



This online education resource focuses on several artists in the exhibition *Strange cargo: contemporary art as a state of encounter*.

Artists featured are James Angus, Hany Armanious, Peter Atkins, Lionel Bawden, Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy, Mikala Dwyer, Linde Ivimey and Kate Rohde.

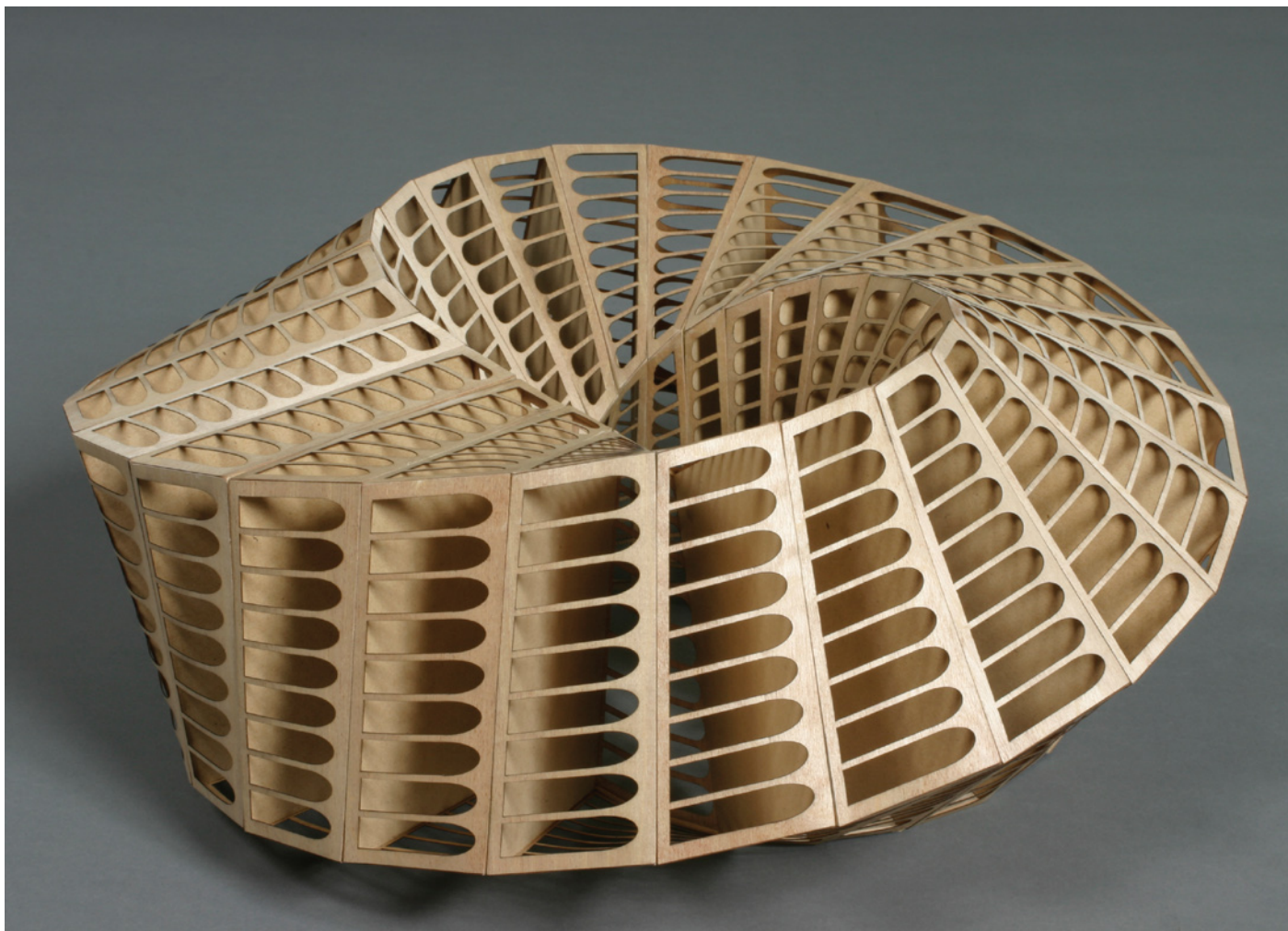
Each page provides key information relating to the artist, their practice and the work on exhibit. Learning experiences are written to address relevant aspects of current visual arts secondary curriculum.

