Photo: Newspix/Liam Kidston

Olafur Eliasson
Danish, b. 1967
The Cubic Structural Evolution Project, 2004
white LEGO bricks (various sizes), wood, mirror
dimensions variable
Installation view at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2010
Courtesy of Queensland Art Gallery, South Brisbane, Australia

1

EXPLORE ART

As an art detective, you will discover that questions and ideas arise as you investigate art. Many of these questions will relate to artworks, artists and audiences, which all play an important role in the art world.

Ideas about art can be challenging, and questions about art often have no absolute answers.

Although artworks, artists and audiences are discussed separately in this chapter, in reality, there are strong relationships among them. Understanding these relationships is part of the work of an art detective.

As you explore different aspects of the art world and investigate more artworks, you will form your own opinions and ideas and ask questions about art. That is part of the fun and challenge of being an art detective.

This chapter provides starting points to help you explore the art world.

Learn about:

- artworks, artists, audiences and how they relate to each other
- starting points, tools and words for exploring art
- processes and ideas in art, including how artists use visual diaries and drawing.

Learn by:

- thinking about questions related to art, artists, audiences and their relationships
- considering viewpoints for exploring artworks
- discovering tools for organising thinking and learning in art.

ABOUT ARTWORKS

1.1 THINKING ABOUT ARTWORKS

What comes to mind when you think of an artwork?

Perhaps it will be a sculpture such as *Discobolus*, made in Greece more than 2000 years ago (p. 184), or a painting such as *River Landscape with Tiburtine Temple at Tivoli* by French artist Claude Lorrain (p. 28)? These types of paintings and sculptures have been widely admired and collected in **western art** for hundreds of years, so it is not surprising that such artworks often come to mind when you think about art. Indeed, a painting in a gold frame is sometimes used as a sign or symbol for art.

Art can take many forms

Although what first comes to mind when people think of art is often a painting or sculpture, artworks vary greatly in form, purpose and presentation.

You see this when you compare the traditional **landscape** painting by Claude (p. 28) with *Red Earth* by Andy Goldsworthy (p. 56), an **ephemeral** site-specific artwork made in and of the landscape. Comparisons with other works inspired by the landscape – including *Walking Through a Pine Forest in Moonlight* (p. 121), a Chinese scroll painting from around the same time as Claude's painting, and the *Women's Native Title Painting* (p. 118), a collaborative artwork made by the Spinifex people of the Great Victoria Desert, Western Australia – also illustrate the fact that art can take many different forms.

Kuncan
Chinese, 1612–c. 1674
Walking Through a Pine Forest in Moonlight, 1660 (detail)
ink and pigments on paper
207.2 × 97.6 cm (image and sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Westpac Banking Corporation, Founder Benefactor, 1978
(AS7-1978)

Claude Lorrain
French, c. 1604/05–1682
River Landscape with Tiburtine Temple at Tivoli, c. 1635 (detail)
oil on canvas
38 × 53 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1967 (1796–5)

Culture and society shape art

Culture and society shape the visual arts. They influence why art is made, what it is made from, how it is made, who it is made for, and how and where it is displayed. Every culture and society has ideas, values and beliefs, and these influence the visual arts.

Art has been created and valued by artists and audiences for many reasons, including to:

- describe or commemorate places, people, events, experiences and objects
- communicate, explore, preserve or challenge ideas, history, beliefs and traditions
- express cultural, national or personal identity
- express feelings and emotions
- explore the imagination and subconscious, including the world of fantasy and dreams
- communicate abstract qualities such as power, beauty, serenity and gloom
- provoke a reaction
- influence opinion
- tell stories.

Tradition, convention and change

How art is made and presented is influenced by social and cultural conventions. The visual arts are rich in tradition, but they are also constantly transforming, making them dynamic and exciting.

Cultural conventions can include visual language, such as how art elements and principles are used and interpreted. For example, different cultures have different conventions associated with the representation of space (pp. 96–9) and the symbolic meaning of colour (pp. 70–1).

The type of art that is made is also influenced by the society in which it is made. For example, traditionally, Chinese artists and audiences have favoured calligraphic ink painting, whereas European artists and audiences have favoured oil paintings on canvas.

While many conventions endure for long periods and continue today, ideas about art can evolve and change over time. For example, many Australian Indigenous artists have adapted conventional forms of cultural expression, such as ceremonial body painting and rock painting, to create artworks in new forms, such as acrylic paint on canvas.

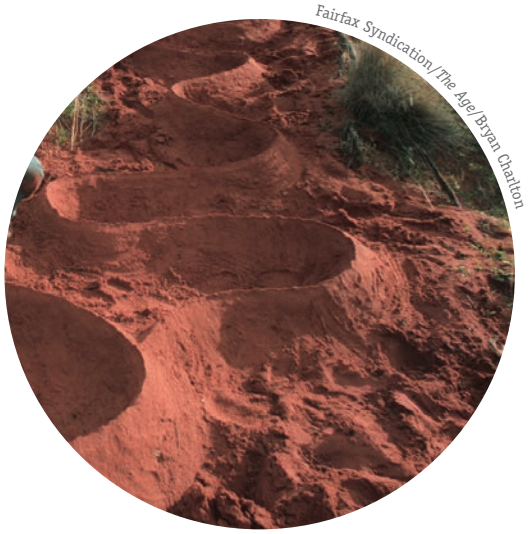
Contemporary art and art exhibitions now frequently reflect global influences.

Art can be anywhere

Throughout history, artworks have been made for and displayed in many locations, including temples, churches, palaces, private homes and public buildings. The idea of displaying art in public galleries is a convention that developed in Europe in the eighteenth century, but it has had an enduring effect on how people experience art.

Contemporary artforms such as **performance art**, **installations**, street art and **land art** challenge many of the conventions associated with the display of art. Often, such artworks exist only for a limited time, although a photographic or video record of them may remain.

Knowing something about the original context in which an artwork was displayed can help your understanding of an artwork.



