TEACHER NOTES
SECONDARY (MIDDLE SCHOOL) AND SENIOR LEVEL (YEARS 10–12)

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA WOMEN

Modern Woman: Daughters and Lovers 1850–1918
Drawings from the Musée d'Orsay, Paris

This education resource is intended for students to use in the Gallery and classroom. It aims to compare and contrast historical and contemporary artists’ approaches to the subject of ‘women’. Students can investigate four key art works from ‘Contemporary Australia: Women’ and ‘Modern Woman: Daughters and Lovers 1850–1918: Drawings from the Musée d’Orsay, Paris’ to explore their similarities and differences.

‘Contemporary Australia: Women’ is a celebration of the way women artists have reshaped the landscape of art in Australia. It demonstrates the diversity, energy and innovation of contemporary Australian women artists through the work of 56 artists.

The exhibition highlights the following themes:
• performing femininity
• the place of personal and intimate spheres, such as sexuality, the body, motherhood and ageing
• the return to everyday materials
• the ways artists are redressing the canon of painting
• aspects of art by women that directly address political and social issues

‘Modern Woman: Daughters and Lovers 1850–1918: Drawings from the Musée d’Orsay, Paris’ celebrates the changing roles of women during the Belle Époque as depicted by leading artists of the time, such as Edgar Degas, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Édouard Vuillard, Édouard Manet, Mary Cassatt, Pierre Bonnard, Auguste Rodin, Berthe Morisot and Jean François Millet.

In this exhibition you will see women from a diverse range of backgrounds depicted in their family lives and domestic activities, as well as in the public realm as spectators, performers and workers. Through these fascinating drawings, we see French society undergoing radical transformation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Students will be encouraged to:
• view and discuss four different art works (drawings and paintings created during the late 1800s in France) in terms of what art can tell them about vocations, social conventions, history, style, economics and artistry
• using historical references, create imaginary narratives about what the artists’ private lives in Europe during the 1880s and 1890s
• assess and utilise the properties of a variety of art media and their ability to convey messages and meaning (visual arts)
• analyse the art works to determine the artists’ intentions
• find art works that explore the following themes:
  - feminine identity
  - gender representation — roles and cultural expectations
  - autobiography

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES
The following resources aim to enhance the visitor experience by providing additional information on the exhibiting artists.

QAGOMA IPhone and Smartphone App
Available from the iTunes app store, the QAGOMA iPhone app provides access to multimedia content for a number of works in both exhibitions.

Smartphone users can download a QR code reader to access exhibition information relating to select art works in the Gallery. Look for art works with an ‘Interactive tour’ label next to them to find out more about the work and the artist.

BLOG AND YOUTUBE
qagoma.qld.gov.au/blog
youtube.com/queenslandartgallery

Resources include:
• interviews with artists and curators
• webcasts of lectures and public programs

PUBLICATIONS
Contemporary Australia: Women is a substantial and richly illustrated, full-colour publication. Featuring over 30 essays on individual artists and their works, the publication highlights the strong work by women artists in Australia today and profiles their many contributions to contemporary art.


Both publications are available for purchase from the QAGOMA Store and online at australianartbooks.com.au.
CURRICULUM LINKS

VISUAL ARTS
Visual literacy
- Consider female approaches to making work:
  - How do the artists represent themselves as women?
  Are there any symbols of femininity in their work?
- Ask students to respond to the diverse materials, themes and frameworks that the artist is working with.

Concept focus:
Consider a concept being explored by several artists — for example, culture or spirituality. *Through what media are the various artists exploring this concept?*

Context focus:
*How do both these exhibitions connect to the students’ body of work? (e.g. subject matter, media, process)*

Using the exhibition as a guide to inform a body of work, students should aim to identify relevant artists from the exhibition to reference.

Encourage students to:
- ‘Read’ art works in terms of what themes or concepts are being explored by the artists and through which particular pathways or foci.
- Identify common themes throughout the exhibitions, while at the same time recognising individual pathways of exploration.

ENGLISH
Critical literacy
- Analyse and interpret images (e.g. use a psychoanalytical framework) — question, challenge and evaluate cultural assumptions in texts and their effects on meaning.
- Use art works as a starting point to construct a narrative.
- Semiotics/symbolism:
  - *How do the artists use symbols and words to communicate?*

STUDIES OF SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT/MODERN HISTORY
Historical and cultural context
- Identify and describe trends in the visual arts and discuss how the issues of time, place and cultural influences are reflected in selected art works.

Aesthetic valuing
- Articulate how personal beliefs; cultural traditions; and current social, economic, and political contexts influence the interpretation of the meaning or message in an art work.
- Compare the ways changes in interpretation and context over time affect the meaning of a specific art work.

Chronological thinking
- Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions, and determining the lessons that were learned.
- Students analyse how change happens at different rates at different times — understanding that some aspects can change while others remain the same and that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics, but also values and beliefs.

The curriculum information included in this resource has been developed from the Assessment and Reporting Framework for The Arts, focusing on learning and assessment around the Essential Learnings and Standards for Visual Art, Studies of Society and the Environment, Modern History and English (© The State of Queensland, Queensland Studies Authority, 2007).

PRE-VISIT PREPARATION

Glossary
Prior to the students visit to the Gallery, research the following terms to create a glossary for ‘Contemporary Australia: Women’:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contemporary art</th>
<th>Femininity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminism</td>
<td>Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and intimate spheres</td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body</td>
<td>Motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ageing</td>
<td>Women at work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic materials</td>
<td>The artistic canon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender
Have the students view and consider a recent movie poster, newspaper advertisement or CD cover that suggests stereotypical gender roles. Invite students to comment on what they think is suggested.

*How have gender roles and stereotypes changed in the last 50 years?*

Organise students in groups of four, presenting each group with a recent and an older book. Have students investigate whether the representations of female and male relationships have changed by comparing the stories in the books. Each group should report their findings.

Some points to address:
- *Is it easy or hard to look at female and male roles in a new and non-traditional way? Why or why not?*
- *What are some of the ways in which changing gender roles have affected relationships between women and men in:
  a) social settings,
  b) families, and
  c) the workplace?*
- *If you could make one change in the male gender role, what would it be? In the female gender role?*

The gender perspective: When we use the gender lens, we examine patterns of thought, behaviour, value and power in interactions between the sexes.

Portraiture
*How can a portrait reflect the attitudes and trends of its time?*
Create a portrait of a public female figure today (e.g. Julia Gillard, Kate Ellis, Oprah Winfrey, Lady Gaga).
**Feminism**

Explore feminist movements in France, USA, New Zealand and Australia by completing the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminist movements</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date began</th>
<th>Why instigated</th>
<th>Outcomes achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feminist movements</td>
<td>France</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Feminist perspective: Feminism has as many forms as women have ideas! One feminist critic considers cultural and economic factors in a ‘patriarchal’ society that have hindered or prevented women from realising their potential. This includes exploring a woman’s cultural identification with man being seen as the defining and dominating subject.

France — Belle Époque period

Invite your students to research the Belle Époque period in your school library and on the internet.

- How was the upheaval of the Belle Époque depicted by the artists in ‘Modern Woman’?
- How do people ‘perform’ identity? (e.g. modes of dress, taste in music, hobbies, within their social structure)

**Additional resources:**

More information about many of the women artists featured in ‘Modern Woman’ is available online through a Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, slideshow: metmuseum.org/toah/hd/19wa/hd_19wa.htm

**POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES**

[Please note: Post-visit activities are listed in the student worksheets under the ‘In the classroom’ sections.]

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