

Make Your Mark

Visual Arts · Year 8 · Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Unit inquiry: What Mark will you leave?

Unit Arc

This four-lesson sequence uses street art and the broader tradition of mark-making across cultures as the entry point through which Year 8 students move from resistance to agency. At thirteen and fourteen, young people are actively challenging inherited structures to build their own relationship with truth, authority and meaning (Steiner, 1996). Street art meets them exactly there, and shows them how to channel that energy. Through looking, making and claiming their mark, students find a language beyond words that is unmistakably their own.

Pedagogical framework: This sequence is grounded in inquiry-based learning (Murdoch, 2015), where each lesson poses a driving question that students investigate through both critical analysis and hands-on making, following the process of creative thinking. Embodied cognition underpins the material-first approach. Students hold clay, work with thread and cut stencils through doodling principles to follow the throughline that is not quite visible. Following traces, analysing outcome, working towards a mark. Progressive skill-building across lessons deliberately builds knowledge and capability for the next, consistent with middle years pedagogical principles (Churchill et al., 2022). The unit's integrated assessment approach draws on Reggio Emilia principles of documentation and observation (Malavasi & Zoccatelli, n.d.). The teacher photographs every portfolio page, follows the student's process rather than directing it, and uses visible records of making as the primary evidence of learning. The unit's broader philosophical framework draws on James Scott's concept of everyday resistance (1985) — the idea that resistance does not have to be loud or organised; a stitch, a tag, or a doodle made in the margins is an act of agency within constraint. This is developed through Albert Camus's reading of the Sisyphus myth (1942): meaning is not found but made, and the shift from passive resistance to active expression is the shift from condemned repetition to claimed act. Together these frameworks describe the arc the unit is designed to create in students: from foot-dragging disengagement, through the entry point of mark-making, toward the moment of genuine ownership while looking at the mark that is unmistakably theirs. Artist references across the unit include Shoe (n.d.) for calligraffiti and the mark as language, and De Ruwe and Bolten (n.d.) for contemporary street intervention as positive disruption.

Classroom management: Students are seated before the teacher begins. Ground rules are established in Lesson 1 and maintained throughout. Respect for each other's making, no judgement, full engagement expected. Materials are distributed and collected by the teacher. Portfolios are stored by the teacher between lessons. The teacher circulates constantly. Presence and anticipating on students needs during making is the primary management tool.

- Lesson 1 – Recognition: Street art history, global mark-making traditions, first marks. Techniques: clay/wax, black marker, thread introduction
- Lesson 2 – Resistance: Injustice in street art, colour and neon introduced, stencil process. Techniques: black marker, thread patterns, colour, stencil cut
- Lesson 3 – Other Voices: Kaylene Whiskey, Reko Rennie, neon meets earthy, personal colour palette finalised. Techniques: black marker, sashiko stitching with neon and earthy thread, acrylic mark-making
- Lesson 4 – Arrival: All layers combined. Imagined wall question activates public space connection. Techniques: marker background, thread layer, stencil + acrylic in personal colour palette

Unit Curriculum Map

[All Victorian Curriculum 2.0 Visual Arts content descriptions for Levels 7–8 addressed across the unit. See \[f10.vcaa.vic.edu.au\]\(http://f10.vcaa.vic.edu.au\) \(Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2024; Israel, 2024\):](#)

Content Description	Code	How it is addressed in this lesson
Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to develop themes, concepts or ideas	VCAVAE033	All four lessons. Students investigate how Haring, Banksy, Basquiat, Frankey, COBRA, Niels Shoe Meulman, Whiskey and Rennie select techniques to express themes. Students consider these in their own art making across the unit. More artists will follow depending on the needs of the class.
Explore how artists use materials, techniques and processes to realise intentions	VCAVAE034	Lessons 1–3. Stencil process examined as deliberate artistic choice. Cultural identity expressed through symbol and material. Sashiko examined as cultural mark-making practice. Mark-making with paint, spray paint and black marker.
Experiment with materials, techniques and processes in a range of art forms	VCAVAV035	All four lessons. Three techniques (marker, thread, stencil/acrylic/spray paint) introduced progressively and combined in Lesson 4. Public space dimension activated through imagined wall question in Lesson 4.
Develop skills in planning, designing and documenting artistic practice	VCAVAV036	All four lessons. Portfolio documentation from first mark to resolved work. Development sketches, colour palette notes and written reflection.
Create and display artworks describing how ideas are expressed to an audience	VCAVAP037	Lesson 4. Gallery walk, imagined wall question, written reflection describing choices to an audience.

