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**Suburbia : a postmodern artistic investigation and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian post-compulsory visual arts course of study**

Lisa Young  
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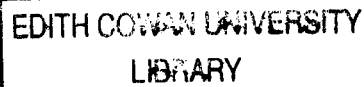
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**SUBURBIA: A POSTMODERN ARTISTIC INVESTIGATION; AND AN  
EXAMINATION OF HOW POSTMODERN APPROACHES CAN BE  
EFFECTIVELY ADOPTED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW WESTERN  
AUSTRALIAN POST-COMPULSORY VISUAL ARTS COURSE OF STUDY**

By

Lisa Young, Dip. Teach., B Ed.

**EXEGESIS**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of  
**Master of Education (Visual Arts Education)**

In the Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences

Edith Cowan University

Western Australia

March 2005



## ABSTRACT

*In 2007, Western Australian art educators will be required to teach a new post-compulsory visual arts curriculum. This course, written in a postmodern context, will need a paradigm shift in approach. As a visual arts educator and a visual artist working in a contemporary context what are valid and effective methods of creatively investigating the postmodern world? How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum? What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study?*

This Creative Arts Project allowed the introduction of postmodern working methods into my visual arts practice with the intention of transferring the discoveries made to an education situation. The project aimed to determine whether a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods and concerns was a valid and effective method of creatively investigating the suburban landscape. Extrapolating from this, I planned and trialed curriculum materials that responded to the draft concept plan for the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

Through an action research approach, I determined ways of addressing the new curriculum effectively and with validity, with the overall aim of implementing a new and more relevant approach to visual arts education. In doing this, I was informed by Burgess and Addison's (in Hickman, 2000) "border pedagogy" (p. 32) model of art education where critical reasoning aspects of Modernism are combined with postmodern concerns of difference and pluralism. I set out to discover possibilities for addressing postmodern themes and using postmodern methods in an effective and valid way, whilst still recognising the value of modernist concerns.

The research centred on a creative arts project, culminating in an exhibition supported by an exegesis. The exhibition of artworks completed using a range of media and methods was the outcome of an investigation of selected issues in the context of the suburban landscape. The methods used in these investigations informed the writing of curriculum materials that were tested with a group of students with the resulting data analysed and reported on in the exegesis. The exegesis makes recommendations for pedagogic practice based on these results.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### Background

The nature of society has changed dramatically over the last few decades and it is now evident that we live in postmodern times. As art is considered a mirror of society, it follows that the nature of art and art-making, too, has changed to reflect a new set of concerns. As a visual artist and visual arts educator, I am very interested in the issues raised by postmodernism. I am aware of directions in contemporary art-making and my practice reflects a willingness to experiment with these ideas both practically and conceptually, whilst still acknowledging that some aspects of modernist thought will occupy a permanent place in the making of art. It has always been of the utmost importance to me to remain abreast of developments in contemporary visual arts internationally, but more importantly, locally and nationally. The benefits of reading about art, discussing art, and visiting exhibitions transfer to my practice and, in turn, influence the direction of my teaching. It is vital that Western Australian visual arts educators keep abreast of the changes that have occurred in contemporary society and visual arts, and through their teaching, educate and equip students to make sense of their world with its proliferation of visual imagery and the erosion of traditional notions of time and place, whilst still allowing for personal growth, the expression of individual concepts and an appreciation of aesthetics.

Postmodern theorists all seem to agree that Modernism has run its course. Suzi Gablik (1984) wrote that Modernism failed because it left people without hope. She identified a current cultural crisis – a crisis in belief – where there is a lack of philosophical, spiritual and cultural consensus. Efland, Freedman and Stuhr (1996) explained the nature of society's crisis which began with a realisation in the 1960s that society's distribution of wealth was uneven, that racism and sexism were endemic and that the rapid



industrialisation of Modernism was beginning to backfire (with pollution, the dangers of nuclear accidents and over population). In the 1990s, further complexities arose with the breakdown of Marxist/Socialist structures, globalisation and economic cooperation between countries, a growth in terrorism and ethnic conflict and the deterioration of the planet due to rapid population growth, global warming and the destruction of rain forests (Efland, Freedman and Stuhr, 1996, pp. 69-70). The recent large-scale terrorist attacks that began with 'Nine-11' in the United States have heightened this environment of uncertainty and have plunged western society into a deeper crisis. Added to these changes is the change from what Parks (1989, p.11) termed "Industrialisation to Computerisation". Computers create new environments, fragmenting time, place and subject, and visual imagery is now mass-produced, creating a kind of hyper-reality. It seems that the mass media is now all-powerful and together with popular culture, it can teach 'truths' as well as present political ideas. Finally, the minority groups and non-western cultures that gained prominence in this globalised and computerised world of mass communications have challenged the universal truths that characterised Modernism. This has resulted in new imagery, values and ideas in art and society.

It is against this background that the Western Australian Curriculum Framework for K-12 has been developed: the K-10 framework has been developed and implemented; and the new post-compulsory courses, currently being developed, are due for full implementation in 2007. These courses have been written within the context of Postmodernism and take into account the nature of contemporary society and art-making within it. In the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study, it seems therefore that a selected fusion of Modernist and postmodern concerns is being promoted. Formal relations, subjective expression, aesthetic value and the idea of universal meaning in art, which typified the modernist canon, sit alongside difference and pluralism, a focus on messages and the construction of meaning. This "border pedagogy" (Burgess and Addison, in Hickman, 2000, p. 32), melding both modernist and postmodernist concerns, appears central to the draft Visual Arts Course of Study curriculum document. I favour this pedagogical model and through this Creative Arts Project, I set out to discover ways of applying it as a model for the teaching of visual arts in Western Australia.

Directions in contemporary art-making reflect the nature of postmodern society, with its proliferation of visual imagery, questioning of the universal truths of Modernism and new notions of time and place. As a visual arts educator, I recognise the importance of sustaining my own art practice and engaging with contemporary concerns through this. This enriches my teaching by providing me with experience and intellectual rigour, both of which are vital in interpreting visual arts curriculum. With the introduction of the new curriculum, Western Australian visual arts educators will need to introduce postmodern methods into their teaching as both modernist and postmodern thought will now inform programming and teaching. Through my own art practice in the undertaking of this Creative Arts Project, I experimented with postmodern methods, exploring the use of techniques such as layering, appropriation, collage, and the use of multiple images and text to make meaning. I used new media, particularly digital technology, focussing on meaning and the communication of ideas, whilst still being mindful of aesthetic value and the importance of personal expression. These explorations assisted in identifying ways postmodern methods may be employed effectively by Western Australian visual arts educators in teaching the content of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

Eisner (1991) observed that in general, the quality of the content being taught in American schools was neglected by researchers, despite this being of crucial importance. He recommended “in appraising the content, one can also look for the extent to which what is taught is made relevant to ideas in other content areas or to issues and situations outside of the school” (1991, p. 178). Considering Eisner’s observation and applying it to the Australian school system, it seemed appropriate to appraise the content of the visual arts curriculum through action research with the aim of discovering ways in which postmodern themes may be taught and strategies employed effectively, and with integrity, by visual arts educators. Overall, the study set out to discover effective and valid approaches to teaching the new Western Australian visual arts curriculum in Years 11 and 12.

In summary, my Creative Arts Project set out to answer the following research questions:

1. In my own practice, can I employ a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape?
2. How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?
3. What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

## **Key terms**

The following list defines, in direct relationship to this research project, key terms that are used throughout the study. The key terms are divided into those that are applicable to a postmodern context and those that are relevant to Modernism.

### **Key Terms - Postmodernism**

#### **Postmodernism.**

Postmodernism is the term used to describe the present era. It not only refers to the aesthetic but also to the whole climate of society, which allows for and shapes the production of art works (Freedman, 1997). As the concept itself is in a constant state of evolution, there is no single, generally accepted definition, however, characteristics of Postmodernism are discussed by commentators with much consensus. Postmodernism calls into question the notion of progress and the assumption that change is positive in human culture. Traditional notions of time and place are also questioned. The rise of global mass communication has fractured fixed notions of history and geography. Equally, this revolution has challenged cultural hegemony and made space for many voices or narratives. With less emphasis on absolutes, the idea of innate (artistic) genius is also questioned. Instead, postmodernists believe that great minds are the product of their social influence (Freedman, 1997, p. 21).

In addressing these ideas, artists place emphasis on process. Typically, they use juxtaposition of images from various times, cultures and popular culture. This approach is a direct result of the new conception of time and place caused by global mass communication that calls into question traditional notions of geography and history.

The mass production of images is acceptable and serves, in part, to challenge the idea of the uniqueness of a masterpiece. The notion of individual self-expression, originality and ownership is questioned, encouraging artists to engage in projects that allow for appropriation and collaboration. Postmodern artists recognise the way digital technology/media is implicated in the postmodern condition and also embrace its potential for exploration and expression of ideas. As a result of the changing conceptions of contemporary life and the access to new media, new art forms have evolved and become part of contemporary visual arts practice (e.g. video, electronic art, installation, performance).

Postmodern artists accept that viewers will construct their own meaning from interacting with an artwork. How this meaning is constructed will depend on cultural associations and individual, lived experiences. The implication is that the artist no longer controls the message. Some theorists believe that art should promote or suggest many interpretations. Contradiction, irony, metaphor and ambiguity are used to promote this. Closely associated with this is the idea of art functioning as cultural critique - making social comments through various forms of culture, using borrowed and recycled imagery. Finally, postmodern thought involves support for positions which promote equity, such as feminism and multiculturalism.

### **Appropriation.**

Appropriation refers to a technique used by postmodern artists involving borrowing images and styles from the art of other cultures, times or popular culture and deliberately using these images in new ways to make statements or communicate ideas. In essence it is a strategy that challenges the idea of originality. Stockley (1998) comments, "The use

of existing images or styles in new contexts in many postmodern artworks effectively challenges accepted values and meaning” (p. 175).

### **Contemporary.**

Contemporary refers to the present time. Contemporary art is therefore new and innovative art that is made in the present time and reflects current approaches, issues and ideas.

### **Context.**

In a general sense, context refers to the set of circumstances or facts that surround a particular event or situation. Context is a vital component of postmodern discourse with the viewing and interpreting of art works necessarily taking into account the context in which the work was originally produced and the context in which it is viewed. Learning contexts, as they are described in the draft Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study, refer to the experiences, activities and themes through which content is delivered in order to facilitate learning.

### **Pluralism.**

Pluralism refers to a theory that there is more than one basic substance or principle. Pluralism is a feature of postmodern times in that the views of many are considered, universal truths are refuted and artworks may have multiple meanings. The ‘reading’ of artwork acknowledges the context of its making, with viewers constructing their own meanings depending on their cultural associations and individual, lived experiences. Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000) considered postmodern art “theorized as a more plural, more inclusive range of practices, accommodating difference” (p. 18).

### **Border pedagogy.**

Border pedagogy is a term devised by Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000). It describes a critical and progressive pedagogical model which acknowledges its modernist roots, but also adopts aspects of Postmodernism. It stresses “that the whole learning community examines existing structures and demarcations...and asks that learners move into unfamiliar territory, whether of practice, place or time” (2000 p. 32). They suggest an “incremental transformation” (p. 32) of the curriculum:

One that, having built a safe environment, develops the dialogic and discursive, invites interventions and broadens knowledge in partnership with external agencies, particularly contemporary galleries and artists, *challenging students to go beyond what is already known* [italics added].  
(Burgess and Addison, in Hickman, 2000, p. 32, 33).

The border pedagogy model acknowledges pluralism, considers difference, examines the communication of messages and the construction of meaning, uses new media and technologies and challenges traditional notions of what constitutes an artwork whilst still acknowledging the value of formalism, aesthetics and art’s potential for the personal growth of the individual.

### **Key Terms – Modernism**

#### **Modernism.**

Modernism, in its broadest sense, “refers to Western humanist ideas developed during the Enlightenment which glorified science, logic, and a belief in the inevitability of human progress” (Burgin, 1986, cited in Clark, 1998, p. 7). According to Clark (1998), the future was emphasised and the past was considered irrelevant. Artistically it refers to the twentieth century era of art styles and artists who were intent on creative individuality and distancing themselves from what they saw as the bourgeois western society (Clark, 1998). Modernism disregarded popular culture, denied the value of past art styles and took stylistic motifs from the art of non-western cultures purely for formal ends, denying contextual and cultural meanings and associations. Social forces enabled

the 'great masters' to gain their prominence, hence the myth of the white male artist/hero dominated. Clark quoted Freedman (1994), who explained this myth, which found its expression within modernist art, as "the autonomous, male fine artist who worked alone in a studio, freely self-expressing and intuitively creating" (1998, p. 8).

From a modernist point of view, the artist has full ownership and control over the meanings of his work, thereby rendering himself and critics who demystify the work, all-powerful. This reinforces the idea of a single meaning, which can be attributed to artworks, the understanding of which may exclude all but an elite avant-garde (Clark, 1998). Freedman discussed this "elitism of high modernism," noting that it is challenged by postmodern criticism; however, she did warn, "some of (Postmodernism's) own discourse is as mystifying as the modernist discourse it seeks to transcend" (1997, p. 24).

### **Formalism (art learning theory).**

Formalism refers to a branch of Twentieth Century Modernism in visual art and visual arts education. According to Efland:

A formalist aesthetic has it that art objects acquire their status as art by virtue of the structural aspects of the work as an organised entity, and thus it has in common with cognitive psychology the idea of structure as its defining attribute. (1990, p. 16).

In the early part of the twentieth century, visual arts education followed a formalist model wherein art was about formal order or significant form. Art was taught through systematic, formal exercises and artworks were valued for their aesthetic, not social or moral qualities. That is, artworks were valued for the quality of their formal organisation. Formalism, in its purist form, advocated an art whose foremost concerns were beauty and aesthetics, over representational content or social messages.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Personal context

My first memories of place come from New Zealand, the country of my father's birth. Having spent the first three years of my life in Tasmania, living in a remote hydro-electric village, we moved to the small hydro-electric village of Turangi, on Lake Taupo, New Zealand where my father commenced his second engineering posting. My grandparents lived in the town of Taupo, at the top of the "Great Lake," the largest in New Zealand, formed by an enormous volcanic eruption. We spent a great deal of time driving between the two towns alongside the lake on Highway 1, always hoping for a glimpse of the mountains at the bottom of the lake.

As a child I often went trout fishing with Dad on the rivers that flowed in and out of the lake. His favourite was the Tongariro and I clearly remember Dad hauling me across the "Red Hut Pool" in a tiny flying fox.



**Figure 1** The artist aged 4, and her father in Turangi, New Zealand, after a fishing trip.



Once my younger sister was old enough, we would play for hours in the dense undergrowth alongside the river, building neat cubby houses in between the gnarled tree trunks. We were always playing outside, building houses and inventing new games that often tied in with the mythology of the places we knew.

I was six years old when my family moved to Perth, the place of my mother's birth. My parents saved \$7000 for a deposit and they bought a block of land in the R and I Bank land release in Karrinyup, at the time, one of the furthest northern suburbs on the outskirts of the city. They had their patch of suburbia and they set about creating their suburban utopia. I still have one of my first annotated drawings (Figure 2), completed soon after moving into our newly built home. The drawing says it all – I have represented the 'Super Six' fence, the 'Hills Hoist' washing line in the middle of the back yard, the 'Mission Brown' painted timber fences my father built and the tiny clumps of grass on the yellow sand covered front lawn – we used to *grow* lawn back then. We had sprinklers on the end of hoses that had to be moved at regular intervals and Dad used to mow the front lawn – once it had established itself – with a rotary push mower.

From an early age I was indoctrinated into the ordered and ritualistic patterns of suburban life. As the annotation that accompanies my drawing will attest, I quickly learnt that life was all about building your dream home, complete with outdoor area, and being a two-car family:

My home has a big window on the roof. It has a very very [sic] big lounge-room. Its lawn is just growing. It has a dubble [sic] car port and my Dad has a new car. It is blue. It is the new model of a Falcon. My Mum has a mustard car. It is the new model Fiat and a big back yard [sic]....My Dad put in limestone and build [sic] a wall and put slabs on the sand. (Young, 1971).



**Figure 2** Drawing by the artist, aged 6 years.

From a young age I took to drawing, entertaining myself for hours drawing, amongst other things, houses, people and horses. In the last few years of primary school, my sister, friends and I would build homes with elaborate floor plans in the back yard for our Barbie dolls, using bricks placed on their side. In our spare time we would make furniture for the houses using recycled boxes and cardboard. By the time I was in high school I was so obsessed with drawing house plans in my spare time that people regularly suggested that I may become an architect.

By the time I had embarked on tertiary studies, my parents had built their second version of suburban utopia – still in the same suburb, but in the more affluent section. Just as our first home was an archetypal tribute to the seventies, complete with orange curtains, shag pile carpet and mission brown fences, this home represented the black, white, pink and grey blandness of the eighties. This was the last home I lived in with the family unit prior to graduating and joining the workforce.

The encouragement of a wonderful art teacher in high school, coupled with the enormous amount of enjoyment and satisfaction I gained from creative pursuits, set a course for my future career in the visual arts. Whilst never setting out to become a visual arts educator, once I was teaching I found incredible fulfilment and satisfaction in introducing others to the joy of being involved in the visual arts. My passion for the arts has ensured that I have remained a practitioner as well as an educator and it has also encouraged me to actively keep up with contemporary developments in the visual arts through reading, visiting art exhibitions and through further academic study.

With the exception of a short eighteen-month stint living in an apartment right in the heart of the city, I remained a northern suburban dweller. For the most part, I trod similar paths each day as I journeyed by car to and from work, sporting and recreation centres. I now recognise how keenly I have always noticed aspects of urban planning and the suburban environment, such as emerging housing developments, peculiarities of certain houses, quirky and unusual letterboxes, the green “wheelie” bins lined up along streets on rubbish collection days, abandoned shopping trolleys (and their often surreal appearance depending on their location and state of abandonment), road signs and piles of verge-side discarded items. These days I feel like a detective, with sharpened senses, every time I venture out in the suburbs. I have now taken to permanently keeping my camera in my car with me wherever I go, enabling me to record things I see for future reference.

The suburban landscape first appeared as a theme in my artwork in 2001. I began by exploring the notion of suburban icons and landmarks around my immediate area, engaging with visual imagery which I saw as typical to the suburbs. My interest, initially, was purely visual – I was responding to quirky aspects of the environment in which I dwelled. As I began to look beyond the superficial level, I became aware of the suburb as a site for exploring a range of more far-reaching and complex themes and issues, tied in with sense of place, self, environment, culture and gender. These themes will be addressed in further detail in the following chapter.

Since I lived my childhood and formative years in the suburbs of Perth and am still a suburban dweller, the Australian suburb is the only landscape I really know – it is my ‘frame of reference’ - and over the last few years, exploring it in an artistic manner has made me more aware of just how well I know this place.

The experience of growing up and still residing in the suburbs has helped to shape my beliefs and values and continues to influence the direction of my artwork. There is a real richness in the suburban landscape that most Australians know well. For me, this intimate knowledge of place allows for meaningful engagement and investigation through the visual arts. The suburb is a site for exploring issues pertinent to contemporary life; it also provides richness of imagery and the opportunity to communicate ideas, both personal and universal.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **Artist's statement – current work**

In many ways, 'suburbia' is a word with pejorative undertones. In cultural terms it stands for blandness, homogeneity and often, quiet despair. Yet for me, and a range of other artists such as Joanna Lamb, Mike Singe and Philip Ward-Dickson, suburbia is a place rich with meaning and layers of significance. It is also a site where important environmental, political and social issues are contested.

