

The background of the entire page is a detailed rubbing of petroglyphs from the Burnett River. The rubbing shows various ancient symbols, including circular motifs, wavy lines, and abstract shapes, all rendered in a light tan color against a darker, textured background.

Memories

Visual Arts | Years 9-10

STEM Links: Science, Digital Technologies

Cover: Dylan Sarra, *Burnett River Petroglyph Rubbings*, n.d.

Contents

CURIOCITY BRISBANE	3
Memory Making	3
Featured artworks	3
Curriculum links	4
Content descriptions	4
STEM links	4
General capabilities	6
Learning objectives	6
Success criteria	6
Teaching notes	7
Timing	7
Materials	7
How to use	7
Learning activities	8
Lesson 1: Keeping Memories	8
Lesson 2: Creative Memories	10
Lesson 3 & 4: Video Diary	12
Endnotes	15

CURIOCITY BRISBANE

Did you notice the spelling mistake? *Curiosity* is actually a *portmanteau*, or a blended word made of two or more other words. Portmanteaus take on the meaning of the words they are made from, and the English language is full of them. Portmanteaus you might use include, *fortnight* (fourteen and night), *smog* (smoke and fog), *twerk* (twist and jerk), or *Pokémon* (pocket and monster).

What two words have been blended to make Curiosity, and why do you think World Science Festival Brisbane has used this portmanteau to name their public art program?

Putting things together to make something new is the definition of creativity. [Curiosity Brisbane 2023](#) is jam-packed with multi-disciplinary artworks that blend science, technologies and art in creative and curious ways.

As you engage with these public artworks, what new things will you discover, and how will you respond in your own creative ways?

Memory Making

What is your earliest memory? Do you know the memories of your parents? Or your grandparents, or even earlier descendants? Have you looked through photo albums, read autobiographies or watched family films? Does your family have traditions? Special songs, recipes, stories, places or other things?

In simple terms, a memory is information that has been stored in our brains, much like a file in a filing cabinet. Some memories are simple and easily retrievable—you might remember that you dislike the feeling of runny egg on the roof of your mouth, or the time a cat scratched you badly—your brain will use these kinds of memories to help you respond to external stimulus (you will likely ask for your eggs well-cooked and avoid cats).

Some memories are more significant. To help us hold on to and recall our memories, we often keep a physical record too; perhaps through photographic or video footage or written or oral storytelling. In this way, we not only keep memories for ourselves, but also for generations to come.

But it's important to think about the way memories are kept and shared. A person's recollection will only ever tell the story from a particular viewpoint, or through a lens or filter, which is one reason why Australia's *true* history or past can be challenged.

How do you decide which memories are important, and how will you record them?

Featured artworks

Dylan Sarra. *Burnett River Petroglyph Rubbings*

Martin Edge. *I SEE*

Curriculum links

This resource is aligned with [Australian Curriculum](#)ⁱ, Visual Arts, Years 9-10 and includes reference to [Australian Curriculum](#)ⁱⁱ, Science, Years 9-10 and [Australian Curriculum](#)ⁱⁱⁱ, Digital Technologies, Years 9-10.

Content descriptions

Visual Arts, Years 9 and 10	
ACAVAM125	Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists
ACAVAM126	Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions
ACAVAM128	Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention
ACAVAM129	Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks
ACAVAR130	Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making
ACAVAR131	Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks

STEM links

Science, Years 9 and 10	
ACSHE160 ACSHE194	People use scientific knowledge to evaluate whether they accept claims, explanations or predictions, and advances in science can affect people's lives, including generating new career opportunities
ACSHE228 ACSHE230	Values and needs of contemporary society can influence the focus of scientific research

ACSIS165 ACSIS199	Plan, select and use appropriate investigation types, including field work and laboratory experimentation, to collect reliable data; assess risk and address ethical issues associated with these methods
Digital Technologies, Years 9 and 10	
ACTDIP043	Create interactive solutions for sharing ideas and information online, taking into account safety, social contexts and legal responsibilities

General capabilities

Knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions:

- intercultural understanding
- critical and creative thinking
- ethical understanding
- personal and social capability
- information and communication technology (ICT) capability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures

Learning objectives

Students are learning:

- to manipulate media, techniques and processes to represent their ideas
- how artists use visual conventions to explore who they are and where they fit, and as a way of storytelling
- how to consider others' viewpoints on records of history
- how artists create compositions
- how artists display artworks to emphasise meaning

Success criteria

Students will be successful when they can:

- demonstrate purposeful use of media to express characteristics of their personal history
- discuss the purpose of visual conventions to communicate meaning and viewpoints, using vocabulary to label, categorise, describe and explain
- reflect on how they fit into their social and cultural environments
- apply visual conventions to create original compositions
- increase engagement with their artworks through innovative display

Teaching notes

Timing

4 x 1-hour sessions

Materials

- each student will need a HB pencil, eraser, coloured pencils and a sketchbook, visual diary or paper to work on
- devices for students to take digital photographs or moving footage
- devices with editing software and internet access
- optional: students bring objects, language, rituals or stories to include in a video diary.

