



# THE ANTIPODEAN MANIFESTO MAKING & RESPONDING LEARNING RESOURCE

19 AUGUST 2023 - 18 FEBRUARY 2024  
THE ART GALLERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

**AGWA**

# THE ANTIPODEAN MANIFESTO

## MAKING & RESPONDING

### HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This Education Resource is designed to be used alongside *The Antipodean Manifesto* Resource with Early Learning, Primary and Secondary distillations to inspire engagement in your classrooms.

The MAKING and RESPONDING activities are directly related to *The Antipodean Manifesto* exhibition and can be a springboard for your own teaching and learning programs. The **MAKING** section includes material practice ideas to experiment with in your classroom. The **RESPONDING** section offers prompts to inspire critical thinking, personal responses, and visual analysis.

#### IDEAS GENERATION

Prompts for initiating conversations about themes and material practice to help students generate ideas for their own artmaking.

#### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Ideas for experimenting with art conventions, exploring ideas and testing materials.

#### PRODUCTION

Hands-on material practice towards the creation of a resolved artwork.

Cover image: Charles Blackman, *Portrait of Christabel Blackman* 1969. Charcoal on canvas. Gift of Mrs Barbara Blackman in honour of Josefa Medina-Blackman 1988. © Charles Blackman / Copyright Agency, 1969.

# PP-YR2

EARLY LEARNING  
MAKING & RESPONDING

# OVERVIEW

## EARLY LEARNING PP-YR2

This exhibition is called *The Antipodean Manifesto* and includes paintings, drawings and prints that were made by a few Australian artists who were part of the **Antipodean** group in Melbourne over 60 years ago.

This group wrote a **manifesto**, or a document, that outlined all of their thoughts, ideas, opinions and beliefs.

A lot of people had started making artworks that were very **abstract** and didn't show recognisable objects or scenes. However, the Antipodean group believed that **figurative art** showing representations of the **real world**, and in particular the **human figure**, was important. They felt that figurative art was easier to understand and could express how people were feeling about the world around them.

At the time these artists were working the world had been through **two big wars** and some people were feeling **very sad** and lonely. To help make sense of what they had seen and lived through, some of them painted stories from their imagination.

Many of the artworks in this **exhibition** are about how the artists were **feeling**. They made artworks to express how **lonely** they were feeling, and how sad they were that the world had changed so much since they were children.

### Curriculum Links

#### MAKING - Page 4

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##### Pre-Primary

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# MAKING

## EARLY LEARNING PP-YR2

### MIXED-MEDIA DRAWING

#### IDEAS GENERATION

Initiate a discussion about **feelings**. Invite students to respond with their own personal experiences and **memories** of times they might have felt sad or lonely. Explore what kinds of colours they would use to describe feelings of sadness or loss. Follow each question with "Why?" **There are no wrong answers.**

What do you imagine eggshell blue feels like?  
 What about midnight blue or turquoise?  
 Which colour is the saddest?  
 Which colour is in your heart when you feel love?  
 Describe the colours would you wrap yourself in if you felt lonely?  
 How do you imagine bright red feels?

#### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

#### FEELING FACES

Draw six circles or oval shapes on your page.  
 Draw a face inside each one that expresses a different feeling: sad, angry, happy, frightened, excited, or lonely. Add a small colour swatch under each face to represent the feeling.

Imagine you are on your own and there are no family or friends around you.  
 What kinds of colours would you use to describe how you feel?  
 Which colour do you feel is the saddest?

# MAKING

## EARLY LEARNING PP-YR2

### MIXED-MEDIA DRAWING CONTINUED

PRODUCTION

Draw a self-portrait using **ONLY** different shades of the same colour.

Create a self portrait that represents YOU with one of the feelings from your designs. Colour the drawing using different shades of only **ONE** colour, this is known as a monochromatic colour scheme. You can use a combination of pencils, markers, crayons, paint and even collage. (NB-monochromatic colour scheme in bold)

Give your work a title and explain all of the different parts of yourself that you have drawn.

# RESPONDING

## EARLY LEARNING PP-YR2

### SLOW LOOKING

Slow looking is the practice of taking time to deeply observe artworks and notice the way you respond to them.

Spend two minutes looking at Charles Blackman's *Triptych Alice* (below), noticing all of the objects, people, colours, shapes, lines, you see in the foreground, background and everything in between. Imagine climbing into the artwork and exploring the surroundings.



Charles Blackman *Triptych Alice* 1957. Oil and enamel on board. Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Art Gallery, 1988. © Charles Blackman / Copyright Agency, 1957.

What would it feel like? Describe the sounds you can hear?

How does the temperature feel?

What is the weather like in this painting?

What can you smell? If you could choose one spot to fall asleep in this painting, where would you rest, and why?

# YR5-6

PRIMARY

MAKING & RESPONDING



# OVERVIEW

## PRIMARY YR5-6

The *Antipodean Manifesto* features a selection of paintings, drawings, prints and ceramics by the seven artists who formed the Antipodean group in Melbourne in 1959.

