

EDUCATION  
RESOURCE



# lost in palm springs

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country  
and their ongoing connection to land, waters and  
community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander peoples and to the Elders past  
and present and emerging.*

Curated by Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* is a touring initiative developed by HOTA, Home of the Arts, Gold Coast in partnership with Museums & Galleries Queensland. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through its Visions of Australia program and through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. It is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, part of the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy, and proudly sponsored by IAS Fine Art Logistics and o2 Architecture.

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For information on the exhibition tour, go to the  
M&G QLD website, <https://magsq.com.au/touring-exhibitions/lost-in-palm-springs/>

Cover: Rosi Griffin, *Tumbling Down*, 2022  
photographic print on Perspex  
250 x 150 x 0.6 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist



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# EXHIBITION CONTEXT

*Lost in Palm Springs* is a multidisciplinary exhibition that brings together fourteen creative minds—including internationally recognised artists, photographers and thinkers from America and Australia—who respond to, capture, or re-imagine the magical qualities of the landscape and the celebrated mid-century modern architecture of the desert city of Palm Springs, California.

Artists are curious, drawn to unbridled beauty, intense landscapes and romantic notions of isolation. And they are equally drawn to places where ideas of place and home and architecture shape society and the way in which people live.

**Place and home** as an overarching theme within the exhibition, links the artists, photographers and thinkers. We all need shelter: a place to live and make home, a place to dream—whether it be a vernacular coastal shack or desert cabin, Gaston Bachelard's philosophical hut in the forest or an architect designed single-family home in suburbia. Inevitably, the form home takes will have an enduring effect on those who live within.

Ideas, histories, and stories intrinsic to the works are supported by philosophical themes, linking and highlighting, the different perspectives of the artists. While place and home as a theme links all works, further themes such as **making the invisible visible, proof of existence, extending the moment** and **the re-imagined** make further connections and expand ways of looking at the collection of works.

Palm Springs—its history, beauty, and its extraordinary collection of mid-century modern homes set within a magical desert landscape—maintains its allure today as strongly ever, actively stimulating creative minds and inspiring the exploration of the art of architecture and the architecture of art.

**Dr. Greer Honeywill, Curator**

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about the exhibition and each of the artists. The exhibition catalogue can be downloaded from Museums & Galleries Queensland's website at <https://magsq.com.au/touring-exhibitions/lost-in-palm-springs/>

# ARTISTS/EXHIBITORS

## SECTION 1

### OUR RELATIONSHIP TO PLACE

**EXHIBITION THEMES | PLACE AND  
HOME | EXTENDING THE MOMENT |  
PROOF OF EXISTENCE**

ROSI GRIFFIN

ROBYN SWEANEY

DARREN BRADLEY

ANNA CAREY

GOSIA WLODARCZAK

## SECTION 2

### ARCHITECTURE & ENVIRONMENTS

LANCE O'DONNELL, AIA

TROY KUDLAC

KIM STRINGFELLOW

VICKI STAVROU

## SECTION 3

### WONDER & VISION

**EXHIBITION THEMES | THE RE-IMAGINED  
| MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE**

KATE BALLIS

PAUL DAVIES

TOM BLACHFORD

## SECTION 4

### ART & DESIGN

JIM ISERMANN

SAM CRANSTOUN

# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been designed to support quality teaching and learning for a wide range of subject areas, within and beyond visual arts.

Drawing on the rich social, geographical and design-based content in *Lost in Palm Springs*, teachers will find critical thinking inquiry questions, visible thinking routines, and responding activities that appeal to a broad range of curriculum areas, as well as creativity and collaboration.

The resource aims to support teaching and learning through a focus on the exhibition themes, and the widely varied artmaking mediums evident in the exhibited works.

The Australian National Curriculum Cross-Curriculum Priorities; Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultures & Perspectives and Sustainability, are explicitly integrated into this resource.

Relevant Australian Curriculum links across visual arts, geography, humanities, design and maths are evident at the beginning of each section.

## KEY INQUIRY

How does design and architecture impact our relationship to place, wellbeing and sense of connection and belonging?

What do artworks about place tell us about its importance to our lives?

How do artists use visual storytelling to extend, examine and engage our experience of place?

# SECTION 1

## OUR RELATIONSHIP TO PLACE

It has been well researched and documented, academically and anecdotally, that people are greatly affected by the places (home and localities) in which they live. A sense of wellbeing, connection and belonging can be inextricably linked to the physical environments in which we live, work and travel.

When people have a connection to place, or more so, a love for it, it is known as place attachment, or **topophilia**, according to humanistic geographers. The phrases 'community ties', and 'sense of community' are commonly exchanged, and speak to our day-to-day affective and emotional relationship to the built environments around us.

In this section, we look at the role and work of artists to document stories, relationships, and memories of places. We also explore how they draw inspiration from elements of architectural design to preserve our experiences of places and facilitate an opportunity to relate to them forevermore through their work. Through this, we consider the concept of change over time, and the way notions of domestic life, people, and environments interact between the past and present.

Taking inspiration from these artists and themes, students can analyse their own experiences, through and within artmaking and visual storytelling.

Darren Bradley, *Is Canberra the Palm Springs of Australia?* Palm Springs (detail), 2012-2019  
Tract House with sun-flap-roof, Twin Palms,  
architect William Krisel, Palmer and Krisel, 1956  
archival pigment prints  
each 47 x 47 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

LOST IN PALM SPRINGS EDUCATION RESOURCE



# INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES

To Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, living ecology and sustainable interaction with the land has been the way of life for over at least 50,000 years.

Land connects Australia's First Nations peoples to their sense of self and wellbeing and represents part of their identity that has carried through generations. Spiritually rich, Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples believe that ancestral beings created landscapes and geographic features, among other aspects of the way people are to live and interact. In many Indigenous cultures, it is believed that these ancestral beings are present in the land, sky, and waters across all living things.

A deep sense of connection, responsibility, and care for the natural environment underpins the traditional practices and ways of living undertaken by Traditional Owners.

## **Country/Place:**

*refers to the land to which Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples belong; where the spiritual essence of their ancestors remains in the landscape, the sky and the waters.*

## **Nation:**

*describes cultural groupings based on clan and language. At the time of English colonisation, there were more than 500 different clan groups or nations around Australia, with distinctive cultures, beliefs and languages. In this way, Australia was a lot more like Europe than early settlers realised.*

## **Traditional custodian/owner:**

*means the First Nations people of a Country or Place. As knowledge is passed from generation to generation, Elders and the most senior knowledge holders are normally considered to be rightful holders of this title. The term 'custodian' helps to express the important point that both Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have important responsibilities to their Country/Place, rather than a sense of the land and waters as their property.*

(Adapted from Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, 2022)

Embed this knowledge with students throughout the learning experiences described in this resource. Encourage students to research and articulate the relationship between the exhibition themes and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives around place and home. Authentic opportunities are best facilitated by engagement with representatives from the Country in which your learning environment is situated. Reach out to the following sources for more information:

- NSW: Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) or Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG)
- QLD: Queensland Indigenous Education Consultative Committee (QIECC)
- VIC: Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups (LAECG)
- SA: The South Australian Aboriginal Education and Training Consultative Council (SAAETCC)
- TAS: The Orb



# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS | GEOGRAPHY

## **Foundation | My Personal World**

The places people live in and belong to, their familiar features and why they are important to people (ACHASSK014)

The reasons why some places are special to people and how they can be looked after (ACHASSK017)

## **Year 1 | How my world is different from the past and can change in the future**

The natural, managed and constructed features of places, their location, how they change and how they can be cared for (ACHASSK031)

Activities in the local place and reasons for their location (ACHASSK033)

## **Year 2 | Our past and present connections to people and places**

The connections of people in Australia to people in other places in Australia and across the world (ACHASSK050)

## **Year 3 | Diverse communities and places and the contribution people make**

The similarities and differences between places in terms of their type of settlement, demographic characteristics and the lives of the people who live there, and people's perceptions of these places (ACHASSK069)

## **Year 4 | How people, places and environments interact, past and present**

The importance of environments, including natural vegetation, to animals and people (ACHASSK088)

## **Year 5 | Australian communities – their past, present and possible futures**

The environmental and human influences on the location and characteristics of a place and the management of spaces within them (ACHASSK113)

The influence of people on the environmental characteristics of places in Europe and North America and the location of their major countries in relation to Australia (ACHASSK111)

## **Year 6 | Australia in the past and present and its connections with a diverse world**

Differences in the economic, demographic and social characteristics of countries across the world (ACHASSK139)

Australia's connections with other countries and how these change people and places (ACHASSK141)

## **Year 7 | Place & liveability | Sustainable pasts, present, futures**

Factors that influence the decisions people make about where to live and their perceptions of the liveability of places (ACHASSK188)

The influence of environmental quality on the liveability of places (ACHASSK190)

The influence of social connectedness and community identity on the liveability of places (ACHASSK19)

## **Year 8 | Changing nations**

Differences in urban concentration and urban settlement patterns between Australia and the United States of America, and their causes and consequences (ACHGK055)

## **Year 9 | Geographies of interconnections**

The perceptions people have of place, and how these influence their connections to different places (ACHGK065)

# SUB-INQUIRY

## PLACE AND HOME

- What makes a place a home?
- How does design and architecture impact our sense of connection, wellbeing or belonging?
- What does art about architecture and places tell us about its importance to people's lives?

## EXTENDING THE MOMENT

- In what ways are our memories connected to place and home?
- How do artists preserve an experience of place?

## PROOF OF EXISTENCE

- What is the role of artists and their works in documenting our lived experiences?

*I write poems to preserve things I have seen/  
thought/felt (if I may so indicate a composite and  
complex experience) both for myself and for others,  
though I feel that my prime responsibility is to the  
experience itself, which I am trying to keep from  
oblivion for its own sake. Why I should do this I have  
no idea, but I think the impulse to preserve lies at  
the bottom of all art.*

Philip Larkin, 1955.  
(Peschmann, 1975, p. 51)

# MEET THE ARTIST | ROSI GRIFFIN

Key words: Watercolour, memories, façades, history, shack, lifestyle, coastal



Rosi Griffin, *Just Beachy*, 2020  
watercolour on paper  
43 x 55 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Rosi Griffin creates paintings, mixed media and sculptural works that explore the themes of place and home, as well as architecture and memories.

*"It was in Queensland on her regular Mermaid Beach walks that Griffin was first attracted to the modest, post-war, make-do domestic structures she saw and began to capture the collection of beach houses in various media. Her works focus on the threat to these frail houses from rising tides, neglect, decay, and demolition. Without sufficient care the houses could simply disappear with all their histories and secrets."*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 23.

In this exhibition, the works from Rosi Griffin's *Best Before* series consider the fragile nature of simple fibro Gold Coast beach homes. Her choice to capture the front **façades** in watercolour deliberately portrays this fragility while also commenting on the preservation of memory. Her work explores the simplicity of the buildings, and the way their function was perhaps more concerned with the easy pleasures of coastal living such as swimming and fishing, than those of a complex existence orientated around the commercial value of property.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Rosi Griffin.

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING

### **BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END | A routine to encourage connections, storytelling, patterns and meaning making**

Look closely at Rosi Griffin's *Just Beachy* (2020). Choose one of the following questions:

- If this artwork is the beginning of a story, what might happen next?
- If this artwork is the middle of a story, what might have happened before? What might be about to happen?
- If this artwork is the end of a story, what might the story be?

