tim johnson
painting ideas
Johnson's early conceptual practice
1971–1974
Focus essay

Concepts to explore
• art as 'a part of life'
• questioning art's relevance as an object
• conceptual art as a way to escape art's role as an object
• conceptual art as radical and democratic.

Because I was travelling and away from my usual environment I started to make art without paints and canvas, using whatever materials were at hand. Overseas I saw that other people were doing that anyway. My art changed out of necessity and once that happened it was like a door opening, because then I realised all the things I could do with the concepts of art rather than with objects.¹

At the very end of the 1960s, after painting in some form or another since the age of six, Tim Johnson abandoned painting to focus on conceptual art. For Johnson, painting was no longer as important to him as it once was and, at this time, he questioned the essence and purpose of art generally. However, his different lines of inquiry were still influenced by his practice as a painter. Years later, Johnson would return to painting with a fresh view for its importance to his practice, as well as a reinvigorated interest in its role in an art world changed dramatically by the influence and popularity of conceptual art in the 1970s.

In Johnson’s Light performances 1971–72, he began to focus on light as a subject of his work. Johnson performed Light performances for the first time in his 1971 solo exhibition ‘Out of the Gallery: Installation as Conceptual Scheme’ held at the artist-run exhibition space Inhibodress in Sydney. Johnson performed his work by swinging light globes on lengths of electrical cord and smashing fluorescent tubes against the gallery floor. Such moments began to indicate a change in how art was perceived and created, not only in Australia, but internationally. Johnson’s work (as well as many others) was increasingly unconcerned with traditional media. In its place an art form emerged more directly informed by life, and which considered subtle intricacies rather than complicated historical influences. Works such as Light performances existed as a sort of antithesis of the traditional art object, questioning art’s past reliance on object-based forms through the very temporary nature of the ‘experience’. With documentary photography only able to capture brief moments of the performance, the work remains locked; it cannot be acquired conventionally by a collector or dealer, while its true content remains open to viewers who need only to think of it to ‘acquire’ it.

Johnson began to experiment with the notion of conceptual art as a means to question the traditions of the art object. For conceptual artists, their practice was not about devaluing the meaning of art, but rather exploring and expanding the idea of art. In conceptual art, it was not the art object that was of importance, but the context through which it was viewed. Art was understood as a way of looking, anything could be an art work should it be thought of, or viewed as, an art work. Johnson created interventions in everyday places and social situations using strange or unexpected objects. In ‘Installation no.258: Face installation’, which forms part of Out of the gallery: Installation as conceptual scheme, a small piece of white tape is stuck over the face and eyelid of a sleeping woman and then photographed as documentation. Johnson states:

That was my conceptual scheme — the idea that you can apply an artist’s way of looking at things or you can be the artist yourself . . . so in a hotel room I’d look around and ask myself, I’m an artist, what can I do to make a real artwork out of this situation? I might turn the TV on, I might put some tape over part of it and then take a photo of it.²

Photographs documenting Johnson’s interventions were exhibited accompanied by specific details, such as the title of the installation, its location, description, materials, and date.
of its occurrence listed underneath. Through these details, Johnson lays emphasis on the concept behind the photograph — the event itself, rather than on the art object.

Questions for discussion

- Define conceptual art.
- What everyday sources do you draw upon when you develop ideas for art works?
- How did Johnson’s interest and experimentation in conceptual art reinvigorate his interest in painting? How did Johnson’s explorations help to expand his ideas about art and how it can function?
- How did Johnson’s art practice question what art can be? Does art have to be an object?
- Documentation is crucial for recording conceptual ideas. What types of documentation do you use in your own work?

Classroom activities

- In the library, research other conceptual artists (e.g. Marcel Duchamp [French, 1887–1968], Joseph Kosuth [United States, b. 1945], and Christo [Bulgaria–United States, b. 1935]).
  How is their work both similar and/or different to that of Tim Johnson’s?
- Consider how your dreams, thoughts, actions and everyday life influence your art making. Look through your journals and think about how these ideas are reflected in your work.
- Look through your journal and past art works. Think about the questions your art investigates and how you have explored these questions in your work. How might this process of ‘questioning’ generate conceptual art?
- Research some new media artists in the library. Start by looking at artists such as Bill Viola (United States, b. 1951), Nam June Paik (South Korea–United States, 1932–2006), Doug Aitken (United States, b. 1968); and Australian artists Craig Walsh (Australia, b. 1966) and Natalie Jeremijenko (Australia, b. 1966). How do you think new media art is influenced by conceptual art? Do you think new media works, such as video and sound art, can be considered objects?