This resource is intended for use in conjunction with a visit to the exhibition. It may also be used independently as a potential resource for classroom programming.

Strange cargo touring destinations and dates:

Newcastle Region Art Gallery	21 October – 3 December 2006
Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery	10 February – 18 March 2007
Bendigo Art Gallery	31 March – 13 May 2007
Orange Regional Gallery	25 May – 14 July 2007
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery	27 July – 23 September 2007
Tweed River Art Gallery	11 October – 18 November 2007
Ipswich Art Gallery	8 December – 17 February 2008

A *Strange cargo* expedition has been devised for younger audiences and can be found at strangecargo.net.au



1. James ANGUS

born 1970, Perth

Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana 2004
laser cut aircraft plywood and MDF
edition 1/10

22.0 x 50.0 x 50.0

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2004
reproduced courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

James ANGUS

1. *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* 2004

James Angus has recreated in plywood and MDF an Italian modernist building situated in Rome called *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana*. But unlike an ordinary architectural maquette, the building has been recreated four times over, twisted and then joined end to end to create a moebius loop.






The moebius loop is a three dimensional form that only has one edge and one side, an emblem of infinity that defies physical laws. Invented by German mathematician, August Möbius, the loop is a fitting form to describe art and architecture's perpetual cycle of self-reference.

After selecting an object, Angus remodels it in order to demonstrate its underlying structural plasticity. He maps its form in a precise, mathematical way and then plays with it by applying various relation-altering equations. Working with basic physical concepts, he inverts forms, turns them inside-out or multiplies and off-sets them. He subjects them to extreme, hypothetical forces and shows us the object's response to this treatment in a clean, neutral, medium.

Amanda Rowell

www.roslynxley9.com.au/news/releases/2002/09/26/32/

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

-  Sketch what *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* would look like as a building. Find pictures on the internet of the building and compare these with your sketch.
-  Make a model of your favourite building in cardboard and then alter it to make it strange. Ask your friends what it reminds them of.
-  Create a new title for *Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana* that hints at James Angus' process.
-  Make a list of objects that are, in Angus' words 'suspiciously odd'. Consider how you could translate these objects into sculptures.
-  Research other works by James Angus. Select your favourite work and devise a set of questions that you would ask the artist about this work.



2. Hany ARMANIOUS

born 1962 Cairo, Egypt; arrived Australia 1965

Untitled snake oil 1998

hotmelt, glass

dimensions variable

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2003

reproduced courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery

Hany ARMANIOUS

2. *Untitled snake oil* 1998

In *Untitled snake oil* nineteen drinking glasses in different shapes and sizes are turned upside down and adorned with curious forms. To make this work Hany Armanious has cast the negative space within each glass, the space usually reserved for liquids, in a substance called 'hotmelt'. The cast space is placed on top of each inverted glass which becomes a tiny pedestal for each mould; a clever play on the traditional sculpture and plinth.






Curiosity and speculation surround the creation of *Untitled snake oil*. What are the strange forms adorning each glass? Did the artist have to break the glass to retrieve the cast form? How delicate is the cast substance? How did it gain its colour?

