



# HOW SOON IS NOW?

**BRUCE REYNOLDS**

*Education Resource*

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**For more information on the exhibition tour of *How Soon is Now?*, and to view the artist film with Bruce Reynolds, visit the M&G QLD website:**

**<https://magsq.com.au/touring-exhibitions/how-soon-is-now/>**



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***How Soon is Now?* brings together a selection of Bruce Reynolds' exquisite cast relief works with two-dimensional collaged linoleum works, to invite a consideration of the ancient in relation to the recent.**

**“Since how we see the past reflects how we see ourselves, the works are intended to question the tableau of history with consideration of the recent and ancient together,” Reynolds said.**

## HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This Educational Resource will enable upper primary and lower secondary students to explore both practical skills and ideological principles embedded within the *How Soon is Now?* touring exhibition.

Teaching and learning opportunities have been designed to assist students in the acquisition of the Australian Curriculums' V.9 Content Descriptors, Cross-curriculum Priorities and General Capabilities to aid in the development of skills, knowledge, understanding and technique.

### Curriculum links to learning activities:

To accommodate the new V.9 Australian Curriculum, the 'Responding and Making' activities have been structured using the V.9 Visual Arts Strands: 'Exploring and Responding'; 'Developing Skills and Practice'; and 'Creating and Making'. The 'Exploring and Responding' activities are designed to facilitate a deep exploration of the fundamental concepts present in Bruce Reynolds' artistic practice. Moreover, these activities encourage students to reflect on how these concepts relate to their own unique contexts. Under the 'Developing Skills and Practice' strand, students will engage in experimental activities that draw inspiration from the approaches, materials, and techniques employed by Bruce Reynolds in his art practice. Lastly, the 'Creating and Making' strand builds upon the ideas and skills acquired in the previous strands with a suggested making task, guided by suggested themes, to apply their knowledge and creativity in producing their own original artworks.

### Incorporating First Nations perspectives:

Considering the V.9 curriculum objectives pertaining to First Nations perspectives, 'Responding' questions also offer students opportunities to explore various aspects of Bruce Reynolds' practice and consider the connections to First Nations and post-colonial Australian history. Specific First Nations artists have not been suggested; it is within the teacher's purview to identify artists whose work aligns most closely with the themes covered in their instructional unit.

### Scaffolding and differentiation:

The 'Responding and Making' activities have been categorised into themes that allow teachers to focus on singular ideologies embedded within the exhibition for upper primary and can be paired with other themes when using this resource to provide a layered understanding of perspectives for younger to senior levels of secondary. The themes include *Culture and Identity*, *History and Place*, *Symbols and Motifs* and *Materiality*. Teachers may select or

adapt different activities across the themes that best align with the unit focus, year level, contexts of their students, resources and timeframes. Please note that the learning activities within each theme have been designed so that each question builds upon another and may rely on knowledge and/or techniques gained from an earlier task in that theme.

### Exhibition Case Studies:

The 'Responding and Making' activities focus on 5 case study artworks designed for general exploration. These case studies include questions that encourage students to delve into the visual conventions, styles and expressions to interpret meaning in artworks. For each theme, we provide suggested case study artworks that students can refer to when exploring concepts; however, you have the flexibility to adapt and combine case study artworks to suit a specific context and unit focus. Additionally, these case studies can serve as references for the making activities in each theme.

### Prior reading and watching:

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the ideologies presented in Bruce Reynolds' exhibition, we encourage teachers to watch the [How Soon is Now? video](#) and read the accompanying essay by Genevieve Felix Reynolds in this resource. These resources provide valuable insights into the interconnectedness of the themes explored in Bruce Reynolds' artistic practice. Certain responding activities within this resource are directly linked to the content presented in the [How Soon is Now? video](#). As a result, it is highly recommended that teachers introduce this video to their students. Moreover, teachers can utilise the responding activities provided for each theme to help students grasp and dissect the concepts more effectively.

Teachers may wish to use this resource when planning a visit to the *How Soon is Now?* exhibition or to select tasks for a thematic unit of work. Either way, students will be given the chance to explore, react, analyse, and interpret artworks as a means of deepening their visual engagement by building skill sets for looking at, interpreting and articulating their responses to art. The suggested tasks also assist students in understanding art through their own making.

## Exploring and Responding

### Years 5-6

[AC9AVA6E01](#)- Explore ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in visual arts across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts.

### Years 7-8

[AC9AVA8E01](#)- Investigate ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials are manipulated to represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in artworks created across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts.

### Years 9-10

[AC9AVA10E01](#)- Investigate the ways that artists across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts develop personal expression in their visual arts practice to represent, communicate and/or challenge ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

- Students will explore concepts and approaches within Bruce Reynolds' practice and artworks.
- Through the case studies artworks, students will explore and investigate the different visual conventions, styles and approaches that communicate meaning.
- Through a specified theme/s they will explore Bruce Reynolds' practice and how he uses artmaking to communicate meaning.
- Students will respond to these themes by considering how they connect to their individual contexts and ideas.
- For older students, teachers are encouraged to combine themes to consider the different contexts that underlie Bruce Reynolds' practice to uncover diverse perspectives and how they influence visual expression.

## Develop Practice and Skills

### Years 5-6

[AC9AVA6D01](#)- Experiment with, document and reflect on ways to use a range of visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials. Experiment with visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials to develop skills.

### Years 7-8

[AC9AVA8D01](#)- Reflect on the ways that they and other artists respond to influences to inform choices they make in their own visual arts practice.

[AC9AVA8D02](#)- Reflect on the ways that they and other artists respond to influences to inform choices they make in their own visual arts practice.

### Years 9-10

[AC9AVA10D01](#)- Experiment with visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials to refine skills and develop personal expression. [AC9AVA10D02](#)- Reflect on the way they and other visual artists respond to influences to inspire, develop, and resolve choices they make in their own visual arts practice.

- Students will document and reflect on their ideas and influences in response to Bruce Reynolds' practice and artworks.
- They will explore these ideas in experiments inspired by Bruce Reynolds' concepts and approaches in his practice, such as:
  - > Collaging photographs, drawings, and paintings to explore composition and symbols and how they can contribute to explored meaning.
  - > Using relief and intaglio processes with clay to explore textures of their built and natural environments.
- They develop skills and practice in specific approaches and reflect on how these approaches can contribute to meaning and personal perspectives.

## Creating and Making

### Years 5-6

[AC9AVA6C01](#)- Use visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.

### Years 7-8

[AC9AVA8C01](#)- Generate, document, and develop ideas for artwork. [AC9AVA8C02](#)- Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.

### Years 9-10

[AC9AVA10C02](#)- Use visual conventions, visual arts processes, and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning.

- Units for overall making and creating activities have been suggested using the ideas and the art-making approaches used in the experimental activities from *developing practice and skills criteria*.

## GENERAL CAPABILITIES

### Critical and creative thinking

Through responding activities, students will be provided with questions to critically reflect on ideas related to the theme on their personal contexts. They will reflect and plan on how experiments and their intended meanings can be communicated into artworks.

### Digital Literacy

When responding, students will need to research histories of objects, places, and people. While books and other resources can be used, it is recommended that digital resources are used to develop skills for search terms, using safe resources and selecting validity of information for their responses.

### Intercultural understanding

Students use visual literacy to identify and analyse elements and principles in art. The case studies have been designed with the assumption students are priorly equipped with terminology and understanding to identify and describe different art elements and principles.

### Literacy

Students use visual literacy to identify and analyse elements and principles in art. The case studies have been designed with the assumption students are priorly equipped with terminology and understanding to identify and describe different art elements and principles.

They use literacy skills when researching, documenting, reflecting in response to Bruce Reynolds' practice.

### Numeracy

Experimental activities in collage prompt students to create organised compositions influenced by Bruce Reynolds' work. They will use numeracy to plan and design a composition.

When researching migration and colonisation in Australia, students will consider numerical data and the impact on post-colonial Australian identity.

### Personal and Social Capability

Responding questions prompt students to consider their personal, cultural, and geographical contexts and histories, offering opportunities to build self-awareness and social awareness of the diversity of their environment and community.

## CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITIES

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

Each theme's responding questions consider the impact of colonisation on identity and place on First Nations people. Post-colonisation and its impact on identity is a theme explored in Bruce Reynolds' artwork.

### Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia

*In theme: Cultural and Identity*

Students will research migration to Australia from Asia and other countries and consider what cultural influences migration had on post-colonial Australia. They will consider the effects of migration to Australia on the cultural identity of immigrants and following generations in Australia.

### Sustainability

*In theme: History and Place, Materiality*

Students will consider how the natural landscape served for materials for building developments. They will research the historical context of their current location to consider how materials were used from their local environments and the impact this had or continues to have on the natural environment.

