

SUBLIME

CONTEMPORARY WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION

TEACHER NOTES

QUEENSLAND ART GALLERY

30 AUGUST 2014 – 24 MAY 2015

This resource focuses on selected artists featured in the exhibition 'Sublime: Contemporary Works from the Collection' and is to be used in conjunction with the Curriculum Reference Points: Visual Arts. An accompanying Student Worksheet is available at www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/education/resources/current

To learn more about the exhibition visit:

Exhibition webpage: www.qagoma.qld.gov.au/sublime

QAGOMA TV: <http://tv.qagoma.qld.gov.au/>

OSKAR FISCHINGER

GERMANY 1900–67

Born in Gelnhausen, Oskar Fischinger combined his scientific training with a creative interest in music and visual effects, and later filmmaking and painting. On the invitation of Paramount Pictures, Fischinger moved to Hollywood in 1936, where he worked for several major film studios, at the same time as maintaining an independent film practice with the support of grants. In the 1940s and 1950s, his works were presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and at the then San Francisco Museum of Art (now the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, or SFMOMA).

Concepts

- Visual conventions
- Representations
- Innovation
- Abstraction.

As an artist, Fischinger combined his engineering background with his interest in music, visual effects and filmmaking to create abstract animated films. *Raumlichtkunst (Space-Light-Art)* c.1926/2012 was reconstructed by using restored positive and negative 35mm nitrate film materials from the 1920s, resulting in three looped, side-by-side projections of high definition video create endlessly varied combinations of moving images.

Classroom activity suggestions

Foundation to Year 6

Explore the work of Fischinger and identify the techniques he used. Using geometric patterns and focusing on the elements of line, shape and colour, encourage students to create their own artworks relying on optical illusion.

Year 7 to 12

Using square or rectangular pieces of thick paper or card, invite students to create an abstract series of images based on the elements of design. Animate the sequence by creating a flipbook. Alternatively, take a series of photographs to form the stills of a film. Encourage students to use their film sequences to experiment with the layered, multiple projection technique used by Fischinger.

TIMO NASSERI

GERMANY B.1972

Born in Berlin to a German mother and an Iranian father, Timo Nasseri studied photography between 1994 and 1997. Although he began his career as a photographer, in recent years, he has systematically built a sculptural oeuvre. Since the early 2000s, he has exhibited in Lebanon and extensively throughout Europe. In his art, Nasseri blends two formative influences — Islamic traditions and Western culture.

Concepts

- Infinity
- Culture
- Spirituality
- Archetypal forms
- Contexts: Cultural, historical
- Knowledge: Forms and styles.

Drawing on Islamic beliefs and practices, *Epistropy VI* 2012, which is made from polished stainless steel, explores the connection between repetition and aesthetics and is connected to the foundation of geometry in traditional architectural forms. Nasseri's choice of materials and his manipulation of form and shape fragment the viewer's perception of self and space, allowing the viewer and their surroundings to become a part of the artwork.

Classroom activity suggestions

Foundation to Year 6

Invite students to research the ways paper can be used to create three-dimensional objects, as well as to make their own paper sculptures. Discuss how to best display the sculptures; for example, they could be placed on a mirrored surface. Students should think about how viewers/audiences will interact with their artworks.

Year 7 to 12

Ask students to conduct online research into paper-folding and scoring techniques (i.e. not origami patterns). Encourage students to manipulate an ordinary piece of white paper by folding and scoring, so it is transformed into a three-dimensional artwork.

LARA FAVARETTO

ITALY B.1973

Born in Treviso, Lara Favaretto lives and works in Turin. The artist calls her artworks *macchine del divertimento* ('fun machines' or 'machines of entertainment'), a description that points to their carnivalesque character. In her art, found objects — usually standard-issue — are animated so they are stripped of their intended function and become imbued with a sense of magic, fantasy and play. Disrupting the conventional order of things, Favaretto transforms useful, functional things into impractical, but strangely engaging, ones. The artist produces works that reveal the absurdity and pathos of everyday life and commonplace objects.

Concepts

- Materials
- Techniques
- Technologies and processes
- Representations
- Artistic intentions.

