

WARRNAMBOOL ART GALLERY



VCE ART MAKING & EXHIBITING

This resource has been produced by Warrnambool Art Gallery to provide support to VCE: Art Making and Exhibiting students to respond to

Unit 2 Understand, develop and resolve, Area of Study 1, Outcome 1

Unit 3 Collect, extend and connect, Area of Study 3, Outcome 3

Unit 4 Consolidate, present and conserve, Area of study 3, Outcome 3

WARRNAMBOOL ART GALLERY

With more than 5,000 artworks ranging from European Salon and Colonial Paintings of the 1800s and Indigenous artefacts, to the Melbourne Modernists of the 1940s and an expanding catalogue of contemporary works, the Warrnambool Art Gallery has facilitated rich experiences for audiences, both through its Collection and through an inspired program of exhibitions and events in and beyond the Gallery.

The Warrnambool Art Gallery began in 1886 when retired police officer Joseph Archibald opened its doors in a building behind the mechanics institute in Liebig Street. The Gallery began with an eclectic mix of artworks and museum curios.

Before long Archibald mobilised public support and paid for a new gallery annex. Loans and grants allowed the Gallery collection to grow with significant early acquisitions by French, German, and Belgian artists, which were less expensive than British works.

These were followed by the Louis Buvelot's pastoral landscape *Sunset Waterpool at Coleraine* (1874). Buvelot found his artistic theme in light and tone and it is not surprising that he favoured the Western District during his sketching tours of Victoria. This reverence for light and tone can be seen in local contemporary painters including Kathryn Ryan who captures moody rows of trees in hazy paddocks.

The Gallery also holds a series of early tonalist paintings by Australian artists including Clarice Beckett, Archie Colquhoun, Percy Leason, Max Meldrum and Roland Wakelin.

Despite its enthusiastic start the economic downturn of the 1890s brought the Collection to a halt. In 1910 the Council took control of the Mechanics Institute and ran the Gallery there until 1963 when the building was allocated for municipal offices.

The Collection was dispersed on loan to galleries in Shepparton and Hamilton and not reunited until 1971. In 1986 the Gallery's Centenary year, a permanent home was built next to the 'Civic Green' and named in memory of one its champions Sir Fletcher Jones O.B.E.

Our Mission

Missions are abstract statements of purpose that look outward.

Purpose (why we exist)

To uphold and transform the cultural life of South West Victoria

To achieve this, Warrnambool Art Gallery must exemplify the engaged, informed and inspired community we envision

Vision (what we want to achieve)

Warrnambool Art Gallery aspires to become a gateway for transformative cultural experiences in South West Victoria, a vital meeting place, an incubator and generator of ideas and innovation.

With a large collection of artworks, museum objects and artefacts Warrnambool Art Gallery's primary function is to:

- Exhibit the gallery's collection and hold temporary exhibitions loaned by other galleries, collections or artists.
- Care for and develop the permanent collection
- Provide education, outreach and public programs

The Team

Director: Aaron Bradbrook

The Director has both a strategic and a creative role. As well as leading and managing the team of staff, a Director will guide the development of the exhibition program, manage collections care and look after the long term development of the gallery. Part of the Director's overarching care is to make sure major stakeholders are happy, manage budgets, provide reports to various people and organisations and apply for funding. The Director will also visit other galleries both locally, nationally and internationally to inspire and bring back ideas for possible future programs. They are instrumental in forging strong relationships with partners both within and outside the sector.

Curatorial Staff

Curator of Collections: Serena Wong

Responsible for the care and development of the collection. Programs and curates exhibitions of works taken from the permanent collection and undertake research into the permanent collection, looking at ways of developing it. Responsible for the administration of the collection, loan agreements, collections management and preventive conservation. Undertakes tasks such as monitoring environmental conditions – temperature, humidity and insect and pest control.