## THEMES

### Identity and migration

In her essay *“How Soon is Now?”*, Genevieve Felix Reynolds explores the cultural background of Bruce Reynolds and how it has shaped his art practice. As a first-generation Australian with a Nigerian and English heritage, Reynolds represents the complex interplay of migration, colonisation, and the absence of a singular cultural history that many Australians experience. Reynolds’ work resonates with the notion of a late or colonial culture where multiple cultural identities coexist, yet none truly belong, captured by the lyric *“I am the son and the heir of nothing in particular.”*<sup>1</sup>

When students use this theme to explore and respond to artworks, they have the opportunity to delve into their own cultural identities and examine how these identities interact, or perhaps, coexist within their environmental surroundings. This exploration may entail an examination of their heritage, family history, as well as an exploration of how past histories and cultures have influenced the formation of their present values, which in turn shape their individual worlds. By considering the continuum of the human experience and the mixing of diverse cultural identities, students can deepen their understanding of the complexities surrounding cultural identity and its representation in art.

In relation to curriculum links with First Nations perspectives, this theme can also be employed to explore the connections between Bruce Reynolds’ perspectives on post-colonial culture as a first-generation Australian and those of First Nations artists who investigate the impact of colonisation. By exploring Reynolds’ experiences of cultural identity shaped by migration and colonisation and the perspectives of First Nations artists, students gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Australia’s history and the diverse narratives that contribute to the country’s cultural fabric.

### History and Culture

Bruce Reynolds’ practice explores the intricate relationship between recent history and ancient times by integrating architectural or decorative elements from various historical eras and cultures. This approach aims to emphasise the interconnectedness and continuity of human experiences over time, particularly within the framework of our physical spaces. Reynolds achieves this through his relief work: such as collages made from re-purposed linoleum sourced from colonial, federation, art-deco and mid-century

homes in Queensland that speak to urban lifestyle, as well as plaster and gypsum cement works that draw inspiration from the various architectural elements of Rome that speak to the complexity of European history. These artistic techniques spark discussions about how our physical environments convey the diverse influences of different periods and cultures, symbolising the hybrid nature of contemporary places.

Through this theme, students can examine the history of their surrounding environments and how the transcendence of cultural and historical influences have influenced the landscape’s built and natural environment. It also encourages researching how the specific geographical context has shaped the materials used in constructing their surroundings and how it relates to the area’s history. To broaden the perspective, integrating First Nations perspectives when exploring this theme enables an examination of how Indigenous communities from the students’ area have historically utilised their surrounding environments in contrast to the post-colonial practices, and how this impacts the natural landscape.

### Symbols and motifs

Bruce Reynolds uses patterns, motifs, and symbols to depict the dynamic interplay between diverse cultural influences. Bruce Reynolds examines the past history of different symbols used in our everyday, from vases, vessels to oceanic creatures. Our lifestyles, environments, and designs, such as the patterns found in floor linoleum may speak to the time when they are used in popular movements, while also having reference to past history and culture too. Through these explorations, Reynolds highlights the ways in which past ideas remain relevant and intertwined with the present, fostering a deeper understanding of our collective heritage. When exploring this theme in the classroom, students have the opportunity to examine the patterns and motifs present in their contemporary environment. They will investigate the symbols used with consideration of their origins across different cultures and historical periods. Moreover, students will analyse historical artworks from diverse times, places and cultures, aiming to identify both similarities and differences in the subjects portrayed. This analysis will shed light on how the passage of time has influenced changes in representation and the evolving meanings attached to these symbols and motifs.

When incorporating First Nations perspectives into this theme, teachers can encourage students to reflect on how symbols, patterns, and motifs



utilised by First Nations people have endured and changed over time, permeating into contemporary lifestyles. This includes exploring how First Nations businesses such as fashion, art and design bring these symbols, motifs, and patterns into modern lifestyles. During discussions, students can delve into the profound significance of this cultural preservation and how it serves to safeguard the intellectual property of First Nations arts and culture.

### **Materiality**

Bruce Reynolds' art practice revolves around exploring themes of materiality through various artistic elements, such as relief work, linoleum, architectural contexts, historical references, and symbolic motifs. His creative process involves the use of salvaged linoleum from Queensland homes and the creation of plaster relief sculptures, both of which contribute to the exploration of materiality and design within our built environments. Reynolds' reliefs are distinguishable by their sculptural forms and minimal use of colour, a deliberate selection that symbolises a blank canvas to investigate historical events and places, capturing a fusion of events intertwined with the broader sweep of empires, effectively emphasising the significance of historical context through their material presence. By blending and juxtaposing different styles, cultures, and historical periods, Reynolds establishes a visual and conceptual dialogue that mirrors the intricate interplay of history and culture in our constructed surroundings.

Through this theme, students will consider how the materiality of objects can be used to communicate their age, function, and form through use of colour, design, form, and other art elements. They will consider how their physical spaces include materials from influences from many times, places and cultures. When integrating this theme with First Nations perspectives, teachers can prompt students to consider the history behind the materials in their built environments and where their use has come from. Teachers can include case studies from First Nations artists that explore the use of materials to communicate the impact of colonisation.

1. *How Soon is Now?* by The Smiths. Songwriters: Johnny Marr / Steven Patrick Morrissey. *How Soon Is Now?* lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner Chappell Music, Inc.

## GLOSSARY

**Ancient** – from a long time ago; having lived or existed for a very long period of time.

**Antiquity** – term used to refer to relics or monuments (e.g. coins, artefacts, statues, architecture) from the ancient past, especially before the Middle Ages (before the 6<sup>th</sup> century).

**Archaeology** – the process of learning about human history through the recovery and study of artefacts, monuments, and other remains.

**Archaic** – an early period of art and culture, especially 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC in Greece; also refers to something that is no longer in everyday use.

**Architecture** – the art or practice of designing buildings and other physical structures.

**Built Environment** – is a man-made environment for human activity e.g. parks, buildings, neighbourhoods.

**Casting** – a method used by artists to make copies of their work using materials such as clay, latex, plaster, wax, bronze, that involves pouring a liquid material into a mould. The liquid hardens or sets inside the mould, taking on its shape.

**Collage** – an art technique that combines visual elements (paper, photographs, fabric etc.) to create a new image. It comes from the French word 'collér' which means to stick or glue.

**Colonisation** – the act or process of people, plants, animals or bacteria starting to live and dominate a particular area. In the example of people, it relates to settlement and control of another country.

**Composition** – refers to the placement or arrangement of visual art elements in an artwork.

**Concrete** – a building material made from sand, cement and water which can be poured into a mould and hardens over time.

**Contemporary** – of the day; belonging to the present.

**Culture** – refers to the customs, beliefs, characteristics, language/s, and behaviour shared by a group of people, community or society.

**Cultural Identity** – refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a culture and is related to nationality, language, art, literature, religion, and heritage.

**Decor** – the furnishings or decorations of a room.

**Decoration** – something that adorns, enhances or beautifies.

**Design** – to plan or envisage how to make something; it can also relate to pattern.

**European** – refers to people living or originating from Europe, its languages, customs or cultures.

**Frieze** – a long painted or sculpted decorative band placed on buildings and other architecture, often cut from stone or timber and usually displaying a continual scene or story.

**Form** – one of the principles of art that refers to the physical structure or shape of an artwork. It can also refer to how artists represent different elements in their artwork. Other principles in art include line, shape, colour, texture and tone.

**Function** – the purpose of something; what it is used for.

**Heritage** – can refer to a person's racial, ethnic, religious or cultural background; or it can refer to knowledge, customs, traditions, historic buildings, property or other assets passed down from previous generations.

**History** – the study of the past.

**Identity** – refers to who or what a person or thing is e.g. the unique qualities, interests, values, name, characteristics and other facts that belong to an individual or thing.

**Intaglio** – a printmaking technique where an image is scratched, incised or etched into a surface to hold ink. The ink held in the recessed areas of the plate forms the image when printed. In sculpture, it refers to a surface that has been engraved or carved into.

**Linoleum** – a floor covering invented in 1860 made from ground cork, linseed oil and sawdust, and used widely up until the 1950s. It was a decorative, inexpensive, durable, waterproof material used in high-use areas such as hallways and kitchens. Modern linoleum (lino) is made from synthetic materials.

**Material** – also known as 'medium' refers to the substances artists use to create their work.

**Migration** – refers to the movement of people or things from one location to another e.g. people moving from one country or region to settle in another.

**Motif** – an element, design or feature that is repeated in a work or series of works.

**Mould** – a hollow frame, structure or shaped cavity used to hold liquid material, that when cools becomes hard.

**Narrative** – a story or account of an event or experience.

**Patina** – a thin layer that forms on the surface of some metals, stones or wood that occurs through the process of aging. It can change the colour or texture of an object's surface.

**Pattern** – a sequence or repeated set of shapes, colours, lines or forms.

**Plaster** – a dry powder made of sand and limestone that when mixed with water forms a hard solid.

**Portraiture** – an art form where an artist records or depicts a person's likeness (usually their face) through painting, photography, drawing, sculpture or other medium.

**Post-colonisation** – refers to the period of time after colonisation.

**Relief** – an art term used a lot in sculpture that refers to 3-dimensional figures or objects that are raised slightly or project out from the background.

