

EDUCATION RESOURCE:

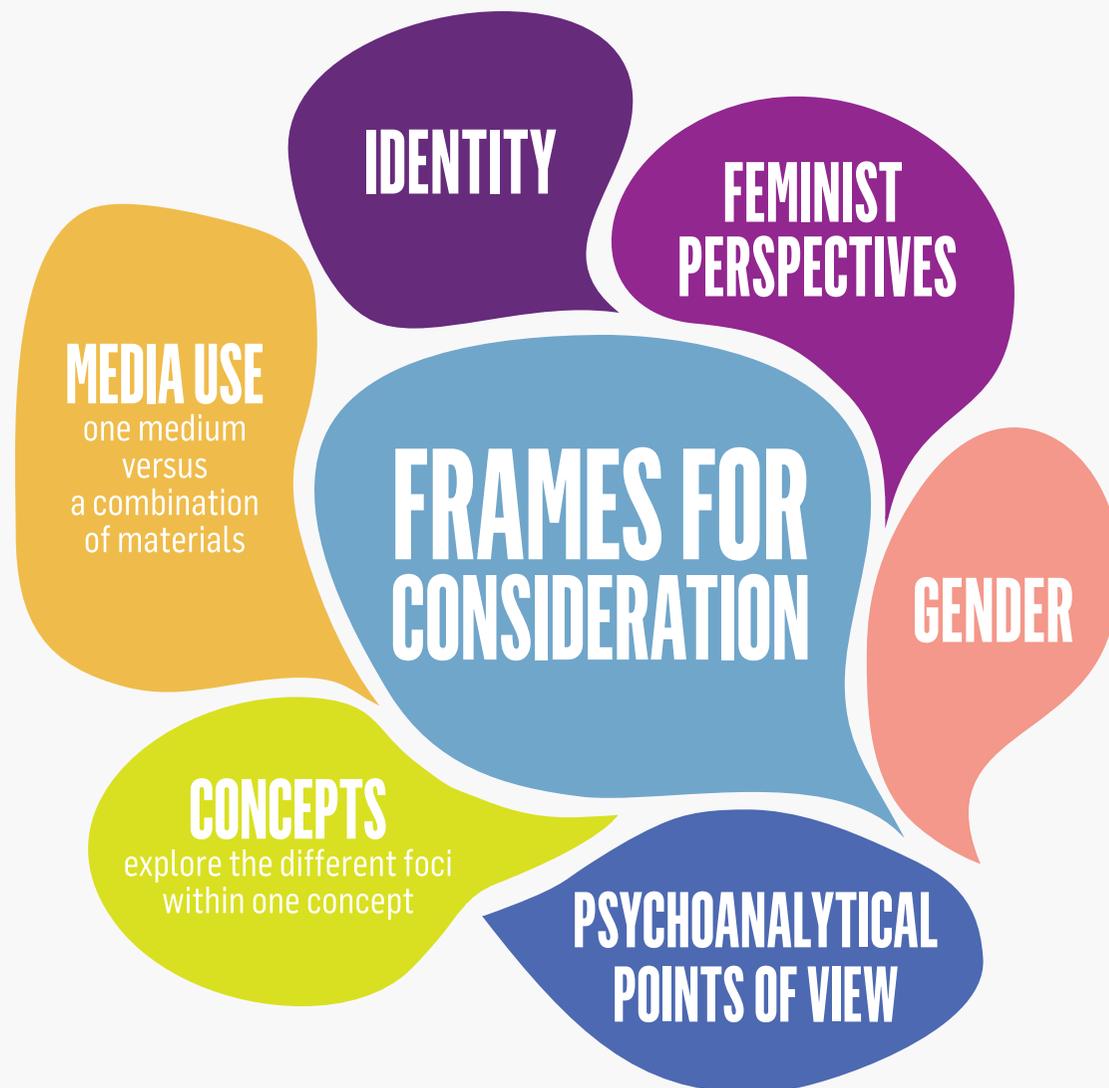
SECONDARY (MIDDLE SCHOOL) AND SENIOR LEVEL (YEARS 10–12)

CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA WOMEN

'Contemporary Australia: Women' celebrates 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 features new and recent work — including sculpture, painting, installation, photography and video — by emerging, established and senior Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian female artists.