Fairfax Syndication/The Age/Bryan Charlton

Andy Goldsworthy
English, b. 1956
Red Earth, 1991 (detail)

Art can be anything

In **western art**, ideas about art, including what it could be made from and how it could be presented, changed dramatically in the twentieth century.

Artists associated with the development of **modern art** in the early twentieth century approached traditional artforms, such as painting and sculpture, in new ways. Some artists started to work with unconventional materials, including **found objects**. In the second half of the twentieth century, emerging artforms such as performance art and installations blurred the boundaries between the visual arts and other arts, such as theatre. Materials, techniques and subjects were borrowed from traditional crafts and popular culture, which had not previously been highly valued in the visual arts. Today, artists use almost anything to make art, from industrial products to body fluids (p. 208).

Visual arts practice is dynamic

While people often think of art as something to look at, some new forms of art immerse audiences in environments or experiences that require them to do more than just look. Some art requires you to use other senses, such as hearing or touch. Artworks such as *The Cubic Structural Evolution Project* by Olafur Eliasson (p. 62) need you to help create them. *Geology* (p. 61), by David Haines and Joyce Hinterding, shows how technology has opened up new artistic possibilities.

1. Select an artwork in this book that you find easy to define as art. List three reasons why this artwork is obviously art.
2. Select an artwork in this book that you know nothing or little about but you feel is difficult to define as art.
   - List three reasons why you feel it is difficult to define it as art.
   - Read the text about the work you chose. Does the explanation change your opinion of the work? Why?
   - Compare your chosen artwork with those chosen by others in the class. Have others chosen similar or different examples? What does this reveal about ideas about art?

ABOUT ARTISTS

1.2 MAKERS AND CREATORS

Artists are people who make art, but what else do you know about artists?

Photo: Terry Owen

John Brack in his studio in February 1977 as he completes ***Nude on Shag Rug*** (1976–77)
© Helen Brack

To find out more about the working life of artists today, read pp. 190–1, 194–7.

Follow the link from **http://artdetect3e.nelsonnet.com.au** to read the stories of contemporary Australian artists on the website of the National Association for the Visual Arts.

Many artists, many paths

There are many different paths to becoming an artist. In some societies, including in many Indigenous cultures, artists learn under the mentorship of senior artists.

Ron Mueck's parents were toymakers, and he created models for television and film before taking up art (pp. 172–3). Reko Rennie became an artist after working as a journalist (p. 81). He says, 'I realised that in art I had more power than I ever did as a journalist.'[1]

Artists come from every type of cultural, social and educational background.

What is the role of artists?

In some historical periods, artists have been skilled **artisans** who crafted products for others, such as the artists who produced art for the tombs of ancient China (p. 48). In some cultures, including Indigenous Australian cultures, artists play a significant role in communicating and preserving cultural knowledge (pp. 22–3, 146–7).

In western cultures, artists have often been seen as people with special talents and insights, and as creators of new and original images and forms; however, many contemporary artists choose to rework existing images and forms (pp. 170–1).

While many artists have made artworks that celebrate aspects of their society, artists also have a long history of criticising the values, history, people and institutions of society (pp. 156–61).

Some artists offer insights into imaginary worlds and create visions of the future (pp. 166–7).

Throughout history, the work of artists has also often been widely valued for its beauty and the skill required for its creation.

What is art practice?

When artists talk about their **art practice**, they are referring to everything involved in how they make art: how and where they work, what their art is about, who they work with and how they present their work.

Research is an important part of most artists' work. It may involve visiting and studying places, observing and collecting things, and learning more about ideas, issues and the work of other artists.

Pictures from History/Bridgeman Images

Chinese Emperor Qianlong with a writing brush at his desk

Courtesy of Louise Allerton

Artists from the Women's Collaborative at Tjintirkara

© Cameron Robbins

Cameron Robbins and his wind drawing machine at Queenscliff pier

Many artists keep visual diaries in which they record thoughts, plans and images that inspire them. Trialling and refining ideas is an important aspect of art practice (pp. 12, 16–17). Some projects require extensive planning and development, including preliminary drawings, models and experiments.

The art practices of some artists, including many Indigenous Australian artists, are often based on the cultural knowledge and understanding acquired over a lifetime.

Where do artists work?

Artists' work environments are determined by their personal circumstances, their interests and the society or culture in which they live and work.

Historically in China, artists were scholars who worked in studies that were designed as quiet, contemplative spaces. They were surrounded by carefully selected objects that provided moral and philosophical inspiration for **calligraphy**, painting and poetry.

Historically in Europe, master artists worked in busy **studios**, aided by assistants, apprentices and students who mixed paint, prepared canvases and worked on paintings under the master's supervision.

Today, some artists work at home in part of their living space. (Many artworks have been made on kitchen tables!) Many artists work in studios surrounded by equipment, materials and sources of inspiration, such as objects, books and images. Some artists, such as Marc Quinn (p. 208), have large studios and employees who help them produce artworks or manage administrative tasks.

Artists who work with specialist technology or materials sometimes work in industrial sites or laboratories.

Some artists create work on location. This includes artists who create **performance art** or **site-specific installations**, as well as many artists who make work inspired by the natural environment, such as Cameron Robbins (pp. 17, 163). Working outdoors is common in Australian Indigenous communities, as seen in the photograph of artists from the Women's Collaborative at Tjintirkara.

Working with others

Although many artists work alone in a studio, an artist's practice usually involves working with others. Artists who share common interests may also share ideas, work closely with each other or exhibit together.

Some artists choose to work collaboratively with other artists or specialists. **Collaboration** involves all participants working together equally to plan and create an artwork, such as in the work produced by the Spinifex artists (pp. 118–19).

Artists do not just make art

The business of being an artist involves more than just making art. It can involve applying for grants, organising materials and equipment, and doing a range of tasks associated with exhibiting, promoting and selling artwork, including working with **curators** and art dealers.

Artists are also often expected to comment on their work in interviews or artists' statements, and they are expected to participate in public events, such as exhibition openings and talks. Some artists choose to make such activities an important part of their work; others prefer their interests to be represented by dealers or other art professionals.

