

# Visual Art 2019 v1.1

## Supporting resource: Contexts

### Contexts in the Visual Art syllabus

Contexts are frames of reference that inform the concepts and focuses, allowing visual communication and meaning to evolve. The contexts are contemporary, personal, cultural and formal. As students engage in art-making and responding, they employ different contexts to understand and appreciate how artists incorporate a range of influences and layers of meaning. Throughout the course of study, students develop their understanding of each of the four contexts, both individually and in combination, and how they provide alternative ways of analysing and interpreting their own artwork and the work of others.

The four contexts in the Visual Art syllabus are:

- the contemporary context, which informs the analysis and interpretation of past and present artwork through a lens of 21st century art ideas and issues, and how these challenge engagement, communication and meaning
- the personal context, which informs the analysis and interpretation of emotions, sensory experiences, personal philosophy, beliefs and ideas that are reflected in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning
- the cultural context, which informs the analysis and interpretation of the social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender and spiritual and secular beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning
- the formal context, which informs the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art elements and principles, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning.

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal</li><li>• Contemporary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formal</li><li>• Cultural</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contemporary</li><li>• Personal, cultural, and/or formal</li></ul>

The course of study focuses on contexts as a way of making and responding to artworks.

Learning in Units 1 and 2 builds a foundation for study in Units 3 and 4.

- In Unit 1, students apply the contexts, foregrounding the personal and contemporary contexts to analyse and interpret visual communication and meaning in artworks.
- In Unit 2, students foreground the formal and the cultural contexts to analyse and interpret visual communication and meaning in artworks.
- In Unit 3, students use the contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal contexts to study selected artists and explore expression, different layers of meaning and diverse interpretations of artworks.
- In Unit 4, students foreground the contemporary context to develop new meanings through a lens of 21st century art ideas and issues. They simultaneously select from the personal, cultural and formal contexts to examine and compare visual language, expression and the communication of multiple meanings in various art forms.

# Analysis and interpretation through different contexts

Contexts are used as a method or approach to view and decode visual language in artworks and art practice. Artworks can be investigated through different contexts to understand multiple meanings. Students use contexts to understand the work of artists and in developing, researching and reflecting on their own work. Each context uses a series of questions to guide analysis and interpretation. Viewing and creating work through different contexts draws on characteristics typical of that context.

## Contemporary context

The contemporary context informs the analysis and interpretation of past and present artwork through a lens of 21st century art ideas and issues, and how these challenge engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- art-making, students can test boundaries of traditional art practices. They reconceptualise, modify and appropriate artworks and images, and investigate the impact and place of new technologies on art practices and experiences
- responding, students examine new or different meanings and significance that may be assigned to artworks of the past. They question and re-evaluate traditionally held values and assumptions of art and representation.

## Contemporary context guiding questions:

- How is meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st century ideas and issues?
- How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?
- How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?
- How do artists communicate or provoke ideas about current issues and concerns and challenge established philosophies?

## Artworks viewed and created through the contemporary context typically:

- challenge mainstream ideas about the boundaries of art
- manipulate and change the familiar
- question established conventions
- use non-traditional materials and new technologies
- exploit digital technology and multi-sensory experiences, such as sound and movement
- work against traditional practices
- may be exhibited in public spaces rather than traditional gallery environments
- reference images from both real life and fiction
- borrow imagery through appropriation of recognisable sources and popular culture
- use parody and irony to present current concerns
- use satire and humour to exaggerate ideas for impact.

## Personal context

The personal context informs the analysis and interpretation of emotions, sensory experiences, personal philosophy, beliefs and ideas that are reflected in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- art-making, students investigate their responses to the world around them, their personal interests, experiences and philosophies, and the impact these have on symbolism and practices
- responding, students examine how artists and the choices they make are influenced by life and experiences, and consider how their own feelings and background influence their physical and emotional reactions as audience.

### Personal context guiding questions:

- How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?
- How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?
- How do artists communicate their personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?

