# Interpreting sculptural practice – Year 11 Visual Arts – Art criticism and art history



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## Overview

This learning sequence provides opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and understanding of art, by interpreting sculptural practice through the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus content. Students learn about the nature of practice, and the conceptual framework, in art criticism and art history. Students learn how to interpret and evaluate the significance of particular artists, artworks, audience members, and representations of the world. Students engage with a broad range of artists’ practice in sculpture, by researching contemporary and historical artworks, from local and international contexts. Students learn about artworks, significant ideas in the visual arts, and how critical accounts have been developed at certain times, and over time.

Practice is a discrete term in the artworld that identifies what artists, art critics, and art historians know and do, as practitioners. Throughout this learning sequence, students learn to represent their interpretations of sculptural practice, through written accounts, class discussion, and extended essay responses. Focus questions and prompts are provided to stimulate inquiry and build student confidence in art criticism. Students learn about critical and creative thinking and the role judgement plays in reasoning, arguing, and forming opinions about art. This learning sequence culminates with students writing an extended response, drawing upon their knowledge and understanding of practice, to interpret art.

Objectives

**Course:** Visual Arts Preliminary

**Lesson duration:** 5-6 weeks

**Focus content:** Practice, conceptual framework

Students will develop knowledge, skills and understanding of how they may represent an informed point of view about the visual arts in their critical and historical accounts.

‘The Stage 6 syllabus builds on the knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes gained by students in the Mandatory and Elective courses.’

The preliminary course provides students with a broad-based experience and enables them to develop understanding in, and about, the visual arts.

Teachers will assist students with their selection of content (for example, a focus on artists and their works, consideration of the audience and artworks, the practice of artists, art critics and art historians).

‘This approach provides the foundation for more relational and interpretive ways of approaching content in the HSC course.’

From: [Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-creative-arts/visual-arts-syllabus) © 2016 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)

Scaffolds for [practice](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/creative-arts/stage-6/visual-arts#Practice8) and [the conceptual framework](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/creative-arts/stage-6/visual-arts#The7) are referred to, and elaborated, throughout this learning sequence. Students will also develop their skills in [critical and creative thinking](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/creative-arts/stages-4-and-5/fostering-critical-and-creative-thinking-in-visual-arts-7-10). Teachers should model these scaffolds to develop and apply student understanding of syllabus content. While the Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus content also includes the frames, these are intentionally omitted from these activities, to specifically focus on the content areas of practice and conceptual framework. Teachers can choose to include reference to any of the frames, in class activities, at their own discretion. Teachers should adapt these learning resources for their own teaching and learning context.

If you would like to provide feedback on this resource, please email CreativeArts7-12@det.nsw.edu.au.

### Art Criticism and Art History Outcomes

Table 1 – Preliminary outcomes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Content | A student: |
| Practice | P7: explores the conventions of practice in art criticism and art history |
| Conceptual framework | P8: explores the roles and relationships between concepts of artist, artwork, world and audience through critical and historical investigations of art |
| Representation | P10: explores ways in which significant art histories, critical narratives and other documentary accounts of the visual arts can be constructed. |

Outcomes referred to in this document are from [Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-creative-arts/visual-arts-syllabus) © 2016 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

## Focus question

**Practice question (25 marks)**

Explain how the choice of materials affect artists’ intentions and actions.

In your answer, refer to specific artists and artworks you have studied.

The focus question provides context to activities in this learning sequence, through the study of sculptural practice. It is similar to a Section II HSC examination extended response question and should inform each lesson’s aims and learning intentions. The tasks included in this learning sequence will prepare students to answer the focus question.

Throughout each task, students will learn about a range of artists, and interpret their practice through the syllabus content areas of practice and conceptual framework. Each task is iterative, building upon prior knowledge, as students learn to interpret practice in increasingly complex ways. The learning sequence culminates in students writing an extended response to demonstrate their understanding of artists’ practice.

The referenced artworks and tasks provided in this learning sequence can be used exclusively or combined with a broader study of artistic practice. It is assumed that students will be able to complete each task within the allocated timeframe.