Curator of Exhibitions & Outreach

Responsible for developing the program of temporary and travelling exhibitions. The role includes working directly with artists to resolve conceptual and artistic ideas, to use the platform of an exhibition to create experiences for the audience to engage with and organise all exhibition logistics such as art handlers and couriers. Also responsible for Warrnambool Art Gallery's outreach and public program.

Cultural Engagement Officer

Responsible for the Maar Nation Gallery, consultation with Indigenous community and developing cultural programs and events.

Education Officer: Megan Nicolson

Responsible for developing education programs and promoting Warrnambool Art Gallery as an art education resource. Conducts tours and arts engagement with pre-school, primary and secondary aged children and tertiary and community members. Development of education resources to compliment exhibition program and organisation of school holiday activities and professional development for teachers.

Front of House Officers: Shiloh Henderson & Phillip Ward

Warrnambool Art Gallery has two Front of House Co-ordinators. They are the first point of contact for our visitors and provide assistance and a welcome. Responsible for the shop – sourcing merchandise and sales, running events, coordinating the Friends of the Gallery group and marketing.

Volunteers

Being a small regional gallery with a small staff team, volunteers are vital to Warrnambool Art Gallery's smooth running. We have a core group of dedicated volunteers who specialise in their chosen area of gallery work – front of house, collections or outreach.

Curatorial

Curatorial Decision Making

Exhibitions at Warrnambool Art Gallery include works from the permanent collection and individuals, other galleries and from private or public collections.

The Warrnambool Art Gallery has five different exhibition spaces; the Family Learning Centre, Temporary Gallery, Permanent Collection Gallery, Maar Nation Gallery and the George Lance Gallery. Warrnambool Art Gallery offers a diverse program of exhibitions ranging from exhibitions aimed at children in the Family Learning Centre to truth telling works in the Maar Nation Gallery.

Preparation for an exhibition involves extensive discussions regarding exhibition proposals, concept development and research.

Exhibition Theme

Exhibitions can explore a variety of themes and ideas and are developed for a variety of purposes. They may explore aspects of an individual artist or group of artists, how artworks relate to cultures, histories and ideas. They may explore particular mediums or contrasts in styles or respond to a theme. Each exhibition is unique and it is the curator's role to decide on the focus and content of exhibitions and the overall look and design.



Installation view of Self-Creation at Warrnambool Art Gallery.

Unit 2: Understand, develop & resolve

Area of Study 1 - Outcome 1

Key knowledge

- Background information about artists and artworks
- The ways artworks in an exhibition have been selected for display
- The influence of contexts on the representation of subject matter and the communication of meaning in artworks
- Connections between artworks in a thematic exhibition
- Strategies used to exhibit artworks from different contexts in a thematic exhibition, including ways to select and form relationships between artworks in an exhibition
- Processes used to document the design of an exhibition in their Visual Arts journal
- Use of appropriate art terminology in the presentation and evaluation of artworks

Key skills

- Use a range of resources to investigate information about artists and artworks
- Justify the selection of artworks for a thematic exhibition
- Identify and analyse the influence of contexts on the representation of subject matter and ideas to communicate meaning in artworks
- Explain the connections between artworks in a thematic exhibition
- Discuss the ways in which artworks from different contexts are exhibited in a thematic exhibition
- Research and select artworks to design a thematic exhibition
- Explore a thematic exhibition and then design a thematic exhibition for an audience
- Develop and present information about a range of artworks in a thematic exhibition
- Document the research and design of a thematic exhibition in their Visual Arts journal
- Use appropriate art terminology in the evaluation and presentation of artworks

Exhibition Title _____

What is the exhibition theme? _____

Why do you believe the artworks on show have been selected in relation to the theme?

Can you provide examples of some of the connections between different artworks in the collection?

Notes

Remember to include the artists name, title, date, materials and background information.

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Exhibition Design

At Warrnambool Art Gallery the curator will consider a number of factors when designing an exhibition. Primarily the space should create a narrative and engage the audience.

