

THE 5TH ASIA-PACIFIC TRIENNIAL OF CONTEMPORARY ART

2 DECEMBER 2006 – 27 MAY 2007
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Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art

ORGANISING THE WORLD APT5 TOUR

TEACHERS' NOTES

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SUBJECT AREAS

SOSE; Science; Modern History

STUDENTS ATTENDING THIS TOUR SHOULD COME AWAY WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF:

- how artists address issues of the classification of objects and ideas throughout history
- how artists use materials and techniques, such as manipulating scale and media, to encourage viewers to think about different approaches to the way people view objects
- the links between science, history and art.

INTRODUCTION

This tour is about the ways that artists can encourage viewers to think more about the world we live in and some of the major issues that affect us, such as history and the environment. Some of the ideas that the artists work with have emerged over thousands of years, such as how animal specimens are classified in museum collections. They also relate to larger issues about the effects of collecting things and living in urban societies. Each artist brings out these issues in particular ways through their various techniques. A focus of this tour could be the artists' techniques and how they relate to the main ideas represented in their work.

HINTS FOR THE TOUR

When moving between the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art, suggest that students think about why Yuken Teruya is inspired to use trees in his works. Link this with Teruya's ideas about the degradation of the environment.

Ask the students how they think the development of urban spaces and modern living has impacted on the environment.

What is the purpose of a museum? Why do museums collect things? What do collections of things tell us about how we understand the world we live in?

TEACHERS' NOTES



Yuken Teruya Japan b.1973 / *Notice — Forest* (detail) 2006 / Paper / 5 components: 11.7 x 23.9 x 34.9cm; 9.9 x 21.8 x 28.8; 10.5 x 19.5 x 26.5cm; 11.7 x 23.9 x 34.9cm (approx.); 11.7 x 23.9 x 34.9cm (approx.) / Collection: The artist

QAG GALLERY 17
YUKEN TERUYA

JAPAN B.1973

Yuken Teruya manipulates and transforms the meanings of everyday objects. A central feature of his works is the idea of metamorphosis, and the subversion of expectations or traditional meanings. Using a variety of materials and media — from kimonos to pizza boxes, newspaper articles, shopping bags and paper-cuttings — Teruya frequently creates meticulous and intricate art works, small and captivating worlds, which relate to broader concerns. Teruya's works explore issues such as consumerism, the depletion of natural resources and other problems associated with globalisation, including the threat it poses to regional cultural traditions and identities.

In his recent *Notice — Forest* works, Teruya created delicate jewel-like papercut trees, constructed from discarded bags. Teruya begins with a photograph of a specific tree, which is then reconstructed in meticulous detail and suspended inside the bag. These enclosed and enchanted worlds, intensely time-consuming to produce, contrast strangely with the prosaic and easily discardable materials from which they are fabricated. Many of the bags are derived from multinational brands such as McDonalds, Louis Vuitton and Starbucks. One of Teruya's concerns was to point to the link between environmental problems and the ever-growing 'family trees' of global corporations.

If Teruya's trees are metaphors for the growth and spread of large corporations, they are also small memorials to the many trees that have been destroyed to create commercial bags. These fragile icons suggest the instability and transience of the natural environment. They also send a message of hope, since the materials are recycled to create an object of delicate and magical beauty.

Yuken Teruya uses 'rubbish' to create beautifully sculpted works. Do you think that the time and effort that Teruya puts into creating the works makes them more valuable?

What comments do you think Teruya is making about the consumption of materials in our society? Why does he sculpt trees inside the bags?



eX de Medici Australia b.1959 / *The theory of everything* 2005 / Watercolour and metallic pigment on Arches paper / 114.3 x 176.3cm / Purchased 2005 / Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