Note down your observations on the following as you walk through the exhibition:

- *Are there any consistent themes or underlying messages that you can identify across a range of selected works?*
- *What are the different applications of media that the artists have used?*
- *How have the artists reinvigorated or reused traditional media techniques?*
- *How has technology been utilised and exploited to construct meaning across a range of works in this exhibition?*



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

MODERN *Woman*

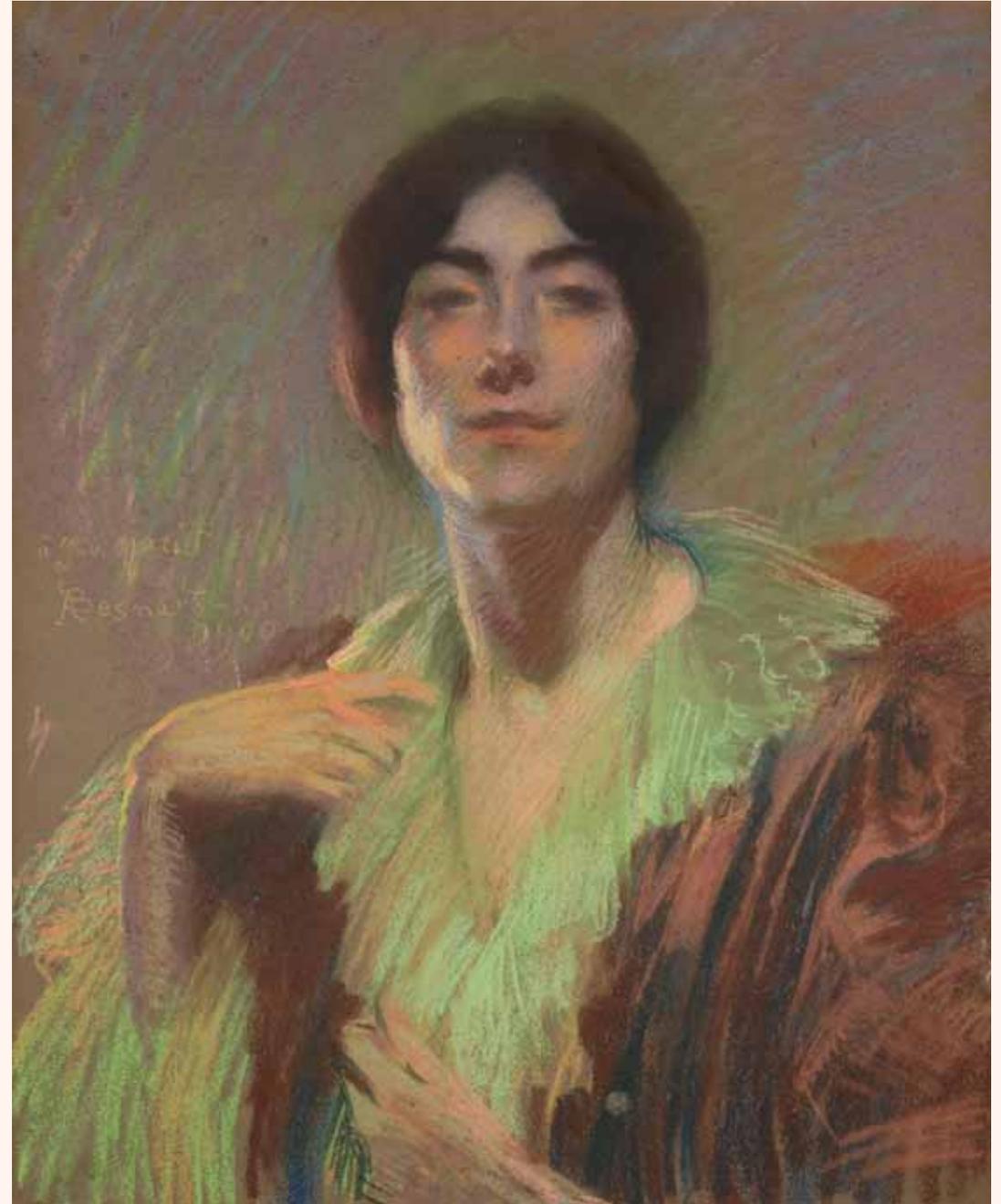
Daughters and Lovers 1850-1918

DRAWINGS FROM THE MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS

'Modern Woman: Daughters and Lovers 1850–1918: Drawings from the Musée d'Orsay, Paris' features drawings from renowned French artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The exhibition celebrates the changing roles of women during the Belle Époque as depicted by leading artists of the time.

