

# Year 9 Visual Art

Term 4 Week 2 & 3 2021

Mrs Mason



Google Classroom code uwughqv



## Year 9 Visual Art Week Two & Three, Term Four 2021

### **QUICK WRITE:**

1. Set a timer for five minutes.

Describe the subject matter (what you can see in the artwork).  
Include what you think the artist (Subjective viewpoint) is trying to say through the signs and symbols on the porcelain pot.

Aim for at least 50 words!



2. Writing Reflection: 1) Tally the number of words written; 2) Fix something; 3) Enhance something.

### **ARTIST STUDY: Merran Esson**

**EQ: How can Merran Esson's ceramics be analysed through the Structural frame?**

**'Broken Buckets, Breaking Boundaries'**

*"This work expresses the contrast between the extremes of country and city. Influences from my rural childhood, combine with my city life to produce large objects inspired by old water tanks and buckets, often with distorted shapes, discarded in a farm gully or machinery yard; these are a reminder of the impermanence of material".*

1. Write down the artist, title, date and media of the artwork.
2. What materials and processes have been used?
3. Describe the symbols and signs used. What do they mean?
4. Describe the elements used: line, shape, colour, texture, tone etc.
5. How do these elements add to the mood or meaning of the artwork?

Draw the artwork underneath your answers.



Merran Esson, Copper Lines #4 2018

V

A

S

• **VIEW:** Read and look at the text to understand the content.

• **ANNOTATE:** Highlight and mark the text; identify the key words or ideas.

• **SUMMARISE:** Describe and outline the text in a clear and concise manner.

Merran Esson is a ceramicist who was born in 1950 in Tumbarumba, New South Wales, later moving to Sydney. Esson’s work is greatly influenced by the contrast of surroundings in which she has lived – both inland Australia and the urban environment of Sydney. Her large and small scale vessels evoke sensory responses through colour and form. The deep, changing greens, sculpted angular surfaces and pierced tactile planes suggest aged and corroded metal – the metal of water tanks exposed to the weather and the distinct colour of copper found in treasures buried beneath the sea.



**Autumn on the Monaro**  
Winner - Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize  
12 October - 3 November 2019

Autumn is a sign of change on the land, a signal that summer is ending. The colours of autumn are best seen in the European trees planted in groups throughout the Monaro area of NSW, or in the rolling hills of Tumbarumba, and all journeys in between.

In the landscape the purpose of trees is to create shade from the hot summer sun and protection from the winter winds. They are the passing images that become familiar, revealing themselves in the creative processes that inform this art. They realise an abstract simplification that triggers one's own sensations.

Artist Details

Use this scaffold to make bullet points notes on a KEY Artists from your CASE STUDY

Artists Name:		
Country/Culture:		
Key Dates:		
Movement/Period:		
Artist	Info on: Who, what, when, where, why, how? Biological information. Are they an artists, designers, craftsperson, architect, individual or group?	
Artwork	Info on: key artworks, materials and concepts.	
Audience	Info on: Who was the audience? How did the audience, art critics and historians respond to the work?	
World	Info on: How does the artwork reflect the artist world. Think about significant events, relationships, culture, belief and ideas.	

8





“

*I flew in gliders with my father, so viewing the earth below from an aerial perspective has had a lot to do with how I see the interference of man on nature. On one hand seeing a hedgerow of trees, planted to create a shade barrier for stock, also divides up the landscape in a way that fights with nature.*

**YOU GREW UP IN RURAL PARTS OF NSW – HOW influential has this aspect of your life been on your art practice?**

I always thought I would return to the land and when I discovered ceramics I imagined a studio behind a woolshed somewhere. I am a practical girl, and I watched my father and grandfather fix things as farmers do. It was not always beautiful, but over time a patina builds up and something once practical takes on its own beauty. My grandfather would fire up an old forge and hammer out plough shears and horseshoes, and I became quite fascinated in how metal changes under heat. It never occurred to me that all these experiences would lead me to where I am now.