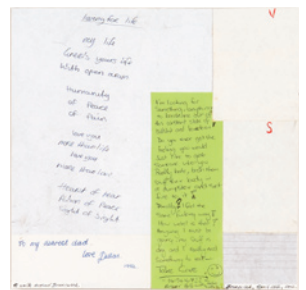
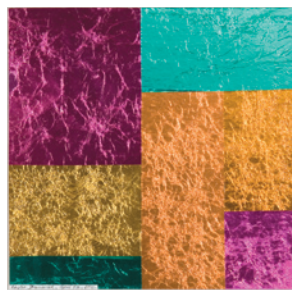
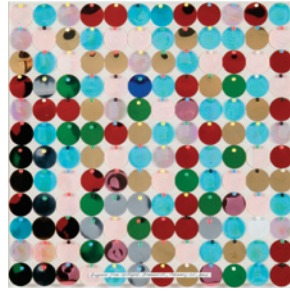
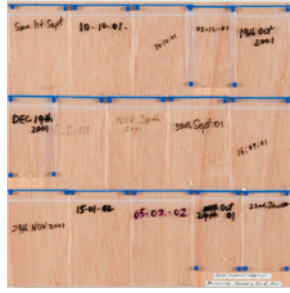
Well, the piece promises enchantment, mystery and magic but I don't think it actually delivers that. It's got all the trappings of something amazing, but in the end there's a kind of hollowness. That hollowness has to do with the cast, and we're filling that emptiness with this stuff. What's really demonstrated over and over again is the idea of the vessel and the filling, and in various forms, it's always that, so much so that that somehow becomes dissipated and we're not aware of that anymore. But all the experiments have to do with filling an empty cavity with the substance to try and solidify something that we can't really understand or know.

Hany Armanious

<http://www.hammer.ucla.edu/exhibits/hanyarmaniousinterview.html>

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

-  Sketch your favourite glass in *Untitled snake oil*. Give it a fancy name. Imagine the type of person who would use this glass.
-  Imagine being a travelling salesperson. What type of miracle cures would you peddle? Give these miracle cures catchy names and create an advertising campaign for your 'snake oil'.
-  Collect objects that contain space. Fill these spaces with different substances. Visualise the space as a solid form and sketch these forms.
-  Write a list of all of the hollow objects that you would cast if you had a never-ending supply of 'hotmelt', the casting substance that Armanious uses.
-  Design a series of vessels to contain unusual substances. How would you make these vessels? Document your ideas in your visual diary.



3. Peter ATKINS

born 1963, Murrurundi, NSW

Brunswick journal: part 4 2002

mixed media

12 panels 30.0 x 30.0 each

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2002

reproduced courtesy of the artist and Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Peter ATKINS

3. *Brunswick journal: part 4* 2002

In the late 1980s Peter Atkins began composing visual journals comprised mostly of non-precious, found objects carefully re-presented in formal arrangements. Atkins' collections offer no obvious hierarchy or economic value but rather reflect a highly personalised approach to selection and display and serve as a time capsule of the artist's life at any given time.






In one panel in *Brunswick journal: part 4* his son Cato's fingernail clippings are labelled and archived. In another, videotape found by the artist as a long glittering thread trailing from a tree in a Brunswick park is glued to the panel creating a monochromatic abstraction. His journals function simultaneously as an ode to art history and a record of a personal encounter.

The impulse to record experience is one shared. All manner of people write diaries, gather family photographs, collect theatre tickets, place keepsakes in cabinets and the like. However, the artistic impulse evidenced here, is essentially different. While the artist is still driven no doubt by similar needs, that is to gather together materials and to use them to make sense of experience, there is also an overarching artistic impulse at work, to make beautiful objects. This is certainly the case in the work of Atkins, whose sensitive registering and use of the everyday commodity, provides for the rest of us, lessons in aesthetic apprehension.

Simeon Kronenberg

www.shermangalleries.com.au/artists_exhib/artists/atkins/intro.html

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

-  Play a memory game in which you attempt to recall all of the objects in *Brunswick journal, part 4* as quickly as possible.
-  Brainstorm a list of synonyms for the word 'collect'. Include colloquial and more formal words in your list. Circle the words that describe Atkins' practice.
-  Why do you think Peter Atkins collects objects? What do the objects have in common? Classify the objects according to their similarities in size, shape and colour. What other objects could be included in these categories?
-  Imagine creating your own journal series. What type of objects would you collect and display? Develop your ideas in the form of a weekly journal in which a different object is collected, arranged and exhibited for each day of the week.
-  Empty the contents of a messy top drawer of a desk or kitchen cupboard onto a hard surface. Play a game of 'aesthetic chess' where you arrange the contents of the drawer to make the most pleasing composition. Photograph or sketch this composition. Consider what it is that makes this display interesting.