A whole industry revolves around the work of artists.

1 Think of an artist who interests you. Imagine you are a journalist, and write a letter to the editor of a magazine proposing an article about the artist.
   - Explain why you think your chosen artist would make an interesting subject for an article.
   - List four questions you would like to ask the artist.
2 What roles do you think artists have in contemporary society?
3 Look at the photographs of the artists at work on these pages. What does each photograph reveal to you about each artist's practice?

Fairfax Syndication/*SMH*/James Hopwood

Grace Cossington Smith

ART AND AUDIENCES

1.3 THE ART OF CONNECTION AND EXPERIENCE

Making and experiencing art are closely connected. Artists make artworks to communicate ideas to audiences.

Getty Images/AFP/Torsten Blackwood

Visitors viewing art in an art gallery

Photo: Newspix/Liam Kidston

Olafur Eliasson
Danish, b. 1967
The Cubic Structural Evolution Project, 2004
white LEGO bricks (various sizes), wood, mirror
dimensions variable
Installation view at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2010
Courtesy of Queensland Art Gallery, South Brisbane, Australia

Points of connection

When you think of an art audience, what comes to mind? Do you think of people admiring art in a gallery? Perhaps you think of people looking at art in other places: in public buildings, on the streets or in private homes.

The audience for art includes everyone from art experts to people who look at an artwork because they happen to pass it on the way to school or work. Art is often a part of cultural or religious ceremonies.

The audience for art also includes the many people who see art **reproductions** in books, on posters or online.

A matter of opinion

Like any industry, the **art industry** includes experts whose opinions are highly valued and often influential. Apart from artists, art industry experts include **art critics**, **curators**, **art historians**, art writers and collectors.

Art experts gain their expertise by studying art, researching, working with artists and looking at a lot of art. They then share their knowledge with audiences via exhibitions, reviews, books, blogs and other forms of media.

Art is a form of communication and expression so, not surprisingly, many people

Dave Carpenter. Image: CartoonStock.com

"We better check first to see if that is trash or a piece of art."

obtain great pleasure and meaning from art without knowing the experts' opinions; however, expert opinions can improve your understanding of an artwork.

Expert opinions can be particularly helpful when you are examining artworks that use unfamiliar subject matter, visual language or conventions, including symbolism. For example, the symbolism and meaning of *Avalokitesvara* (p. 152) would be clearly understood by audiences familiar with Buddhism, but they might need to be explained to other audiences.

A matter of experience

Audiences find their own meaning in art. Everyone, including art experts, has their own ideas, beliefs and experiences that influence how they react to and interpret art. People's beliefs and experiences are influenced by factors such as age, gender and cultural, social, family and educational background.

People respond to artworks in different ways. The process is often unconscious, but it involves their senses, emotions and intellect.

- Senses respond to elements such as colours, textures or sounds in an artwork.
- An artwork might trigger emotions, feelings or personal associations.
- People use their intellect to think about the ideas an artist is trying to communicate.

Depending on the artwork, the audience and the context, some of these responses may be more important than others.

Chris Madden. Image: CartoonStock.com

The curse that afflicts abstract painting

Layers of meaning

The artist's intended meaning may be just one of many ideas associated with an artwork. Part of the role of an art detective is to discover different meanings and to evaluate their significance.

Sometimes artworks accumulate layers of meaning over time. The history of an artwork can add to what audiences know about the artist's intentions and affect how an artwork is perceived. The theft of Picasso's *Weeping Woman* (p. 212) added to the stories and history associated with the painting.

Many contemporary artists make artworks that acknowledge that the meaning of an artwork can vary from viewer to viewer. Some artists encourage the audience to find their own personal meaning in a work. They sometimes do this by including layers of images or elements that can communicate different meanings to different people. In this way, they evoke a personal response from viewers.

Some artists involve audiences in the making of the work; for example, Olafur Eliasson's *The Cubic Structural Evolution Project* depends on audience participation (p. 62). Some artists, including Peter Booth (pp. 140–1), deliberately avoid giving titles to their artworks to leave the meaning open for interpretation.

1 Look at the two photographs and two cartoons on these pages. Identify two ideas that each image illustrates about art audiences and how they react to and form opinions about art.

2 Think of an artwork in a public place, perhaps a sculpture or a mural. It could even be an artwork in your school or a major gallery.
   - Describe the work and the location.
   - List at least two different groups of people who may be part of the artwork's audience.
   - Do you believe that both groups would understand the artwork in the same way? Why?

3 Find an artwork that you feel strongly about.
   - What personal meaning does the artwork have for you?
   - What is it about the work that encourages your strong response?

VIEWPOINTS

1.4 PERSPECTIVES FOR MAKING AND INTERPRETING ART

When making and interpreting art, it can be useful to consider different viewpoints.

Viewpoints

Four useful viewpoints for exploring art are the cultural, personal, formal and contemporary. Each viewpoint offers a different perspective for learning about art, artists and audiences, and the relationships between them.

Viewpoints are useful tools for exploring and understanding the different approaches that:

- artists (including you) take when making artworks
- audiences (including you, art critics and other commentators) take when looking at artworks.

A cultural viewpoint

A cultural viewpoint considers how culture, including social, religious and political beliefs, influences art. Culture can affect what the artwork is about, what it is made from, how it is made and how it is displayed and viewed.

Exploring art from a cultural viewpoint may include asking:

- Where was it made, when was it made and who made it?
- How has the culture of the time, place and artist influenced what the artwork is about, how it was made or why it was made?
- Who was the intended audience for the artwork?
- How is the display of the artwork influenced by culture?
- How might the audience's cultural background influence their reaction to the artwork?

Units 4.19 and 4.20 focus on artworks where a personal viewpoint is important.

Units 5.1–5.5 focus on artworks where a cultural viewpoint is important.

A personal viewpoint

A personal viewpoint considers how personal experiences or inner worlds – such as dreams, imagination, memories, feelings and the subconscious – influence art. An artist's personal viewpoint affects what an artwork is made from, how it is made and often how it is displayed.