How to use

Students view featured artworks in situ, prior to completing these activities. Activities can be modified for remote learning.

To enrich this experience, Queensland Museum [learning resources](#) may be accessed. Creating a free account means you can save, sort, manage and share your favourite collection items (audio and video, objects, events, fact sheets, images, learning resources, loan kits, etc.).

As museum collection items and exhibitions are often focused on the preservation and presentation of history, students could plan a visit and explore any of the four Queensland Museum Network locations as they reflect on memory.

See individual websites to see what's on and plan your visit:

- [Queensland Museum](#) (South Bank)
- [Cobb+Co Museum](#) (Toowoomba)
- [The Workshop Rail Museum](#) (Ipswich)
- [Museum of Tropical Queensland](#) (Townsville)

Learning activities

Lesson 1: Keeping Memories

Inquiry question

- How does the recording of memories contribute to our understanding of history?

Preparation

- Project a still-image or moving footage of Dylan Sarra's *Burnett River Petroglyph Rubbings* in situ, so students can recollect their experience with the work as they enter the classroom (moving-image is preferable as the artwork contains animation).
- Each student should have a HB pencil and eraser and access to a device and internet.

Introductory activity

- As a class, brainstorm how and why we keep memories. Students capture class responses in their visual diary. Discussion could include the following statements:
 - Memories are information we store in our brains, and can retrieve to help us respond in new or familiar situations
 - Some people have difficulty remembering things, and others have photographic memory
 - In my family, we keep records of our memories, through physical objects, language, rituals or storytelling

Learning activities

- Read the following statement aloud, as students watch the projected artwork:

Dylan Sarra's rubbings of the Burnett River Petroglyphs respond to the Queensland government's removal of culturally significant rock drawings in 1971.

Without consulting the traditional custodians, more than ninety-two large sandstones sitting in a surface area of 3.348 square kilometres were fractured and removed to make way for a dam wall.

This body of work explores how a creative arts practice can reconnect cultural iconography, which has become decontextualised through its removal.

Using the art of frottage (the technique or process of taking a rubbing from an uneven surface), muslin cloth was placed over the original artefacts and natural charcoal rubbed over the material to expose ancient carvings previously not visible to the eye.

For the first time, this work will incorporate animation to bring the carvings to life. This is done to represent First Nations stories as a continuum of a living and breathing culture.

This immersive installation will be located in the Queensland Museum Whale Mall.

Fluctuating conversations are ongoing regarding the fractured history and possible repatriation of the rocks. Regardless, the site remains a cultural place to the traditional owners as it sits within a line of a more significant journey trekking across country to the Bunya Mountains.

The importance of more research lies within a statement from the commissioned archaeologist Kate A. Sutcliffe in which she states: "Through the various failures and successes of the salvage process, no analysis of the artwork was undertaken." This alludes to the fact that the petroglyphs were decontextualised once removed from the site because of failure to understand their placement within the surrounding landscape.

- In small groups, students work together to answer the following questions:
 - Why are the original rock drawings significant?
 - What does it mean when something has been *decontextualised*, and how can Sarra's art-making 'reconnect cultural iconography'?
 - To what effect has animation been used in this artwork?
 - What does *repatriation* mean, and why is it important that these rock drawings stay where they were first drawn?
- As a class, discuss these answers, electing a member from each group to share the group responses. Students capture class responses in their visual diary.
- Students write, speak or sign a short reflection, answering some of the following questions:
 - What is my immediate response to this artwork? What is my response now I understand what the work is about?
 - Do I think this is *real* art? Why or why not?
 - How does the artwork make me feel?
 - How has the meaning of the original drawings changed or shifted now that the artwork is displayed in the Queensland Museum Whale Mall?
 - What was Sarra trying to do with this work, and has he been successful?

Extension activity

- Have a conversation with your family. How would they feel if the family's memory objects, language, rituals or stories were erased without any warning?

Lesson 2: Creative Memories

Inquiry question

- How do artists apply filters in their art-making?

Preparation

- Project a still-image or moving footage of Martin Edge's *I, SEE* in situ, so students can recollect their experience with the work as they enter the classroom (moving-image is preferable as the artwork contains AR). This lesson could also be completed onsite, at Picnic Island Green, South Bank Parklands.
- Each student should have a HB pencil and eraser.

