

*In the World:
head, hand, heart*
17TH
TAMWORTH
FIBRE TEXTILE
BIENNIAL

EDUCATION KIT





INTRODUCTION

The 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial provides a wonderful opportunity for students to closely engage with a wide variety of artworks. There is a great diversity of materials, approaches, and concepts explored by the artists and brought together skillfully by curator Vivonne Thwaites.

In the Word: head, hand, heart provides many possibilities for studying artworks within the gallery context and this education kit provides a starting point for that educational exploration. The exhibition also provides inspiration for students to connect with art and hopefully to create art themselves.

The support of Tamworth Regional Council was integral to the realisation of the 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial, and they are to be congratulated for their ongoing support and commitment to the exhibition.

I would also like to acknowledge the Australia Council, Visions of Australia and Arts NSW for their support of the exhibition and tour. I would like to thank Museums and Galleries NSW for their expert management of the tour.

Thank you to the curator of the 17th Biennial, Vivonne Thwaites whose commitment and passion for the project has been exceptional, and of course to the artists of the 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial, whose inspirational art provides the realisation of the curatorial concept. Thank you to Pam Brown, Public Programs Coordinator Tamworth Regional Gallery, writer of this education kit, and to the designer Lyn Mitchell.

Elizabeth McIntosh
Director
Tamworth Regional Gallery



| *How to use* THE EDUCATION KIT |

This education kit has been developed to assist teachers in preparing their class for their visit to the 17th Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial *In the world: head, hand, heart*. In reflecting the strong curatorial theme of the exhibition, *In the world: head, hand, heart*, the kit draws on the information from the catalogue essay and artist's statements, as well as highlighting the actual experience of the artwork within the gallery space.

The Education kit contains suggested discussion points and practical exercises for students from lower primary to senior secondary level.

Works by 35 artists have been selected for inclusion in the exhibition, representing urban and regional areas and all states and territories in Australia.

The questions and suggested discussion points can be adapted to be used as pre-visit, gallery visit or post-visit exercises.

All are designed to assist students to interpret the works whilst engaging with them in the gallery and to encourage students to make artworks using similar processes to the artists in the exhibition.

Pam Brown
Public Programs
Coordinator
Tamworth Regional Gallery



*Jean Baptiste
Apuatimi, Osmond
Kantilla & Bede
Tungatalem*

Jean Baptiste Apuatimi and Osmond Kantilla demonstrate the contemporaneity of Indigenous cultural work at Tiwi. The purpose built textile printing workshop at Tiwi Design is run by Osmond Kantilla, a master printer with over 20 years practical experience.

Osmond supervises the translation of original artworks onto screens and manages the production of hand-printed fabrics. He has worked at Redback Graphics and Boomalli and has travelled extensively pursuing new designs.

The *Jilamara* design by Jean Baptiste Apuatimi at Tiwi is derived from body painting.

Bede Tungatalum's *Pukamani* design is the dominant image remaining on the exhibited print table cloth cover. Layers of designs can be seen on this thickly matted cloth from the Tiwi print workshop.



Aadje Bruce

Aadje Bruce recycles and reuses found items from the real world, knitting shoe-laces, string, gift wrapping, ribbon, wool, 'relics of usage that document living physical experience' as John Stringer has aptly put it, into one work. There is no sense that the artist needs to take refuge in the subtle nuances or aesthetic qualities of aged materials. Rather she makes minimal interventions into the materials, in this instance knitting together discarded materials. On one level the work offers a homage to all those lovingly knitted rugs, quilts and household items and on another level, connections to abstraction.



Susanna Castleden

Susanna Castleden uses the folds of work shirts to give a sense of the topography of the landscape of the mining towns of north-western Australia, as well as a sense of the individual workers' presence in the place.



Chris De Rosa

Chris De Rosa's work is a tribute to her Auntie (Zia Lucia) a migrant, who as a young woman came from Italy to Australia. Like the rose cutting she smuggled into the country hidden in her blouse, she has become one of South Australia's icons. She retained her accent and always remained somewhat an outsider, offering her knowledge about plants and food to an ever-growing appreciative Australian audience.

On one level *Transplant* 2005, (constructed with fabric and paper imprinted with imagery) is a quilt, a series of individual squares each with its own discrete story, on another level however, the squares stitched together form a new narrative. The work operates as a metaphor for other internal journeys.