Exploring art from a personal viewpoint may include asking:

- Who made it?
- How did the personal experiences and inner world of the artist influence what the artwork is about, how it was made, why it was made and how it is displayed?
- Who was the intended audience? Who is the current audience? How may the personal perspectives of different audiences influence how the work is understood?
- If someone other than the artist designed the display of the artwork, what personal perspectives have influenced its display?

Tibeto-Chinese
Avalokitesvara, 17th–18th century (detail)
gilt-bronze, semi-precious stones, pigment
115.0 × 72.5 × 45.4 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1966 (1485–D5)

The Art Archive/Nasjonal Galleriet Oslo

Edvard Munch
Norwegian, 1863–1944
The Scream, 1893 (detail)

A formal viewpoint

A **formal** viewpoint considers the structure or form of an artwork. The structure of an artwork is made up of **art elements** (colour, shape, line, tone, form and texture), **design principles** (harmony, balance and variety), materials and techniques (such as painting, photography, drawing, new media and **found objects**). Artists use art elements, art principles, materials and techniques as a visual language to communicate ideas.

Exploring art from a formal viewpoint may include asking:

- What art elements, art principles, materials and techniques were used to make or display the work?
- How were they used?
- What ideas are suggested by the use of art elements, art principles, materials and techniques?

Melinda Harper
Australian, b. 1965
Untitled, 2000 (detail)
oil on canvas
183.0 × 152.3 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Presented through the NGV Foundation by Robert Gould, Founder Benefactor, 2004 (2004.358)

A contemporary viewpoint

A contemporary viewpoint involves considering how current practices or ideas influence art, including what it is made from, and how it is made, displayed and viewed.

A knowledge of current art practices (such as participatory art, digital technology and **appropriation**) and ideas (such as **feminism** and globalisation) can be useful for understanding both the art of today and art from the past. For example, an understanding of feminism can provide an interesting perspective when studying how women were depicted in historical artworks.

Exploring art from a contemporary viewpoint may include asking:

- Have contemporary practices been used in the making or displaying of the work? If so, what ideas or meanings are suggested by these practices?
- Have contemporary ideas influenced the artist's choice of subject and intended meaning? If so, how?
- Do contemporary ideas influence the way the artwork is viewed by audiences?

Anne Zahalka
Australian, b. 1957
The Sunbather No. 2, 1989 (detail)
C-type photograph (edition of 20)
76 × 76 cm (image area)
Art Gallery of New South Wales

Which viewpoint?

It is possible to consider all four viewpoints when investigating art; however, one or two viewpoints will often be enough to give a good understanding of an artwork.

Depending on the artist and the artwork, some viewpoints are more relevant than others. For example, for many artists, including Australian Indigenous artists, cultural identity and expression are an important part of art-making. Exploring their artworks from a cultural viewpoint will provide valuable insights. Other artists may create work inspired by their dreams and imagination. Focusing on a personal viewpoint will therefore reveal important information about their artworks.

Choosing the most appropriate viewpoints for exploring an artwork is part of an art detective's skill.

1 Find out more about the artworks shown on these pages. Why do you think each image has been linked with one viewpoint?

2 Choose any artwork from this book. Write a few paragraphs about it, focusing on your own personal viewpoint. How does the artwork link to your experiences, inner worlds, feelings and memories? Then, choose one other viewpoint to write about.

Units 3.15 and 5.16 focus on artworks where a formal viewpoint is important.

Units 4.8 and 5.8 are some of the many in this book that focus on artworks where a contemporary viewpoint is important.

1.5 VISUAL THINKING AND RECORDING

Most artworks you see are finished works, but behind every artwork is a process.

The process of creating art typically includes researching, developing, refining, trialling, realising and evaluating ideas. Visual diaries play an important role in the creative process of many artists.

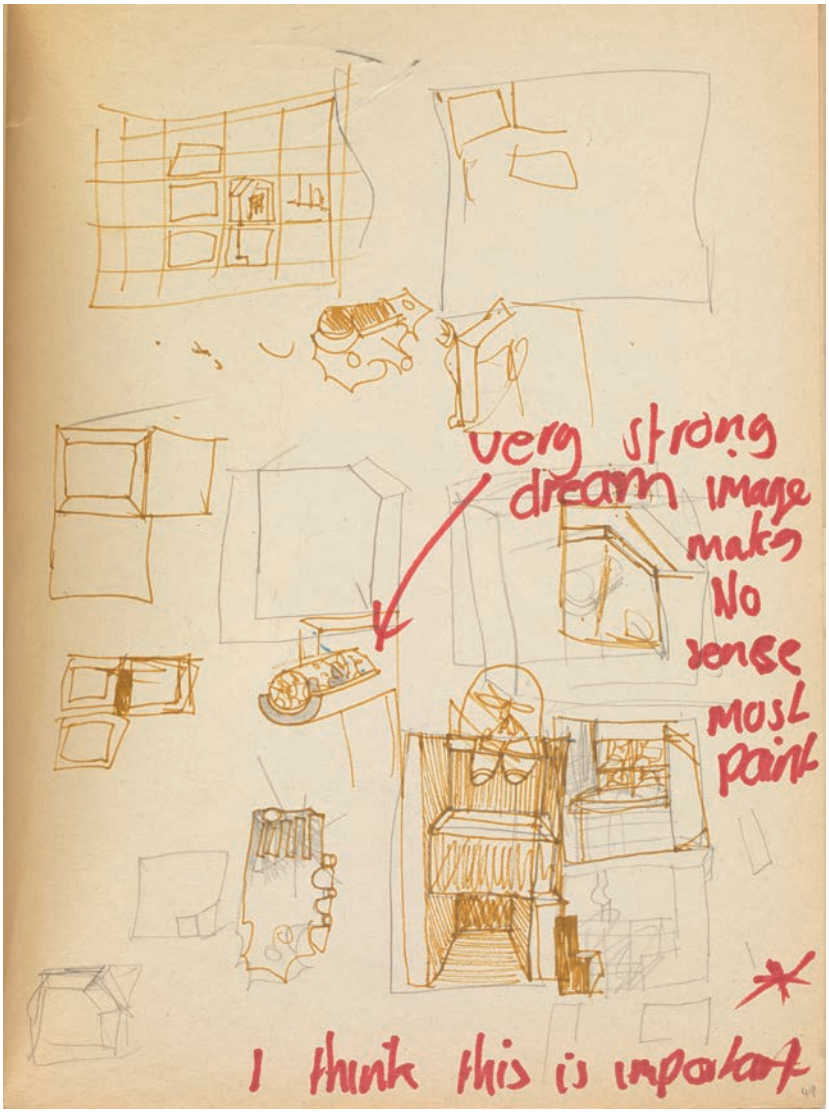
Follow the link from **http://artdetect3e.nelsonnet.com.au** to an online catalogue of Arkley's work, including his visual diaries and sketchbooks.

