SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SKY AND EARTH

SCHOOLS RESOURCE

An education resource designed for high school students
ABOUT THIS EDUCATION RESOURCE

The School Resource is intended to inform teachers’ and students’ understanding and engagement with the works, the artists, and the themes of the exhibition, *Somewhere Between Sky and Earth*. Images and text can be adapted by teachers for educational purposes, and can be used either prior to or following a visit to see the exhibition at Campbelltown Arts Centre.

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

This exhibition brings together reflections on the Australian landscape by artists from across the country through a variety of forms. Landscape art holds a key place in the history of Australian art and this appreciation of the natural world continues in Australian art today.

The exhibition, *Somewhere Between Sky and Earth* focuses on landscape not only as inspiring subject matter in contemporary art, but also as a vehicle for revolution. Artists reflect on landscape today, in a time where society is faced with mass displacement, destruction of the environment, climate change and the use of land as a commodity.

The junction between the battle of survival in the natural world and overwhelming awe mixed with connection to country emulates from these works through generation and family connections.

*Somewhere Between Sky and Earth* encourages us to peer out in consideration to the very point on the horizon where the world disappears and begins once again.

**Key topics to explore**

Australian landscape art
Balance and duality
Climate change and environmental issues
Plein air painting, atmosphere and capturing natural light
Environmental art and activism
Family and connection to country
Hermannsburg School and watercolour landscape art
Internal, spiritual world and external landscapes
Relationship between humans and nature
Revolution
Romanticism, awe and the sublime
Surrealism
ABOUT THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

The works exhibited are part of the Campbelltown Arts Centre Permanent Collection. The collection was initiated in 1962, before the gallery existed, and is now valued at over $8 million. The collection consists of more than 1,460 works, the majority of which are contemporary Australian artworks from 1950 – today.

The Permanent Collection includes paintings, original prints, drawings, sculptures, digital and new media works, weavings and ceramics. Highlights of the Permanent Collection include works by Joseph Lycett, Emily Kngwarreye, John Peart, James Gleeson, Wei Guan, Yvonne Koolmatrie, Fiona Foley, Bronwyn Oliver, Roy Jackson, George Gittoes, Shaun Gladwell and Tom Bass.

Key focus areas for the Permanent Collection include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art
- Local artists of the Campbelltown and Macarthur region
- Historical art of regional significance
- Contemporary Australian art of national significance

Schools are able to view selected works from the collection, through arrangement with Education Officer, Edwina Hill Edwina.hill@campbelltown.nsw.gov.au (02) 4645 4298.
Arthur Boyd
Australia
Born 1920 – Died 1999

Shoalhaven

Colour lithograph
63.4 x 36.1cm image

Purchased 1990

Shoalhaven depicts the area surrounding the Shoalhaven River, where Boyd lived and worked on his property at Bundanon. Many of his works later in life were painted plein air (outside) and depicted this landscape and the surrounding bush land.

In the early 1990s the artist and his wife Yvonne Boyd gifted Bundanon with the intention of establishing a trust for the Australian people, to protect and retain the Boyd dynasty and the remarkable landscape of the Shoalhaven area.

Topics for exploration
Antipodeans and figurative art
Boyd family and dynasty of artists
Bundanon
Gum trees in Australian art
Landscape and mythology
Plein air painting, atmosphere and capturing natural light
Arthur is entranced by the place [Shoalhaven]. He is drawn back to paint the same particular features, the river, its meandering glide ... the rocky hills, the silver white trunks of the gum trees, the dense bush, over and over. But the land Boyd paints is no only beautiful and fragile, it is powerful and dangerous, a prehistoric landscape which traps you in its primordial mysteries.”

Grazia Gunn in Barry Pearce, Arthur Boyd Retrospective, Art Gallery of New South Wales 1993

Image
Arthur Boyd, Shoalhaven, date unknown (photograph by Document)
Theodore Penleigh Boyd
Australian
Born 1890 – Died 1923

*Landscape*

1914
Watercolour on paper
13 x 17.5cm image

Gift of Susie Murphie 2003

The uncle of Arthur Boyd and part of the Boyd dynasty, Theodore Penleigh Boyd is best known for his handling of light in his landscape works, and as an accomplished landscape artist.

He studied at the Melbourne National Gallery School (1905-09) and was introduced to plein air painting while in Paris in 1912-13. *Landscape* was painted in 1914, the same year the artist won the Wynne Prize for another landscape work.

After a series of successes in his career, Penleigh purchased land at Warrandyte and built a home and studio called ‘The Robins’. Many of his works depicted the surrounding landscape and ever present gum trees of this landscape.

During his short career he travelled extensively and exhibited throughout Europe and Australia. Penleigh Boyd was tragically killed in a car crash at age 33.