Often the curator will work with the exhibiting artist collaboratively to decide on the appearance of an exhibition. Factors such as the intent of the artist and how they perceive their work should be presented involves a lot of consultation. From placement of the works, to wall colour, lighting, multimedia, budget, disability access and health and safety, there a number of factors influencing the layout of an exhibition.

The curator needs to consider how the exhibition layout relates to people and their dimensions. People need to feel comfortable in the exhibition environment and to maintain their personal space. COVID has added an extra element to exhibition design and the need for community to socially distance.

The curator needs to consider how the visitor should move through the exhibition. Some exhibitions have a structured layout which controls the path of the visitor using walls, screens and labelling. Other exhibitions allow the visitor to determine their own movement through the space.

Often exhibitions are designed for a target audience, such as the Family Learning Centre which is aimed at children and families. This exhibition space is designed very differently to other spaces in the gallery. The development of FLC exhibitions involves working with the artist to ensure the artworks presented engage children in a safe manner. Most often it is understood that children will touch the artworks and interact in the space physically, which is not the case in other exhibitions in the Gallery. The design includes activations and activities for children to interact and engage with and messaging to ensure safety of children and the artworks.



Installation view of Making Waves at Warrnambool Art Gallery. Aimed at children and families and hands-on engagement

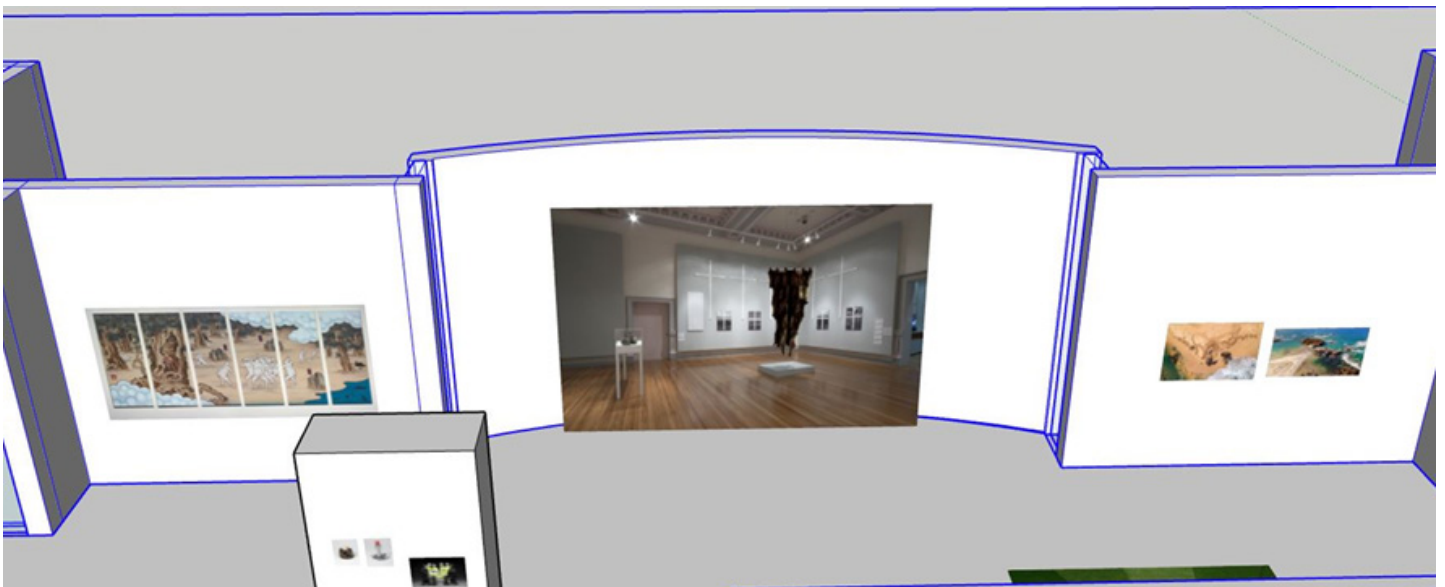
Exhibition Layout

At Warrnambool Art Gallery the exhibition design falls under the responsibility of the curators. Each exhibition is carefully designed by the curator to ensure the success of the narrative the exhibition aims to communicate.