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks	VCAVAR038	All four lessons. Two questions (projection and reception) in every lesson. Third question in Lesson 3 comparing visual languages. Written reflection in Lesson 4.
Identify and connect features of artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including ATSI peoples	VCAVAR039	Lessons 1 and 3. Global arc of mark-making in Lesson 1. Kaylene Whiskey (Yankunytjatjara) and Reko Rennie (Kamilaroi) in Lesson 3 with full cultural context. Stories from Whiskey's own artist book used as primary source (Whiskey, 2025).
Cross-curriculum priority: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures	CCP	Lesson 1: Aboriginal art mark-making shown alongside street art throughout. Lesson 3: Kaylene Whiskey and Reko Rennie presented with accuracy and respect as living, contemporary artists within their cultural context.
Capability: Critical and Creative Thinking	CCT	All four lessons. Two questions require analysis and evaluation. Design development requires problem-solving. Colour palette requires reasoned aesthetic judgment. Written reflection requires critical self-evaluation.

Lesson planner design: This lesson sequence uses an original planner template designed by the teacher. The format draws on the structural conventions of the Victorian Curriculum 2.0 unit planning framework and standard middle years lesson plan components, but is not a direct adaptation of any prescribed template.

Lesson 1 – Recognition

Inquiry: What is expression beyond words?

Duration: 60 minutes | Year 8 Visual Arts | Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Techniques this lesson: Clay or wax (tactile exploration) · Black marker (first marks, doodles, patterns) · Thread introduction (running stitch as mark)

Curriculum Map – Lesson 1

Content Description	Code	How it is addressed in this lesson
Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to develop themes, concepts or ideas	VCAVAE033	Students observe how Haring, Banksy and Basquiat select techniques to express themes. Teacher story connects mark-making traditions across cultures. Students begin exploring their own approach.
Explore how artists use materials, techniques and processes to realise intentions	VCAVAE034	Investigation of how street artists use materials for public spaces, and how cultural identity is expressed through symbol and mark – connecting to the global history of mark-making told in the teacher story.
Experiment with materials, techniques and processes in a range of art forms	VCAVAV035	Students use clay/wax, black marker and thread as three different mark-making tools simultaneously. Portfolio annotation begins.
Develop skills in planning, designing and documenting artistic practice	VCAVAV036	First portfolio marks documented and photographed by teacher.

Students begin their visual journal as a record of practice.

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks	VCAVAR038	Two questions in every lesson – projection (what the artist needed to express) and reception (what it gives the viewer). Introduced here.
Identify and connect features of artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including ATSI peoples	VCAVAR039	Global arc: cave walls, capoeira, corroboree, kantha, sashiko, interbellum resistance art, COBRA, graffiti, street art, Niels Shoe Meulman, Frankey. Students compare and connect mark-making traditions across cultures and times. Aboriginal art mark-making shown alongside street art on board throughout.

Learning Intentions

- Students recognise that expression and communication exist beyond words
- Students understand the difference between street art and graffiti
- Students connect mark-making traditions across cultures to a shared human impulse
- Students begin their own mark-making vocabulary in their portfolio

Success Criteria

- I can explain at least one difference between street art and graffiti
- I can name two different cultural traditions of mark-making and explain what connects them
- I can identify what feeling I think an artist needed to express (projection)
- I can describe what the work gives me when I look at it (reception)
- I have made first marks in my portfolio using black marker, and they have been photographed and documented

Resources

- Teacher's own photographs: Amsterdam and Melbourne street art (projected)
- Melbourne Street Art book (physical, to pass around) COBRA book (physical, to pass around)
- Board: two columns projected side by side throughout – street art mark-making (Haring, Banksy, Basquiat, Melbourne) and Aboriginal art mark-making (dot patterns, line work, geometric forms, Country)
- Clay or wax | one piece per student, on desks as students arrive (probably not, depends on class)
- Black markers with proper tips | one per student
- Needles and white thread | available for early exploration
- Visual journal / portfolio book | one per student
- Teacher's camera or phone for photographing marks + system set up to present class process
- Music for flow state if needed

Mark-making running practice	The black marker doodling begins here and returns every lesson. Students are building a personal vocabulary of marks, patterns and figures. In Lesson 4 these marks become the background layer of the resolved work. Thread mark-making is introduced briefly here as a parallel tool. Same marks, different time and weight. Doodling helps to focus while listening and it's is thinking made visible (Brown, 2014).
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Colour note	No colour in Lesson 1. Black only. Tell students: 'We're working in black for now. Colour arrives next lesson, and when it does, it will build depth.'
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Vocabulary introduced this lesson

- Mark – any gesture that leaves a trace
- Figure – a shape that reads as a body or presence
- Symbol – a mark that carries meaning beyond its shape (see De verborgen taal van het symbool, Fontana, 1993 – use examples and link with myth)
- Pattern – a mark repeated with intention
- Contrast – difference that creates visual energy
- Composition – how things are arranged in the space
- Doodle – a mark made without a predetermined outcome, following what appears. The beginning of visual thinking

