# Mapping memory – Badger Bates – Unit of work

**Course:** Stage 4 Visual Arts

**Unit duration:** 10 weeks

**Focus content:** Practice, conceptual framework, frames

## Overview

The NSW Department of Education recognises the traditional custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We celebrate the First Peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationship to Country, through cultural expressions reflective of Australian heritage through Aboriginal art. We respect the work of artists, their aspirations and expressions.

Badger Bates is an Aboriginal artist of the Barkindji people of the far-western region of New South Wales. He is best known for his lino prints, which explore the cultural heritage and environmental significance of sites throughout the region. Many of his works represent the Barka (Darling River) which has a major significance for Barkindji people. For Badger Bates, the practice of carving lino represents an extension of traditional carving practices taught to him as a child by his grandmother and other family members. As an adult, he worked as the Aboriginal Sites Officer for over 20 years at Mutawintji National Park, a site of major cultural significance. Rock carvings at Mutawintji and other carved artefacts have further influenced Bates’ practice as a printmaker and sculptor. Badger Bates has been described as a senior cultural knowledge bearer and is a frequent spokesperson on issues that impact Barkindji people, the Barka, the Menindee Lakes, and other sites in the region.

In this unit of work, students will conduct a major study of Badger Bates’ artwork Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s (2009), which uses map-like features to explore Bates’ childhood memories and sites of cultural significance. Through the subjective and structural frames, students investigate how Bates uses significant symbols and other visual devices to communicate personal and cultural meanings. In their own artmaking, students develop their own visual language, using signs and symbols to represent a place that has personal significance to them and create a design for a lino print.

## Outcomes

### Artmaking

Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills to make artworks informed by their understanding of practice, conceptual framework and the frames. A student:

* **4.1** uses a range of strategies to explore different artmaking conventions and procedures to make artworks
* **4.2** explores the function of and relationship between artist – artwork – world – audience
* **4.3** makes artworks that involve some understanding of the frames
* **4.4** recognises and uses aspects of the world as a source of ideas, concepts and subject matter in the visual arts
* **4.5** investigates ways to develop meaning in their artworks
* **4.6** selects different materials and techniques to make artworks.

### Critical and historical studies

Students will develop knowledge, understanding and skills to critically and historically interpret art informed by their understanding of practice, the conceptual framework and the frames. A student:

* **4.8** explores the function of and relationships between the artist – artwork – world – audience
* **4.9** begins to acknowledge that art can be interpreted from different points of view.

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## Learning intentions

Throughout this unit, students engage in artmaking and critical and historical studies.

In artmaking, students will:

* use their visual arts diaries to research and investigate the world, focusing on their memories and personal experiences of a specific place, and develop artistic intentions arising from relationships between artist and world
* use the subjective frame to recognise how their own lives and personal and family experiences can connect with intentions and choices to shape meaning in their artworks
* use the structural frame to select appropriate source material to represent aspects of their personal experiences of the world by developing their own visual language
* develop a design for a lino block relief print that represents a personal account of a significant place.

In critical and historical studies, students will:

* identify and explain intentions, actions, and choices in Badger Bates’ artmaking practice through his selection and use of materials, signs and symbols to represent the world
* develop an account of how Badger Bates’ material and conceptual choices use a carefully considered visual language to communicate meaning about personal and cultural experiences in his artwork Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s.

## Cross-curriculum content

### Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

Students use ICT effectively and appropriately throughout the learning sequence to create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems, and work to create artworks and critical and historical interpretations. In artmaking, students use online map services to collect imagery related to a specific place that they use to inform their artwork design. Students also use Photoshop or another graphics editor to experiment with and resolve their lino print design. In both artmaking and critical and historical studies, links to online resources are provided to support teacher instruction.

### Aboriginal and Indigenous

Students investigate how visual arts reflects and constructs beliefs and attitudes about cultural identity, and the relationships between Aboriginal cultures and the world. Students examine the significance of place to Aboriginal peoples, and the role of tradition and culture in informing artmaking practice. Students construct a critical account of how symbolic representation has been used by Badger Bates to communicate personal and cultural meanings in his artmaking practice.

