

NGUNUNGULA

Retford Park
Southern Highlands
Regional Gallery

Education
Resource



TOM POLO JAMES VAUGHAN

**VIDEO
COMMISSION**

27 December 2022 – 12 March 2023

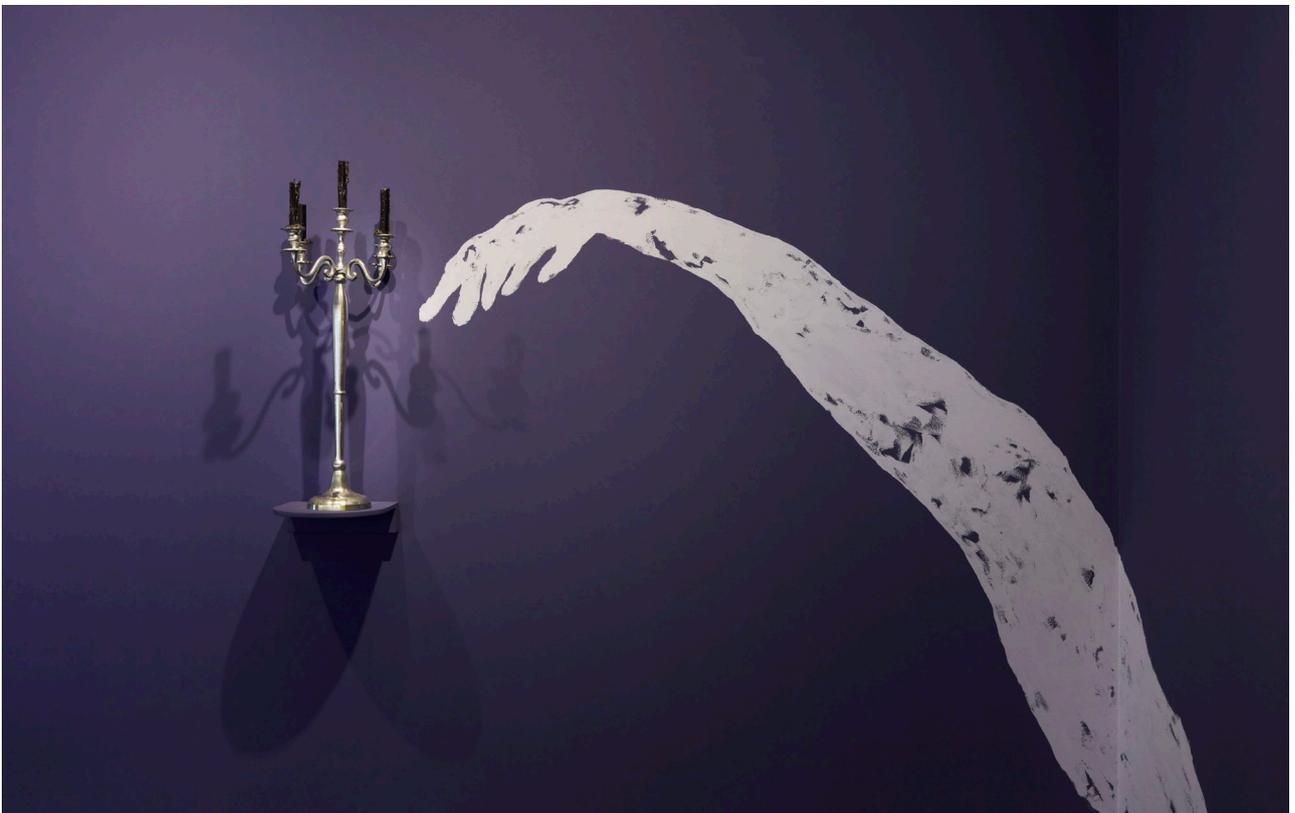
TOM POLO | b.1983, Australia

- Tom Polo creates painting and painted environments to explore how conversation, gesture and exchange are embodied acts of portraiture. Incorporating text and figurative elements, his works draw upon acute observations, absurdist encounters, personal histories and imagined personas. Polo has built a significant index of vignettes that are recalled then assembled into richly hued paintings and installations that are familiar, poetic and stirring.



JAMES VAUGHAN | b.1989, Australia

- James Vaughan is an independent writer and filmmaker from Sydney. His debut feature, FRIENDS AND STRANGERS (2021) was the first ever Australian film to screen in International Film Festival Rotterdam's Tiger Competition; it also screened at New Directors/ New Films, the Viennale, Chicago International Film Festival and Jeonju International Film Festival, where it won the Special Jury Prize.



Cover image and above : *a head is a place to go* (installation view), 2022, 8-channel video and painting installation, photo Zan Wimberley

a head is a place to go

2022 | 16mm film, sound, 4mins

a head is a place to go (2022) is a multi-channel film installation and collaboration between painter Tom Polo and film director James Vaughan. The immersive installation space has a theatrical quality, showcasing Polo's signature bold colour palette as well as gestural paintings applied directly to the gallery walls. Shot on 16mm film, the work is split across eight identical flatscreens. The screens provide a framing device for single vignettes but can also be viewed simultaneously, as sequences stretch and recede across multiple panels.