Lesson 1 – Lesson Plan

Phase	Time	Activity
Entry	5–8 min	<p>Students enter. Board: two columns of images projected side by side – street art mark-making and Aboriginal art mark-making.</p> <p>Music playing if appropriate. Clay/wax and black markers on desks, if that works with the class.</p> <p>Teacher at the door. Once seated: ground rules. This space works when we listen, respect each other’s making, and give things a go. No judgement. No assessment today.</p>
Movement (if needed)	2 min	<p>High energy room: teacher leads a short structured movement sequence to music. Everyone together. Teacher takes the embarrassment. Energy moves through and out.</p> <p>Settled room: skip this phase entirely.</p>
Teacher story & history	12–15 min	<p>Students pick up clay/wax. Hands busy to help listen.</p> <p>“When I was in Amsterdam I photographed street art, thinking I’d found something remarkable. But when I arrived in Melbourne I realised I hadn’t seen anything yet.”</p> <p>Show own photos: Amsterdam then Melbourne. Amsterdam does not have nearly as much or all around like Melbourne.</p> <p>“Has that ever happened to you? You saw something on a wall and it stopped you before you had words for it?” (about what touches you)</p> <p>Brief discussion.</p> <p>Then the history of mark-making: • Cave walls – 35,000 years ago. Hands pressed against stone, pigment blown around them. I was here. • Capoeira – enslaved Africans in Brazil, fighting back disguised as dance. The body as the mark. • Corroboree / Aboriginal art – Country, Dreaming, survival. 60,000 years of making. The mark carries the law. • Kantha – women in Bengal stitching their stories into old saris. Every stitch a word they</p>

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		<p>couldn't speak. • Sashiko – Japanese working-class women, constrained by a strict class hierarchy that limited what fabrics and textiles they could own, making beauty through a running stitch within those constraints. Little stabs against the system. • Artists in occupied Europe making work under censorship and political oppression – kunst als verzet, art as resistance (Museum Paleis Lange Voorhout, n.d.). • COBRA, Amsterdam 1948 – painted with the same urgency. Spontaneous marks, public surfaces, art for everyone, joyful and immediate. The same human impulse (Stokvis, 1994). • Cornbread, Philadelphia 1967 – a 12-year-old writing his name to avoid violence and impress a girl. The beginning of modern graffiti. • New York 1970s – disenfranchised youth covering subway trains overnight. The wall as the only gallery that would take them. • Blek le Rat, Paris – stencils, rats appearing overnight. The rat as the artist – both move under</p>
<p>Artist characters & two questions</p>	<p>10—12 min</p>	<p>Three artists projected one at a time:</p> <p>Keith Haring: radiant babies, barking dogs, bold outlines. “Art is for everybody.” Chalk on subway blackboards. Simple lines carrying enormous meaning.</p> <p>Banksy: stencilled children, rats, flower thrower. Anonymous. Political. Why this? They could have broken a window.</p> <p>Basquiat: crowns, crossed-out words, raw figures, text, rage and beauty. SAMO. The crown as resistance.</p> <p>Niels Shoe Meulman, Amsterdam: calligraffiti. The letter as image, the word as mark. Typography that refuses to be just text. A Dutch artist who started on the streets and never left them behind.</p> <p>For each: 1. “What feeling do you think this artist needed to express? What couldn't they say any other way?” (Projection) 2. “What feeling does this work give YOU when you look at it?” (Reception)</p> <p>Teacher holds both readings open. The gap between them is interesting, not wrong.</p> <p><i>Pedagogical note: The two-question framework (projection/reception) operationalises aesthetic inquiry as critical and creative thinking (ACARA, 2023). Holding multiple readings open reflects the open-ended assignment approach advocated by Heijnen and Bremmer (2020) – questions without single correct answers develop genuine interpretive thinking rather than performed responses.</i></p>
<p>Mark-</p>	<p>12—1</p>	<p>Portfolio books open. Black markers in hand. Board images remain</p>

making	5 min	<p>up as visual inspiration.</p> <p>“Doodle. Make marks. Lines, dots, patterns, shapes, repetition. Don’t think too much. Let the marker go where it wants. You’re not making a picture. You’re finding your marks.”</p> <p>Thread available for students who want to try: same marks with a running stitch on portfolio page or fabric scrap.</p> <p>“Same mark, made fast with a pen and slow with a needle. Different time, different weight.”</p> <p>Teacher circulates and photographs every portfolio page. Asks quietly: What keeps coming back? What mark feels like yours?</p>
Close	3–5 min	<p>“Every mark-maker we looked at – cave painters, sashiko stitchers, Basquiat, Banksy – had a vocabulary of marks that was theirs. You just started yours.</p> <p>Next lesson colour arrives. And we start cutting.”</p> <p>Exit ticket (self-assessment): Before portfolios are stored, students circle one response on a sticky note or portfolio corner: “Today I felt: Green – I found my marks / Yellow – I’m still searching / Red – I wasn’t sure where to start.” No names required. Teacher collects and uses responses to group students or plan opening prompts for Lesson 2.</p>
Clean up	5 min	Materials returned. Portfolios stored. Room reset.

