

Michael Parekowhai

THE PROMISED LAND

PRIMARY
AND SECONDARY
**TEACHER
NOTES**

About the exhibition

The exhibition title 'The Promised Land' could be interpreted in a number of ways. It is also the name of a simulation building and strategy video game featuring five colonists disembarking from a ship on an uninhabited island. 'The Promised Land' could also refer to pop culture and the Chuck Berry song, famously covered by both Elvis and Bruce Springsteen. Parekowhai's works never mean just one thing. Instead, they invite viewers to engage with them to create their own interpretations.

The exhibition begins with *Memory Palace* 2015, a seven-metre-tall replica house. This is adjacent to *Home Front* 2015, a wall made from brightly coloured, oversized Cuisenaire rods, which acts as a threshold for a series of

domestic scaled rooms. Within these multiple spaces, viewers can discover sculptures and photographs from over two decades of the artist's practice.

Concepts

Parekowhai's unique practice is characterised by a refined aesthetic and engagement with the role of art and culture in the contemporary world. Primarily sculptural, his works often play on scale and use humour to comment on significant issues, particularly the intersections between national narratives, colonial histories, biographies and popular culture. He brings together multiple layers of meaning in a single object, with in-jokes and snippets of autobiography sitting side-by-side with cultural critique and art-historical playfulness.

For the classroom

The accompanying Student Worksheet addresses five selected artworks from the exhibition. The artworks are listed below, accompanied by relevant questions and activities to investigate in the classroom.



Stainless steel, ed. of 3 / 257 x 166 x 158cm / Courtesy: The artist and Michael Lett / Photograph: Jennifer French

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL 2015

Primary

Brainstorm adjectives that can be used to describe explorer Captain Cook. With these words in mind, create a portrait of Captain Cook.

Secondary

Choose a prominent figure from history or popular culture. Research information and images reflecting different perceptions of them: for example, is he heroic or vulnerable, courageous or cowardly? Create two portraits that reflect the differing opinions.



Aluminium, polyurethane paint / Two parts: 4.04 x 22.95m (each) / Gift of the artist and Michael Lett through the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art Foundation 2015

HOME FRONT 2015

Primary

Think about the purpose of walls and how they've been used in history. Research different walls online and why they are famous (e.g. the Berlin Wall, the Great Wall of China, the Wailing Wall).

Secondary

Choose a small object or children's toy and assign a symbolic meaning to it in order to address a topic of interest. For example, dice may represent a risk, a plastic dinosaur may represent evolution. Make an artwork using multiples of the object. Multiples could be produced digitally or with traditional sculptural media. Consider stacking, grouping, up- and downscaling.



Bronze / 164 pieces: 77.5 x 11 x 2cm (each); / 2 frames: 360 x 90 x 5cm (each) / Installed dimensions variable / Courtesy: The artist and Michael Lett

ACTS III 2015

Primary

From a selection of tools, choose one and draw it from different angles. Repeat using two or more tools. Combine these images by filling an A3 sheet with drawings of the tools using various sizes and angles.

Secondary

Choose your favourite object. Change the way you look at it by adding some dramatic lighting to make it seem scary or dangerous. Make some carefully observed tonal drawings of the whole object or a part of it, or take some black-and-white photographs. In your visual diary, write a reflection comparing and contrasting the original object with your new interpretation of it.



Wood, fibreglass, steel, brass, automotive paint / Purchased 2008 with funds from the Queensland Government's Gallery of Modern Art Acquisitions Fund in recognition of the contribution to the Gallery by Wayne Goss (Chair of Trustees 1999-2008)

HORN OF AFRICA 2006

Primary

See how the sculpture is shaped like New Zealand? Think of the shape of Australia. What animal and object would you draw together to represent Australia?

Secondary

Investigate the concept of colonisation and the effect it has on contemporary Australian society. Consider Indigenous perspectives. Research artists who have produced work on the subject. Select two artworks that are indicative of the impact of colonisation in Australia, then use the four Steps of Art Criticism to analyse these works and write a short essay to support your visual analysis.



Neon, LED light bulbs, aluminium, automotive paint / 158 x 569cm (overall) / Courtesy: The artist and Michael Lett

RULES OF THE GAME 2015

Primary

In groups or individually, choose a word which contains another word. For example: TOUCH, BURNT or CLOSED. Use letter stencils to create the word. Fill in the block letters using patterns, colours, paint or textures.

Secondary

Brainstorm words that change meaning when you rearrange or remove letters. Develop one idea by exploring composition, letters, colours, textures and size. Create an artwork by considering choice and arrangement through juxtaposition of images, symbols, and/or text to communicate the double meaning found within the word/s.

Curriculum links

Queensland curriculum links (years 11 & 12)

Visual art

Making

- Deconstruct artworks and reconstruct their intent for a different context and purpose
- Use skills, techniques and processes to explore and manipulate a diversity of materials, techniques and technologies.

Appraising

- Critical analysis, interpretation, evaluation and effective synthesis of information about visual language, expression and meanings in artworks
- Consistently accurate and skilful use of relevant visual art terminology, referencing and language conventions.

Australian curriculum links

Content descriptions are included in the tables below. The codes are hyperlinked to the relevant Elaborations. For information about how this resource links to cross curriculum priorities, please visit the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website.

Visual art

FOUNDATION TO YEAR 2	YEARS 3 AND 4	YEARS 5 AND 6	YEARS 7 AND 8	YEARS 9 AND 10
Responding ACAVAR109	Responding ACAVAM110	Responding ACAVAM114 ACAVAR117	Responding ACAVAR123	Responding ACAVAM125 ACAVAR130
Making ACAVAM107 ACAVAM108	Making ACAVAM111 ACAVAM115	Making ACAVAM115 ACAVAM116	Making ACAVAM119	Making ACAVAM127 ACAVAM128

History

FOUNDATION TO YEAR 2	YEARS 3 AND 4	YEARS 5 AND 6	YEARS 7 AND 8	YEARS 9 AND 10
The Australian colonies ACHHK093	First contacts ACHHK078 ACHHK079	The Australian colonies ACHHK093 ACHHK094	Chronology, terms and concepts ACHHS205 Historical questions and research ACHHS207	Perspectives and interpretations ACHHS172 Making a nation ACDSEH020

English

YEARS 5 AND 6	YEARS 7 AND 8	YEARS 9 AND 10
Literature and context ACELT1608 Examining literature ACELT1610	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating ACELY1721 Responding to literature ACELY1628 Interacting with others ACELY1730	Interpreting, analysing, evaluating ACELY1742 Interacting with others ACELY1811 Literature and context ACELY1639 Texts in context ACELY1749

Geography

FOUNDATION TO YEAR 2	YEARS 3 AND 4	YEARS 5 AND 6	YEARS 7 AND 8	YEARS 9 AND 10
Collecting, recording, evaluating and representing ACHGS014	Geographical knowledge and understanding ACHGK016 ACHGK018	Geographical knowledge and understanding ACHGK027	Geographical knowledge and understanding ACHGK043 Unit 1: Water in the world ACHGK040	Unit 2: Geographies of interconnections ACHGK065

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