Artist biography

Tim Johnson’s highly individual contributions to the practice of making art and to debates about art in Australia, as well as his sustained engagement with diverse communities of Australian society, have constituted one of the most passionate, provocative and productive contributions to our cultural life by an Australian artist in recent decades.¹


Family

- Tim Johnson was born in Sydney in 1947.
- Johnson’s father was an architect and the first Chancellor of the University of Technology, Sydney.
- His father collected widely: Asian and African textiles, pottery, statues and masks; paintings by Australian artists, such as Roland Wakelin and Fred Williams; and Aboriginal bark paintings.
- Johnson was taken to galleries and to jazz, rock and theatre performances from an early age.

University and study

- From 1966 to 1970, Johnson completed a Bachelor of Arts, taking courses in English, drama and political science, at the University of New South Wales.
- He rented a room in Surry Hills in Sydney as a studio.
- He painted obsessively and interviewed artists whose work interested him, including Janet Dawson and Garry Shead.
- In the late 1960s, Johnson worked through the limits of painting as a medium, incorporating new materials and sculptural elements.

Exhibitions and Inhibodress

- In 1969, Johnson held a solo exhibition of shaped canvas works at the University of New South Wales.
- In 1970, in his first solo show, ‘Off the Wall’, at Sydney’s Gallery A, Johnson showed a series of ‘Type A’ light sculptures made from clear, curved perspex, metal and coloured light bulbs.
- In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Johnson participated in a number of solo and group exhibitions at Blaxland Gallery, Central Street, Gallery A (Sydney), Pinacotheca and Gallery A (Melbourne).
Conceptual works and travel

• In 1970, Johnson travelled for the first time to Europe seeing work by American artist Donald Judd, and German artists Gerhard Richter and Joseph Beuys.
• He made contact with artists whose work he wanted to show at Inhibodress.
• He moved away from painting and created conceptual and performance works — rather than using paint and canvas, he experimented with whatever materials were at hand.
• Conceptual artists (often called idea artists or, in Australia, post-object artists) concentrated on ideas rather than traditional subjects, materials and locations; their practice included photography, performance, sound recordings and text.
• Johnson worked with everyday places, objects and social situations.

Performance

• Johnson’s performances of the early 1970s challenged social boundaries, often creating scandal; in one work, participants were asked to rearrange their own or others’ clothes, and in another the artist himself made alterations to participants’ clothing.
• Johnson was taken with the anarchic style of punk music — he documented the local punk scene with audio tapes, photographs and super-8 film.
• He performed with friends in bands in the context of performance art.

Collaborations

• From the late 1970s, Johnson supported the entry of Aboriginal artists into the wider arena of contemporary Australian art through publishing and exhibiting their work.
• Leading painters from Papunya, and other key Aboriginal painting centres, were profoundly influential for Johnson’s work.
• He made collaborative works with Aboriginal painters, in the spirit of respectful cross-cultural dialogue.
• In the early 1980s, Johnson began to research Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan Buddhist art.
• He was influenced by both Aboriginal and Buddhist approaches to narrative space and collaborated with a number of artists, such as Tibetan painter Karma Phuntsok and Vietnamese artist My Le Thi in the 1990s and 2000s.
• In 1999, he participated in ‘Beyond the Future: The Third Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art’ at the Queensland Art Gallery.

Questions for discussion

• Discuss the ways Johnson’s interests and personal experiences may have influenced his artistic direction. Which works show evidence of this?

Classroom activities

• Read Tim Johnson’s biography in the exhibition catalogue. Choose two works by the artist and see if you can identify which stage of his career the works represent.
• Throughout his career Johnson experimented with a range of styles and mediums. With reference to at least two art works, identify some of the techniques Johnson has used (you might consider, scale, materials, colour, shape and space).
• Johnson researched Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan Buddhist art. Do some of your own research into Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan Buddhist art. Which elements specific to these styles can you see reflected in Johnson’s work? Choose one element to incorporate into an art work of your own.