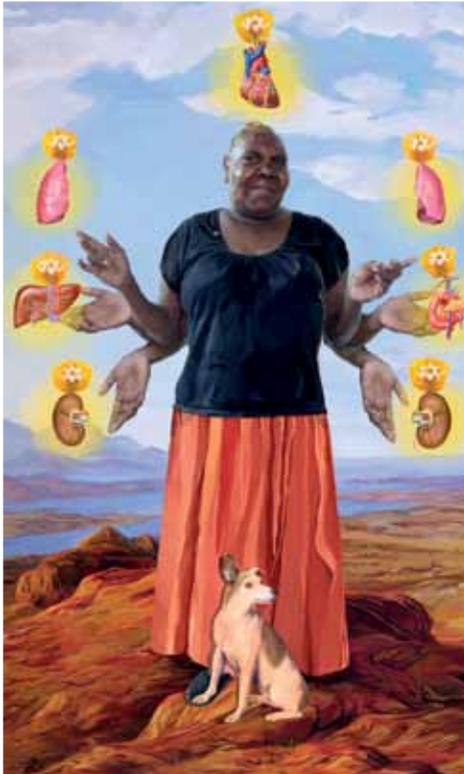
As you walk through the exhibition:

- List all the types of work activities you can see women engaged in.
- How do male artists depict women?
- What was it like to live during this time?
- Look for evidence in the drawings exhibited.
- What can we learn about the impact of feminist ideas on women artists during this time?
(Hint: Look at the exhibition timeline for assistance)
- What year were women in France given the right to vote?



Albert Besnard / France 1849–1934 / *Portrait de femme (Portrait of a woman)* 1900 / Pastel / 72 x 40cm / Bequest of Jules Maciet, 1911 / RF 54924 / Collection: Musée d'Orsay, Paris / Photograph: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Hervé Lewandowski

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PORTRAITURE



Darwin-based artist Therese Ritchie creates portrait photographs that mostly depict Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. Her works feature clear digital manipulation and raise questions relating to the tradition of documentary photography.

Therese Ritchie / Australia b.1961 / *Our organs are Sacred* 2011 / Inkjet print / 120 x 80cm / Courtesy: The artist

Secondary:

- Find Ritchie's art work *Our Organs are Sacred* 2011. List the different organs in this art work.
 - What do you think they represent?
 - What is sprouting from the organs? Why?

Describe and draw how the different faiths represented in this image are represented in Therese Ritchie's art work:

Hindu — many armed gods (Shiva and Kali)
Christian tradition — virgin and sacred heart
Renaissance — passion of the Christ

Senior:

- There is a level of protest in this artist's work.
 - What is the artist concerned about?
- Consider symbolism.
 - What are three different ideas that a dog can represent?
- Look closely at the photograph.
 - How has it been manipulated?

In the classroom:

The Australian landscape depicted in this work references colonial artist John Glover.

- Research the artist John Glover.
 - Which of John Glover's art work/s do you think Ritchie's landscape background references?
 - What is appropriation?



Portrait de Madame Edma Pontillon, née Edma Morisot, soeur de l'artiste 1871, by Berthe Morisot, depicts the artist's sister, Edma. Morisot was one of the first women accepted into the impressionist group, exhibiting in shows regularly throughout her lifetime.

Berthe Morisot / France 1841–95 / *Portrait de Madame Edma Pontillon, née Edma Morisot, soeur de l'artiste* (Portrait of Mme Edma Pontillon, née Morisot, the artist's sister) 1871 / Pastel / 81.5 x 65.8cm / Bequest of Mme Pontillon, 1921 / RF 5262 / Collection: Musée d'Orsay, Paris / Photograph: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Hervé Lewandowski

Secondary:

- Select another portrait in this exhibition that has been drawn by a male. Describe the subject matter.
 - How has the sitter been portrayed?
 - What is the mood or feeling depicted in the sitter's face and how is this affected by the colours used?
 - Are there any differences between the representations made by the different artists?

Senior:

- Research the history behind female portraiture — e.g. the capacity of the depicted female to provoke desire.
 - Do you think this work is an historical representation of a female subject in portraiture? Why?
 - Who were the majority of portrait painters previous to this era?
 - What was the purpose of the paintings and who were the sitters previous to this period?

In the classroom:

- Research portraiture during the Belle Époque and compare your findings with another portrait from the same time period (does not necessarily have to be from this exhibition).
 - Would you describe the image you have researched as a traditional portrait? Why or why not? Discuss as a class.
 - How were artists reinterpreting portraits during the Belle Époque? Why was this occurring?
(Hint: Think about the history behind female portraiture.)

