



Promoting critical perception: thinking big & re-imagining spaces

Curriculum springboard

Visual Arts
Stages 4–6
Years 7–12



Search party (by R. Steedman, 2012)

Outcomes:

A student:

- explores the roles and relationships between the concepts of artist, artwork, world and audience
Conceptual Framework P2
- explores the roles and relationships between the concepts of artist, artwork, world and audience through critical and historical investigations of art
Conceptual Framework P8
- applies their understanding of the relationships among the artist, artwork, world and audience
Conceptual Framework H8

[Visual arts Stage 6 syllabus](#)

Other outcomes:

[Visual arts Years 7–10 syllabus](#)

4.2, 4.8, 5.2, 5.8

[Photographic and](#)

Review:

Big art, small art

MANCO, Tristan

Thames & Hudson, UK, 2014

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In the words of Robert Smithson, *size determines an object, but scale determines art*. Underscoring this pivotal notion of perception, this publication examines the creative use of scale in contemporary art, ranging from painting, photography, sculpture and installation to alternative architecture, street art and collaborative interventions.

Inspirational works from a diversity of artists and localities are presented within the context of globalisation, prompting students and teachers to consider how the digital realm is affecting the way we use and interact with space, whether virtual or physical, immersive or intimate. Informative essays introduce the concepts of big and small art and, combined with profiles highlighting each artist's distinctive voice and intentions, signal engaging artmaking and critical investigations that focus on the practice of artists and their innovative use of materials. Image plates are separated from artist profiles, creating a useful platform to stimulate active discussion, comparisons and interpretations, whilst page number cues enable quick cross-referencing. From playful public spaces to the fascinating minutiae of everyday ephemera and the microscopic, this publication will spark student interest in the psychological ties between artworks and audiences, inviting them to think big, no matter what the size. H. Yip ([Scan 34.1](#))

USER LEVEL: Stage 4 Stage 5 Stage 6 Professional

KLA: CA

SYLLABUS: Photographic & Digital Media 7–10; Photography, Video & Digital Imaging CEC Stage 6; Visual Arts 7–10; Visual Arts Stage 6; Visual Design 7–10; Visual Design CEC Stage 6

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Teaching and learning opportunities:

- Define *scale*, brainstorming everyday examples that demonstrate this concept.
- Discuss how globalisation, including the rapid rise of digital communication and [travel networks](#), has impacted the way we use, interact with, experience and perceive space, whether virtual, physical, individual or collective. Consider how this informs the practice of artists who aim to explore the sensory potential of materials and provoke audiences to re-engage with the physical world.
- Investigate how artists integrate artworks directly into the fabric of spaces, dissolving boundaries between inside and outside, positive and negative, and public and private.
- Use objects en masse to construct a large-scale sculpture or immersive installation that challenges physical boundaries and spatial relationships. Simple, lightweight items such as blown up plastic bags or styrofoam packaging can be used as repeated elements of shape, colour and texture. Refer to [Pascale Marthine Tayou](#), the [BEAMS arts festival](#), Nike Savvas' [Full of love, full of wonder](#) (2005) and Choi Jeong-Hwa's [Kabbala](#) (2013). Alternatively, string or textiles can be woven across spaces to create suspended installations similar to the work of [Janet Echelman](#). Experiment with natural and/or built spaces and lighting, documenting the work in-situ and changing over time.
- Make the impossible appear possible by inverting everyday spaces or situations. Experiments in collage,

Professional resources:

- TED talk: [Taking imagination seriously](#) by Janet Echelman, 2011
- [White rabbit library](#)

Resources:

Books:

- Bachelard, G 1994, *The poetics of space*
- Boffoli, C 2013, *Tiny people in a world of big food: big appetites*
- Slinkachu 2008, *Little people in the city: the street art of Slinkachu*
- Sloan, M 2012, *Return to the sea: saltworks by Motoi Yamamoto*

Films:

- [Do-ho Suh](#) by Art21, 2003
- [The great swallow, Rotterdam](#) by Benjamin Verdonck, 2008
- [Human nature](#) by Jason deCaires Taylor, 2012
- [Jason deCaires Taylor and Museo Subaquatico de Arte](#) by Jason deCaires Taylor, 2011
- [Latest marine development of underwater sculptures and statues](#) by Jason deCaires Taylor, 2009
- *Le ballon rouge (The red balloon)* by Albert Lamorisse, 1956
- [Phantom landscape](#) by Yang Yongliang, 2010
- [Return to the sea, saltworks by Motoi Yamamoto](#) by Monterey Museum of Art, 2013
- [Saving Chinese art from extinction: meet Yang Yongliang](#) by The Creators Project, 2012
- *Wasteland* by Lucy Walker, 2010



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continued

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[digital media Years 7–10 syllabus](#)

5.2, 5.8

[Photography, video and digital imaging CEC Stage 6 syllabus](#)

M2, CH2

[Visual design Years 7–10](#)

5.2, 5.8

[Visual design CEC Stage 6 syllabus](#)

DM2, CH2

Content:

- Interpreting and activating relationships between the artist, artwork, world and audience.
- Investigating the roles and functions of the artist, artwork, world and audience.
- Acknowledging multiple points of view.
- Recognising the synthesis between the material and conceptual practice of artists.

photography, digital imaging, animation or video could involve scenarios where up is down, inside is out or gravity is ambiguous. Windows, doors, floors, walls, ceilings, mirrors or other structures could be positioned in unexpected ways to disrupt audiences' notion of reality. Refer to the concept of *trompe l'oeil* and the work of [Jean-François](#), [Leandro Erlich](#) and Philippe Ramette.