### Artworks viewed and created through the personal context typically:

- generate immediate emotional responses through visual imagery
- stimulate reactions through sensory experiences
- communicate through material and imagery that is sometimes visually shocking or confronting
- appeal to viewers through prior experiences and knowledge
- employ recognisable qualities that express the artist's beliefs and values
- explore the artist's personal journey or memories
- express the artist's passion or inspiration
- develop through the artist's imagination, fantasy and dreams
- use distortion and manipulation of visual imagery to change appearance
- share human and psychological experiences and emotions.

## Cultural context

The cultural context informs the analysis and interpretation of the social influences and representations of time, place, politics, purpose, ethnicity, gender and spiritual and secular beliefs on artwork, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- art-making, students explore cultural values, historical or current events, social pressures, and attitudes that impact on them and others, and determine the origins of social meaning communicated in artwork
- responding, students consider indigenous perspectives; regional, national, international, social and cultural identity of artists and audiences; and how artists use their work as a vehicle to invite change and provoke conversation.

### **Cultural context guiding questions:**

- How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?
- How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?
- How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?
- How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?

### **Artworks viewed and created through the cultural context typically:**

- identify cultural influences on the artist, such as history, religion, politics, ethnicity, gender, social class, age
- reflect community interests through social commentary
- explore Australian culture through narrative depictions
- question cultural and social roles
- explore spiritual or religious traditions
- explore cultural themes, such as notions of beauty, coming of age
- depict traditional imagery and communicate through familiar symbols and metaphors
- demonstrate influences of art movements, styles and origins of time and place
- can be identified through specific iconographic elements that link the work to a style or movement
- exist in a historical framework.

### **Formal context**

The formal context informs the analysis and interpretation of formal visual art elements and principles, the application of materials and techniques, the stylistic qualities relative to historical periods or iconology seen in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning. Through:

- art-making, students focus on the formal organisation and placement of visual components, experimenting with codes, symbols, and art conventions, and the communicative value of art materials, techniques and processes
- responding, students decode artworks by reading the relationships between specific visual language, signs, symbols, codes, and conventions that are used to transmit information and ideas in artworks.

### **Formal context guiding questions:**

- How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?
- How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?
- How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?

**Artworks viewed and created through the formal context typically:**

- emphasise process, elements, principles, materials and media
- employ imagery as a visualisation of ideas and representation
- rely on aesthetic knowledge and experience
- can be described by identifying tangible qualities and characteristics
- employ imagery to signify a time, place or events
- communicate meaning by decipherable visual elements
- represent ideas as a system of symbolic objects, motifs or signs which are decoded as evidence of the artist's intention.

## Summarising artwork characteristics through different contexts

Ken + Julia Yonetani  
*Sweet Barrier Reef*  
2009  
Sugar, vegetable gum, polystyrene foam  
Dimensions: variable  
Photography by Ian Hobbs



Ken + Julia Yonetani  
*Sweet Barrier Reef (detail)*  
2009  
Sugar, vegetable gum, polystyrene foam  
Dimensions: variable  
Photography by Ian Hobbs