In my current work, I have highlighted the dynamic and layered nature of the suburb by exploring the following themes pertaining to it:

- Presenting the ordinary as extraordinary
- Suburban iconography
- Questioning notions of taste and beauty
- Highlighting environmental issues associated with suburban development.

### **Presenting the ordinary as extraordinary**

For the past three years, I have used photography as a way to record aspects of my immediate suburban landscape and have used these images as the basis for a body of artwork. Of particular interest have been the piles of discarded objects on front verges in surrounding suburbs during council clean-up periods. Over a period of time, I started to notice interesting things about these piles of discarded household items: that the same kinds of objects constantly reappeared e.g. suitcases, chairs, old exercise equipment and prams; and that the piles often seem deliberately and consciously arranged, more often than not, speaking about the suburban lives of the former owners of the objects. Reflecting on the many photographs of these objects, categorising, arranging and displaying them and then manipulating them using Adobe Photoshop led me to consider the appeal of exploring the symbolism associated with the nature of the objects discarded and engaging with the way meaning can alter when context is changed. I



began to play with 'Adjustments,' transforming the images into 'Posterized' versions of the originals. This 'Adjustment' dramatically altered the colours of the objects, transforming the junk piles into fragments of fascinating visual imagery, providing a new take on something so familiar. After enlarging the images and applying distortion filters to the edges, this effect was further enhanced. I printed out a series of these digital chair images onto photo quality paper, still contemplating the idea of taking these images further.



**Figure 3** *Old Pram* (digital print by the artist)

This work reflects the theoretical underpinnings of my Creative Arts Project as a whole. My formal aesthetic sensibilities allowed me to recognise the visual appeal of the objects I photographed in the first place, but as the work developed, using digital technology as a tool, it began to reflect more postmodern concerns. The digitally manipulated images eventually proved a catalyst for going beyond the features of the traditional medium of painting towards a more contemporary notion of image, surface and reproduction. This symbiosis between postmodern and modernist approaches can be identified in the draft Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study and reflects the appropriateness of the border pedagogy model for visual arts education in Western Australia.

## Suburban iconography

The suburban landscape has distinctive elements that form the basis of a suburban iconography. Apart from the piles of junk that appear during each suburb's annual verge-side clean-up, other symbols such as supermarkets, shopping trolleys and road markings are immediately recognised as suburban. To broaden my understanding of these elements and their potential to encapsulate ideas, I continued to paint images from my local suburban environment, which includes the Town of Vincent and the City of Stirling. These images included a series of small abandoned shopping trolleys and a somewhat romanticised view of the dramatic Saeco Coffee building, on the corner of Loftus Street and Scarborough Beach Road in North Perth (refer to Figure 4).



**Figure 4** *Suburban Landmark I (Golden Light)* (painting by the artist)

## Questioning notions of taste and beauty

In painting images of the suburban environment, I began to realise that the process of painting was one that I felt very comfortable with, and that I enjoyed the tactile aspects of mixing colours and applying them to a surface. It dawned on me that I could try painting from digitally manipulated images – the process would still be enjoyable but problems would be solved, and designs developed, using the technology. This led to a series of works depicting segments of verge side clean up objects, predominantly chairs,



'Posterized' first using Adobe Photoshop and then painted using oil on board. As the series evolved, I realised the benefits of working with this method – I could solve all of the formal compositional aspects firstly using the computer and was then free to paint, enjoying the process for its own sake. The computer broke down segments of the images into small, flat areas of colour; often colours that I would never have contemplated using. I mixed paint colours and applied the paint according to the digitally printed image and discovered that whilst it was a fairly controlled process, it resulted in my paintings appearing looser and more expressive, something I had been trying to do for some time. The resulting works transform the 'junk piles' into images that are quite poetic, the subject questioning notions of beauty and taste. The arrangements of objects, painted exactly as they were found, disclosed fascinating things about the lives and sense of aesthetics of their previous owners.



**Figure 5** *Red Plastic Chair* (painting by the artist).

This discovery of process (a formal, modernist concern) led to a more postmodern, conceptual questioning of the relationship between digitally manipulated images and traditional painting - of the connection between the painted and the digitally printed surface. How differently is an image read if it is presented as an oil painting with a textured, tactile surface than if it is a digitally produced print? An oil painting carries



with it an historical mythology centred on the notion of originality and the ‘genius’ of the maker, whereas the digitally produced print is contemporary, eminently reproducible and imbued with a certain anonymity. These issues were of continuing interest as my body of artwork developed and as I attempted to determine effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum.

### **Environmental issues associated with suburban development**

In studying the nature of the suburb, it seems impossible to ignore the troubling side of suburban development – its seemingly unstoppable growth along the coastal strips of Australian cities and the associated degradation of the coastal plain. I am amused by the names developers invent for these new suburbs (that almost always start out as barren expanses of sand with neat little bitumen roads and ‘For Sale’ signs) like *Regent Glades*, *Roselea*, *Secret Harbour* and *The Kestrels*. I am aware that these names are used to attract buyers, but at the same time, I am reminded of the destructive nature of never-ending sub-divisions in the name of big business and consumerism. Another series of my work attempts to challenge the notion of everyone needing his or her own suburban patch of land and draws attention to the destruction of the WA coastal plain through the endless sprawl of ‘suburbia.’ I am concerned at the way Banksia forest once covered the coastal plain where now there are ‘instant’ suburbs with their artificial parks, lakes and subdivisions. For this series, I adopted techniques such as collage, layering and solvent transfers and employed the use of text to further enhance the message being conveyed.

Added to these somewhat dishonest attempts on the part of developers to sell land and make profits are the humorous lengths new home builders go to in the naming of their ‘spec homes.’ Throughout 2004 I collected names of homes that could be built from plans and recorded over 300 different names such as *The Tropicana*, *The Paradiso*, *The Grand Indulgence*, *The Bela Vista* and *The Alfresco Life*. These names all speak of other places, promising an ideal life, far from the realities of living on a 500 square metre block in a stark new suburb a long way from the city centre. I communicated these ideas through a series of small works that combine the use of digital technology and painting.

I developed images using Adobe Photoshop that consisted of layers depicting Banksia forests, sections of a new northern suburban development from a street directory and an exotic house design name such as those previously listed. I printed these out onto an inkjet canvas product and then attached them to small stretchers before finally painting an image of a 'spec' home design above the text. This series communicates ideas about suburban development using postmodern strategies such as irony and postmodern methods such as the employment of new technologies and the use of layering and text.



**Figure 6** *Your own Piece of Paradise I and II* (digitally printed and painted works by the artist)

I have worked with a variety of media ranging from painting, drawing and collage to digital imagery and photography. I enjoy working with mixed media and have found the use of computer software to be an invaluable tool in developing ideas and imagery for my work. I like the way this allows for building up images in layers as well as allowing me to develop and work through ideas prior to painting. I used the suburbs as a vehicle through which a number of contemporary and significant issues were explored and expressed. Through my work in this Creative Arts Project, I aimed to promote what Chris McAuliffe calls for in the opening chapter of his book *Art and Suburbia* “a new appreciation of the suburbs and their acceptance as a legitimate subject for the arts” (1996, p. 11).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Cultural/theoretical/historical context of my artwork**

#### **The nature of contemporary society and its impact on art-making**

Art is a reflection of the values and ideologies of a particular society at a particular time. Universal changes over the last few decades have irrevocably altered the way the world operates and so it follows that art-making, which is a form of cultural expression, has changed in response to this. To establish the context within which I am working as a visual artist and visual arts educator, I have identified eight relevant and significant characteristics of contemporary society:

1. Constant and abundant availability of information.
2. The power of the mass media.
3. Technological advances creating new environments.
4. Changes in the nature of visual communication.
5. Society shifts from industrial- to information-based.
6. Distinctions blurred between high art, popular culture and traditional art disciplines.
7. Business structures are less bureaucratic and replaced with more cooperative, collaborative ways of dealing with the world.
8. More valued views of marginal groups in society.

#### *1. Constant and abundant availability of information.*

In society's response to massive changes, Efland et al (1996, p. 2) discussed what they termed "the postmodern condition" and Gablik (1984, p. 17) called "a crisis in belief". This condition is reflected in the pluralism and recognition of the relevance of context which characterises the postmodern world, brought about by the mass of information which is available, twenty-four hours a day.

## *2. The power of the mass media.*

Freedman (1997) acknowledged both the political and pedagogical power of the mass media, pointing out “daily, contradictions ranging from ‘facts’ to ethical positions are presented to us through information technology” (p. 23).

## *3. Technological advances creating new environments.*

Freedman (1997) also recognised the way computers create new environments in which “time is cut and pasted together in ways impossible in lived experience” (p. 23). This is of particular importance to contemporary artists in that it expands the traditional boundaries of time and place creating what Harvey (in Bird, Curtis, Putnam, Robertson and Tickner, 1993, p. 4) called “time-space compression.” Mark McPherson, a Perth artist, recently completed a project called *Isolated Funkstörung Triple Media*, which clearly illustrated this phenomenon. McPherson posted a collection of his photographs of various cities on a website and invited artists and designers from around the world to reinvent (or as McPherson terms it, “remix”) them. The photographs were constantly removed and replaced with new ones for remixing. In 12 months, more than 1,000 images were submitted from artists around the world resulting in a collection of unique urban multimedia images, including a DVD and a book. The West Australian newspaper’s visual arts critic Simon Blond commented:

The work can be seen as a metaphor, which explores the paradox that in this, the age of worldwide connection, we are at our most catastrophically disconnected. The project is thoroughly postmodern, questioning the value of individuality and reflecting the surface brilliance and pace of today’s download culture. (2005, p. 13).

#### *4. Changes in the nature of visual communication.*

It is no secret that the nature of the visual arts in today's society has changed to encompass mass media, fine art, popular culture and advertising images. There is undeniably a crossover between high and popular cultural forms, an emphasis on new technologies and an acknowledged view of individuals as multifaceted. It is crucial for visual artists to recognise that the form of visual communication has changed – it is now all-pervasive, and we must develop the means to deal with the new technologies, which promote it.

#### *5. Society shifts from industrial- to information-based.*

The end of the twentieth century has seen a restructuring of the work force in much of the developed world. The change from an industrial-based to an information-based world has led to the mass production and dissemination of images. These are factors which are bound to affect the making and viewing of art works. Artists now fragment, borrow, appropriate and juxtapose images from various times, cultures and popular culture.

#### *6. Distinction blurred between high art, popular culture and traditional art disciplines.*

The distinctions between 'high art' and 'popular culture' are now rather blurred and it seems that imagery from anywhere has the potential to be used by artists to present their messages. Jencks (1986) commented, "If the information world has one obvious effect on culture it is to have put all content in question" (p. 46). All of the literature supports the notion that art-making now involves the freedom for artists to refer to any source, be it cultural, historical, popular culture, fine art, literary or the mass media. Artists are no longer bound by the requirements of traditional art disciplines and visual arts works are no longer seen as objects of great wonder and contemplation, afforded their almost sacred status by their placement in a gallery. Art can be transient, impermanent, and located in areas not traditionally designed for it.

*7. Business structures are less bureaucratic and replaced with more cooperative, collaborative ways of dealing with the world.*

Freedman (1997) observed that business now favours group decision-making and collaborative problem-solving and this attitude is also reflected in art-making where many artists now like to work collaboratively on group projects. This phenomenon results in a reduction of the heroic status accorded to artists during the modernist era and shifts the focus toward the message.

*8. More valued views of marginal groups in society.*

With the development of the global communication network, increased travel, massive population migrations, the fall of Soviet Communism and the development of the 'Third World' has come an interest from western nations in other cultures. A number of writers and researchers propose that multiculturalism, feminism and support for other positions that promote equity reflect the pluralism of postmodern society. Freedman (1997, p. 25) observed that "in postmodern art, culture and critique, the ways in which certain ethnic, gender and social groups have been controlled are investigated." She calls this "a concern for otherness," that recognises "the importance of local traditions and values in art" (1997, p. 25).

The previous points raised outline the nature of society and art-making today and the resulting implications for visual artists as identified by many writers and researchers. It is within this cultural and theoretical context that I place myself as a visual artist. Artistically, my work has been informed by a number of writers and practitioners such as the ones listed below under the sub-heading *Artists and writers of influence*. Their work has influenced my Creative Arts Project in a number of ways.

## **Artists and writers of influence**

### **Chris McAuliffe**

McAuliffe is an important commentator on urban art. His book *Art and Suburbia* (1996) traced the history of Australia's suburbs and the artists who used them as subject matter throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. McAuliffe's writing has relevance as he discussed the issues Australian artists have addressed with regards to suburbia over the last hundred years. Issues such as the 'bush myth' versus the reality of Australian life in cities, the organisation and development of the suburban landscape, consumerism, the feminisation of suburbia and the recognition of the suburban landscape as a source of rich visual imagery have all been dealt with in the book. McAuliffe identified the importance of what the suburbs stand for (rather than simply their physical nature), seeing the suburb as a site to articulate ideologies, for example, country versus city living, the positive and negative effects of industrialisation, the status of the individual within society, the nature of the family, the idea of community and the values of a consumer society. He identified a range of artists who deal with these themes.

McAuliffe summarised the 1950s as a time of dramatic modernisation in Australia, "thrusting the bush legend further into the past, forcing Australians to accept that their future lay in the confusing realm of global consumer society" (p. 65). He identified the search for a national identity through an examination of the rituals of suburban life as a central concern for artists at this time but noted that they were depicting the suburb not as a particular place, but as a particular culture; the culture of consumer society.

The changes in the fabric of society, which began to occur in the 1970s, affected the face of Australian cities and associated postmodern concerns began to become evident in the work of artists of this time. McAuliffe discussed the impact of the mass media on suburban life and the change in the dynamism of the suburb transforming it into a self-contained entity. All of these changes to the nature of the suburb affected the work of visual artists and with the onset of the 80s and 90s, McAuliffe recognised the

consistency with which they sought to construct cultural metaphors to comment on postmodern suburban life. He identified themes of mobility, complex communities, fluid and hybrid identities, and the interplay of personal, psychological and political realities within the suburbs.

In addition to the status of the suburbs changing, McAuliffe suggested that the cultural attitudes to them were also changing. He acknowledged the importance of international art and theory to artists of this time, citing the work of English sociologist Dick Hebdige and his 'cultural studies' model as being seminal. This model had relevance for any reading of the suburbs and suburban life and the model was to influence a number of visual artists of this period. In addition to this, developments in American architectural theory suggested that the architecture of shopping centres and the suburbs (often considered aesthetically worthless) deserved more serious consideration and could be read in different ways according to inherent symbolism within it. These developments affected visual artists of the time who were attempting to come up with new ways of understanding Australia's suburbs.

McAuliffe concluded his book by suggesting that for the artist, the Australian suburbs remain problematic due to the fact that, from a postmodern viewpoint, there seems to be no single system of meaning associated with them. He recognised that identities and the forces shaping them are now fluid and ever changing and artists tend to commentate on this in a variety of different ways, rather than search for a national identity through it. His views regarding the nature of suburbs and the development of the Australian suburban landscape are directly relevant to this Creative Arts Project and the visual artists he discusses from modern to postmodern have provided starting points for further studies.

### **John Brack (born 1920)**

Brack's artwork from the 1950s seems pertinent and speaks of the hopes, dreams and aspirations that are still promised by Australia's 'suburban dream,' even today. His



works from this era are of interest for the messages within them, rather than for his style or technique.

*The New House* (1953), depicts a man and woman standing in their living room surrounded by furnishings that reveal the style and taste of that time. The viewer gets the impression that Brack is satirizing people's contentment at achieving the suburban dream of home and contents ownership, as if this is the pinnacle of aspirations. The work contains symbols that challenge identities at the time. For example, the woman wears an apron, the man a business suit and on the wall is a reproduction of a Van Gogh painting, serving merely as decoration, indicating ironically, that these people have a sense of style. This myth of the virtues of home ownership is perpetuated today through the plethora of lifestyle shows available on television (such as *Better Homes and Gardens*), through the endless 'junk mail' catalogues from furnishing stores offering hire purchase and objects which every home simply must have. This myth is also taken up by big business creating new housing developments with appealing names that seduce buyers with the promise that somehow their lives will be better by buying their land, and upon it, building their project home. I explored these ideas directly in the creation of my piece *Suburban Dream (homage to Brack)*. In this work, I looked at aspects of consumerism associated with our desire to own our own small patch of paradise in the suburbs, using collage and paint to refer to the patterns of cul-de-sacs present in the new suburbs with their elaborate house names and obsession with appliances. In this work, I also appropriated Brack's *The New House*, reinterpreting it in a contemporary context.



**Figure 7** *Suburban Dream* (homage to Brack) (painting, with collage, by the artist).

Brack's drawing *New Houses* (1954) is also relevant to the emptiness that can be seen in the endless sprawl of suburbia along the northern and southern coastal strip of WA. It depicts a view that is certainly not uncommon today, as one travels from one end of the freeway to the other.

### **Howard Arkley (1951 – 1999)**

Arkley perceived variety and difference in suburbia as opposed to sameness and monotony, articulating that it was the place he knew and therefore it was his chance to make honest, meaningful, relevant artwork. He observed difference being expressed through subtleties such as facades, gardens and other decorative embellishments and found these details fascinating and inspiring rather than expressions of poor taste. Arkley understood the way meaning in the suburbs was generated and sought new ways of engaging with this meaning. He used photography extensively to record details of houses and streets in different suburban areas of Melbourne, and developed a personal style of painting to communicate his findings, back in the studio.

It is not Arkley's painting style or technique that informed this Creative Arts Project; rather it is the theory behind his work. His recognition of difference in what some may

see as bland or banal and the way he elevated the ordinary to the extraordinary, insisting that the style of the suburban house could be the vehicle through which individuals and cultures construct their identities, were of interest, particularly in the creation of my series depicting objects from verge-side clean ups.

### **Mark Datodi (born 1966)**

Datodi is a Western Australian artist whose past work identified the suburban architecture of the north coast as representative of our cultural aspirations. Recently he has been more directly addressing the development of the northern suburban coastal strip and this work was on show at his 2003 exhibition *New Works*. He commented on the way the edge of suburbia in these new developments continues to move on, bringing with it the artificiality of laid lawn, laid pavers, laid roads and laid carpets. His work drew attention to the artificial lakes and mounds in artificial parks that are created for suburbanites to feel comfortable with some glimpse of nature, albeit small and constructed. He observed that soon after it has been built, it is almost impossible to remember what the land looked like before a subdivision, before it was turned into a kind of retail paradise.

Datodi primarily used printmaking processes with mixed media and found objects to highlight these observations. He also identified the way the light in these newly created suburbs seemed harsh and glaring due to the vast, cleared spaces, devoid of trees. He commented on the way developers have constructed endless cul-de-sacs and parks for aesthetic, rather than practical purposes. Datodi is interested in the way television suffices for these suburban dwellers in bringing nature into these new homes, as it can be turned on and off at will. All of these issues were presented through visually appealing works constructed on grids and patterns found in the mapping of suburbs.