The ‘do-it-yourself’ philosophy of punk 1979–83

Punk seemed to offer all the energy, challenge and attitude that art had lost... it is shrewdly intelligent, surprisingly articulate, witty, threatening, curiously repellent yet magnetic, radical, inventive and has proved innovative in the spheres of music, philosophy, the visual arts, theatre, film, typography and fashion.¹

Introduction

• Tim Johnson’s punk works marked a significant transition in the artist’s practice. They allowed him to reconnect with painting, without losing sight of his early conceptual practices, and to avoid the more simplistic rhetoric of the so-called return to figuration.

• The punk works condensed into prints and paintings Johnson’s inter-media practices of the early 1970s — ‘music, language, sound, publication, film, video and performance’ — the goal of which he declared as ‘disturbing the edges of what we call art’.²

What did ‘punk’ mean when Johnson began these works?

• The Australian music press began to use the term ‘punk’ to refer to raw and authentic rock’n’roll, or music from the streets.³

• Punk’s methods were as attractive as the music itself. Bands ‘operated as artists working in the medium of rock and roll, setting their own standards and acutely aware of the context in which their work was presented’.⁴

• These punk values were values that Johnson had previously declared in the first half of the 1970s, especially in activities at Inhibodress and the Contemporary Art Society.⁵

Works

• Johnson depicted Australian, English and American punk musicians and fans, using his own photographs or pictures from the music press.

• He admired Sydney band Radio Birdman — ‘by taking their destiny in their own hands and working outside the system’.⁶

• The largest punk paintings, such as New music 1979, are structured by grids, with each cell devoted to a band or portrait.

• The works ask to be read like the pages of a book (left to right, top to bottom) and imply a symbolic or narrative connection.

Conclusion

• Punk tactics of the late 1970s — confronting performance, structural independence and inter-media practices — were pursued by Johnson in the first half of the decade.

• By depicting an active, independent cultural community, Johnson established a pattern that would continue in his paintings of the next decades.
Questions for discussion
• What is meant by the ‘do-it-yourself’ philosophy of punk? How does this knowledge add to your understanding of Johnson’s punk works?
• What aspects of the punk music movement appealed to Johnson? Where can you see these elements in his works?
• What effects did Johnson’s grids, silkscreens and compressed spaces invoke?
• What is your personal interpretation of New music 1979 or Four bands 1980? In your discussion consider meanings and ideas associated with:
  • the visual qualities of art elements, such as colour and shape
  • the representation of subject matter and content
  • the presentation of the art work (i.e. scale and format)
• How did the crossovers between music, language, sound, publication, film, video and performance in the 1970s ‘disturb the edges of what we call art’?
Classroom activities

• Compare your interpretation and analysis of Johnson’s punk works with someone else (e.g. a classmate, didactic or label in the Gallery or the exhibition catalogue). Do you share the same ideas?
• Do fans of punk still exist? Do an internet search to see if there are punk groups in Australia. How do these groups make punk relevant to current times?
• Think about other music movements which have influenced artists. Research some of the music trends of the last 100 years (e.g. rock’n’roll, jazz, hip-hop). Did any of these influence the work of visual artists? Can you find some examples?
• Identify some of the political and social issues covered in Australian newspapers 1979–83. Did Johnson comment on any of these issues in his punk works from the period?

5. Tim Johnson, in Cripps, p.2.

These notes are based on Chris McAuliffe, “‘Disturbing the edges of what we call art’: Tim Johnson and punk”, in Tim Johnson: Painting Ideas [exhibition catalogue], Art Gallery of New South Wales and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2009, pp.20–7.
Johnson's journey of personal map making in the 1980s and 1990s

Concepts to explore

- ‘visual mapping’
- iconography and symbolism
- Pure Land Buddhism.