Artworks need to be installed in a way that enhances their importance and maximises the impact for the visitor. There are three important considerations – how an artwork interacts with the exhibition space, with other artworks and with the visitor. Curators and exhibition designers also need to take into consideration how the placement of the artworks helps express the key themes or narratives in the exhibition.

A successful artwork often relies on good design and the effective use of the design elements. This also applies when a curator has a collection of different artworks and has to determine the layout of an exhibition. The key element to consider is the relationships between the artworks which may be based on their history, subject matter, meanings, messages, tones, pattern and forms. Sightlines -an uninterrupted line of vision from the viewer's eye to an object – are also essential to the design and layout of an exhibition. They can draw a viewer into an exhibition but also assist in how the audience navigates and is able to understand the relationship between artworks and themes explored.

At Warrnambool Art Gallery curators use the 3D software programs SketchUp to visualise the exhibition space during the planning phase. This allows the curator to experiment with how the artworks are presented, how the works will sit alongside each other and how the placement of works will enhance the narrative and the audience experience.



Exhibition plan for There's no place like home, 2023

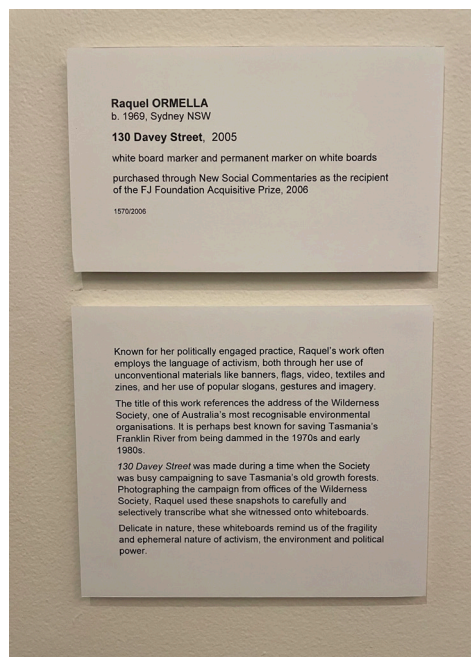
Wall Text & Interpretive Labels

Titles and wall text are used to share information regarding the exhibition with the audience. They are presented in a highly visible position and used to assist the viewers understanding of the exhibition theme.

Labels are used in exhibitions to share information relevant to individual artworks. They include the artists, title, date, materials, artist's biography and information relevant to the particular artwork. The label will often also include information about how the artwork was purchased or loaned from.



Wall text for *There's no place like home*. The text assists with audiences understanding of the exhibition theme and the selected artworks



An extended label shares information regarding the artist as well as further understanding of the artwork

Unit 3: Collect, Extend & Connect

Area of study 3 - Outcome 3

Key knowledge

- The characteristics of exhibitions
- The characteristics of exhibition space
- The responsibilities involved in curating an exhibition
- Methods used for identifying and analysing the curatorial considerations and the thematic connections between the artworks and artists in an exhibition
- Methods used to develop didactic info about the theme, artists and artworks in an exhibition
- The strategies used to plan and develop an exhibition in a specific space
- Art terminology used to discuss exhibition, artists and artworks

Key skills

- Research and discuss the characteristics of exhibitions
- Research and discuss the characteristics of exhibition spaces
- Research and discuss the responsibilities involved in curating an exhibition
- Discuss and analyse the curatorial considerations and the thematic connections between the artworks of artists in an exhibition
- Develop an exhibition proposal for a specific space using the works of the three selected artists from Unit 3 Area of study 1
- Explain and analyse the presentation of artworks in the exhibition and the thematic connections between them
- Present and discuss didactic information including the theme of the exhibition, and the artists and artworks
- Discuss the characteristics of exhibition, exhibition space, artists and artworks using art terminology

What kind of exhibition is it?