4. Lionel BAWDEN

born 1974, Sydney

the monsters (like some colossal python which after swallowing a mountain is sluggishly digesting the meal) 2004

coloured Staedtler pencils, epoxy, linseed oil

47.0 x 72.0 x 36.0 (monster form)

60.0 x 60.0 x 90.0 (plinth)

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, gift of the artist 2006

reproduced courtesy of the artist and GRANTPIRRIE Gallery

photograph courtesy of Jamie North

Lionel BAWDEN

4. *the monsters (like some colossal python which after swallowing a mountain is sluggishly digesting the meal)* 2004

Lionel Bawden's ambiguous forms are made entirely from coloured pencils. He fastidiously selects, layers, glues and then sands the emerging sculptural form.






In the monsters (like some colossal python which after swallowing a mountain is sluggishly digesting the meal) Bawden has twisted the strata of coloured pencils as the glue between each layer hardened creating fault lines along the body of the sculpture. This work was inspired by the sixties cult novel *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem, in which the ocean covering the planet Solaris behaves like a gigantic single organism spawning monstrous formations.

The Monsters are unique in that they offer no conclusions as to their ultimate form; oscillating between landscape, the figure and still-life, depending on the vantage point from which one observes them...What is striking about Bawden's sculptures is the tactile affinity we feel for his chosen medium. Their construction from coloured pencils appears simple and accessible – a material imbued with early memories and the sensory awakening of one's first creative expression. And yet the evocative forms which emerge are so achingly beautiful and seemingly malleable in their craftsmanship, they bear little resemblance to their prosaic origins.

Clare Lewis

www.grantpirrie.com/GRANTPIRRIE/Lionel_Bawden_2004/lionelbawdentext/index.shtml

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

-  Write a list of questions you would ask Lionel Bawden about his work. Predict his responses to your questions.
-  Research famous monsters from history. Why do you think Bawden calls his sculptures monsters?
-  Find a science fiction story that features a strange or monstrous creature. Illustrate this story using your favourite art materials.
-  Collect multiples of a discarded everyday object. Construct a sculpture by joining together these objects. Give your sculpture an unusual title.
-  Find examples of other contemporary artists who explore the material properties of everyday objects. Prepare an oral presentation on your favourite one of these artists.



5. Sean CORDEIRO and Claire HEALY

Sean Cordeiro born 1974, Sydney
Claire Healy born 1971, Melbourne

Deceased estate 2004

Lambda print;
edition 5/10

124.5 x 160.5

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2006
reproduced courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis

The plastic menagerie 2006

pine vitrines and inflatable animals
300.0 x 230.0 x 195.0

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2006
reproduced courtesy the artists and Gallery Barry Keldoulis

Sean CORDEIRO and Claire HEALY

5. *Deceased estate* 2004 *The plastic menagerie* 2006

Deceased estate is a photographic documentation of Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy's collaborative, site-specific installation in which the entire contents of an abandoned studio in Germany were compressed and bound together with orange twine. No hierarchy or system of organisation is applied here, unrelated objects are packed within and around each other and the threat of their release creates a tension within the pristine, white space.

Installed within a manner of minutes, *The plastic menagerie* offers a portable and compact living solution to zoo overcrowding. But what of the decline of the species wrought by slow leakages and sagging plastic? Are these creatures doomed to become deflatables? Each vitrine or display case in *The plastic menagerie* is made from laminated pine, the type of material used to make inexpensive, ubiquitous furniture. Rather than the elegant handcrafted vitrines of the museum, these 'storage solutions' have a certain DIY appeal.