...it doesn’t show you something and tell you what is — it shows you bits of things, fragments of experiences, images that are in the process of forming or breaking apart, and images that are related to other images. All of this is like throwing out a net or holding up a mirror to find something of yourself.¹ (Tim Johnson)

...one has to work in a symbolic space, perhaps like the Buddhist Pure Land, or the mandala itself, to create an illusory reality in which the space that the artwork occupies is revealed to the audience that can read enough signs to begin to unravel its meanings.² (Tim Johnson)

Introduction

- Johnson’s ‘visual language’ (as the artist calls it) offers an insight into his own experiences and understanding of the world. These experiences are embodied within what is often a complex layered imagery, which become symbols and often lead the viewer through the works and marking out a path through the artist’s world.
- Over time Johnson’s work has developed and changed through cultural and artistic influences. In the 1980s and 1990s, he began to rethink the way he approached the idea of ‘landscapes’ through his interest in the way many Indigenous artists often showed many sites on one picture plane.
- The symbolism and imagery used is drawn from a wide array of cultural sources and references — from Aboriginal art, Chinese cave painting, Buddhist art from Japan and Tibet, Native American art and Christian iconography.

Works

Reading meaning in Visualisation 1992 and From one cloth 1987, two major works from the late 1980s and early 1990s:

The ‘shimmering field of dots’ was ‘initially derived from Aboriginal Central Desert painting. While the dotting technique is important formally and conceptually to Johnson, Aboriginal art also informed his practice through his perception of its resonances with the Western use of language, and how it could also be a form of ‘visual mapping’. Johnson says: ‘I was interested in the way Papunya painting and most Aboriginal art used imagery in the same way we use language — to tell a story, taking an overview, like map’.³

• While there has been a degree of stylistic consistency in Johnson’s painting over the last two decades, there have been shifts in content, responses to circumstances and events, and more personal concerns which have influenced his practice.
• The title Visualisation suggests the power of visualising as a way of making something present, to effect change or to influence the outcome of events — a form of agency found in meditation practices. Johnson has a more personal account of the conception of this work:

Visualisation refers to something Brett Whiteley told me and demonstrated for me in front of a canvas during one of my visits to his studio. This was that he visualised what he was going to paint on the canvas first. It seemed like a unique ability — to be able to see what you wanted to paint just before you painted it. It was like the Buddhist practice of visualising the Buddha, before and during meditation — something that is fundamental to Buddhist practice...⁴
In the centre of Visualisation 1992 is an image of Vairocana Buddha, one of the five transcendent Buddhas, known in the West as Dhyani or meditation Buddhas. The transcendent Buddhas represent five aspects of the Gautama Buddha in Mahayana, Vajrayana and Tantric Buddhism. Vairocana is both illuminator and radiance and is considered both the centre and sum of the transcendent Buddhas. Vairocana ‘transforms delusion and ignorance into a mirror-like wisdom which allows things to be seen in their ultimately perfect form’. From this central figure an array of other figures, narrative moments, temples, monks, trees and pathways (which recall the Dunhuang Buddhist cave paintings Johnson explored in the early 1980s) move out towards the edge of the canvas, potentially inhabiting our space and involving us in this visualisation.5

In paintings such as From one cloth 1987, a plethora of events, moments and places seems to occur simultaneously. Though he usually maintains a figurative presence, the use of a symbolic iconography in Aboriginal art has shaped Johnson’s use of imagery in this painting. The areas of abstract colour in the work are interspersed with human and spiritual beings, natural and architectural imagery, and symbolic motifs. The figures, events and their locations are scaled for their importance for Johnson, rather than to any logical size from their relation to each other, possible placement in space, or a sense of narrative sequence.

Conclusion

The complex map of referential images in Johnson’s work from the 1980s and 1990s requires openness on the viewer’s part in both following Johnson’s path through these paintings and simultaneously charting one’s own narrative through understanding the symbolic content of the artist’s work.

Questions for discussion

• What led Johnson to explore the symbolism and imagery of other cultures and artistic styles in his work?
• Compare Johnson’s work from the 1980s and 1990s with his earlier work. How has his work developed over time?
• What is the difference between an environmental landscape and an inner landscape? How could an art work be both?
Classroom activities

• In the library or online, research Pure Land Buddhism. Closely examine works such as From one cloth or Visualisation and see if these beliefs are reflected in these works.
• Try visually charting your own narrative by creating a key of symbols or pictures. Start by using written words to record a story or part of your life story. Convert the different parts of your story into symbols or pictures. Next, record the different ways you might have felt during these parts of your life, and make up another set of symbols. From the key you have created, create a visual map of your own personal narrative.