What is your first impression of the look and feel of the exhibition?

What was the inspiration behind the exhibition?

Why do you think the curators has displayed the works in the manner they have?

What are some of the thematic connections between artworks on display and what strategies has the curator used to create these relationships?

Record some of the decision making the curator would have gone through in the planning and preparing the exhibition?

Find a wall label with extended text. What do you notice about the language used? What information is shared and how does it increase the viewers understanding of the artwork?

Conservation

Conservation refers to the care, preservation and restoration of cultural materials. The best way to ensure artworks and cultural items are cared for is to store them away under perfect environmental conditions but this would mean that the works would not be seen by the public. It is the galleries role to both care for and to allow access to the public and thus a conservation strategy is required involving the principles of examination, documentation, treatment and prevention.

Smaller art galleries, like the Warrnambool Art Gallery, don't usually have a conservator but the curatorial staff practice preventative conservation. This means they ensure that the art gallery environment prevents or slows down any further deterioration of the artworks in both the areas where the art works are displayed and where they are stored. Preventative conservation aims to prevent any damage by maintaining museum standard environmental conditions, storage and handling.

LIGHTING

Light needs to be carefully managed in the gallery environment. We need lighting to see artworks however strong light or exposure over a period of time can cause damage to artworks and objects. The most common form of damage is fading of dyes, pigments and the breakdown of materials and fibres.

Lux is the term used to refer to the level of light which can be measured with a light meter Daylight measures on average 10 000 lux.

Fragile works such as textiles, photographs, watercolours, work on paper, dyed leather and botanical samples are best displayed at 50 lux and oil paintings at 200 lux and up to 300 lux for ceramic, glass or stone.

Strategies employed by galleries to protect against light damage include excluding daylight with blinds/curtains and UV filters, using low uv lighting and ensuring that fragile works are rested from exhibition regularly.

TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

Galleries are kept at a constant temperature to maintain the works of art. Changes in temperature can adversely affect works with shrinking, cracking or buckling. Too much humidity may encourage mould and too low may cause works to become brittle.

Sophisticated climate control systems monitor and regulate temperature and humidity levels with the optimum temperature between 18 – 22 degrees Celsius

PESTS

Pests in an art gallery can cause considerable damage. They include rodents such as rats and mice, birds and insects. Preventative measures include regular monitoring of display and storage as well as making sure any new items bought into the gallery are not infested.

Art Handling, Transport, Condition Reporting & Storage

When art works are in the gallery space it is important that the display methods are appropriate to each type of object. Different display methods at Warrnambool Art Gallery include using plinths, display cabinets and hanging art works on the wall.

Plinths are generally used to display three dimensional pieces, sometimes covered with a Perspex box. A gallery usually has a selection of plinths in different sizes. At Warrnambool Art Gallery they are generally painted the same colour as the walls or linked to a highlight colour.

Display cabinets are used for fragile works such as glass, ceramics or artist books and can be locked.

There are different hanging systems that are used for attaching different artworks to the walls. Adjustable hanging systems use rods/wire and hooks fixed to the picture rail. At Warrnambool Art Gallery framed art works have d-rings on the back of the frame which are hung on picture hooks nailed into the wall. Unframed works, text panels and labels are put on the walls with either pins or Velcro strips.

Display methods need to ensure the safety of the artwork, visitors and gallery staff. The materials used in a display must not damage the artwork.



Inge King's sculpture Summer Solstice displayed on a plinth allows the sculpture to be safely displayed.

HANDLING AND TRANSPORTATION

Art works need to be transported both within the art gallery but also externally when they may be travelling to another venue. Each time an artwork is moved there is potential for damage and gallery staff are trained how to handle art works correctly.

