

NGUNUNGULA

Retford Park
Southern Highlands
Regional Gallery

Education
Resource



HEATH FRANCO MATTHEW GRIFFIN

**VIDEO
COMMISSION**

27 December 2022 – 12 March 2023

HEATH FRANCO b. 1984, Australia

- Primarily working in time-based media, Heath Franco's body of work incorporates video, performance, installation and sound. Franco's time-based works are structured with respect to flow and rhythm rather than plot narrative. His screen works in turns attract and repulse through the mix of a curious aesthetic and absurd performance.



MATTHEW GRIFFIN b. 1976, Australia

- Matthew Griffin combines works across sculpture, photography, video and installation. This work is often playful and humorous and combines references from high and popular culture. Matthew Griffin's work is held by institutional collections including: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Murray Art Museum Albury, UQ Art Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia.



The Entertainer and Mosquito (installation view), 2022, photo Zan Wimberley

Cover image: *The Entertainer*, 2022, photo Zan Wimberley

Gate, Repellant, Don, The Entertainer and Blanket 2022 | various single and 2-channel video installations | various durations

Franco and Griffin's installation was created in response to a two-week artist residency at Shark Island Institute in Kangaroo Valley, New South Wales. The residency gave the artists time and opportunity to collaborate and produce work heavily inspired by the remote, bush location. Franco and Griffin created five screen-based works which are broadly connected through a sense of play, performance and references to the natural environment. Upon entering the installation space, the audience is immersed by a grid painted on all four walls. The pattern is both reminiscent of a fly screen and an overt reference to the heavy presence of flies and mosquitos that the artists experienced during their residency.

In the *The Entertainer* (single channel video installation) Franco and Griffin create a world of whimsy that combines performance, storytelling and imagination. A child narrates the story of a ventriloquist puppet who dreams of experience and adventure beyond it's own physical limitations. The handmade appearance of the ventriloquist puppet, the integration of low-fi animation techniques and the youthful voice over, create a sense of naivety, play and wonder that is echoed elsewhere in the installation.

Repellent (2-channel video installation), a short analogue video work, further references irritating bush insects such as flies and mosquitoes. In a both comical and grotesque performance, a costumed, mosquito caricature is shown drawing blood from a host, in abject detail. A mosquito net covers the CRT television set and VCR on which the video is screened. A promotional graphic, which mimics the promotional conventions of B grade Hollywood horror movies, advertises a fictional film called *Mozzie* as a \$3 weekly rental.

In *Gate* (single channel video installation), a humorous and poignant vignette about family dynamics, Franco and Griffin play father and son roles. As the overbearing father-figure watches his son struggle with opening and closing a farm gate, he appears judgemental and increasingly frustrated. Yet, in a strange overturning of archetypes, the text that appears on screen is (conversely) positive affirmations of love and support.

Blanket (single channel video installation) invites the viewer to sit next to a suspended picnic blanket and view what organisms may be living within it if viewed at a micro level.

Don (single channel video installation) appropriates footage of famed Australian cricketer Donald Bradman performing batting drills. The archival footage is spliced with newly shot cutaways, so that Bradman is transported to an unmistakably contemporary setting to undertake his training. Having spent his youth in Bowral, where Ngununggula is located, Franco and Griffin give a comical nod to the local sporting legend.

VOCABULARY

Abject something (usually bad or unpleasant) experienced or present to the maximum degree.

Analogue video predates digital video technology.

Affirmation emotional support or encouragement.

Archetype a very typical example of a certain person or thing.

Caricature a picture, description, or imitation of a person in which certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect.

Collaborative produced by or involving two or more parties working together.

Dynamics the forces or properties which stimulate growth, development, or change within a system.

Grotesque comically or repulsively ugly or distorted.

Organism an individual animal, plant, or single-celled life form.

Poignant evoking a keen sense of sadness or regret.

Suspended supported by attachment from above; hanging.

Ventriloquist a person, especially an entertainer, who can make their voice appear to come from somewhere else, typically a dummy of a person or animal.

Vignette a brief evocative description, account, or episode.

ARTMAKING | UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

This lesson can be tailored for a PRIMARY or SECONDARY school audience

Responding

- ▶ **Frames | Postmodern Frame**
List the postmodern techniques used by Franco and Griffin.
Prompts: *remixing, appropriation, humour, pop culture references, low-fi technology etc.*
- ▶ **Conceptual Framework**
Describe the references that the artists have made to regional/country living?
Prompts: *consider places, spaces, icons, objects and ideas*
- ▶ **Practice**
Discuss the impact an artist residency may have had on the practice of the artists?
Prompts: *collaborative, site-responsive, working outside of their usual environment*

Making

Lesson Plan | Under the Microscope

Taking inspiration from Franco and Griffin's work *Blanket*, students will use scientific equipment to observe and respond to the microscopic/cellular

Resources

- VAPD
- Class set of bio-viewers or microscopes and set of specimen slides. Alternatively, ask students to undertake a Google image search of 'microscopic cells' and use these images as secondary source material.
- Watercolour or cartridge paper
- Watercolour paint and brushes
- Felt tip pens

Success Criteria

A student can:

- Experiment with a range of watercolour washes
- Confidently recreate and manipulate a range of watercolour wash techniques as demonstrated in class
- Recognise and represent line, shape and pattern through sample drawings
- Confidently manipulate visual language such as line, shape, pattern, space and scale in a resolved artwork.