### Environment

Students engage in artmaking and critical and historical studies that explore the relationships between artist and world. Students consider the choices and intentions in Badger Bates’ artmaking practice to represent the world, including aspects of the natural environment. In their own artmaking, students consider their connection to a particular site, and how to represent the natural world in their artworks.

## Teacher notes

* Alternate spellings may be found for Aboriginal language terms referenced in this resource. Variations for ‘Barkindji’ include ‘Barkandji’, ‘Paakantyi’, ‘Paakantji’. Variations for ‘Barka’ include ‘Baaka’. Variations for ‘Ngatji’ include ‘Ngatyi’ and ‘Nhatji’.
* It is recommended that teachers test the suggested artmaking procedures to ensure suitability for their class context.
* Teachers could use the resource [Programming for the frames](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/key-learning-areas/creative-arts/stages-4-and-5/visual-arts#Programming0) to extend and support student understanding of the frames.

## Differentiation

* Where lino printing is not appropriate to the class context, alternative artmaking processes could be used. Some options could include monoprinting, commercial or DIY scratchboards, the use of digital graphics editors as described in this learning sequence, or mixed-media processes involving drawing/painting over printed maps and/or other media.
* Where appropriate, teachers could extend the artmaking task to develop a multiple-colour reduction print.
* Answers provided in the resource booklet could be used by teachers to support scaffolding and/or modelling for students who require literacy support.
* Extension activities could be developed where students conduct further research into Badger Bates’ artmaking practice, including his contributions to the exhibitions River on the Brink (2019) and Barka: The Forgotten River (2020-2021).
* A scaffolded activity could be developed using the [Bird's eye art](https://sites.google.com/education.nsw.gov.au/tau-home-birds-eye-art/student) resource from The Arts Unit.

## Ongoing assessment/feedback

* Formative assessment is collected in student visual arts diaries throughout the learning sequence as students complete the activities in the attached resource booklet.
* A formal task could be developed as a summative assessment to evaluate students’ completed lino prints and their written responses to question 5 in ‘Activity 6 – Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places’.

## Lesson sequence

Table 1 – Learning sequence

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| Outcomes | Teaching strategies | Resources |
| 4.84.9 | **Critical and historical studies –** Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s**Duration:** 1-2 lessons**Learning intention**Students are introduced to Badger Bates’ artwork Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s. Students identify aspects of Bates’ practice, and how he has used the visual convention of a map to communicate a personal and cultural narrative based on his childhood memories.**Lesson steps**Students are given an image of Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s for their visual arts diaries. The Art Gallery of South Australia has a high resolution image on their website: [Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s](https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/mission-mob-bend-mob-wilcannia-1950s/64803/). An alternative source is ‘[Carving into Country: The work of Badger Bates’](https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/3970/carving-into-country-the-work-of-badger-bates/) in Artlink Magazine.Students complete ‘Activity 1 – First impressions’, observing detail in the artwork and making predictions about what it might mean.Look at the artwork Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s, and complete the following questions using your knowledge of the structural and subjective frames:1. Write down 10 details that you observe in this artwork.
2. Do you think this artwork is realistic? Why or why not?
3. Do you think this is a landscape artwork? Why or why not?
4. What perspective/angle of view has been used?
5. Use subjective language to explain what the overall design reminds you of.

Students complete ‘Activity 2 – Badger Bates interview’.Watch the video excerpt [Badger Bates interviewed 2010 for MCA Artist Voice (15:55) from (02:18 – 08:55)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ll635Eu7-zg), and answer the following questions using your knowledge of the subjective frame:1. Write down 4 childhood memories Badger Bates talks about in the video.
2. List the features of the artwork that Badger Bates describes between (04:30) and (05:58).
3. Why didn’t Badger Bates put the bridge or the town of Wilcannia in this artwork?
4. Badger Bates talks about his grandmother, Granny Moysey, as a major influence. What are some things he said he learned from her?