The issues Datodi addresses through his work and also through his use of maps and grids to construct these works were of great interest in the undertaking of this Creative Arts Project. My mixed media piece *Utopia Manufactured* and the series of six works *Your*

*Own Piece of Paradise* were influenced by Datodi's works in his 2003 exhibition *New Works*. In both of these works I drew attention to the destruction of the Banksia Forest on the coastal plain as it makes way for the inevitable sprawl of Perth's manufactured northern and southern suburbs.

**Darren Wardle (born 1969), Claire Firth-Smith (born 1969), Stephen Haley (born 1961)**

These three artists all hail from Melbourne and each is making a mark on the contemporary art scene working broadly with the suburban theme, but in different ways.

Wardle's most recent work shows slick looking, surreal, almost menacing images of suburban buildings, the designs for which appear as though developed digitally. Wardle's environment is one of shiny, manufactured surfaces in "day-glo" colours that promise much but may well lack substance. He seeks to investigate how our environmental saturation in technology and digital imagery is redefining urban life and contemporary painting. He even titles one work *Grand Theft* referring to the popular computer game and perhaps making a comment on consumerism and the way we have become slaves to technology. For Wardle, the urban landscape is inextricably tied in with the digital landscape. Wardle's new paintings inspired me to consider the surface of my work and how it reflected the messages I was trying to convey. At the same time I was taken by the structures he depicted and the way they defined his suburbia.

Firth-Smith investigates the structures found in the contemporary suburban landscape, through irony and a very controlled, precise painting technique. Her starkly presented "homes" appear uninhabited and unfinished – as if they were perhaps two months away from being completed. At the same time they are made up of many different contrasting colours and tonal planes, giving them the appearance of computer-designed structures and imbuing them with a sense of quiet unreality. Firth-Smith's titles such as *Oh Baby Can't You See, There Ain't no Place I'd Rather be* are ironic as these structures and this landscape seem alien and threatening, in stark contrast to where most urban dwellers

would like to be. They reflect what she sees as the endless construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the suburban landscape and the parallels that can be drawn to the lives of its inhabitants. I was attracted to Firth-Smith's paintings for their stark, bold depictions of suburban structures and their obvious reference to digital technology both in the appearance of the completed works and in the way the images were constructed.

Haley is an artist whose work and the conceptual basis behind it interests me greatly. His recent work consists of eerily distorted interiors and exteriors, quite architectural in their appearance. However, the compositions are impossible. His interest in vision and perception is communicated through his imposing digital prints of rooftops and cyber cities stretching repetitiously toward the horizon. His works address the notion of architecture modulating space and the way space is constructed. Haley applies this directly to the Australian suburb where there is a reliance on repetition and a simplistic architectural grid. I am interested in Haley's obsession with grids and repetition and the way this is a strong feature of Australia's urban design with its colonial roots. I adopted the use of grids in a number of my works – the grids being taken from the grid system of the suburbs around me and the grid system used in urban street directories.

**Susanna Castleden (born 1968), Joanna Lamb (born 1972), Philip Ward-Dickson (born 1951), Mike Singe (born 1970)**

All of these Western Australian artists were relevant to the construction of this Creative Arts Project. Castleden's work that engages with the naming of the land and the associated meanings of words was of interest, even though she deals with different issues. Her work inspired me to think about the significance of names of new subdivisions and project homes and even signs and symbols in the urban environment.

Lamb's recent work exhibited in June 2004 explored areas visited in suburban and urban Melbourne, Geelong and Perth and were described as "large scale paintings about the act of painting, colour and surface, artificiality and reality, ordinariness and extraordinariness" (The Association of Western Australian Art Galleries, 2004, p. 5).

More recently, she has been using digital technology, painting on large-scale canvases with urban subjects treated in a hard-edge, stylised manner, the designs for which have been worked through using the Adobe Photoshop programme. Lamb commented that she enjoys the process of solving all of her artistic problems through the digital medium prior to venturing onto the canvas. I too have explored this way of working in my series depicting objects from verge-side clean ups and found it a valid and liberating way of working.

Ward-Dickson's recent paintings of bizarre suburban icons such as garden gnomes, stone kookaburras and stone black swans take a humorous look at the way people construct meaning and identity from their lives in the suburbs by using embellishment and decoration. He examines notions of taste and fashion and what is considered 'kitsch'. By painstakingly creating paintings with a controlled pointillist technique, Ward-Dickson adds further impetus to the bizarre appearance of these subjects. They glow and are hence elevated, almost to the status of religious icons. I appreciate the irony and humour in Ward-Dickson's work and identify with the way he uses a controlled, formal process to communicate his acute observations of the bizarre details of suburban life.

Finally, Singe's work in his last solo show investigated the suburban landscape, specifically the Perth suburbs, as they appear in the Perth street directory. Through his creation of household objects entirely from piles of street directories, he commented on Perth's endless desire to move further out into the world even though it may not have the appropriate means to do so. One work, entitled *Recreational Vehicle – Side View*, 2003, shows a section of a street map with the familiar image of a shopping trolley superimposed in a rather harsh way over the top. This trolley takes the form of a stylised stencil, looking almost like it has been "rubber stamped" onto the map. Singe is perhaps commenting on the way over the years, familiar images particular to the suburbs become integral parts of the suburban vernacular. Like Singe, I have used the image of the trolley as a feature in a number of my paintings. It is a symbol that is instantly recognised by Australian suburban dwellers and is definitely a part of the suburban

landscape. I have also used pages from the street directory extensively in several works such as the series *Your Own Piece of Paradise* and the work *A Manufactured Utopia*.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Educational context of the study**

#### **Current curriculum development in the visual arts in Western Australia**

With the full implementation of the Curriculum Council's restructuring of post-compulsory education, it is anticipated that plans for a comprehensive arts education (K to 12), which is relevant to contemporary society, will be realised in 2007. The proposed Visual Arts Course of Study will complete the Curriculum Framework, providing consistency between curriculum structure and assessment in Years K to 10 and the post-compulsory Years 11 and 12. The current draft concept plan for the Visual Arts Course of Study (years 11 and 12) takes into account the nature of our increasingly visual society and recognises the importance of students receiving a visual arts education that provides them with "the ability to perceive, understand, interpret and evaluate visual information" (Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2003, p. 5).

The concept plan also recognises the importance of students valuing community, understanding community's visual symbols, engaging in art-making processes utilising new media, respecting the environment, appreciating ecological sustainability and understanding and appreciating artwork from a range of historical and cultural contexts. The visual arts course of study will allow students to work across media and art forms, emphasising that:

The conventions of studio practice traditionally associated with particular art forms or media, techniques and processes may be accepted, challenged or overturned in the pursuit of particular ideas or artistic goals.  
(Curriculum Council of Western Australia, 2003, p. 13).

Within the essential content of the course, the Art Interpretation component contains two content points that were particularly relevant to my study: "Meaning and purpose" (2003, p. 14) and "Social, cultural and historical contexts" (2003, p. 14). The

elaborations of these points include that making meaning from artworks depends on understanding codes, conventions, signs and symbols which are socially, culturally and historically determined; and that each viewer constructs their own meaning according to their experience. Context is seen as important, as is allowing students the opportunities to explore issues of race, gender, religion and politics. All of these concerns can be seen as postmodern in nature and reflect contemporary artistic directions. In addition, the concept plan does not deny the vital role art has to play in giving form and meaning to individuals' ideas and feelings, and allowing for self-knowledge and personal enrichment.

### **Postmodernism and visual arts education**

In discovering ways that the new visual arts curriculum in Western Australia can be taught, it is useful to critically examine the work of American, Australian and British writers and researchers in this field who have made many suggestions regarding what is the most appropriate visual arts education pedagogy for the twenty-first century. Many believe in a complete reconstruction of the curriculum whilst others believe in reforming what is already in place. Others, still, warn against abandoning modernist principles, as the result may be a denial of the aesthetic pleasure and enrichment that art objects, for their own sake, can provide.

Efland et al (1996) examined postmodern theory in relation to changing conceptions of art, culture and education and clearly embraced it as the future for visual arts education. They saw the value of art education from a social reconstructionist point of view and argued, "the purpose for teaching art is to contribute to the understanding of the social and cultural landscape that all individuals inhabit" (p. 72). Whilst this is indeed a valid view of the value of visual arts education, it does deny the important role which art plays in an individual's personal growth and discovery and in providing enjoyment and enrichment through creative investigation.

Duncum (2001) supported a shift from studying the art of the “institutional art world” (p. 101) to studying visual culture. He saw a change to Visual Culture Art Education as a paradigm shift, involving teaching students about the codes inherent in cultural objects. Duncum argued that anything visual in our culture could have attitudes and values attached to the reading of them, which may then make them subjects for visual arts education. He pointed out that artefacts and images must be examined in their social context and, in relation to this, understanding, decoding and knowing should replace cherishing, revering and valuing. Hicks (2001) also advocated a move to Visual Culture arguing that art teachers must take advantage of visual trends and our existing visual world rather than focussing visual arts programs on traditional use of media and ‘fine art’ imagery. He encouraged a change to a more conceptual curriculum, more in line with the nature of our postmodern world.

British art educator, Baynes, argued for an education *through* art, with the focus being on “the dynamism created by the interaction between art, technology and social change” (2000, p. 37). He emphasised the central role the new technologies must play in arts education pedagogy, and, like Duncum, stressed the importance of equipping students to take part in shaping and enjoying the broad popular culture of their time.

Steers (1997) called for art educators not to become complacent, to “get active” and make sure they don’t “miss the boat” with regard to the new technologies and the visual nature of our world. He asked ten questions regarding the future of art and design education in Australia, questioning whether we should give prominence to the place of new technologies and media in the visual arts curriculum. One of his most pertinent points concerned the lack of research into effective curriculum design in visual arts education in the UK and in Australia. Steers claimed that “much educational research has little to do with art and design education practice: that which does is seldom disseminated in a way that ensures much impact in the classroom” (1997, p. 18). He argued that research is essential if we are to have evidence to support claims for the importance of the subject.

Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000), suggested ways of reforming the British visual arts curriculum which they saw as static and outdated into something much more in line with contemporary art and its related discourses. They recommended ways of realising a model for critical and progressive pedagogy, what they termed “border pedagogy” (p. 32), where critical reasoning aspects of Modernism are combined with postmodern concerns of difference and pluralism. As opposed to what they saw as a more traumatic conversive transformation (p. 32), advocated by other theorists, they argued for an incremental transformation of the curriculum. Like Burgess and Addison, Canadian visual arts educator Roger Clarke (1998) proposed strategies for constructing a postmodern classroom from what he termed a “reformist” (p. 9) point of view. He advised teachers to adapt postmodern ideas for teaching to individual circumstances, emphasising that modernist curricula should not be completely discarded and that postmodern ideas could be introduced if they complement and enrich existing modernist practice. He suggested ways of reforming existing curricula such as experimenting with different media and technologies, exploring design ideas from other cultures and times, expanding established ways of making art and exposing students to more alternative visual art and artists.

In encouraging teachers to adopt postmodernist teaching strategies and to introduce them into their classrooms, Clarke (1998) pointed out that some aspects of Modernism are not compatible with studio practice in the postmodern visual arts curricula. He argued that teachers need to develop studio environments which go beyond the modernist ideas of sameness and an accepted way of doing things and instead promote difference and diversity. He suggested that in order to do this, teachers can plan projects which incorporate cultural diversity as well as similarity, allow students to work in groups as well as individually, allow students to develop individual styles as well as imitate styles and provide for students to learn cooperatively as well as competitively. Clarke insisted that by encouraging students to use strategies like keeping visual diaries, taking notes, photographing, filming, they learn to deconstruct visual images and make meaning of their world, important requirements of postmodern art practice. He added that teachers need to be culturally sensitive in considering their instructional methods. Clarke’s

suggestions are particularly relevant to the new Western Australian curriculum as both the Curriculum Framework and the draft Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study reflect postmodern thought but do not abandon all principles of Modernism.

Kindler (2000) warned of the dangers in adopting a purely postmodern approach to curriculum. She reminded us of the value of aesthetic experience and contemplation for their own sake and argued that “recognition of art’s power to advocate, promote or effect social change should not overshadow the fact that art has a unique potential to enrich our lives simply because it has the power to delight us” (p. 41). Kindler maintained that in arguing for art to remain relevant to a society we must not lose sight of what it can mean on a personal, individual level. Her recommendations were that art education should seek a broader mandate where “searching for ‘the why’ of art should go hand in hand rather than replace personal idiosyncratic engagement with ‘the what’” (2000, p. 41).

The research completed in this Creative Arts Project was informed by the views of writers such as Clark (1998), Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000) and Kindler (2000) who advocate an approach to visual arts education, which takes into account both modern and postmodern methods and concerns. Their recommendations have relevance for curriculum reform in Western Australia as the Curriculum Framework is fully implemented and the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study is being developed.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Models of art education

At the outset of my research, Efland’s Pragmatic Social Reconstructionist model of art education was an influence. As I progressed further into the Creative Arts Project, I recognised that the pluralistic nature of society and art-making today allows teachers to work with more than one model of art pedagogy. Burgess and Addison’s “border pedagogy” model of art education, combining aspects of Modernism and Postmodernism, became influential.

#### Efland’s Pragmatic Social Reconstructionist model of art education

The Pragmatic Social Reconstructionist Model of visual arts education (refer to **Table 1**), proposed by Arthur Efland in 1990, influenced me in the design of this research project. This model sees the nature of art as “an object that provides aesthetic experience and has instrumental value” (Efland, 1990, p. 15). It acknowledges the importance of context and sees visual arts education’s value in what it can do for society and the individual within that society. This model is one in which students are presented with problems that are to be solved through transactions with their environment, and, as a result of this, learning takes place. Generally, both the individual and the broader community benefits from the project and the resulting learning.

**Table 1** PRAGMATIC-SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION MODEL (Efland, 1990, p. 15).

Components of Pragmatic Aesthetics	Components of Social Reconstruction Educational Theories	Prescriptions for Art Education
<b>Nature of Art</b> Art is an object that provides aesthetic experience and has instrumental value	<b>Nature of Knowledge</b> Knowledge is experience that has instrumental value	<b>Content</b> Is expressed in terms of problem situations
<b>Creative Process</b> Reconstruction of experience	<b>Nature of Teaching</b> Uses problem situations to enable	<b>Teaching Methods</b> Poses problems to be

by giving it artistic form	students to transact with their environment	solved, helps students identify resources to solve problems
<b>Response to Art</b> Reconstruction of experience through transactions with works of art	<b>Nature of Learning</b> Reconstruction of knowledge through transactions with the environment	<b>Student Activities</b> Students work on artistic problems in the home, school and community
<b>Value of Art</b> Emerges through transactions with works of art, criterion is instrumental value	<b>Value of Education</b> Emerges through transactions with experience, criterion is instrumental value	<b>Evaluation of Learning</b> Students and teachers determine instrumental value of aesthetic solutions to problems

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### **Burgess and Addison's Border Pedagogy model of art education**

In 2000, Burgess and Addison proposed a Border Pedagogy model of art education, a critical and progressive model which combines aspects of Modernism and Postmodernism, thereby acknowledging the changing and pluralistic nature of society. However, Burgess and Addison's notion of border pedagogy was conceived as a transitional phenomenon and a legitimate and effective way of introducing Postmodernism into the British art curriculum, which was strongly rooted in a modernist context. Although favouring an eventual shift toward an entirely postmodern visual arts curriculum, Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000) felt that border pedagogy, with its "incremental transformation" (p. 33) of the curriculum, grounded in critical inquiry and encouraging "more subtle, less oppositional practices; rather than soap-box oratory and confrontation" (p.33), was the most appropriate way to remodel the visual arts curriculum. I see Burgess and Addison's concept of border pedagogy as desirable in terms of an ideological approach to contemporary visual arts education in Western Australia. It reflects the transitional direction (from the old to the new) proposed by the draft Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study document, and is a valid and relevant way of teaching postmodern themes and strategies in an effective visual arts curriculum. I have therefore adopted their model as a legitimate framework for a hybrid approach to teaching visual arts within the context of the new post-compulsory course, terming it border pedagogy methodology.

In commenting on the nature of postmodern society requiring an eclectic approach to an art curriculum, Efland (1990) suggested:

A non-eclectic curriculum is only possible when one model of art teaching is privileged as being true, a situation which cannot exist as long as the present pluralism is characteristic of the art world (p. 20).

Through the research undertaken in this project, I discovered that teaching visual arts within the new visual arts curriculum will require an eclectic approach and hence a pedagogic model that reflects pluralism.

### **Teaching in a postmodern context**

As a visual arts educator I tend to combine the Pragmatic Social Reconstructionist and the Border Pedagogy models in my teaching. I like to set projects that provide aesthetic experience and learning for my students, but I also like to consider the value these projects have in a broader context. I incorporate postmodern methods and strategies into my teaching but not at the complete exclusion of modernist fundamentals such as knowledge of colour and aesthetic sensibility.

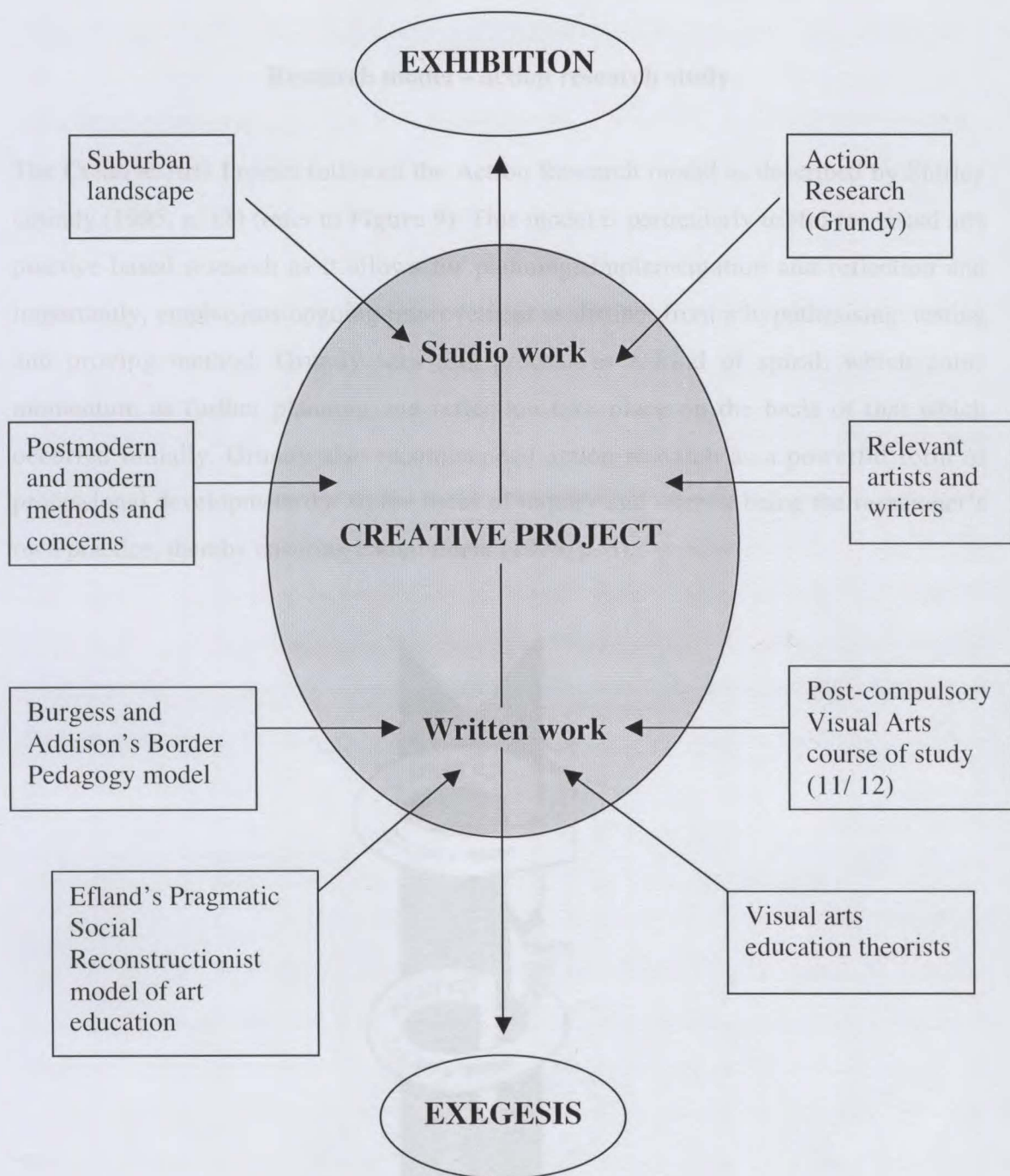
Introducing students to postmodern working methods and strategies allows them the freedom to work within a certain vernacular with which they are conversant. I am aware that my generation's experience of the world, space and place is very different from that of the students I teach. Considering this, it follows that their art-making and art learning should be informed by today's visual language, rather than a visual language relevant to a modernist context. Teachers who continue to teach solely from a modernist point of view, focussing on skills and formal concerns and addressing artworks by modernist artists only, are excluding students from what they are most familiar with and therefore can relate to – their own visual culture. Burgess and Addison (in Hickman, 2000) commented:



Students relish the opportunity to interpret visual and material culture. Teachers tend to rely on historical art as a focus for pastiche and interpretation. However familiar, it could be argued that these exemplars are more difficult to understand than contemporary art because the contexts that once conditioned their production are less evident than the conditions and motivations stimulating contemporary practice (p. 27).