Additional support for [differentiation](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/high-potential-and-gifted-education/supporting-educators/implement/differentiation-adjustment-strategies) and meeting individual student’s needs should also be considered by the supervising teacher, prior to beginning the tasks within this learning sequence. Suggested adjustment strategies include complexity, by making connections and using inquiry-based learning. Other adjustment strategies, such as abstraction and higher order thinking, involve students seeking justification of thinking and reasoning through different means, synthesising information, and making evaluative judgements.

## Week 1: Practice in context

### Sculpture – Plate 1

**Task:** Complete a [Think-Pair-Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645) activity.

Look at plate 1, [*Hot with the Chance of a Late Storm*](https://gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/), by the art collective, The Glue Society (see [Appendix](#_Appendix_1)).

Use the activity focus question to generate ideas about plate 1.

Record your immediate thoughts about the artwork on sticky notes, on the whiteboard, in a Google document, or on the [Digital learning selector | Jamboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/593).

Share your notes with others in the class and discuss your ideas.

**Activity focus question:** Discuss how plate 1 is a response to the world.

**Task:** Complete a [critical and creative thinking](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/creative-arts/stages-4-and-5/fostering-critical-and-creative-thinking-in-visual-arts-7-10) activity.

Following on from the previous [Think-Pair-Share](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningActivity/Card/645) activity, organise and group ideas and comments under topic headings (for example, ideas, techniques, or materials).

Create other subheadings and sort the notes below them.

As a class, discuss the common themes identified about the artwork and make links back to syllabus content areas.

Connect topics and themes to aspects of syllabus content (for example, artist, artwork, world, audience).

Capture this information as a screenshot, photograph, or record in a journal.

### Practice – Overview

**Task:** Read through the information on practice.

Identify and discuss the practice of artists, art critics and art historians.

Summarise the information, including key points about practice, in a journal.

Practice is an intentional, human activity, informed by knowledge within the field of visual arts. Artmaking practice involves the representation of artists’ ideas. This is realised through an expressive form: the material, physical, or virtual properties of an artwork, and the techniques associated with the form. The practice of an art critic, or art historian, is to provide meaning and context to artworks, via interpretations and value judgements. Interpretations are represented for audiences in the form of written, or verbal, accounts.

#### Practice – Artmaking

Artmaking practice consists of both material practice and conceptual practice. Material practice identifies the expressive form, use of materials, medium, and working methods that affect the artist’s actions in the production of an artwork. Conceptual practice identifies the concepts, ideas, values, issues, and theories that influence the artist’s intentions to produce artworks. Artmaking practice informs the intentions and actions of artists and affects the production and outcome of artworks. The artist’s intentions are communicated through their artworks, are influenced by the world an artist resides in, and reflect the values and beliefs the artist holds. Actions are determined by the choices, forms, technologies, procedures, approaches, and decisions artists make, when producing and exhibiting artworks.

#### Practice – Art criticism and art history

Art critics make judgements about the value of the artwork. An art critic analyses, or interprets, an artist’s practice and seeks to understand what an artwork means. The art critic is the critical consumer of art. The role of the art critic is to make meaning about artworks and to communicate this to audiences, via interpretation and evaluation. Art critics adopt a particular point of view when interpreting art. In the NSW Visual Arts Syllabus, the frames provide different ways of understanding and interpreting art. Art critics are reliant upon their knowledge of art practice, which includes the existing bodies of knowledge about art, located in the artworld. Evaluations and interpretations of art can change over time, and throughout history.

Art historians explore art in historical contexts and consider how a period of time has influenced an artist's practice. Art historians seek to reveal why an artwork, or artist, came to be valued as important by others in history. Art historians interpret artworks by understanding how social contexts, values, beliefs, and technologies available at the time affect the representation of the world in artworks. Art historians consider the way artworks were viewed and interpreted in the past, and within contemporary contexts, to shape meaning.

### Sculpture – Overview

**Task:** Read through the information on sculpture below.

Identify and discuss the main features of sculpture, summarising the information in a journal. Refer to ‘[Sculpture – Key terms and definitions’](#_Sculpture__–).

