Alexia Sinclair resource booklet

Table of contents

[Alexia Sinclair resource booklet 1](#_Toc64898892)

[Alexia Sinclair – Storyteller 3](#_Toc64898893)

[Activity 1 – see, think, wonder 3](#_Toc64898894)

[Activity 2 – signs and symbols 5](#_Toc64898895)

[Activity 3 – compare and contrast 6](#_Toc64898896)

[References 9](#_Toc64898897)

# Alexia Sinclair – Storyteller

## Activity 1 – see, think, wonder

‘Variola Vera’ is a digital photograph by Alexia Sinclair from the 2014 series ‘The Art of Saving a Life’, part of a larger project commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to illustrate the global impact of vaccines.

[Alexia Sinclair - The Art of Saving a Life](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-art-of-saving-a-life#variola-vera-the-gates-foundation) (accessed 22/02/2021)

Variola Vera by Alexia Sinclair.

A highly detailed colour photograph. There are three human figures, all styled in 18th century clothing. On the left, a young boy in plain clothing receives an injection from a man in period dress. On  the right are two empty chairs. In the centre of the frame site a young woman styled as an aristocrat with a high blonde wig and dark blue and purple dress covered in flowers. She faces the camera with her right hand over her chest and left hand reaching towards the doctor. She is framed by an ornately carved blue cabinet in the background. On this shelf, hundreds of small specimen jars are visible. The floor of this interior space resembles a blooming meadow with green leaves and blue flowers. 

Refer to this image, and the video resource [Alexia Sinclair – Storyteller](https://vimeo.com/435558298/bd07fe6843) (10:37) to complete the see, think, wonder scaffold on the following page.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| See | Think | Wonder |
| Observe the work. Describe what you see using the structural frame to guide you. For example – consider the subject matter, textures, colours, composition, size, use of repetition and other visual qualities. | Discuss what you think is happening in this artwork.  Provide evidence as to why you think this. You might refer to evidence in the first column. | What are you curious about?  What more do you want to know about this artwork, artist or the audience for this work? |
|  |  |  |

## Activity 2 – signs and symbols

Refer to the completed example below which interpret two symbols in Alexia Sinclair’s [The Art of Saving a Life](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-art-of-saving-a-life), and then use the scaffold on the following page to interpret symbols in her artwork [The Cabinets of Curiosity](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/a-frozen-tale#the-cabinets-of-curiosity) (accessed 22/02/2021).

Symbols are marks, signs or codes that represent ideas to audiences. They can be used to communicate an artist’s ideas. Similarly, signs are also used to convey information to audiences. Signs and symbols carry meanings that are culturally bound and can be read or interpreted by specific audiences in certain times and places.

For examples of common symbols in 17th-18th century art, refer to the article ‘[Symbols in a Vanitas](https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/oAKis1oFVGZ1KA)’ (accessed 22/02/2021)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Symbol | Meaning |
| Skull  Skull, by Alexia Sinclair. From the series 'The art of saving a life'  A colour photo of a human skull against a black background, intertwined with colourful blue and purple flowers on green stems. | Death, transience of life, passing of time, mortality, fragility of life. |
| Bottles  Bottles, by Alexia Sinclair. From the series 'The art of saving a life'  A closeup colour photograph of three small glass bottles with stoppers against a black background. Inside each bottle is a worn slip of paper with a printed image of a skull entwined with turquoise flowers. | Medicine, cure, science, vaccine, health. |

Write a statement that explains how the symbols you have identified communicate meaning in this artwork. The text box will expand when using a digital copy of this resource.

Example – the skull labels on the medicine bottles juxtaposed against an ornate floral background suggest new life that comes from death. With this medicine we can overcome the fragility of life and fight mortality.

The Cabinets of Curiosity, by Alexia Sinclair.

A highly detailed colour photograph of an interior scene. The central figure is a young woman with piled high powdered hair reminiscent of 18th century French court style. She is wearing a dress with a very large purple, orange, blue and teal skirt. She is looking through a brass telescope through a window beyond the right of the frame. In the background are globes, a map, and a bookshelf can be seen through a dark doorway. The room is lit from the right as if through an open window, and large white snowflakes are floating in and settling on the floor.

Alexia Sinclair – The Cabinets of Curiosity, 2013, (accessed 22/02/2021)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Symbol | Meaning |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Write a statement that explains how the symbols you have identified communicate meaning in this artwork. The text box will expand when using a digital copy of this resource.

## Activity 3 – compare and contrast

In her artmaking practice, Alexia Sinclair carefully considers the composition and placement of figures and objects to create highly detailed images that evoke a particular time and place. Her work is influenced by, and makes references to, trends and movements drawn from her study of art history, including the Pre-Raphaelite movement.

Compare these works by Alexia Sinclair and Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt.

List some of the features in each work. Pay attention to the composition, placement of figures, and the use of objects and other details. When complete, write a short paragraph that explains similarities between the two artist’s works.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Artwork | Visual features |
| In the artwork  column are two images.  The fist one is the photograph by Alexia Sinclair called 'Marie Antionette' from 2005. The second artwork is the painting 'Isabella and the pot of basil', by William Holman Hunt. It is in the 19th century Pre-Raphaelite style. In the empty column students are asked to list visual features.  Alexia Sinclair, ‘[Marie Antionette](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-regal-twelve#marie-antoinette)’, 2005. Accessed 23/02/2021 |  |
| In the artwork  column are two images.  The fist one is the photograph by Alexia Sinclair called 'Marie Antionette' from 2005. The second artwork is the painting 'Isabella and the pot of basil', by William Holman Hunt. It is in the 19th century Pre-Raphaelite style. In the empty column students are asked to list visual features.  William Holman Hunt, ‘[Isabella and the pot of basil](https://nga.gov.au/lovedesire/works.cfm?wrkirn=326063)’ 1867-68. Accessed 23/03/2021 |  |

Using your list of visual features in these two works, write a short paragraph that explains some of the similarities between Alexia Sinclair’s photograph and William Holman Hunt’s painting. The text box will expand when using a digital copy of this resource.

## References

[Alexia Sinclair – Storyteller](https://vimeo.com/435558298/bd07fe6843) (10:37).

[Alexia Sinclair – Variola Vera – The Art of Saving a Life](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-art-of-saving-a-life#variola-vera-the-gates-foundation) (accessed 22/02/2021).

[Alexia Sinclair – The Cabinets of Curiosity](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/a-frozen-tale#the-cabinets-of-curiosity) (accessed 22/02/2021).

[Symbols in a Vanitas](https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/oAKis1oFVGZ1KA) (accessed 22/02/2021).

[Alexia Sinclair – Skull – The Art of Saving a Life](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-art-of-saving-a-life#skull) (accessed 23/02/2021).

[Alexia Sinclair – Bottles – The Art of Saving a Life](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-art-of-saving-a-life#bottles) (accessed 23/02/2021).

[Alexia Sinclair – Marie Antionette](https://alexiasinclair.com/collections/the-regal-twelve#marie-antoinette) (accessed 23/02/2021).

[William Holman Hunt – Isabella and the pot of basil](https://nga.gov.au/lovedesire/works.cfm?wrkirn=326063) (accessed 22/02/2021).