Taking into account the content of the new Post Compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study, written in a postmodern context, it seems essential that art educators access and address the visual culture of their students in their teaching. Through this Creative Arts Project, I set out to design a teaching unit that was in keeping with the general thrust of the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study, fitting within the border pedagogy methodology. I experimented with postmodern strategies and methods in my own studio work and applied the discoveries made to this teaching programme with the aim of discovering ways postmodern themes can be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum. I was able to determine effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

The diagram on the following page (Figure 8) illustrates the content and direction of this research project. This conceptual framework places the Creative Arts Project, comprising the studio work and associated written work, centrally, with the studio work leading to the exhibition and the results of both being reported in the exegesis. The action research model, postmodern theory and artistic practices and the suburban landscape, as the subject of my creative arts investigations, informed the studio work, and the written work was additionally informed by visual arts education theorists, a critical examination of the Visual Arts Course of Study concept plan, Burgess and Addison's Border Pedagogy model and Arthur Efland's Pragmatic Social Reconstructionist model of art education. Relevant artists and writers and knowledge of postmodern methods and concerns influenced the Creative Arts Project as a whole.

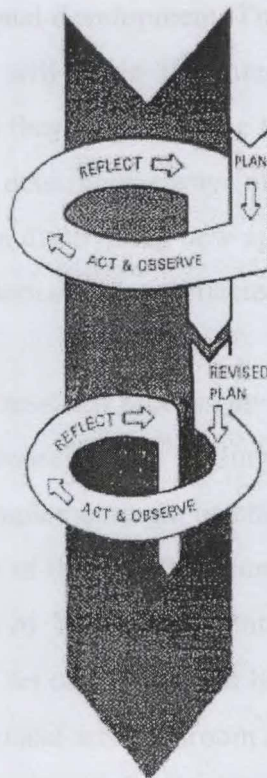


**Figure 8** Conceptual Framework.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Research model – action research study

The Creative Arts Project followed the Action Research model as described by Shirley Grundy (1995, p. 13) (refer to **Figure 9**). This model is particularly useful for visual arts practice-based research as it allows for planning, implementation and reflection and importantly, emphasises ongoing improvement as distinct from a hypothesising, testing and proving method. Grundy sees this process as a kind of spiral, which gains momentum as further planning and reflection take place on the basis of that which occurred initially. Grundy also recommended action research as a powerful form of professional development due to the focus of inquiry and interest being the researcher's own practice, thereby ensuring commitment (1995, p. 5).



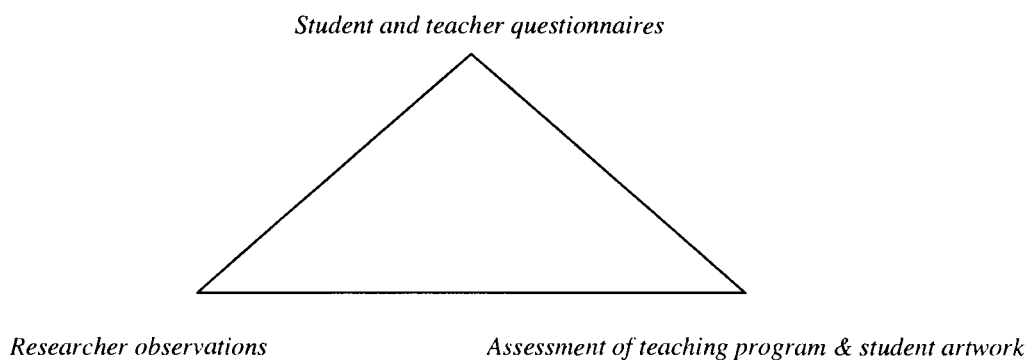
**Figure 9** The Action Research Spiral (Grundy, 1995, p. 13)

Prior to setting out specific research steps, I carried out what Grundy termed a “reconnaissance” (1995, p. 12), to focus attention on what needed to be changed as a result of the research. Although I will discuss the research process in two components (the studio investigation leading to an exhibition as well as the educational application of the research), it should be noted that the action research process included both concerns, each being mutually dependent. In my own visual arts practice I explored strategies and processes considered postmodern such as the communication of ideas and meaning through layering, collage and the use of digital technology. At the same time, these processes were informed by my artistic background, developed within a modernist context. Therefore, formal aesthetic principles and the desire for personal artistic growth and development also informed my artwork.

With regard to the educational component, the new draft post-compulsory plan for the Visual Arts Course of Study is written in a postmodern context, valuing the communication of ideas and meaning as well as recognising the importance of the individual’s growth and personal development. This represents a paradigm shift and the challenge for art educators will be in the interpretation and teaching of the new curriculum, particularly since they may continue to rely solely on a modernist frame of reference. I was interested in determining ways of addressing the new curriculum in an effective and valid way and in discovering new approaches to visual arts education that take into account the postmodern concepts reflected by these new courses.

The next phase of the action research process involved planning and making art works using postmodern methods, sourcing and reading information about artists relevant to the study and planning and implementing a teaching programme that was designed and taught following the structure of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study. Through presenting a group of Year 10 students with a project designed within the structure of the new course, I set out to discover how postmodern methods and concerns could be introduced into the visual arts classroom and whether the students perceived the content of the new post-compulsory system as valid and effective. In order to gather evidence that enabled me to answer my research questions, I employed a triangulation

method whereby students completed a questionnaire regarding their enjoyment and perceived effectiveness of the project and I, and a group of visual arts teachers, completed an assessment of the teaching programme as well as the resulting student work (refer to **Figure 10**). The processes outlined in the following paragraph, enabled me to make judgements about whether I could employ a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape.



**Figure 10** Diagram of triangulation methods

The reflective aspect of the process was crucial and ongoing through keeping visual diaries in which personal thoughts and reflections regarding my artwork, discoveries, ideas and processes were recorded. I also ensured that my work underwent regular reviews and critiques from colleagues, artists and lecturers; and I took up opportunities to show my work in progress.

On the basis of this reflection, I continued to plan for the next phase of action in my work and acted upon this in due course. My journey through the action research process was documented in formats such as the visual diary, prior to being written in this exegesis. It is important to note that whilst the artistic and educational components of my Creative Arts Project are intertwined, for ease of discussion I will deal with each part separately.

## **Model for research – creative project**

Through the creative project, I set out to answer one of my research questions: is a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods an effective way to investigate the suburban landscape? At the same time, the discoveries made in my artwork were transferred to the classroom where I carried out my research in the educational component of the project. I implemented a single action research spiral to monitor changes in my visual arts practice as well as my educational practice. This model involved the perpetuating spiral of planning, acting/ observing, reflecting and then replanning for further action.

Most of my artwork relied on photography to capture imagery in the first instance. Through the creative project, these photographs were digitally manipulated, photocopied, enlarged and/or cropped to become starting points for the studio pieces. Constantly keeping a camera in my car, I began by photographing series around my immediate suburban environment. These series included abandoned shopping trolleys, interesting buildings such as the Saeco Coffee company on the corner of Loftus Street and Scarborough Beach Road, North Perth and verge-side clean-up piles appearing at various times during the year.

I began by working in a fairly painterly fashion, using acrylic on board to complete small studies of shopping trolleys, buildings and views of the area. I then incorporated more postmodern strategies and methods into the production of my artwork and experimented with grid patterns and included text in works such as *Its Where You Want to Be* and *Suburban Dream II (Homage to Brack)*. I wanted to introduce methods of layering and use of digital technology into my work in order to charge it with different layers of meaning and communicate beyond the solely superficial. To this end, I began to use the Adobe Photoshop program to fuse semi-transparent layers together, printing the resulting images out onto inkjet canvas. These prints, containing images of banksia forest superimposed over maps from a Perth street directory with text incorporated, were then attached to a stretcher and an image of a rather bland looking project home was

painted over each. This series of works was successful and indicated that it was possible to make artwork using postmodern methods and strategies and still apply modernist aesthetic principles to the creative process.

At this point I began to manipulate images of verge-side clean-up piles using Adobe Photoshop, deciding to experiment with completing all of my problem-solving on the computer prior to creating the resulting artwork. I felt the need to return to the process of painting, which enabled me to communicate ideas effectively and from which I derived a lot of pleasure. I wanted to discover a way of combining the use of digital media with the use of the traditional modernist medium of oil paint and, at the same time, to loosen my approach to the medium. As my work evolved, images were simplified and reduced to flat areas of colour and tone by applying the “Posterize” command. The resulting images were printed using my desktop printer. I then enlarged the images using a photocopier and transferred the designs to boards using carbon paper. I then went on to paint a series of four of these images of chairs amongst piles of discarded materials. Referring to the computer print outs, I painted in colours I would not normally have used and in strokes and flat areas of colour that, when fused together, caused the entire image to appear somewhat loosely painted. This then lead to contemplation of the painted surface and the question of whether the digital image, all-pervasive today, has altered the way we look at the surface and the arrangement of space in painting.

After completing these four works, I reflected on the ideas presented by the paintings and the processes I used to complete them. I considered whether the combination of using digital technology and traditional painting methods was an effective way of investigating this aspect of the suburban landscape. I came to the conclusion that in completing these works, notions of taste and beauty were being called into question. This was achieved through transforming discarded, mundane objects, usually considered unworthy of aesthetic contemplation, into images whose surfaces are richly textured, whilst paradoxically being conceived on the flat, smooth digital screen. I then extrapolated from these reflections, planning for further artworks that would build on these discoveries. I decided to challenge myself by applying all I had discovered to a

grander scale, choosing to embark on a two by one metre canvas, further exploring ideas of surface and the contrast between the painted and the digital surface. At all stages of the events described, the action research spiral (plan, act and observe, reflect and plan further) was at work.

The large painting was challenging as, not only had the scale changed, but the surface, also, was a departure from the MDF board I had been using. The painting required several layers of paint in order to achieve the richness of surface described previously. I also needed to discover ways of translating the individual brushstrokes applied on the smaller paintings to a larger scale. I solved this problem by investing in a set of large brushes that allowed me to focus on individual mark-making.

The subject of the work is an imposing view from a low angle of the large, stark water tower at the highest point in my suburb. I aimed to convey the subject in a manner that lacked emotion, presenting it as a familiar landmark that would invite the viewer to derive personal meaning from it. The use of the software program initially to “Posterize” the image imbued the painting with a sense of the digital; however, this is contradicted by the painted surface that speaks of the richness of oil paint and mark-making. This ambiguity – the emotional distance created by the digital technology in contrast to the warmth of the painted surface – parallels the ambiguous feelings many people have regarding certain features of the suburban landscape. The tower is an imposing eyesore, but at the same time, its familiarity speaks of the home environment.

For the final pieces in my body of artwork, I returned to the scale of the verge-side clean-up chair series, completing two paintings of an upturned shopping trolley with tomatoes spewing forth from it, a scene I came upon on an early morning jog. As with the previous works, these paintings were successful, exploring the connections between the digital and painted surface.

Therefore, through completing this last series of works, I discovered that a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods was an effective way to investigate the



suburban landscape. Through applying the action research model to the completion of this body of artwork I discovered that the process of painting is not only relevant in a modernist context. In a contemporary context, the use of new media can work in conjunction with more traditional media to create a new conception of art-making. This position is simpatico with the notion of border pedagogy methodology and therefore is applicable to the general thrust of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

### **Model for research – educational component**

Through the educational component of the project, I set out to discover how postmodern themes can be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum and what are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum.

Since I was not teaching at the time of completing the research, I was required to set up an alternative arrangement to ensure I had a class of students to participate in my project. I decided to run an after-school class (which I called an art club) for a small group of Year Ten students from St Mary's Anglican Girls' School, once a week for three hours over a period of 11 weeks. I began with a group of 12, but during the course of the project, the numbers reduced to seven, due to students having other commitments during the time slot.

I designed a project within Unit VAR1B, *Investigations*, of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study and supplied students with a student brief to begin with (see Appendices 5 and 6). Over the course of the project, students developed a body of work based around the theme "My Place, My Space." Throughout the project I attempted to provide an understanding of Postmodernism and postmodern working methods and encouraged students to apply these strategies and methods to their work. I applied Grundy's Action Research model throughout the project as I planned, taught lesson by lesson, reflected on each lesson in a written format and then modified my approach. I

found that I had to re-plan on many occasions to deal with issues that arose such as a lack of time, students missing sessions and the activities planned not being appropriate to the practicalities of the after school situation. I also had to modify the way I had planned to teach students about postmodern methods and strategies on a number of occasions as I recognised that some struggled with applying the concepts to their own work.

At the completion of the project students were involved in a small exhibition of their body of work, with each student's resolved piece being the focus and the rest of the work (drawings, mixed media pieces and journal) supporting it (see Appendices 10 and 11) Each student completed a personal evaluation of her project, including an explanation of her body of work in relation to the theme, a description of the processes used, and an evaluation of personal learning that took place.

I then embarked on the data collection process which led to an evaluation of the success of the project overall.

### **Data collection**

I employed triangulation by using several data collection methods to discover valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum and to discover effective ways of teaching postmodern themes and employing postmodern strategies. These methods included the following:

1. Student questionnaires measuring students' enjoyment of the project and their understanding of postmodernism concepts and working methods.
2. Teacher questionnaires measuring teachers' perceptions of the project and the degree to which it addressed aspects of Postmodernism.
3. Teachers' and my assessment of the students' completed bodies of works and the degree to which their work indicated an understanding of postmodern concepts and working methods.
4. My ongoing written observations of the students' progress.

I evaluated the progress students made and the effectiveness of the lesson at the completion of each session, identifying what was successful in relation to my research and what needed modification. These evaluations were completed in a written format and filed after the lesson plan for each session. They were acted upon and changes implemented for the subsequent lessons.

Each student was asked to evaluate the success of her project upon its completion, by writing an artist's statement about her body of work and making a judgement about how effectively her project adopted postmodern methods and strategies and how clearly these were understood.

I developed a questionnaire for students to complete at the end of the project, evaluating their perceptions of the perceived differences between the project and other projects they have been involved in at school (See Appendix 7). The questionnaire was also designed to gauge their perceived understanding of postmodern concepts and methods and to discover how clearly they identified with the content being taught.

Three secondary visual arts teachers, two from government schools and one from a Catholic school, were involved in the assessment of the project. They visited the class mid-way through the project and on this occasion, were given a copy of the draft concept plan for the Visual Arts Course of Study, and an overview of the study. They also spoke with the students about the progress of their work and their perceptions of the project. At the completion of the project, they viewed each student's body of work and filled out a questionnaire, an assessment rubric and a rubric that was designed to gauge their perceptions of the extent to which the students' work indicated an adoption and understanding of postmodern concepts and strategies (see Appendices 8 and 9).

The questionnaire asked the teachers to personally evaluate the structure and content of the project and to make a judgement as to how different they perceived the project to be in comparison to those designed within the current post-compulsory visual arts courses

in Western Australian schools. The assessment rubric required the teachers to make an on-balance judgement regarding the level they saw each student fitting into after assessment of her body of work. Each was provided with a table containing indicators of levels of achievement for each outcome, taken from pages 35 to 38 of the draft post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study document. Assisted also by their knowledge of levelling within the Curriculum Framework, they were able to make individual judgements.

I also completed the assessment rubric and the rubric that was designed to gauge perceptions of the extent to which the students' work indicated an adoption and understanding of postmodern concepts and strategies. During the visit the teachers made mid-way through the project, I furnished them with information about Postmodernism and we discussed this at length, thereby ensuring consensus regarding a definition of this art movement. This communication added to the internal validity of the study. I collated the results of each of the data collection tools, pasting them into new documents for the purposes of comparison.

To evidence the validity of the results of this project, I read and annotated a wide range of recent literature on the topic. I ensured that the readings were relevant to the project and summarised the positions of these writers in this exegesis. I also researched the work of a range of artists whose concerns were of relevance to my project. Reflections on all of these activities were recorded in visual diaries.

The visual diary was also used to record reflections on my work, develop my ideas visually and solve problems in the evolution of studio pieces for exhibition. I actively sought peer and lecturer review of my work as it progressed. The project culminated in a showing of my work in a public exhibition space (see Appendix 12).

The significance of the Creative Arts Project is evidenced in this exegesis through presenting a history of my own visual arts practice and through placing it in a contemporary context, thereby establishing it as an original body of work. This exegesis

also contains an evaluation of the implementation of the teaching project described above including an evaluation of how my work informs education and the implications of the project overall.