QAG GALLERY 6
EX DE MEDICI

AUSTRALIA B.1959

Since the 1970s, eX de Medici's practice has included sound performance, installation, painting and photography. She is also a celebrated tattooist and opened her own tattoo parlour in 1990. Since the late 1990s, de Medici has made a stunning series of large watercolour paintings, juxtaposing emblems of power and control with signs of the fragility of life. In her hands, emblems of oppression are adorned with elaborate patterning inspired by the natural world — she has a particular passion for moths. Since 1999, de Medici has been artist-in-residence at the CSIRO Entomology Division's Australian National Collection and her paintings pay homage to natural history illustration associated with the scientific classification of the world. De Medici also draws on the seventeenth-century Dutch vanitas tradition: her paintings are contemporary forms of memento mori, reminding us of our mortality and the futility of worldly pursuits.

eX de Medici's work is called *The theory of everything* 2005 — what kinds of ideas do you think a 'theory of everything' would include? Look closely at the different objects represented in the painting.

Compare this work with another in the space, *Desire overcoming duality* 2006, which is a microcosmic look at the surface of an insect's body.

TEACHERS' NOTES



Justine Cooper Australia/United States b.1968 / *Leopards (Panthera pardus), Congo 1911* (from 'Saved by science' series) 2005 / 76.3 x 99.1cm / Digital colour print on Fuji Crystal Archive Matte paper, ed. 1/8 / Purchased 2005. Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

QAG GALLERY 6
JUSTINE COOPER

AUSTRALIA/UNITED STATES B.1968

Justine Cooper is an Australian artist who currently resides in New York. She is fascinated by the intersections of science and art and by the relationships between science and society as a whole, especially in the ways we order and use knowledge and how advances in medical science change concepts of identity.

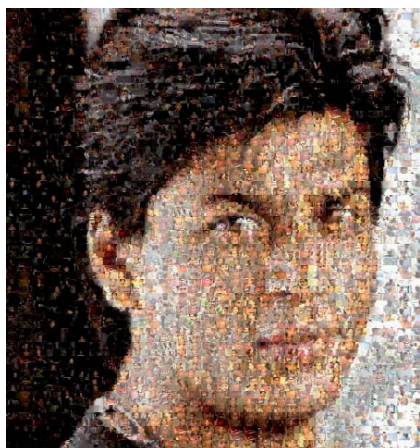
Cooper was artist-in-residence at the American Museum of Natural History, New York, in 2003–04. Her access to its rich collections was unprecedented as she was the first resident artist at the museum in its almost 150-year history.

'Saved by science' is a series of photographs and a film shot by Cooper which document and explore the extensive scientific collections stored in the museum. Cooper used a vintage large-format wooden 1910 camera to detail the museum's storage areas just before they were modernised and rationalised. The specimens are juxtaposed with the architecture of the collections, including imposing locked metal cabinets. The film echoes this theme, with the camera moving steadily through the empty rooms and corridors of the museum and between the storage cabinets, accompanied by the recorded sounds of the birds and animals locked inside.

The 'Saved by science' series examines how specimens collected from the natural world are processed into valuable objects of Western scientific order.

Look around at the other works in this gallery space by Justine Cooper. What are the common themes about 'collecting' animal specimens being raised by this series? Are the animals in their natural environment? What is the effect of removing the animals from where they live?

After viewing the photographs, discuss how Justine Cooper's images relate to her moving image work *S.O.S. (Sounds of science)* 2005.



Rashid Rana Pakistan b.1968 / *Ommatidia III / Shah Rukh Khan* 2004 / Type C photograph / 76.2 x 83.82cm, ed. 12/20 / Collection: The artist

GoMA GALLERY 16
RASHID RANA

PAKISTAN B.1968

Krithik Roshan, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan are recognised superstars of popular Indian cinema, commonly referred to as Bollywood. These actors who play archetypal roles of masculinity, heroism, romance and sexuality are not only popular in India but also in Pakistan, where large and colourful portrait posters can be readily found in street stalls and on urban and rural billboards.

Ommatidia are the structural elements which hold the many lenses of the compound eye of a fly. In these works, the structure (or ommatidium) of these fictive film heroes is made up of thousands of tiny smiling Pakistani men, both young and old. By placing these tiny faces as the foundation of each image, Rana asserts that the collective dreams and desires of ordinary Pakistani men help sustain the fame and status of these film stars. Despite the continuing political conflict between India and Pakistan, their shared cultural passions cannot be divided by geographical borders.