Students may use this as an oral storytelling activity, or an individual written response to share their ideas. Encourage students to justify their choices, using the details in the image as evidence of their reasoning. Justification prompts:

- When/where is the artwork set (time and place)?
- What is the rest of the neighbourhood like?
- How old do you think the building is?

The Beginning, Middle, End thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## GETTING HANDS-ON

- Collectively develop a narrative based on this work and others in Rosi Griffin's *Best Before* series.
- Students use their bodies to create still images of these places, looking at the characteristics of the lines and shapes and how their body language can represent the condition of the aging materials that might be present in the artwork.

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES P-12

- What is the impact of Rosi Griffin using watercolour as the medium to represent these houses?
- How is the idea of simplicity evident in Rosi Griffin's work?
- What is the impact of the colour choices and shadows on the buildings?
- How can artists preserve places and memories in their work?
- Students look at places in their local area that are personally important to them or that they feel characterises their community. They may brainstorm and categorise these places on a timeline to represent approximately the era they were built.
- Create a map of a suburban area of 1950's Australia with watercolour houses like those painted by Rosi Griffin's. Continue the storytelling by profiling the town to reflect what the life and culture of these times may have been like.
- If using watercolour, consider colour and layering, and the impacts of watermarks to convey fragility, aging or decay.

**See also! Kim Stringfellow on page 31.**



# MEET THE ARTIST | ROBYN SWEANEY

Key words: Painting, memories, emotive, façade, history, community, place



Robyn Sweaney, *Paradise lost*, 2022  
acrylic on linen  
97 x 137 cm  
Collection: HOTA Gallery. Gifted by the citizens of the Gold Coast to future generations 2022  
Image courtesy of the artist

Robyn Sweaney's work is centred around everyday suburban homes in Australia. She has a strong appreciation for the way homes are spaces for people to create memories and describes the way their aesthetic properties influence our human experience.

By painting homes such as the one captured in *Paradise lost* (2022), Sweaney allows us to explore both architecture and imagination. The choice of these homes, as well as the style of painting she employs, evokes an emotional response and prompts deeper contemplation about the memories that took place in and around them. In this way, we can see that the design of a home, in its textural and general aesthetic qualities, can inform our experiences of place and time.

Robyn Sweaney's works have been included in this exhibition for the way her depictions of mid-century architecture extend the moment and preserve the detail and design of the era.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Robyn Sweaney.



# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING

Discussion prompts. Select from one of the following:

- What makes a place a home?
- Should we be able to demolish homes?
- What factors impact whether a home needs to be demolished?
- How does architecture respond to our changing needs, or desires?

## GETTING HANDS-ON

- Research the oldest domestic dwellings in your local area. Compile images and information about them in terms of when they were built, materials they were constructed with, occurrences of the home being sold, changes over time (restoration and renovation), etc.
- Extend your search to find evidence of the first built home that may no longer exist. Locate information about its building date, design, and date and reason for demolition/removal.

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES P-12

- How can we use the art elements of pattern, line, shape, balance, composition and texture in design?

### Frottage

Frottage is an artmaking technique that works by taking a rubbing from a textured surface to form part of an artwork.

- Look closely at Robyn Sweaney's painting of *Paradise lost* (2022).
- Note all the textures, lines, patterns and shapes students can see and describe. Ask the students to think about how this design makes the building feel, and how it would look/feel different if the textures (from the materials), shapes, lines and patterns were used in a different proportion. Have the students consider balance and composition in design.
- Have students select several colour pencils and a sheet of light-medium weight paper. Students source textures in their environment and use the pencils and paper to create a rubbing of the surface. Students will then experiment with cutting out various shapes to compose an artwork that has balance. This image may be of a house or other building, or it could be an abstract piece exploring these elements.

## MEET THE ARTIST | ANNA CAREY



Key words: Sculptural, model, replica, architecture, memories, history, emotive, nostalgia, place

Anna Carey uses a combination of artforms to create imaginative and exciting experiences for viewers to connect with places and eras gone by. Based on real settings, she constructs miniature worlds through sculptural, architecturally inspired models. Photographed in outdoor environments, the structures and the skies together achieve her intention to allow people to contemplate the real and imagined.

Carey is inspired by the modernist architecture found in both Los Angeles, Palm Springs, and the Gold Coast, QLD. In creating these models, referencing places that in some cases no longer exist, we can appreciate the qualities of historic architecture and design, and have an opportunity to experience a place that without her works, would be inaccessible for many. Carey's artworks play a valuable role in preserving the significance of these places, and their associated memories and relationships.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Anna Carey.

Anna Carey, *84 Frank Street, Surfers*

*Paradise...then*, 2015

giclée print

74 x 109 cm

Collection HOTA Gallery, Gold Coast.

Acquired through the assistance of our generous benefactors, 2016

Image courtesy of the artist

Anna Carey, *84 Frank Street, Surfers*

*Paradise...now*, 2015

giclée print

74 x 109 cm

Collection HOTA Gallery, Gold Coast.

Acquired through the assistance of our generous benefactors, 2016

Image courtesy of the artist

## RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

3D replicas of places give us the opportunity to experience or re-live them. These models or maquettes can be critical parts of a building's development, their memory, their re-imagining, or be a fantastical idea for a place that will never be built full-scale in real life.

The impact these models can have comes from our ability to see a structure in physical form and being able to visualise our experience with it. We can be curious about the shapes, colours, and areas of these structures, and how we might feel in them or when we interact with them.

### VISIBLE THINKING

#### **ZOOM-IN | A routine to engage curiosity, hypothesising, inferring, reasoning, and attention to detail**

Using a digital image of Anna Carey's, *84 Frank Street, Surfers Paradise...then* (2015), prepare a presentation or document with several copies of the image. Conceal sections of each copy so that each version, when moved through sequentially like a slideshow, reveals more and more sections of the artwork. The initial version should have the majority of the artwork covered, and the final version will show the artwork in full. Consider what information will be conveyed by each section of the artwork. Take note that each new revealed section should challenge students to think in new ways.

As each section is revealed, ask the students:

- What new things do you see?
- How does this change your hypothesis or interpretation? Has the new information answered any of your questions?
- What new things are you wondering about?
- What do you think the origin of this artwork is?
- Why was it made?
- What is it telling us?

Repeat the reveal and questioning activity until the whole image has been revealed. Invite students to ask any lingering questions they may have.

The Zoom-In thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## GETTING HANDS-ON | MODELS

A model shows the proportions and physical characteristics of a design. Architects and set designers use models at various stages of their project development. In some cases, models are made for artistic purposes only and can be of fictional worlds or places that are never intended to be built.

In architecture, the main types of models are conceptual, working, or presentation, and help architects to experiment with ideas, while giving a sense of the aesthetic and practical qualities of the structure. Models can be made from cardboard, foam, wood, metal, Perspex or acrylic.

Making models with students is valuable for mathematical reasoning, design, and technological understanding, as well as visualisation and fine motor skills. Opportunities to construct real and imagined places as models is equally valuable for students' appreciation of architecture and critical thinking about their relationship to the world around them, as it is for their creative development.

When starting out on a model and design, students should consider:

- What is the model of and who is it for?
- How do I want the building and space to feel?
- How do I want people to use the space?
- What is the outer environment like? Can I connect or disconnect the inside and out?
- What materials would I use in the real-world fabrication of my design?
- What materials can I use to construct my model?
- What is my timeframe for making my model?
- What is the scale?
- Will it be a model of the whole building, or just a section?

### Maths teaching link | Scale Factor

The detail, accuracy and scale of Anna Carey's artworks make the models captivating. Scale in her works is important as this accuracy directly supports her intention in achieving a likeness that stimulates curiosity and nostalgia.

A scale factor is defined as the ratio between the scale of a given original object and a new object. It is a representation of the original object, but a different size (bigger or smaller).

For grades 6 and above, embed scale factor in the learning experience to contextualise this mathematic concept using a real-world example.

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 6-12

In 2015 Carey completed *Stardust*, a series based on five Stardust Motels built across the world including the USA and the Gold Coast, QLD. Having located the motels as they exist today, Carey continued her research to discover the original appearance using digital search platforms and Google maps.

*With 84 Frank Street, Surfers Paradise...then (2015) and 84 Frank Street, Surfers Paradise...now (2015), once the first version of the model and its iconic signage was constructed, Carey photographed it against a purpose-built cinematic set. The model was then 'renovated', re-imagined, and rephotographed to create the second version.*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 29.

On both occasions, Carey's use of natural light adds to the atmospheric depiction of these motels.

### Think about...

- How does the natural background influence the realism of Anna Carey's works?
- What is the impact of the realistic representation of these buildings?
- How does Anna Carey's artmaking practice extend the life and memory of a place?

### Making the work

- Students brainstorm iconic local buildings or places from personal experience that hold special memories.
- Students sketch their remembered version of their chosen place, and have time to share and reflect on the importance of it to them. Prompt them to consider the design, style and architecture as aspects that may have played into their fondness for the place.
- Using photographs or Google, have students research the site in more detail if possible.
- Looking at original images, or imagining the building when it was first built, ask students to draw a detailed and accurate sketch of its external façade, paying attention to the textures, lines and shapes of its design.
- Students draw another sketch of how it may have changed after 30-50 years, and again in the future. The future drawing is a fun and imaginative way for students to be creative with extending the memory of the building.
- Students may select one of these three time points in the building's life and depending on time and resources, use foam core board, recycled materials, and construction paper to re-create a model or façade of the building.
- While working on the construction, draw students' attention to the architectural elements of the building, and the re-experiencing of the memories attached to it.
- Take the finished works outside and photograph them like Anna Carey has, to replicate the realism of their existence.



# MEET THE ARTIST | DARREN BRADLEY

Key words: Photography, architecture, modernist, travel, design, experience of place



Darren Bradley *Is Canberra the Palm Springs of Australia?* Canberra, 2017  
Butterfly roof house, Yarralumla, architect, Kenneth Oliphant, 1954  
archival pigment prints  
each 47 x 47 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Darren Bradley uses photography to broaden and connect with his passion for mid-century modern architecture. His love of photography started at a young age, and after staying in a mid-century modern house in Palm Springs, his admiration of its architectural qualities prompted him to document similar homes as photographic works. In particular, he was drawn to the work of architect, William Krisel.

Bradley's love of photography and modernist design has led him to travel widely, and he continues to capture the essence and experience these places provide. Paying close attention to the way the buildings interact with their natural environment, Bradley's photographs are a deliberate pairing of rich modernist façades and vibrant skies.

Darren Bradley's work supports the story of *Lost in Palm Springs* by extending the moment. Photographing and carefully framing these places through his composition, documents their existence and allows viewers to appreciate the distinctive elements of mid-century modern design in a way these buildings may have not been experienced before.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Darren Bradley.

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

### LOOKING TEN TIMES TWO | A routine to support observation

1. Look at the artworks in Darren Bradley's series, *Is Canberra the Palm Springs of Australia?* Canberra (2017) quietly for at least 30 seconds. Encourage students to let their eyes wander.
2. List 10 words or phrases about any aspect of the artworks.
3. Repeat Steps 1 & 2: Look at the artworks again and try to add 10 more words or phrases to your list.
4. Students share their list, and themes are documented to visually group and connect ideas.

The Looking Ten Times Two thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## GETTING HANDS-ON

- Looking at the characteristics of mid-century architecture, research this style of design in Canberra, Palm Springs and even your local major city or community. Refer to pages 24-25 for more information.
- If there are original mid-century modernist (1950s-1970s) houses or other historic buildings in your area, consider how can we preserve their existence? Why is this important?
- List and discuss the characteristics of architecture style and design in the present day. What aesthetic is prominent?