### **Ethics clearance**

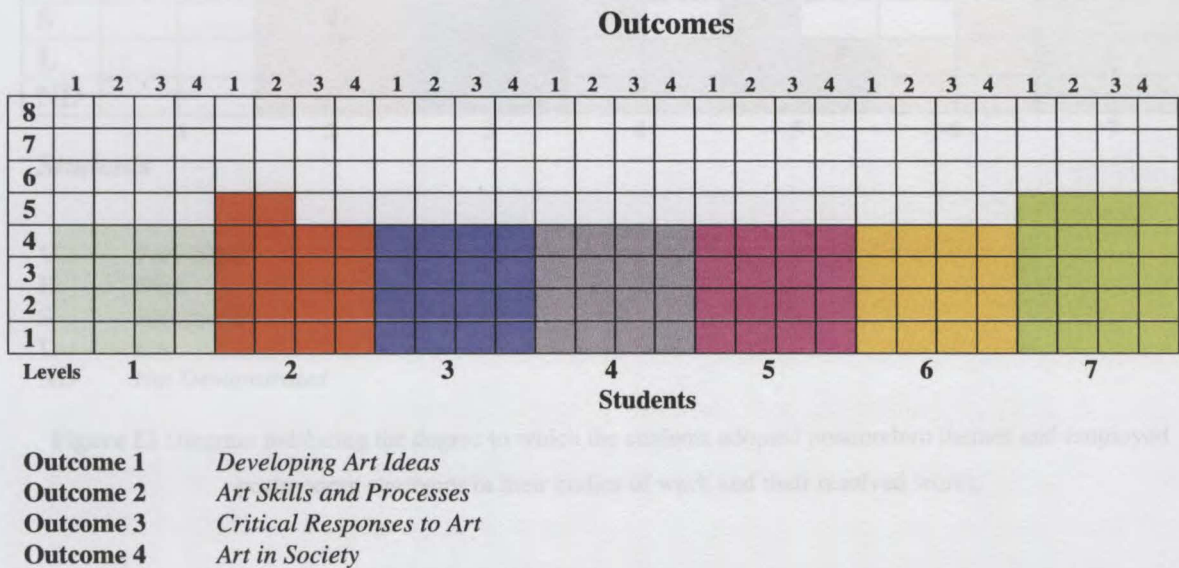
Ethics clearance was required as the study included obtaining written responses from a group of students and three visual arts teachers in relation to curriculum material which I developed. An assurance of confidentiality and adherence to ethical codes in general was given to the participants. Students who agree to be involved, and their parents, did so with a clear understanding of the project and the part they were to play in it.

Curriculum development in education is greatly enhanced through research that evaluates content and determines what direction curriculum should take in the future. Discoveries made through this research will provide me with ideas for directions I will take in my teaching. It is hoped that the project was of benefit to all who participated in it and that the discoveries made will provide some direction for the future of art education in WA schools.

### **Evaluation of data**

The data, which was collected in the returned questionnaires and rubrics, was pasted into new documents, averages were attained, results analysed and conclusions were reached. The diagram below (Figure 11) has been constructed from the assessment rubrics completed by the teachers and me. It summarises the on-balance judgements made of each student's level of achievement according to the indicators contained within the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study. The conclusion I drew from the diagram was that the Unit VAR1B was the correct level of entry into the Visual Arts Course of Study for these Year 10 students. One would confidently assume that all seven of them would now be ready to go on to study the second two units of the course, VAR2A and VAR2B. As the draft Visual Arts Course of Study document (2003, p. 16) states, "the

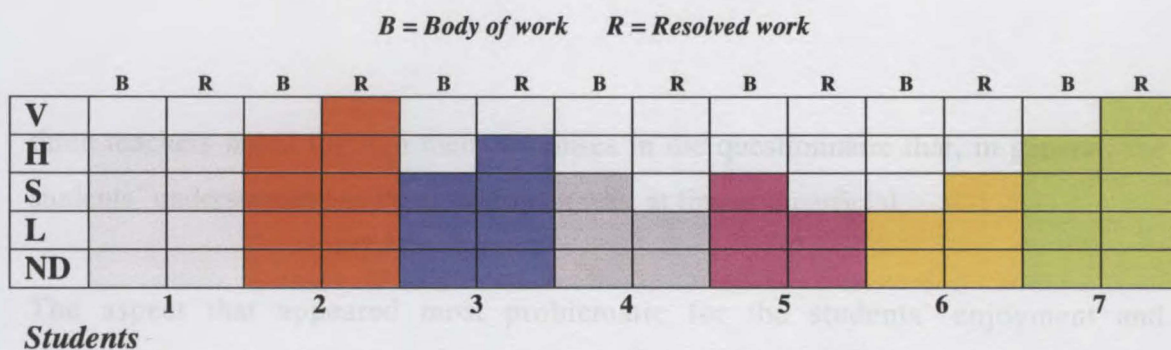
next two units (VAR2A and VAR2B) include more complex content and are suitable for students who are entering at levels 4/5 and are ready for further development.”



**Figure 11** Diagram indicating the students’ level of achievement according to indicators contained within the Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

The rubrics indicating the teachers’ and my perceptions of the degree to which the seven students adopted postmodern themes and employed postmodern strategies in both their bodies of work and their resolved pieces are summarised in Figure 12 below. Students 4 and 5, who had attended the least frequently of all students in the group, demonstrated a low to satisfactory degree of understanding of postmodern concepts through their work. Student 3, who demonstrated a satisfactory to high degree of understanding through her work, was absent for one quarter of the lessons and Student 6, demonstrating the same degree of understanding was only absent once.





- V**    *Very High*
- H**    *High*
- S**    *Satisfactory*
- L**    *Low*
- ND**    *Not Demonstrated*

**Figure 12** Diagram indicating the degree to which the students adopted postmodern themes and employed postmodern strategies in their bodies of work and their resolved works.

### The students' reactions to the project

From analysis of the data collected, I concluded that the students were unanimous in their enjoyment of the project. They enjoyed the freedom the project allowed in the way they were encouraged to respond individually to the brief, complete their own research and use the Internet and digital imagery in the creation of their body of work. They all agreed that the work they completed related to their own interests and the majority of the group enjoyed experimenting with new and varied media in the development of their body of work. Overall, they agreed that the content of the project was new and exciting and required them to think in different ways. Generally they enjoyed exhibiting and reflecting on their work.

Overall, students revealed an understanding and appreciation of postmodern methods and strategies through their responses to the questionnaire. However, this understanding was not unanimously reflected in their body of work, a fact confirmed by the results of the rubric measuring the teachers' perceptions of the degree to which students' work displayed an understanding of postmodern concepts and methods. In addition, two of the

three teachers noted through their responses in the questionnaire that, in general, the students' understanding of Postmodernism was, at times, superficial.

The aspect that appeared most problematic for the students' enjoyment and understanding of the project was the critical/ historical component where they were required to discuss and deconstruct contemporary art works with a strong postmodern bent. The majority were unsure as to whether they could relate to the works studied; however, they all agreed that they enjoyed the way the project taught them about contemporary artists. The conclusion I drew from this was that they found it difficult to apply aspects of these artists' works to the development of their own ideas. They may also have experienced difficulty in using the framework I developed to deconstruct the artworks which was based on "the Frames", as an alternative to the formal analytical model based on Feldman's methodology currently widely used in schools and perhaps no longer adequate in the context of the new post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study. Due to time constraints, I was unable to provide enough depth in familiarising the students with this method, to enable them to apply it with confidence.

### **The teachers' reactions to the project**

All teachers agreed that the conceptual aspects of the project introduced students to new ways of approaching art-making. They also agreed that the content of the project was new and exciting and different from projects written in the current post-compulsory curriculum. They liked the artwork produced and felt there was sufficient emphasis on drawing, design development and studio work in the project. They all agreed that the emphasis in this project on the journal/ workbook as a means to an end rather than, as it is in the current curriculum, an end in itself, was of benefit to the students' work.

All teachers agreed that they liked the way the project taught students about contemporary artists, but not all agreed that the work of the artists studied was stimulating and interesting and well suited to the students' interests. They all indicated that their understanding of postmodern concepts, methods and processes and their



knowledge of the use of digital technology would allow them to comfortably teach this project. Generally, the teachers felt that the students' work displayed a somewhat superficial understanding of postmodern themes and techniques.

The conclusion I reached from the analysis of this data was that, in general, I was unable to address aspects of Postmodernism in enough depth within the time-frame for all of the students to be able to demonstrate understanding through their work. Holding the classes outside of regular class time and relying on the students to attend voluntarily had a large part to play in reaching this conclusion. This is supported by the fact that those students, whose bodies of work displayed the least understanding of the concepts covered, also attended fewer classes due to other commitments. In addition to this, the selection of art works for the students to study in support of the development of their work, perhaps needed to be broader allowing them more scope in relating to the works. Accessing local artists who could possibly have visited the class to discuss their work may have provided a more meaningful experience for the students. Overall, I discovered how crucial thorough discussion of contemporary works was in assisting students to engage with projects written within the context of the new post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.

In summary, what was achieved by the research conducted with the students was an indication of effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study. I discovered that the new course requires that students are given the freedom to work independently with the teacher as a facilitator and resource manager. This does not mean that teachers cease actually teaching; rather it gives them the scope to teach students how to research effectively and with integrity and to use resources available to them in the most valid and efficient ways. In addition to this, teachers need to be able to direct students to use digital technology and other new media effectively and to consider the ethical, legal and economic ramifications of their decision-making.

The fact that two of the students worked collaboratively on the one project, also confirmed that students around this age, often referred to as “Generation Y”, like to work together to solve problems, mirroring a general pattern in other aspects of their lives and in wider society. They also relish the opportunity to make personal comments and even deal with universal issues through their artwork. The freedom offered by the project allowed for exploration of an issue of relevance and importance to them. This reinforces the notion that art-making today engages with issues and ideas, and if contemporary visual artists are producing work that does this, then students, too, should be encouraged to do so.

In addition to this, I came to the conclusion that some aspects of the current modernist curriculum need to be retained in order to provide a meaningful skills and knowledge base upon which to build more conceptual decision-making abilities. Visual perception and visual literacy are still relevant to a meaningful art education, as are many formal aspects of visual arts such as the ability to represent ideas and imagery, and knowledge of colour theory. The students involved in the research project were still required to make many decisions relating to aspects of aesthetics in the creation of their bodies of work.

These achievements clearly reflect the relevance of border pedagogy methodology to the interpretation and implementation of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study. Perhaps in the future, a more radical transformation of the curriculum, which involves the complete rejection of modernist thought and pedagogy, may be required. But for now, in the context of a postmodern world, this less dramatic transformation of the visual arts curriculum is the most appropriate for Western Australian secondary schools.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **Results and conclusions**

#### **The implications of my artwork on education and its relevance in the context of this research**

Through extending my own visual arts practice in the completion of the Master of Education, I was able to enrich my personal experience and engage with contemporary issues and ideas, enabling me to teach with genuine understanding, validity and authority. I believe this is an essential component in sustaining credibility and effectiveness as an educator. The creation of a body of artwork for exhibition allowed me to experiment with a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape and to transfer these investigations to an education context.

#### **Answering the research questions**

Completing this Creative Arts Project enabled me to answer my three research questions and these answers are summarised in this section:

1. In my own practice, can I employ a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape?

In the creation of a body of artwork for exhibition I experimented with a combination of postmodern and modern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape. I discovered that by introducing postmodern strategies into my work I could extend traditional artforms, particularly painting, and at the same time, I was able to deepen the conceptual aspects of my artwork. Using digital media as a tool in the creative process, I was able to forge a new personal conception of painting and to place myself comfortably within the realms of contemporary visual arts practice.

2. How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?

Through completing this research, I discovered that Postmodern themes can be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum, providing art educators are aware of contemporary issues, engage with students in their art production and provide them with the skills to discriminate and make sense of a world where visual imagery dominates.

In teaching students about postmodern principles and encouraging them to incorporate these ideas into their work, teachers should make students aware of their ethical and legal responsibilities. To effectively teach postmodern themes and strategies, teachers should also be prepared to engage with contemporary art-making and search broadly for critical/historical references that support the students' own art-making. Whilst teachers can still refer to art work using a modernist/formalist framework, they will need to examine contemporary art works using a new mode of discourse which includes considering personal response, meaning and purpose, social, cultural and historical contexts and ethical, legal and economic issues.

Teachers need to be able to communicate to students that art works can be examined according to different orientations or interpretive frameworks – structural, cultural, historical and postmodern. Through examining the relevant literature and through completing this research I came to the conclusion that a postmodern curriculum should not necessarily discard or replace modernist theory and practices. The notion of a 'border pedagogy', one where the new is introduced without completely discarding the old, resulting in a kind of remodelling and revitalising of the curriculum, would seem to be most workable.

3. What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

As a result of completing this research, I concluded that the teaching of this new course requires a paradigm shift for teachers, parents and administrators. Whilst the course will provide for greater flexibility in terms of themes, contexts, choices of art forms and choices of artists to support the art-making, it will also rely on visual arts teachers having a broad knowledge of and access to contemporary visual arts. I discovered that effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new curriculum include introducing postmodern methods and strategies into teaching. These methods and strategies include using new media, adopting appropriation (including teaching of associated ethical and legal issues), using layering as a technique (layered imagery can be seen to mirror the complexity of modern life), using text with images, utilizing mixed media, using irony as a strategy and encouraging students to express themselves according to their own personal history and culture.

As there will no longer be a set art history syllabus to follow in the new post-compulsory course, teachers who search broadly for meaningful, relevant critical/historical content to support the units of study will be most successful in their teaching. Being prepared to address the *Art Interpretation* part of the course in new ways, for example using new analysis frameworks such as *The Frames* (Structural, Cultural, Historical, Postmodern) (Israel, 2000) are effective and valid approaches to the new curriculum.

Part of the rationale behind the introduction of this new course was that the current post-compulsory visual arts course, written in the 1980s, was outdated, with much of it no longer relevant to contemporary society, contemporary visual arts practice and today's students' conception of time and place. Visual arts teachers who are able to tap into the thinking of their students in order to maintain their interest, sufficiently engage them and prepare them for a world which is becoming increasingly reliant on visual imagery, will be teaching visual arts in the context of the new curriculum effectively and with validity.

## **Recommendations**

Over the last four years, through the introduction of postmodern working methods into my own art practice, I have been able to explore new conceptions of the function and nature of art and ways of making art that are relevant to contemporary visual arts practice. I have utilized these methods and strategies to explore and investigate aspects of the Australian suburban landscape. In turn, I have applied the discoveries made through these investigations to an educational situation in order to discover effective ways of engaging students in artistic endeavour in light of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study, which has been written in a postmodern context.

Through writing a unit from the new post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study and trialing it with a group of students, I discovered that postmodern themes can be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum. The research completed revealed some issues, however, that teachers would need to be aware of when undertaking a project within the new course.

Firstly, it is important that comprehensive and relevant critical/historical studies are included in the Art Interpretation part of the content of the new course. These studies need to support the practical art-making that takes place within these units and must be relevant, accessible and meaningful for students. Teachers need to search broadly for meaningful, relevant critical/historical content to support these units, as there will no longer be a set art history syllabus to follow. New methods of addressing this part of the course will need to be developed as traditional image analysis frameworks, alone, developed within a modernist context may no longer be adequate. Whilst there is still a place for examining art work using a modernist/formalist framework, it will become obvious that contemporary art works need to be examined using a new mode of discourse which includes considering personal response, meaning and purpose, social, cultural and historical contexts and ethical, legal and economic issues.

The second issue that arose as a result of the research was one of the degree of depth of content covered. I found that in my own practice, I was able to employ a combination of modern and postmodern artistic methods to effectively investigate the suburban landscape. However, in an education situation, dealing with students with little or no experience with these concepts provided a challenge. My knowledge has been developed over a long period of time; however, the students were suddenly introduced to a new way of working and some found it difficult to apply aspects of the learning to the creation of their own artwork. As the results of the data analysis indicated, some students' work, particularly those with lower attendance records, displayed only a superficial understanding of postmodern concepts and working methods. This indicates that, as predicted in the opening of this exegesis, the teaching of this new course will require a paradigm shift, not just for teachers, but in many cases, for students as well.

To effectively teach the new post-compulsory visual arts curriculum, art educators need to be aware of contemporary issues and need to have the capacity to engage with students in their own art production and provide them with the skills to discriminate and make sense of a world where visual imagery dominates. I believe that this will be achieved through both the content taught and the context within which it is taught within the curriculum. Through this investigation into both the content and learning contexts of the new secondary visual arts curriculum in Western Australia, I have been able to experiment with effective and valid approaches for art education in postmodern times. Efland (1990) predicted, "a postmodern curriculum would not necessarily discard or replace modernist or pre-modernist theory and practices" (p. 19); however he did indicate that art educators would need to remind students of the context within which these theories originally functioned. Through my own artwork, I was able to discover possibilities for addressing postmodern themes and using postmodern methods in an effective and valid way, whilst still recognising the value of modernist concerns such as self-expression, aesthetics and formalism.

## Conclusion

It is of the utmost importance that visual arts educators are able to engage with the new post-compulsory visual arts curriculum and to assist in preparing students who must make sense of, and find their place in, a world in which visual imagery predominates. Freedman (2003) commented:

In the postmodern world, *what* students come to know and *how* they come to know breaks traditional boundaries. Currently, students may gain more information from images than from texts. As a result, art education is an increasingly important responsibility as the boundaries between education, high culture, and entertainment blur and students increasingly learn from the visual arts (p. 15).

Secondary students in Western Australia need to engage in visual arts studies that are firmly embedded in the context of the postmodern world, reflecting their notion of culture, place and space. I believe the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study recognises concerns in contemporary art-making and also caters for our students who live in a predominantly visual world that reflects difference and pluralism. At the same time, the new course displays many characteristics of border pedagogy methodology, embracing the new whilst acknowledging what has gone before. As Burgess and Addison (in Hickmann, 2000, p. 27) comment, “students and contemporary artists have a similar field of experience; an experience in and with difference.” Responsibility will lie with visual arts educators to access this field of experience and to therefore to determine effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum.



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## APPENDIX ONE

### Information letter to school principal

Lisa Edwina Young  
Home address  
Joondanna, 6060  
Home phone number  
Email address

The Principal  
Mrs Lynne Thomson  
St Mary's Anglican Girls' School  
PO Box 105  
Karrinyup 6921

Dear Mrs Thomson

I am writing this letter to ask for your permission to conduct a study at your school as part of the research component of my Masters of Education Creative Arts Project, the topic of which follows:

*Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study.*

Through implementing a practical visual arts project in a school, and analysing and reporting on the results of this project, I am attempting to provide answers to the following questions in the completion of a Master of Education Thesis in the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University:

- How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?
- What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

I am seeking the voluntary participation of a group of around ten Year 10 visual arts students from your school. I estimate that students will be required to participate in an after-school visual arts programme for three hours per week over a period of approximately eleven weeks, throughout Term III and IV, 2004. The programme will be written within the new visual arts post-compulsory course of study, due for implementation in schools in 2007. I would like to promote the programme as an extension, for those students who are particularly interested in being involved in extra visual arts activities.

At the completion of the programme I will be collecting and analysing the artwork completed by students and gathering data for assessment from the students involved in the form of a questionnaire. I will also be collecting responses to the project from a group of secondary visual arts educators, also in the form of a questionnaire.

It is anticipated that this study will provide ideas for teaching visual arts within the new post-compulsory framework.

I will contact you early in Term III to discuss this proposal further. In the mean time, should you have any further questions regarding the nature of this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or email (number and address above). This study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to

talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Human Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
100 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170  
Email: [research.ethics@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.ethics@ecu.edu.au)

For your further information, my research supervisor's name and contact details follow:

Dr Judith Dinham  
Programme Co-ordinator  
Visual Arts in Education  
Edith Cowan University  
Email: [j.dinham@ecu.edu.au](mailto:j.dinham@ecu.edu.au)  
(On Leave July – December, 2004. Contactable via email and CSESS Receptionist Alicia Vassiley, ph. 93706200).