Visual diaries

Artists use visual diaries to collect sources of inspiration, to experiment with ideas, materials and techniques and to plan artworks and their display.

Visual diaries can be bought from art-supply stores, but artists use many different types of books, including sketchbooks, notebooks and exercise books as visual diaries. A visual diary can also be a folio, a collection of images and notes, or even a digital file.

Visual diaries are also often called other names, such as visual journals, workbooks or process diaries.



State Library of Victoria, Howard Arkley collection

Each artist's visual diary will be unique because it will reflect the personal interests and processes of that artist. A glimpse inside the visual diaries of artists reveals a valuable resource for art-making.

An artist at work – Howard Arkley

The 48 visual diaries, notebooks and sketchbooks of Australian artist **Howard Arkley** (1951–1999) provide a fascinating insight into his art practice and processes.

The visual diaries include:

- collections of clippings and images
- doodles, sketches and planning drawings
- notes about art, artists, exhibitions and books and articles that Arkley had read
- ideas for new works and exhibitions
- ideas for titles for new works.

Arkley drew constantly on almost any convenient surface. He sketched on newspapers and magazines as well as in his notebooks. Arkley sometimes referred to notes and images in his visual diaries years after they were made.

The page pictured here from *Sketchbook No. 9* reveals his process of visual thinking. Notice how the artist has added annotations to his sketches to better capture his ideas, which here include an image from a dream.

The other image from Arkley's diaries includes clippings he collected from department store brochures. This page was collected as inspiration for a number of artworks Arkley made of suburban interiors in the 1980s, including *Suburban Interior* (p. 135). Can you see how the artist used them?

Howard Arkley
Australian, 1951–1999
Sketchbook No. 9 (early 1970s?)
Olympic school project scrapbook with orange/black cover (early 1970s?)
65 unruled pages, 34.7 × 24.5 cm

An artist at work – you

A visual diary is a useful tool for exploring and recording your own ideas about art and art-making. As you add to your visual diary, it will become a valuable record of your ideas and artistic development. You can use a visual diary for:

- trying materials or techniques
- exploring approaches to making and presenting artworks
- collecting, recording and displaying ideas, images, articles and quotes that interest or inspire you
- recording your thoughts about artworks
- compiling lists of useful art words.

Many of the activities and questions in this book will encourage you to use your visual diary.

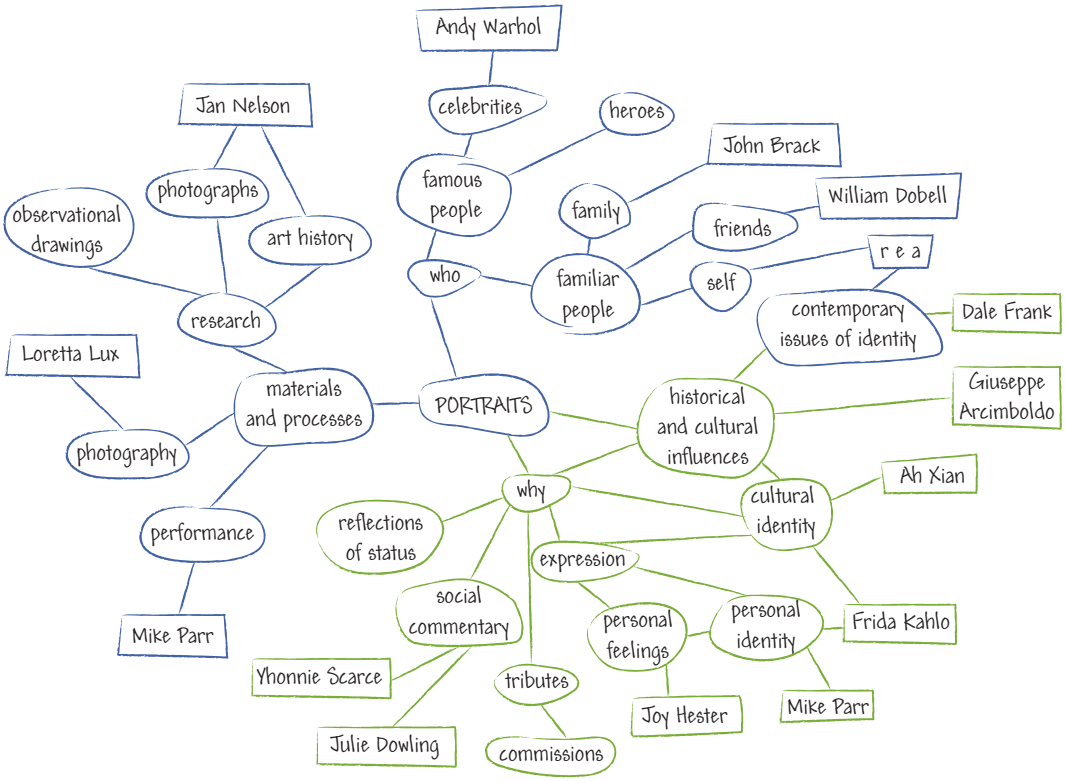
Your visual diary is a creative working space, not a finished work of art. It should be an ongoing collection of images and ideas that reflect your individual interests, thinking and experimenting.