Formative assessment	<p>Observe who engages with the two questions – who reads the artist, who reads themselves. Photograph every portfolio page. Note students whose marks show a clear instinct versus those still searching – this shapes support in Lesson 2. Exit ticket responses (green/yellow/red self-rating) provide anonymous self-assessment data: low-stakes, student-owned, and immediately actionable. Teacher reference for guiding students in symbol analysis and meaning-making: Fontana (1993) provides accessible background on how symbols carry meaning across cultures and times. For the theoretical basis of doodling as cognitive practice see Brown (2014).</p>
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Diverse learners	Clay/wax is intentional for restless hands. Black marker is low-barrier and immediate. Thread is an option, not a requirement, in this lesson. Early finishers: try the same mark at a different scale, or begin translating a marker pattern into thread.
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Safety	Low risk. Protect surfaces for markers. Space between desks if movement is used. Brief needle safety reminder if thread is introduced.
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Lesson 2 – Resistance

Inquiry: What do artists say when they can't stay silent?

Duration: 60 minutes | Year 8 Visual Arts | Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Techniques this lesson: Black marker (mark-making practice continues) · Thread patterns (running stitch mark-making) · Colour and neon introduced · Stencil – sketch, simplify, cut

Curriculum Map – Lesson 2

Content Description	Code	How it is addressed in this lesson
Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to develop themes, concepts or ideas	VCAVAE 033	Students observe how street artists distil a feeling into a single high-contrast image. They investigate why artists choose specific stylistic qualities – simplicity, stencil, public placement.
Explore how artists use materials, techniques and processes to realise intentions	VCAVAE 034	The stencil process is examined as a deliberate artistic choice – speed, repeatability, public impact. Students select and apply this process to their own intent.

Experiment with materials, techniques and processes in a range of art forms	VCAVAV 035	Students experiment with black marker, thread patterns and stencil cutting – three different processes in one lesson, each producing a different quality of mark.
Develop skills in planning, designing and documenting artistic practice	VCAVAV 036	Stencil development from first mark to simplified design to cut stencil is documented in portfolio. Colour palette notes recorded.
Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks	VCAVAR 038	Two questions applied to street art works with injustice themes. Students analyse how colour choices – including neon – carry emotional meaning.

Learning Intentions

- Students understand how street artists distil a feeling into a single powerful image
- Students learn the stencil process – idea, sketch, simplify, cut
- Students understand how colour – including neon – carries emotional meaning
- Students begin developing their stencil design from Lesson 1 marks
- Students continue building their mark-making vocabulary with marker and thread

Success Criteria

- I can explain how a stencil is made and why the simplification process matters
- I can describe what neon does emotionally compared to earthy or muted colour
- I can identify two or three colours that belong to my visual language and explain why

- I have begun cutting at least one stencil from my own design
- My portfolio shows mark-making development and stencil design thinking

Colour Theory – introduced this lesson, builds across Lessons 3 and 4

- Warm colours (red, orange, yellow) – energy, urgency, heat, anger, joy, visibility
- Cool colours (blue, green, purple) – calm, distance, strength, grief, power
- High contrast (black and white, dark and neon) – confrontation, clarity, cannot be ignored
- Neon – electric, loud, urgent, visible from a distance, refuses to be quiet
- Earthy tones (ochre, rust, brown, sand) – grounded, connection, time, permanence, Country
- Desaturated / muted – quiet, grief, distance, something held back
- Black – power, the mark itself, the line that defines everything

Key question	“What colour is your feeling?” – introduced this lesson, returns in Lessons 3 and 4.
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Lesson 2 – Lesson Plan