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 3-12

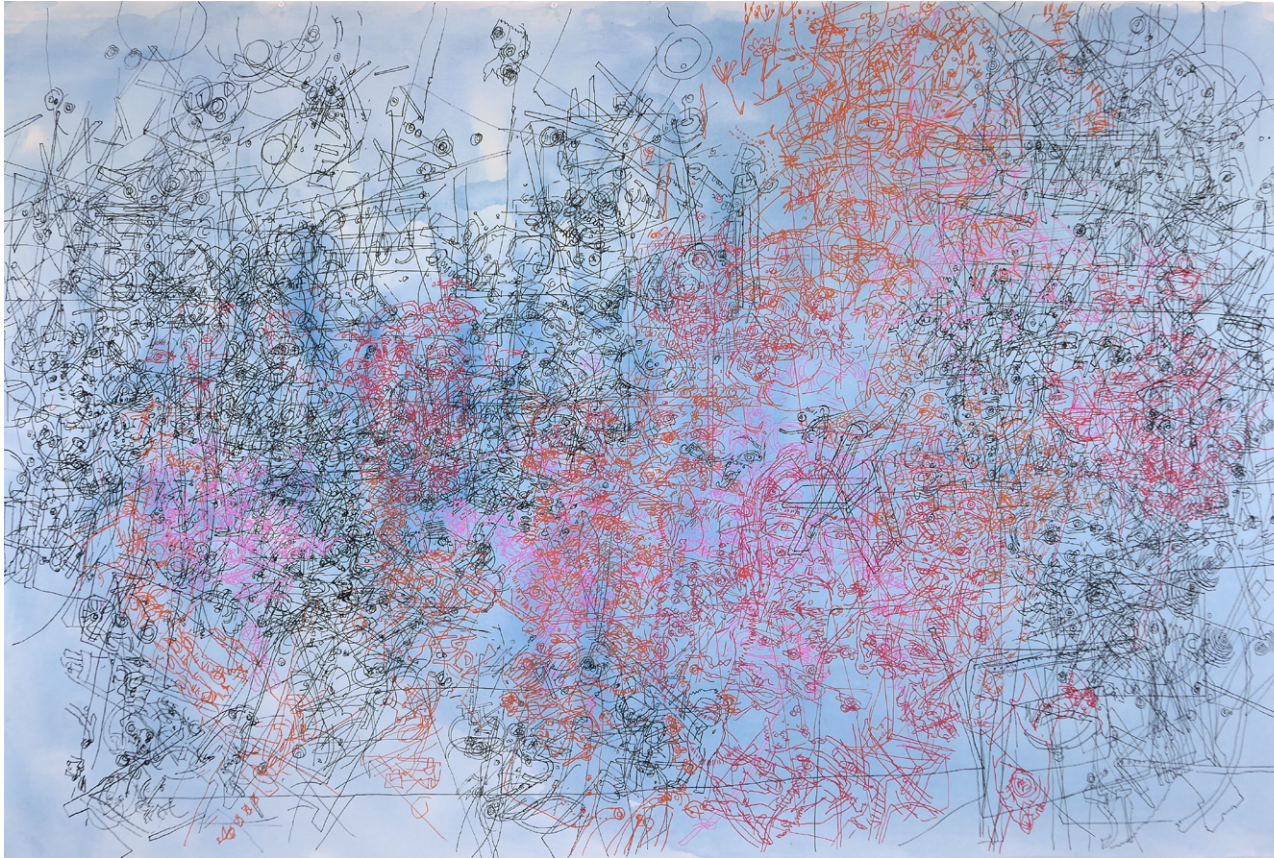
Photography is a strong medium for capturing proof of existence. The framing of the subject in a photograph allows us to experience and pay attention to the details of a place in ways we may miss in real life. As we can see in Darren Bradley's work, a characteristic of mid-century modernist architecture in Palm Springs is the continuity and transition between the inside and out, and for the homes to sit within the natural environment.

- Have students create a viewfinder and explore buildings around their school site. Guide students to critically reflect on the details of the buildings and where they want to draw the eye. Prompt them to consider how the buildings interact with the natural environment. Discuss the fore, middle and backgrounds.
- The focus of Darren Bradley's photographs is on the entry view of the properties. This helps orientate the viewer with the site. Consider, what is the impact of this?
- Take students on a walk around the school site, or if permitted, the local streets surrounding the school. Have students use iPads, phones, or cameras to experiment with framing and photographing a building's relationship with its natural environment.



# MEET THE ARTIST | GOSIA WLODARCZAK

Key words: Drawing, performative, personal, internal, senses, interactive, real-time, in-situ, present moment, responsive, recorded



Gosia Wlodarczak has an art practice embedded in drawing. Influenced by the present moment, Wlodarczak creates in-situ and in a performative style, using drawing to capture experiences as they unfold in real time. In this way, her work is storytelling based on what she describes as trans-disciplinary drawing. It is an interactive experience and abstract representation that extends over surfaces, objects, clothing and sometimes people that occupy the environment.

Wlodarczak makes the present moment visible emphasising transparency between the inner emotional and cognitive experience and the landscape beyond. With a particular interest in the senses, and the way in which we process our lived experiences, she uses drawing, installation, sound and film to extend the moment. With drawing in particular, the immediacy of form and structure suits her translations of real-time experiences, in a way she parallels to the act of writing.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Gosia Wlodarczak.

Also see <https://vimeo.com/74811004>

Gosia Wlodarczak, *Modernist Conversation* 2017  
pigment pen, gouache, on unstretched canvas  
105 x 160 cm  
photograph Longin Sarnecki  
Created at Art Palm Springs 2017 and completed at  
BoxoPROJECTS as part of open house  
Image courtesy of the artist

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

### SEE, THINK, WONDER | A routine for stimulating curiosity and making thoughtful observations

Ask students to make an observation about Gosia Wlodarczak's, *Modernist Conversation* (2017), and follow up with what they think might be going on in the artwork and real-life situation it represents. Encourage students to justify their interpretation with reasons.

This routine works best when a student responds by using the three stems together at the same time, i.e., "I see..., I think..., I wonder...." However, you may find that students begin using one stem at a time, and that you need to scaffold each response with a follow-up question for the next stem. The routine works well in a group discussion but in some cases, you may want to ask students to try the routine individually on paper or in their heads before sharing their ideas with the class. Student responses to the routine can be written down and recorded so that a class chart of observations, interpretations, and wonderings are listed for all to see and return to at another point in learning.

The See, Think, Wonder thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 3-12

Line in art depicts movement, rhythm, structure/form, momentum, and relationships. Artists like Gosia Wlodarczak have used this element to visually represent human experience. Human experience is also characterised by movement, rhythm, structure/form, momentum, and relationships. Buildings and architectural designs also feature these qualities.

- Gosia Wlodarczak focuses on documenting and representing social experiences and interactions. Select a stimulus in relation to other curriculum areas being studied. Examples may include a chapter of a text being read aloud where there may be tension, in a monologue or critical decision-making point. You may select an interview, drama performance, dance performance, a parliamentary session, footage of wildlife interacting, a piece of music, a school-based event/environment, etc.
- Guide students to be aware of their senses as they orientate themselves with the stimulus. Prompt them to tune into being fully present to the movement, rhythm, form, momentum, and relationships evident in the interaction they are about to experience.
- Have students select and justify their choice for a drawing or painting tool; e.g. pencil, paint, texta, POSCA pen, etc. They may refer to qualities such as thickness, saturation, and texture to justify their choice.
- Begin by working on paper, experimenting with the scale of the paper sizes and shapes as well as the line representations they are about to draw.
- Listening carefully to the different sounds, and even possible smells, students commence drawing using line to represent the interactions, as well as their personal responses to them. Encourage students to connect with the idea of mapping their surroundings, and their personal experiences of the stimulus. Challenge them to keep their pen on the paper as often as possible, and to not try to create the image to look like anything in particular.
- Have students reflect on the process and experience, specifically, the act and impact of creating with line.
- Ask students to reflect on using the medium of paper in the size and format they had chosen. Would they use another surface? Did working on paper feel restrictive at all?
- Place students work alongside each other to fill a large space. Reflect on the experience of viewing this, with different types of line, and now seen at a larger scale. What is the impact of this?

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF MID-CENTURY MODERNIST ARCHITECTURE

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MID-CENTURY MODERNIST ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Minimal

Sleek

Connected with nature and the outdoors

Clean lines

Functional

Sophisticated

Colourful interiors and front doors

Open spaces and floorplans

Natural light

Asymmetrical

Organic and geometric shapes

Straight lines

Short staircases



# PALM SPRINGS

## A VERY BRIEF LOOK AT SOME KEY STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DESERT MODERNISM IN PALM SPRINGS

For thousands of years the area we now know as Palm Springs (USA) was home to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians but in the late 1800s things changed. Three factors were key to the early development of what we now know as Palm Springs—the discovery of gold in California (1870s), the building of the railway across California to the Pacific coast (late 1870s) and access to a reliable water supply (c1887). Despite these advantages, Palm Springs continued to develop slowly until the 1920s when the film industry took an interest in making films in the area because of the extraordinary landscape. Hollywood, and its stars, drew attention to Palm Springs making it exciting and desirable. However, the trajectory to becoming the tourist destination that we know today, was long and slow. Even in 1950 the population of Palm Springs was just 7,428 compared with the population of 45,019 today.

From 1945 an unusually large number of young architects began gathering in Palm Springs making the city a hotbed of architectural experimentation. The term used to describe the architecture was 'Desert Modernism'. The architects listed below were by no means the sum total of architects drawn to the amazing desert landscape.

### Key architects based in Palm Springs

- William F. Cody (1916-1978) from 1945
- Donald Wexler (1926-2015) from 1952
- E. Stewart Williams (1909-2005) from 1946
- Albert Frey (1903-1998) from 1939

### Key architects who contributed significantly to the architecture of Palm Springs

- William Krisel (1924-2017) from 1957 while based in L.A.
- John Lautner (1911-1924) Elrod House (1968), (Bob) Hope Residence (1973)
- Richard Neutra (1892-1970) Kaufmann House (1946)
- Frank Lloyd Wright Jr (1890-1978), The Oasis Hotel (1925), today only the tower remains

It was in the mid 1950s that the Alexander Construction Company and its founders George Alexander and Robert Alexander moved to Palm Springs after successfully building tracts (we use the term subdivision) of affordable homes in Los Angeles. While they were not the only developers their prolific contribution physically doubled the size of Palm Springs, changing the city forever. In Palm Springs they began developing affordable houses

for middle-income earners and second home buyers in an architectural style in stark contrast to the prevailing Spanish influence. The Alexanders worked principally with the architects William Krisel and Dan Saxon Palmer of Krisel and Palmer to build 1,200 modernist houses between 1957 and 1965. And in the same period a further 1,000 homes were built across the Coachella Valley adjacent to Palm Springs.

Supporting clean lines, floor to ceiling windows, free flowing floor plans and a substantial connection to the landscape, the architects created a limited number of designs with similar floor plans under a limited number of rooflines and then they rotated the designs through the tracts creating an appearance of individuality. Today Palm Springs is said to have the largest collection of intact mid-century modern homes in the world.

It is shocking to think that architecture that is so revered today went completely out of fashion in the 1980s and was allowed to decay until the early 2000s before being slowly rediscovered. It has been said that the 2007 television series *Mad Men*, which ran for a decade, helped to inspire a resurgence of interest in all things mid-century modern, particularly in Palm Springs.