**Why did you gravitate towards making ceramics?**

I rejected the grand landscape and became fascinated by the minutiae of rural detail, drawing it and later creating aspects of it in clay. In the 1970s I studied Ceramics at Caulfield Institute of Technology in Melbourne (now Monash University), and on completion I moved to London. Travel really opened my eyes to the breadth of contemporary ceramics and I was introduced to a much broader art world.

My studio practice now is an urban one; it includes teaching, exhibiting, writing, curating and making. There is still a yearning for a farm studio, and recent works, although rural in origin, have an industrial scale. I visited Bendigo Pottery in Victoria in the early 1970s and watched transfixed as potters were throwing on the wheel. I loved the sense of repetition and that clay could move so effortlessly through their hands. Science didn't interest me at school but I found science as related to ceramics, geology and alchemy to be very intriguing. I think we don't always choose our influences, they somehow choose us.

**You are interested in the contrast between the natural formations of the landscape and the artificial materials commonly seen dispersed across farmland. What triggered your interest in the relationship between these conflicting elements?**

I flew in gliders with my father, so viewing the earth below from an aerial perspective has had a lot to do with how I see the interference of man on nature. On one hand seeing a hedgerow of trees, planted to create a shade barrier for stock, also divides up the landscape in a way that fights with nature. Water tanks, which are a strong influence in my work, are so necessary for farm survival. An old water tank with its rusted metal and distorted shape often lies discarded in a farm gully or machinery yard, a reminder of the impermanence of material.

Farmers are great hoarders of “stuff”. A broken piece of metal might one day find a use when a repair is needed. So a store area overflows with things that just might have a function. Artists have a similar stockpile, either of bits of stuff, or of drawings and ideas, often as yet unrealised but there in storage until the right solution is found.

**Making clay requires a deep understanding of heat, pressure and time. Can you discuss your art-making process and how you control these variables in order to achieve your finished objects?**

Clay is such a willing material. My imprint on the clay surface will stay there forever. In 2011 I went to Fowlers Gap, near Broken Hill on a residency and used both rocks and tree trunks as textures to mould clay over. I returned to my Sydney studio with these texture slabs and have impressed the clay onto these to try to embed these influences into the finished work. To work with clay one does need some sort of understanding of geology and alchemy. Of course many artists such as Picasso and Miro worked in clay but they relied on ceramic artists to show them how to glaze and fire. I think patience and instinct play a great role in who succeeds with this material. In ceramics it takes time to develop an understanding of what a particular clay body will do under firing conditions.

**When you create your ceramics, do you start with an idea of the design or do you let the clay inform you as you continue?**

A little bit of both, when I start a new body of work I do drawings of things that interest me, but I usually close the book and rarely refer back. Marks from my hands and distortions during the construction process often lead the way. Making is my favourite part of all the processes.

**What are some of the difficulties that you have come up against while working with clay?**

Actually there are very few difficulties now. Time is a great teacher and I rarely lose a piece of work in construction. Materials change as

Opposite page clockwise from top left: *Bezel*, 2016, ceramics with automotive paint, 43 x 43 x 30cm, photographer Ian Hobbs; *A Bowl for St Sebastian #1*, 2015, Japanese Porcelain, 15 x 16 x 16cm; *Displaced Places*, 2008, ceramics with copper and chrome glazes, 85 x 53 x 46cm, photographer Greg Piper; *Eurowie Rockface*, 2012, ceramic with copper glaze, 20 x 34 x 30cm, photographer Greg Piper; *To hold the best there is*, 2016, ceramics with copper rust glaze, 70 x 48 x 38cm, photographer Ian Hobbs; *Ochre Bowl*, 2011, ceramics with copper and chrome glaze, 10 x 15 x 14cm, photographer Greg Piper.





“

*Developing colour is often the result of a firing that has gone wrong. I quite like these problems as it forces me to embrace change and to solve problems.*



09

10



11



12



13

clay pits get mined and new ones are opened up. The industry that supplies clay and glaze materials often doesn't inform us of these changes, so if an important ingredient changes then I won't find out about that until after a glaze firing when things don't turn out as they should. This can be very frustrating. I now have a few "rescue" glaze recipes that I can add on as an extra firing, so far these have often led to new solutions that continue to keep my work fresh.