Living in the city is a very convenient thing indeed. One of the most convenient things about living in the city is garbage removal. When we moved out of our home in Ashfield New South Wales, we threw 2 tonnes of garbage out. This was accumulated in only 24 months of living there! This wasn't garbage like beer bottles and decaying foodstuffs. Most of it was old artworks and destroyed furniture. We aren't wasteful art collecting furniture trashers: it's more like a lot of the art we made and furniture we found had merely had taken a detour through our house on its way to the garbage heap.

Sean Cordeiro & Claire Healy

www.iaska.com.au/pages/residency/corderio_healy.htm

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- ↘ Imagine your response to *Deceased estate* or *The plastic menagerie* if you came across them outside the gallery space? What makes them art? Stage a class debate for and against their status as art.
- ↘ Create an inventory of the things from your life that you would place in a museum display case or vitrine. Make this inventory as absurd as possible by listing unrelated objects.
- ↘ Design your own menagerie (enclosure in which wild animals are kept for exhibition).
- ↘ Document an everyday environment using digital photography. Make changes to that environment and then photograph the space again. Exhibit the photographs as 'before' and 'after' shots.
- ↘ Research other artists who use everyday materials or found objects in their work. How does their work communicate their emotional and intellectual responses to the world? Begin with artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Joseph Cornell, Joseph Beuys, Meret Oppenheim, Rosalie Gascoigne, Hany Armanious and Fiona Hall.



6. Mikala DWYER

Born 1959, Sydney

Empty sculpture 2 2005

heat formed plastic

59.0 x 34.0 x 36.5

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2005
reproduced courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery

Empty sculpture 1 2005

heat formed plastic

107.5 x 79.0 x 62.0

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2005
reproduced courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery

Mikala DWYER

6. *Empty sculpture 1* 2005 *Empty sculpture 2* 2005

Empty sculpture is a whimsical play on traditional sculpture. Through her soft geometry Mikala Dwyer targets the late modernist movement of minimalism. In the nineteen sixties and seventies minimalist sculptors sought a return to pure, formal values resulting in the creation of decidedly hard edged forms that denied the trace of the artist's hand.






Dwyer turns pure form into formlessness and hence defies the weight and presence of minimalist forms. Armed with a heat gun and volumes of malleable transparent plastic, Dwyer literally sculpts space.

When I'm working in the studio it must look like a weird wrestling match, determined by what I can reach and hold onto at the time; a balancing act while doing heat seals, trying not to burn your own hair off. That much of it seems real. But it's also like drawing in air – it's all mistakes. Like chasing your shadow, believing your shadow to be something real. Mistakes like that may also be called flights of the imagination.

Mikala Dwyer

www.annaschwartzgallery.com.au/exhibitions/exhibitions.asp?ID=11

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

-  Experiment with making your own invisible sculpture. What transparent materials could you use?
-  Imagine surveying a typical art gallery audience when viewing this work. Devise wall text for Mikala Dwyer's sculptures based on their responses.
-  Write a list of unusual materials for sculpture. Experiment with using these materials and annotate your experiments, successes and failures in your visual diary.
-  Find out as much as you can about Mikala Dwyer's use of installation. Why do you think she chooses to work in this way?
-  Research minimalism. You may wish to look at work by Donald Judd, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, Eva Hesse and Sol Le Witt.



7. Linde IVIMEY

Born 1965, Sydney

St Emmeranus 2006

steel armature, cast acrylic resin, dyed cotton, natural fibre, wedge tail eagle and emu feathers, horse, turkey and chicken bones
33.0 x 117.0 x 25.0

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2006
reproduced courtesy of the artist and Martin Browne Fine Art

7.

Linde IVIMEY

St Emmeranus 2006

The surprisingly unorthodox and often macabre lives of saints, such as Saint Emmeranus, have provided endless inspiration for Linde Ivimey. The artist's interest in saints, based on a Catholic upbringing, was broadened by her travels to Europe where she encountered the tales of lesser-known accounts of saints as sinners.

Ivimey uses materials excreted or discarded through human behaviour to construct and clothe her sculptures. She collects the bones that have been gnawed and discarded, old towels, mattress protectors and pillowslips that carry the residues of the body and she obsessively collects her own hair.