This group wrote a **manifesto**, or a document, that outlined all of their thoughts, ideas, opinions and **beliefs**.

A lot of people had started making artworks that were very **abstract** and didn't show recognisable objects or scenes. However, the Antipodean group believed that figurative art that showed representations of the real world, and in particular the **human figure**, was important. They felt that figurative art was easier to understand and could convey important messages about how people were feeling and what the world around them was like.

The artists in this group had all lived through an enormous period of change, in particular, World War I and World War II. During these wars, the world was **disrupted** in ways that people had never thought possible.

As Australia was very far away from most of the war, it would often take a long time to hear from loved ones serving overseas. During this time many people grew up feeling scared, lonely, and anxious. There was a general feeling of unsettledness, and it took a long time after the wars for people to adjust to how much the world had changed.

### Curriculum Links

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# MAKING PRIMARY YR5-6

## SCULPTURE

### IDEAS GENERATION

Talk about sculpture as a practice and spend time looking at and responding to John Perceval's *Angel standing on her head* (pg 12).

- Describe the gesture in his work?
- How do you think the figure is feeling? Why?
- Does the sculpture remind you of a time in your own life?
- Why do you think the artist has left the eye sockets looking so hollow?
- What do you love most about this work?

### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

#### FOUR QUICK ANGEL SKETCHES

Look at John Perceval's *Angel standing on her head* (pg 12) for a few minutes, capturing as much as you can in your mind.

1. Close your eyes and draw the sculpture from memory including as many details as you can.
2. Draw a response to the sculpture using only your non-dominant hand.
3. Hold a pencil loosely with your fingertips and draw expressive lines in response to the playful lines and patterns in the sculpture.
4. Shade only the negative spaces of the sculpture.

Design a playful figure that balances in unusual ways, eg on one hand, on its pointer finger, on tippy toes, or one foot. Consider symmetry, asymmetry, scale, movement and proportion and texture.

# MAKING

## PRIMARY YR5-6

### SCULPTURE CONTINUED

#### PRODUCTION

##### PLAYING WITH CERAMICS

Working with clay, make the playful figure you designed. Construct the main elements of the sculpture using the pinch pot method.

Glaze or paint the finished piece using a limited colour palette that represents the playful nature of your figure.

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# RESPONDING

## PRIMARY YR5-6

### IMAGE ANALYSIS

Image analysis is a process of interpreting a work of art through identifying how elements and principles have been utilised.

John Perceval's *Angel standing on her head* (pg 12) is a playful sculptural form. **Analyse** this sculpture by describing how **space**, **movement** and **form** are used in the final composition.



John Perceval *Angel standing on her head* 1958-59. Glazed earthenware. Purchased 2006. © John Perceval, 1958-1959.

# YR9-10

SECONDARY

MAKING & RESPONDING

# OVERVIEW

## SECONDARY YR9-10

The *Antipodean Manifesto* features a selection of paintings, drawings, prints and ceramics by the seven artists who formed the Antipodean group in Melbourne in 1959.

Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, David Boyd, John Brack, Robert Dickerson, John Perceval, and Clifton Pugh held a single exhibition at the Victorian Artists Society in August 1959. The Antipodean Manifesto was written by art historian and fellow group member Bernard Smith and, signed by Smith and the exhibiting artists, it was included in the exhibition's catalogue.

The Antipodean Manifesto stated that the artists were opposed to non-figurative art and that recognisable images were the basis of painting. Abstract art was perceived as a threat to Australian figurative art due to the unchallenged reception it was receiving with audiences and critics locally and abroad. The Antipodeans did not see themselves as representative of a national cultural identity. Rather, they were deeply rooted in the post-war modernist artistic and literary associations of the Heide circle in Melbourne. They asserted the importance of subject matter and theme; viewing abstract art, predominantly gaining popularity in Sydney, as marginalising their artistic contribution, and ultimately leading "to the death of art".

The exhibition, drawn from The State Art Collection, explores the formation and aspirations of the group, situating their work within the social and political context of late 1950s Australia.

### Curriculum Links

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# MAKING

## SECONDARY YR9-10

### PASTEL DRAWING

#### IDEAS GENERATION

Spend time looking at *Girl fixing her hair* by Robert Dickerson (pg 16).

What do you imagine the figure is thinking about?  
 Describe the colour palette and why the artist may have made these choices.  
 How would you describe Dickerson's distinct style and material technique?  
 Do you agree with the Antipodean Manifesto that identifiable imagery in figurative art is more meaningful than abstraction? Why?  
 In what ways might it be possible for abstraction to convey more meaning than figurative images?

#### DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

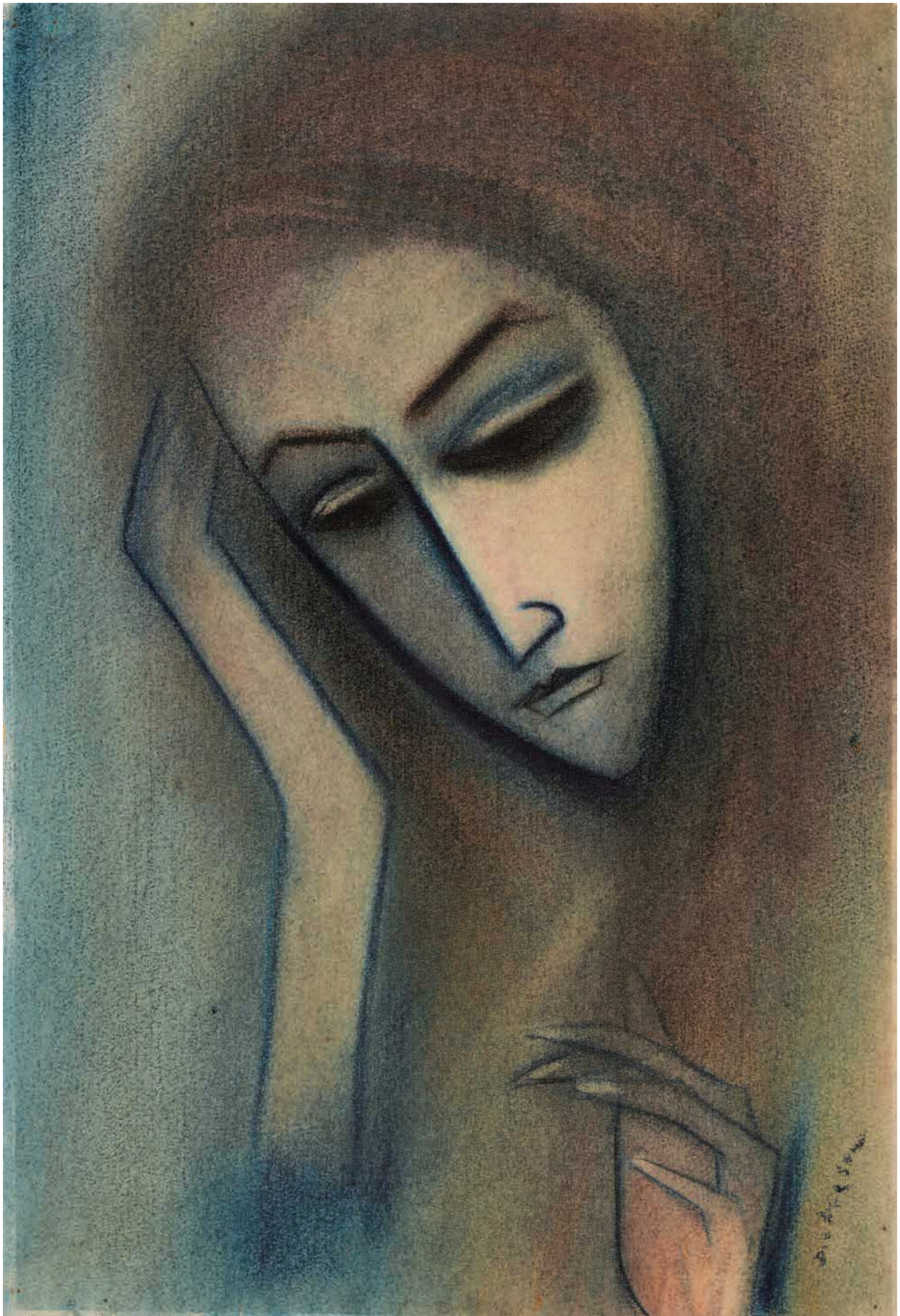
##### GESTURE DRAWINGS

In pairs, using charcoal or pastels, take turns drawing each other's facial expressions. Exaggerate an expression of sadness, fear or extreme joy and respond using strong lines and shading in your drawing.  
 Work quickly and swap every two or three minutes so you each have an opportunity to capture a number of different emotions.

#### PRODUCTION

##### FIGURATIVE PASTEL DRAWING

Choose one of your drawings and develop it further in coloured pastels using a limited palette. Experiment with a combination of blending and strong bold lines in response to Robert Dickerson's style and technique



Robert Dickerson *Girl fixing her hair* c1973. Pastel on paper on board. Gift of Dr Rose Toussaint, 1995. © Robert Dickerson / Copyright Agency, c 1973.



# RESPONDING

## SECONDARY YR9-10

### COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Compare and contrast is a process of identifying the similarities and differences between two works of art.

Compare and Contrast *Portrait of Christabel Blackman* by Charles Blackman (pg 18) and *The lost child* by Robert Dickerson (pg 19).

Consider material practice, composition, colour, mood, expression and personality of the children depicted in each artwork.

Using visual language, describe in detail how these works are the same and in what ways they are different?

Imagine and describe the life story of each of the children.



Charles Blackman *Portrait of Christabel Blackman* 1969. Charcoal on canvas. Gift of Mrs Barbara Blackman in honour of Josefa Medina Blackman 1988 © Charles Blackman, 1969



Robert Dickerson *The lost child* 1957. Oil on board. Purchased 1959 © Robert Dickerson, 1957