Gummo IV 2012 employs a Duchampian strategy of displacement, whereby a found object is removed from its natural surroundings and placed in a decidedly incongruous one. The displacement of five car wash brushes in the gallery space results in these familiar objects suddenly appearing foreign and absurd. Favaretto challenges our thinking about the purpose of everyday objects and encourages us to open our eyes and minds to new possibilities.

Classroom activity suggestions

Foundation to Year 6

Ask students to collect a variety of common objects; the challenge is for the objects to be incorporated into an artwork, which should become playful when animated. The sculpture (or mobile) could be constructed outside to reflect the sunlight or to move in the wind, or it could be constructed inside to move by touch or an electric fan.

Year 7 to 12

Ask students to identify an everyday object and to brainstorm the ways it could be deconstructed and reconstructed in order to create new meaning or purpose for the object. Instruct students to resolve their ideas into a finished artwork.

MICHAEL SAILSTORFER

GERMANY B.1979

Michael Sailstorfer was born Vilsbiburg. Between 1999 and 2003, he studied at Munich's Akademie der Bildenden Künste under the sculptors Nikolaus Gerhart and Olaf Metzal. In 2003, he relocated to London where he studied at Goldsmiths College until 2004. He is currently based in Berlin. Since his first exhibitions in the early 2000s, Sailstorfer has developed a distinctive approach to sculpture drawing on Minimalism, Fluxus, Land art and the readymade. Although his practice engages in serious investigations of artistic problems, his work also reveals a playful appreciation of the material world.

Concepts

- Visual conventions

While Sailstorfer emphasises the formal qualities of weight and volume in his works, there is also a strong romantic sensibility in his evocation of landscape. *Walken (Clouds)* 2010 — constructed from tyre inner tubes — creates the brooding atmosphere of an impending storm within the gallery's walls. In his practice, Sailstorfer reorganises what already exists in the world by revealing hidden or unnoticed aspects of our everyday lives.

Classroom activity suggestions

Foundation to Year 6

Engage students in a creative exercise where they imagine developing an artwork — on a grand scale — from any materials they choose. Ask students to think of a concept and draw their installation, as well as describe their materials and the reasons for their choices. Invite the class to create a scale model of an exhibition of their installations, alongside their concept drawings.

Year 7 to 12

Invite students to collaboratively construct a large-scale installation from ordinary objects, such as ice-cream containers or cardboard boxes. Encourage them to experiment with changing the form of the objects in order to contradict their original intended use.

ANISH KAPOOR

ENGLAND B.1954

In his practice, Anish Kapoor draws on his varied cultural heritage, including his Indian and Jewish ancestry and his mainly British art education. Deciding to become an artist at the age of 18, he moved to London to study. Kapoor continues to live and work in Britain and is identified as one of the New British Sculpture artists. His works are highly engaging, both visually and physically, and they are also rich in philosophical references. Kapoor's artistic development has been deeply informed by Jung's psychoanalytical ideas of archetypal forms, together with concepts of duality in Hinduism and other philosophies. One of Kapoor's main undertakings as an artist is to understand the 'wholeness' of our experience of life.

Concepts

- Spirituality
- Culture
- Infinity
- Origin
- Space – Illusion and duality
- Archetypal forms
- Social/Cultural context
- Psychological.

Kapoor's *Void* (#13) 1991–92, which is made from fibreglass and pigment, relies on visual illusion to provide the viewer with an ambiguous sense of space. Kapoor is able to play with viewers' perceptions by manipulating surface, space, colour and form. His use of dark, light-absorbing pigment on the surface of the large concave form makes it difficult for the viewer to clearly perceive the interior surface of the work. Here, colour has a symbolic value — blue is a significant colour in both Hindu and Christian traditions.

Classroom activity suggestions

Foundation to Year 6

Ask students to think about what two-dimensional shapes and colours would be needed to create an effect similar to that in *Void* (#13). Encourage them to work with chalk pastels to create a page of intensely coloured shapes. Compare the effects created, and ask students to experiment with contrasting colours and discuss the results.

Year 7 to 12

Encourage students to interpret *Void* (#13) as a painting. Ask the students to consider the following as they produce their artworks: tone, texture (matt versus gloss surfaces), light-absorbing surfaces and non-objectivity.