Introductory activity

- Students reflect on the previous lesson, discussing their own or their family's responses to the take home question: *How would you feel if your family's memory objects, language, rituals or stories were erased without any warning?*
- As a class, play the game, *Telephone*, where a phrase is whispered over and over by several people, often being misunderstood, or misheard as it is transferred. At the end of the game, the resulting phrase is compared the original phrase, often with hilarious results.
- Students now think of an instance—this could be a family story, or an example from a book or film—where a story has been twisted as it has been retold, slightly exaggerating or over-stating the truth. For instance, *Dad surfed a wave that was 10-metres tall*, or *Nonno rescued Mum from a snake as thick as a tree trunk*. Share class responses.

Learning activities

- Read the following statement aloud, as students engage with the artwork:

Edge says, "My artworks are like a 'memory jog' of each adventure, but I also like to use my own imagination and creativity to paint the scene how I see or remember it."

Martin Edge is a Queensland artist and ambassador for Autism Queensland. His artworks reflect his unique perspective of the world. They are a recreation of his memories, filtered through his imagination.

In simple terms, a filter is a device used to remove unwanted components or features, like how a coffee filter allows liquid coffee to move through but removes or traps coffee grinds. These days, filters add components or features too. A social media filter may keep some recognisable features (usually of a face) within a photograph, while removing lines, spots, backgrounds, etc., but it can also add a digital effect, re-colour, blur, or add dog nose and ears to the image.

- Pose the question below and ask students to *Think-Pair-Share*.

What elements of Edge's artwork appear to be filtered through his imagination?

- *Think* – spend three minutes considering your own response to the question and write or draw this in your visual diary
 - *Pair* – spend five minutes discussing your responses with your elbow partner and listening to their response. Copy down ideas your partner had that you did not
 - *Share* – with your partner, decide which responses are most valid or important and raise your hand to share these with the class. As you listen to responses from the class, write down any more ideas you like.
- Pose the question below and ask students to *Think-Pair-Share* with a new elbow partner.
To what effect has Edge used elements and principles of art to show emotion? Give examples.
 - Give students five minutes to consider a *mundane* memory and write it down in their visual diary. It could be something like, eating breakfast, catching the bus, or driving to football practice.
 - Now students apply their own *imagination filter* to the memory. In the remaining class time, they sketch an image of their reimagined memory.

Lesson 3 & 4: Video Diary

Inquiry question

- What memories are significant to me?
- How can I capture and keep memories?

Preparation

- Encourage students to bring any small items or objects relevant to their memory to school, to use as *mise en scène*.
- Supply devices for students to take digital photographs or moving footage, as well as devices with editing software.

Introductory activity

- Students share their reimagined memories with an elbow partner. Invite students to share sketches or ideas with the whole class.

Learning activities

- As a class, discuss the reasons for keeping memories. Discussion could include the following purposes:
 - ensure that violent or other devastating elements of history are not repeated
 - strengthen family or community
 - give people a sense of belonging within a group with shared memories
 - boost mood
- Go around the class and generate a list of ways that people keep memories. Write responses on the whiteboard. How do the students in the class tend to record their memories?
- Explain that students will be creating a video diary to capture a cherished memory. The video will go for a maximum of one-minute, and they should plan to say no more than 100-words. Students can bring in any relevant objects to include in their video as *mise en scène*, or to hold or speak to. They can also include background music *if* it strengthens their communication of the memory. The videos will be uploaded or shared on a digital platform, so students should all adhere to the same conventions (e.g., landscape format, full HD resolution).
- Independently, students begin to design their video diary, using storyboards, annotated sketches, scripts or similar in their visual diary.
- When they have completed their designs, give each student the opportunity to share (show preliminary sketches, explain the memory represented and any *mise en scène* or added elements). Invite classmates to engage in *TAG* peer feedback in small groups (feedback could also be given using colour-coordinated post-it notes or via digital/online comment).
 - *T* – tell your classmate something you like about the artwork
 - *A* – ask for clarity about something

- G – give a suggestion
- Depending on confidence and ability, students can work in small groups, independently or as a class to produce video diaries. Allow students time to record multiple takes but ensure that each student has the opportunity to produce a video they are happy with. Note: recording each video diary in one take with minimal editing will expedite the process.
- As a class, come to a consensus on how best to display the video diaries so that they can be shared with family and friends. Consider the way that Sarra and Edge invited engagement with their artworks. Some display options include:
 - projecting the video diaries so that people can move in front of the projection (the task could be extended to include audio or other sensory elements)
 - sharing them on a social media platform or class wiki
 - creating one film product to play on a school display or during an event.
- Students write an artist statement (50-100 words) which explains their intentions and inspiration and evaluates the success (strengths and limitations) of their video diary and its ability to communicate a cherished memory.

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Endnotes

ⁱ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2019). *Australian Curriculum, Visual Arts, 2019*. Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>

ⁱⁱ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2019). *Australian Curriculum, Science (Version 8.4), 2019*. Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/science/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) (2019). *Australian Curriculum, Digital Technologies (Version 8.4), 2019*. Available at: <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/technologies/digital-technologies/>