Sculpture is an artform, focusing on 3D (three-dimensional) objects. Sculptures can be produced as a single, one-off artwork, or made in series. Sculptures can be viewed in museums, galleries, exhibitions, private collections, important cultural sites, or as outdoor public sculptures. Freestanding sculptures can be viewed in the round, from all sides. Relief sculptures have a 3D, raised surface and are flat at the back.

Sculptural practice is understood by considering how an artist’s intentions and actions can be realised through the material and conceptual constraints of 3D form. Sculptors are artists, who work within the limitations of the medium of sculpture, use their knowledge of sculptural techniques, and understand how sculptures have been made in the past.

Throughout history, artists have made sculptures representing the natural and spiritual world, important people and events, beliefs and culture, ancestors, gods, and leaders. Western sculpture, up until the 19th century, was made to look realistic, or figurative. During the 20th century, sculptures became more abstract (non-representational) and were aligned with the styles of modernist art movements. Today, contemporary sculpture is a blending of different ideas and techniques from the history of art.

Sculptures can be made using traditional materials, including stone, marble, wood, clay, steel, and bronze. Sculptors choose these materials because of their physical properties and malleability. One of the reasons historical sculptures can still be seen today is because of the material’s durability. They are solid and have withstood exposure to weather and temperature.

Sculptors manipulate materials into different forms, using carving, modelling, assemblage, and casting techniques. Contemporary sculptures can be constructed from modern materials, including aluminium, steel, plastic, fibreglass, and found objects. Site-specific sculpture transforms a site, location, or environment into an artwork and may include other media. Installation is a contemporary approach to making and exhibiting artworks, by altering a particular three-dimensional space.

Environmental sculptures use materials, or ideas, that reference the land, environment, and the natural world. They are often made in a particular location, sourcing local materials. These sculptures are intentionally made to be ephemeral, temporary, and are designed to exist for a limited period of time. The artworks are documented, allowing the work to continue to exist beyond its intended period of exhibition.

#### Sculpture – Key terms and definitions

Table 2 – Sculpture: Key terms and definitions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key term | Definition |
| Assemblage | A method of juxtaposing found objects together to make sculptural forms. Also known as a ‘combine’ (Robert Rauschenberg) |
| Carving | A method of taking away materials (subtractive process) to create a form. Traditional materials include wood, stone, and marble. Tools used for carving include a hammer and chisel |
| Casting | A method of reproducing a sculpture model by creating an external mould, which is then filled with a liquid material that can harden (silicon, plaster), or molten metal (for example, bronze). Injection moulding uses the same process |
| Contemporary | Belonging to the present time. Often used to identify artworks produced over the past 20 years that are innovative and different to traditional artmaking approaches |
| Documented forms | A record of an artwork in any media, typically photography or video, documenting where the work existed temporarily |
| In the round | A 360-degree view of a form. Used to describe a sculpture that can be viewed from all angles and sides. The opposite of relief sculpture |
| Installation | A genre, or category, of art that transforms a three-dimensional space, or environment, by installing objects (sculptural elements, or mixed media) for either a temporary or permanent time, creating an immersive experience for the audience |
| Modelling | A method of adding material (additive process) to create a three-dimensional form. Materials such as clay, wax or plaster are used to build up form. Modelling tools smooth, or incise (cut), the material |
| Modernist art | A term used to describe a period of time between the late 19th century to the late 20th century, noted for a series of innovative Western art movements, including Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, and Pop Art |
| Relief | A style of sculpture that creates a raised form from a background plane. Ancient wall carvings use this technique |
| Sculptor | An artist who creates sculptures. Michelangelo (David)and Bernini (Apollo and Daphne*)* were famous for their marble-carved sculptures |
| Sculpture | A form of art that creates three-dimensional objects. Traditional sculptural materials are stone, marble, wood, bronze, and clay. Modernist art used metal (steel, aluminium) and synthetic materials, including plastics |
| Site-specific | A particular location where an artwork is produced, or exhibited, for an indefinite amount of time |

### Interpretation – Conceptual framework

**Task:** Read through the information on conceptual framework below.

Consider how the 4 agencies of artist, artwork, world, and audience can be applied to the interpretation of artists’ practice.

Discuss how each prompt can be used to support interpretation.