Within the gallery many artworks are moved by hand by the curatorial staff. Curators will ensure they have clean hands or wear cotton or nitrile gloves depending on the materials handled. Framed artworks are carried where the least amount of pressure is applied to the frame and the stretcher, while larger works are moved on a large custom made trolley designed to support the artwork whilst upright and padded with carpet. Works in touring exhibitions are often moved into the display area whilst still in their crates using trolleys.

Specialist art carriers are generally used to transport art works in touring exhibitions to other venues. Artworks are generally packed in crates or wrapped in bubble wrap. Some crates are made specifically for an artwork, others designed for multiple use.



Insulated travel case for painting. Specifically made to house the artwork.

CONDITION REPORTING

A condition report is completed by curatorial staff when an exhibition arrives and departs from a venue. Each artwork is examined for any signs of deterioration in its condition and that is noted in the report.

WAG CONDITION REPORT – sample

Exhibition: _____

Accession Number: _____

Artist: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Dimensions (frame): _____

Support: _____

Medium layer

1. Losses: _____

2. Scratches/abrasions: _____

Mount surface:

3. Appearance: _____

4. Surface/dirt: _____

5. Abrasions/damages: _____

Frame:

6. Rigidity: _____

7. Splits/cracks/losses: _____

8. Gilding/paint losses: _____

Fitting (verso):

9. Secured by: _____

10. Backboard: _____

11. Glazing: _____

12. Alignment: _____

General comments:

-
-
-
-

Signed: _____

Print name:

Position:

Date:

STORAGE

Different types of artwork require different storage systems. In general, all storage systems should be designed to prevent damage to the artworks from environmental factors and enable staff to safely access the work. Warrnambool Art Gallery uses the Vernon software system to catalogue its collection on computer. Data is entered on each artwork in the Collection enabling staff quick and easy access to information.

At Warrnambool Art Gallery works on paper (prints, drawings, watercolours, photographs...) are stored in the Curatorial Room and are kept in map drawers. Each work is stored in a mount made of archival mount board and interleaved with either a sheet of barrier paper or film. A barrier paper such as Glassine is used to protect original pastel, charcoal and pencil drawings. Glassine is a thin, translucent paper that is non-electrostatic and acid free. A polyester film, such as Melinex or Mylar, is used to protect prints and photographs. Melinex Polyester Film is a clear, inert film which will not react chemically with the artwork.

Larger works are stored in Solander Boxes. Solander Boxes are handmade from heavy-weight ply board, lined with white archival barrier paper and covered with textured black book cloth. They offer excellent protection from dust and light.

The painting store is used to house the Gallery's framed works including paintings, mixed media as well as three dimensional items such as sculptures and ceramics. The works are attached to metal racks that roll out.



Paintings stored on metal racks in the Painting storeroom. This room is climate controlled and kept in darkness when not in use.

Unit 3: Consolidate, Present & Conserve

Area of study 3 - Outcome 4

Key knowledge

- Methods used and considerations involved in the presentation, conservation and care of artworks while on display in an exhibition space
- Considerations of conservation and care that relate to artworks in the handling, storage and transportation of artworks
- Relevant conservation and care methods that students can apply to their own artworks on display
- Relevant conservation and care methods that students can apply to their own artworks in storage, handling and transportation
- Terminology used to discuss the conservation and care of artworks

Key skills

- Investigate, identify and evaluate the methods used and considerations involved in the presentation, conservation and care of artworks while on display in the exhibition space
- Investigate, identify and evaluate conservation and care in the handling, storage and transportation of artworks
- Discuss the relevant conservation and care methods that can apply to their own artworks when on display compared to artworks studied in exhibitions visited in the current year of study
- Discuss the relevant conservation and care methods and apply to their own artworks in storage, handling and transportation compared to artworks studied in exhibitions visited in the current year of study
- Apply terminology in the discussion of the conservation and care of artworks

What methods have been used to conserve and care for the artworks whilst on display?

How do you think the curator has been able to honour the intentions of artists when displaying works?

Can you note any cultural considerations in displaying artworks? If so, what are they?

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