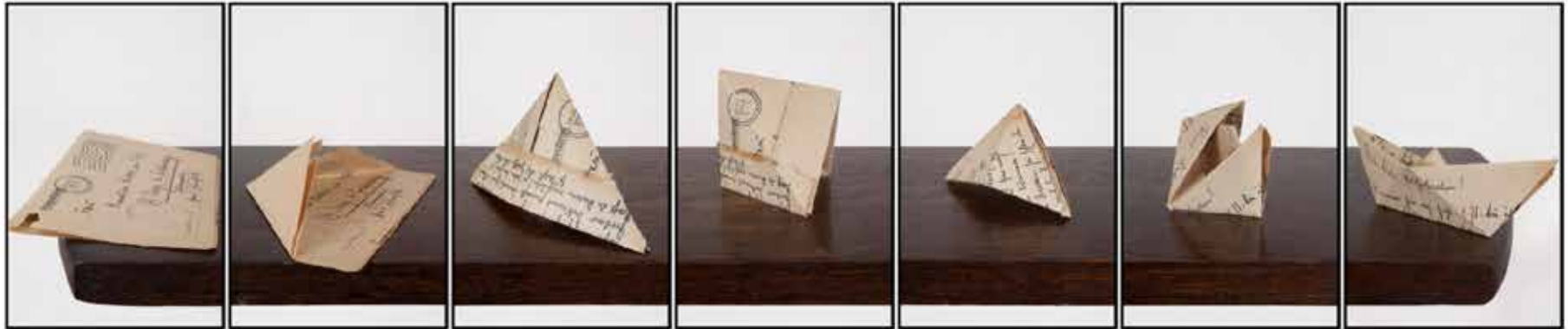


Contemporary context	Personal context	Cultural context	Formal context
<b>How does the artwork:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenge mainstream ideas?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>awareness of coral bleaching, environmental impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generate immediate emotional responses through sensory experiences?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>immediate connection with the aesthetics of the work shifts as the audience becomes aware of the impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore cultural traditions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the raking of the sugar draws upon the artists' Japanese culture relating to Zen and juxtaposes a traditional world with a new contemporary twist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasise process, elements, principles, materials and media?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>texture is an integral element in this work</li> <li>realism of shapes and tactile surfaces create patterns and structures that ignite curiosity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use non-traditional materials and new technologies?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3D installation using sugar and vegetable gum (icing mixture)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore the artist's personal journey or memories?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>impacts both Australian and Japanese coral reefs which connect to the artists' heritage</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect community interests through social commentary?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>production and consumption of sugar is removed from its origins and the impact and effects on the reef</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>represent ideas as a system of symbolic objects, motifs or signs which are decoded as evidence of the artist's intention?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the coral forms created with sugar provide strong clues to the artists' deliberate message about environmental issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>borrow imagery through appropriation of recognisable sources and popular culture?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coral reef structures are emulated and mimicked using sugar</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop through the artist's imagination, fantasy and dreams?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use of lighting to create an experience that emulates being underwater</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore Australian culture through narrative depictions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>links to sugar as a symbol of early colonisation and modern consumerism</li> <li>the Great Barrier Reef connects to an Australian identity and is recognised as one of the seven wonders of the world</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate meaning by decipherable visual elements?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the stark whiteness of the sugar heightens the link between coral bleaching caused by sugar production and manufacture</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use parody and irony to present current concerns?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the work is constructed out of the product that is causing its demise</li> <li>run-off from sugar cane farming in Australia and Japan are leaching into the ocean and causing coral bleaching</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>share human and psychological experience and emotions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appeals to the audience's conscience to draw awareness to human impact on this fragile ecosystem, audience shares feelings of responsibility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employ imagery to signify a time, place or events?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>colour, lighting, surface and forms are designed to express an underwater environment and express mood</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Joachim Froese b.1963

*Tell him it is all a transition #3 (Rudolf)* 2011

7 inkjet prints 30 x 140cm





Contemporary context	Personal context	Cultural context	Formal context
<b>How does the artwork:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenge mainstream ideas?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>challenging heroic notions of war by emphasising the impact and atrocities of war and how this continues to affect current society</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generate immediate emotional responses through sensory experiences?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>this work is reflective and calm and allows the viewer to contemplate family history and journey</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore cultural traditions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Japanese tradition of Sadako Sasaki making 1000 cranes for a wish to come true</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasise process, elements, principles, materials and media?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shape is deliberately modified in this work as the object transforms from a flat letter into a boat</li> <li>contrast in positive and empty negative space</li> <li>repetition of letter as it transforms</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use non-traditional materials and new technologies?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>paper letters inspired by his grandfather are re-contextualised through origami folding</li> <li>multi-panel photographic narrative creates a story</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore the artist's personal journey or memories?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>direct connection to family history exploring the story of the artist's grandparents during WWII</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect community interests through social commentary?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the impact of war and personal narratives is a recurring theme in the history of art</li> <li>the audience connects with commentary on war historically and in current issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>represent ideas as a system of symbolic objects, motifs or signs which are decoded as evidence of the artist's intention?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>boats refer to travel and movement from one place to another, a means of escape</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>borrow imagery through appropriation of recognisable sources and popular culture?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visual representations of the letters transformed into origami boat structures are both recognisable forms with prior meaning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop through the artist's imagination, fantasy and dreams?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the seven shots present a narrative of the family story imagined by the artist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify cultural influences on the artist?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the artist reflects on his cultural identity through his grandfather's journey to show connections to the social impact war has upon family</li> <li>explores the artist's European heritage and the death of his grandfather as a prisoner of war</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate meaning by decipherable visual elements?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>aged letters communicate a historical narrative</li> <li>panels develop a sense of transformation and change over time</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use parody and irony to present current concerns?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>irony is reflected in this work as the artist transforms the letters into boats that represent the transition from war to freedom that can never occur</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>share human and psychological experience and emotions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sharing family relationships to understand how history connects us</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>demonstrate influences of art movements, styles and origins of time and place?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>style is influenced by European still-life traditions, but modernised through multiple panels and photography</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employ imagery to signify a time, place or events?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creates historical links through reproduction of letters written during the war, using authentic dates, text and symbols</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Abdul-Hamid Ibrahim  
Abdullah