**Topics to explore**
Artist’s connection to place
Plein air painting, atmosphere and capturing natural light
Gum trees in Australian art
Naturalism and Australian modernism
Quote
“The uncle of Arthur and David, Penleigh Boyd was precociously talented, gaining admission to the National Gallery School in Melbourne at the age of 15. Here he studied under Frederick McCubbin and Bernard Hall, with the former influencing the young artist with principles of plein-air painting and the theories of the Heidelberg School.”
Director’s Choice 2005 Gould Galleries, 2005

Image
Theodore Penleigh Boyd, Landscape, 1914 (photograph by Document)
George Gittoes
Australian
Born 1949

Central Australian Landscape

1980s
Oil on Board and canvas
78 x 100cm

Gittoes works often relay conflict and brutality; Central Australian Landscape is no exception. The work presents the landscape in glorious expression. It could be interpreted as an interchange between earth and fire elements captured in full display, engulfing the land underneath. The painting may also present mountainous ranges of the desert outback with high peaks of crimson.

Central Australian Landscape was created after a period in which Gittoes travelled to Arnhem Land and the Kimberleys to learn about Aboriginal art and dance from the regions.

Gittoes was awarded the Wynne prize in 1993 and was part of the Yellow House Artist Collective in Sydney’s Potts Point. Through painting, performance and filmmaking, Gittoes is a noticeable activist for environmental and social issues for war torn countries in the Middle East and Central Asia. He presents his work as an eyewitness account of social injustices.

Topics to explore
Aboriginal art and dance from Arnhem Land
Aboriginal art and dance from the Kimberley
Contrast
Expressionist art
Landscape and conflict
Simplification of form
Social justice and art
War artists
“Gittoes (b.1949) cut his teeth in the early 1970s with psychedelic paintings and puppet shows at Sydney’s most famous artist co-operative, the Yellow House. Almost from the beginning of his career he was experimenting with a wide variety of media, producing paintings, films, installations and large-scale performances. Never satisfied with any one means of expression, he was equally concerned that his works engage with important issues, from Aboriginal rights to environmental activism.”

John McDonald, George Gittoes exhibition depicts graphic images of war, Sydney Morning Herald 2014

Image
George Gittoes, *Central Australian Landscape*, 1980s (photograph by Document)
James Gleeson
Australian
Born 1915 – died 2008

The Propitious Moment

1987
Oil on Belgian linen
183 x 274 cm

Gift of Michael and Marilyn Reardon Small 2009

Revealing the influence of J.M.W Turner, especially in light, colour and atmosphere, The Propitious Moment is a painting of promise. The artist has captured a seascape scene teeming with projected imaginaries; threatening crustaceans from another world are washed ashore, with grotesque and nightmarish seaside scenes suggesting the subconscious workings of the human mind.

From the 1970s, James Gleeson’s work can be pronounced by interior landscapes and dreamlike inscapes. In his artwork he depicts imaginary truths and is considered one of Australia’s most renowned Surrealist painters.

Topics for exploration
Comparison of Romanticism and Surrealism
Interior mind and exterior world
J.M.W Turner
Relationship between humans and nature
Subconscious
Surrealism
Quote
“In 1983, Gleeson entered the most prodigious period of his painting career and embraced a radically different pictorial format that included a dramatic increase in scale and shift in technique. Initially based on small drawings made of rock-pools situated on the Queensland coastline, these panoramic paintings transported the viewer an alternative reality... The meticulous and sensuous application of paint added a further sense of realism that was simultaneously beguiling and disturbing. A sense of prophecy pervades many of these images. The illogical and disturbing landscape appears to look simultaneously to the past and future – inferring a future, but perhaps also suggesting a punishment for the past.”

Lou Klepac and Geoffrey Smith, James Gleeson beyond the screen of sight, National Gallery of Australia 2005

Image
Queenie McKenzie
Australian
Born circa 1930 - died 1998

Willy Willy Dreaming

1997
Ochre on canvas with gum resin fixative
91cm x 152cm

Gift of Mr Stephen Hearn 2006

Queenie McKenzie is a Gija (Gidja) woman from Warmun (Turkey Creek), in East Kimberley WA. She started painting in the late 1980s after encouragement from her friend, Rover Thomas, one of Australia’s most preeminent Aboriginal artists.

McKenzie worked with natural earth pigments to depict her country, remembered events, family anecdotes and dreamtime stories. Working with dots and colour to define form in the tradition of the Turkey Creek (Warmun) art movement, her landscapes map the World Heritage Area of the Kimberley region. Willy Willy Dreaming was painted by Queenie as a public performance during a Fulbright Symposium: Indigenous cultures in an interconnected world, held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin in July 1997.