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Young.

## APPENDIX TWO

### Information letter to teachers

Lisa Young  
Home address  
Joondanna WA 6060  
Home phone number  
Email address

Dear

I am writing this letter to request your assistance in the completion of my research for my Master of Education Award. I have outlined the nature of the project below:

Project Title:

*Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study*

Research Questions:

- How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?
- What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

Through implementing a practical visual arts project that has been developed within the context of the new Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study in a school, and analysing and reporting on the results of this project, I am attempting to provide answers to these questions in the completion of a Master of Education Thesis in the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University.

I will obtain the voluntary participation of a group of around ten Year 10 visual arts students from St Mary's Anglican Girls' School. The students will participate in an after-school visual arts programme for three hours per week over a period of approximately eleven weeks. The programme will be promoted as an extension, for those students who are particularly interested in being involved in extra visual arts activities. The students will not necessarily be the strongest students.

At the completion of the programme, I will gather data for assessment from the students involved in the form of a questionnaire. I would also like to gather data for assessment from a group of visual arts teachers regarding their perceptions of the project and its outcomes. The purpose of this letter is to invite you to be involved. Should you agree to participate, you will be required to read the teaching programme and project brief at the outset of the project, visit the class at work on two occasions, view the resulting artwork and critically respond to all of these components in the form of an anonymous questionnaire. Questionnaires and related data analysis would be kept in the Archival Storage area of the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences at Edith Cowan University's Mount Lawley Campus. The School's receptionist has access to this area and manages the storage of such items.

It is anticipated that this study will provide ideas for teaching visual arts within the new Post-compulsory framework. Transcriptions of the results of the project and its implications for visual arts education in Western Australia will be available for all parties to view if desired. It is important that you are aware you can withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.

I will contact you early in Term IV to determine whether you wish to be involved in this project. In the mean time, should you have any further questions regarding the nature of this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or email (number and address above). This study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Human Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
100 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170  
Email: [research.ethics@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research.ethics@ecu.edu.au)

For your further information, my research supervisor's name and contact details follow:

Dr Judith Dinham  
Programme Co-ordinator  
Visual Arts in Education  
Edith Cowan University  
Phone: (08) 9370 6057  
Email: [j.dinham@ecu.edu.au](mailto:j.dinham@ecu.edu.au)  
(On Leave, July – December, 2004. Contactable via email and CSESS Receptionist Alicia Vassiley, ph. 93706200).

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Young.

## APPENDIX THREE

### Letter and informed consent form for parents

Lisa Edwina Young  
Home address  
Joondanna, 6060  
Home phone number  
Email address

Dear Parent/ Guardian

I am writing this letter to ask whether you would be willing to give your permission for your child to participate in a visual arts project, the results of which will assist in my research toward my Master of Education award in the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University. Through introducing a practical visual arts project in a school, and analysing and reporting on the results of this project, I am attempting to provide answers to the following questions:

- How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?
- What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

I am seeking the voluntary participation of a group of around ten Year 10 visual arts students. Your child would be required to participate in an after-school visual arts programme for three hours per week over a period of approximately eleven weeks, throughout Term III and IV, 2004. The programme will be written within the new Visual Arts Post-Compulsory Course of Study, due for implementation in schools in 2007. The programme will take the form of an extension project, for those students who are particularly interested in being involved in extra visual arts activities.

At the completion of the programme I would like to collect and analyse the artwork completed by the students and gather data for assessment from them in the form of a questionnaire. Your child's artwork would be returned to her at the earliest possible convenience and questionnaires and related data analysis would be kept in the Archival Storage area of the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences at Edith Cowan University's Mount Lawley Campus. The School's receptionist has access to this area and manages the storage of such items. Transcriptions of the results of the project and its implications for visual arts education in Western Australia would be available for you to view if desired.

It is anticipated that this study will provide ideas for teaching visual arts within the new post-compulsory framework.

Importantly, if you do not want your child to participate in this research project, or if you choose to withdraw her from it at any stage, she will not be disadvantaged in any way.

Should you give permission for your child to be involved in this project, please sign the informed consent document below and return it to me (address above). In the mean time, should you have any further questions regarding the nature of this study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or email (number and address above). The study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Human Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
100 Joondalup Drive

JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170  
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

For your further information, my research supervisor's name and contact details follow:

Dr Judith Dinham  
Programme Co-ordinator  
Visual Arts in Education  
Edith Cowan University  
Phone: (08) 9370 6057  
Email: j.dinham@ecu.edu.au  
(On Leave July – December, 2004. Contactable via email and CSESS Receptionist Alicia Vassiley, ph. 93706200).

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Young (B Ed., Dip T.)

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### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Project Title:** *Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study*

**Researcher:** Lisa Young

**School:** School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University.

Please sign the Informed Consent form below, providing you are satisfied that you:

- have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter, explaining the research study.
- have read and understood the information provided.
- have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- are aware that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher, researcher's supervisor or Research Ethics Officer.
- understand that your child's participation in the research project will involve:
  - her attending a series of out-of-school art lessons.
  - allowing her work to be photographed.
  - her completing a questionnaire.
- understand that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that the identity of participants will not be disclosed without your consent.
- understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and understand how the information is to be used.
- understand that you are free to withdraw your child from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty.
- freely agree to allow your child to participate in the project.



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**CONSENT FORM**

**Project Title:** *Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study*

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/ Guardian) have read and understood all aspects of the above project and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to allow my child to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw her at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided my child is not identifiable.

Participant's Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX FOUR

### Letter and informed consent form for students

Lisa Edwina Young  
Home address  
Joondanna, 6060  
Home phone number  
Email address

Dear Student

I am writing this letter to ask whether you would like to be involved in a visual arts project, which is part of my research toward my Master of Education award in the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University.

I would like a group of around ten Year 10 visual arts students to be involved. You would be required to participate in an after-school visual arts programme for three hours per week for around eleven weeks, throughout Term III and IV, 2004. The project will be written within the new Year 11 and 12 visual arts course framework, which will be being taught in schools by 2007. I am hoping that this study will provide ideas for teaching visual arts within this new Year 11 and 12 framework. The programme will be like an extension, for those of you who are particularly interested in being involved in extra visual arts activities. You do not necessarily have to be the strongest student.

At the completion of the programme I would like to collect and analyse the artwork you complete and ask you to fill out a questionnaire about the project. Your artwork will be returned to you as soon as possible and questionnaires and related data analysis will be kept securely in the Archival Storage area of the School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences at Edith Cowan University's Mount Lawley Campus. You would be welcome to view the results of the project when it is complete.

Importantly, if you do not want to be a part of this project or if you decide to withdraw from it at any time, you will not be disadvantaged in any way. Also, whether you choose to participate or not will not affect your results in Art at school.

Should you wish to be involved in this project, please sign the accompanying informed consent document and return it to me (address above). Your parent/ guardian will also need to sign a separate informed consent document giving their permission for you to be involved. In the mean time, if you have any further questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone or email (number and address above). This study has been approved by the Edith Cowan University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you or your parent/ guardian has any concerns or complaints about the research project and wish to talk to an independent person, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer  
Human Research Ethics Officer  
Edith Cowan University  
100 Joondalup Drive  
JOONDALUP WA 6027  
Phone: (08) 6304 2170  
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

For your further information, my research supervisor's name and contact details follow:

Dr Judith Dinham  
Programme Co-ordinator  
Visual Arts in Education  
Edith Cowan University  
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Email: j.dinham@ecu.edu.au  
(On Leave, July – December, 2004. Contactable via email and CSESS Receptionist Alicia Vassiley, ph. 93706200).

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Young.

---

### INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**Project Title:** *Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study*

**Researcher:** Lisa Young

**School:** School of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences, Edith Cowan University.

Please sign the Informed Consent form below, providing you are satisfied that you:

- have been provided with a copy of the Information Letter, explaining the research study.
- have read and understood the information provided.
- have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- are aware that if you have any additional questions you can contact the researcher, researcher's supervisor or Research Ethics Officer.
- understand that participation in the research project will involve:
  - attending a series of out-of-school art lessons.
  - allowing your work to be photographed.
  - completing a questionnaire.
- understand that the information provided will be kept confidential, and that your identity will not be disclosed without your consent.
- understand that the information provided will only be used for the purposes of this research project, and understand how the information is to be used.
- understand that you are free to withdraw from further participation at any time, without explanation or penalty.
- freely agree to participate in the project.

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### CONSENT FORM

**Project Title:** *Suburbia: a postmodern artistic investigation; and an examination of how postmodern approaches can be effectively adopted in the context of the new Western Australian Post-compulsory Visual Arts Course of Study*

I \_\_\_\_\_ (the participant) have read and understood all aspects of the above project and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided I am not identifiable.

Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX FIVE

### Unit outline/project planner

#### VAR1B UNIT OUTLINE

#### INVESTIGATIONS

In this unit students will focus on contexts related to *investigations*. This unit will involve students in the exploration and development of ideas through investigation of different artists, art forms, media, techniques, processes and technologies and the examination of the conventions associated with studio practice. Investigations will be made within the contexts of:

- Concepts: 'a sense of place' and myth and reality
- Personal meanings and messages

ART MAKING		
Assessment Task 1 <i>Body of Work</i>		Outcomes
Content	Learning Activities	
Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research artists and art forms from a range of times and places with an emphasis on sense of place, myth and reality and personal meanings and messages</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Investigations</i> of 'sense of place,' myth and reality and personal meanings and messages through different forms of inquiry: brainstorming, group discussion, dictionary definitions, and thesaurus research. <i>Investigate</i> words and phrases that represent the language of their world (e.g. ICT terms, teenage slang, place names, chat room language, sms language).</li> </ul>	1, 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Investigate</i> messages and meanings that are associated with students' sense of place e.g. the language of advertising, comics, and subcultures. Decode this language as a group, exploring aspects of marketing, globalisation and advertising.</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Investigations</i> of objects that define their sense of place through drawing. Large charcoal drawings on brown paper of close-up sections of objects</li> </ul>	1, 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore, experiment and examine the way contemporary and past artists investigate i.e. develop and document their thinking and working practices. Visiting artist to demonstrate their techniques.</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drawings related to experiences: 'My place, my space.' Excursion to cinema complex to draw and photograph.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquiry 'mythical self.' Students make themselves up based on the theme 'future self' and photos are taken. Draw from photos. Scan drawings into computer and manipulate using Photoshop.</li> </ul>	1, 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquiry 'mythical sense of place'. Students create a collage 'postcard' from an imaginary place e.g. a journey through cyberspace.</li> </ul>	1, 3
Visual language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use visual language in the development and transformation of ideas.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and utilize the design possibilities from inquiry activities undertaken in the creation of one resolved art piece.</li> </ul>	
Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate consideration of skills, techniques and processes in selection of art forms to complete resolved pieces. Select from painting, mixed media, and digital media (or a combination thereof).</li> </ul>	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify ideas in different art forms and recognise artists who work within styles relevant to the project.</li> </ul>	1, 3, 4
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion, commentary and evaluation of ideas.</li> </ul>	3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Display of resolved artwork in an exhibition situation.</li> </ul>	3, 4
Art forms, media & conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate discernment in the selection of media, both in inquiry and studio work.</li> </ul>	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an awareness of codes and conventions and terminology of painting, mixed media and digital technology.</li> </ul>	2, 3
Techniques and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transform and develop ideas through media manipulation</li> </ul>	1, 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trial and experiment with materials and processes and document these experiments in journal.</li> </ul>	1, 2, 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate an awareness of the way use of media can contribute to the mood and meaning of an artwork.</li> </ul>	2, 3
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use tools and methods of digital image manipulation, painting, collage and mixed media appropriately and in an <i>investigative</i> way in the creation of a body of artwork</li> </ul>	1, 2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan and manage time effectively.</li> </ul>	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use correct health and safety practices, be aware of environmental concerns and make informed and sensitive choices in relation to different religions and cultures.</li> </ul>	2, 3

<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document processes and production during art making and complete a structured reflection/ evaluation of completed project.</li> </ul>	3
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<b>ART INTERPRETATION</b>		
<b>Content</b>	<b>Learning Activities</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Visual analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a critical framework to discuss meaning and the formal organization of artworks from diverse times and places that are relevant to the themes of the project.</li> </ul>	3, 4

<b>Personal response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine artworks relevant to the themes of the project. Discuss formal and expressive qualities in the artworks and respond personally to them both verbally and in written format using appropriate art vocabulary.</li> </ul>	3, 4
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<b>Meaning &amp; purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate artworks as a reflection of society and examine the role of the artist in society whilst examining artworks.</li> </ul>	3, 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look at the purpose of art in different societies.</li> </ul>	4

<b>Social, cultural &amp; historical contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate, select and analyse artworks, both Australian and international, that highlight concepts and issues related to <i>investigations</i> of a 'sense of place,' myth and reality and personal meanings and messages in all analysis activities: visual, verbal and written.</li> </ul>	3, 4
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<b>Assessment Task 2 Case Studies: Written Presentation with Visual Analysis</b>		
<b>Social, cultural &amp; historical contexts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Select an Australian artist/ designer whose work deals with the theme 'a sense of place,' and produce a catalogue for their hypothetical exhibition.</li> </ul>	3, 4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research the artist/ designer's work, considering the technical, artistic, social and political factors that influence the artist/ designer and the production of their artworks.</li> </ul>	4

<b>Meaning &amp; purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider chosen artist/ designer's work as a reflection of society and consider their role in society.</li> </ul>	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider whether the artist/ designer's work is functional or created purely for art's sake.</li> </ul>	4

<b>Ethical, legal &amp; economic issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the nature and function of exhibitions and their role in the economic side of art making and in transmitting culture and shared beliefs.</li> </ul>	4
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine exhibition catalogues and discuss their function in promoting artists/ designers.</li> </ul>	4

<b>Visual analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalogue's main emphasis: an essay containing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catchy introductory statement</li> <li>Brief introduction of the artist (could include CV)</li> <li>Summary of previous themes</li> <li>Summary of work dealing with 'a sense of place.'</li> <li>Analysis of one piece in the 'exhibition' using image analysis framework.</li> <li>Clear pictures of at least two of the artist's works with appropriate referencing and annotation.</li> <li>References.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3, 4
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Art forms included in this project are: Drawing, painting, mixed media, collage, and digital media.

## APPENDIX SIX

### Project brief

#### PROJECT BRIEF

YEAR 11 & 12

UNIT: VAR1B "Investigations"

Produce a body of artwork that communicates aspects of the theme 'My Place, My Space.'

Body of artwork will include inquiry and idea development in a journal, 1 resolved studio piece and a critical/ historical project.

<b>OUTCOME 1</b> <i>Developing Art Ideas</i> <i>Students use creative processes to research, explore and to develop ideas towards resolving and presenting artworks.</i>	<b>OUTCOME 2</b> <i>Art Skills and Processes</i> <i>Students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of art as their work is being developed and resolved.</i>
<b>In achieving this outcome, you will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate how artists whose work deals with sense of place, myth and reality and personal meanings and messages explore, develop and transform ideas.</li> <li>Investigate sense of place, myth and reality and personal meanings and messages through different forms of inquiry.</li> <li>Investigate messages and meanings that are associated with your sense of place.</li> <li>Investigate objects that represent your sense of place through drawing.</li> <li>Examine and document the way contemporary and past artists investigate through their journals and workbooks.</li> <li>Investigate sense of place through drawing at the Innaloo Cinema Complex.</li> <li>Explore a mythical sense of place through completing a postcard/ collage activity.</li> <li>Explore the idea of 'mythical self/ future self' through photography, drawing and digital manipulation.</li> <li>Demonstrate an understanding of visual language throughout your idea development in your journal.</li> <li>Creatively develop designs in your journal for two resolved studio pieces.</li> <li>Trial and experiment with materials and processes and document these in your journal.</li> </ul>	<b>In achieving this outcome, you will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop skills and demonstrate an understanding of 3D form through completing large charcoal drawings.</li> <li>Demonstrate an understanding of form, perspective and composition through completing drawings at Innaloo Cinema Complex.</li> <li>Demonstrate and develop skills in photography, drawing and digital manipulation through completing 'mythical self/ future self' activity.</li> <li>Develop collage skills through mythical sense of place activity.</li> <li>Use the skills, processes, conventions and technologies of digital image manipulation, painting, collage and mixed media to produce a body of work, including 1 resolved studio piece.</li> <li>Use appropriate skills to trial and experiment with media and processes and to document these experiments in your journal.</li> <li>Plan and manage time effectively.</li> <li>Use correct health and safety practices, be aware of environmental concerns and make informed and sensitive choices in the creation of your body of artwork.</li> </ul>
<b>OUTCOME 3</b> <i>Critical Responses to Art</i> <i>Students engage with, respond to, reflect on and critically evaluate their own art and the art of others.</i>	<b>OUTCOME 4</b> <i>Art in Society</i> <i>Students understand the role of art in creating and reflecting culture and society.</i>
<b>In achieving this outcome, you will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In class, examine artists such as those listed below, whose work is relevant to the themes of the project. Discuss formal and expressive qualities in their artworks and respond personally to them both verbally and in written format using appropriate art vocabulary. E.g. Howard Arkley, Rosalie Gascoigne, Mariko Mori, John Young, Patricia Piccinini, Helen Britton, Judy Watson.</li> <li>Use a framework to discuss meaning and the formal organization of artworks from diverse times and places that are relevant to the themes of the project.</li> <li>Critically respond to the way contemporary and past artists investigate i.e. develop and document their thinking and working practices. Select one or more key artists to inform your work.</li> <li>Reflect on the creative thinking processes of your artwork in your journal throughout the project.</li> <li>Display your resolved artwork in an exhibition situation.</li> <li>Critically evaluate your completed artwork at the conclusion of the project in the form of a self-evaluation.</li> </ul>	<b>In achieving this outcome, you will:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine exhibition catalogues and discuss their function in promoting artists/ designers.</li> <li>Select an Australian artist/ designer whose work deals with the theme 'a sense of place,' and research their work, considering the technical, artistic, social and political factors that influence the artist/ designer and the production of their artworks.</li> <li>Produce a catalogue for their hypothetical exhibition, its main emphasis being an essay containing the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catchy introductory statement</li> <li>Brief introduction of the artist (could include CV)</li> <li>Summary of previous themes</li> <li>Summary of work dealing with 'a sense of place.'</li> <li>Analysis of one piece in the 'exhibition' using image analysis framework.</li> <li>Clear pictures of at least two of the artist's works with appropriate referencing and annotation.</li> <li>References.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## APPENDIX SEVEN

### Student questionnaire

#### **STUDENT PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**To be used to gather data in order to answer the following research questions:**

- How can postmodern themes be taught and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in a visual arts curriculum?
- What are effective and valid approaches to teaching visual arts in the context of the new post-compulsory curriculum?