Students refer to their image of Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s and complete ‘Activity 3 – Signs and symbols’. Students identify landscape features and other details in the artwork, making thumbnail sketches of Badger’s designs for these features and then inventing their own designs for similar features.Students are asked to think about a site or place that they have a strong memory of or a particular personal connection to. This will be used to develop their artwork design over the following lessons. | Mapping memory – Badger Bates – Resource bookletActivity 1 – First impressionsActivity 2 – Badger Bates interviewActivity 3 – Signs and symbols[Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s – Art](https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/mission-mob-bend-mob-wilcannia-1950s/64803/) Gallery of South Australia[Carving into Country: The work of Badger Bates - Artlink magazine](https://www.artlink.com.au/articles/3970/carving-into-country-the-work-of-badger-bates/)[Badger Bates interviewed 2010 for MCA Artist Voice (15:55)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ll635Eu7-zg) – MCA Australia |
| 4.24.34.44.5 | **Artmaking – mapping memories – research and planning****Duration**: 1-2 lessons**Learning intention**Students start to develop a design for their own artwork that uses some conventions of maps to represent a place that has personal significance to them.**Lesson steps**Students compare different map imagery of the Wilcannia Mission Camps area, including Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s, and complete the questions in ‘Activity 4 – Using maps’:1. What do you usually use maps for? What features do maps typically have?
2. How is Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s like a map? What features have been emphasised, stylised, added, or removed?
3. What similarities and differences can you observe between current maps and aerial photography, and Badger Bates’ artwork? When you compare images, think about how the area has changed since the 1950s.
4. Students investigate the site they nominated as having a strong memory association or personal connection with, and begin research to collect visual material to inform the design of their stylised map artwork. SIX Maps is recommended for this research activity. Students should search for their location and choose different versions of the map to view, including current aerial photographs, different maps, and 1943 aerial photographs (Sydney only). The SIX Maps ‘Print PDF’ tool can then be used to download their map images. The expanded range of different map imagery available and the ‘Print PDF’ tool makes SIX Maps a more appropriate tool for this task than Google maps or other online map providers. Where possible, students may be able to collect maps from other sources such as print media.

Students complete the tasks in ‘Activity 5 – Artmaking research’:1. What place have you chosen to represent in your artwork?
2. Explain your choice. What strong memory or personal connection do you have with this place?
3. Collect some images that relate to your site to incorporate into your printmaking design. Make a record of your source material in Table 6 – record the source URL if using a website. Any digital materials collected should be saved together in a reference folder.
4. It is recommended that you use [SIX Maps](https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/) to find maps and aerial photography – use the ‘Basemaps’ tool to switch between different views. The ‘Print PDF’ tool can be used to generate a full-page screenshot of your selected image.
5. Refer to the [Map of Indigenous Australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) and related sources to learn about the Aboriginal heritage of your chosen site.

Source material to collect: An area map, aerial photography, information from the map of Indigenous Australia, photographs of the site, images of found objects associated with the site, and site sketches.1. Think of at least 5 specific features of the place that you can represent visually to communicate your memories and personal connections.
2. In your visual arts diary or the table provided, design a sign/symbol to represent each feature, and explain why it is relevant to your memory or connection to the place.