For further research, you might like to look into the origins and meaning of ‘cartography’

4. Email to Wayne Tunnicliffe, 8 December 2008.

The influence of Johnson’s early conceptual practice on his collaborations

The paintings that Johnson made from these photographs are not slavish renditions. They have a spontaneous quality that saves them from the cool detachment that characterises photo-realism. Areas of colour are quickly blocked in, figures and shadow laid down with the barest of detail, and faces are worked on only until, as Johnson puts it, the person seemed to be there. Hence a sometimes ghostly appearance remarked by an early reviewer, Terence Maloon.3

Overview

Johnson adapted from Papunya painting the device of having multiple sites on the picture plane, viewed as if from an aerial perspective, each site being marked by images of events that had occurred there.4

• In Papunya II, 53 artists and family members stand by 37 paintings distributed up the picture plane. A few Papunya artists are shown working cross-legged on canvases that recede into space, but the display of completed canvases is what is important. The overall pattern of the ‘paintings within the painting’ gives this work its enduring interest, as does its take on multifocal perspective. Some of these ideas are derived from Western Desert painting. Combining different scenes within an overall narrative is characteristic of Papunya paintings.

The various ideas that Johnson explored as he adapted from Papunya painting:

• collaboration

• appropriation

• collecting

• sharing ‘sacred stories’ versus ‘designs’ — in Central Australian Aboriginal art.

Tim Johnson on learning from the Papunya artists:
For me, sitting down next to them on the ground and watching them paint was one of the most important experiences of my life as an artist. I learnt a new way of painting.1

Tim Johnson on collaborating with Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri:
It is really Clifford’s painting — his story — but he gave me the picture with just the design on it, and gave me permission to finish it in any way I thought suitable. . . . The design was so good that I just decided to surround it with gold dots. Gold is a healing colour . . . It was a ‘minimal’ approach to a collaboration.2

Introduction

• Johnson’s practice has involved taking marginal areas of belief and experience — punk rock, the painting of remote Aboriginal communities, the art and practice of Buddhist religion — and somehow making a visual language from them. His key ideas of communality and collaboration are grounded in a foundational belief in crossing cultures.

• Johnson’s early interactions with Aboriginal artists from Central Australia involved observing the artists paint, helping with tasks like photographic documentation of their work, and also buying pictures.

• In the 1980s, Johnson’s collaborative work consolidated a decade’s research into the possibilities of conceptual art, painting and landscape.

Works

• Tim Johnson’s first visit to Alice Springs was in June 1980. His art advisor Andrew Crocker introduced him to several artists. Through Crocker, Johnson and his wife arranged a visit to Papunya, a day’s travel with four-wheel drive vehicles north-west of Alice Springs.

• In Papunya, Johnson found a treasury of snapshot photographs pinned to the noticeboard in the art advisor’s house. These snapshots showed men in the act of painting or proudly displaying their paintings, held in front of their bodies or propped against humpies. Taking his cue from the noticeboard photographs (some of which he rephotographed and incorporated into his art), Johnson began taking informal colour photographs of artists, their works and their family members.

Concepts to explore

• collaboration

• appropriation

• collecting

• sharing ‘sacred stories’ versus ‘designs’ — in Central Australian Aboriginal art.

Tim Johnson on learning from the Papunya artists:
For me, sitting down next to them on the ground and watching them paint was one of the most important experiences of my life as an artist. I learnt a new way of painting.1

Tim Johnson on collaborating with Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri:
It is really Clifford’s painting — his story — but he gave me the picture with just the design on it, and gave me permission to finish it in any way I thought suitable. . . . The design was so good that I just decided to surround it with gold dots. Gold is a healing colour . . . It was a ‘minimal’ approach to a collaboration.2

Introduction

• Johnson’s practice has involved taking marginal areas of belief and experience — punk rock, the painting of remote Aboriginal communities, the art and practice of Buddhist religion — and somehow making a visual language from them. His key ideas of communality and collaboration are grounded in a foundational belief in crossing cultures.

• Johnson’s early interactions with Aboriginal artists from Central Australia involved observing the artists paint, helping with tasks like photographic documentation of their work, and also buying pictures.