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*The aim of this questionnaire is to discover your responses to the visual arts programme you have been involved in over the last ten weeks.*

**The following group of questions requires you to indicate your response using the following scale:**

**1 = strongly agree**

**2 = agree**

**3 = undecided**

**4 = disagree**

**5 = strongly disagree**

Question	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The art project enabled me to express ideas and thoughts differently from the way I have in projects in the past.						
2. The ideas I expressed in the art project required me to use new techniques and explore new methods.						
3. The art project was complex and I had difficulty understanding what to do.						
4. The content of the art project was new and exciting and it required me to think in different ways.						
5. I learnt to recognise postmodern themes and techniques in the work of artists we studied.						
6. I enjoyed using a range of varied media in the development of my body of work and my resolved piece.						
7. I could relate to the works of artists we studied more than artworks I have studied in the past.						
8. I was able to adopt postmodern techniques such as use of text, layering, collage and appropriation in the development of my body of work.						
9. Painting was my preferred medium in the creation of my resolved artwork.						
10. I used my journal/ workbook extensively to develop ideas and record the progress and processes of my artwork.						



11. I found that the choices/ freedom available to me in creating my resolved work were too broad.						
12. I enjoyed the freedom of being able to use digital technology and the Internet to develop my ideas.						
13. This project was more focussed on communicating ideas than on developing skills.						
14. I liked being able to use other artists' imagery for my own work.						
15. I enjoyed the way the art project taught me about contemporary artists.						
16. The work I completed in this unit related to my interests.						
17. I felt that I did not have the skills to express the ideas that I wanted to in my resolved artwork.						
18. I did not enjoy the process of reflecting on my work.						
19. This project taught me that images from popular culture and the art of other cultures or times can be used in new ways to make statements or communicate ideas in artworks.						
20. I enjoyed having the opportunity to exhibit my work and discuss it with my peers.						

**The next group of questions requires a written response. Answer these in as much detail as you can.**

1. Was this project different to other visual arts projects you have completed in the past? If so, describe how it was different.
2. Did the concepts covered in this project require you to use new techniques, methods and processes? If so, what new concepts, techniques, methods and processes were covered?
3. Consider the critical framework you used for analysing artworks in class (structured around the 4 Frames). Did you find this structure more appropriate to use than frameworks you have used in the past? Give reasons for your answer.

4. What part(s) of the project did you enjoy the most? Give reasons for your answer.
5. What part(s) of the project did you least enjoy? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Is there any way you think the project could have been improved?
7. What did you learn from completing this project?
8. Would you like to be involved in more projects like this in Year 11? Give reasons for your answer.
9. Overall, did you enjoy being involved in this out-of-school visual arts project? Give reasons for your answer.

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

## APPENDIX EIGHT

### Teacher questionnaire

#### TEACHER PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

**This is an anonymous questionnaire. Please ensure that you do not write your name, or any other comments that will make you identifiable, on the questionnaire. By completing the questionnaire you are consenting to take part in this research. As such you should first read the enclosed Participant Information Letter carefully as it explains fully the intention of the research project.**

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*The aim of this questionnaire is to discover your responses to the visual arts programme St Mary's students have been involved in over the last ten weeks.*

**The following group of questions requires you to indicate your response using the following scale:**

**1 = strongly agree**

**2 = agree**

**3 = undecided**

**4 = disagree**

**5 = strongly disagree**

Question	1	2	3	4	5	
1. The focus of the art project was different from any other art project I have taught or seen.						
2. The conceptual aspects of the art project introduced the students to new ways of approaching art-making.						
3. The art project was complex and the students had difficulty understanding what to do.						
4. The content of the art project was new and exciting. It was clear the project had a conceptual base that was different from that in the current curriculum.						
5. There was sufficient emphasis on drawing, design development and studio work in the project.						
6. The work of the artists studied was stimulating and interesting and well suited to the students' interests.						
7. This project was no different from a Year 11 project within the current syllabus.						
8. The students' work displayed a superficial understanding of postmodern themes and techniques.						
9. The art project was not as challenging for the students as a project designed within the context of the current curriculum.						
10. I did not like the artwork the students produced in the completion of this project.						
11. Were I teaching this project, I would not enjoy teaching about the artists featured in it.						

12. I would not feel comfortable working with digital technology in helping the students to develop their ideas.						
13. Less emphasis on the journal/ workbook in this project than is on the visual diary in projects in the current course was of benefit to the students' studio work.						
14. I liked the way students were able to use other artists' imagery for their work.						
15. I liked the way the art project taught the students about contemporary artists.						
16. The work the students completed in this project related to their interests.						
17. The students enjoyed being able to display their work in an exhibition.						
18. I have an understanding of postmodern concepts, methods and processes and would be comfortable teaching them in a project such as this.						
19. There was not enough emphasis in the project on the journal/ workbook as a personal working document in which to resolve ideas.						
20. Using other artists' works for ideas doesn't allow students to be creative.						

**The next group of questions requires a written response. Answer these in as much detail as you can.**

1. Was this project conceptually different to other visual arts projects you have taught and seen in the past? If so, describe how it was different.
2. What were the new approaches to teaching visual arts that you identified within this project? In your opinion, how effective and valid were they?
3. What new techniques, methods and processes were introduced in this project?
4. In your opinion, were postmodern themes and strategies employed effectively and with integrity in this project? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What part(s) of the project did you like the most? Give reasons for your answer.
6. What part(s) of the project did you least like? Give reasons for your answer.
7. Is there any way you think the project could have been improved?
8. What do you think the students learned from completing this project?
9. Would you like to teach a project like this in Year 11? Give reasons for your answer.
10. Overall, do you think this out-of-school visual arts project was worthwhile? Give reasons for your answer.

END OF QUESTIONNAIRE

## APPENDIX NINE

### Rubrics for teachers

#### VAR1B RUBRIC FOR STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Please give an on-balance judgement about each student's achievement in relation to the 4 outcomes. Indicate their approximate level of achievement according to the indicators.

OUTCOMES	STUDENT						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b><u>Developing Art Ideas</u></b> Students use creative processes to research, explore and to develop ideas towards resolving and presenting art works.							
<b><u>Art Skills and Processes</u></b> Students use the skills, techniques, processes, conventions and technologies of art, as their work is being developed and resolved.							
<b><u>Critical Responses to Art</u></b> Students engage with, respond to, reflect on and critically evaluate their own art and the art of others.							
<b><u>Art in Society</u></b> Students understand the role of art in creating and reflecting culture and society.							

#### ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ADOPTION OF POSTMODERN THEMES AND EMPLOYMENT OF POSTMODERN STRATEGIES IN THEIR ART WORK.

Assess the degree to which you feel each student has adopted postmodern themes and employed postmodern strategies in their body of work generally and in their resolved work specifically.

ND – Not demonstrated  
 L – Low  
 S – Satisfactory  
 H – High  
 V – Very high  
 Circle the appropriate indicator.

#### Student 1

<b><i>Body of work</i></b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>V</b>
<b><i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i></b>	<b>ND</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>V</b>

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 2

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 3

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 4

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 5

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 6

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

Student 7

<i>Body of work</i>	ND	L	S	H	V
<i>Resolved work (studio piece)</i>	ND	L	S	H	V

Low degree of pm \_\_\_\_\_ High degree of pm

APPENDIX 10  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDENT EXHIBITION

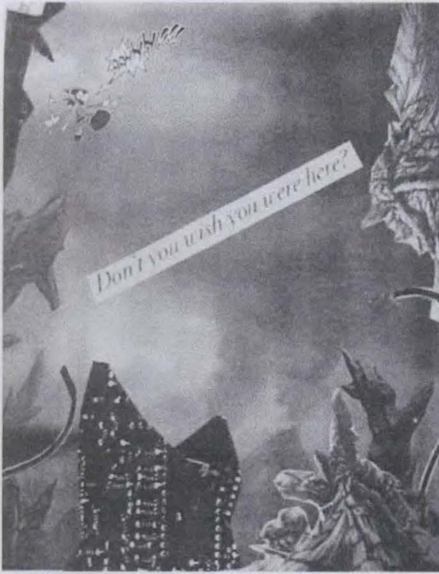


Students' artworks in exhibition, December 2004



# APPENDIX 11 PHOTOGRAPHS OF STUDENT ARTWORK

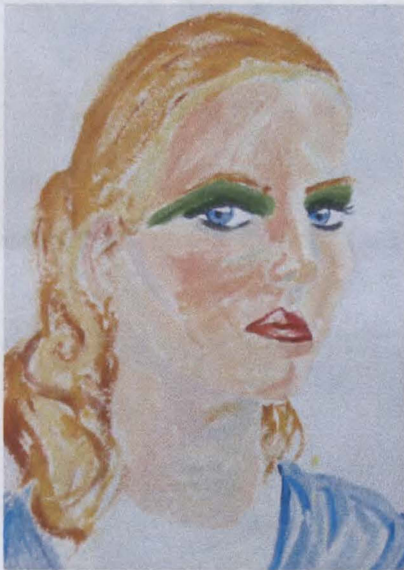
## STUDENT 1



**Work 1: Postcard from a mythical place**



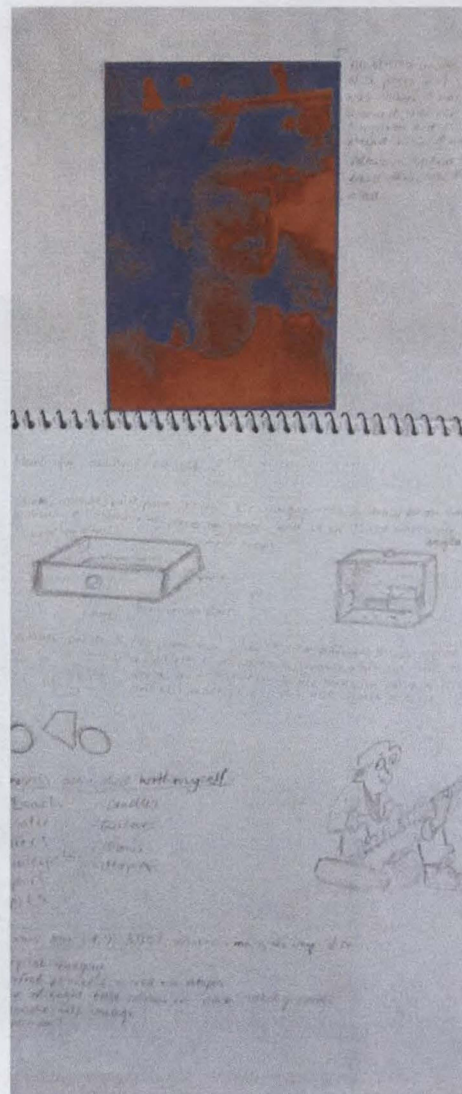
**Work 2: Personal objects that define place**



**Work 3: Self with painted face**



**Work 4: 'My Place, My Space' mixed media piece**



**Work 5: Journal pages**



**STUDENT 1 RESOLVED WORK**





## STUDENT 2



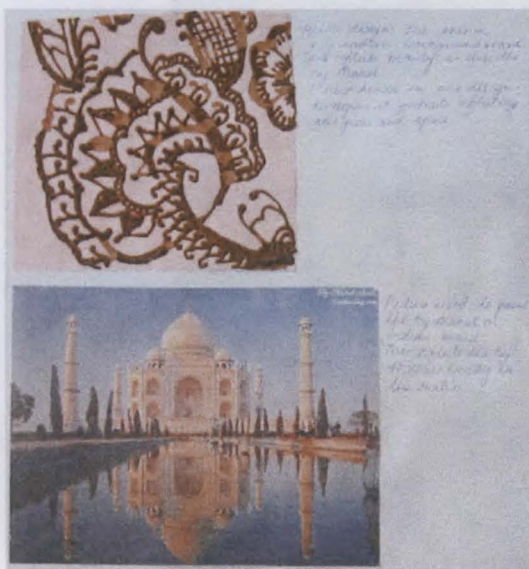
Work 1: Postcard from a mythical place



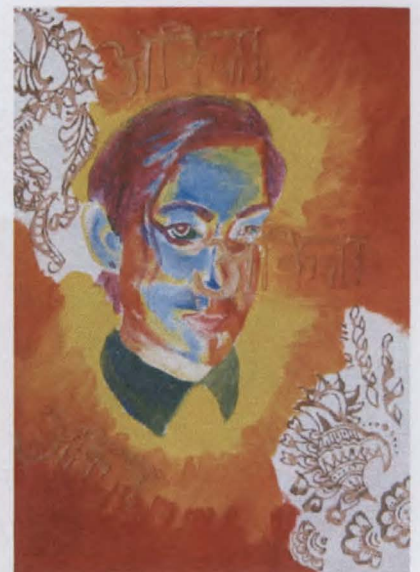
Work 3: Self with painted face



Work 2: Personal objects that define place



Work 5: Journal page



Work 4: 'My Place, My Space' mixed media piece



## STUDENT 2 (CONTINUED)



Work 6: Journal page

## STUDENT 2 RESOLVED WORK



## STUDENT 3



**Work 1: Personal objects that define place**



**Work 2: 'My Place, My Space'**  
mixed media piece



**Work 4: Journal pages**



**Work 3: 'My Place, My Space'**  
mixed media piece



### STUDENT 3 RESOLVED WORK



(Detail)

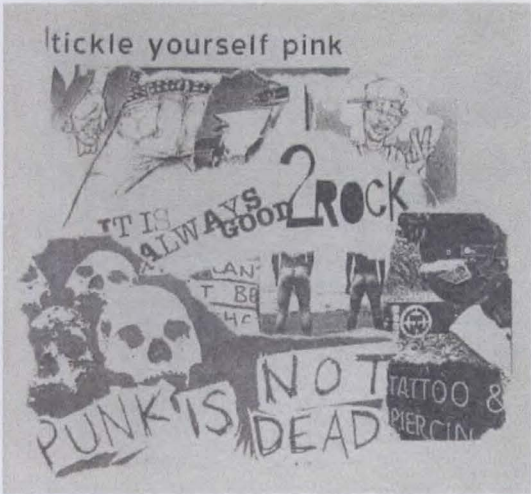


(Detail)



(Detail)

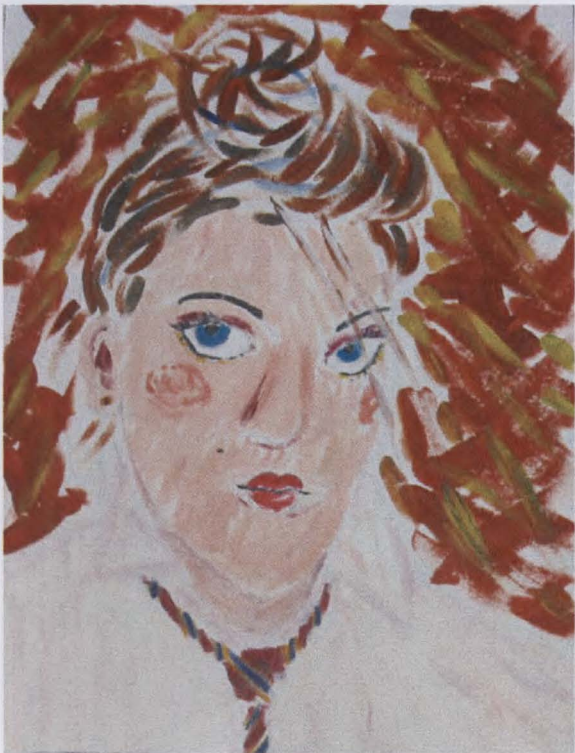
**STUDENT 4**



**Work 1: Postcard from a mythical place**



**Work 2: Personal objects that define place**



**Work 3: Self with painted face**

**STUDENT 4 RESOLVED WORK**

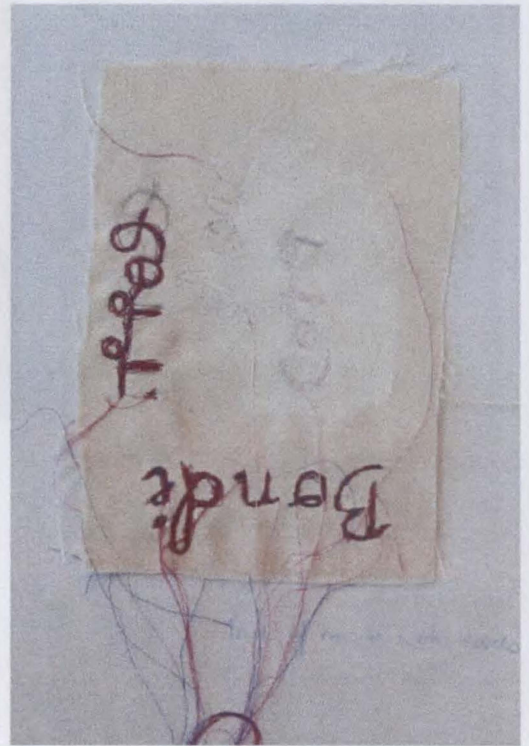




## STUDENT 5



Work 1: Postcard from a mythical place



Work 3: Journal page



Work 2: Personal objects that define place

## STUDENT 5 RESOLVED WORK





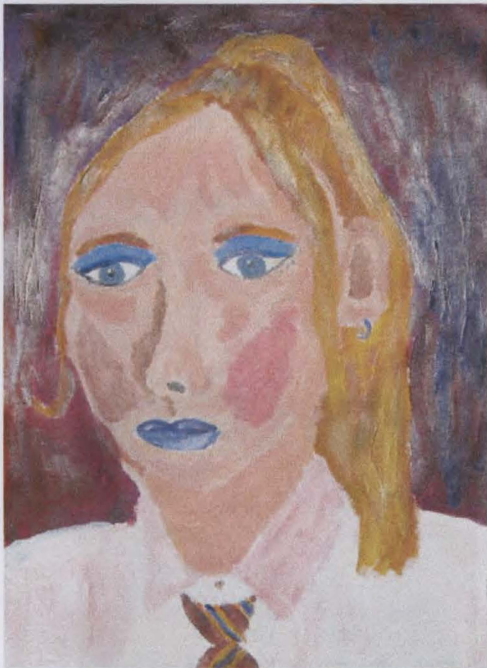
## STUDENT 6



**Work 1: Personal objects that define place**



**Work 4: Journal pages**



**Work 2: Self with painted face**



**Work 3: 'My Place, My Space' mixed media piece**

## STUDENT 6 RESOLVED WORK





## STUDENT 7

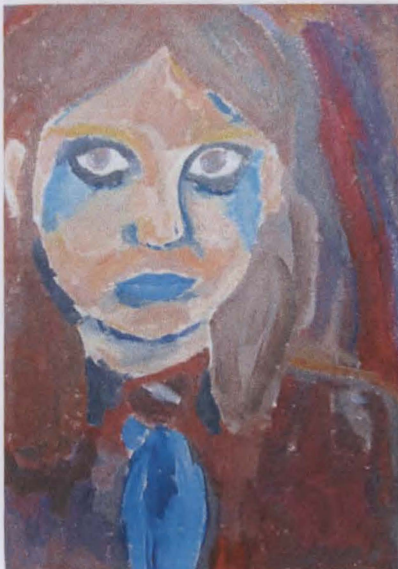
### STUDENT 7 RESOLVED WORK



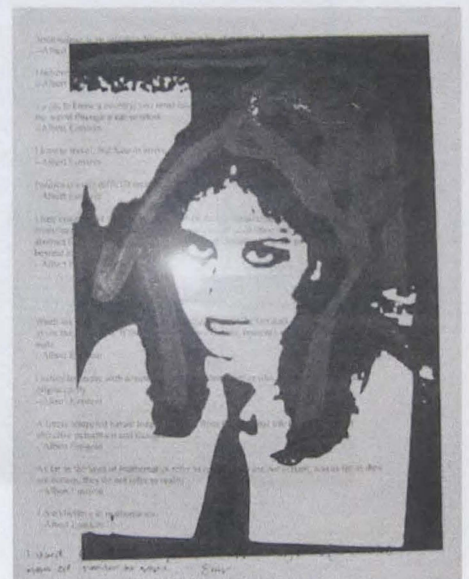
**Work 1: Personal objects that define place**