Students then make a simple sketch of their design. They should consider the availability of printmaking materials. For example, if 15 × 15 cm lino blocks are to be used, students should make their sketch inside a 15 × 15 cm square in in their visual arts diaries. Their designs should approximate the level of detail in Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s, using a simple aerial perspective with map-like features to represent their site. Students incorporate their subjective, stylised symbols to show their personal connections to the site. This will be the first of two drafts produced, so their designs can be kept relatively simple. | Activity 4 – Using mapsActivity 5 – Artmaking research[SIX Maps](https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/)[Map of Indigenous Australia](https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia) |
| 4.84.9 | **Critical and historical studies – Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places****Duration:** 1 lesson**Learning intention**Students complete a literacy activity that uses the cultural frame to further explore the relevance of the places represented in Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s. Teachers should consider the timing of this lesson. It could be interspersed between practical lessons, set as an independent task or as homework, used to end the unit, or developed into an assessment task component.**Lesson steps**Students complete ‘Activity 6 – Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places’.In 2020, the area shown in Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s was recognised for its rich cultural heritage and protected by the NSW government as an Aboriginal Place.Read the media release ‘Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places declared an Aboriginal Place’ and complete the following tasks:1. Highlight any words or sentences that relate to cultural issues. This could include references to aspects of the site with cultural, community, spiritual and historic importance.
2. In the space provided, list any specific examples of cultural values, activities, locations or artefacts that are referenced in the text.
3. Find definitions for the following features mentioned in the text: Aboriginal canoe tree, Aboriginal coolamon tree, Aboriginal mound site, Aboriginal midden, Aboriginal heat retainer oven, Ngatyi/Ngatji/Nhatji.
4. In your visual arts diary, label a copy of Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s with any locations mentioned in the text that you can find in the artwork.
5. Write a paragraph that explains the cultural perspectives revealed in Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s, using the provided cultural frame questions to guide your response.
 | Activity 6 – Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places[Wilcannia Mission Camps and Cultural Places declared an Aboriginal Place](https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20210402014307/https%3A/www.heritage.nsw.gov.au/celebrate/latest-announcements/new-media-page-3/)  |
| 4.14.6 | **Artmaking – resolving the design****Duration:** 1 lesson**Learning intention**Students refine and resolve their sketch from the previous artmaking lesson to develop their final lino print design, using a graphics editor such as Photoshop.**Lesson steps**To resolve their designs, students use a digital workflow to emulate the printmaking process and ensure that their design will work as a single colour lino print. A suggested workflow is provided for Photoshop. However, Paint or another program could be used, or students could draw their final design by hand. If not using the suggested workflow, teachers will need to ensure that student designs are the correct size, and are flipped horizontally before being transferred onto their lino block. Students will:1. Create a new document in Photoshop. For ease of transfer, the document should be set up to be the same size as their lino block. For example, for a 15 × 15 cm lino block, a 15 × 15 cm document should be created.
2. Use the paint bucket tool to fill the document with black. This will represent the ‘printed’ or inked area of the print.
3. On a new layer, use the brush tool to draw the design in white. This will represent the ‘carved’ area of the print, or the area of the paper that is not inked.
4. This activity emulates the process of carving the lino block. Students will develop a sense of the restrictions inherent to this material process. In a single colour print, students are limited to the colour of the ink and the colour of the paper, represented here by black and white. Students will need to consider where to use thin or thick lines and where to carve out larger areas.
5. If students want to preserve aspects of the map for accuracy, their saved images from SIX Maps could be imported and traced over, then removed or hidden from the design.
6. Once their design is complete, students should save 2 .jpg copies. The first copy is saved as is and recorded in their visual arts diaries. A second copy should be flipped horizontally (in Photoshop, go to the ‘Image’ menu, select ‘Image Rotation’, and then ‘Flip Canvas Horizontal’), and then printed. This flipped copy will be used to transfer their image onto lino blocks.
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| 4.14.24.34.44.54.6 | **Artmaking – lino printmaking processes****Duration:** 5+ lessons**Learning intention**Over the course of several lessons, students transfer their image to a lino block, carve the lino using hand tools, and make a series of prints using hand printing processes.**Lesson steps**Appropriate processes and procedures are outlined in the following lessons. For an overview of the process described, the [Project: Card Making (6:06)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Xa_T4FwbwE) video resource provides a brief outline of the hand printing process, including transferring the image onto the lino block, carving the lino, preparing and transferring ink, and hand printing. More advanced tutorials, or explanations of specific techniques, can be found by searching ‘lino printing’ on YouTube. It is suggested that teachers allow one lesson to transfer images, 2-3 lessons to carve lino, and 2-3 lessons for printing.The flipped copies of students’ lino print designs are used to transfer their design onto their lino block. If carbon paper is available, this can be used to trace the image and record their design onto the surface of the lino. If carbon paper is not available, the following procedure can be applied using lead pencils:1. Print the flipped image and check it matches the size of the lino block.
2. Turn the printout over so the blank side of the paper is facing up.
3. Use lead pencils to ‘colour in’ the blank side of the paper so the paper is completely coloured in on one side, with the printed image on the other side.
4. Trim the paper to match the image size and place it on top of the lino block with the image facing up so that the ‘coloured in’ side is touching the surface of the lino. Fasten the paper to the lino block with some tape.
5. Firmly trace over the design with a pencil or pen. The pressure will transfer graphite from the surface of the paper onto the surface of the lino.
6. Remove the paper and retrace the design on the surface of the lino with a thin point permanent marker (this will prevent the design from smudging).