#### Artist – Producer of the artwork

What is the artist trying to do? (intentions)

* Interpret subject matter, ideas, and concepts from the world
* Represent a particular point of view
* Communicate meaning to the audience.

How do they do it? (actions)

* Artforms, including 2D, 3D, and 4D media. Physical, material, or virtual properties
* Material practice: production decisions, processes, techniques, and approaches
* Artworld practice: knowledge of art, links to art movements, styles, and genres.

#### Artwork – Product of the artist

What does the artwork represent? (representation)

* Subject matter and ideas from the world
* Artist’s intentions and actions.

How was the artwork made/realised?(form)

* Artist’s actions and choices
* Exhibition contexts and display methods.

#### World – Source of subject matter, ideas, and concepts

What is the artwork about? (subject matter)

* The focus of the artist’s interests and investigations
* Physical, social, psychological, and imaginative worlds
* Interpreted through a particular point of view (frames).

What ideas influence the artist? (ideas and interests)

* Conceptual practice: significant ideas, concepts, and theories from the world
* Artworld practice, for example, traditions, conventions, and theories of art
* Art history, including time and place, issues, and theories.

#### Audience – People who view and interpret art

What is the role of the audience? (role)

* Agents of the artworld, such as critics, historians, artists, general public
* Agency: knowledge of art and capacity for action.

Which point of view is taken to interpret the artwork? (interpretation)

* Frames, including subjective, structural, cultural, and postmodern
* Interpret: to construct meaning about the artwork
* Evaluate: to make value judgements about the resolution of the artwork.

### Interpretation – Plate 1

**Task:** Look again at plate 1, [*Hot With the Chance of a Late Storm*](https://gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/), (see [Appendix](#_Appendix_1)) and answer the questions below on intentions and actions.

Record your answers, either in your journal, on the whiteboard, in a Google document, or on a [Jamboard](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/digital-learning-selector/LearningTool/Card/593).

Share your notes with others in the class and justify your answers.

**Intentions**

* What is the artist trying to represent in the artwork?
* How are the artist’s ideas communicated to the audience?
* In what ways does the world influence the artist’s intentions in this work?

Answers could include:

* subject matter of a melted ice-cream van
* title of the work is a weather forecast
* the artwork creates an experience of the beach
* the subject matter is ironic, humorous, witty, and thought-provoking
* childhood memories, evoking hot summer days, swimming, ice-cream
* the surreal quality attracts the audience to the artwork
* the artwork symbolises environmental issues.

**Actions**

* How did the artist make this work?
* What processes and choices has the artist taken to make the artwork?

Answers could include:

* the creation of a site-specific sculpture
* use of specific materials allows the sculpture to be made
* fibreglass can be easily modelled and manipulated
* the colours are bright and happy (like ice-cream) to attract a wide audience
* a distorted audio loop of ‘[Greensleeves](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T4qdndPUW8)’ (the song ice-cream vans play) accompanied the artwork
* the work is life size
* it was exhibited in [Sculpture by the Sea](https://sculpturebythesea.com/), 2006, at Bondi Beach, Sydney.

**Task:** Create a summary response for the artwork, [*Hot with the Chance of a Late Storm*](https://gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/)*.*

Write one paragraph about the artist’s intentions and one paragraph about the artist’s actions.

Refer to the answers from ‘[Interpretation – Plate 1](#_Interpretation_–_Plate)’ to inform your response.

#### Example summary response – Plate 1

Hot with the Chance of a Late Storm(2006) by the art collective, The Glue Society,is a sculpture of a melted ice-cream van. The title of the work is a weather forecast. The subject matter is ironic, witty, and thought-provoking. The surreal quality attracts the audience to the artwork and makes them think about childhood memories of going to the beach, swimming, ice-cream, and hot summer days. A deeper interpretation of the artwork symbolises environmental issues and the effects of global warming.

The site-specific work was exhibited in Sculpture by the Sea, 2006, at Bondi Beach, Sydney. The scale of the sculpture is life size. The artist has modelled the materials of fibreglass and steel to create the appearance of an ice-cream van melted onto the footpath. The bright, happy colours and recognisable subject matter makes the work easily accessible to audience members. The distorted audio loop of ‘Greensleeves’ reinforce the humorous, and absurd, image of a melted ice-cream van.