Sandy Elverd

Sandy Elverd's *Numbers Count* refers to the blanket in the early days of European settlement, commenting on its use to record numbers of Indigenous people at mission sites. It was the one item that was given to each Indigenous person on arrival at the mission. Her work is constructed from blankets which have been dyed with eucalyptus leaves; bark and flowers of different indigenous plant species.



Ernabella Arts Inc

Ernabella Arts Inc has participated in the Alice Springs Beanie Festival since 2002. The *Mukata* or beanies have been made at Ernabella or Pukatja as it is also known, 440kms south west of Alice Springs by women from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands. Ernabella is the oldest permanent settlement on Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in the remote north west of South Australia. When the art centre at Ernabella began in 1948, thread was spun using the traditional Pitjantjatjara spindle. Today the artists use the same technique and spindle to make the thread for the mukata or beanies and include dyed emu feathers, ininti seeds and commercial yarns.



Helen Fuller

Helen Fuller's dexterous ability to use all manner of materials sees her tugging and pulling rags through holes, and incorporating common pins and plastic baskets into her work. The artist makes clear and succinct contemporary statements about the state of the art world and her place in it. Her work draws out the significance and meaning of her struggle between painting and making - the letters P-A-I-N-(T) - constructed with rags and pins, plastic bags and ribbons appear to weep at the artist's struggle. Pushing the rags through the holes, forcing the hand to paint, adapting the womanly skills of working with rags to working with paint.





Julie Gough

Julie Gough's canoe is constructed with blankets, plastic, wire, wool and shells, and references the French artists Lesueur and Petit's 1807 image *Terre de Diemen, navigation, vue de la côte orientale de l'île Schouten* in journals kept during Baudin's early voyages around Australia. The shells have been collected from beaches in Tasmania, her homeplace. Raised slightly off the floor on tea tree sticks, the work appears to float between worlds. The artist sees the canoe in relation to journeys beyond the material world and has made the work 'to honour the proximity of life, culture, memory, particular places in Tasmania and the past in my present'.



Barbie Greenshields

Barbie Greenshields's *Slough* lies like a cast off skin on the weathered boards of her West Coast home. Made with stiffened and worn grey blankets reminiscent of childhood bed-times, the artist conflates the ideas of comfort and confinement in this work.



Catherine Grundy

Catherine Grundy's intricate laid fabric appliqué and Brazilian dimensional embroidery in stranded cotton on satin begin a discussion about her relationship with her father and the landscapes of the Flinders Ranges and the Coorong, remembered from her past. She has mastered her techniques and is able to employ them to give a voice to her concerns about the environment.



Beth Hatton

Beth Hatton constructs representations of tools with native tussock grasses, and introduced plants such as cordyline, using an Aboriginal stitching technique. Redolent with memories of the Australian outback, the works express a vulnerability to the forces of nature. The tool shapes are presented as if unravelling, suggesting impermanence and decay.



Glenys Hodgeman

Glenys Hodgeman marks out the intricate design of Willow Pattern on a teapot with pin pricks through film, tracing lines reminiscent of lace. The work speaks of the ritual of tea, the art of sewing, and the illumination these skills offer us about the significance of women's lives.



Namoi Kantjuri

No stitching is visible on Namoi's emu feather shoes and baskets and so they appear to float on the red landscape of Central Australia at the homeplace of Tjala Arts. The Mukata or beanies or Pukatja as it is also known, 440kms south west of Alice Springs by women from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands.



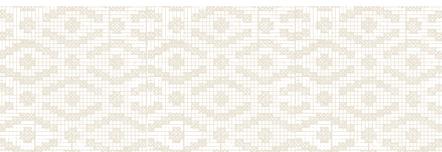
Kay Lawrence AM

Australian attitudes toward Asia are examined in the work by Kay Lawrence, *No work for a white man*. Pearl shell buttons are used as both material and metaphor to make reference to the exploitative nature of the pearl shell industry. Prior to the World War II, 80% of the world's pearl shell came from 400 luggers working out of Broome. The pearl shell buttons used to adorn the clothes of ordinary people were the product of an industry built on the labour of Chinese, Japanese, Koepanger, Malay and Manilamen, at a time when the White Australia policy discriminated against Asian immigration in an effort to keep Australia 'white'.



Susan Mader

Susan grew up in farming country in Western Australia and much of her connection to place derives from what has been caught in her memory through tasks associated with farm management. In her work, *Working the fallow*, opened-out hessian bags, hand-stitched with jute, coated with lime convey a sense of the earth in that place.





