

Artback NT in association
with the University Gallery

NERIDAH STOCKLEY

A SECULAR VIEW

THE LANGUAGE OF LOOKING

**ACTIVITIES FOR VISUAL ARTS
STUDENTS YEARS 7-10**

Neridah Stockley

An Artist's Practice

Neridah Stockley is a visual artist who has been making art for over twenty years. She is interested in representing the world around her whether that be the natural or the built environment.

Central to Neridah's art practice is working *en plein air*, which means working from life, directly in front of a subject, as opposed to from a photograph or from her imagination. Over the years she has gone on many drawing excursions to many different places, whether they be close to her home in Alice Springs, interstate or overseas. She is inspired by urban, rural, coastal and bush environments as well as domestic interiors.

The important thing for Neridah however is not so much the subject matter as the act of looking – both seeing and sensing – and how to communicate that visually. She is interested in the relationship between forms, shapes, colours and textures and it is these formal and spatial relationships, that are the starting point for her artworks. Back in the studio the visual records from her excursions are combined with her memory of the process of looking at a certain time in a certain place. In this way there is a dialogue between the observation in situ and the work in the studio, between experience and memory, representation and abstraction, the tangible and intangible.

In her work Neridah references the everyday, the secular or prosaic - a curving road, a tractor wheel, a telegraph pole, the imposing forms of chimneys or mountain ranges, the arabesques of trees or clouds,

the bulk of a cargo ship, the permanence and impermanence of cast shadows. She is intrigued by views through and around and beyond, the framing devices of windows, passageways and tunnels, the play of perspective and scale. These are motifs and perceptions she is drawn to consistently. Over time a highly personal language of looking is built up to represent a sense of place - the light and atmosphere, negative and positive space, patterns and textures.

Neridah makes paintings, drawings, prints and collages and also creates assemblages and ceramics. She is alert to the qualities of the mediums that she works with, rejoicing in a materiality which brings its own life and immediacy to her works. She says,

Raw material' is a term I think about often, the physicality of paint, timber, paper, pencil, pastel and clay ... the way in which materials are handled and resolved.

While her works are formally resolved they are anything but static. There is a tension between objective observation and a subjective point-of-view in her compositions that serves to activate the space within and beyond the physical picture plane. For the artist, making her work

starts in an extreme awareness of oneself in a place and ends in an extreme awareness of oneself in a painting.

The experience for the viewer is equally immersive.

PRE-VISIT CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ON LOCATION

The artist Neridah Stockley is inspired by places she visits.

Use google earth to find the locations the artist has made work and zoom in.

Search for images related to these places using the internet.

In the Northern Territory:

Alice Springs, Ross River, Eastern Macdonnell Ranges, Hermannsburg, Newhaven Reserve

In NSW:

Newcastle, Hill End, Bare Island

In Tasmania:

Wardlaw Point, Falmouth, King Island

In Western Australia:

Tom Price, Fremantle

Overseas:

Marrakesh, Atlas Mountains, Petra

KEY CONCEPTS

In pairs or groups research the meaning of words from the list below then hold a class discussion to formulate definitions and brainstorm synonyms.

Secular

Abstraction

Plein air

Motif

Perspective

Point-of-view

POSTCARD ACTIVITY IN THE GALLERY

Looking and responding in the exhibition space

Use the **Language of Looking Activity Postcards** to facilitate looking and responding activities.

[Postcards are available at the gallery upon request or are downloadable on the website. Students can work in pairs or alone to complete two or more postcards.]

When selecting artworks make sure students choose

- at least one built environment and one natural environment
- different mediums – a painting, a ceramic, a collage/construction, a print

Encourage students to explore the exhibition before choosing works to engage with in more depth.

Look out for artworks inspired by places that were googled in the classroom.

POST-VISIT CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Representation and abstraction continually inform one another. The objective always remains, to observe the world in its simplest and purest state, to learn to see. It is through drawing and painting you get to know the bones of a place and the world can suddenly have new meaning.

Neridah Stockley

A series of sequenced artmaking activities that explore representation and abstraction

2B, 4B, 6B GO

When I go out sketching I take a drawing book and my favourite pencils.

Neridah Stockley

Go for a drawing excursion outdoors – in the schoolyard, local shopping mall, nearby park or elsewhere.

Explore the surroundings using a cardboard view finder as a framing device for looking.

Choose a place to sit and make a detailed drawing of your chosen view using a variety of lead pencils.

Experiment with different qualities of mark making and patterning to represent textures and surfaces.

Look for shapes that repeat and overlap and consider negative and positive space.

Consider the point-of-view in your composition. Is it from above or below, distant or close up?

Change your point-of-view or choose another location and make another drawing.

CUT AND PASTE

When making work what I choose to leave out is just as important as what I leave in.

Neridah Stockley

Back in the classroom **choose** one of the *en plein air* drawings as a starting point to explore abstraction.

Make a series of three drawings where each new drawing is based on the one before and is less detailed than the last.

Think carefully about what to leave out and what to retain at each stage.

Use the final drawing as inspiration for a collage work incorporating coloured and textured papers.

Consider the dominant shapes, patterns and motifs to include.

Discuss: How does the collage capture the essence of the outdoor experience or has it become something else?

THE SPACE OF PLACE

My work is about relationship to place and space.

Neridah Stockley

Swap collages with a classmate and use as a blueprint to make a 3D model on an A3 base of thick card.

Cut and fold card and paper and join with masking tape to construct the model.

Arrange all the 3D models together as a collaborative class work.

Experiment with arranging the models to create an interesting configuration.

Try lighting the model from different angles to create shadows.

Make some line drawings of the collaborative artwork from different viewpoints.

Display a selection of models, drawings and collages as a class exhibition.