**Sculpture** – 3-dimensional artworks created through a process of carving, casting, construction or modelling.

**Symbol** – a mark, motif, or sign that represents an idea, belief, object or concept.

**Trade** – refers to the act of buying or selling goods and services, or it can refer to a job that requires manual skills and labour e.g. carpenter.

**Vase** – an open, decorative container typically made of glass, porcelain or ceramics to display cut flowers. A vase with a lid is often referred to as an 'Urn'.

**Vessel** – a container that can be used to hold or carry goods or liquid.

## About the Artist

Bruce Reynolds' career spans more than 30 years in Australia and abroad as an arts practitioner and educator (ANU School of Art, ACT, through the 1980s and more recently at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University from 1986 – 2006). A trained painter, Reynolds works across 2D and 3D media, integrating the mediums of photography, painting, sculpture and relief in his practice.

Now based in Brisbane, QLD, Reynolds grew up in Canberra, ACT and has a migrant background of English and Nigerian. His travels to China, Bangladesh, Rome and Malta inspired his research into the historic migration of ideas and forms that continue to link Europe and Asia.

Reynolds has had numerous solo exhibitions around Australia and has participated in many group exhibitions in Australia and Germany. His work is held in public collections including the National Gallery of Australia; Queensland Art Gallery; Museum of Brisbane; High Court of Queensland; and HOTA Gold Coast. Reynolds has regularly created large-scale artworks for integration into architectural projects and has contributed extensively to Brisbane's public art landscape.

## BRUCE REYNOLDS

### *How Soon is Now?*

By Genevieve Felix Reynolds

"I am the son and heir of nothing in particular"<sup>2</sup>: words of doubt and protest from 1984, during a time of thrusting western economic growth and disruption, aimed backwards at the oscillations of conservatism and cultural quickening of prior decades. Today, this sentence still feels poignant, resonating with accusations aimed at globally felt failures: political, environmental and cultural. It links the past to the present, acknowledging this inheritance with a floating ambivalence and implies a movement towards exploration and invention. To be the heir of nothing in particular is freeing; one is untethered. This can be a new ground zero.

Culturally speaking, Bruce Reynolds has not inherited anything in particular. Like many Australians, migration and colonisation have genetically and socially shaped him into a person without clean ties to a single cultural history. His familial story is one of Nigerian and English migration, of colonised and coloniser, into a country where neither has claim. Without ancestry or cultural allegiance, 'belonging' to a place in any concrete sense must be limited in scope, to personal involvement, familiarity and care.

As a first-generation Australian, Reynolds' experience has been characterised by a working-class migrant philosophy – pull your socks up, get on with it, keep busy, ensure you don't fall through the cracks. Born out of necessity and a couple of world wars, this conception of a life well-lived does not leave much room for experimentation or enquiry. It tends to discourage introspection and instead praise physical labour, honesty, and generosity within one's community: values manifest in his mother's specific brand of energetic altruism within their multicultural suburban community. Newly-arrived Maltese, Italian, Baltic and British migrants were welcomed with gifts of food, neighbourhood introductions and briskly networked employment opportunities with pragmatic efficiency. Stoicism and labour are keys to success when you start from ground zero.

Art practice, however, is a form of experimental enquiry, and it is here that Reynolds departs from this system of value. His work is characterised by manual labour, long hours in the studio, and a deep interest in the honesty of materiality. A brusque, almost brutish approach to carpentry and production is refined by expert material manipulation and a vastly informed and intuitive visual language.

Being untethered has its perks. Without a strong sense of cultural belonging, one is freed to roam; across continents, between historical narratives, dipping in and out of concepts, forms and aesthetics. The breadth of this exploration is evident in Reynolds' practice, which is the culmination of research into the interwoven art histories of some of the largest and oldest civilisations.

Despite this scope, Reynolds prefers perception over statistical and historical generalisation. His attention is engaged by the specific. In art, this leads to an interest in materiality and processes over ideological agenda. The fallibility of the narratives of art history are to be found in artists and objects that can't easily be categorised – and of these, there are thousands, especially in the spaces between cultural traditions. Objects are wordless, and explanation and categorisation approximate but often fail to represent their deep-layered complexities.

A generalised narrative is a simplification of reality, Reynolds would argue, which prioritises trend-finding and minimises that which does not fit. In his words, "the advantage of art [as a reference] is its wordlessness, its authenticity". Art does not equal art history, and artefacts are not dead. Historical objects continue to exist, today, in both physical and pictorial spaces: simultaneously, they belong to the past and present. Scrutinising these artefacts is very different to reading about them, and often a dazzlingly more detailed experience.

Reynolds' neurodivergence may play a part in this approach. Looking to the specific holds his attention, but not for long – his gaze must keep wandering, from object to object – history is the only place one can find enough quantity, quality and variety to satiate. As an ever-hungry disciple of the visual, sources of inspiration are chosen through a lens searching for 'in-betweenness'. Validating his aversion to art history narratives, artworks that play at the edges of traditional categorisation are favoured.

Growing up, there was a favourite game in our household. What's halfway between a rhinoceros and an oyster? What's halfway between a cardboard box and a fountain? There are no wrong answers, but some are better than others. As a medium, sculptural relief is an 'in-between' category. Not quite three-dimensional, not quite two-dimensional, it hovers between the two and utilises characteristics from both. As such, it has mostly been left out of the history of art, becoming unfashionable by the turn of the 19th century and

downgraded to classification as decoration – not quite architecture, not quite art and, as a result, to be swept under the rug, along with the physical and intellectual craft of similarly 'in-between' makers; of mosaics, tapestries, domes, vessels, arches, painted friezes, woven carpets and more.

In-betweenness is having a comeback, however. Motivated by a desire to review and challenge the dogmatic, binary ideologies of the recent past, the 21st century has embraced the dissolution of traditional categories throughout social, political and cultural spheres. As a result, new and complex approaches to binary concepts are flourishing. Physical and pictorial space are being renegotiated, too; in part nourished by a cultural interest in entanglement and idiosyncrasy, in part by feminist-led reappraisals of craft, and in part by the weirdness of new technologies in art. Thus far, binaries retain their importance in our conception of ideas, but they are there to be negotiated as far sides of a spectrum.

As an artist, Reynolds is part of this movement. His works play between painting and sculpture, chance and precision, decoration and concept, representational and abstract, new and archaic. Borrowing forms recognisable from a swathe of places and times in Australia, Asia and Europe, he manipulates plaster, paper and linoleum into objects that silently and statically explore the dimensions of physical space.

Favouring a chainsaw as his current drawing tool, semi-abstract forms are carved into existence. Moulds are carefully collaged together in order to transmute negative imagery into positive protrusions via poured plaster. These forms are not flat, and not sculptural: relief exists in 2.5 dimensions. It reaches out towards the viewer, but stops; it departs, but does not arrive. Perpetually in transit, its 'reaching' demands reciprocal acknowledgement of our own bodies. A silent, 'slo-mo' intimacy: "remember where you are."

"Where" demands a "when", too, especially in the face of an archaic medium-like relief. Its historical mode is most familiar adorning buildings whose gravitas is owed to stretching out the moment from the present back beyond the outmoded. The past is linked to one's present physicality.

In *Sea Fight*, 2022, molluscan abstractions swim around muscular lumps. They are one and the same poured surface, colour bleeding across delimited forms. Its construction, like all Reynolds' works, is a careful dance between chance and intention. "Preparation is 80% of the task", he admits. As

long as this is thorough, the “unintentional” can be “more articulate than the intended”. Reynolds may be depicting natural forms, but his interest is cemented in the overlapping and abstract – colour, material and depicted poses increase visual ambiguity, which allows the eye to enjoy texture and gesture over any contained narrative. Shellfish are repeated motifs throughout the exhibition, jutting against architectural design, industrial pattern and taut masculine flesh. Lifted from the reefs of South East Queensland, this imagery also explicitly references the origins of the material from which it is formed – deposits of limestone – billions of compressed ancient shells. This is a nod to the warm, shallow, embryonic seas from which all life emerged – saltwater is our shared origin story and sustenance.

Overlaps, categorical limits and combinations shimmer together across every individual artwork. This interest in the shared and ambiguous is owed to Reynolds’ life-long love of collage, which for many years was explored through floor linoleum, ripped from half-demolished mid-century kitchens across Queensland. Originally fabricated in the 19th century to imitate the details of carpets and tiles, linoleum is an amalgamation of cultural references itself, a link back to the industrial revolution and earlier interwoven histories of craft.

*Large Hydria*, 2014, is a painting of this sort. A silhouette of an archetypical vessel is built out of 1950s abstraction, florals and faux terrazzo. This “palette of patterns provided by Queensland” is wrapped, frame-like, in a shape pulled from the Italian Baroque. Geometry, nature, culture; ancient, mid-century, now; thematic implications are embedded within a fractured composition. *Reconstructivist*, 2018, plays a similar game, but limits itself more strictly to references to 20th century abstraction, Malevich-like. Here, the ancient is only implied, by the patinas of past materialities. In Reynolds’ words, “when lino is ripped from a floor in a final historic gesture, it embodies pathos and defiance. It signposts an end of sorts. It becomes...decoration without form, ambassador for a life lived, the material version of a photograph”. Linoleum, like the medium of relief, is a material gripped by architecture – without this solidifying structural context, it reads as incomplete and allusive. Decontextualised from the sites in which we expect to find them, plaster and lino act as reliquaries for remembered cultural objects, once whole and new.