Your visual diary does not just have to be about your current projects. Collect and record interesting ideas and images, making notes about what interests you. This will help you identify ideas you may be interested in exploring further in the future.

Howard Arkley
Australian, 1951–1999
Undated Sheet of Suburban Source Images (assembled 1983 or later)
John Gregory, *Carnival in Suburbia; The Art of Howard Arkley*, Cambridge University Press, 2006

Mapping ideas

A mind map is a useful tool for exploring linked ideas on a theme. You can use mind maps when brainstorming ideas and themes in preparation for your own art-making, or when you are investigating the work of other artists.



A mind map can help you explore ideas.

EXPLORING PROCESSES AND IDEAS

1.6 RESEARCHING

Researching art involves finding and using sources of inspiration and information, including artworks.

Follow the links from **http://artdetect3e.nelsonnet.com.au** to take virtual tours of some of the world's greatest galleries.

The art of research

Looking at art is an important form of research for art detectives. When you visit galleries, you not only see original art but also discover displays and exhibitions about art themes, ideas and styles (pp. 198–201). Major galleries have websites that tell you what is on. As well as exhibitions, many galleries offer a range of learning programs and activities, and many of them are free.

Visit your school library or local library to find art books, magazines and exhibition catalogues. These contain great reproductions of artworks and interesting information.

You can quickly find a wealth of images and information about almost any subject online. Make sure you use reliable sources, such as an artist's own website or the websites of well-known galleries, and always document where you find images and information.

As technology advances, the websites of major galleries are offering more and more resources, including videos. Some galleries have digital curating tools and functions that allow you to zoom in on images in amazing detail. Other galleries' websites offer virtual tours, which allow you to explore rooms of the gallery, see how the artwork is displayed and zoom in on artworks.

Betty Churcher
Australian, 1931–2015
Sketch in Response to Tiepolo's Banquet of Cleopatra
Betty Churcher, *Australian Notebooks*, The Miegunyah Press, University of Melbourne, 2014, p. 146

Annotated images

Annotated images are sketches or other images, such as copies of artworks, with notes that explain or point out the artwork's features. Annotated images are useful tools when planning your own artwork and when studying other artworks.

Betty Churcher, a former director of the National Gallery of Australia, found drawing sketches of other artworks useful because it forced her to slow down and really look at an artwork. She believed that by sketching she saw things she would not otherwise have noticed. Her drawings include annotations that draw attention to the features of artworks that she found interesting or significant. She travelled the world with her sketchbook and published several books of drawings and commentaries of artworks she admired, such as *The Banquet of Cleopatra* by Tiepolo (p. 97).

Word up

When you are looking for information, it is vital to identify the words about your subject that will help you direct your search. You can use these words to look up an index in a book or to search the Internet. The name of an artist or artwork is a good starting point for any search; however, you may also find useful information by researching the art period, movement or style of an artwork or artist.

The caption accompanying an artwork in a gallery or a book will give you many useful words to use as starting points for finding further information.

Also, an understanding of the following terms will be helpful when researching artworks and when completing questions and activities in this book.

Term	Meaning
Materials and media	What an artwork is made from. For example, Alec Mingelmanganu used earth pigments on canvas to create *Wanjina* (p. 147).
Techniques	How materials are used in an artwork. For example, Louise Weaver tightly crocheted yarn and added decorative embellishments to create *Guido Valdez (Vendetta for Love)* (p. 53).
Art elements	The basic components of an artwork, including colour, line, shape, tone, form and texture. For example, in *November* by Lesley Dumbrell (p. 74) the brightly contrasting colours and zigzag lines are art elements.
Composition	The arrangement of art elements in an artwork that creates its complete design. For example, Melinda Harper used an idiosyncratic grid-like structure filled with a mosaic of brilliant colours in *Untitled* (2000) (p. 179).
Design principles	Concepts that explain the arrangement of art elements in a composition. These include balance, unity, variety, rhythm, focal point and space. For example, Tom Roberts used lighting and placed the shearer in the centre-front of the composition to create a focal point in *Shearing the Rams* (p. 150).
Subject or subject matter	What is literally represented or presented in an artwork. For example, the subject matter of *Still Life with Fruit* by Jan Davidsz. de Heem (p. 130) is an arrangement of fruit and luxury objects.
Aesthetic qualities	The elements of an artwork – the materials, art elements, design principles and subject matter – and how they work together to express ideas, feelings and other meanings. For example, the swirling waves of thick black line, heightened with blood red and deep green, create a feeling of an unsettled and disturbed world in *The Scream* by Edvard Munch (p. 138).
Meanings and ideas	What the subject matter and aesthetic qualities of an artwork communicate to audiences. For example, the decaying fruit in *Still Life with Fruit* by Jan Davidsz. de Heem (p. 130) suggests that beauty and life are transitory and fleeting.

1.7 REFINING AND PLANNING

Once artists have developed an idea, they often need to do significant amounts of trialling, refining and planning before the artwork is complete.

Many artists – including artists who work in artforms such as sculpture, installation and moving images – use drawings to develop and refine their ideas. The drawings can be as simple as a rapid sketch of an initial idea for a composition or as complex as a detailed study for a finished work.

Variations on a theme

Variations on the Theme of the Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra by **Giambattista Tiepolo** (1696–1770) is an early drawing for *The Banquet of Cleopatra* (p. 97). Can you recognise some of the figures, details and ideas that Tiepolo is trying out?

Tiepolo produced more than 2000 drawings in his lifetime. Most of his drawings were made as artworks in their own right; however, like many artists, Tiepolo made drawings in preparation for his paintings and kept albums of drawings in his **studio** for reference.

Giambattista Tiepolo
Italian, 1696–1770
Variations on the Theme of the Banquet of Antony and Cleopatra
The National Museum of Fine Arts. Stockholm

The National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm

Working out

Can you see what **Howard Arkley** (1951–1999) was 'working out' in this sketch for *Suburban Interior* (p. 135)? The lighter lines that cut through the drawing are a clue. Although they are drawn freehand, they are like the **orthogonal lines** used in mathematical perspective drawings to create an illusion of space and distance (p. 96).