Petra Meer

Although born in Australia, Meer is able to convey something of the migrant experience of her parents. Inherited iconography of European origin remains in her subconscious and slips through in her forms. Made entirely with recycled fabrics and materials, these pieces are also tokens to the community of 'unknown others', piecing together cultural identities of their own.



Sophie Morris

Sophie Morris manipulates plain grey/black blanket, felting and matting it until it becomes a material that is sculptural, malleable into three dimensional forms. The woollen blanket folds, contracts, collapses, expands and responds to gravity and tension.



Michelle Nikou

Michelle Nikou's *Grey gulf* casts an overall droll distillation on the domestic ordinariness of real life, of awkward interpersonal dialogue, of grim loyalty, of silent moments between people. The works are laboriously made of tapestry. The monotony and repetitiveness of the daily rituals of life are strongly evoked. From another vantage point Nikou is asking the viewer to consider these everyday objects in relation to one another, as a group of odd forms, classified and categorised.



Toby Richardson

Toby Richardson collects old and used mattresses during council hard rubbish days. *Unknown, Brooklyn Park 5032* is an almost life-sized representation of a once glorious gold mattress, photographed in such detail that we see each thread. The mattress is now torn and weathered, stained from years of use. The work has a regal aura but a deposed grandeur.



Nalda Searles

Nalda Searles is a master of making use of found items – in this instance, shells and ragged towels. Her lifetime of working in country and engaging with Indigenous artists easily speaks through this work.



Holly Story

Holly Story's *Heritage (salt rising)* employs the image of a 19th century fan marked out with salt mixed with a medium. Its design alludes to the patina of salt across the land and acts as a metaphor for the legacy of European settlement. Plants gathered from the south of Western Australia are cooked up for dyes to imbue the work with a sense of place.

The artist notes that there are plants and animals that have adapted to live in the natural salt lakes in the Great Southern district of Western Australia, but we are changing the balance too fast and too far for natural adaptation to keep up. The artist sees the blanket as a reference to human domestic comfort and security as well as a metaphor for the 'skin' of the land, on which our ultimate security and well-being depends.



Irmina Van Niele

Irmina van Niele knits with recycled plastic bags. One of the five elements in the work titled *Carrying loss* is an amalgam of child's singlet and bag. Here past, present and future intertwine, as they are knitted together. Her works are part of an investigation about human belonging in the world and the experience of displacement.



Wilma Walker

Wilma Walker (Ngadijina Babimilbirra) is a traditional owner for the Mossman area of far north Queensland and twines black palm and lawyer cane to make dilly bags (ngakan). These dilly bags are reminiscent of those in which children were hidden during mission times.



Ilka White

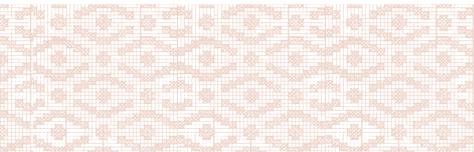
Ilka White has recently spent considerable time in some of Australia's more desolate places, collecting, drawing and experiencing the environment. This collection of works alludes to experiences at Shoreham Beach where grasses and shells were collected and Newhaven Reserve near the edge of the Tanami Desert where spinifex, salt bush and mulga grow. The artist collected red batwing coral seeds, budgerigar feathers and other natural materials with which to construct her works.



Rosemary Whitehead

Rosemary Whitehead's celebration of the rag rug is aptly partnered with a wooden clothes horse. The poem etched into the wood of the rack lifts the work into another realm. The artist knitted the edges when pregnant with her daughter - incorporating old school uniforms, her mother's tights, scraps from her first sewing projects and remnants from the local dressmaker. The rug is a poem to aspects of the artist's life.





Focus Questions and Activities

K - 6

VISUAL ARTS

Aadje Bruce. Read the wall label. The title of the work is *Never, never, never give up*. Write down why you think the artist Aadje Bruce gave the work this title.

Can you think of another title?

Discuss what the term abstract means.

Describe what you can see, focus on colour, pattern and texture.
Create an abstract artwork.

Name four recycled materials the artist has used.

1

2

3

4

After attending *In the world: head, hand heart* organise your class to have a treasure hunt around their homes or school grounds. Have the children construct an artwork from the materials they bring into class.

Susanna Castleden intended for her work *Abandoned* to be a map and look like a map. Do you think that she has achieved this?