Dr Greer Honeywill, Curator

# AUSTRALIA

## A VERY BRIEF LOOK AT SOME KEY STEPS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT AND ITS RELEVANCE TO AUSTRALIA

Modernism, an international design movement, was quietly developing before the 1900s, especially in Europe, stimulated by industrial advancements, new technologies and new building materials. The movement heralded a minimalist form of architecture emphasising form and function with a clear separation from the decorative architecture of the past. Modernist thinking embraced structures of clean lines, large windows (framing the landscape), open floor plans and white exteriors supported by steel, glass and concrete construction. Architects around the globe contributed to the development of modernism, each in differing ways.

Ideas underpinning modernism were shaped in part by the Bauhaus (1919–1933): a revolutionary German art school founded in 1919 by architect Walter Gropius, AIA (1883–1969) and later helmed by architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, AIA (1886–1969). At the Bauhaus, the creation of good design for mass production included the design of affordable architect designed houses for the masses, a problem confronting many countries including America and Australia.

The advancement of modernism was slowed by the Great Depression (1929–1939) and World War II (1939–1945), both catastrophic events. Australia and its economy were deeply affected by these events, but the end of the war stimulated an explosion of optimism and activity in the form of housing and immigration booms. At this time the term *great Australian dream* was born supporting the concept of freedom and dignity for all and freedom found expression through home ownership for all. America had a similar dream.

It is the architecture of this post-war period stretching to 1965, and beyond, that we now call mid-century modern. In the decades after the war, suburbs of modernist houses emerged in every state of Australia. However, not all domestic built form was adequate, and not all designs were created by architects. In 1947, architect Robin Boyd (1919–1971) started The Small Homes Service of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects (RVIA) which ran until the late 1970s. Under his directorship The Small Homes Service offered couples a small architect designed home conforming to all of the regulations current at the time. Ready to build plans were available for a fee of five pounds. These plans could be either self-built or owners could hire a builder. Similar services began in NSW (1952) and in Canberra (1958), however, neither were as successful as Boyd's model.

Mid-century modern architecture exists in all states of Australia, some more documented than others, and sadly many homes have been demolished.

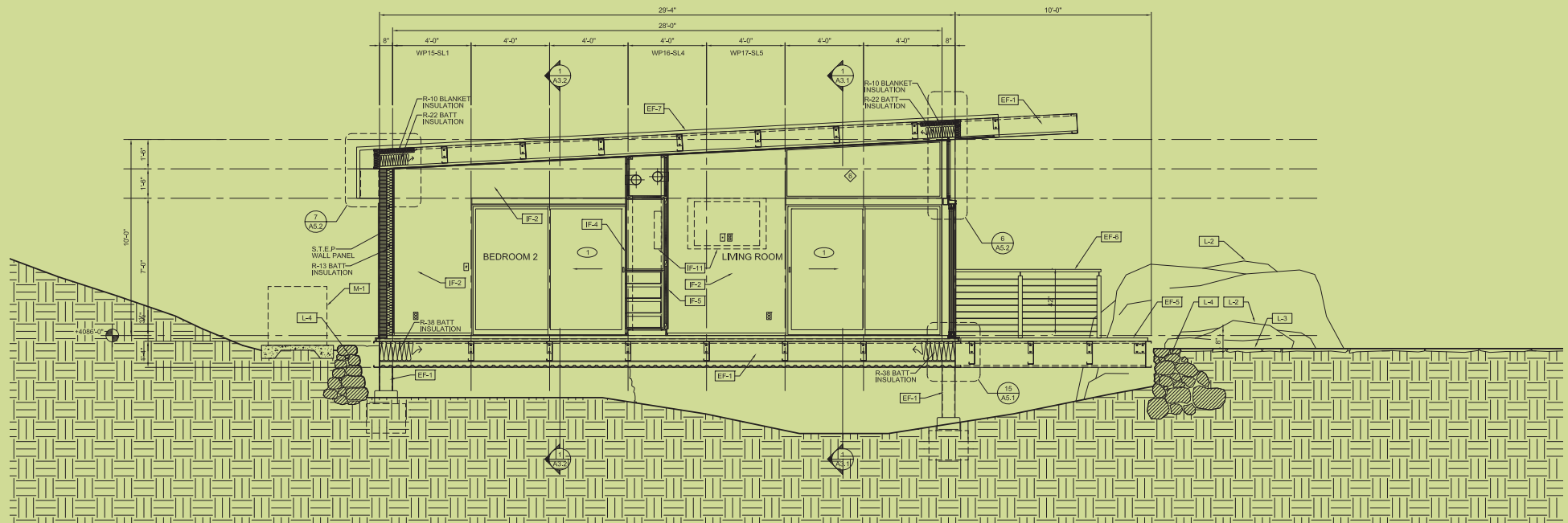
### **Examples of mid-century Modern Australian homes:**

- The Rose Seidler House, 1948, designed by Harry Seidler for his parents (Wahroonga, NSW)
- The Walsh Street House, 1952–3, designed by Robin Boyd. (South Yarra, VIC)
- The Roy Grounds House, 1950, designed by (Sir) Roy Grounds (Toorak, VIC)
- The Round House, 1957, designed by Alex Jelinek (Canberra).
- The Dorney House, 1978, designed by Esmond Dorney (Fort Nelson, TAS)
- The Edith Emery House, 1958, designed by Edith Emery (Sandy Bay, TAS)

Dr Greer Honeywill, Curator

# SECTION 2

## ARCHITECTURE & ENVIRONMENTS



Lance O'Donnell, AIA, *Building Sections*, 2008  
print on paper  
61 x 91 cm  
Courtesy of Lance O'Donnell and o2 Architecture

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS | DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

## **Foundation – Year 2**

Identify how people design and produce familiar products, services and environments and consider sustainability to meet personal and local community needs (ACTDEK001)

Explore the characteristics and properties of materials and components that are used to produce designed solutions (ACTDEK004)

## **Year 3 – 4**

Recognise the role of people in design and technologies occupations and explore factors, including sustainability that impact on the design of products, services and environments to meet community needs (ACTDEK010)

Investigate the suitability of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment for a range of purposes (ACTDEK013)

## **Year 5-6**

Examine how people in design and technologies occupations address competing considerations, including sustainability in the design of products, services, and environments for current and future use (ACTDEK019)

Investigate characteristics and properties of a range of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment and evaluate the impact of their use (ACTDEK023)

## **Year 7-8**

Investigate the ways in which products, services and environments evolve locally, regionally and globally and how competing factors including social, ethical and sustainability considerations are prioritised in the development of technologies and designed solutions for preferred futures (ACTDEK029)

## **Year 9-10**

Critically analyse factors, including social, ethical and sustainability considerations, that impact on designed solutions for global preferred futures and the complex design and production processes involved (ACTDEK040)

Explain how products, services and environments evolve with consideration of preferred futures and the impact of emerging technologies on design decisions (ACTDEK041)

Investigate and make judgments on how the characteristics and properties of materials, systems, components, tools and equipment can be combined to create designed solutions (ACTDEK046)

Investigate and make judgments, within a range of technologies specialisations, on how technologies can be combined to create designed solutions (ACTDEK047)

# MEET THE ARCHITECT | LANCE O'DONNELL, AIA

Key words: Architecture, environment, eco-conscious, desert, accessibility, solutions

Lance O'Donnell, AIA, is the Principal of o2 Architecture. O'Donnell's family has a history of living in the Coachella Valley (USA).

O'Donnell's design approach is strongly influenced by modernist architecture and an awareness of the natural environment. There are several characteristic elements and philosophies embedded in his work. Of equal importance is his consideration of using eco-friendly materials, and a value for ensuring buildings facilitate felt and memorable experiences of a place.

Curator, Dr Greer Honeywill shares additional insightful information to understand the significance of Lance O'Donnell in Palm Springs noting that...

*"In 2009, O'Donnell and o2 Architecture's Martin Brunner partnered with **prefabricated** home developer Dave McAdam and Blue Sky Building Systems to create Rock Reach, a prototype for a modest, sustainable prefabricated home—the first of which was built in the desert near Joshua Tree.*

*Rock Reach is a 're-imagining' of home that connects to Bauhaus ideas about prefabrication as a means of enabling quantifiability, cost reduction and shorter construction periods. Rock Reach was built in just eight weeks."*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 16.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Lance O'Donnell.

Lance O'Donnell, AIA, *Rock Reach*, 2009  
archival pigment print  
78 x 53 cm  
Photograph Lance Gerber  
Image courtesy of Lance O'Donnell and  
o2 Architecture

LOST IN PALM SPRINGS EDUCATION RESOURCE





# MEET THE DEVELOPER | TROY KUDLAC

Key words: Development, appropriation, legacy, design

## Re-imagining, re-presenting and appropriation

Re-presenting (often called appropriating) is the process of using existing elements of an artwork or design with minimal changes to the original. This is quite common in artmaking but can and has also extended to instances in architecture and design.

In the context of Troy Kudlac and Palm Springs in the early era of the 21st century, he incorporated the original mid-century modern homes first developed by Joseph Eichler some 50-70 years earlier. His efforts to appropriate original designs by Claude Oakland, Bob Anshen and Steve Allen of Anshen + Allen extended the original value and legacy of true mid-century design in the modern world.

As curator, Dr Greer Honeywill, notes...

*“Kudlac’s Desert Eichlers, as he calls them, are not copies and the designs were not stolen; they are part of a focused and authentic collaboration with the past. Philosophically, proof of existence is celebrated as Kudlac’s approach extends the moment for the originating architects and Joseph Eichler.”*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 19.

Both Troy Kudlac and Lance O'Donnell, in different ways, are re-imagining design that already exists.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Troy Kudlac.

Troy Kudlac, *Desert Eichler\_4*, 2020  
Gallery Model MC-674, architect Claude Oakland, FAIA  
diptych, archival pigment prints  
43 x 123 cm  
Photograph Peter Tran  
Image courtesy of Troy Kudlac





# MEET THE ARTIST | KIM STRINGFELLOW

Key words: Documentation, social, cultural, research, physical environment, policy, land ownership



Kim Stringfellow, *Jackrabbit Homestead*, Patentee, Worth Brewer, U.S.,  
Patent No. 1146096, Patent Date: 8/11/1954, 2005-2008  
archival pigment print  
45 x 58 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Kim Stringfellow is a multidisciplinary artist and researcher. Primarily concerned with social and cultural relationships with place, her work creatively explores the interconnected influence of human values, policy, the physical environment and public practice.

*Jackrabbit Homestead* is an example of this creative approach, and in this series, she utilises photography and media to showcase and spark discussion about the inception and history of the Small Tracts Act 1938, which was one of several US laws that enabled people to apply to own government land.

Stringfellow's social research approach has been supported by commissions and funding from a range of institutions. *Jackrabbit Homestead* was one such opportunity.

The project focuses on land ownership and desert 'architecture' that links to the endless make-do beach shacks built in Australia. Homemakers in both places dreamt of living a utopian life in the desert or the beach and to achieve this they re-imagined the form place and home would take to enable them to build the dream themselves.

For more information about Kim Stringfellow, and her work with the *Jack Rabbit Homestead* project, please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue.

## RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

The beach shack, in its low cost, low fuss design and construction, has been a common occurrence throughout the coastal regions of Australia. State library archives have photographic references of these dwellings, a key part of housing approaches to coastal areas around Australia.

A similar and unique shack-style housing development to that in Stringfellow's work is the NSW Royal National Park coastal cabin community.