THE BOND BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD



Anastasia Klose / Australia b.1978 / *Together* (production still) 2011 / Single-channel HD video projection, 16:9, colour, sound, 9:46 minutes, ed. of 5 / Image courtesy: The artist and Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne

In *Together* 2011, Anastasia Klose and her mother, artist Elizabeth Presa, perform contemporary jazz moves to Olivia Newton-John's 1980s hit 'Magic' in a Melbourne shopping centre. They display a banner made from an old bed sheet saying: 'Mother and daughter experiencing the totality of existence!'

Secondary:

- How would you describe Klose's relationship with her mother?
- Identify a person who you have a special bond with.
 - How would you compose a portrait of them? What type of medium would you use to convey this bond in your art work?

Senior:

- Explain what is meant by the statement on the banner — 'Mother and daughter experiencing the totality of existence!' — in relation to this art work.

In the classroom:

- Identify someone who you don't have a special bond with (e.g. family member, bus driver, neighbour, older student). Compose a new image that conveys the lack of closeness or connection you feel with this person.



Mary Cassatt was an American artist who lived much of her life in France. Her art work *Femme et enfant devant une tablette où sont posés un broc et une cuvette* 1889 is a pastel drawing depicting the tender embrace of a mother and child. Cassatt was well known for her perceptive depictions of women and children.

Secondary:

- Describe what kind of relationship between mother and child is depicted in this work.

Senior:

- Does the title help you discern what the art work is about?
- Why do you think the artist has titled the work in this way?

In the classroom:

- How would you incorporate or reference an artist's work that you admire in your own self-portrait or a portrait of a family member?
 - Think about how you would portray this person — characteristics, personality, ancestry, personal history, age, gender.
- Design a soundtrack on a computer to reflect the mood of this painting.

Mary Cassatt / United States/France 1844–1926 / *Femme et enfant devant une tablette où sont posés un broc et une cuvette* (Woman and child in front of a small table bearing a wash basin and pitcher) 1889 / Pastel on beige paper mounted on canvas and stretched / 65 x 50cm / Donation subject to usufruct of Jean-Pierre Hugot and Mlle Louise Hugot, 1968 / RF 31843/ Collection: Musée d'Orsay, Paris / Photograph: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Hervé Lewandowski

INTIMACY AND REFLECTION



Jennifer Mills's practice explores identity through drawing. Her installation of small portraits entitled *What's in a name?* 2009–11 depicts 325 portraits of women called Jennifer Mills, sourced online.

Secondary:

The artist has represented each Jennifer Mills in their own intimate space.

- Select one and describe the setting.
- How is the person depicted? What do they look like and how are they dressed? Do they look happy or sad? Where are they — what type of setting are they in?

Senior:

- What different representations of identity are pictured in this work?
- How does this work question the nature of identity and self-reflection?

In the classroom:

- Try googling your own name.
 - How many search results appear (apart from those relating to you)?
 - How does your name identify who you are and provide you with a sense of self?
- Create a collage including images, photos, words, objects that identify who you are.

Jennifer Mills / Australia b.1966 / *What's in a name?* (detail) 2009–11 / Watercolour with pencil on paper / 325 sheets, installed dimensions variable / Purchased 2011, Queensland Art Gallery Foundation / Collection: Queensland Art Gallery / Installation view, Darren Knight Gallery, 2011 / Photograph: Susannah Wimberley



Eva Gonzalès was a French painter who trained under Édouard Manet (1832–83). In the exhibition, find the work *La matinée rose (ou La nichée)* 1874.

Eva Gonzalès / France 1849–83 / *La matinée rose (ou La nichée)* 1874 / Pastel on paper mounted on canvas and stretcher / 90 x 72cm / Purchased 1885 / RF 12299 Recto / Collection: Musée d'Orsay, Paris / Photograph: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Hervé Lewandowski

Secondary:

- The title of this work translates to *The pink morning wrap (or The litter)*.
 - Why do you think the work is called this?
 - Why is this lady in a room by herself?
 - What do you think the lady is thinking about?

Senior:

- Walk around the exhibition and take in the different art works.
 - What are the types of imagery depicted?
 - What types of colours are used?
- Describe what you think was happening during this period in France.
 - Do these art works provide a glimpse into society at this time?

In the classroom:

Research the Belle Époque. Create your own definition of this period.