The artist explained to Stephen Hearn, who purchased the work, that the spirals in her painting were willy willies, and that the hills near her home in Texas Downs shook when someone dies. The painting has multiple levels, the performative result of being painted over a number of days. Queenie has been noted for her dedication to the preservation of strong law and culture in her area, as well as being a teacher of her language and devoted to inspiring younger artists to paint.

Topics for exploration
Connection to country
Gija (also spelt Gidja, Kija) people and East Kimberley region, WA
Natural pigments and ochre painting
Performance art: action, time and trace/ mark
Perspective
Story and landscape
Turkey Creek (Warmun) art movement
"In little more than a decade of active painting, Queenie McKenzie emerged as a prominent and compelling commentator on the Aboriginal experience. Participating in numerous solo and group exhibitions, she created works that range in scope from the creation of the world, through the violent encounters of the colonial era, to the present day. Many of McKenzie’s paintings are autobiographical: depicting episodes from her life with her own people and with gardiya, on the remote cattle stations of the East Kimberley. McKenzie created a remarkable visual history of a life spent in two worlds: the sacred landscape of the Ngarrangkarni, and her working life on Texas Downs Station."


Image
Queenie McKenzie, Willy Willy Dreaming, 1997 (photograph by Document)
Mandy Martin
Australian
Born 1952

_Drawing For Powerhouse_

1988
Enamel paint, pigment and acrylic binder on craft paper
112.4 x 166cm

Gift of Mr Ralph Renard 2000

_Drawing For Powerhouse_ is an eerie and dark imposition of a man made structure obtruding from the natural landscape. Martin’s use of red and black evokes Armageddon, perhaps alluding to the destruction of nature through human intervention. We become witnesses in this scene to the pending threat that appears on the other side of a still body of water.

In her practice Martin explores the relationship between the man made structures and the natural environment and our passive witness to climate change. Through many of her works, she stresses the urgency of our need to take action to stop climate change before the point of no return.

**Topics for exploration**
Climate change
Coal power and fossil fuels
Relationship between human world and natural environment
Romanticism and Dystopia
“Industry and landscape have remained central concerns in my work since [the early 1980s]. The Romantic industrial sublime informed my work, then and now, and I have always researched Romantic landscape art and artists who deal with the sublime. This led to my current interest in the nineteenth century artist/explorer in Australia, which I primarily see as a metaphor for the spiritual quest in Australia by the non-Aboriginal population and for misplaced priorities. I have a continuing concern with the Australian landscape and the cultural, industrial and agricultural colonization of that landscape.”

Mandy Martin in Anna Voigt, New Visions, New Perspectives, 1996

Image

*Somewhere Between Sky and Earth*, installation view (photograph by Document)
Enos Namatjira
Australian
Born 1920 – Died 1966

Central Australian Landscape

Watercolour on paper
26.2 x 37.2cm image

Gift of Mrs E Umback 1989

Enos Namatjira was a Western Arrernte man, the eldest son of Albert Namatjira (1902–1959) and one of the Hermannsburg School of artists located 125km West of Alice Springs in Central Australia.

Other artists from the Hermannsburg School include Wenten Rubuntja, Walter Ebatarinja, Otto Pareroultja, and his brothers Ruben and Edwin, as well as Albert’s other sons, Oscar, Ewald, Maurice and Keith and his grandson Gabriel.

Artworks produced through the School were viewed stylistically as outwardly Western, figuratively reflecting the central Australian landscape whilst still embodying an intimate knowledge of the land.

The Ghost Gum appears in several of the works produced by Namatjira as a prominent and sacred symbol of Western Arrernte mythology. In this work the Gum sits before the blue Macdonnell Ranges and suggests the understanding and connection of artist to his country.

Topics for exploration
Albert Namatjira
Australian landscape art
Hermannsburg School
Western Arrernte culture
Quote

“Albert Namatjira was the first Aboriginal artist to be recognised within a wider Western art tradition. His watercolours have become synonymous with central Australia. For Namatjira, they expressed a deep relationship with the Arrarnta country for which he was a traditional custodian.

(Albert) Namatjira taught the watercolour technique to his children and other members of the community, who have continued painting in this style at Hermannsburg to this day.”

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art: Hermannsburg School. National Gallery of Australia 2017

Image

Enos Namatjira, Central Australian Landscape, date unknown (photograph by Document)
Daisy Napaltjarri Jugadai
Australian
Born 1955 – Died 2008

*Tjungupi Creek (Haasts Bluff)*

1996
Synthetic polymer paint on linen
181.5 x 136.9cm

Purchased 1996

Daisy Napaltjarri Jugadai was a Pintupi-Luritja woman from the Western Desert region and was recognised for her use of imagery and expressive interpretation of the landscape through her Tjuukurpa, spiritual knowledge and complex relationship to the land.