The process of carving out lino to prepare it for relief printing will require some specific planning from teachers to ensure the safety of students. Teachers should reiterate safe working procedures at the beginning of each lesson. The following list can be used as a guide and integrated into classroom safety routines and procedures:* Carve away the areas that were traced onto the lino in the previous step.
* Always carve away from your body. Never rest your hand in front of the carving tool.
* Use a bench hook to help support the lino block during carving to minimise the risk of tools slipping and causing injury.
* Use specific lino carving tools and ensure that the tools are appropriately sharp. Blunt tools require more pressure to carve, which increases the risk of an injury being caused by a tool slipping out of position.
* Choose the right tool for the job. Different sized ‘V’ and ‘U’ shaped tools should be used to carve different parts of the design. In general, ‘V’ tools are used for linework and ‘U’ tools are used for larger areas.

Once students have carved their lino blocks, they can prepare for hand printing. This process will require:* the carved lino block. Ensure that any cuts are fairly deep so they don’t get ‘flooded’ by ink
* block printing ink suitable for lino
* a roller or brayer suitable for block ink
* a baren (hand printing tool), spoon, and/or clean roller to transfer the ink from lino to paper
* paper to print onto. For hand printing, standard visual arts diary pages of approximately 110 gsm will be suitable
* a surface to roll ink onto. A sheet of acrylic sheet is ideal, but a transparency sheet could be taped to a desk and used. Any hard, smooth surface could be used. A removable surface will make cleaning easier
* a tool to spread the ink onto the inking surface. A plastic palette knife is ideal
* a registration guide to ensure accurate positioning of the print. A piece of paper the same size as the lino block could be placed under a transparency sheet and taped to a desk, with markings to indicate where the edge of the paper should sit.

It is recommended that a specific procedure be developed by classroom teachers to manage printing with the class group. Management strategies could include the teacher providing a thorough demonstration and then having students break into several groups with their own inking station, or the teacher could choose to manage a central inking station. Care should be taken with block printing ink, as smudges, fingerprints, and other unwanted marks can spoil students’ prints. It may be necessary to test/troubleshoot the process until the right amount of ink can be reliably transferred onto the lino blocks. The following steps can be used as a guide.1. Prepare paper for printing. If visual arts diary pages are used, they should be trimmed to remove any scrap paper torn by the spiral binding. It is recommended that students make between 5 and 10 prints.
2. Prepare the inking surface. Use a plastic palette knife to spread out a tablespoon of ink near the top of the surface. Roll the ink out, taking care to ensure an even distribution on the roller. It may be helpful to ensure students always move the roller in one direction to avoid an uneven distribution of ink.
3. Use the roller to transfer ink onto the lino block. A piece of newsprint or scrap paper could be placed under the block to minimise mess. Again, take care to ensure even distribution of ink. The ink should cover the uncarved surface of the lino evenly without ‘flooding’ any of the carved sections.
4. Carefully place the inked lino onto the registration guide. Line up the printing paper and place it onto the lino block, taking care not to move or smudge the paper. Using a baren, spoon, and/or clean roller, apply pressure to the back of the paper to transfer the print.
5. Carefully remove the paper and set out to dry. This process should be repeated until students have a small ‘edition’ of prints.

Once students have a small collection of prints, they should remove misprints or less successful prints. These could be kept in their visual arts diary for formative assessment and feedback. Students could annotate their misprints to identify the cause of any errors. The successful prints should be ‘editioned’ directly under the printed area using a lead pencil. Students record the edition number (usually expressed as a fraction), the title of the work, their name/signature and the year. Refer to the markings underneath the printed area of Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s. The print in the AGSA collection reads: ‘38/50’ (edition number), Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s (title), Badger (signature), 2009 (year).Students’ best prints are collected for assessment, and displayed in a class exhibition. Students write a short artist statement that explains what they have represented in their artwork and why it is important to them. | [Project: Card Making – Derivan Block Ink (6:06)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Xa_T4FwbwE)  |

## References

**Links to third-party material and websites**

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Bates B (2009) [*Mission Mob, Bend Mob, Wilcannia 1950s*](https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/mission-mob-bend-mob-wilcannia-1950s/64803/) [linocut on paper], Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, accessed 31 October 2022.

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