This beachside park has approximately 200 shack dwellings that are dispersed along the beaches and inlets of Era, Little Garie and Burning Palms in the NSW Royal National Park. These houses emerged as settlements from the depression-era before the area was deemed a National

Park. The houses are not accessible by road and the initial construction, as well as present day maintenance must be done by carrying materials in on foot.

Images of these shacks can be viewed here - <https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/travel/travel-destinations/2012/11/gallery-beach-shacks-of-royal-national-park/>

Research has been undertaken about the importance and methods of preserving these shacks in recognition of their historical significance and the communities that inhabit them. Compare this to Stringfellow's documentation of the Jackrabbit Homesteads.

# MEET THE ARTIST | VICKI STAVROU

Key words: Painting, colour, domestic, emotive, water conservation, environment, desert, landscape



Vicki Stavrou, *Late Afternoon Sprinklers*, 2021  
acrylic on gallery cotton canvas  
63 x 94 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Vicki Stavrou is an artist known for her bold use of shape and colour to depict iconic scenes and objects of mid-century modern design. In her landscape paintings, the natural elements are showcased just as vividly as the house façades themselves. The result is an encapsulating feeling of intrigue, awe and wonder for viewers.

Stavrou hasn't herself been to Palm Springs, but as curator, Dr Greer Honeywill notes...

*"The artist's dreams of Palm Springs are so intense she communicates a palpable emotional reaction to place and home through her work."*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 31.

As detailed in the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, Dr Honeywill shares the following information about Stavrou's work, *Late Afternoon Sprinklers* (2021), that is particularly useful for teachers:

*"In Late Afternoon Sprinklers, Stavrou touches on one of the great problems of Palm Springs—the appropriate conservation of the water supply. With more than 40,000 swimming pools, 124 irrigated golf courses and many thousands of private gardens, often with lawns, much water is consumed. In 2011 the City of Palm Springs began a 'Lawn Buy Back Program' encouraging residents to replace lawn with desert gardens. While Stavrou's painting conveys the architecture of place it also highlights an important environmental issue."* p. 31.

Recently Stavrou's focus has expanded to include individual pieces of mid-century modern furniture as the subject, and the use of hand-stitched tapestry thread to create distinctive, embroidered, patterned shadows.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Vicki Stavrou.



# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## GETTING HANDS-ON

### Desert environments

There are many different definitions of deserts and **semi-arid** regions. Some of the things taken into consideration when defining a desert include the amount of rain per annum, the temperature and the humidity. Deserts are dry areas that generally have less than 250 mm of rain per annum while semi-arid regions have between 250 and 500 mm per annum. Hot deserts are those we are most familiar with. Hot deserts, such as those found in central Australia and the Coachella Valley, have extremely high daytime temperatures, but the temperature at night can drop below freezing. This happens because in a desert region there is not much moisture in the air. This moisture usually acts as a blanket and traps some of the heat. In a desert, when the sun goes down, the heat escapes and the temperature drops dramatically.

The following information comes from Education Services Australia (2013). For more information, see the references section at the end of this resource.

### Plant adaptations to conserve water

Plants that live in desert and semi-arid regions have adapted in different ways to conserve water. These adaptations help them survive the extreme temperatures and limited water supplies found in such harsh environments. One of the most common ways for plants to reduce water loss is through adaptations to their leaves.

- As plants can lose a lot of moisture through their leaves, many have evolved leaves that reduce water loss. These include much smaller, thinner, needle-shaped leaves to reduce the surface area. This reduces the amount of water that can evaporate from the leaves. It also means that less heat is absorbed by the plant, thereby reducing the need for transpiration. Having smaller leaves also reduces the amount of leaf area available for photosynthesis, which is one reason why desert plants are often slow growers.
- Some desert plants, known as succulents, have thick, fleshy leaves to store water. This enables them to draw on the water stored in their leaves during dry periods. The thick succulent leaves also help reduce evaporation.
- Some plants have grey or light-coloured leaves which reflect sunlight. This reduces the amount of heat absorbed and the amount of moisture lost.
- Some plants have an outer, waxy coating on their leaves called the cuticle. This helps reduce water loss by reflecting light and reducing evaporation.
- Some plants have the ability to drop their leaves in dry periods.
- Some plants have leaves that curl or roll away from the harsh sunlight. This helps reduce the amount of water lost through the leaves due to evaporation.
- Plants that grow in drier environments have fewer stomata, the pores found on the epidermis (the outer layer of the leaf). By having fewer stomata the plant reduces the amount of water lost through the leaves by evaporation. Many desert plants also have the ability to only open their stomata during certain times of the day, such as at night, when the water loss is greatly reduced due to there being no direct sunlight and a reduction in temperature. Other adaptations apart from those to leaves include the following:
  - Having a double root system. Plants use their roots to bring water from the soil into the body of the plant. A double root system means that the plant has a set of roots near the surface of the soil and another set of roots that go much deeper. This enables the plant to spread their roots both wide and deep to maximise the amount of water it can get from the soil.
  - Completing their life cycle within a year or less. These annual plants take advantage of the times when moisture is available to flower and set seeds before the dry period arrives. The seeds from this type of plant can lie dormant in the soil until the conditions are right for growth, thereby avoiding the drought conditions.

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## Indigenous desert life

Before the colonisation of Australia, Indigenous people lived in all areas of Australia including desert and semi-arid regions. The availability of water is a huge issue in such regions. The Indigenous people had a variety of strategies to overcome this problem and make survival in these regions possible.

Traditional life in these areas was nomadic, with groups of people following the cyclic patterns of available resources. It was chiefly the supplies of water that formed the basis for the movement of the groups. The Indigenous people had a good knowledge of the landscape. This meant they were usually able to move from one water supply to the next. They learnt the location of different waterholes through stories and songs. They reduced the evaporation rate of the water they found in springs by placing large rocks over the openings. Containers were also used to carry water on journeys between water supplies. Indigenous people also knew which plants indicated the presence of water and they would dig into the ground around their roots to get it. Tree roots also store water and the Indigenous people dug and harvested water from the roots of trees such as the red mallee, as well as collecting dew from plants in the early morning. They could also obtain water from animals such as the water-holding frog.

(Education Services Australia Ltd, 2013)

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 3-12

Vicki Stavrou is a landscape painter who explores the relationship between art and design. Blocks of colour, and sometimes patterns, form the bold style of her work. She uses tone and shadow in her depictions, with a confident experimentation of blending techniques when using paint.

- Taking inspiration from Stavrou, work with your students to select a stimulus of domestic life. This can be contemporary or historical, a still life object, motif, building or landscape.
- Guide students to explore the way Stavrou has used colour in her paintings and experiment with the impact of bold blocks of colour, distinct lines through contrasting colours, tonal range to create depth and shadows, and the way the shade of the colours chosen evokes an emotive response to the place or object in focus. Encourage students to layer elements, such as patterns of contrasting colours over solid background shades.
- Guide students to contemplate the way colour can impact the details in an image and draw the eye to different sections of their artwork as an element of visual storytelling. Discuss the experience of working with paint, especially blending as a technique.



# SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE CHALLENGE

## How can architecture and design inform our way of life?

In response to the uncertainties of modern day living, many people are choosing to embrace methods of minimalism and sustainability in their everyday life. When reflecting on the history of Jackrabbit Homesteads, curator, Dr Greer Honeywill, notes, *“This seems to me to be a precursor to the tiny home movement that has been re-invigorated across the globe by those who believe in living ethically and sustainably.”*

(Honeywill, 2022)

Many other artists and architects have also been drawn to revisit the abandoned mid-century buildings in Palm Springs during the 1980s to early 2000s, left over from the housing boom in post-war America.

Explore architecture and design to come up with practical solutions to present day challenges. Some prompts to approach this learning opportunity include:

- Research restoration and renovation as a sustainability method
- Merging indoor and outdoor spaces to support buildings within the natural environment
- Research population trends, housing prices and cost of living in your local area
- Research materials that are cost effective and made using environmentally sustainable sources and technologies
- Look at architecture, design and building materials from the 3rd and 4th centuries and compare them to those being used in the 20th and 21st centuries

*“Architects and designers have control over our built environment; by changing the way we design cities and buildings to connect to rather than disconnect from nature, we can change our proximity to nature and shift our physical relationship to the environment.”*

(Hopkins, 2015)

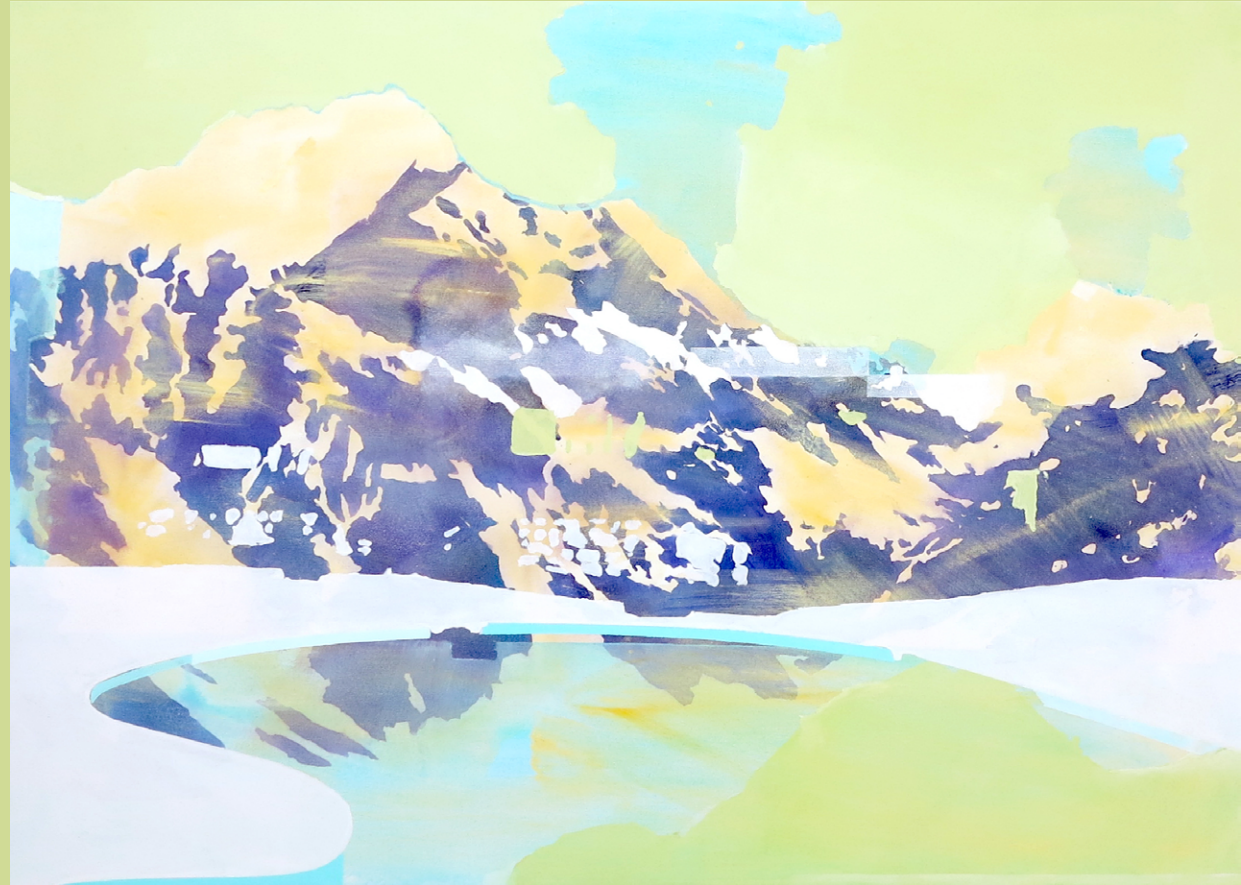
## SECTION 3

### SEEING BEYOND

Artmaking can change the way we look at things and change the way things look. This section invites us to explore the ability for art to affect our experience of a person, object, and in the case of *Lost in Palm Springs*, a place.