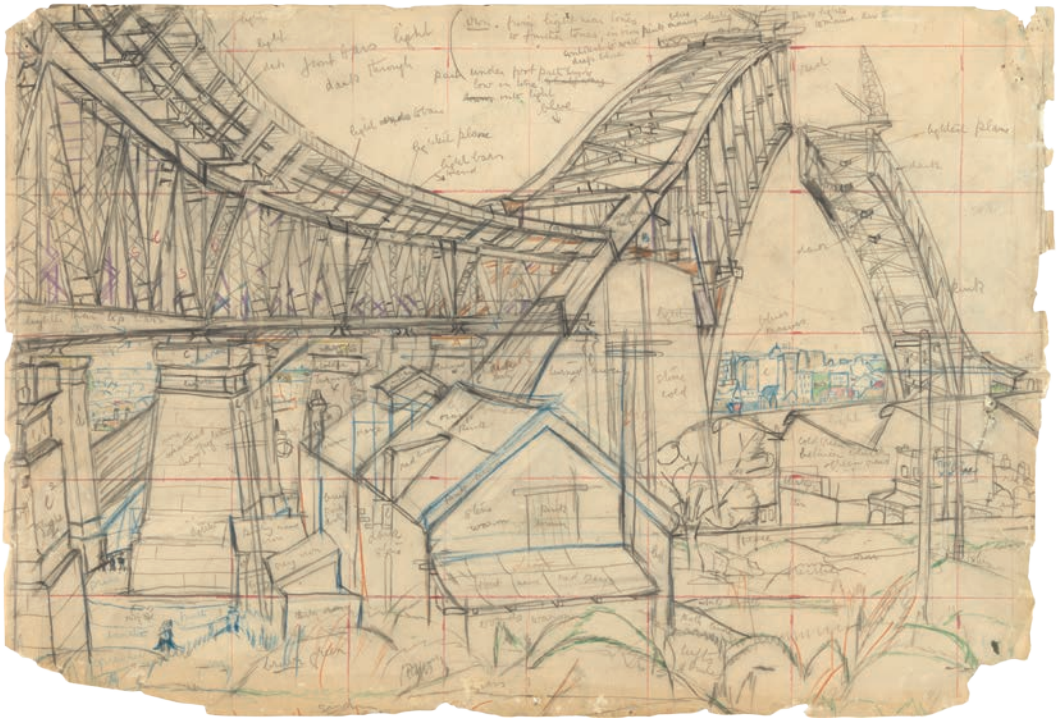
Black marker pens were a favourite drawing tool for Arkley, and you can see how he uses them boldly and confidently to outline the main features in the composition. In the finished painting, an airbrush was used to create similar bold outlines.

Comparing this image with the source material (p. 13) and the finished painting provides interesting insights into how *Suburban Interior* evolved.

Sketching from the environment

As it is for many artists, drawing was an important part of art and life for

Howard Arkley,
Australian, 1951–1999
Working Sketch for Suburban Interior, c. 1983



Grace Cossington Smith
Australian, 1892–1984
Study for the Bridge in-Curve, 1930
drawing in black pencil and colour pencils [recto]; drawing in black pencil, pastel, and colour pencil [verso] (sheet) 37.2 × 55.8 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Purchased 1976
Estate of Grace Cossington Smith

Grace Cossington Smith (1892–1984). The National Gallery of Australia has a collection of her sketchbooks, which are full of subjects drawn from her immediate environment, including family portraits, garden scenes and **still lifes**.

Cossington Smith made a number of drawings of the Sydney Harbour Bridge as it was being constructed. This drawing is a study for the painting *The Bridge in-Curve* (p. 95). The lines and forms reveal the strong structure and geometry that underpin the painting's composition.

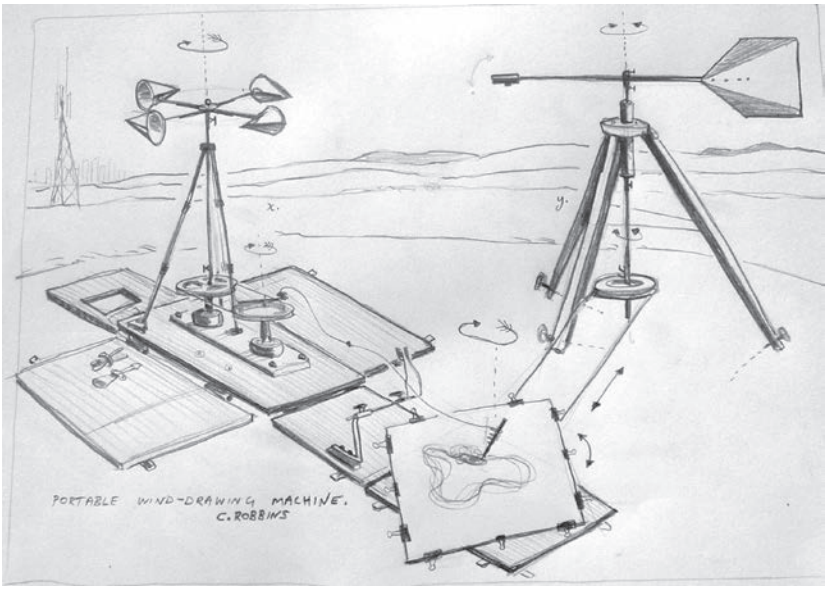
Can you see how the artist has also annotated the drawing with notes about her plans for colour and other effects? As seen in the final painting, colour played a vital role in Cossington Smith's work. The artist became interested in colour theory after reading a book by Beatrice Irwin, *New Science of Color*, which highlighted the emotional and spiritual power of colour.

Drawing machines

Cameron Robbins (b. 1963) creates drawings with nature by using wind-driven drawing machines (pp. 6, 163). He harnesses the energy of natural forces to make art.