### Interpretation – Public sculpture

Public sculpture exhibitions are a popular way for audiences to experience art outside of the traditional gallery context. Often associated with a particular location, these exhibitions have grown in attendance and now occur annually.

In NSW, sculpture exhibitions include:

* [Sculpture by the Sea](https://sculpturebythesea.com/)
* [Les Sculptures Refusées](https://www.lessculpturesrefusees.com/)
* [Sculpture in the Vineyards](https://sculptureinthevineyards.com.au/)
* [Sculpture Bermagui](https://sculpturebermagui.org.au/)
* [Sculptures in the Garden](https://www.sculpturesinthegarden.com.au/)
* [Hidden – Rookwood Sculptures](https://www.hiddeninrookwood.com.au/)
* [Sculpture at Scenic World](https://scenicworld.com.au/sculpture)
* [ARTPark Australia](https://artpark.com.au/).

**Task:** View an exhibition of public sculpture.

Use the weblinks provided in [‘Interpretation – Public sculpture’](#_Interpretation_–_Public) and select one artwork to research.

Read about an artist’s practice and interpret their sculpture, using the questions on intentions and actions from ‘[Interpretation – Plate 1](#_Interpretation_–_Plate)’.

Record your responses as dot points, then write a summary response.

Include paragraphs about the artist’s intentions and actions.

## Week 2: Traditional practice

**Task:** Read the information on [traditional practice](#_Week_2:_Traditional) and compare the artmaking practice of Ricky Swallow and Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Fill in the table below, identifying the similarities and differences between the 2 artists’ practice (see [Appendix](#_Appendix) for citation information).

Table 3 – Similarities and differences

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Swallow – Practice | Similarities | Bernini – Practice |
| (Add response) | (Add response) | (Add response) |

### Practice – Ricky Swallow

Australian artist, Ricky Swallow, is informed by traditional sculpture techniques, historical art movements, and the subjective qualities of the artist’s own memories. His artworks are meticulous in their construction, traversing the divide between high art and popular culture. Swallow’s practice is influenced by an eclectic mix of classical art, science fiction movies, and hobby-store model making. The intriguing and personal subject matter of his works resonate with the audience.

Swallow’s artmaking practice references traditional art. The massive life-size sculpture [*Killing Time*](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/125.2004/), 2003-2004, appears as a three-dimensional reproduction of a Dutch 17th century still-life painting. The artist presents a table laid out with a banquet of seafood – fish, lobsters, oysters, and eels. The attention to detail is evident in the twist of orange peel dangling off the edge of the table. The work evokes the personal memories of Swallow’s childhood; his father was a fisherman and Swallow grew up along the coast of Victoria.

The laborious effort undertaken to carve the work, Killing Time*,* is evident in the title. Swallow has expertly carved the arrangement and the table from laminated Jelutong and maple. By far his most ambitious sculpture, the workwas made with Japanese carving tools and traditional Swiss chisels. Starting with a solid block of wood, Swallow has painstakingly carved away the material to reveal each object’s form, including the table. The folds in the drapery recall the work of Baroque sculptor, Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

### Practice – Gian Lorenzo Bernini

Baroque sculptor, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, was commissioned by the Cornaro family to create ‘[Ecstasy of Saint Teresa](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ABernini_Santa_Teresa_02.JPG)*’* and surrounding chapel, completed in 1652. This was the time of the Counter-Reformation for the Catholic Church, in response to the Protestant Reformation. Bernini’s intentions were to inspire the audience’s faith in the miraculous. The work tells the story of Teresa of Avila, a Spanish Discalced Carmelite nun, who had been canonised as a saint in 1622. The work illustrates Teresa’s experience of religious ecstasy in her encounter with an angel, as told in her autobiography.

Bernini has created a breathtaking and dramatic theatrical scene, combining sculpture, architecture, and painting, to depict this significant event. The figure of Teresa is leaning back, floating on a cloud of marble, with an angel by her side. Bernini has captured the moment immediately before she is to be pierced by the angel’s spear. The folds of her robes resonate with the spiritual transcendence she is experiencing by the event. Gilded plaster stucco rays are illuminated from a stained-glass skylight above the sculpture. Painted cherubs float up to heaven on the vaulted fresco ceiling. The Holy Spirit, symbolised by a dove, radiates light downward onto the scene. The coloured marble columns, pediment, and walls create a sumptuous and dramatic composition. The work is in the Cornaro chapel, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, Italy.