I have saved laundry lint for years, ever since I owned my first washing machine and it features somewhere in most of the works; I collect large and small bird eggs, bones and feathers when I find them, and animal bones or fur too; I order in restaurants and cook food according to what bones will remain from the meal, I use the bones from food that gets carefully prepared and lovingly served at my table, I collect the bones that get chewed and picked at and covered in saliva and fat and various juices; I never let my hair go down the drain, it surprises me to have collected so many hair balls of varying colour over the years; I collect seeds and pods and organic plant fibre, dried grasses and leaves that all get 'twined' into string and light rope; I collect whatever fabrics I come across, off-cuts from canvases, favourite garments, old towels, body wax strips, mattress protectors, the occasional hotel pillow slip, so full of strangers' dreams, night sweats, tears and spit...

Linde Ivimey

www.nga.gov.au/Prize/Default.cfm?Moda=2&View=Works&WrkID=140233&ArtistID=15

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- ↙ Consider your personal and emotional responses to this work. What are your first reactions to the work? Why does it make you feel like that? What does it remind you of and why?
- ↙ Make a list of all of things that make your skin crawl. Brainstorm how you could translate these sensations into a body of work. What materials would you use? How would you invite your audience to interact with the work?
- ↙ What is the strangest thing you have ever collected? Use the internet to find some strange collections and share your findings with your classmates.
- ↙ Write a journal entry narrating a day in the life of Line Ivimey and describing her experience in collecting the materials used in the making of *St Emmeranus*.
- ↙ Imagine being a gallery guide. How would you explain this work to a new audience?



8. Kate ROHDE

Born 1980, Melbourne

Emerald cut vitrine with luxury interior 2006

polyester resin, faux fur, enamel paint, papier mache, rice paper, pastel paper, MDF, perspex, co-polymer sealant, polyurethane foam, polystyrene, air dry clay, tape, aluminium wire, sheet aluminium, glitter

113.0 x 91.0 x 68.5

Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, purchased 2006
reproduced courtesy of the artist and Kaliman Gallery

Kate ROHDE

8. *Emerald cut vitrine with luxury interior* 2006

Early in 2005 Kate Rohde visited Vienna's Museum of Natural History, celebrated for its ostentatious taxidermy, where over 20 million specimens from insects to dinosaurs are amassed. Drawn to the spectacular and undeniably kitsch museum display tactics Rohde has created her own museum empire.

The mink in *Emerald cut vitrine with luxury interior* was derived from natural history engravings however the idea of augmenting the creature's natural beauty came to the artist upon seeing a woman in Los Angeles sporting a fur coat studded with crystal rhinestones. Rohde presents us with super nature, new and improved and fashioned for display.

Coupled with this interest in reimagining natural history, I have been incorporating decorative elements typical of Baroque and Rococo style over the last year. The highly ornate nature of these styles reveals on closer inspection that much of the patterning is drawn largely from flora and fauna. The combination of motifs from these movements, with dioramas featuring faux specimens of animal, vegetable and mineral, create a sense of the richness and excess of culture intertwined with the splendors of nature to produce a spectacular example of humans seeking to have control over their environment.

Kate Rohde

www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/youngallery/artist/details.php?id=7269

LEARNING EXPERIENCES



Research natural history museums on the internet. Write a list of the type of things collected in them.



Collect objects and images from a friend or family member. Form an archive of these artefacts and consider how they could be presented to an art audience to communicate something about that person.



Select your most and least favourite object from *Emerald cut vitrine with luxury interior*. What is it that you like and don't like about these objects?



Research artists who use the display case in their work on either a material or conceptual level. You may wish to look at work by Susan Hiller, FLUXUS, Christian Boltanski, Karsten Bott, Narelle Jubelin or Cornelia Parker.



Write a hypothetical letter proposing an exhibition of your own work to a local gallery. Refer to all aspects of your art making practice. Include a sample page from your visual diary to illustrate your work.