- Research Eva Gonzalès to gain insight into life as a female artist during this period.
- Did she exhibit with other impressionist artists of this time? Why or why not? Did her lifestyle and practice as an artist differ to that of her male contemporaries?

FEMININITY AND SOCIETY



Deborah Kelly's multimedia art work *Beastliness* 2011 features an image of a face transforming into animals, insects and women.

Secondary:

- How has this artist used technology to construct meaning?
- Comment on the idea that one performs femininity or performs as a woman.
 - Do you agree or disagree?

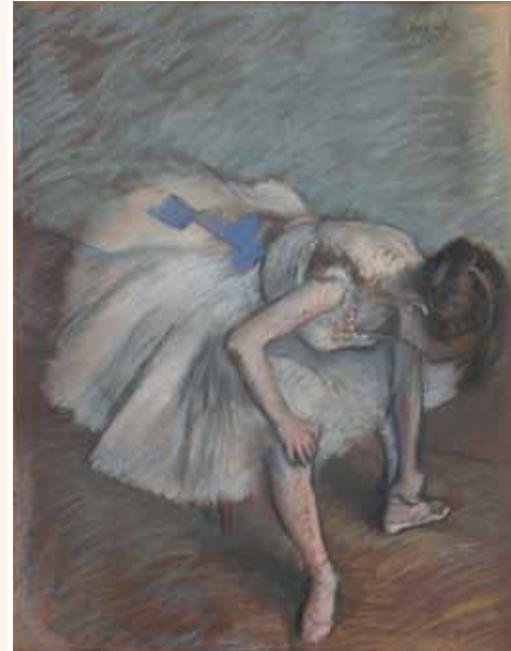
Senior:

- How has Kelly contextualised femininity in this art work?
- Mythology and immortality are explored in this work.
 - What is a chimera and how is this used in this work?
- The pattern of transformation has been described as an ouroboros.
 - How can this be translated to the movement and pattern of the creatures in this work?

In the classroom:

Create a simple transformation animation. Scan a photograph of yourself and some cut-outs of figures — animal or object — into your computer. Import these into a PowerPoint presentation and create a simple 1 minute animation that transforms your face into something grotesque.

Deborah Kelly / Australia b.1962 / *Beastliness* (still, detail) 2011 / Digital animation shown as HD projection, DVD, 16:9, colour, sound, 3:17 mins, ed. 2/8 / Animation: Chris Wilson and Christian Heinrich / Original score by Brutal Poodles / Audio mastering: Steve Smart / Purchased 2011. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation / Collection: Queensland Art Gallery / © Deborah Louise Kelly. Licensed by Viscopy, Sydney, 2012



Edgar Degas's work *Danseuse assise, penchée en avant, se massant le pied gauche* c.1881–83 presents a representation of a female ballet dancer.

For Degas, the practice of drawing became a way of collecting and translating forms.

Secondary:

- How has Degas represented femininity in this art work?
 - Describe how this is different to the way other artists in the exhibition have represented femininity.

Senior:

- This work celebrates a new era of acceptance and freedom of expression.
 - Why and how do we know this?

In the classroom:

- Respond to this work by writing an article to be included in a newspaper during the Belle Époque.
 - What is the subject doing? Where has she been? What's a typical day in her life like?
- Consider using appropriate grammar and values of the time. You may even wish to try writing it in French!

Edgar Degas / France 1834–1917 / *Danseuse assise, penchée en avant, se massant le pied gauche* (Seated dancer leaning forward, massaging her left foot) c.1881–83 | Pastel, brown paper backed with cardboard / 62 x 49cm / Caillebotte bequest, 1894 / RF 22712 Recto / Collection: Musée d'Orsay, Paris / Photograph: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay)/Hervé Lewandowski

COMPARISON:

CONTEMPORARY VERSUS HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

Compare the portraits in these exhibitions.

- *How do they represent feminist perspectives and social attitudes? What key messages are communicated?*
- *How are a range of cultures and cultural perspectives presented in the images of women across these two exhibitions?*

Consider Jennifer Mills's work *What's in a name?* from 'Contemporary Australia: Women'. Discuss how the title of selected works define and perhaps extend the context and intended meanings in art works.

Since the Belle Époque, cameras have significantly changed. We can now record video, crop and edit a photo instantly.

- *How did the invention of the camera in 1827 by Nicéphore Niépce impact on the work of artists in 'Modern Woman'?*
- *How are the portraits in 'Contemporary Australia: Women' reflective of some of these technological innovations?*

EXHIBITION REVIEW