In artmaking, artists have creative freedom to play with the elements of art with endless possibilities. Experimenting with colour, line, texture, balance, composition, scale, form, shape, space and value, their works can help us see things we would have otherwise not noticed, and to experience something new with reference to what already exists. In this way, they can make what was once invisible, clear and opens an opportunity for contemplation and appreciation.

We can describe this practice in artmaking as re-imagining.



Paul Davies, *Two Pools* (detail), 2013  
diptych  
acrylic and oil on canvas and linen  
179 x 122 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

# AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CURRICULUM LINKS | VISUAL ART

## Foundation – Year 2

Explore ideas, experiences, observations, and imagination to create visual artworks and design (ACAVAM106)

Use and experiment with different materials, techniques, technologies & processes to make artworks (ACAVAM107)

Create & display artworks to communicate ideas to (ACAVAM108)

Respond to visual artworks and consider why people make visual artworks (ACAVAR109)

## Year 3 & Year 4

Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times (ACAVAM110)

Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks (ACAVAM111)

Present artworks and describe how they have used visual conventions to represent their ideas (ACAVAM112)

Identify intended purposes and meanings of artworks using visual arts terminology to compare artworks (ACAVAR113)

## Year 5 & Year 6

Explore ideas and practices used by artists (ACAVAM114)

Develop and apply techniques and processes when making their artworks (ACAVAM115)

Plan the display of artworks to enhance their meaning for an audience (ACAVAM116)

Explain how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts (ACAVAR117)

## Year 7 & Year 8

Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques (ACAVAM118)

Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes (ACAVAM119)

Present artwork demonstrating consideration of how the artwork is displayed to enhance the artist's intention to an audience (ACARVAM 122)

Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks (ACAVAR123)

Develop planning skills for art-making by exploring techniques and processes used by different artists (ACAVAM120)

Practise techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art-making (ACAVAM121)

Identify and connect specific features and purposes of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making (ACAVAR124)

## Year 9 & Year 10

Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists (ACAVAM125)

Manipulate materials, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions (ACAVAM126)

Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks (ACARVAM129)

Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future artmaking (ACAVAR130)

Develop and refine techniques and processes to represent ideas and subject matter (ACAVAM127)

Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention (ACAVAM128)

Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore viewpoints and enrich their art-making (ACAVAR124)

# SUB-INQUIRY

## THE RE-IMAGINED

- How can art bridge the world between real and imagined?
- How do artists use the real world as a stimulus for creating?
- How do re-imagined representations of place impact our experience of them?

## MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

- How does art help us observe and appreciate the world around us?

# MEET THE ARTIST | KATE BALLIS

Key words: Photography, infrared, otherworldly, architecture, design, emotive, vibrant



Kate Ballis, 2350, 2017  
archival pigment ink on cotton rag  
103 x 153 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Kate Ballis is a photographer inspired to make the everyday unseen, visible in a new light. Her artistic endeavours to create an otherworldly frame of reference for viewers experiencing the natural and built environment prompted Ballis to experiment with infrared photography. The nature of desert plants, as well as the mid-century modern architecture and texture of the buildings in Palm Springs, made for a detailed, bold and responsive documentation of desert architecture.

Infrared photography works on extending the visible light spectrum with the addition of a filter that can pick up the wavelengths of infrared radiation.

The re-imagining of places through this vivid saturation of colour, and the unnatural pink and purple hues are not only nostalgic for the generations of the 1940s-2000s, but also evoke an emotive response to the places Ballis has photographed.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Kate Ballis.



# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

### CREATIVE QUESTIONS | A routine for generating curiosity and critical thinking

In this routine, students are encouraged to think like the artist. Kate Ballis employed curiosity in her approach which supported the re-imagining of this Palm Springs house. Have students engage in critical and creative thinking as follows:

1. Pick an everyday object or topic and brainstorm a list of questions about it.
2. Look over the list and transform some of the questions into new questions that challenge the imagination.  
Do this by transforming questions along the lines of:
  - What would it be like if...
  - How would it be different if...
  - What would change if...
  - How would it look differently if...
  - Suppose that...
3. Choose a question to imaginatively explore the answer by playing out its possibilities. Do this by writing a story, drawing a picture, creating a play or dialogue, inventing a scenario, conducting an imaginary interview. Have the students share their work with their peers.
4. Reflect: What new ideas do you have about the topic, concept, or object that you didn't have before?

The Creative Questions thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## GETTING HANDS-ON

### Infrared technology

The human eye cannot see infrared light as it is beyond the visible light spectrum. Also known as IR light, special filters can be applied to cameras to reveal colours and textures. Photography of this kind began being published in 1910 on experimental film that required long exposures. There is history of this technology being used for both practical and scientific purposes such as in agriculture and warfare. In World War I, infrared photography technology was used to help troops navigate an area, especially in the presence of toxic gas. In the 1930s–1950s infrared photography was used more commercially for artistic purposes, finding its way onto album covers and in popular culture due to the vibrant, multicoloured hues it would cast on everyday objects and places. Up until this time, the technology was reliant on images being processed on special film with long exposures. In the present day, this is no longer necessary, with filters available that attach directly to modern cameras.

In Kate Ballis' work, her use of infrared photography can support us to consider:

- What is the impact of her colour choice, shape and architecture?
- How are natural and built elements contrasted through infrared?

Thinking like the artist:

- Invite students to think of a place or landmark that is well documented in painting or photography.
- What would be a creative way to bring attention to the details?
- How could you re-imagine it so that it is recognisable, but slightly different?

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 6-12

### Infrared Photography

The opportunities for creative photography are endless as the play and experimentation they allow with colour, tone and texture enables us to re-imagine and re-experience real people, places and objects with dreamlike and other-worldly visuals.

If you want to explore infrared photography with your students, there are several creative options using digital technologies.

- Digital camera filters: Infrared filters are available for digital cameras and attach to the lens, and can be relatively inexpensive.
- iPhone technology: Later model iPhones have the ability to shoot in RAW. When you combine this with placing a standard infrared camera filter over the iPhone camera lens, and use the 'night mode' setting for long exposure, you can capture an infrared image. Further image processing can take place in digital programs such as Adobe Lightroom.

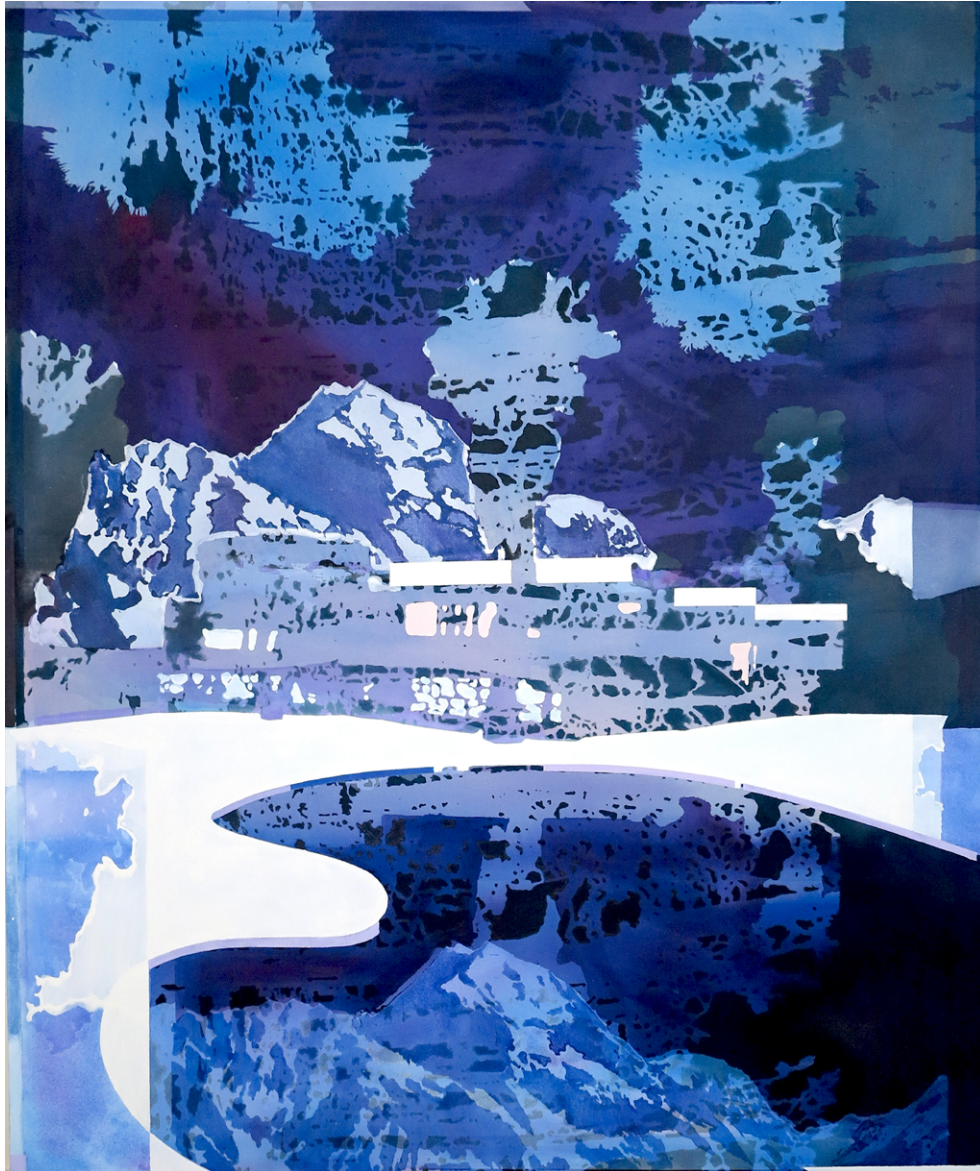
- Photoshop & Lightroom: These programs are available from Adobe. These are desktop computer programs, though Lightroom is also available as a mobile app. Various guides and tutorials are available to explain the process of enhancing infrared images. Hosting this learning experience will be a valuable opportunity to explore contrast, grading, white balance and clarity.
- Other apps: Some apps have the ability to apply infrared adjustments to an image. While this approach will still provide a great opportunity to experience images and their content in a new light, they apply a formula of manipulating an image's greens and yellows, and adjusting lightness and darkness as influenced by red colour channels.
- Analogue film photography: Analogue film photography requires both infrared film and a filter. The filter blocks all light on the electromagnetic spectrum except light in the range of 700-1200nm. This allows only the infrared light to pass through the lens, and blocks out other light sources.

Things to note and explore:

- Filters come in yellow, red and orange which affects the colours translated from the infrared radiation.
- Different films have different sensitivities to light; this will affect the shutter speed choices and exposures. This information will be noted on the packaging. Experiment with different ISO settings.
- Infrared film photography is dependent on the infrared radiation present, with levels being higher in the morning or late afternoon. You must shoot in sunlight, as artificial lighting will only emit visible light.
- You may need to adjust the focus to achieve best results. Consult online tutorials to better understand this.
- Infrared film is very sensitive to light, so must be loaded and unloaded in darkness.
- Enjoy researching and discovering other possibilities.