• In the 1980s, Johnson’s collaborative work consolidated a decade’s research into the possibilities of conceptual art, painting and landscape.

Works

• Tim Johnson’s first visit to Alice Springs was in June 1980. His art advisor Andrew Crocker introduced him to several artists. Through Crocker, Johnson and his wife arranged a visit to Papunya, a day’s travel with four-wheel drive vehicles north-west of Alice Springs.

• In Papunya, Johnson found a treasury of snapshot photographs pinned to the noticeboard in the art advisor’s house. These snapshots showed men in the act of painting or proudly displaying their paintings, held in front of their bodies or propped against humpies. Taking his cue from the noticeboard photographs (some of which he rephotographed and incorporated into his art), Johnson began taking informal colour photographs of artists, their works and their family members.

The paintings that Johnson made from these photographs are not slavish renditions. They have a spontaneous quality that saves them from the cool detachment that characterises photo-realism. Areas of colour are quickly blocked in, figures and shadow laid down with the barest of detail, and faces are worked on only until, as Johnson puts it, the person seemed to be there. Hence a sometimes ghostly appearance remarked by an early reviewer, Terence Maloon.3
Conclusion

- Johnson’s enthusiasm for collaboration was what motivated his first interactions with the artists at Papunya, whom he both admired as fellow artists and considered as masters offering him new ways of thinking about the visual. Across remote Indigenous Australia, collaboration and reciprocity in the production of ceremonial art was, and still is, the norm. As a Tjapaltjarri (Johnson had been given a skin name by the Papunya artists), Johnson was entitled to ask the favour of collaboration from kirda artists. The evaluation of works created under such circumstances remains a question for debate: do the dreaming tracks painted by a white outsider, with only cursory knowledge of the law, carry the full weight of the tjukurpa (dreaming)?

Questions for discussion

- What is meant by the term ‘appropriation’?
- Johnson was not deterred — although he was distressed — by the criticism, prevalent in the late 1980s, that viewed his engagement with Aboriginal artists as an unacceptable neo-colonial appropriation.
- What is the difference between ‘collaboration’ and ‘appropriation’? What makes an art work collaborative?
Classroom activities

- Investigate collaborations — consider literature, film, design. Work with a friend to create a collaborative poem, poster, music composition or other work. Analyse the benefits and drawbacks of collaboration.
- Consider the work Visit to Papunya II 1983. Write three separate paragraphs each presenting a different argument about the work:

  - Visit to Papunya II as ‘collaboration’
  - Visit to Papunya II as ‘appropriation’
  - Visit to Papunya II as ‘portraiture’


These notes are based on Roger Benjamin’s essay, ‘Inner landscapes’, in Tim Johnson: Painting Ideas [exhibition catalogue], Art Gallery of New South Wales and Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2009, pp.28–43.
The curriculum information included in this resource has been developed from the:


### Essential learnings by the end of year 9

**Visual art**

Students will:
- research ideas informing Tim Johnson’s visual responses, considering both social and cultural issues
- document their process to develop images and objects from visual, verbal and tactile stimuli (e.g. create a folio of work that is a conscious record of personal thoughts, feelings and conceptual ideas)
- use media areas in isolation, or in combination, to create art works (e.g. painting, light sculpture, performance art and installation).

### Years 11 and 12

**Visual art**

#### Appraising

Students will:
- engage in visual literacy to read images, perceive images, think with images, process images and discriminate whether images stem from ideas, concepts, focuses, context, trains of thought, memories or insights
- research, develop, resolve and reflect to demonstrate a personal aesthetic (style expression)
- discuss the value of diversity of forms of visual art from different cultures and contexts (including Indigenous Australian, Asian and multicultural).

#### Making

Students will:
- research by observing, collecting, compiling and recording visual, verbal and sensory information and ideas from a variety of sources and contexts
- engage in innovative explorations of media, ideas, technologies, processes and techniques
- use skills, techniques and processes to explore and manipulate a diversity of materials, techniques, technologies and processes.
Visual arts
Years 7–10 syllabus
Stages 4 and 5

Art making – conceptual framework
Students will learn about the ways Tim Johnson:
• invents, adapts and develops strategies and procedures to make art works
• makes art works using a range of 2D, 3D and/or 4D forms, materials and techniques
• adapts and develops strategies to investigate the world to make art works.