Describe the map identify places and write down their names.

Create your own map of a place you know well, perhaps your room, classroom or backyard. Think of how you would identify parts of the area without drawing the map on paper.

Several art works in the exhibition were created using blankets. In addition to **Sandy Elverd's** *Numbers Count* find another two art works that use blankets. Who are the artists?

What are the titles of the art works?

Which artist's work appears to be sleeping on the floor?

What animal is represented by the smaller shape?

How do you feel when you see this art work?

Petra Meer and **Rosemary Whitehead**'s artworks are made from recycled materials and relate directly to the lives of the artists and their families. Both works are based on poems.

Petra Meer's *Mutter* and *Kreuz* relate to a poem written by her grandfather. What is the name of the poem?

Rosemary Whitehead's work was made for which member of her family?

After exploring the exhibition thoroughly, draw lines to connect the names of artists listed below with a description that suits their work in the opposite column:

Beth Hatton	a mattress
Susanna Castleden	beanies
Helen Fuller	shoes made from emu feathers
Kay Lawrence AM	knitted from plastic shopping bags
Sandy Elverd	a sleeping dog
Julie Gough	a button covered cross
Toby Richardson	elegant embroidery
Irmina Van Niele	canoe
Petra Meer	mother of pearl covered pants
Naomi Kantjuri	paint
Catherine Grundy	a woven trap
Ernabella Artists	a map
Barbie Greenshields	a blanket roll

Another alternative to assist in teaching younger students to read labels and gather information would be to connect the artist to the title of the work.

Chris De Rosa	<i>Flash beanie</i> 2005
Naomi Kantjuri	<i>Black palm</i> (ngakan) dilly bags 2006
Glenys Hodgeman	<i>Transplant</i> 2006
Malpiya Davey	<i>Floral Domestic Damask</i> series 2005
Ilka White	<i>Feather Basket</i> 2005
Rosemary Whitehead	<i>Head-dress for my daughter</i> 2001
Liz Williamson	<i>Tidal Cords</i> 2005/6
Wilma Walker	<i>Blew Willow - Gift Tease</i> 2006

Which is your favourite work from *In the World: head, hand, heart* and why?

The following is a sample worksheet for Infants and Lower Primary Students. Teachers or gallery staff may like to photocopy for class visits or education programs.

It is designed to stimulate the younger students' interest in art.

Aadje Bruce knitted together many different things to make her artwork. Look at the artwork and write down 4 different things

1

2

3

4

Name the artist who made the rifle? (dots or line)

What is the artwork's name?

Helen Fuller's red baskets spell a word. What is the word?

Naomi Kantjuri's shoes & baskets are made from what bird's feathers?

The Ernabella Artists make *Mukatas*. Mukata is the aboriginal word for

On what part of your body would you wear a mukata?

How many works contain buttons?

No work for a white man is about the Pearling Industry in Australia.
Which Town in Western Australia is famous for pearls?

In which artwork is there a sleeping dog?

How many works are made from blankets?

Match the artwork to the Title

Three rolls of black felt

Navigator 2006

Canoe

Desert Life 2005/6

Shell covered towel

Enclose 2005

Collection of small sculptures

Littoral..Embrace 2006

Which artwork in the exhibition is your favourite?

Write down why.

Draw a picture of your favourite artwork



Focus Questions and Activities
YEARS 7 - 12
VISUAL ARTS

Many of the artists participating in this exhibition have created their works from recycled materials and found objects, just ordinary everyday things. The artists have transformed the ordinary into thought provoking and imaginative works that enable us to see and question our world in a new light.

As you view the exhibition compile two lists in your process journal. Firstly, a list of recycled and found objects used by the artists, and secondly a list of the messages and themes the artists want to convey to the viewer.

After attending *In the World: head, hand, heart* think of an issue that you could build an art work around. Write down your thoughts and make a few sketches of your thoughts. Gather materials and found objects from your own environment to produce an art work that communicates your ideas.

Susanna Castleden intended for her work *Abandoned* to be a map and look like a map. Do you think that she has achieved this?

Castleden uses a portable card table as a component of her work *Abandoned*. Consider the importance of the card table to the overall message of the work.

Barbie Greenshields *Slough* is a very personal work dealing with emotion, life, relationships and eventual loss, as does **Irmina Van Niele's** *Carrying Loss*. Compare the two works in terms of the media used by the two artists. Which work in your opinion best conveys an emotional message? Why?