**Task:** Interpret the practice of Swallow and Bernini.

Answer the prompt questions and points in ‘[Interpretation – Conceptual framework’](#_Interpretation_–_Conceptual) for each artist.

**Task:** Complete the review questions below.

Refer to the practice of [Ricky Swallow](#_Practice_–_Ricky) and [Bernini](#_Practice_–_Gian) and include examples of their artworks in your responses.

Use the comparison lists and the prompt questions in ‘[Interpretation – Conceptual framework](#_Interpretation_–_Conceptual)’ to inform your response.

**Review questions**

* What are the intentions and actions of each artist? What is similar and different?
* How does each artist use materials to represent ideas in their artmaking practice?
* How is the audience considered in the exhibition of each artwork?

**Task:** Write a summary report on the material and conceptual practice of Ricky Swallow and Bernini. Use your answers from the research and review tasks to inform your response.

## Week 3: Contemporary practice

### Practice – Rachel Whiteread

British artist, Rachel Whiteread, is a pre-eminent contemporary sculptor. She is known for her post-minimalist artworks of domestic environments and architectural structures. Her monumental public sculptures, [*House*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/turner-prize-1993/turner-prize-1993-artists-rachel-whiteread), 1993, [*Judenplatz Holocaust Monument*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenplatz_Holocaust_Memorial), 2000, and [*Untitled (Stairs)*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whiteread-untitled-stairs-t07939), 2001, are representative of her sculptural practice.

Whiteread’s conceptual practice aims to capture the essence of memory and the space the audience occupies, through the negative casting of everyday and familiar objects. Whiteread’s material practice is evident in the final artwork. Whiteread typically works with concrete, silicone, and plaster of Paris, materials that excel in capturing the details from the cast surfaces. As part of her actions in the inverted casting process, the finished artwork is left as a mould of the negative space, rather than the objects themselves. The only reference to the physical subject is the surface indentations, captured in reverse, causing an optical illusion in the viewer’s gaze. Whiteread’s works challenge the audience’s expectations of the familiar and real, through the uncanny and *trompe l’oeil* (trick of the eye) representations of her subject matter.

Whiteread’s sculpture, [*House*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/turner-prize-1993/turner-prize-1993-artists-rachel-whiteread), was a life-size concrete cast of a Victorian terrace house in East London. The building was the last remaining residence and due for demolition, to make way for a new park as part of urban development in the area. Whiteread and her team cast the interior of the house by spraying concrete against the walls, floors, and ceiling, before reinforcing the structure and eventually removing the exterior. What was left were traces of the interior’s façade – window sills, light switches, and utility lines.

From afar, the sculpture looked the same as the original building, just inverted. The raw concrete made no attempt to hide the casting process or materials. The site-specific work celebrated the residents who had once lived in the working-class neighbourhood by capturing the spaces that they had occupied, revealing private spaces to the public and making memories permanent. [*House*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/turner-prize-1993/turner-prize-1993-artists-rachel-whiteread) was only meant to be a temporary installation but its aesthetic and ambition divided audiences. Nearby residents voted for the local council to destroy the work, viewing it as too ugly. Yet, Whiteread won the prestigious Turner Prize, which is awarded annually to an outstanding British artist, for her work, [*House*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/turner-prize-1993/turner-prize-1993-artists-rachel-whiteread).

**Task:** Research each of the artworks, House, Judenplatz Holocaust Monument, and Untitled (Stairs), using the information from [Practice – Rachel Whiteread](#_Practice_–_Rachel) (see [Appendix](#_Appendix_1) for citation information).

Use the points in ‘[Interpretation – Conceptual framework](#_Interpretation_–_Conceptual)’ to analyse each artwork.

Answer the review questions below.

