relative humidity over twenty four hours. By contractual arrangement, the NGV also specifies maximum light levels. Works on paper must be displayed under lighting conditions of 50 lux with the maximum UV content of the light controlled to less than 75microWatts per Lumen.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

How is the exhibition promoted to the public?

This exhibition will be promoted to the public via editorial coverage and advertisements. Advertisements will be placed by the host gallery.

Who is the target audience for this exhibition?

The exhibition is targeted at people with an interest in contemporary art, regional gallery visitors and schools.

What media will be targeted for this exhibition?

Local media will be targeted for this exhibition, with additional mentions on the NGV website.

What will be included in a media kit to promote the exhibition to journalists?

A list of works, a media release and a disk of images will be included as part of the media kit for this exhibition.

GRAPHIC DESIGN/ MULTIMEDIA

What associated products have been developed for this exhibition?

Most of the material produced for this exhibition is related to marketing, including posters and bookmarks. A design template was created for the exhibition masthead and invitation.

GLOSSARY

APPROPRIATION A term in art history and criticism that refers to the direct taking over into a work of art of a real object or even an existing work of art. Appropriation art raises questions of originality, authenticity and authorship and questions the nature of art itself.

BRAZING A process for joining similar or dissimilar metals using a filler metal that typically includes a base of copper combined with silver, nickel, zinc or phosphorus. Brazing covers a temperature range of 900°F - 2200°F (470°C - 1190°C). Brazing differs from welding in that brazing does not melt the base metals, therefore brazing temperatures are lower than the melting points of the base metals. For the same reason, brazing is a superior choice in joining dissimilar metals. Brazed joints are strong. A properly-made joint (like a welded joint) will in many cases be as strong or stronger than the based metals being joined.

DIPTYCH A painting in two panels.

FOUND OBJECT A natural or man-made object found by an artist. Found objects may be put on a shelf and treated as works of art in themselves, as well as providing inspiration for the artist. They could also be incorporated into a new work of art.

MAQUETTE A small model for a larger piece of sculpture. They are often works of art in themselves which convey the artist's first realisation of an idea.

PATINA A distinct green or brown surface layer usually on bronze sculpture. Patina can occur naturally through the oxidising effect of the atmosphere and weather, or artificially by the application of chemicals.

RIVET A metal pin or bolt with a head at one end, used for joining pieces of metal, that are passed through a hole in each of the pieces, then hammering the protruding end flat.

SURREALISM This began in the early 1920s as a literary movement under the leadership of the French writer André Breton. Surrealist artists sought to fuse everyday reality with the experience of dreams and the subconscious to create a 'super' reality. Surrealist images often combine logically unconnected objects using a meticulous, almost photographic technique, that sometimes evoking a dream-like quality. Other artists explored the unconscious mind by using techniques of 'automatism'. The 'reality' of the subconscious mind and the world of dreams were preferred over the matter of fact reality and logic of everyday life. Major exponents were Salvador Dali, Max Ernst, Jean Arp and Joan Miro.

THANKA A Tibetan religious icon usually painted on cotton.

ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHIES

PETER GRAHAM

Peter Graham was born in Sydney in 1970 and lives and works in Melbourne. Since graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) from Victoria College, Melbourne in 1991 he has exhibited widely, participating in a number of group exhibitions including *Primal Drawings* at Michael Wardell Gallery, Melbourne and *(Un) authorised duplication* at 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne in 1993; *Poltergeist I, II and III*, at respectively, Sherman Galleries, Melbourne, Goodhope, Sydney and Canberra School of Art Gallery in 1995; *Graphic* at Monash University Gallery, Melbourne in 1998; and *Crossing: New Art from Australia* at the University of Art and Design, Helsinki in 2002. Graham has shown his work in several exhibitions at the National Gallery of Victoria including *Aspects of Australian Printmaking* in 1995; *Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Australian Art* in 1996; *In Relief: Australian Wood Engravings, Woodcuts and Linocuts* in 1997, and *2004: Australian Culture Now* in 2004. He was also selected for the *National Works on Paper* exhibition at Mornington Peninsula Art Gallery, Victoria in 1999 and 2000.

Peter Graham is represented in the collections of Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Victoria; Newcastle Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria; Monash University, Melbourne and the National Gallery of Victoria.

TIM JOHNSON

Tim Johnson was born in Sydney in 1947 and continues to live and work there. He first exhibited his work in 1970, the same year that he completed study at the University of New South Wales and the University of Sydney. Since that time he has shown his work extensively in Australia and internationally. His work has been included in important forums such as the 1986 and 1992 Biennales of Sydney; *Flight Patterns* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2000; the *3rd Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane in 1999, and *Documenta IX* at Kassel, Germany in 1992.

Johnson was awarded an Australia Council Fellowship in 1997 and was Visiting Fellow at Canberra School of Art, Australian National University in 1999. He held a teaching position at Sydney College of the Arts between 2001 and 2003. His work frequently involves collaboration with artists from other areas and he has produced works with Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, Karma Phuntsok and Me Li Thi.