*I wanted to paint him as a  
mountain*

2014


© Abdul Abdullah/Licensed by  
Viscopy, 2017.



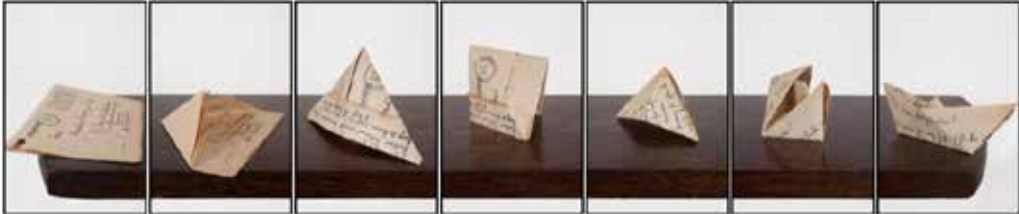
Contemporary context	Personal context	Cultural context	Formal context
<b>How does the artwork:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>manipulate and change the familiar?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>portraiture in role as an imaginary character</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>generate immediate emotional responses through visual imagery?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the representation confuses the viewer at first — why is Bell in a spacesuit?</li> <li>makes the audience question Abdullah's intent but appeals through humour</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identify cultural influences on the artist?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the artist identifies with marginalised minority groups based on his own experiences</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasise process, elements, principles, materials and media?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stylistic layering of the portrait component; black foundation then multiple skin tones overlaid</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>borrow imagery through appropriation of recognisable sources and popular culture?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>this image mimics science and space travel; referring to the idea that artists also change the world through their professions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employ recognisable qualities that express the artist's beliefs and values?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>admiration for Richard Bell not only as a friend but as a strong community figure</li> <li>strength of character shown in Bell's expression</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflect community interests through social commentary?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>painting a prominent Aboriginal artist for the Archibald competition highlights the artist's determination to ensure minority groups are recognised for their contributions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>represent ideas as a system of symbolic objects, motifs or signs which are decoded as evidence of the artist's intention?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ANSA badge on the suit is appropriated from <i>Planet of the Apes</i>, where Charlton Heston played a strong vocal figure</li> <li>strong tonal contrast communicates social inequality in Australia</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>use satire and humour to exaggerate ideas for impact?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>depicting the figure in outer space exaggerates Abdullah's ideas about his regard for Bell as a high-profile artist</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop through the artist's imagination, fantasy, dreams?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>placing Bell in a space suit as an astronaut shows how Abdullah imagines this artist as a prominent figure in his personal and professional life</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exist in a historical framework?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2014 Archibald finalist entry which places this image within a historically documented position</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicate meaning by decipherable visual elements?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abdullah's trademark flat, black background simulates the idea of floating in space</li> <li>deliberate cropping of the figure communicates that the figure exists without gravity</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>share human and psychological experiences and emotions?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abdullah's admiration for this artist and his friend is highlighted by presenting him larger than life, as an astronaut</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>depict traditional imagery and communicate through familiar symbols and metaphors?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>space travel is a metaphor to reflect the notion that this man is bigger than we all are</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