When asked about his experience of viewing art, Reynolds muses, “we often walk away [from a work] with a heightened sense of our own other

reality, as one does after a holiday or a movie”. *How Soon is Now?* activates this awareness. Form fuses with ornament, pattern with patina, and abstraction with illustration, in a celebration of visual and contextual complexity. Conspicuously, some material and thematic aspects of the 21st century are neglected. References to the flat perfection of screens and manicured industrial technologies, in particular, are glaringly absent. This omission is purposeful – a bold rejection of flatness, smoothness, and the simplification of space and concept. Here, material substance demands more. Energetic and textural, these objects refuse clean definitions of category, both conceptual and material, demanding first-hand observation and acknowledgment of corporeal space. We are, in time, here.

2. *How Soon is Now?* by The Smiths. Songwriters: Johnny Marr / Steven Patrick Morrissey. *How Soon Is Now?* lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner Chappell Music, Inc.



Bruce Reynolds,  
*Coronas*, 2015,  
Hydrostone and pigment with linoleum and plaster insets,  
920 x 610 x 130mm.

## Artwork Case Study:

### *Coronas*

#### Links to themes: Identity and Culture, Materiality, Symbols and Motifs

In the [How Soon is Now? video](#), Bruce Reynolds discusses how salvaged linoleum from Queensland homes represents recent history in Australia, seen through the patterned colours and designs of linoleum commonly used in early to mid-20th century homes on the flooring and kitchens. Bruce Reynolds also discusses how the white plaster relief works can relate to the complexity of Europe's distant history seen through the diverse symbols, architecture and design in the built environment. In the artwork *Coronas*, the recent past contrasts with references to the distant past through his use of materials, colours and forms.

## Case Study Questions:

Look at the artwork *Coronas* by Bruce Reynolds. What art design elements and principles such as colour, pattern and composition suggest it was influenced by recent designs?

Bruce Reynolds' practice explores cultural identity and its connection to historical events and global interactions. What art design elements and principles such as forms, shapes and colours in the plaster show historical influences from Europe? Which European culture do you think it is referencing?

How do the colours in the artwork stand out next to each other?

How do the textures and forms stand out next to each other?

What does the composition of shapes remind you of? How can the shapes and composition help to communicate man-made?

What do you think Bruce Reynolds is trying to say by combining these?

What do these techniques symbolise about the hybrid nature of contemporary places and their cultural influences?



Bruce Reynolds,  
*Tank Street Hydria*, 2016,  
linoleum, paint and photographic print on plywood panel,  
1685 x 1030 x 75mm.

## Artwork Case Study:

### *Tank Street Hydria*

#### Links to themes: History and Place, and Symbols and Motifs

Bruce Reynolds' practice explores the transcendence of symbols throughout history and culture, and how they are now prevalent in our everyday. The history of the decorative vase can be traced back to Egyptian use and has migrated across cultures and places throughout time connecting its history to the present. *Tank Street Hydria* has been composed by collaging different patterned, re-purposed linoleum. The pattern inside the vase is an aerial view of the Brisbane River. Together, the symbol of a vase, the aerial map of Brisbane and the found material of linoleum sourced from Queensland homes, suggests a connection between our contemporary use of decoration and how it is influenced by historical events, cultures and places.

## Case Study Questions:

Have you ever seen vases in your daily life? Where do you commonly encounter them, and what are they used for? Can you think of different shapes and functions that vases or similar types of vessels can have?

How did the history of decorative vases begin, and how did they become a part of our lives today? Can you find out about how they spread across different continents? What factors like trade, exploration, or migration contributed to their popularity?

Can you find artworks from different times and cultures that include vases? How are the vases represented in these artworks? Do you notice any similarities or differences in the shapes and designs of vases across different periods?

The shape of the vase in Bruce Reynolds' artwork comes from a movement called Early Modernism. When did this movement start? Do you think it is from recent history or ancient history?

How do you think the patterns in the linoleum serve as decoration? What might have been the purpose of these patterns in older Queensland homes?

Research linoleum patterns from the 1930s. How do they compare with linoleum floor patterns today?

The artwork includes a map of the Brisbane River as the focus. How do you think this map suggests a connection between different places and the idea of travel?

How does the use of the Brisbane River map create a connection between the artwork's materials and its subject?

What do you think the artwork suggests about how our decorations today are influenced by historical events, cultures, and places?



Bruce Reynolds,  
*Skyphos (Atlantis)*, 2015,  
plaster and pigment,  
570 x 660 x 245mm.

### Artwork Case Study: *Skyphos (Atlantis)*

#### Links to themes: Symbols and Motifs

In the [How Soon is Now? video](#), Bruce Reynolds elaborates on the use of oceanic organisms and crustaceans as symbols representing those who existed before us and continue to coexist with us. While these symbols were historically depicted on Greek vases, and have migrated across the world through trade, these motifs have prevailed in contemporary culture with new meanings and uses. This can be seen by how building materials are made from the natural environment – limestone for example, is the result of billions of ancient shells compressed over time. In *Skyphos (Atlantis)* Bruce Reynolds poetically portrays how these oceanic animals connect past and contemporary lives through the seas in which all life emerged; salt water being a shared origin story and sustenance.

### Case Study Questions:

What are some examples of oceanic organisms used as symbols in Bruce Reynolds' artwork *Skyphos (Atlantis)*?

Do these sea creatures live in areas of Australia? Where?

Bruce Reynolds explains these organisms represent “those who existed before us and continue to coexist with us.” What do you think he means by this? Research the 13 oldest animal species still living on earth.

Research ocean symbols used on Greek vases; do you see similarities in the symbols used in Bruce Reynolds' work?

What ocean is surrounding Greece? Do the same sea creatures also live there? How does this connect Australia's natural seascape and Greece's?

What meanings do you think these animals hold in contemporary society? Consider their use in industries, building materials and sustenance.

How does Bruce Reynolds use symbols of the ocean to discuss how human experience is linked over time and place?





Bruce Reynolds  
*Cornice Frieze*, 2015-2016,  
Hydrocal and pigment,  
800 x 1120 x 250mm.

## Artwork Case Study:

### *Cornice Frieze*

#### Links to themes: History and Place, Materiality

Bruce Reynolds' artwork *Cornice Frieze* depicts a frieze informed by sculpted bas-reliefs researched and experienced during his residency in Rome, Italy, in 2013. Bas-reliefs were used to decorate external and internal walls of buildings in Roman times. They also allowed artists of the day to communicate complex narratives and can tell us much about Roman lifestyle, architecture and events.

A frieze is a decorative element on the outside of buildings commonly used in historical Greek and Roman architecture. In Reynolds' work we see the relief forms of battling centaurs, a Greek mythological creature that is half man and half horse; however, we cannot make out the whole narrative as parts of the frieze appear to have fallen away or eroded to reveal another story underneath.

## Case Study Questions:

Bruce Reynolds' artistic practice draws inspiration from the complex history of Rome and Greece. Research the historical context of Rome and Greece, including its different empires, leaders and significant events. How might this rich history have influenced the diverse styles of architecture, buildings, symbols and designs that evolved in those places over time?

Think about the depiction of figures and portraiture in history e.g. coins, paintings, sculptures and monuments, and how these are used to show status, power, virtue, wealth, beauty, and/or personal qualities. What does the inclusion of figures in *Cornice Frieze* add to the overall composition and narrative of the work?

How does *Cornice Frieze* incorporate various forms and elements to reference Ancient Greek culture, architecture and beliefs?

*Cornice Frieze* suggests that the battle of the centaurs has resulted in the self-destruction of their forms; how could this idea relate to the past histories and events in Ancient Greece and Roman Antiquity?

Research an example of ancient Roman bas-reliefs and/or friezes e.g. Arch of Constantine, Column of Trajan, Column of Marcus Aurelius. When was it made and what does it symbolise?

How does Reynolds' use of colour in the artwork convey a sense of age or antiquity?

How does Bruce Reynolds' choice of materials contribute to his artistic message about the ability of a place to communicate histories and past events?



Bruce Reynolds,  
*Reconstructivist*, 2018,  
linoleum on wood panel,  
400 x 315 x 75mm.

## Artwork Case Study: *Reconstructivist*

### Links to themes: Materiality

Bruce Reynolds' artwork *Reconstructivist* is a collage of linoleum sourced from early to mid-20th century homes in Queensland. Linoleum is a decorative surface commonly found in hallways and kitchens of these homes. By using second-hand linoleum, Reynolds incorporates elements from our everyday built environments, like floorboards and tiles, which we encounter daily. The linoleum surfaces are aged. In the centre of the artwork, Reynolds assembles various patterned linoleum pieces, creating a composition that resembles an aerial map of interlocking patterns, distinct from the background's solid colours and geometry. Bruce Reynolds explains his process as "when lino is ripped from a floor in a historic gesture, it embodies pathos and defiance. It signposts an end of sorts. It becomes... decoration without form, ambassador for a life lived, the material version of a photograph."<sup>3</sup>

## Case Study Questions:

How does arranging the linoleum pieces to look like floor tiles help us understand their practical purpose in the artwork?