Tim Johnson is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and all Australian state galleries. His works are also held in the Fairfax Collection; the Kerry Stokes Collection, and the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane; Monash University, Melbourne; Griffiths University, Queensland, and the University of New South Wales.

CLINTON NAIN

Miriam Mer/Ku Ku born 1971

Clinton Nain was born in Carlton, Victoria 1971. His mother was of Miriam Mer (Torres Strait Islander) and Ku Ku (Aboriginal) descent and his father is of Irish descent. He grew up in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and lives and works in the inner city. His work focuses on the ironies of being an urban indigenous person, as expressed through multi-levelled images, collage, mixed media and installation art. His oeuvre is at once concerned with issues of urbanisation, sexual identity and challenging stereotypes about his lived identity.

Clinton Nain performs Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contemporary and traditional dance and has modelled for both fashion and visual artists. In 1989 he began a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the Victorian College of the Arts and first exhibited in 1990 at the Fringe Festival Multi Media Exhibition. He has exhibited regularly in group shows since 1990 and obtained his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1994. His work was included in *Blakness: Blak City Culture*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne and *Beyond The Pale: 2000 Adelaide Biennale of Australian Art*.

Since completing his Master of Fine Arts (COFA) at the University of New South Wales, Sydney in 2003, Clinton Nain has secured a significant place in critical debates concerning contemporary Australian art. A dance performer as well as an artist, Nain is an Indigenous Australian whose work negotiates his cultural condition. He takes part in numerous public events, such as the Melbourne Festival Opening in 2000, and Melbourne Fringe Festival art exhibitions. His work featured in the Cairns Regional Gallery touring exhibition *Ilan Pasin (This is our Way): Torres Strait Art*, and the 2000 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia. He is represented by Sherman Galleries, Sydney.

ROSSLYND PIGGOTT

Roslynd Piggott was born in Frankston, Victoria 1958. After travelling through Great Britain and Europe in 1976 she attended the Institute of Education, University of Melbourne from 1977 to 1980 and was awarded a Bachelor of Education (Art and Craft). She has taught at various tertiary institutions in Victoria. She has exhibited since 1981 and held her first solo exhibition at 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne in 1987. In 1987 and 1988 she occupied the Visual Arts/Craft Board studio at Paretaio, Italy, and in 1993 the Power Studio of the University of Sydney at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. In 1990 her *Palace* installation was exhibited at the Ian Potter Gallery, University of Melbourne and in 1992 *Palace 2* at the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia. In 1997 she held a solo exhibition *Swallowing night* at the Kitamoto Cultural Centre, Saitama, Japan and in 1998 was the subject of a major survey at the National Gallery of Victoria, titled *Suspended breath*. She has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *The aberrant object: Women, Dada and Surrealism* in 1993–94 and the Liverpool Biennial in 1999. Since 2000 she has exhibited regularly in Japan and in 2005 was awarded a major public commission for The Urban Workshop (architect John Wardle) at 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

BRONWYN OLIVER

Bronwyn Oliver was born in Inverell, New South Wales, 1959. In 1977 she attended the Alexander Mackie College of Advanced Education and in 1980 graduated with a Bachelor of Education (Art). In 1981 she was awarded the New South Wales Travelling Art Scholarship, which enabled her to travel overseas for two years. During this time she attended the Chelsea School of Art, London, where she was awarded a Master of Arts (Sculpture) in 1983. In 1988 she was resident in Brest, France, as part of an artist exchange programme. In 1989 and 1990 she occupied the Visual Arts/Crafts Board studio at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris and held the Marten Bequest for Sculpture scholarship in Paris. In 1990 she was an artist-in-residence at the Auckland City Art Gallery in New Zealand. In 1994 she was awarded the Møet & Chandon Fellowship. She has exhibited her work regularly since 1981 and held her first solo exhibition in 1986. In 2001 she was a participant in the inaugural Helen Lempriere Sculpture Award. Oliver's work is held in numerous state and regional public collections and many private collections in Australia and overseas.

WALANGKURA NAPANANGKA

Pintupi born c. 1946

Walangkura Napanangka was born at Tjiturunga, west of Walungurru (Kintore). She is the daughter of Tutuma Tjapangati and Inyuwa Nampitjin and sister of Pirmangka Napanangka. Her family was amongst a group of Pintupi people who made their way to Haasts Bluff in 1956. They walked hundreds of kilometres from west of the salt lake of Karrkurutinyinya (Lake MacKay) to access the supplies of food and water on offer at the settlement. The family returned to their homelands community of Walungurru in 1981.

Walangkura began her career through participating in the historic Kintore/Haasts Bluff collaborative canvas project *Minyma Tjukurpa* in 1995, and subsequently began painting for Papunya Tula Artists in 1996. She now lives at Kiwirrkura with her husband and fellow artist Johnny Yungut Tjupurrula. Walangkura has exhibited extensively, including *Papunya Tula: Genesis and Genius* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2000 and had solo exhibitions at Utopia Art, Sydney and Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi Melbourne in 2004. Her work was strongly represented in *Mythology and Reality: Contemporary Desert Art from the Gabrielle Pizzi Collection* at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2004.