*Tjungupi Creek (Haasts Bluff)* depicts the Haasts Bluff area near The Ikuntji Women’s Centre, which Daisy Napaltjarri Jugadai played a significant role in establishing in 1992.

The intensity of the colours used in her paintings reflect the vibrancy of the desert colours, representing the journeys the local women have made over generations in hunting and collecting native foods, and the vegetation of the surrounding area.

**Topics for exploration**
- Connection to country
- Flattened perspective
- Ikuntji Women’s Centre and Ikuntji Artists
- Journey and landscape
- Pintupi-Luritja language and Western Desert region
- Perspective
- Symbolism and repetition
- Tjuukurpa
- Vibrant colours

**Quote**

“Daisy is well known for her unique style with its representation of the native flora of the Haasts Bluff region. What to the untrained eye looks like a colourful painting is in fact a detailed description of a section of the desert showing all the bush tucker growing in the area. Using well-known landmarks – such as mountains and rivers – as guides to the viewer, Daisy makes it possible to orientate oneself and discover where the likely location of a humble meal might be”

Artist biography, Ikuntji Artists 2017
Image
Daisy Napaltjarri Jugadai, *Tjungupi Creek (Haasts Bluff)*, 1996 (photograph by Document)
**Wenten Rubuntja**  
**Australian**  
Born circa 1923 – Died 2005

*Emily Gap, Northern Territory*

Watercolour and pencil on paper  
34 x 23.4cm

Purchased 1993

Wenten Rubuntja was an Arrernte man from the Central desert who was influenced by the Hermannsburg School and Papunya Tula artists. He was a key figure in political activism and in the establishment of the Aboriginal land rights movement and in reconciliation.

In the 1950s he began painting in watercolour, inspired by his father’s cousin Albert Namatjira and depicting the dramatic desert landscape. He spoke of the importance of painting the landscape for Aboriginal culture, respecting the Tywerrenge, the sacred spirit of the land and of particular objects and the songs that came out from the country in these areas and the sacred sites from the land around his country.

**Topics for exploration**  
Aboriginal land rights and art  
Hermannsburg school  
Papunya Tula art  
Reconciliation  
Tywerrenge

**Quote**  
"While European people can take a photo and say ‘What a pretty country’, we can sing the song for that country. The country has got sacred sites, that stone, that mountain has got Dreaming. We sing that one, we’ve got the song. We’ve got to keep singing and painting and holding ceremonies. As this country is nothing else but culture, and all over Australia this culture is alive."

-Wenton Rubuntja quoted in Aboriginal Desert Art Gallery 2003
Image
Wenten Rubuntja, Emily Gap, Northern Territory, date unknown (photograph by Document)
Philip Wolfhagen
Australian
Born 1963

Second Illusory Field

1991
Oil on cotton duck
173 x 271cm

Open Award winner 1992 Fishers Ghost Art Award

Based in Tasmania, Philip Wolfhagen is celebrated for his moody and atmospheric landscape paintings. Capturing changing light, he seeks to emulate qualities which induce an emotional reaction from his audience similar to the response evoked by the landscape itself.

His work has produced a revival in the tradition of Australian landscape artwork in contemporary art; referencing his precursor John Constable, the artist paints places he knows and has a connection to, such as the familiar landscapes near his home.

Second Illusory Field is almost abstract in quality, with the horizon cutting through the canvas. The perspective of the work is such that it is entirely up to the viewer to decide if they are looking upward or across. The audience can similarly imprint their own story behind this captured moment in time.

Topics for exploration
Impasto and textured paint
Landscape of Northern Tasmania
Light and atmosphere
Perspective
Sublime and Romanticism
“Wolfhagen emphasises the feeling of reverence he has for the source of his imagery, and this is akin to a sense of spiritual discovery:

‘The spiritual quality in my work resides in the vanishing point on the central horizon. I cannot deny the ritualistic nature of the act of painting and the feeling of spiritual elation I experience when I achieve, in a passage of paint, what I had in mind and soul.’

For Wolfhagen, spirit is the very genesis of art. His paintings reflect the awe he feels in transcending personal boundaries and in exploring both the inner and outer landscape of his perceptions.”

Philip Wolfhagen and Nevill Drury, Philip Wolfhagen, Australian Painting Now 2000

Image
Philip Wolfhagen, Second Illusory Field, 1991 (photograph by Document)
CONTACTS AND ENQUIRIES
For school excursions, artist incursions or general exhibition enquiries, please contact:
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Images: courtesy Document Photography.

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