Within the videos, a disorienting journey unfolds in which two characters navigate a world that is filled with conversations, questions, doubts and humour. The artists themselves appear within the sequences, conversing in a disjointed dialogue across the multiple channels. The dialogue is sometimes in synch, sometimes out-of-synch and occasionally echoes across the channels, creating a disorienting quality, or a discordant call and response. The script emerged from conversations between the two artists and also integrates text and titles from Polo's extensive catalogue of work.

The use of multiple channels allows considerable variety and experimentation with compositional ideas and arrangements for both sound and vision. Playful editing techniques allow the characters step out of one frame and into the next, or to sometimes occupy multiple channels at once.

Grainy, birds-eye shots of traffic, pedestrians, inner-city laneways and urban architecture generate a sense of navigation, surveyance and exploration of the city. Teamed with the inquisitive, questioning dialogue and imagery of hands opening doors and walking feet, there is very much a sense of the flaneur navigating space and place, through a fractured or prismatic lens.



Polo and Vaughan share a journey through a world that is fractured and disjointed.

What are some other words for 'fracture'?

Prompt: *split, splinter, fragment, displace, shatter, break, smash etc.*

VOCABULARY

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

Discordant harsh and jarring because of a lack of harmony.

Flaneur a French term used by nineteenth-century French poet Charles Baudelaire to identify an observer of modern urban life.

Immersive providing a deep absorption or immersion in an activity or environment.

Multiple channel consists of two or more display devices, such as monitors or projectors, used in the same work of art, in the same viewing space.

Prismatic relating to or having the form of a prism or prisms.

Vignette a brief incident or scene.

16mm film Polo and Vaughan shot their work on film rather than digital video. 16 mm film refers to the width of the film (about 2/3 inch); other common film gauges include 8 and 35 mm. It is generally used for non-theatrical (e.g., industrial, educational, televisual) film-making, or for low-budget motion pictures.

ARTMAKING | FRACTURING PLACE

This lesson is recommended for a PRIMARY school audience



List the filmmaking techniques used by Polo and Vaughan.

Prompts: *close ups, mid shots, birds eye shots, use of long lens, multi-channel display, non-linear narrative, un-synched dialogue, use of text*



How have the artists represented their world?

Prompts: *urban, fast-paced, mysterious, unfixed, boundless, non-linear, multi-layered, a multiverse*

Responding

Making

Lesson Plan | Fracturing Place

Inspired by Polo and Vaughan's disjointed journey through the urban landscape, students will fracture and transform an architectural building through drawing.

Resources

- A3 cartridge paper
- 2B pencil
- Ruler
- Erasers
- Black marker
- Colour pencils

Success Criteria

A student can:

- Recognise and represent the main lines and shapes of their chosen building
- Transform their drawing by extending, overlapping and connecting lines
- Select and apply pattern and colour to their work
- Confidently manipulate colour, pattern and shape to transform their chosen building

Australian Curriculum

General Capabilities

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Critical and creative thinking

STEP 1

Photograph a local building that is of interest to you. This could be in your neighbourhood, town or school. You can also source an image of a building using an online search.



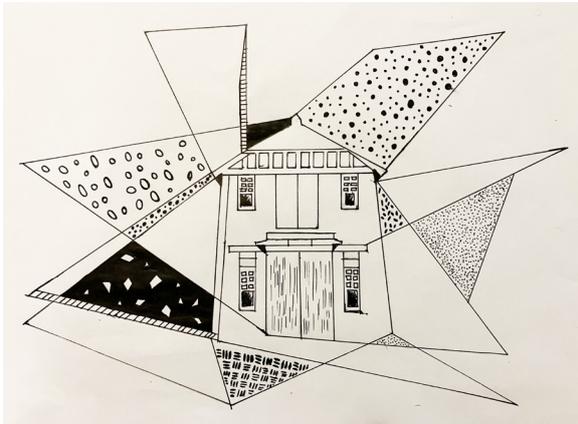
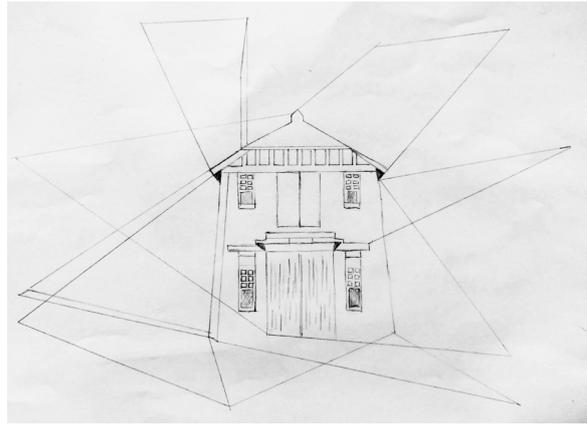
STEP 2

Identify the **main lines** in the form of the building. Use 2B pencil to lightly sketch these lines onto an A3 piece of paper. It is ok if your drawing looks incomplete – we will build this up in the next step.



STEP 3

Now is your opportunity to reimagine and 'fracture' your building. Using a ruler, add triangles and other polygons to your drawing by extending, overlapping and connecting existing lines in your drawing. As you overlap lines, more geometric shapes will emerge.



STEP 4

Select a number of shapes and add graphic pattern using a felt tip pen or biro. Leave some shapes without pattern.

STEP 5

Choose a limited colour palette of three or four colours and shade some of the shapes to resolve your drawing.



Observe the results. Is your building still recognisable? Are the outcomes across the class varied? Why is this the case? Consider the impact of colour and pattern choice.