# Analysis and interpretation through guiding questions


Contexts	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These questions guide the analysis and interpretation of artworks through each context.</li> <li>• Questions consider both artist and audience and can be selected as appropriate to the task or the artwork.</li> <li>• Explore various contexts by asking questions about the same artwork.</li> <li>• When students select their own context to develop and make artworks, they should consider their ideas as both artist and audience.</li> <li>• The four contexts also allow for finer-grained contextual ideas, for example applying a cultural context may include historical, political, socio-economic, spiritual, gender or ethnic influences.</li> </ul>	
<b>Contemporary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st century ideas and issues?</li> <li>• How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?</li> <li>• How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</li> <li>• How do artists communicate or provoke ideas about current issues and concerns and challenge established philosophies?</li> </ul>
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</li> <li>• How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</li> <li>• How do artists communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?</li> <li>• How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</li> <li>• How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?</li> <li>• How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</li> </ul>
<b>Formal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?</li> <li>• How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?</li> <li>• How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?</li> </ul>

Contexts		
<b>Artwork</b>	<p>Ken + Julia Yonetani  <i>Sweet Barrier Reef</i>            2009            Sugar, vegetable gum, polystyrene foam            Dimensions: variable            Photography by Ian Hobbs</p>	
<b>Contemporary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st century ideas and issues?</li> <li>• How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks? How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</li> <li>• How do artists generate concern about current issues and challenge established philosophies?</li> </ul>	<p>Ken + Julia Yonetani challenge our engagement with this work through contemporary art practice, employing sugar as a non-traditional material to change our familiar understanding of both the reef and a common household product. Boundaries are tested, as the audience becomes part of the underwater environment. This establishes a paradox, as we ironically become part of the artists' concern relating to the environmental impact of sugar cane farming on our reefs.</p>
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</li> <li>• How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</li> <li>• How do artists communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</li> </ul>	<p>Audiences are drawn visually to this work through sensory experiences and expectations that they impact and affect the world around them. Their sensory reaction to the work, at first delicate and beautiful shifts with the realisation that the artists are exploiting their concerns.</p>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?</li> <li>• How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</li> <li>• How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?</li> <li>• How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</li> </ul>	<p>This work reflects current social pressures and influences upon our environment. Creating the coral from sugar is a deliberate provocation to change current practices in farming and environmental protection. The work is underpinned by the iconographic representation of the reef as a symbol of Australian culture.</p>

Contexts		
<b>Formal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?</li> <li>How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?</li> <li>How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?</li> </ul>	<p>The communicative value of the chosen material, coupled with borrowed techniques and processes establish a deliberate aesthetic quality. Surfaces are intricately manipulated, on the coral, the raked floor and the filtered light that ripples on the walls. The space invites the audience into an immersive experience.</p>

Contexts		
<b>Artwork</b>	<p>Joachim Froese b.1963  <i>Tell him it is all a transition #3 (Rudolf)</i> 2011            7 inkjet prints 30 x 140cm</p>	
<b>Contemporary</b>	<p>How is meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st century ideas and issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?</li> <li>How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</li> <li>How do artists generate concern about current issues and challenge established philosophies?</li> </ul>	<p>Real life is referenced in this work using past letters written by the artist's grandfather. Traditional significance is re-evaluated through the modification of the letters into origami shaped boats, which is reflective of escape from the catastrophe of war.</p>

Contexts		
<b>Personal</b>	<p>How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</li> <li>How do artists communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</li> </ul>	<p>The letters reflect a direct personal influence on the artist and take the audience on an emotional journey of the artist's memories. Froese presents a haunting and disquieting feeling through the transformation of the letter into a paper boat. Depicting each step in the transformation reminds the viewer of a shared experience.</p>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?</li> <li>How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</li> <li>How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning?</li> <li>How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</li> </ul>	<p>The cultural connections to the historical events of WWII are a predominant feature in this work. Traditional imagery using handwritten notes establishes a connection between a historical representation of time and place. Ideas of family, nostalgia and remembrance underpin the work.</p>
<b>Formal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?</li> <li>How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?</li> <li>How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?</li> </ul>	<p>Exploring formal organisation such as repetition, balance and space, allows the audience to read the narrative from left to right. The objects are symbolic of a specific time, with the aged appearance of the letters and the changing placement hinting at the shift between past and present memories.</p>