Phase	Time	Activity
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<p>Entry & provocation</p>	<p>5–8 min</p>	<p>Strong street art images projected – works with clear injustice themes, including works that use colour powerfully: Haring’s primaries, a neon mural, high-contrast Banksy. Include one or two images from Kunst als Verzet – artists in occupied Europe making work under political oppression. Resistance has always found a form.</p> <p>“Think of something in your world that feels wrong. Not just annoying – actually wrong. Unfair. Something you can’t stop thinking about.”</p> <p>Pause. Private.</p> <p>“These artists felt something like that. And they found a way to put it on a wall.”</p>
<p>Mark-making warm-up</p>	<p>5 min</p>	<p>Portfolio books open. Black marker warm-up – two minutes of free doodling continuing from Lesson 1.</p> <p>“What mark kept coming back last lesson? Start there.”</p> <p>Thread also available alongside.</p>
<p>Colour & neon</p>	<p>8–10 min</p>	<p>Teacher introduces colour through street art examples:</p> <p>“Look at Haring – primary colours, bold outlines. What does it feel like? Now look at this neon mural. Same wall, different feeling. Why?”</p> <p>Walk through the colour vocabulary above.</p> <p>Neon specifically: “Neon is the colour of urgency. Of refusing to be ignored. Spray paint comes in neon because the wall demands to be seen. You cannot walk past neon and not notice it.”</p> <p>Neon thread is also available in Lesson 3 – the stitch can be as electric as the spray can.</p> <p>“What colour is your feeling? What colour is the thing you thought of at the start of the lesson?”</p> <p>Students note colour response in portfolio – a swatch, a word, a sentence. Not assessed. Just recorded.</p>
<p>Stencil process</p>	<p>8–10 min</p>	<p>Walk through the stencil process using projected examples:</p> <p>1. Start with a feeling or idea – what do you need to say? 2. Sketch it – rough, fast, don’t overthink 3. Simplify to high contrast – what’s</p>

		<p>the essential shape? What can be cut away? 4. Cut the stencil – card or paper, craft knife, the negative space does the work 5. Apply – spray paint, acrylic, any surface</p> <p>Key idea: a stencil forces a decision. You cannot put everything in. What is the ONE thing you need to say?</p> <p>Show Banksy’s rat – from sketch to stencil. How Haring’s figures are simple enough to draw in seconds.</p> <p>Two questions for one or two projected works: 1. What feeling did this artist need to express? 2. What does it give you when you look at it?</p>
Design development	8–10 min	<p>Students return to Lesson 1 portfolio marks.</p> <p>“Take that figure or mark. Simplify it. If you had to cut it out of card with scissors – what would it look like? What stays? What goes?”</p> <p>Development sketches in portfolio. Teacher circulates and photographs.</p>
Stencil cutting	15–18 min	<p>Teacher models briefly: transfer, cutting clean edges, planning bridges.</p> <p>Students work. Teacher circulates, supports, encourages risk. First stencil doesn’t have to be perfect – it has to be a start.</p> <p>Thread available alongside – students may stitch a mark pattern on paper while waiting between cuts.</p>
Close	3–5 min	<p>“You now have a mark vocabulary, a colour instinct, and a stencil. Next lesson we bring in two Aboriginal artists who do something extraordinary with colour – and we add stitching as a third technique.”</p> <p>Exit ticket (self-assessment): Students write one sentence in their portfolio before packing up: “The ONE thing my stencil is saying is ____.” Teacher scans responses before Lesson 3. Students who cannot complete the sentence are prioritised for an opening check-in next lesson.</p>
Clean up	5 min	Stencils stored with portfolio. Cutting materials returned.

Formative assessment	<p>Can students simplify their Lesson 1 marks into a stencil design? Note who struggles – they may need a specific prompt in Lesson 3. Check portfolio colour notes – are choices becoming deliberate? Exit ticket responses (“The ONE thing my stencil is saying”) reveal conceptual clarity: students who write a feeling or idea are ready to resolve in Lesson 4; students who describe only a shape need a further question about intent before the final lesson.</p>
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Safety	<p>Craft knives: safety briefing required. Knives on the mat, cut away from the body, fingers clear of the cutting line. Scissors are a valid alternative. Cutting mats non-negotiable.</p>
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Diverse learners	<p>Students with fine motor difficulties may cut simpler shapes or use scissors. A simpler stencil with genuine thought behind it is more valuable than a complex one without. Early finishers: cut a second variation, or begin a thread pattern from their mark vocabulary.</p>
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Lesson 3 – Other Voices

Inquiry: How do different cultures leave their mark?

Duration: 60 minutes | Year 8 Visual Arts | Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Techniques this lesson: Black marker (mark-making practice continues) · Sashiko stitching with neon and earthy thread · Abstract mark-making with acrylic · Personal colour palette finalised

Curriculum Map – Lesson 3

Content Description	Code	How it is addressed in this lesson
Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to develop themes, concepts or ideas	VCAVAEO 33	Students examine how Kaylene Whiskey and Reko Rennie select materials, symbols and stylistic qualities to express cultural identity and contemporary experience. Students consider how they could apply similar thinking to their own work.
Explore how artists use materials, techniques and processes to realise intentions	VCAVAEO 34	How Whiskey uses dot painting, flat colour and comic-book structure to express Anangu identity. How Rennie uses Kamilaroi geometric pattern on figurative forms. How sashiko stitchers used a running stitch as cultural expression. Cultural identity expressed through symbol and material choice.
Experiment with materials, techniques and processes in a range of art forms	VCAVAVO 35	Students work across black marker, sashiko stitching (neon and earthy thread), and acrylic mark-making. Three distinct processes, each producing different qualities of mark.
Develop skills in planning, designing and documenting artistic practice	VCAVAVO 36	Personal colour palette is documented in portfolio with emotional reasoning. Sashiko practice documented. All mark-making photographed.
Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks	VCAVARO 38	Two questions plus a third: how does the visual language differ from street art, and why? Students analyse how cultural context shapes visual choice.
Identify and connect features of artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times, including ATSI peoples	VCAVARO 39	Kaylene Whiskey (Yankunytjatjara, contemporary, APY Lands) and Reko Rennie (Kamilaroi, Melbourne-based, emerged from graffiti tradition) are examined in cultural and historical context. Students connect their work to the broader arc of mark-making traditions introduced in Lesson 1.