How is this image organised? Is Rashid Rana suggesting that we focus on the large image, or the smaller images that make up the work?

Is there any difference between the subject matter of the work as a whole and the smaller photographs?

How does Rana's technique or approach to his murals compare with eX de Medici's watercolour technique?

What are they saying about how objects gain their meaning? For example, are the objects or scenes they create alluding to social or historical meanings?

TEACHERS' NOTES



Hong Hao China b.1965 / *Long March in Panjiayuan A* 2004 /
Type C photographs, ed. 1/9 / 127 x 230cm / Purchased 2006 /
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

GoMA GALLERY 1.1

HONG HAO

CHINA B.1965

Until the 1990s in China, photography was largely for propaganda or utilitarian purposes. Hong Hao is one of a generation of emerging artists who has developed a critical photographic practice that reflects on the legacy of cultural memory amid a rapidly changing China.

Long March in Panjiayuan A and *Long March in Panjiayuan B* were produced for the Long March Project. In these works, Hong scanned life-size objects and Mao memorabilia to reflect on the subtle but pervasive influence of the Communist Revolution (1966–76) on his generation.

Hong often uses repetition in his photographs to redefine and re-evaluate the meaning of objects and events. In these two works propaganda materials from the historical Long March — maps, drawings, paintings, pamphlets, booklets, photographs, badges and hats — are displayed in an encyclopedic array, crowding onto the flat surface of the picture plane.

The titles of the works refer to the Panjiayuan antique markets in Beijing, the largest second-hand markets in Asia, where tourists and collectors gather every weekend and stalls selling copious quantities of Mao memorabilia (both fake and genuine) proliferate.

How does the reorganisation of images outside of their traditional context change the meaning of these objects?

What is the effect of the artist scanning the objects rather than presenting a collage of the real materials?

What are some common themes that students can see by looking at the various works by the Long March Project artists in APT5?



Yang Zhenzhong China b.1968 / *Light and easy no. 15* 2002 /
Type C photograph, ed. 8/10 / 120 x 181.7cm / Purchased
2005. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation / Collection:
Queensland Art Gallery

GoMA GALLERY 1.1

YANG ZHENZHONG

CHINA B.1968

Yang Zhenzhong is a leading practitioner of digital video and photography in China. A graduate of fashion design at the Zhejiang Institute of Silk Textiles in 1990 and oil painting studies at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou in 1993, Yang began experimenting with video and photography as these media became available to Chinese artists in the 1990s.

Yang turns abstract notions of progress and convention into images which comment on contemporary life. He is one of many Shanghai-based artists using digital media to reflect on the city's rapid urbanisation and cultural change. Whether capturing the new individualist ethos of Shanghai's burgeoning middle classes, exploring existential questions or reworking communist visual culture to express present-day anxieties, Yang employs his signature sense of humour and the absurd. He uses video and photography with digital effects to create conceptual games and singular parabolic images. Objects of social status and markers of Chinese identity are set loose from their everyday meanings, and subjected to ironic comment and playful reevaluation. His work creates moments of reflection on cultural pasts and futures in a fast-moving present.

Yang cites his irreverence and striking visual humour as being inspired by Buddhist thought. He explores the general through the anecdotal, and uses humour to reflect on deep personal and cultural anxieties. His practice is driven by an interest in mediating specific and local experiences, and connecting them to universal readings. By changing the way we see objects, places and commonplace behaviours, Yang's videos and photographs liberate us all — if only for a moment — from the most futile aspects of contemporary urban life.

Yang Zhenzhong situates his works in urban environments. What comments do his works make about cities and, in particular, his city of Shanghai?

What is the significance of including a photograph of Shanghai upside down?

Note: Yang's other works in the exhibition focus on objects of social status and markers of Chinese identity such as a motorbike, police car, vending machine and military truck.