**You apply luminous colours to your adaptations of industrial objects – what are you seeking to achieve with this effect?**

Developing colour is often the result of a firing that has gone wrong. I quite like these problems as it forces me to embrace change and to solve problems. There is a car repair business near my studio and recently I worked with them to use car paint to give brightness to the work. So if I continue with this it opens up a whole range of new metallic colours. However I'm not convinced that this is the way to go. Car paint is much more fragile as a surface. I like the unctuous surface that glaze and melt creates.

**The rust-like texture seen in your work is a recognisable feature. Did you experiment with a variety of styles in the lead-up to the works that you produce today?**

My output since 2000 is quite different from earlier work; prior to this the pieces were more about something that was under the sea, encrusted and aging due to water and time. Since then the works have become more land based. They are the containers of water, often appearing with rust glazes to show how time changes things. I think artists who work with clay and fire are always experimenting. I try to have at least one new experiment in my firings. I tend to work with only three glazes but by changing either an oxide or by layering glazes I have learnt how to manipulate materials to give me more than three results.

**What are you currently working on?**

I am currently in Spain attending the 47th International Academy of Ceramics Congress in Barcelona. I have been inundated with a sensory overload of tiles, murals, Picasso and Gaudi. I know this will take some time, probably at least a year, for new ideas and these influences to rust away in my imagination before new work bubbles to the surface. Before I left Sydney I completed seven new pieces of work for 2016 *Sculpture by the Sea*, so I am excited to install this new work in the landscape. The theme of this Congress in Spain is Ceramics in Architecture and Public Space. I think the exposure of my work on the shoreline of Bondi to Tamarama will lead me on to other things. Fired ceramics is durable in all weather, as we know from roof tiles; it requires no maintenance, so potentially my works could last outside forever. This is an exciting time for me. ■

[www.merranesson.com](http://www.merranesson.com)  
 @merran\_esson

Merran Esson is represented by Stella Downer Fine Art Gallery, Sydney  
[stelladownerfineart.com.au](http://stelladownerfineart.com.au)

- 09 *Tintaldras Lines*, 2005, ceramics with copper and chrome glaze, 67 x 45 x 48cm, photographer Greg Piper
- 10 *Coanda Lines*, 2008, ceramics with copper glazes, sizes variable, photographer Greg Piper
- 11 *Catchment Bowl*, 2015, ceramics and copper glaze, 17 x 32 x 28cm
- 12 *Catchment Bowl (detail)*, 2015, ceramics and copper glaze, 17 x 32 x 28cm
- 13 Merran Esson, photographer James Esson

Courtesy the artist and Stella Downer Fine Art, Sydney

## Artwork



- How are signs, symbols, codes or conventions used to convey meaning?
- How are materials and techniques used to represent ideas?
- Are personal ideas or experiences represented in the work?
- Are global concerns, events, social values, philosophies or political issues evident in the work? How?
- Has the meaning of the work changed over time?

## Audience



- How have art critics / historians and others (including collectors, sponsors, theorists and the public) ascribed meaning to this work? Has this changed over time?
- Who was the intended audience for the work? Has this changed over time?
- How do audiences interact with and ascribe meaning to this work?
- What ideas and experiences do you bring to an interpretation?

## Artist



- How have the artist's personal experiences and values influenced the work?
- Is the artist influenced by the practice of others, an art movement or a style? How is this evident?
- Has the artist explored materials and techniques in new ways? Are they challenging conventions?
- How does the artist and/or others represent their practice?
- Do they work individually or collaboratively?

## World



- How have either personal or community interests and ideas in the world been represented in the work?
- Are the specific cultural beliefs and conventions of a time and place represented in the work? How?
- Are advancements in science, technology or material practice evident in the work? How?
- Are world events or shared experiences represented? How?