Learning Intentions

- Students examine how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists use visual language to express identity, connection to Country and cultural strength
- Students understand how neon and earthy colour can coexist and what that collision carries
- Students finalise their personal colour palette with emotional logic
- Students develop sashiko stitching as a mark-making language

Success Criteria

- I can describe how Kaylene Whiskey or Reko Rennie expresses cultural identity in their work
- I can explain how their visual language differs from Banksy or Basquiat, and why
- I have finalised a colour palette for my resolved work and can explain the emotional logic behind each colour choice
- I have developed sashiko stitching using neon and/or earthy thread as a mark-making practice

Artist Context

Kaylene Whiskey – Yankunytjatjara woman, born 1976, Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Works through Iwantja Arts in Indulkana on the APY Lands, South Australia. Paints female pop culture icons – Dolly Parton, Tina Turner, Wonder Woman, Cher – into the Kungkarangkalpa Tjukurpa (Seven Sisters Story). Dot painting, flat colour, comic-book frames, text bubbles. Joy as assertion – her culture is alive, electric, entirely on its own terms. Won the Sulman Prize 2018, Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award 2019. Her 2025 book ‘Do You Believe in Love?’ features a lenticular cover.

Reko Rennie – Kamilaroi man, Melbourne-based. Emerged from the graffiti

tradition in Melbourne’s western suburbs. Uses Kamilaroi diamond-shaped geometric patterns on figurative forms – warrior figures, neon colours, high contrast. Reclaiming space, resisting stereotypes, blending urban and cultural identity. A street artist who moved into gallery practice. His work is in this city.

Cultural responsibility note: Contextualise within living culture and ongoing practice. Use images cleared for educational use – check AIATSIS, NGV or the artists’ official platforms.

Lesson 3 – Lesson Plan

Phase	Time	Activity
Entry & colour provocation	5 min	<p>Kaylene Whiskey’s work projected – vivid, joyful, immediate. Neon pink alongside ochre. Pop culture icons alongside desert landscape.</p> <p>No explanation yet. Just: “Look at this. What do you feel?”</p> <p>Brief sharing.</p>
Mark-making warm-up	5 min	<p>Black marker warm-up – two minutes of free doodling in portfolio.</p> <p>“What’s your mark today? Start there.”</p>
Artist introduction	10–12 min	<p>Teacher introduces both artists as human stories:</p> <p>Kaylene Whiskey: “She lives in a remote desert community. She grew up with Dolly Parton on the radio and her Elders’ Dreaming stories in her ears. She paints them together, on the same canvas, in the same dot language used for ceremony. In doing so she is saying: both of these things are mine. My joy is my assertion.”</p> <p>Reko Rennie: “He grew up in Melbourne’s western suburbs, tagging walls. Then he brought his Kamilaroi heritage into the work. Geometric diamond patterns, warrior figures, and neon. He’s making work on the streets of the same city you’re in right now. Do you recognise his work?”</p> <p>Three questions: 1. What feeling do you think this artist needed to express? 2. What does it give you when you look at it? 3. How is the visual language different from Banksy or Basquiat? And how is it the same? Why might that be?</p>