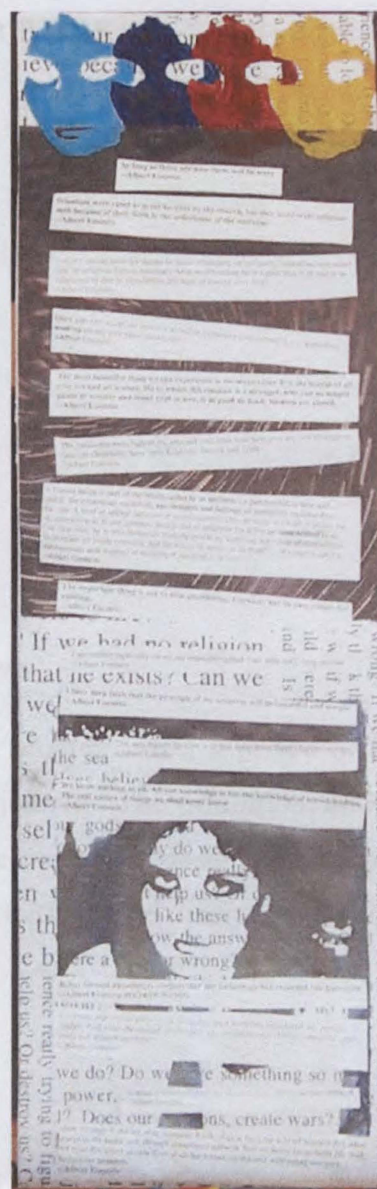
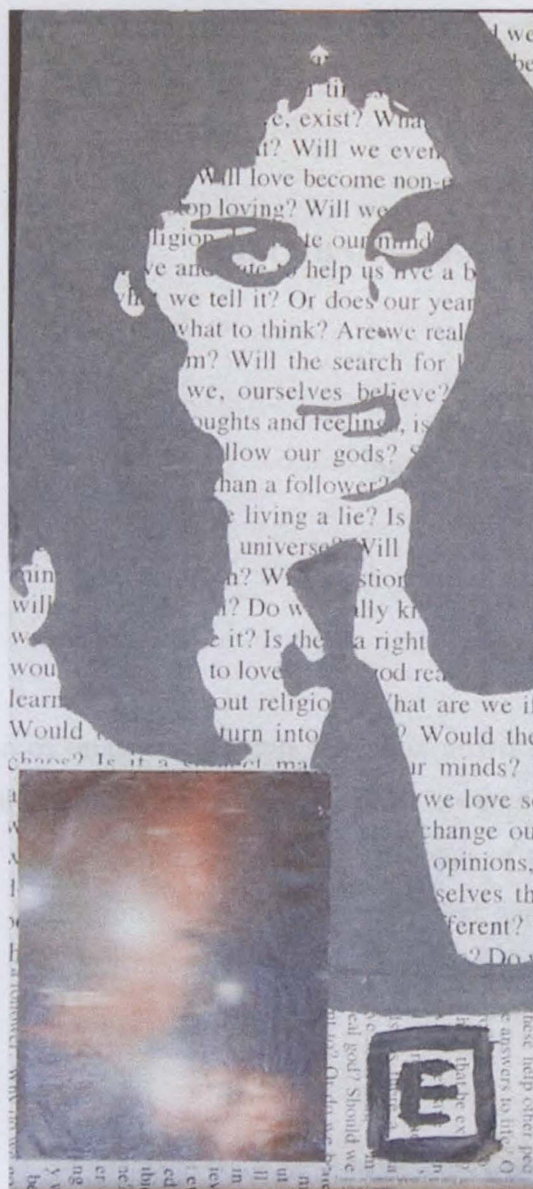
**Work 3: Journal page**



**Work 2: Self with painted face**



**Work 4: Journal page**



## **APPENDIX TWELVE**

### **EXHIBITION OF VISUAL ARTWORKS**

#### **SUB-URBAN – LISA YOUNG**

**2005**

This selection of images represents thirty-six artworks produced over a period of four years and exhibited in March 2005 at Edith Cowan University. The exhibition, entitled “Sub-urban,” was presented as partial fulfilment of the award of Master of Education (Visual Arts Education). The artworks included paintings, digital images and mixed media pieces. Images of the work in-situ are included.



**Photographs of exhibition - "Sub-urban"**  
**Edith Cowan University, Mt Lawley Campus, April, 2005.**





***Suburban Icon I Trolley, 2001***  
Acrylic and modelling compound on board  
36 cm x 36 cm.



***Suburban Icon II Hills Hoist, 2001***  
Acrylic and modelling compound on board  
36 cm x 36 cm.



***Suburban Icon III Old Gate, 2001***  
Acrylic and modelling compound on board  
36 cm x 36 cm.





***Number 149, 2002***  
 Acrylic and modelling compound on board  
 38 cm x 32 cm.



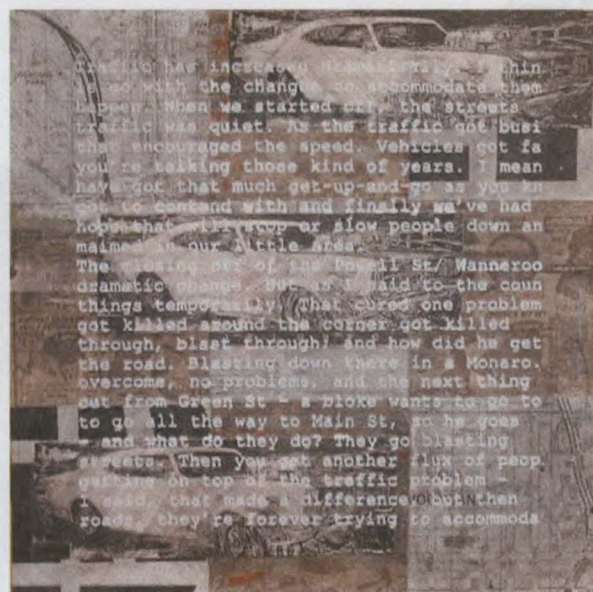
***Super (6) Heaven, 2002***  
 Acrylic and modelling compound on board  
 44 cm x 28 cm.



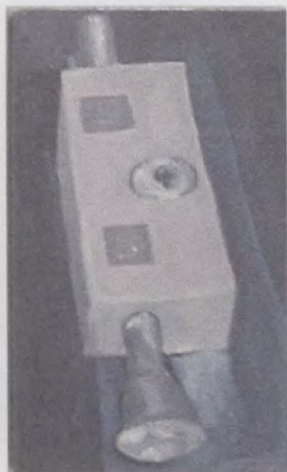




***You Can't Go Wrong in Joondanna (panel 1), 2001***  
mixed media and acrylic on board  
30 cm x 30 cm.



***You Can't Go Wrong in Joondanna (panel 2), 2001***  
mixed media and acrylic on board  
30 cm x 30 cm.



**Dead Lock, 2001**  
Acrylic on board  
15 cm x 10 cm.



**1.2.3.Enter, 2001**  
Acrylic on board  
12.75 cm x 11 cm.



**Burn Out, 2001**  
Acrylic on board  
15 cm x 10 cm.



**Armed, 2001**  
Acrylic on board  
10 cm x 10 cm.



**Slow, 2001**  
Acrylic on board  
15 cm x 10 cm.

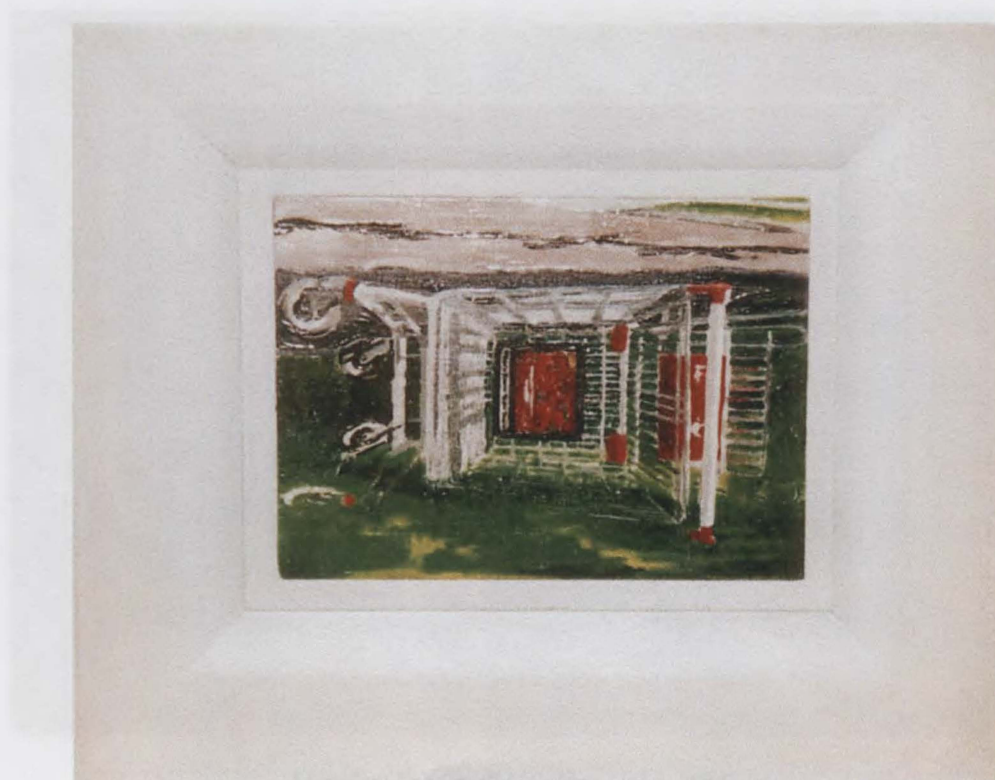


**Trolley and Graffiti, 2005**  
Screen print on cartridge paper  
12 cm x 12 cm.

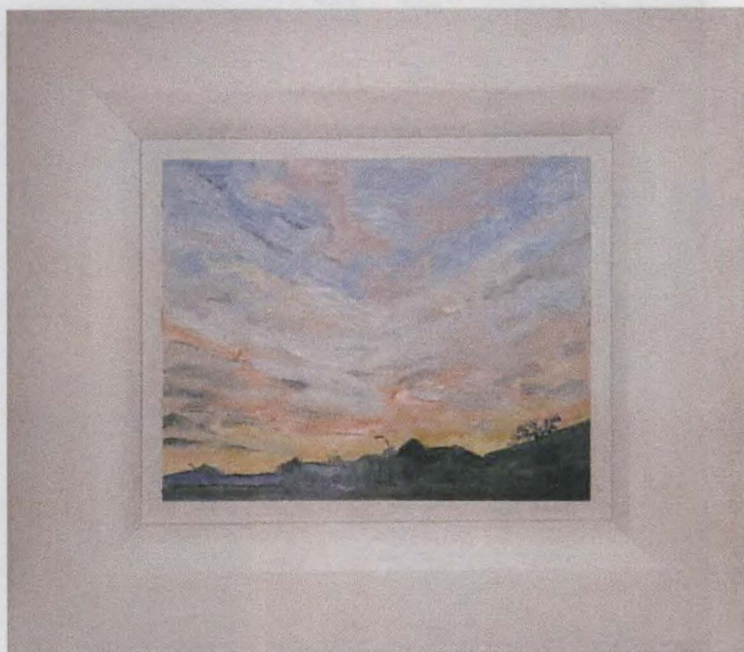




***Trolley I, 2003***  
Acrylic on board  
33 cm x 28 cm.



***Trolley II, 2003***  
Acrylic on board  
33 cm x 28 cm.



***Suburban Sunset I, 2003***

Oil on board  
36 cm x 34 cm.



***Suburban Landmark I (Golden Light), 2004***

Oil on canvas board  
51 cm x 43 cm.









***Your Own Piece of Paradise 1, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.

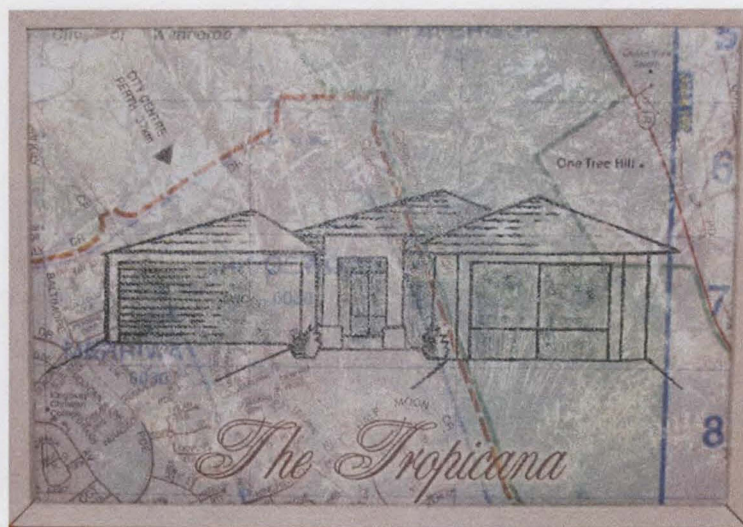


***Your Own Piece of Paradise 2, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.



***Your Own Piece of Paradise 3, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.





***Your Own Piece of Paradise 4, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.



***Your Own Piece of Paradise 5, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.



***Your Own Piece of Paradise 6, 2004***  
 Digital inkjet print and acrylic on inkjet canvas  
 24 cm x 19 cm.



***Orange Chairs and Shower Curtain, 2004***

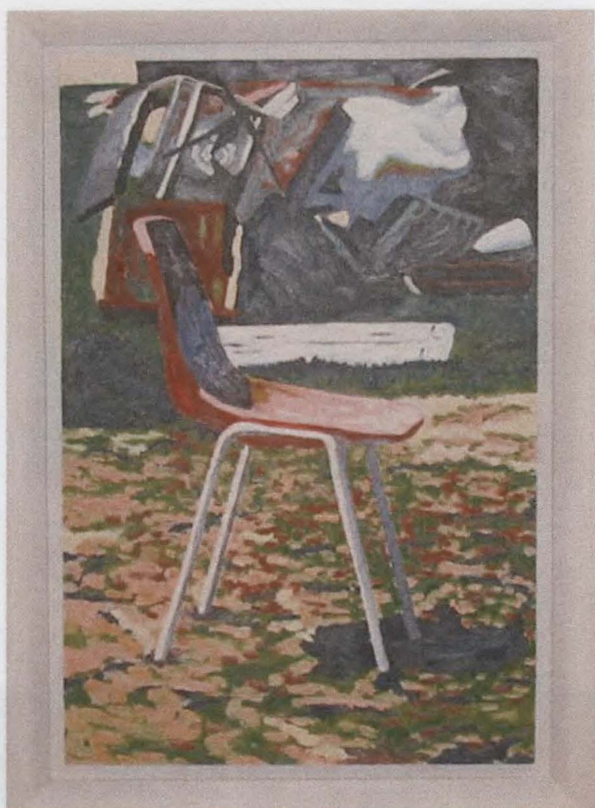
Oil on board  
60 cm x 42 cm.



***Office Swivel Chair, 2004***

Oil on board  
51 cm x 45 cm.

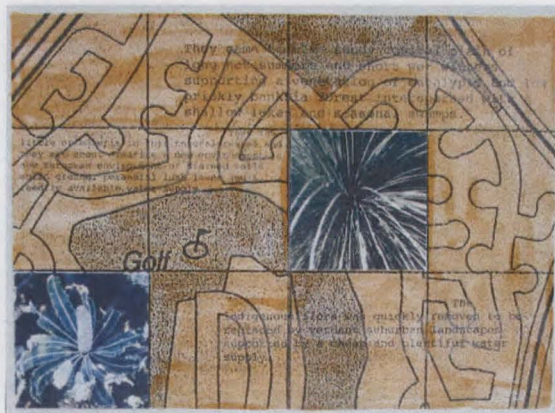




***Red Chair, 2004***  
Oil on board  
60 cm x 42 cm.



***Stacked Plastic Chairs, 2004***  
Oil on board  
51 cm x 45 cm.



***They Came (to this sandy coastal plain), 2004***  
Mixed media on paper  
42 cm x 36 cm.



***It's Where You Want to be, 2004***  
Mixed media on paper  
60 cm x 50 cm.



***Utopia Manufactured, 2004***  
mixed media on particle board  
160 cm x 30 cm.





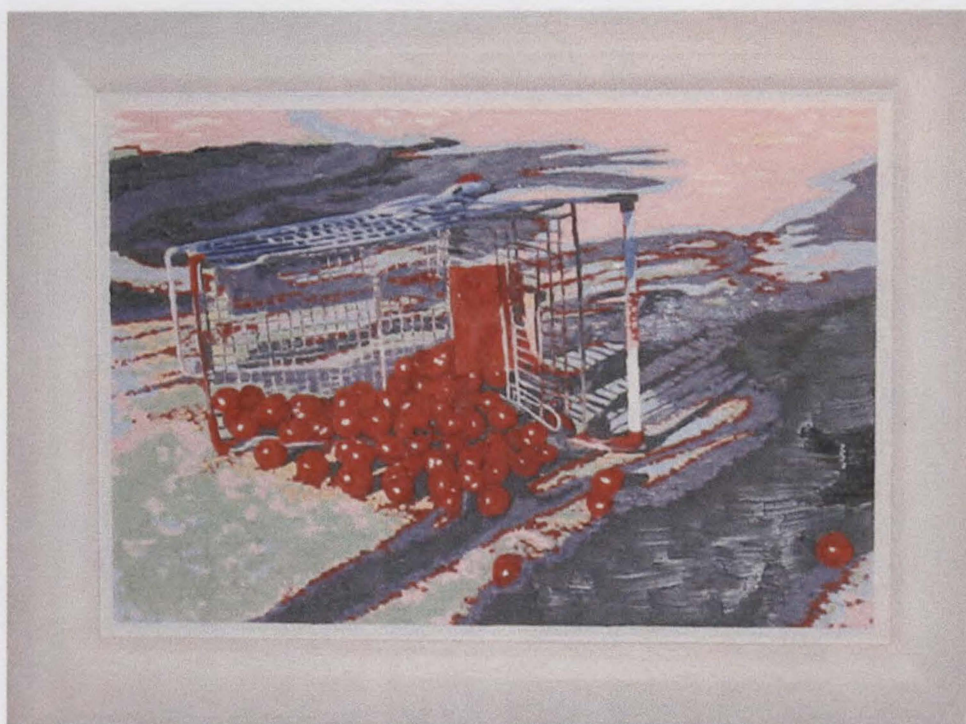
*Suburban Landmark II Water Tower, 2005*

Oil on canvas  
200 cm x 100 cm.



*Suburban Sunset II, 2005*

Oil on canvas  
90 cm x 60 cm.



*Trolley and Tomatoes I, 2005*

Oil on board  
60 cm x 42 cm.



*Trolley and Tomatoes II, 2005*

Oil on board  
60 cm x 42 cm.