Contexts		
<b>Artwork</b>	<p>Abdul-Hamid Ibrahim Abdullah  <i>I wanted to paint him as a mountain</i>            2014            © Abdul Abdullah/Licensed by Viscopy, 2017.</p>	
<b>Contemporary</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is meaning and significance of past artworks challenged when viewed through a lens of 21st century ideas and issues?</li> <li>• How do contemporary art approaches, technologies or environments impact the viewer experience and interpretation of artworks?</li> <li>• How are artistic or social traditions challenged and expanded by contemporary art forms, subject matter and display?</li> <li>• How do artists generate concern about current issues and challenge established philosophies?</li> </ul>	<p>Abdullah challenges social traditions by juxtaposing the high profile Aboriginal artist Richard Bell as an astronaut, creating new meaning and establishing his status and importance within contemporary Australian art. Changing the familiar role of the artist, Abdullah exaggerates the importance of Bell using humour and satire.</p>
<b>Personal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?</li> <li>• How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?</li> <li>• How do artists communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?</li> </ul>	<p>The title of the work is a metaphor as the artist regards Bell as 'mountainous'. Depicting the artist in a space suit is a metaphor for Abdullah's personal admiration for Bell, paying tribute to the artist's strength of character and connecting to him as a friend.</p> <p>The logo on the spacesuit 'ANSA' is appropriated from the <i>Planet of the Apes</i> and subtly hints at the similarities with Charlton Heston's character — a rational and outspoken outsider.</p>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the artwork communicate about the influences of society and the time when it was created?</li> <li>• How do the values of past artists compare to the values of today?</li> <li>• How do the cultural values and background of the viewer influence the interpretation of meaning</li> <li>• How have historical or contemporary events contributed to the meaning of the artwork?</li> </ul>	<p>The representation of a well-known Aboriginal artist and political activist allows audiences to identify Bell and make direct cultural links to the work and indigenous perspectives. Questioning the representation provokes conversations about the choice of costume and facial expression.</p>



## Contexts

### Formal

- How do formal art elements and principles contribute to the meanings and messages in the artwork?
- How do stylistic characteristics shared with other art forms communicate meaning, intention, time and place?
- How do materials, techniques, application, skills or display influence the impact and interpretation of artworks?

Abdullah's trademark flat, dark background is a stylistic characteristic that aligns with the artist's intention to represent the figure floating in outer space. The tight cropping alienates the figure creating the appearance that he is scrutinising us from space. Simulated texture using traditional oil painting methods highlights the contrast in this work. The monochromatic, smooth neutral surface of the spacesuit contrasts with Abdullah's stylistic layering approach to skin tones.

## Extended response through contexts



Ken + Julia Yonetani

*Sweet Barrier Reef*

2009

Sugar, vegetable gum, polystyrene foam

Dimensions: variable

Photography by Ian Hobbs

<b>Introduction</b>	Ken + Julia Yonetani create installations using innovative materials and approaches to communicate powerful messages about the impact of human activity on nature. The artists aim to challenge audience perceptions of environmental issues and promote the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment. In the installation <i>Sweet Barrier Reef</i> , they focus on coral bleaching, an event attributed to runoff of fertilisers from sugar cane farms.
<b>Personal context</b>	Personal experiences motivate the artists to draw attention to this environmental issue. They have witnessed the destruction of marine environments firsthand while diving in Australia and Japan. Their shared Australian and Japanese heritage gives them a strong connection to both places and is also reflected in the cultural techniques and approaches used in this installation.
<b>Contemporary context</b>	Through contemporary materials and approaches, <i>Sweet Barrier Reef</i> challenges the audience to reflect on the environmental impact that sugar cane farming has upon reef ecosystems. The installation appears to be a calm, aesthetic interpretation of the delicate organic structures that exist within this underwater landscape. However, the innovative use of sugar as a sculptural medium ironically exaggerates the fact that this product is the cause of the reef's demise. The sweet smell of sugar and the stark colour would have an immediate sensory impact on viewers. The use of this non-traditional material heightens an understanding of the issues currently affecting the reef, in particular the bleaching of this precious natural environment. This work challenges our engagement through the clever juxtaposition of sugar and reef. What the audience first perceive as calm and beautiful becomes a cynical representation of human impact. The artists present a paradox through appropriation of a visually recognisable image that questions society's responsibility for the environment.
<b>Formal context</b>	Strong emphasis is placed on the artists' skills to create believable coral structures out of icing sugar, borrowing techniques used in cake decorating to sculpt the forms. Textured surfaces are paramount in creating realism and the stark white medium perfectly emulates the impact of the coral bleaching we are becoming familiar with. The size of the room and the contemplative space serve as a strong reminder of what is currently occurring beneath the surface. Blue lighting and rippled movement position the viewer on the floor of the ocean within this environment. The raked sugar traces concentric circles around the coral, adding to the suggestion of motion and the ocean floor in the underwater experience. Yet the pattern is too ordered, more like a Japanese Zen garden, representing human impact and an international problem. The coral confectionary and the impact of the space work together to communicate Ken + Julia Yonetani's message and concerns.