# MEET THE ARTIST | PAUL DAVIES

Key words: Urban-scape, stencilling, layering, colour, conceptual



Paul Davies' approach to artmaking was inspired by the nature and movement of street art. Intrigued by the graphic art style of street art pieces, the fast-paced production methods, bold colours, and appreciation of the **urban-scape**, he incorporates some of these stylistic elements into his painting practice.

Stencilling and photography form the basis of his approach. Davies takes photographs of places that resonate with him, with an interest in both architecture and natural environments. Formulating stencils, Davies experiments with layering sections and colours in a way that both invites the viewer to experience the places depicted in the final works, and also keeps them at a distance with more intrigue than comfort.

The result is a work that explores the artistic possibilities of playing with line, shape, colour, tone, layering, and positive and negative space.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Paul Davies.

Paul Davies, *Built Landscape III*, 2015  
vinyl acrylic copolymer, on canvas  
180 x 147 cm  
Collection: Patrick Corrigan Collection  
Image courtesy of the artist and the Patrick Corrigan Collection

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

### LAYERS | A structure for analysing creative works

Teachers may choose one or several layers.

Each layer consists of 4 possible elements to identify and examine in a creative work:

- Narrative: The story, the back story, the hidden story, the message
- Aesthetic: The appeal, the reward, the skill/mastery, the new/different/unusual
- Mechanical: Technique, form, structure, methods
- Dynamic: Surprise, tension, emotion, movement
- Connections: To other works (in and out of the medium/genre), to history, to oneself, to the artist's other works or personal life

The Layers thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 2-12

### Stencilling

Stencilling is a technique used by painting over a template that has cut out or removed sections.

- Look at a place that is important to the students, and have them photograph this location. Then look at the images digitally and discuss the fore, middle and background.
- Use tracing paper and a pencil to create an outline of the fore, middle and background.
- Transfer these tracings onto a piece of thick card and cut out to create stencils of the fore, middle and background.
- Layer these over a prepared background, and work from the base layer of colour to paint over these stencilled sections. Using a roller will create a flat colour surface.
- To enhance the detail and focussed exploration of shape, tone and colour, the students can create more stencils to overlay and enhance their compositions.
- Choice around colour, composition and layering should always come back to understanding the experience, intention and mood of the work. Students can use these elements, in association with this technique to consider, 'what is the story here?'
- Look at street art examples to see some of Paul Davies' influences. Discuss.



# MEET THE ARTIST | TOM BLACHFORD

Key words: Photography, vintage, documentation, natural light sources, artistic, ambient



Tom Blachford, *Donald Wexler, Steel House #1, 1962 with 1963 Studebaker Avanti, 2017*  
archival inkjet print on Canson Plantine paper  
93 x 138 cm  
Image courtesy of the artist

Tom Blachford's appreciation for Palm Springs and the vintage mid-century modern elements widely presented and preserved throughout the city were what drew him to document his fascination through photography.

Given the wide factual and artistic documentation that has taken place in Palm Springs, Blachford was challenged, like many artists, to frame the mesmerising architectural and environmental qualities of the city in a unique way.

Curator, Dr Greer Honeywill notes Blachford's resolution during one photographic endeavour in Palm Springs...

*"Gradually he was drawn to the absence of light as a possible solution. On his last night he took an exploratory walk to see what could be captured at night, unaware that it happened to be a full moon. And that was the magic. He found a city bathed in wondrously strange light and was astonished to find no other photographer had taken advantage of this recurring phenomenon. He would return many times to create the seminal body of work, Midnight Modern."*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 12.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Tom Blachford.



# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

### VISUAL ART | GRADES 6-12

One of the qualities of Tom Blachford's work is that he only photographs using natural light sources.

Looking at Blachford's photograph *Donald Wexler, Steel House #1, 1962 with 1963 Studebaker Avanti* (2017), consider:

- What is the impact of the lighting, and shooting at night, on the mood of this image?
- What aspects of the building design stand out in this photograph?
- How does light and shadow enhance detail?

Taking photographs with natural light asks the photographer to create a composition using the available light sources. This differs from artificial light, which gives photographers the ability to frame a subject in perfect lighting conditions.

Blachford's work takes on a different quality by allowing himself to be present in natural conditions and to focus on accentuating the design elements of these homes as they appear in the environment. The result is an experience for the viewer that feels honest and as if we were in the scene of the photograph.

- Using smart phones or other available digital technology, have students explore the school environment paying attention to the way light interacts with the buildings, both internally and externally. Select a building that has windows that allows natural light.
- If possible, revisit this location at different times of the day, and in different natural light conditions.
- Have students experiment with capturing images of the same place from both internal and external perspectives, with an emphasis on the way natural light functions in these spaces.

## ART & DESIGN

The relationship between art and design has always been interconnected, with elements and principles paralleled between each.

The following elements and principles characterise the tools of art and design:

Elements	Principles
Line	Rhythm
Colour	Balance
Tone	Contrast
Texture	Emphasis
Shape	Harmony
Form	Repetition
	Movement
	Proportion
	Scale
	Space
	Unity
	Variety

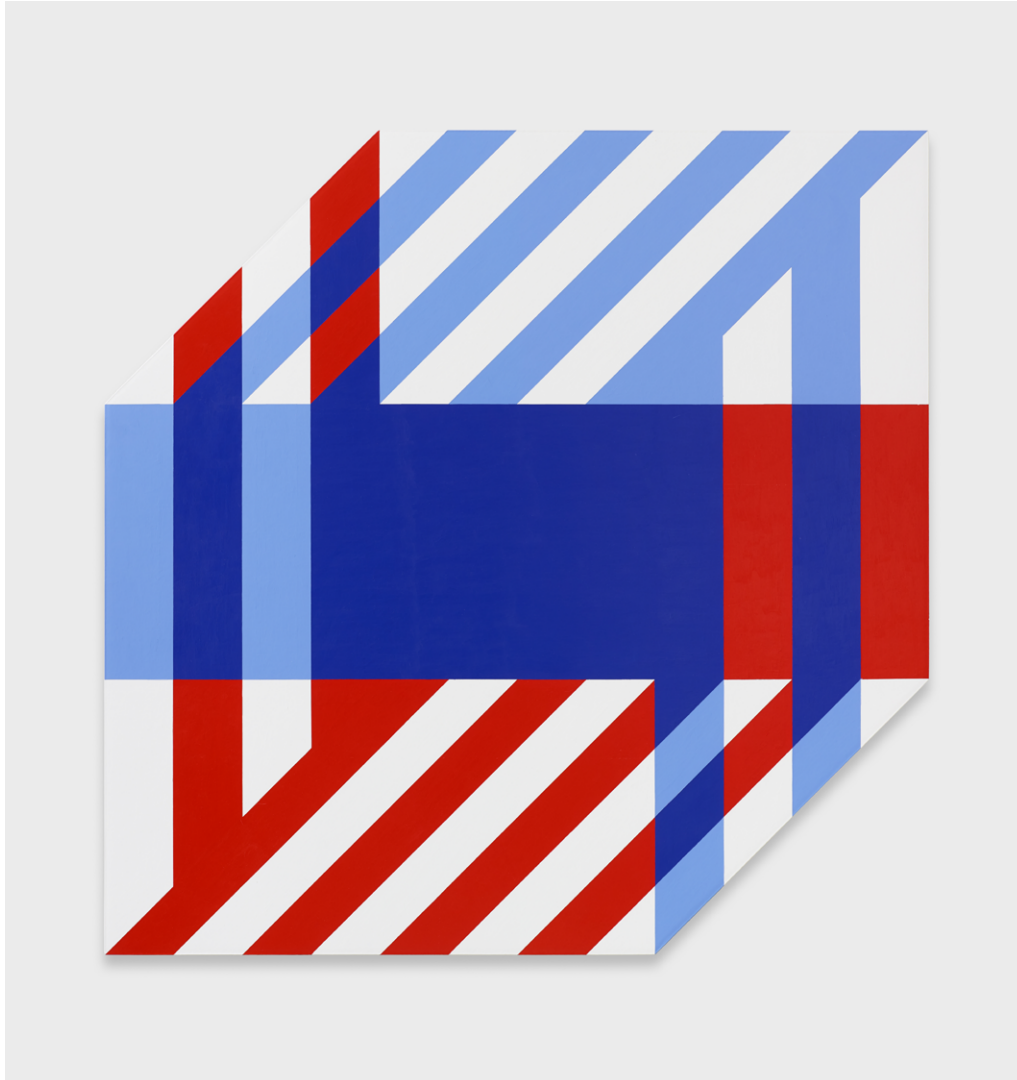
Do you or your students know the difference between art and design?

Discussions around this topic generally agree that the distinction can be made through understanding design to be largely functional, solution oriented, with needs and a brief in mind for the needs of a user. Art, on the other hand, has a primary role in expression, imagination and the generation of an experience that may stimulate a mental, spiritual, or emotional response for artists, viewers or participants.

The elements and principles of art and design show us how these concepts can be applied as visual communication and storytelling tools that serve both the aesthetic and function of design, while also allowing meaning making when applied to artistic expression.

# MEET THE ARTIST | JIM ISERMANN

Key words: Colour, pattern, geometry, domestic life, design, repetition, inversion



Jim Isermann has an artistic career that spans over 40 years. His works are influenced by concepts and materials of post-war industrial design and architecture, with a bold and exploratory application of pattern and colour in artmaking. Working across large- and small-scale pieces, his artistic practice constantly explores the creative possibilities of painting, installation, textiles and sculpture in a way that allows the viewer to re-imagine both art and design.

Over his career, he has drawn inspiration from ideas about domestic life, and the repetitive nature of patterns in his work is a direct parallel to this idea. Reference to the domestic is also evident in the choice of material and form of his work.

Curator, Dr Greer Honeywill notes that while Isermann has developed work over 40 years...

*“For the last two decades pattern has been the prime focus of Isermann’s international practice—paintings, installations, textured walls, ceilings and more. When Isermann chooses to animate patterns across the surface of a work, he creates a sense of joyous movement and an alternative dimension for the viewer. It is the artist’s sense of play, his constant re-imagining of patterns and colour, and his merging of art and design that connect him strongly to modernism and the Bauhaus.*

*To create the paintings in this exhibition, the artist overlaid changing patterns onto transparent cubes which link to the glassy, geometry of mid-century modern houses in Palm Springs. In his titles the artist describes the patterned cubes as in and out, perhaps playing with the idea of access, or egress, to home.”*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue, p. 32.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Jim Isermann.

Jim Isermann, *(2,4,8, in)*, 2017  
acrylic on canvas over aluminium  
122 x 122 cm  
Photograph Martin Elder  
Image courtesy of the artist

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

**SEE, THINK, MAKE, DISCUSS | A routine for critical thinking and exploring relationships and art.**

**Choosing an Artwork:** This routine works by having students relate an artwork to local and global concepts of how we relate, live and work together. Jim Isermann's works are a great example because they have inferential references to domestic life.

Show students all Jim Isermann's works from the exhibition including *Untitled (2,4,8, in)* (2017), *Untitled (8,2,4, in)* (2017) and *Untitled (5,7,3, out)* (2018).

**Preparing Materials:** Gather some artmaking materials that can include simple items such as pencil and paper, or less conventional resources such as aluminium foil, string, tape, recycled materials, or anything else that is lying around. The process of making is more important than the product that is created, so expensive or high-quality art materials are not essential. Limiting the number of materials may also be helpful to spark creativity.

The purpose of this routine is to help students think critically through making. Artmaking allows for a multiplicity of meanings to be shared and explored at once, evoking rather than defining interpretations.