<p>Colour palette – neon meets earthy</p>	<p>5–7 min</p>	<p>“Kaylene Whiskey uses neon pink and electric blue alongside ochre and desert earth. That clash – neon and earthy together – is the point. Ancient and now. That is how she translates bot worlds she lives in. And that is how she created something new.”</p> <p>“Reko Rennie uses high contrast and neon on Kamilaroi geometric patterns. The pattern is thousands of years old. The colour is spray paint from a can. Both in the same work.”</p> <p>Students develop and finalise their colour palette in portfolio: “What colours belong to your work? Neon? Earthy? Both? Note your palette and the emotional logic behind it. Why these colours for your feeling?”</p> <p>This palette is used in Lesson 4.</p>
<p>Sashiko stitching</p>	<p>18–20 min</p>	<p>“Sashiko means ‘little stabs’. Working-class Japanese women, constrained by a strict class hierarchy that limited what fabrics and textiles they could own, made beauty through a simple running stitch – pattern by pattern. Little stabs against the system. The stitch itself is the mark.”</p> <p>Demonstrate the running stitch – simple, repetitive, meditative.</p> <p>Thread available: neon colours (electric pink, lime, yellow, orange) and earthy tones (ochre, rust, cream, black). Students choose based on their palette.</p> <p>“Stitch your figure, your mark, or an abstract pattern. Use the thread as you use the marker – as a mark-making tool. The same patterns, the same shapes, but slow.”</p> <p>Students stitch onto fabric squares or directly into portfolio on paper.</p> <p>Teacher circulates. Photographs. Asks: Why those colours? What is the stitch saying that the marker couldn’t?</p> <p>Black marker also available alongside.</p> <p><i>Pedagogical note: Sashiko stitching as a sustained making practice invites the kind of deep, focused engagement that Rubin (2023) describes as essential to the creative act – the repetitive, meditative quality of running stitch allows students to follow what appears rather than perform for an audience. The availability of multiple simultaneous materials across all lessons reflects the Reggio principle that the environment and its materials are themselves teachers (Malavasi & Zoccatelli, n.d.), offering multiple points of</i></p>

		<i>entry without singling individuals out.</i>
Close	3–5 min	<p>“Kaylene Whiskey. Reko Rennie. Sashiko stitchers. COBRA painters. Niels Shoe Meulman. Frankey. Cave wall painters. All of them finding a way to leave their mark.</p> <p>Next lesson is yours. You bring all of this together into one resolved work.”</p> <p>Exit ticket (self-assessment): Students complete two prompts in their portfolio: “My colour palette is ____ because ____.” and “The technique I most want to use in Lesson 4 is ____ because ____.” Teacher reads before Lesson 4 to identify students who have not yet formed a colour rationale and will need an early check-in during the making phase.</p>
Clean up	5 min	Needles and thread returned, Portfolios and fabric stored.

Key formative checkpoint	<p>Review each student’s portfolio across all three lessons before Lesson 4. Who has an emerging visual language? Who needs a specific opening prompt? Are colour choices deliberate and reasoned? build towards classroom process documentation.</p>
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Diverse learners	<p>Sashiko running stitch is accessible and repetitive. Students with fine motor difficulties may work at larger scale with larger needles and thicker thread. Students who find stitching meditative – let them stay there. That’s the point.</p>
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Lesson 4 – Arrival

Inquiry: What is your mark? What do you leave on the wall?

Duration: 60 minutes | Year 8 Visual Arts | Victorian Curriculum 2.0

Techniques this lesson: All combined – marker background · thread/stitch layer · stencil + acrylic in personal colour palette

Curriculum Map – Lesson 4

Content Description	Code	How it is addressed in this lesson
Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to develop themes, concepts or ideas	VCAVA E033	Students synthesise all artist investigations from Lessons 1–3 into their own resolved practice. The imagined wall question activates the public space dimension of street art practice.
Experiment with materials, techniques and processes in a range of art forms	VCAVA V035	Students combine black marker, thread stitching and stencil with acrylic in a single resolved work. Three techniques in dialogue. Portfolio annotation and documentation completed. Public space elaboration: students consider where their resolved work would exist as a public artwork and why – connecting to the tradition of art in public spaces explored across the unit.
Develop skills in planning, designing and documenting artistic practice	VCAVA V036	Complete portfolio journey from first mark (Lesson 1) to resolved work (Lesson 4) is the primary evidence of planning and documentation. Written reflection documents the artistic decision-making process.
Create and display artworks, describing how ideas are expressed to an audience	VCAVA P037	Gallery walk in Lesson 4 – students display their resolved works and portfolios. The imagined wall question asks students to describe how their work would be expressed to a public audience. Written reflection describes choices made.
Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks	VCAVA R038	Written reflection: students analyse their own choices – materials, marks, colour, stencil – and describe the ideas and viewpoints expressed in their own resolved work.

Learning Intentions

- Students produce one resolved work combining all techniques developed across the unit
- Students apply their personal colour palette with intention
- Students demonstrate an emerging personal visual language through the combination of mark, stitch and stencil
- Students reflect on their creative process and what making has shown them
- Students experience sharing work with an audience and consider its relationship to public space

Success Criteria

- I have made one resolved work that combines mark-making background, stitching and stencil
- I have used my chosen colour palette deliberately and can explain why
- My portfolio shows a journey from first mark in Lesson 1 to this resolved work
- I can describe at least two visual choices I made and explain the thinking behind them
- I have written a brief reflection on what making this work showed me
- I can describe where my work would exist as a public artwork and why

The resolved work – how the layers build

- Layer 1 – Background: black marker mark-making and doodle patterns from Lessons 1–3. The ground, the texture, the history of the making process visible underneath.
- Layer 2 – Thread: sashiko stitching from Lessons 2–3. Neon or earthy thread, running stitch pattern as mark. Applied on fabric, paper or into

the portfolio surface.