<b>Cultural context</b>	<i>Sweet Barrier Reef</i> comments on our cultural relationship with the Great Barrier Reef and how this conflicts with modernisation and consumerism. The artists ask us to consider our inability to see the long-term impact of chemical run-off on the fragile natural environments we are so proud of and feel connected to as a nation. Creating the coral from sugar is a deliberate provocation to change current practices in farming and environmental protection.
<b>Conclusion</b>	Ken +Julia Yonetani visualise human impact on nature, drawing attention to environmental issues that may otherwise go unnoticed. The sugar in <i>Sweet Barrier Reef</i> is a specific comment on the relationship between sugar cane farming and coral bleaching. However, at a deeper level, the use of this innovative media could also be seen to symbolise all our desires and the impact of consumerism on natural environments.

## Comparative analysis through personal context

Students conduct analysis and interpretation of emotions, sensory experiences, personal philosophy, beliefs and ideas that are reflected in artworks, and how these contribute to engagement, communication and meaning.



Abdul-Hamid Ibrahim Abdullah

*I wanted to paint him as a mountain*

2014

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Joachim Froese b.1963

*Tell him it is all a transition #3 (Rudolf)* 2011

7 inkjet prints 30 x 140cm

How does an artist's practice reflect the influences of their life and experiences?	Both artists present work that is reflective of their own life and personal experiences. Froese explores family history through letters handwritten by his grandfather during World War II before his death as a prisoner of war. This connection is deeply felt and reflective. In comparison, Abdullah's personal connection relates to his admiration of a fellow artist who he sees as a mentor in his art practice. Both artists pay homage to important male role models within their personal world. However, Abdullah reflects on his personal influence in a more light-hearted, less sombre manner than Froese.
How do the experiences and expectations of the viewer influence the reading of the artwork and the construction of personal meaning?	Froese's work invites the viewer to look closely at the surface of the paper to provide hints that lead to a personal construction of meaning. The viewer is influenced by an indication of dates and aged keepsakes that connect to a historical period and their own understanding of war and loss. Abdullah's work immediately confronts the viewer and raises questions as they try to understand the connection between figure and costume. The portrait is recognisable as prominent Australian Aboriginal artist, Richard Bell, and the audience is struck by the intensity of his facial expression, which contrasts with the humorous representation as astronaut. It works on the audience's understanding of childhood ambitions to conquer space as an astronaut. Froese invites quiet contemplation of family histories while Abdullah invites the audience to read the strength of the depicted character to construct personal meaning.

How do artists communicate personal stories, thoughts, feelings, philosophies and ideas?

Froese communicates a personal story using symbolic objects, whereas Abdullah communicates his feelings through figurative depiction. Froese uses the changing paper form as a metaphor representing the impact of war on his family. Read from left to right, the letter develops from a flat parchment into a carefully folded origami boat as a symbol of change and an attempt to escape the devastation of war. Abdullah's symbolic representation communicates that he respects the artist and holds him in high regard. The space suit acts as a metaphor for 'greatness', which also connects to the title of the work *'I wanted to paint him as a mountain'*. Man walking on the moon was a triumph and Abdullah uses this ideal to express his thoughts relating to Bell. Both Froese and Abdullah communicate ideas about personal relationships by translating their feelings into visual symbols that also have meaning for the audience.