- Play with perceptions of scale by juxtaposing disproportionate objects or figures to transport audiences to a fantastical world reminiscent of *Gulliver's travels* or *Alice in wonderland*. Everyday objects could be dramatically upsized or downsized in digital or sculptural form to contrast with human scale and a Mad Hatter's tea party could even be staged similar to Lilian Bourgeat's *Le dîner de Gulliver* (*Gulliver's dinner*, 2008).
- Transform subjects into artworks larger than life. Large-scale composite portraits can be collaboratively assembled using symbolic materials, similar to the work of [Jorge Rodríguez-Gerada](#) and [Vik Muniz](#). Sheets of coloured card or packaging could be sculpted to form giant caricatures akin to the busts of [José Lerma](#). Recycled textiles could be used to create soft sculptures based on exaggerated everyday objects inspired by Claes Oldenburg.
- Zoom in on the microscopic and overlooked, staging miniature worlds that encompass intriguing details, childhood memories, fictional narratives or paradoxical humour. Refer to [Thomas Doyle](#), [Liliana Porter](#), [Kendal Murray](#), [Slinkachu](#), [Christopher Boffoli](#), [Joe Fig](#) and Diem Chau's carved pencil leads. Train model figurines can be used to stage Lilliputian scenes that could be documented using macro photography, point of view and depth of field. Alternatively, surveillance footage shot from a bird's eye perspective can be overlaid with omnipotent hands, as in June Bum Park's *Ill crossing* (2002).
- Analyse how artists instil immaterial or elemental components in their work, such as water and natural cycles, to transcend boundaries of time and space, and allow their installations to be shaped by nature itself. Consider Fujiko Nakaya's [fog sculptures](#), the underwater sculptures of [Jason deCaires Taylor](#) and Motoi Yamamoto's [Return to the sea](#) project.

- Utilise substances that are easily spread or shaped, such as salt and coloured sand, to create temporary site-specific installations. Stencil particles onto the ground, similar to Cal Lane's [Sand lace](#) (2012) or apply them in a fashion similar to the work of [Motoi Yamamoto](#). Refer to the concept of Karesansui or Zen rock gardens that symbolise stylised landscapes.
- Re-imagine the spaces we live in, investigating how we relate to them emotionally and perceive individual and collective space. Consider natural or human habitations, such as nests, houses, temporary shelters and urban structures. Design a home, place or landscape inspired by Pascale Marthine Tayou's *Home sweet home* (2011), Benjamin Verdonck's *The great swallow, Rotterdam* (2008), Nikolay Polissky's alternative architecture, [Do-ho Suh](#), Yin Xiuzhen's [portable cities](#) or Gaston Bachelard's *The poetics of space* (1994).
- Appropriate conventional representations of spaces and subvert them through shifts in scale. Refer to Yang Yongliang's appropriation of Chinese landscape painting in [A bowl of Taipei](#) (2012) and [Phantom landscape](#) (2010).
- Re-interpret and combine everyday objects in surreal ways, referring to the practice of [Brock Davis](#), [Nancy Fouts](#) and [Chema Madoz](#).
- Weave a visual narrative by adopting an object or series of objects as a symbolic motif or metaphor for a storyline or sequence of events. Refer to Kurt Perschke's [RedBall project](#) and Albert Lamorisse's film *Le ballon rouge* (*The red balloon*, 1956).
- Experiment with negative and positive forms, similar to the silhouette leaf works of [Jenny Lee Fowler](#) and [Lorenzo Manuel Durán](#), and the carved book sculptures of [Guy Laramée](#).
- Research a particular community space or streetscape through site visits, surveys and interviews with locals. Propose an urban or street art initiative to transform the space, comment on a local issue and/or promote a collective sense of identity. Consider Boa Mistura's typographic interventions, Evol's appropriation of street furniture, and temporary collaborative installations such as [yarn bombing](#).
- Debate the design philosophy *less is more*, comparing the intentions, nature and impact of *big* versus *small* art.

Websites:

- [Christopher Boffoli](#)
- [Lilian Bourgeat](#)
- [Diem Chau](#)
- [Brock Davis](#)
- [Thomas Doyle](#)
- [Janet Echelman](#)
- [Leandro Erlich](#)
- [Evol](#)
- [Joe Fig](#)
- [Jean-François Fourtou](#)
- [Nancy Fouts](#)
- [Jorge Rodríguez-Gerada](#)
- [Choi Jeong-Hwa](#)
- [Luke Jerram](#)
- [José Lerma](#)
- [Chema Madoz](#)
- [Boa Mistura](#)
- [Vik Muniz](#)
- [Kendal Murray](#)
- [June Bum Park](#)
- [Kurt Perschke](#)
- [Nikolay Polissky](#)
- [Liliana Porter](#)
- [Jorge Rodríguez-Gerada](#)
- [Tomás Saraceno](#)
- [Nike Savvas](#)
- [Slinkachu](#)
- [Do-ho Suh](#)
- [Jason deCaires Taylor](#)
- [Pascale Marthine Tayou](#)
- [Motoi Yamamoto](#)
- [Yang Yongliang](#)