- Layer 3 – Stencil: the figure or shape cut in Lesson 2, applied with acrylic paint in the student’s chosen colour palette. The statement. The layers beneath give it depth.

Lesson 4 – Lesson Plan

Phase	Time	Activity
Entry & intention	5–7 min	<p>Students enter. Quiet from the start.</p> <p>“This is your lesson. Today you make one work. Not an exercise, not a response to someone else’s work. Yours.</p> <p>Before you open your portfolio – what is the mark you want to leave? What colour is it? What does it need to say?”</p> <p>Brief private pause. Then open portfolio and look back through everything from Lessons 1–3.</p>
Portfolio review	5 min	<p>Students review their full journey. Teacher circulates quietly: “What do you keep coming back to? What’s the mark, the colour, the stitch that wants to be in this work?”</p>
Making – resolved work	28–30 min	<p>Longest uninterrupted making time of the unit.</p> <p>Students build their work in layers: 1. Marker mark-making as background – their pattern vocabulary laid down first 2. Thread stitching added into or over the background 3. Stencil applied in palette colours over the layers</p> <p>Students may work in any order. The layers do not have to be strictly sequential.</p> <p>Teacher circulates. Present but not directive. Available for quiet conversation. Hands tools when stuck, inspires but does not direct (monessori, guiding the propces).</p> <p>teacher guides with use of spray paint through stencil technique.</p> <p><i>Pedagogical note: The extended uninterrupted making time in this lesson enacts what Resnick (2017) identifies as the condition most essential to creative learning – sustained engagement with a self-directed project.</i></p>

The imagined wall	3 min	<p>Before writing begins:</p> <p>“If this work were going on a wall – where? Why that wall? Who would walk past it?”</p> <p>Students note their answer in their portfolio. One sentence is enough.</p> <p>This connects their resolved work to the tradition of art in public spaces that the entire unit has been about.</p>
Written reflection	7–9 min	<p>Prompt projected:</p> <p>What visual choices did you make? marks, thread, stencil, colour, and why? If this were on a wall, where would it be and who would you want to see it? What did making this work show you?”</p> <p>Not assessed for writing quality. Assessed for evidence of thinking about practice and choices.</p>
Display & gallery walk	5–7 min	<p>Students lay resolved works and open portfolios on their desks. Brief gallery walk. students move around the room and look at each other's work. Silent or with quiet conversation.</p> <p>Peer assessment: Each student has two sticky notes. As they move through the gallery they leave one note on any work that stops them, completing the prompt: “This work made me feel ____ because ____.” Students return to their own desk and read any notes left for them. Teacher frames this before the walk: “You are an audience. Not a judge. Notice what the work does to you.” Notes go home with the work. They belong to the maker. This approach reflects the Wicked Arts principle that responses to art are always personal and always valid (Heijnen & Bremmer, 2020), positioning students as active interpreters of each other's visual language.</p> <p>Teacher closes the unit:</p> <p><i>"Kaylene Whiskey. Reko Rennie. Banksy. Basquiat. Keith Haring. Niels Shoe Meulman. Frankey. COBRA. Blek le Rat. Cornbread. Cave wall painters. Sashiko stitchers. Kantha embroiderers.</i></p> <p><i>All of them had something to say that words couldn't carry. All of them found a way to make it visible. With a stitch, a stencil, a</i></p>

		<p><i>spray can, a marker, a hand pressed against stone.</i></p> <p><i>And at some point, each of them stopped waiting. They picked up the stone and decided it was theirs to push.</i></p> <p><i>You always had a language. These four lessons were how you found it.</i></p> <p><i>Make your mark. That is what artists do."</i></p>
Clean up	5 min	Materials returned. Portfolios collected for teacher review.

Summative assessment	Portfolios collected at end of Lesson 4. Assessment focuses on: evidence of a journey across all four lessons (first mark to resolved work), range of techniques explored, colour palette applied with intention, quality of written reflection including the imagined wall response. Not assessed on technical skill alone. Assessed on genuine engagement with the inquiry and evidence of emerging personal visual language.
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Achievement standards evidence	Explore and Express Ideas personal experience and cultural context informing visual response across all four lessons. Visual Arts Practices: experimentation with three techniques documented in portfolio. Present and Perform gallery walk and imagined wall question. Respond and Interpret two questions every lesson plus written reflection.
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Safety	If spray paint is used: adequate ventilation and protective clothing required. Do not display student work publicly without explicit student permission.
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Diverse learners	The layered structure is naturally inclusive. Simple marks with clear thinking demonstrate the process as fully as complex work. The
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	reflection and imagined wall question allow all students to demonstrate thinking regardless of technical outcome. Gallery walk is low-pressure, looking only unless students choose to speak.
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