Art making – practice
Students will:
• investigate working in groups and in collaboration with others
• utilise their diary to plan and conceptualise art works.

Art making – frames
Students will consider the ways the artist:
• employs a range of conventions including codes, symbols and signs
• offers a way to develop representations of ideas and interests in his art making
• modifies, interprets or appropriates images from a variety of sources in the development of representations of ideas in making his art.

Critical and Historical Studies – conceptual framework
Students will consider the way Tim Johnson:
• develops his intentions relative to his art works, the audience and the world, and some of the constraints he works within
• works individually and collaboratively in different contexts
• investigates the expressive and stylistic possibilities of different media and techniques in the kinds of works the artist produces
• makes art, including their symbolic, representational, physical and material properties.

Critical and Historical Studies – practice
Students will investigate:
• the artistic practices, conventions and network of procedures that inform Tim Johnson’s approaches to art making.

Critical and Historical Studies – frames
Students will learn the following about Tim Johnson’s practice:
• the way he draws on cultural and community identities and social perspectives in making and responding to art.

Visual arts
Years 11 and 12 syllabus
Stage 6

Art criticism and art history outcomes
Practice
Students will:
• explore the conventions of practice evident in Tim Johnson’s work (from the artist’s early career to the present).

Conceptual framework
Students will:
• apply their understanding of the relationships of the artist, art work, world and audience
• appreciate opportunities to view art works as audience members.

Frames
Students will:
• appreciate the material, physical, transient or virtual qualities of Tim Johnson’s works
• appreciate the different ways the world can be interpreted in his art making.

Representation
Students will:
• appreciate the significance of expressive representation engaged by the artist.

© Board of Studies NSW for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales 2003

© Board of Studies NSW 2008
Curriculum information
Victoria

Level 4
Creating and making
By investigating Tim Johnson’s practice, students will be encouraged to:
• incorporate influences from selected cultural and/or historical contexts in designs for collaboratively or independently made art works
• select and use art elements and principles to solve specified challenges when creating art works
• document ideas, media, techniques and processes in a visual diary or sketchbook
• evaluate the use of art elements, principles and/or conventions to develop their own visual solutions to problems
• consider the purpose and suitability of selected media, materials techniques and processes in developing their own art works.

Exploring and responding
Students will consider the ways Tim Johnson:
• draws on different social and cultural contexts in his work
• compares and contrasts characteristics of art works from past and present which explore shared meanings.

Level 5
Creating and making
Students will:
• describe how their own art works are connected to source/s of inspiration
• consider a range of ways their completed art works might be presented to suit specific contexts and purposes
• understand possible visual resolution of ideas appropriate to the art form, particular techniques and personal style
• demonstrate the ways selected art elements and principles were used in developing and realising art making ideas (e.g. in their visual diaries or sketchbooks).

Exploring and responding
In studying Tim Johnson’s art practice, students will:
• analyse the aesthetic features of his works to identify stylistic influences
• analyse the structure, content and technical features of his work to understand characteristics of personal style
• evaluate the influence of new technologies on his art works.

Level 6
Creating and making
Students will:
• sensitively represent subject matter and control in the use of art media, materials, techniques and technologies appropriate to a selected style and/or form
• document aesthetic considerations in the selection, combination and manipulation of art elements, principles and/or conventions for art works in particular styles and forms
• perceptively apply their observation and research in the design, development, refinement, completion and presentation of art works
• document and justify selections, reflections, refinement and presentation in art creating and making processes
• combine and manipulate selected art elements, principles and/or concepts to create desired aesthetic qualities in the realisation and presentation of art works.

Exploring and responding
Whilst viewing Tim Johnson’s works, students will:
• discuss aesthetic considerations, cultural perspectives and/or historical contexts
• utilise the processes of critical inquiry to challenge their own aesthetic values, interpretive decisions and visual realisation of ideas
• observe and reflect on the ways in which art elements and principles, and art concepts and techniques, have been applied, manipulated and combined in the artist’s work.

Victorian Essential Learning Standards
© VCAA March 2007
Acknowledgments