Find an art work in this exhibition that you think has something to say about memory and nostalgia. Write a brief description of the work justifying your choice.

The works of Catherine Grundy, Beth Hatton, Susan Mader, Nalda Searles, Holly Story and Ilka White are concerned with issues relating to the landscape and environment.

Compare two of these works, looking at the media used to create the works and the message each artist is trying to convey. Which work do you think has the strongest message? Why?

Using *In the world: head, hand, heart* as a starting point, research the practices and strategies employed by the indigenous artists: Jean Baptise Akuatimi, Ernabella Artists, Julie Gough, Osmond Kantilla, Naomi Kantjuri, Bede Tungatalem and Wilma Walker.

Exploring Aboriginal art issues, tradition, innovation, taking into account the different meanings and interpretations for audiences. Consider the various approaches indigenous artists employ to explore their cultural identity. Students could research other indigenous contemporary artists such as **Fiona Foley, Rea, Christian Bumbarra Thompson, Brenda L Croft, Clinton Nain, Elizabeth Nyumi and Gordon Bennet.**

The work of more than one of the artists in this exhibition is influenced by their cultural and personal background. Artists include **Aadje Bruce, Chris De Rosa, Petra Meer, Irmina Van Niele and Wilma Walker.**

Choose two artists who fall into this category and briefly describe the ways in which events of their childhood, being displaced, or moving from one country to another country has influenced their artwork. Remember to read the Artists Statements.

Imagine if you are one of these artists. Write down your feelings.

How would you construct an artwork to convey your emotions?

Beth Hatton's, *As for man, his days are as grass* is a grouping of woven tools from Australia's colonial past. Just like the environment and native animals made extinct through their use, the tools too are now obsolete.

What is your immediate response?

What do you think is the relationship between the materials, method of construction and your response?

Do you think you would have responded differently had the work been a painting, drawing or photograph?

One aspect of *In the World: head, hand, heart* which may surprise some viewers is that some of the works are not actually made of fibre. The works of **Toby Richardson**, *Unknown Brooklyn Park 5032* and **Glenys Hodgeman**, *Blew Willow - Gift Tease* employ photography used as a means of documentation. In *Warped* **Helen Fuller's** medium is oil on canvas. Whilst **Irmina Van Niele's**, *Carrying Loss* is knitted not from wool or fibre but from ribbons of plastic shopping bags.

These works are conceptually based in fibre textile practice. They are essentially concerned with process, memory and use (to name a few) which are common themes of fibre textile arts practice, theory and criticism. It is important to allow fibre textile itself the leeway to explore these themes without being locked into a fixation on materiality. As technology advances so does the individual strategies and practices of artists.

These artists have questioned and expanded their practices to produce works which are about a medium. Discuss.

Without reading the artists statements look at the works of **Sophie Morris**, **Michelle Nikou** and **Liz Williamson**. Their works use colour as a particularly strong feature.

Why do you think the artists have chosen these particular colours?

How do the colours make you feel when you look at the artworks?

Write down your response.

Using your imagination visualise the works as being a different colour.

Do you think that you would respond differently?

Kay Lawrence's installation *No work for a white man* comments on the exploitation of the Indigenous and Asian divers during the 19th century in the pearling industry at Broome Western Australia.

How do you feel when you view this work?

Do you think that the artwork conveys its message to the viewer?

Give reasons for or against.

Select an artwork from, *In the world; head, hand, heart*.

Write a critique of the artwork, providing a detailed description of its physical appearance.

Record how you responded to the work and your opinion as to whether or not the artwork communicates its ideas as the artist intended.

In the world: head, hand heart is a curated exhibition. As a class project organise your own curated exhibition.

Select a class member to be the curator or perhaps the teacher can be the curator.

The curator devises an idea or theme for an exhibition.

The students are given a brief to produce a work that responds to the exhibition theme.

The curator then selects the works that he or she thinks best fit the exhibition theme.

Have an exhibition in your classroom or school auditorium invite family and friends to view the exhibition.



| *Student* EVALUATION |

Were there any artworks in this exhibition that made you feel sad or which you thought were funny in some way?

Which ones?

Why did they make you feel this way?

| Student EVALUATION |

Was it because of the formal qualities, colours or designs, or because of something you read about the artwork?

Where would you put this artwork if you were allowed to take it home?

Which of the artworks from *In the world: head, hand, heart* do you like the most?

Why? Give reasons for your answer.