What elements and principles does Bruce Reynolds use, such as colour, shape, and composition, to make the diamond shape stand out in the artwork?

What do you think the title "Reconstructivist" means? What does it mean to reconstruct something? How could this relate to our built environments, like renovation?

How does the surface of the linoleum represent its age and stories? What other elements in the artwork represent age?

Bruce Reynolds' quote suggests that removing the linoleum from its original purpose as flooring changes the material's function to being that of a photograph. What function does a photograph have? How does ripping out the linoleum from its original place transform it to becoming a documentation of the past?

What do you think that *Reconstructivist* is communicating about how time and cultural trends influence the change and reconstruction made to our built environments?

2. *How Soon is Now?* catalogue essay by Genevieve Felix Reynolds, 2023

# 1

## MAKING AND RESPONDING ACTIVITIES

### Theme- Culture and Identity

The objective of this theme's activities is that students can understand cultural identity, how migration across other countries can affect categorising or developing a particular identity and allows opportunities for students to explore the diverse range of cultural influences they engage with in their day-to-day life through the context of their home and school influences.

#### Preparation:

Before starting this case study, ensure that students have a basic understanding of cultural identity, migration, and the concept of colonisation. Familiarise students with the theme of cultural identity explored in *Coronas* and its connection to historical events and global interactions.

#### Suggested Case Study:



Coronas, 2015

### Curriculum Link- Responding and Exploring:

#### Exploring Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

What is cultural identity?

*Begin the case study by defining cultural identity as the sense of belonging and identification with a particular cultural group, shaped by shared customs, traditions, beliefs, language and heritage.*

How do you think Bruce Reynolds' experiences as a first-generation Australian might shape the theme explored of identity and migration?

*Encourage students to reflect on how Reynolds' diverse cultural heritage and being a first-generation Australian contribute to his exploration of cultural identity, migration, and the mixing of different influences in his artwork. Discuss how his experiences might inform his perspective on the complexities of cultural identity.*

What significant events happened during

colonisation in Australia's history?

*Provide an overview of significant events during European colonisation in Australia, such as the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, the establishment of British settlements, interactions with Indigenous peoples, the impact of the Stolen Generations, and the effects of British colonisation on the environment and culture.*

What do you think "post-colonial identity" means?

Can you imagine what life was like for people after colonisation when different cultures came together?

*Guide students to understand the concept of post-colonial identity as the identity and cultural expression that emerges after colonisation ends. Discuss the challenges and complexities of blending different cultures, histories and values during this period.*

Research how European colonisation influenced the art, architecture, buildings and artifacts in Australia after colonisation. Do you notice any of these influences in your everyday environment?

How did European colonisation impact Australia's First Nations people?

*Have students research and discuss the profound impact of colonisation on First Nations people, including the disruption of traditional ways of life, loss of land, cultural practices and languages.*

Find out about key events in Australia's history after colonisation that led to migration from other countries.

*Guide students to research significant events that triggered migration to Australia, such as the Gold Rush, World Wars, labourer shortages and the policy of immigration to increase population and diversity.*

Research the traditional buildings, architecture, and artworks of different countries. How are they different from post-colonial Australia? How do you think these differences might have influenced people's identities and sense of belonging?

*Have students compare traditional buildings, elements within architecture, and artworks from various countries with those in post-colonial Australia. Encourage them to reflect on how these differences might have influenced cultural identities and a sense of belonging in both places.*

Do you know about any historical events where people from Europe travelled to other parts of the world, bringing their culture with them? How might those interactions have influenced the local cultures?

Guide students to research historical events where

Europeans travelled to other parts of the world, such as during the Age of Exploration. Discuss the impact of these interactions on local cultures and the exchange of ideas, technologies, and customs.

Explore the historical and contemporary contexts of migration in your region. Can you see any influences from migration in the architecture, buildings, or other environmental elements in your region?

### Responding to Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

Bruce Reynolds' exhibition *How Soon is Now?* is named after a song by English rock band, The Smiths, which includes the lyric "I am the son and the heir of nothing in particular"<sup>4</sup> What do you think is meant by this? How does it relate to Reynolds' exhibition?

How does Bruce Reynolds' art inspire you to think about your own cultural identity? What are some things that make you who you are?

What are some elements of your own cultural identity? It could be related to your family's traditions, your community's customs, or anything that makes you feel connected to your heritage.

*Instruct the students to use these elements to write a short poem or song lyric to express their cultural identity.*

How do you think your cultural background and experiences shape who you are as a person?

Look at the materials Bruce Reynolds uses in his artwork, like linoleum and collaged objects. Can you think of any objects or materials that represent your own culture or family background?

Look at a picture of an event in your local neighbourhood or community (such as a fair/festival/gathering). How does it show the different cultures and identities of the people who live there?

4. *How Soon is Now?* by The Smiths. Songwriters: Johnny Marr / Steven Patrick Morrissey. *How Soon Is Now?* lyrics © Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC, Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner Chappell Music, Inc.

## Curriculum Link- Develop Practice and Skills:

### PATTERNS OF MY IDENTITY:

The objective of this activity is to encourage students to explore and reflect on the patterns and symbols that hold significance to their identity, including aspects such as religion, values and beliefs, ethnicity, hobbies, interests, and nationality. Through a visually engaging collage, students will represent themselves by incorporating these elements into repeated shapes. This can also be extended with the incorporation of aerial mapping influenced by their heritage or current location, adding further depth to their self-expression.

### Materials:

- Cameras or smartphones for photography.
- Printing materials for the collected photographs.
- Scissors, glue, and a variety of paper for collages.
- Card or A3 paper for creating a frame for their self-portraits.
- Optional: Art supplies for aerial mapping such as coloured pencils, markers, or watercolours

### Instructions:

1. Start by discussing with students the significance of patterns and symbols in expressing personal and cultural identity. Instruct them to document patterns and symbols that hold meaning to their identity, drawing from various sources such as school environments (uniforms, mascots) and their homes (clothing, décor, dinnerware).
2. Instruct students to take photographs of these elements at school or to bring photographs from home on a USB or printed on A4 paper.
3. Provide students with prints of their photographs and encourage them to cut out patterns and symbols to create a composition of repeating shapes. They should take inspiration from Bruce Reynolds' linoleum artworks and apply their knowledge of design elements and principles in creating visually engaging collages.
4. Instruct students to draw an outline of their head in profile on a separate piece of paper/card and cut out the inside, creating a frame for their self-portraits. They should then paste this frame over their collage, allowing the patterns and symbols to become an integral part of their self-portraits. (see page 21).
5. Extension: Inspired by *Tank Street Hydria*, suggest to students that they incorporate aerial mapping into the background or inside their self-



portraits, influenced by their heritage or current location. They can use art supplies such as coloured pencils, markers or watercolours to create aerial maps that hold personal or cultural significance.

6. After completing their collages and self-portraits, have students reflect on how their chosen patterns and symbols represent their personal and cultural influences. Encourage them to discuss how their identity visually conveys a connection to place and culture.

### MEMORIES OF ME:

The objective of this activity is for students to explore their personal histories and stories that have contributed to their identity. By reflecting on significant events and fond memories, students will create symbols that represent these memories. Using clay slabs, they will build relief forms of these symbols and use them to create a cast of their composition, and sculptural representation of their identity.

### Materials:

- Small rectangle slabs of air-dry clay for creating relief forms.
- Sculpting tools, rolling pins, and other relevant clay work materials.
- Fine-grade sand.
- Plaster.
- Food colouring or cold tea.
- Small cardboard box/shoe box.
- Bucket.
- Soft brushes

### Instructions:

1. Start by discussing with students the significance of personal histories and memories in shaping their identities. Instruct them to reflect on significant events and fond memories that have contributed to who they are today. Encourage them to consider their favourite places, people, family, and break down these memories into symbols that reflect each memory or story.

2. Provide students with the task of breaking down three significant memories to create symbols that represent each memory or story. *For example, if they have a fond memory of a family holiday by a lake, they can create symbols related to that place, such as leaves and water droplets, a boat, or ripples in the water.*

3. Give each student two clay slabs. Instruct them to use these slabs to build relief forms of the symbols they created in the previous step. Each slab should be dedicated to a particular memory. Encourage the students to raise the surface of the slab by adding clay, as well as incising and making marks into the clay to create their relief forms.

4. Leave the slabs to dry overnight. These will be used to create the final artwork representing their identity.

5. Place the fine grade sand into a shoe box or similar, approximately 3 cm in depth. It should be slightly moist so that it compresses/is firm when touched. Instruct the students to place their 2 slabs face down in the sand, side by side, and apply enough pressure to create an impression in the sand. Then carefully remove the slabs to create a mould.

6. Following the instructions on the plaster packaging mix enough plaster to cover the sand, approximately 3 cm in depth. To create an aged look, students could replace the water with cold tea or add a few drops of food colouring. Gently pour the plaster over the sand and allow to set.