**Review questions**

* What were Whiteread’s intentions in makingHouse?
* How was the work, House*,* made?
* How are Whiteread’s actions and material practice evident in her artworks?
* In what ways does the world influence Whiteread’s intentions and conceptual practice?
* How is the audience considered in Whiteread’s artworks?

**Task:** Watch the video about Whiteread’s artwork, [Tree of Life (14:48)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcjggsysERg).

View how Whiteread works with a team of artisans and fabricators to make her work.

Look at how to [cast objects (3:45)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWPODod5Bf8), inspired by Whiteread’s practice.

**Task:** Write a summary report of Rachel Whiteread’s material and conceptual practice.

Use your answers from the research and review tasks to inform your response.

## Week 4: Innovative practice

**Task:** Read through the information [Practice – Nick Cave](#_Practice_–_Nick). Refer to citation information in [Appendix](#_Appendix_1).

Highlight the topic sentences in each paragraph and link these ideas to different aspects of the syllabus.

Use the points in ‘[Interpretation – Conceptual framework](#_Interpretation_–_Conceptual)’ to analyse each artwork.

### Practice – Nick Cave

[Nick Cave](https://nickcaveart.com/Main/Intro.html) is an American multidisciplinary artist. His practice explores a diverse range of forms, including sculpture, installation, fashion, textiles, and dance. Cave is best known for his ongoing, [*Soundsuit*](https://jackshainman.com/artists/nick_cave), series of wearable sculptures. To date, he has created over 500 ‘Soundsuits’, designed to be worn by Cave and other performers.

Cave’s conceptual practice is to enact change in the community at large. He collaborates with different artisans and choreographers, who help realise his creative vision. His actions involve staging live performances, with community groups, in non-traditional venues. Cave and other performers dance in the ‘Soundsuits’, often accompanied by drumming and percussive music.

‘Soundsuits’ reinterpret social and cultural costumes, rituals, and celebrations. The brightly coloured suits reference traditional African ceremonial dress, Brazilian carnival costumes, shamanic animism, and army ghillie suits. The suits are quite large, sometimes made over 8 feet tall. Each performance is a ceremony that aims to initiate, cleanse, and heal communities affected by contemporary social evils, such as gun violence, racism, and poverty.

‘Soundsuits’ embody social justice, empowerment, and brutality. The first ‘Soundsuit’ was made by Cave in 1992, as a response to the Rodney King incident and subsequent Los Angeles Riots. The suit was made from twigs collected in a park, which made an audible noise when the artist moved, hence the title, ‘Soundsuits’. Cave thought the discarded materials symbolised his identity as a Black male.

Cave’s ‘Soundsuits’ reflect his unique material practice. His sculptures and installations are an assemblage of found objects and recycled materials. The suits are constructed from feathers, beads, quilted blankets, sisal, human hair, twigs, and thrift store kitsch. The items are intricately sewn and weaved together, often by volunteers and collaborators. Displayed as static sculptures, the suits become animated by the wearer, as part of a performance. The kinaesthetic, theatrical qualities of the ‘Soundsuits’amplifies the exaggerated movements of the performer.

Cave’s intentions for creating his ‘Soundsuits’ are to obscure identity. Eachsuit acts as a protective talisman, a metaphorical suit of armour, camouflaging the wearer from head to toe. The sculpture becomes a second skin, to protect from prejudice, racial profiling, and discrimination. By de-identifying the wearer, race, class, and gender are removed, compelling audiences to look without judgement and focus on the costume and performance.

**Task:** Access interviews with Nick Cave from [ICA Boston (13:17)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndvl8L_a72A), [Nick Cave Heard NY (1:11)](https://youtu.be/SfW9KcU7pzY), and [Thick Skin: Nick Cave (2:48)](https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/nick-cave-thick-skin-short/) on Art21.

Research Cave’s [performance of Heard NY at Grand Central (3:49)](https://youtu.be/OZnv-2WWnEo) and answer the review questions below.

**Task:** Summarise Cave’s intentions, actions, material, and conceptual practice.

**Review questions**

* Nick Cave is a multidisciplinary artist. How does he use each artform in his practice?
* What is his conceptual practice and how does he realise this?
* Discuss his material practice. Why is this unique?
* What is the role of collaboration in Cave’s actions? What effect does it have?
* Cave’s intentions are to obscure identity. Why is this important to Cave?