1. SEE: Look closely at the works. What do you notice?  
Make lots of observations.
2. THINK: How might this artwork connect to ideas or questions about domestic life? Brainstorm several thoughts.
3. MAKE: Choose an idea or question about domestic life that came to mind during the THINK step, and explore your thoughts by drawing or making an artwork that reflects your ideas.
4. DISCUSS: Talk about what you made and the domestic idea or question you explored.

The See, Think, Make, Discuss thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



## VISUAL ART | GRADES 3-12

Jim Isermann's works can be characterised by their colourful and patterned composition, and are almost made in series.

In some of Isermann's works, he creates a pattern and uses this to generate a finite number of variations of this pattern.

- What is the impact of this?
- What is the relationship between Isermann's works?
- In what ways can we see elements of design in these works?

- Drawing inspiration from Isermann's application and experimentation with bold colours and distinct patterns, have the students create a design and then replicate it, but this time, alter or invert the colour composition using the following steps:
  1. Select a paper size or other surface to work onto.
  2. Draw or select regular polygons, outlines of motifs, or irregular shapes. Create a template of these shapes and consider the properties of the shape and how they may be similar or different. The number and variety of the shapes can depend on the abilities of your students. They may also vary in scale.
  3. Using the shape templates, students can examine the relationships between them as they duplicate desired amounts of each one and construct a composition. If not cutting each duplicate, they may create outlines of the shapes on the artwork surface. Consider the arrangement and if the work will be based on a pattern sequence. Revisit the definition of patterns with students.
  4. You may guide students to use printmaking techniques for this step in the process. Students can now assign a colour to each shape they have chosen. With whatever colour materials available (paint, crayon, charcoal, stencilling, pencil, watercolour, printing, etc.) students can add colour to the artwork surface.

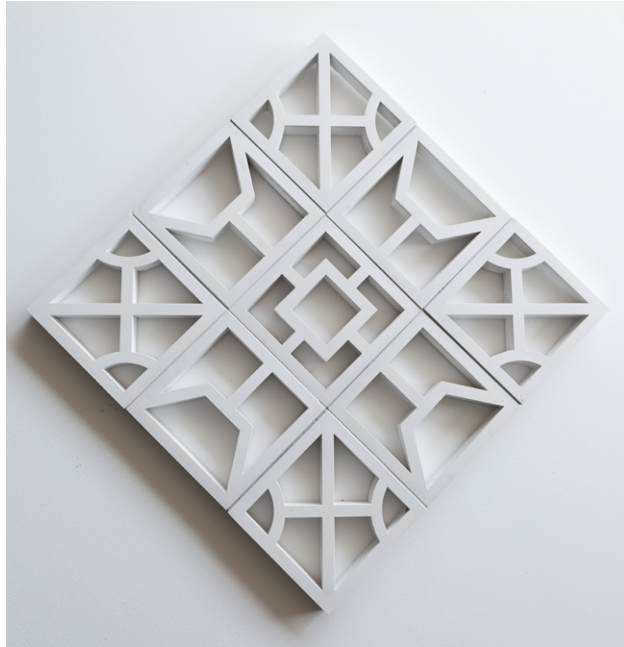
### Inverted colours

- Before step 4, you may prompt students to draw a line in any direction across the surface that divides the overall space into two sections. Research various other Jim Isermann works to see how Isermann has used this approach in some instances.
- Students may also make a second separate artwork as a duplicate of the first.
- Explore the concept of inversion and have students invert the colour composition so that it is in an alternative or opposite order to their original work. Students may use the same medium for colour application, or you may prompt them to create an alternative.
- Students can explore this exercise using digital tools such as photoshop or other applications.

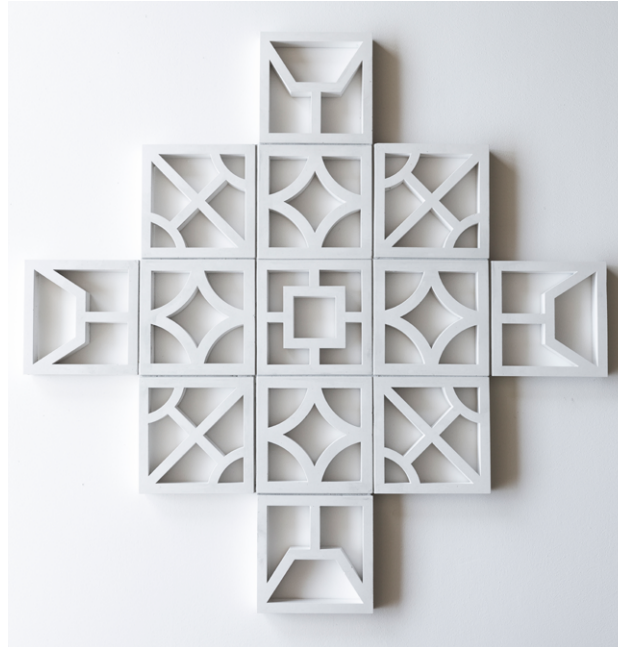
Note that students may refer to artists such as Blake Baxter for a greyscale representation of pattern and colour inversion.

# MEET THE ARTIST | SAM CRANSTOUN

Key words: Research, society, culture, history, symbolism, constructed perspectives



Sam Cranstoun, *Retro Modern 2*, 2015-2022  
72.5 x 72.5 x 3.5 cm  
gypsum cement, polymer adhesive, grout  
Image courtesy of the artist



Sam Cranstoun, *Retro Modern 3*, 2015-2022  
86 x 86 x 3.5 cm  
gypsum cement, polymer adhesive, grout  
Image courtesy of the artist

Sam Cranstoun is a multidisciplinary artist who makes work concerned with the ways popular culture, mass media, art, architecture and design impact the shared construct of our environment. With real world references, including historical and contemporary personalities, events, trends and eras, Cranstoun's approach gives viewers a focussed lens to consider the implications and relationships we have to influential moments in time.

His work is informed by his interest in critical thinking and research around how history is shaped and its function, as well as the creative possibilities or different materials and mediums he uses in the artmaking process itself.

Viewers can look to Cranstoun's work for inspiration and contemplation around the aforementioned themes, but also in looking at his use of colour, scale, typography, sculptural form and tactility, sketching technique, portraiture and realism as artistic features of his work. All of these have strong association with the elements and principles of design.

Please refer to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue for more information about Sam Cranstoun.

# RESPONDING | RELATING TO THE WORLD OF STUDENTS

## VISIBLE THINKING ROUTINE

### **PARTS, PEOPLE, INTERACTIONS | A routine for exploring societal systems and their impacts**

Identify a system and ask the following questions:

- What are the parts of the system?
- Who are the people connected to the system?
- How do the people in the system interact with each other and with the parts of the system?
- How does a change in one element of the system affect the various parts and people connected to the system?

**Purpose:** What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students slow down and look closely at systems, with special emphasis on the various ways people engage with or are implicated in systems. Like the other routines that begin with identifying parts, the routine encourages students to make careful observations. It also encourages them to identify various kinds of causal interactions, and to consider the numerous ways that people affect and are effected by systems.

**Application:** When and where can I use it?

This thinking routine can be used to explore the human side of almost any kind of system. There are systems at work in virtually every aspect of our lives—environmental, governance, financial, workflow, logistical, distribution, mechanical, medicine, etc. The routine can be used on any kind of system, large or small, in which people figure in some way.

**Launch:** What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Before introducing the routine, it can be helpful to discuss the concept of systems with students. A good way to begin is to ask students what they think the word ‘system’ means, and encourage them to brainstorm several ideas and examples. A common definition of a system is: A group of interacting or interrelated elements that form a complex whole. While this definition is accurate, it isn’t very illuminating unless it is accompanied by concrete examples, e.g. subway systems, town recycling systems, governance systems. Since systems are everywhere, it can also be helpful to discuss what isn’t a system.

How can students’ thinking be made visible while using this routine? Working in groups, it is helpful for students to begin by making a list of all the parts and people involved in a system, and then to map it out.

The Parts, People, Interactions thinking routine was developed by Project Zero, a research centre at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

## CONNECTING TO THE ARTIST

How can we visually represent our relationship to the system in focus?

To support an understanding of the multi-layered relevance of Sam Cranstoun’s *Retro Modern 1-3* (2015–2021) to the *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition, as well as the breadth of teaching and learning opportunities it can be a stimulus for, the exhibition curator, Dr Greer Honeywill provides the following information in the exhibition catalogue...

*“For his exhibition, Memphis, TN (2014) Cranstoun examined breeze block patterns and signage, part of the Lorraine Motel, Memphis, and stories related to the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. at the motel. In 2015 Cranstoun’s gaze moved to mid-century modern architecture found on the Gold Coast where the breeze block wall is a defining characteristic. In a practical sense, breeze block walls provide visual patterning, shadow, air flow and privacy; however, in Cranstoun’s hands, the breeze block became a shorthand symbol for the promise made by the Bauhaus and Modernism to deliver affordable, good design to the masses; a melancholy symbol given the promise remains largely unfulfilled. For his exhibition Retro Modern (2015) Cranstoun created cast, wall sculptures as a means of contemplating the history and purpose of the breeze block.”*

Dr Greer Honeywill, *Lost in Palm Springs* exhibition catalogue p. 35.

- Research the history and application of breeze blocks in architecture.
- Explore the geometric designs and composition of different breeze blocks or construct your own.

# MAKING | EXPLORING ART IN PRACTICE

## VISUAL ART | GRADES 6-12

### Art as a reflection

Concepts in art, like in the examples of Sam Cranstoun's work, can be mirrors of our collective experience. His approach to artmaking requires him to zoom out and consider the systems, events and circumstances of our collective responses more objectively, and reframe that back so the viewer is able to see this.

- Revisiting the *Parts, People, Interactions* routine (p. 52), empower students to engage with critically examining a dominant perspective or function of the system, and the key elements at play that shape our experience of it.

### The process and artmaking journey

Like many artists, Sam Cranstoun collects visual references when researching and developing concepts for his artwork.

A large part of his artmaking process begins with browsing or taking photographs. This is used to support the development of Cranstoun's artistic vision, and also part of his research as he collates images from historical eras, key events and movements. Cranstoun then selects a handful of images that are edited in photoshop as he distils his intention. With this visual reference as a foundation, he begins bringing his vision to life in physical form.

- Consider slowing down the ideation phase of artmaking with your students by modelling how to keep an art inspiration journal (either physical or digital) to compile references that inspire them or spark their curiosity.



# GLOSSARY

<b>Bauhaus:</b>	a school of design, architecture and fine arts that existed in Germany in the early twentieth century
<b>Façade:</b>	the front of a building that faces outward, usually toward the street
<b>Frottage:</b>	an artmaking technique that works by taking a rubbing from a textured surface to form part of an artwork
<b>Homestead:</b>	a house, such as a farmhouse or outbuilding
<b>Invert:</b>	to reverse, put upside down, or in the opposite position, order or arrangement
<b>Mid-century modern:</b>	a design movement in architecture, graphic design, furniture and urban development that was popular in the mid 1940s to late 1960s, post-World War II
<b>Multi-disciplinary:</b>	combining several artforms as part of an artist's professional specialisation or practice
<b>Pre-fabricate:</b>	an instance where sections of a building (or item of furniture) are created in sections that allow fast and easy assembling
<b>Semi-arid:</b>	a dry climate that has slightly more rain than an arid (very dry) climate
<b>Topophilia:</b>	the love of or emotional connections with place or physical environment
<b>Urban-scape:</b>	an urban (town or city) landscape

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