7. When the plaster is dry, carefully remove the plaster relief from the shoe box, and using a soft brush, remove the excess sand.

8. After completing their artworks, have students place their cast work next to their original sculpted work and ask them to reflect on the process of creating their artworks and their choice of symbols to represent their personal histories and memories. Provide an opportunity for students to share their artworks with the class and discuss the meanings behind their symbols and compositions.

9. The students could make multiple casts of their original relief work and assemble them like a patterned frieze that tells a story about themselves.

Or students could line their casts up next to each other along the edge of the classroom wall to create a wall frieze that tells the unique story of the entire class.

## Curriculum link- Creating and making:

For an overall making project, students can create an artwork symbolic of their own cultural identity; considering how their urban environment's symbols, motifs, and textures can communicate meaning about their own cultural identities living in post-colonial Australia.

Alternatively, students can combine both the collage and relief approaches to create a 2D self-portrait inspired by approaches used in Bruce Reynolds' artwork *Coronas*. They can utilise collage techniques by incorporating images of patterns, textures, and symbols significant to their identities while incorporating relief slabs that communicate the historical and cultural context of their heritage and background

# 2 MAKING AND RESPONDING ACTIVITIES

## Theme: History and place

The objective of this theme's activities is for students to investigate past histories on their local environment. They will consider past and recent histories of colonisation, migration, environmental context, and industry and how these influenced the construction, design and materials used in their built environment. They will research how the natural environment affects the choice of materials of materials and consider the effects of urban development on the natural environment.

### Preparation:

Before starting the case study, ensure that students have a basic understanding of historical events related to colonisation, migration, and the history of their local environment. Introduce Bruce Reynolds as an artist and provide background information on his art practice, materials used, and the themes he explores in his artwork in the below case studies.

### Suggested Case Studies:



*Cornice Frieze*, 2015-2016



*Tank Street Hydria*, 2016



*Skyphos (Atlantis)*, 2015

## Curriculum Link- Exploring and Responding:

### Exploring Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

In the [How Soon is Now? video](#), Bruce Reynolds talks about visiting the historic Saint Helena Island, QLD, where convicts used a kiln to burn coral for lime conversion into concrete. How does this highlight the connection between the natural landscape and the built environment?

*Guide students to understand how the process of burning coral for lime illustrates the interplay between the natural environment and the built environment. Discuss how the availability of resources from the natural landscape influences construction materials and techniques.*

How do you think building a town or city impacts the natural landscape where it is built?

*Encourage students to think critically about the consequences of urban development on the natural landscape, such as habitat destruction, alteration of watercourses, and changes in biodiversity..*

How have Australia's Indigenous communities historically utilised their surrounding environments in your area? How might their practices contrast with post-colonial practices when it comes to building and interacting with the landscape?

*Have students research and compare Australian Indigenous practices related to building and interacting with the environment to those of post-colonial communities. Encourage discussions on sustainable practices and the preservation of cultural connections to the land.*

How might the historical influences on your environment differ from those in other places around Australia or the world? Research another town in Australia that is based in a different environment, such as country, coastal, inland. What do you notice about the similarities and differences of their buildings and environments to yours?

*Guide students to research the historical influences on the built environment in different regions of Australia and compare them to their local area. Discuss how the availability of resources, climate, and cultural influences contribute to the variations.*

Why is preserving historical buildings and sites important?

*Lead discussions on the significance of preserving historical buildings and sites as a way to conserve cultural heritage, maintain a connection to the past, and promote a sense of continuity and identity for future generations.*

### Responding to Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

Reflect about your surrounding environment - the buildings, streets and landmarks. How do you think the history of your area has influenced the materials and designs used in constructing these spaces? You could consider the history of industries in your area, the temperature or weather conditions, migration of cultures, or any other influence.

Research how the specific geographical context of your area has shaped the materials used in constructing the built environment. How has the local landscape contributed to the materials used for buildings in your community?

Research any historical sites in your area: how do these differ from the architecture and styles of modern buildings in your area?

## Curriculum Link- Develop Practice and Skills:

### HISTORY MAPS:

The objective of this activity is to engage students in exploring the historical and architectural elements of their local area. Through photography, drawing, and painting, students will document designs, textures, and elements from both historical and modern buildings. They will also include images of plants and environments that have contributed to the development and history of the area. By creating a collage representing an aerial map, students will reflect on how history, place, and culture have influenced their surroundings today.

### Materials:

- Cameras or smartphones for photography.
- Drawing materials (pencils, markers, etc.) and painting materials (watercolours, acrylics, etc.).
- A printed aerial map of the area: A3 or A2 size
- Scissors, glue, and a variety of papers or cardboard for collage base.
- Stimulus materials or resources related to local history, architecture, and culture.

### Instructions:

1. Start by discussing the importance of both historical and modern buildings in shaping the character of their local area. Instruct students to photograph, draw, or paint designs, textures, and elements from a variety of buildings in their area. They should focus on capturing details such as bricks, wood panelling, metalwork and other architectural features. Students may also choose

to make rubbings of different surfaces (a technique called frottage) by placing a piece of paper onto the footpath, bricks, wood panelling etc. and rubbing over the paper with a crayon, pencil, or pastel to create an image of the object's surface texture.

2. Guide students to also include drawings and photographs of plants or environments that have contributed to the development and history of their area. These could be leaves and bark off native trees, coral, crops, or other elements with cultural significance to their area.

3. Students are given a printed aerial map of their area.

4. Instruct students to combine their documentations into a collage on the aerial map. Encourage them to be creative in selecting specific designs based on each area's historical context.

*For example, students can add natural elements to areas of natural environments in their map, include patterns influenced from contemporary materials in newer areas etc. Or they may choose to cut their drawings/designs into shapes that reflect their origins e.g. the rubbings of bricks could be cut into the shape of a building.*

5. After completing the collage, have students reflect on how the interaction of history, place and culture has contributed to the development and character of their surroundings today. Encourage critical thinking and connections between the elements they included in their collage and the broader context of their local area.

6. Provide an opportunity for students to share their collages with the class. Encourage them to discuss the elements they chose to include and their significance in representing the history and culture of their area. Facilitate a class discussion where students can learn from each other's observations and insights.

### **FOSSILS AND FORMS OF PLACE:**

The objective of this activity is to provide students with a hands-on experience in creating textured tiles that communicate the surfaces and designs of historical and modern buildings in their area, as well as elements from the natural environment. Through various techniques, such as clay imprints and relief sculpture, students will express their understanding of their surroundings and their significance in their lives.

### **Materials:**

- Clay (slabs or air-dry clay) or plasticine for texture imprints and relief sculptures.
- A range of materials such as rocks, leaves, wood, shells, brick and metal for creating texture impressions on clay.
- Sculpting tools, rolling pins, and other relevant clay work materials.
- Firing kiln (if using clay that requires firing) or baking oven (if using air-dry clay).
- Plaster for creating relief sculptures.
- Release agent such as vegetable oil or cling wrap for demoulding relief sculptures.

### **Instructions:**

1. Instruct students to use slabs of clay, air-dry clay, or plasticine to create imprints of textures and forms from surfaces such as historical and modern buildings. They can press the clay onto these surfaces to capture the designs and textures.

2. Alternatively, provide a range of materials such as rocks, leaves, wood, shells, brick and metal for students to use in designing and creating tiles. These materials should be used to communicate the surfaces and designs of the historical and modern buildings in their area and elements from the natural environment. Students can create the texture or shape of the object by gently pressing it into the slab of clay or plasticine to create an imprint.

3. For relief artworks, students can use the textured slabs as moulds for clay or plaster. Clay moulds will need to be fired first. They can press clay or pour plaster into these moulds to create small relief sculptures or 'fossils'. Remind students to use a release agent such as vegetable oil or cling wrap to ensure the relief impression can be lifted from the mould.

4. Prompt students to consider which tiles they would like to keep intaglio (creating impressions like fossils) and which can be used to create relief (representing physical spaces). Encourage them to think about the significance of each technique in communicating their ideas.

5. Have students reflect on how they would combine these tiles into a composition that communicates their place. They can consider mapping, a landmark, native fauna, or any other significant elements that represent their surroundings.



## Curriculum Link- Creating and making:

For an overall making project, it is suggested that when using this theme that students use the skills and approaches from previous activities to create an artwork that explores the historical and cultural influences of their environments and the diversity of influences: including migration, industry, environmental context, that have attributed to their built environments today.

# 3 MAKING AND RESPONDING ACTIVITIES

## Theme: Symbols and Motifs

The objective of this theme's activities is to encourage students to explore the historical and cultural context of the symbols they encounter in their daily lives. Through research, they will uncover how these symbols and motifs have been influenced by past histories, diverse cultures, and significant migration events. Students will investigate symbols that are personally meaningful to their identities and during the planning of their artworks, students will learn how design, representation and colours can effectively communicate ideas related to identity and history.