**Task:** Write a summary report of Nick Cave’s conceptual and material practice.

Consider how his intentions and actions affect the realisation of his work.

Use your answers from the research and review tasks to inform your response.

## Week 5: Assessment

### Extended response

**Task:** Write a practice essay on sculptural practice.

Select at least one artwork, from 3 different artists in this resource, as examples of their conceptual and material practice.

Identify and elaborate on each of the artist’s intentions and actions.

Include reference to key terms, materials, and techniques of sculpture.

**Task:** Complete the final examination question on practice below.

**Practice question (25 marks)**

Explain how the choice of materials affect artists’ intentions and actions.

In your answer, refer to specific artists and artworks you have studied.

## Marking criteria

Table 4 – Extended response marking criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria | Mark |
| Presents a sustained and well-reasoned argument, demonstrating an extensive understanding of sculptural practice.Comprehensively explains the significance of example artists and artworks in relation to material and conceptual practice.Intentions and actions are examined, elaborated, and integrated into the explanation of specific artists’ practice. | 21-25 |
| Presents a sustained and reasoned argument, demonstrating a thorough understanding of sculptural practice.Thoroughly explains the significance of example artists and artworks in relation to the question.Intentions and actions are examined and integrated into the explanation of specific artists’ practice. | 16-20 |
| Presents and generally sustains an argument, demonstrating a sound understanding of sculptural practice.Broadly explains the significance of example artists and artworks in relation to material and conceptual practice.Intentions and actions are identified in the explanation of specific artists’ practice. | 11-15 |
| Presents an uneven argument, demonstrating a basic understanding of sculptural practice.Describes features of example artists and artworks that may relate to the question..Intentions and actions are generalised and may be connected to artists’ practice | 6-10 |
| Presents a limited understanding of sculptural practice.Describes features of example artists and artworks that may relate to some aspects of the question. Ideas and comments are offered in an isolated way. | 1-5 |

## Appendix

Table 5 – List of artworks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Artwork title | Citation |
| [*Hot With the Chance of a Late Storm*](https://gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/https%3A/gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/) | The Glue Society (2006) [Hot With the Chance of a Late Storm](https://gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/https%3A/gluesociety.com/work/hot-with-the-chance-of-a-late-storm/) [Paint, steel and fibreglass. Distorted audio loop of ‘Greensleeves’], 7m × 5m × 1m. Exhibited 2006 at Sculpture by the Sea, Bondi, Australia. |
| [*Killing Time*](https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/125.2004/) | Ricky Swallow (2001) Killing Time [laminated Jelutong, maple], 108 × 184 × 118cm (irregular). Art Gallery of NSW Collection, Sydney, Australia. |
| [*Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3ABernini_Santa_Teresa_02.JPG) | Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1645-52) ‘Ecstasy of St Teresa’ [marble], 350 cm H. Cornaro Chapel, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, Italy. |
| [*House*](https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/turner-prize-1993/turner-prize-1993-artists-rachel-whiteread) | Rachel Whiteread (1993) House [internal concrete casting of 193 Grove Road, Bow, East London (destroyed)]. |
| [*Judenplatz Holocaust Monumen*t](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenplatz_Holocaust_Memorial) | Rachel Whiteread (2000) Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial (Nameless Library) [steel and cast concrete], 10 × 7 × 3.8 m. Judenplatz, Vienna, Austria. |
| [*Untitled (Stairs)*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whiteread-untitled-stairs-t07939) | Rachel Whiteread (2001) Untitled (Stairs) [plaster, fibreglass, wood], 3.7 × 2.2 × 5.8 m. Tate Gallery, UK. |
| [*Soundsuit*](https://jackshainman.com/artists/nick_cave) (various) | Nick Cave (2013) Soundsuit [mixed media including fabric, crochet blanket, doilies, sequins and mannequin] 251 × 66 × 45.7 cm. Jack Shainman Gallery, NY, USA. |

## References

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

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[Visual Arts Stage 6 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/11-12/stage-6-learning-areas/stage-6-creative-arts/visual-arts-syllabus) © 2016 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

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