TEACHERS' NOTES



Yoo Seung-ho Korea b.1973 / *yodeleheeyoo!* 2006 / Ink on paper / 231.5 x 135cm / Collection: The artist / Courtesy: One and J Gallery, Seoul

GoMA GALLERY 1.1

YOO SEUNG-HO

KOREA B.1973

On first glance, these works appear to be traditional Korean landscape paintings but, on closer inspection, the brushstrokes appear as thousands of tiny, grain-size *Hangul* characters (the native alphabet of Korea), or as English letters. This painstaking process is Yoo Seung-ho's signature mark, a form of poetry inspired by the surreal calligrams of Guillaume Apollinaire (where words make up a shape). With a sense of tongue-in-cheek, many of Yoo's delicate works are linguistic puns that highlight the absurd difference between how a word sounds and its associated meanings in different languages.

Most of the Korean characters found in Yoo's works are onomatopoeic (the formation or use of words such as 'buzz' or 'murmur' that imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to). For instance, in Yoo's 'Shoo' series of paintings, the tiny character that sounds like 'shoo' is the basic unit of a reproduced Northern Song dynasty painting. The choice of 'shoo' was inspired by the sound of a rocket as it is visualised on paper by Japanese comic artists. History is humorously referenced in Yoo's works, which take format, scale, technical virtuosity and spiritual rigour from the discipline of Chinese and Korean traditional aesthetics, though transformed with contemporary cheek and flair.

Graduating from the painting department of Hansung University, Seoul, in 1999, Yoo has been praised as one of a select few of his generation who have rejuvenated the artistic and spiritual practice of the traditional arts in Korea. His unique visual language can be found inscribed on organic sculptural forms, or creeping along a wall like a line of ants, or most notably as pen and ink drawings on canvas.

What do you think the relationship is between the images that Yoo Seung-ho creates and his use of the traditional script?

These works look like traditional Korean painting. How could they be described as both traditional and contemporary?

The Korean words inscribed on Yoo's paintings are onomatopoeic (words such as 'buzz' or 'murmur' that, when spoken, imitate the sounds associated with the objects or actions they refer to). What are some other onomatopoeic words?



Anish Kapoor India/United Kingdom b.1954 / *Void (#13)* 1991–92 / Fibreglass and pigment / 161 (diam.) x 120cm / Purchased 1998. Queensland Art Gallery Foundation / Collection: Queensland Art Gallery

GoMA GALLERY 1.3

ANISH KAPOOR

INDIA/UNITED KINGDOM B.1954

Anish Kapoor is one of the most influential sculptors working today. The exploration of the sublime is central to Kapoor's work, and his recent practice is renowned for dramatic installations. The most spectacular and extraordinary of his works engage the viewer both physically and psychologically with their large scale and saturated colour. Using a range of surface materials, from highly reflective stainless steel and mirrored lacquer to dense pigmentation that draws in the light, even the humblest of Kapoor's sculptures evoke sensations of transcendence.

Kapoor's extraordinary contribution to the field of contemporary sculpture is evident in his work which combines high modernism with metaphysical concepts. His magnificent sculptures draw on a rich cultural heritage that includes Indian metaphysics, in which the notions of 'origin' and 'void' are fundamental. Kapoor's highly evocative use of colour — red, yellow, blue, black and white — references specific symbolic, sacred and spiritual meanings in South Asia. With simple yet strong forms, he explores ways in which viewers can simultaneously experience sensations of infinity and vertigo. Kapoor says:

I have always been interested in objects that have this sense about themselves — not that they were made, but that they were always there. I feel deeply that art has a kind of religious function. Somehow it is not enough that an object is made, that it is fashioned, there is need to go beyond the fashioning. It's related to a very old aspect of Indian thinking that there are certain kinds of objects that are self manifest: they make themselves. The curious thing about these objects is that they are made — but their mythology is that they are not made. It's a very wonderful idea about the presence of form in the world.

Compare Anish Kapoor's *Void (#13)* with his installation *1000 Names* 1981 in the same space. What are the similarities and differences in the artist's use of materials?

What are some of the qualities of the materials that Kapoor uses to explore the idea of a 'void' (a term that refers to a deep sensation of emptiness and fullness at the same time)?