### Suggested Case Studies:



Cornice Frieze, 2015-2016



Reconstructivist, 2018

## Curriculum Link- Exploring and Responding:

### Exploring Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

Research the symbolic meaning of sea creatures (e.g. octopuses, fish, dolphins) and crustaceans (e.g. shellfish, lobsters, scallops) in art. How has their meaning changed over time?

In the [How Soon is Now? video](#), Reynolds speaks about the historical depiction of octopuses and mantis prawns as symbols in art and their connection to his artwork and the present day. Can you find any historical artworks that feature sea creatures and crustaceans? Identify the artworks' country of origin and time periods.

*Guide students to research and find historical artworks featuring sea creatures and crustaceans and identify their cultural origins and time periods. Discuss the significance of these connections in understanding the evolution of symbols over time. For example, decorative fish designs used in ancient Greek and Roman art often had mythological significance, while sea shells depicted in the Renaissance period were often a symbol of femininity, growth or renewal.*

Can you think of examples in your daily life where patterns or motifs are used in contemporary environments?

*Have students observe their daily surroundings and identify examples of patterns or motifs used in contemporary environments (e.g. architecture, textiles, artwork). Discuss the possible cultural influences and meanings behind these symbols.*

When examining historical artworks from various times, places and cultures, what similarities do you observe in the subjects and symbols used? How have the influences of time changed their representation and meaning?

*Encourage students to analyse historical artworks from diverse cultures and time periods, identifying common symbols and motifs and discussing how their representation and meaning have evolved over time.*

### **Responding to Bruce Reynolds' Practice:**

What symbols are commonly used in our school environment, such as logos, mascots or emblems? What historical events or people might have influenced the choice of these symbols?

How do these symbols represent the values and identity of our school?

Do these symbols hold different meanings for different generations of students or staff?

Think about symbols used within your family, like family crests, heirlooms or mementos. What do they represent?

Are there any symbols or decorations in your home that have cultural or historical significance?

Have these symbols been passed down through generations, and if so, what stories are associated with them?

How do these symbols contribute to a sense of identity and connection to your family's history?

Can you identify any symbols in your home that reflect broader cultural or societal values?

## **Curriculum Link- Develop Practice and Skills:**

### **BROOCHES OR MEDALLIONS:**

The aim of this activity is to engage students in exploring their identities and heritage through the use of symbols. Students will research symbols that are meaningful to their personal, cultural or school context and design a unique brooch or medallion that represents their identity. By creating the brooches and medallions, students will have the opportunity to explore different art techniques and contemplate the historical significance of their chosen symbols.

### **Materials:**

- Research materials such as books, articles, or online resources about symbols related to different cultures and identities.
- Art supplies for brooch and medallion creation: different coloured polymer clay, air-dry clay, sculpting tools, paint, paintbrushes, other decorating materials, glue, cord and/or brooch clip.

### **Instructions:**

1. Begin by discussing the significance of symbols and their role in representing identity and heritage. Encourage students to research symbols related to their personal, cultural or school context. They can consider values, beliefs and historical relating to these symbols.
2. Instruct students to choose a symbol that resonates with their identity. Provide them with design sheets to sketch out their ideas for the brooches or medallions. They should explore various styles connected to the symbol's history and incorporate them into their designs through colour and aesthetics.
3. Students have two options for creating their brooches or medallions:
  - 3.a Use coloured polymer clay to shape and mould the brooch or medallion, refining the design as they go. Encourage students to use different colours and patterns to represent their unique heritage and significance of their chosen symbol. Follow the polymer clay instructions to bake and harden the finished artworks.
  - 3.b Use air-dry clay to shape and mould the brooch or medallion, refining the design as they go. When the air-dry clay has hardened, students will paint their artworks using colours that represent their unique heritage and the chosen symbol's significance. Encourage creativity and attention to detail in their painting process.

Note: if making a medallion, students should make a small hole in their work to thread a cord or ribbon through, when their work is finished.

4. When the brooches are finished, glue a metal brooch clip to the back of the work. Teachers may need to assist with this process. Or if you made a medallion, thread a piece of cord or ribbon through the hole to wear it as a necklace or hang as an ornament.

5. Students should reflect on the process of creating their brooches or medallions and the significance of the chosen symbols. They can consider how symbols communicate diverse meanings and representations over time. Encourage them to contemplate the interconnection of their identities with historical uses of these symbols.

6. Provide an opportunity for students to share their brooches and medallions and their reflections with the class. Consider displaying them in a collective exhibit to celebrate the diverse identities and heritage represented in the class.

#### **HISTORY OF SYMBOLS:**

The goal of this activity is to engage students in exploring the historical and cultural significance of a chosen symbol by documenting its different representations over time. By experimenting with drawing and painting, students will create a collage that reflects the evolution of the symbol's meaning. They will also consider design composition and patterns to compose their artwork in a thoughtful manner.

#### **Materials:**

- Various art supplies such as drawing pencils, coloured pencils, markers, watercolours, acrylic paints, scissors, glue, and paper.
- Images or examples of symbols used throughout history and in contemporary contexts for reference

#### **Instructions:**

1. Allow students to choose a symbol of their interest. It could be a cultural symbol, logo, emblem or any representation with a historical background.

2. Instruct students to research and gather various representations of the chosen symbol from different time periods. They can use books, articles or online resources for this purpose.

3. Students should document their findings, noting the changes in design, meaning, and purpose of the symbol over time.

4. Encourage students to experiment with different drawing and painting techniques to recreate the various representations of the symbol they documented earlier.

5. Once students have a collection of drawings and paintings, have them compose these artworks into a collage. Emphasise the importance of design composition and pattern arrangement, taking inspiration from Bruce Reynolds' artwork *Coronas* and *Reconstructivist*.

6. After the collage is composed, students should cut out a symbol from their artwork that represents its historical context best.

*For example, if the chosen symbol is a heart, they can cut the collage into a leaf to show the history of where the heart symbol originated from.*

7. As an extension, students can paste the collaged symbol onto a background with a pattern that represents its contemporary context, such as emoji symbols or clothing patterns.

8. Students should reflect on their artistic process and the historical significance of their chosen symbol.

9. Conduct a class discussion where students can share their discoveries and insights gained during the activity.

#### **Curriculum Link- Creating and making:**

Informed by the above practices, students create an artwork that researches the past and present meaning and representation of symbols. They create an artwork that combines the different representations to communicate the meaning of their symbol. When using clay, they may create a sculpture with relief forms of a symbol that communicates a story, identity or place.

#### **ANCIENT VASES:**

In this activity students will create an artwork of an 'ancient' vase, inspired by ancient Greek vases, that is decorated with symbols and motifs developed in previous activities. Bruce Reynolds references the shape of these vases in his collaged linoleum works, like *Tank Street Hydra*, in the exhibition.

### Materials:

- Watercolour or cartridge paper.
- Black crayons.
- Watercolour paints in earthy orange, yellow and terracotta colours.
- Water.
- Paint brushes.
- Lead pencils.
- Scissors.

### Instructions:

1. Instruct the students to lightly draw the outline of a vase on the paper using a lead pencil. This should take up the full sheet of paper.

2. Instruct students to trace over this outline with black crayon, and to then decorate their vase by drawing symbols and motifs developed in previous exercises. Encourage them to use solid black shapes. For inspiration, you may like to show them examples of ancient Greek vases and urns.

3. When the design is complete, instruct the students to lightly apply brushstrokes of plain water over the image. While the area is damp, apply diluted watercolours to the image. This will cause the paint to bleed and for the colours to blend, creating an aged effect. This technique is called 'wet on wet'.

Continue this process until the vase is completely covered in paint.

4. When the artworks are dry, instruct the students to cut out the shape of their vase and display all the students' works on a wall in the classroom to enjoy.

5. Conduct a class discussion where students can share their discoveries and insights gained during this activity

## 4 MAKING AND RESPONDING ACTIVITIES

### Theme: Materiality

The objective of the learning experiences in this theme is for students to explore how materials, found or made can represent meaning within artworks. Through research of materials used by Bruce Reynolds, students will consider how the properties of artwork's textures, forms, colours and what they are made from, can communicate meaning about the influence of place and history on our physical spaces. Through this exploration, students will also understand how materials can create positive and negative space in the physical environment and how these concepts relate to our everyday environments.

### Preparation:

Before starting this activity, ensure that students have a basic understanding of symbols, motifs, and their use in art, culture and architecture. Introduce Bruce Reynolds as an artist and provide background information on his exploration of symbols and their historical connections in his artwork using the below case studies

### Suggested Case Studies:



*Tank Street Hydria*, 2016



*Coronas*, 2015



*Skyphos (Atlantis)*, 2015

## Curriculum Link- Exploring and Responding:

### Exploring Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

What is a material?

Describe the concept of “materiality” in art?

*Materiality in art refers to the physical and tangible aspects of the materials used in creating artworks. It involves the texture, colour, weight, and form of the materials and how they interact with each other and the viewer.*

What is linoleum? What is linoleum used for?

*Linoleum is a type of durable flooring material commonly used in post-colonial renovated homes in Queensland. It is commonly used for covering floors in residential and commercial spaces.*

In the [How Soon is Now? video](#), Bruce Reynolds describes how he sources linoleum. Where does he find it from?