NESA Syllabus Links

Frames	Conceptual Framework
Structural	World

Australian Curriculum

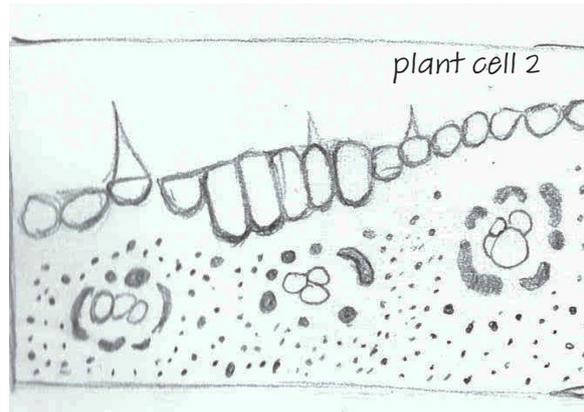
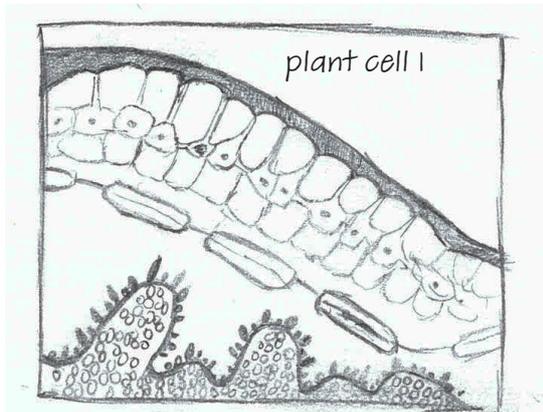
General Capabilities

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Critical and creative thinking

STEP 1

Use the bio viewers/microscopes to study the details and intricacies of animal, plant, insect, textile, pollen and spore specimens.

Record the source material by sketching your observations in your Visual Arts Process Diary. Aim to capture details and intricacies of the source material and with consideration of line, shape, space, pattern and scale.



STEP 2

Seek peer feedback to develop the accuracy of your observational drawing. Apply this feedback, as well as your own self-reflection to your 're-draw'.

STEP 3

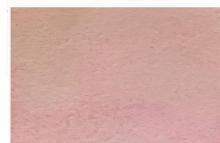
Watch your teacher demonstrate a range of watercolour techniques such as dry brush, wet-on-wet, flat wash, lifting colour, salt and plastic wrap variations.



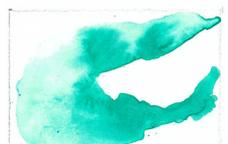
opaque wash



graded wash



translucent wash



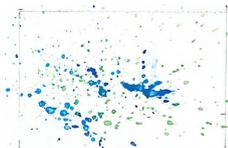
wet-on-wet



wet-on-dry



bleeding



splatter



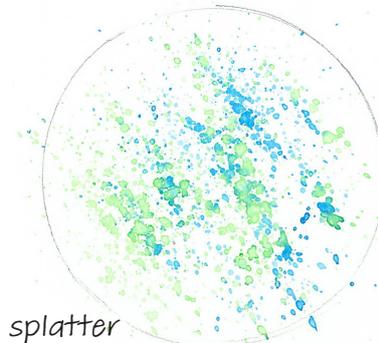
salt



dry-on-dry

STEP 4

Now it is your turn to experiment with a variety of watercolour techniques in your VAPD. Experiment with the techniques demonstrated by your teacher and create a range of swatch samples in your VAPD. Remember to annotate the technique you are using for later reference.



STEP 5

Choose one, or a combination, of the watercolour techniques that you have experimented with and create a wash background on your watercolour paper.

STEP 6

Once the watercolour background is dry, you will work over the top using felt tip pen. Consider using a circular frame to mimic the lens of the microscope.

Choose one observational specimen sketch to develop into a drawing. You will need to increase the scale of your original drawing. You may choose to replicate their observational study accurately. Or, you may choose to further develop or embellish details and patterns.



EXTEND

Consider adding additional texture to your work by using a needle and thread to follow existing lines and patterns within your design.