The machines respond to wind speed and wind direction, and they allow the rain and sun to play on the drawings. The wind direction turns a swivelling drawing board that is connected to a wind vane, while the wind speed drives a pen on a wire arm around in a cyclical motion.

This sketch shows a portable wind drawing machine. Can you see how the drawing explains how the wind drawing machine works?



Cameron Robbins's sketch of his very slow drawing machine

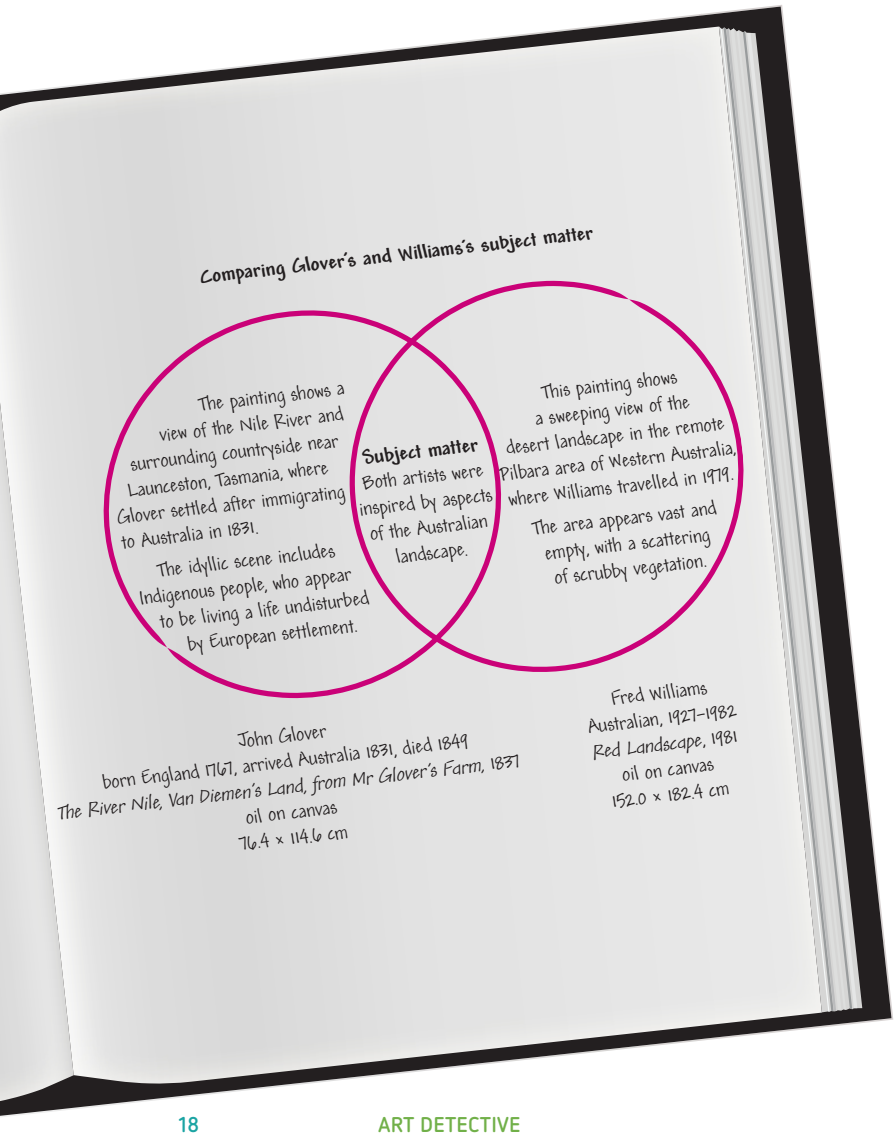
1.8 EXPRESSING AND ORGANISING IDEAS

Exploring art involves expressing and organising your ideas about art.

Express yourself

Every discipline you study has its own language and conventions for communicating ideas. You will discover many widely used art terms in the chapters and glossary of this book. As you investigate art, you will also complete activities and answer questions that require you to express your ideas about artworks.

- To **analyse** an artwork, you need to identify the artwork's features (its art elements, materials, techniques and subject matter) and consider how they relate to each other and contribute to the artwork's aesthetic qualities and meaning.
- To **discuss** artworks, you need to describe the artwork's features and explain any relevant facts, such as the context in which the artwork was made and the artist's working methods, ideas and intended meaning.
- To **interpret** an artwork, you give your opinion about what an artwork means or is trying to communicate. Your interpretation should be supported by evidence, including what you see in the artwork and what you have learnt about the artist and their art practice.
- To **compare** two artworks, you need to identify their similarities and differences. Graphic organisers such as Venn diagrams can be useful tools when comparing artworks.
- To **evaluate** an artwork, you make a judgement about the artwork's **aesthetic qualities**. This includes judging how effectively the artwork communicates the artist's intended meaning. A PMI chart is a useful tool for evaluating artworks.



Making it graphic

Graphic organisers are useful tools for presenting and organising information about your own artworks and the artworks of others. You may find them useful in your visual diary and when answering questions in this book.

Venn diagrams

Venn diagrams are useful tools for comparing artworks or features of artworks.

To create a Venn diagram, draw two overlapping circles. Label each circle with the title of an artwork. The similarities between the two things you are comparing are shown in the overlapping area, and the differences are shown in the areas that do not overlap.

PMI chart

A PMI (plus, minus, interesting) chart is an easy way to identify and evaluate what works well and not so well, and what is interesting and may warrant further investigation. You can use a PMI chart to evaluate the artworks or art issues you explore, or to reflect on your own artworks.

(detail)

PMI chart:
Ash Keating, West Park Proposition

Plus
Adds beauty and interest to an industrial landscape.
Expands art beyond the confines of a gallery.

Minus
Only a limited number of people will see the work.
The work is vulnerable to damage.

Interesting
Links to street art.
The work was created using paint-filled fire hydrants.

Photo: by Greta Costello for Ash Keating

Ash Keating painting the ***West Park Proposition***, 2012
© Ash Keating.