*In the How Soon is Now? video, Bruce Reynolds mentions that he sources linoleum from old houses and buildings in Queensland, Australia. He salvages the linoleum from these structures to use it as a medium in his artworks.*

How do you think that using found linoleum from Queensland homes versus using new materials helps to convey meaning about history and its connection to everyday?

*Using found linoleum from Queensland homes helps communicate historical significance and a sense of connection to everyday life. The salvaged linoleum carries traces of its past use, and by incorporating it into his art, Reynolds highlights the historical context. In contrast, using new linoleum might lack this historical link and the narrative of past places and experiences.*

Bruce Reynolds describes collage as a form of relief, such as seen in his linoleum works. What is relief artwork, and how does Bruce Reynolds use it in his creations?

*Bruce Reynolds uses collage as a form of relief in his linoleum works by layering cut pieces of linoleum to create texture and depth on the flat surface, giving his art a sculptural quality.*

Relief can also refer to positive and negative space in artworks. How does Bruce Reynolds' artworks use positive space?

How does positive space connect to how we interact with surfaces and objects in our everyday places? Can you identify features in your current

room that are positive spaces and those that are negative?

*Positive space in artworks mirrors how we interact with surfaces and objects in our everyday places. In our current room, positive space would be occupied by furniture, decorations, and other physical objects that catch our attention and form the primary focus of the room. Negative space, on the other hand, is the empty or open areas around and between these objects, allowing them to stand out and define the overall arrangement.*

Positive and negative space can also relate to how elements of art are placed in an artwork. How does Bruce Reynolds use positive and negative space through different colours in his artwork Coronas? Bruce Reynolds uses different colours and materials to distinguish positive and negative spaces in his works. Positive space would be the areas filled with one colour, while negative space would be the empty spaces left with another colour, creating a visually striking contrast.

*In Coronas, the positive space is represented by the areas of colour, where the linoleum pieces are placed, forming the main shapes and subjects as well as the white sculpture forms referencing European motifs. The negative spaces are the grey areas. The linoleum includes decorative pattern and colour speaking to our contemporary lives whereas the plaster referencing the European motifs is white, creating a visually striking contrast.*

What do you think Bruce Reynolds is trying to say by having these two contrasting elements beside each other? Which element do you think represents recent history? Which element do you think represents history from a long time ago? Why? *By juxtaposing contrasting colours and elements in Coronas, Bruce Reynolds might be representing the interplay between recent history and history from a long time ago. The positive space, with its vibrant and contemporary colours, could signify recent historical events and experiences. In contrast, the plaster forms with lack of colour, could evoke a sense of history from a long time ago. The combination of these elements may serve to highlight the continuum of history and its interconnectedness, bridging the past and the present.*

How does “materiality” create meaning in Bruce Reynolds' works?

*In Bruce Reynolds' works, materiality plays a significant role as he often uses found linoleum from early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Queensland homes. This choice of material reflects a connection to history and everyday life. The use of concrete and plaster also signify materials used in our present built environments.*

Where do you see plaster and concrete used in our everyday lives?

How does the use of plaster and concrete, such as colour, texture, and form, relate to your everyday built environment? Do you think it also relates to past buildings as well?

Why do you think materials such as concrete and plaster are used for construction of buildings? What properties of the materials benefit their form and function?

*Students can explore properties such as durability, strength, versatility, fire resistance, and ease of moulding or shaping. By understanding the functional benefits of these materials, students can gain insight into the importance of selecting appropriate materials for specific building requirements and the impact of these choices on the overall design and longevity of structures over time, places and cultures.*

### Responding to Bruce Reynolds' Practice:

What are some examples of both natural and synthetic materials you encounter in your daily life? Consider clothing, walls, décor, flooring.

How do you think the physical aspects of these materials communicate their use? For example: how does the choice of fabric used in clothing communicate what it is used for?

*A lightweight cotton fabric may be used for a summer shirt or dress, while polar fleece may be used for a jacket or windcheater.*

Consider the different buildings in your community; what are the different materials used to construct the outside? Do you notice a difference between old buildings and new buildings?

Are there any specific materials that are more common than others? How might this relate to your area's geographical location, including temperature and weather events.

In the inside of your built environments, can you identify common materials used for furniture and décor?

How can you tell if they are old or new? Consider elements of colour, texture and how they represent newness or age/deterioration.

In your current room or surroundings, can you identify elements that represent positive space, such as objects and decorations that catch your attention? What about negative space, which provides a sense of balance and contrast?

## Curriculum Link- Developing Practice and Skills:

### WALL OF MATERIAL COLLAGE:

**Objective:** The objective of this activity is to encourage students to explore the materials that are part of their everyday lives and built environments. Through documentation, reflection, and creative composition, students will create collages that represent various surfaces in their surroundings. They will consider how design properties and elements such as colours, texture and shapes can convey the age of materials in their artworks.

### Materials:

- Resources and stimulus for everyday materials.
- Art supplies: Cameras or smartphones for photography, drawing materials (pencils, markers, etc.), painting materials (watercolours, acrylics, etc.), scissors, glue, and a variety of paper or cardboard for collage base.

### Instructions:

1. Start by discussing with students the significance of materials in their daily lives, including clothing, furniture, and building construction: carpet, wood panelling, bricks etc. Instruct them to document different materials they interact with daily by taking photographs or making sketches.
2. Have students reflect on the design properties of these materials that convey their age. Guide students to consider how colours, texture, and shapes can represent the age of materials in their collage artworks. They should think about using specific colour palettes, creating texture through layering or tearing paper, and using shapes that convey wear and tear or new aesthetics.
3. Instruct students to compose their collected materials (photographs, sketches, and/or salvaged materials) into a collage that represents a surface in their built environments. They can choose images of surfaces such as wood-board panelling, floor tiling as seen in *Reconstructivist*, brick walls, or any other relevant surfaces. Encourage creativity in their arrangement of reproduced materials.
4. After completing their collage artworks, have students reflect on the choices they made in representing the age of materials. Conduct a class discussion where students can share their insights and observations about how different design elements contribute to the perception of age in their collages.

### **WALL OF MATERIALS- RELIEF SCULPTURE:**

The goal of this activity is to help students develop an understanding of different materials they encounter in their daily lives and how these materials exhibit signs of age and wear over time. Through hands-on exploration with clay, students will create tiles that represent various aspects of their everyday life, considering design properties and representing the age of the materials using paint and crackle paste.

#### **Materials:**

- Resources and stimulus for everyday materials.
- Art supplies: Clay, rolling pins, sculpting tools, flat clay tiles, firing kiln, paint, paintbrushes, crackle paste.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Begin by discussing the importance of materials in everyday life, from the clothes they wear to the buildings they inhabit. Encourage students to document different materials they interact with daily, such as the fabrics in clothing, the design of school and sporting equipment, construction materials of buildings and furniture.
2. Have students reflect on the design properties of these materials that reveal their age. Discuss aspects such as patterns and fabrics in clothing, the design of furniture, signs of wear and tear, colours, and patterns used in everyday objects.
3. Instruct students to create clay designs on flat clay tiles. Each tile should explore a different part of their everyday life, focusing on various materials they encounter. For example, they can sculpt clothing patterns, furniture designs, building surfaces, and more. Encourage creativity in the use of clay to represent these materials. Students may also wish to press different fabrics and materials into the clay, to emboss the surface.
4. After the tiles have been fired and cooled, provide students with paint and brushes. Instruct them to use paint to represent how old the materials are. They can use colours and techniques to mimic signs of aging, such as fading colours or surface cracks. For an additional layer of authenticity, students can apply crackle paste on top of the paint to resemble the aging process. The crackle paste will create a textured, cracked effect, further enhancing the representation of aging materials.
5. Have students reflect on their clay designs and the process of representing age through paint and crackle paste. Encourage them to discuss how different design properties contribute to the

perception of materials' age. Consider displaying the finished tiles in a class exhibition or on a bulletin board to showcase the students' work.

### **Curriculum Link- Creating and Making:**

Students create an artwork that uses inspiration from objects with diverse materiality in their built environments. They can use colour, positive and negative space, as well as texture to communicate the difference between old and new materials and objects and how this communicates different influences of culture, history, and place of our built environments.

#### **POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE**

The aim of this activity is to develop an understanding of positive and negative space and assemblage techniques.

#### **Materials:**

- Black card.
- Sheets of square, coloured construction paper.
- Scissors.
- Lead pencils.
- Glue.

#### **Instructions:**

1. Instruct students to draw an outline of a symbol on the back of the coloured construction paper – this shape could be imagined or inspired by nature. Repeat this 3 times, drawing a different shape each time, making sure that one edge of the shape touches the edge of the paper. This will make it easier to cut out.
2. Carefully cut the shapes out, retaining both paper cut outs.
3. Glue the coloured square pieces of construction paper onto the black card, spacing them similar distances apart.
4. Instruct students to glue the cut-out shapes above the corresponding, coloured squares.
5. When the artworks are complete, have students reflect on their creations. Encourage them to discuss how they created positive and negative space in their artworks.

