

MAKING a MARK



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AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS OF MEDIA

A STUDY GUIDE BY
JENNIFER CONNOLLY



1: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Sarah Contos in front of her piece Sarah Contos Presents: The Long Kiss Goodbye at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

2: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Justine Varga at her art residency in London (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

3: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Tony Albert in front of his piece Exotica (Mid-Century Modern) at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

4: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Celeste Chandler in front of her piece Heroic Painting at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)



» SYNOPSIS

FILMED DURING THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF THE RAMSAY ART PRIZE, *MAKING A MARK* IS A CHRONICLE OF PASSION AND CREATIVE TRAILBLAZING AS A SELECTION OF FINALISTS, ALL AGED UNDER 40, VIE FOR THE \$100,000 PRIZE. IN A STORY THAT SPANS THE GLOBE FROM EUROPE TO OUTBACK AUSTRALIA, WE EXPLORE ONE OF THE MOST PERSONALLY CHALLENGING AND FINANCIALLY TENUOUS VOCATIONS, AND FIND OUT JUST WHAT IT TAKES TO LIVE A LIFE IN THE WORLD OF VISUAL ARTS.¹

CONTENT HYPERLINKS

» DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Making a Mark is set in a world where human creativity collides with human realities, and it catches the shards thrown off from these two monumental flywheels. The film follows a selection of finalists in the inaugural \$100,000 Ramsay Art Prize, and asks the question: what does it take to survive as an artist in the 21st century?

We wanted our film to reach out to as broad an audience as possible, not just to art enthusiasts, but finding the core of the story wasn't simple or easy. First we thought we would be making a film about a brand new art prize, one that's unique because it accepts works on any subject, in any medium, as long as the artist is under 40. We thought that the drama would come from watching talented, young artists preparing their works and biting their nails, wondering if they could be that lucky person to make their mark, and have their lives and careers transformed overnight.

But the reality of the art world is different. We discovered artists and their careers are certainly helped by art prizes and the opportunities they offer, but those careers aren't created overnight. And as we came to know the remarkably gifted people in this film, we realised the story isn't actually about the prize at all. It's about people who make our lives immeasurably richer even at huge cost to their own; how they survive in one of the most difficult vocations anyone could imagine; and why they have chosen to be there at all. In other words, this isn't an art film, and in a way it isn't even a film about the arts. It's about obsession, human resilience, and a relentless quest to find truth.

Making a Mark is a very personal film. Our featured artists opened their lives to us, generously and courageously, revealing their deepest fears and greatest dreams. It's also very personal in another way: the Ramsay Art Prize was created in honour of my aunt Diana Ramsay shortly before her death. A leading arts philanthropist, she left a bequest that not only supports the prize in perpetuity, but also numerous people and organisations in other walks of life. So *Making a Mark* is a small thank you to her for a lifetime of giving, and in a larger sense, a celebration of the giving that is the essential nature of the arts and all artists.²

RICHARD JASEK

TOP: Anna Vincent (Producer), Maxx Corkindale (Cinematographer), Richard Jasek (Director) and Bonnie McBride (Co-Producer) at The Museo Correr in Venice, Italy

MIDDLE: Maxx Corkindale (Cinematographer) and Richard Jasek (Director) at Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy (Credit: Anna Vincent)

BOTTOM: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Owen Leong speaks to Director Richard Jasek on the streets of Hong Kong



» CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL SUITABILITY LINKS

Marking a Mark is suitable for Secondary students in Years 9 – 12. **Teachers are advised that there is infrequent course language, sexual references and images with partial nudity in the second half of the film.**

General understandings addressed in the film:

- The commitment and dedication required to become an artist
- Following your passion
- Resilience
- The artistic process

Summary of links to the National Curriculum:

- Media Year 9-10
- Drama Year -9-12
- Art/Studio Arts Years 9-12
- English Year 10

Learning outcomes and content descriptors have not been developed for Arts subjects in the Australian curriculum; however, the ideas explored in the series could be linked to the key knowledge and skills in Senior Art throughout Australia.



The Richest by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Vincent Namatjira (Courtesy of the artist)

» CURRICULUM LINKS³

ENGLISH

Year 10

Responding to literature

Analyse and explain how **text** structures, language and **visual features** of texts and the **context** in which texts are experienced may influence **audience** response (ACELT1641)

Language for interaction

Understand how language use can have inclusive and exclusive social effects, and can empower or disempower people (ACELA1564)

Understand that people's evaluations of texts are influenced by their value systems, the context and the purpose and **mode** of communication (ACELA1565)

Expressing and developing ideas

Evaluate the impact on audiences of different choices in the representation of still and moving images (ACELA1572)

Interpreting, analysing and evaluating

Use comprehension strategies to compare and contrast information within and between texts, identifying and analysing embedded perspectives, and evaluating supporting evidence (ACELY1754)

MEDIA ARTS

Years 9/10

Analyse a range of media artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing **viewpoints** and enrich their media arts making, starting with Australian media artworks, including media artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and international media artworks (ACAMAR079)

Experiment with ideas and stories that manipulate media **conventions** and genres to construct new and alternative points of view through images, sounds and text (ACAMAM073)

Develop and refine media production skills to integrate and shape the technical and symbolic elements in images, sounds and text for a specific purpose, meaning and **style** (ACAMAM075)

Produce and distribute media artworks for a range of community and institutional contexts and consider social, ethical and regulatory issues (ACAMAM077)

Years 11-12

Links to senior Media curriculum in different regions.

VISUAL ARTS

Years 9/10

Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal **style**, reflecting on the styles of **artists**, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander **artists** (ACAVAM125)

Manipulate **materials**, techniques, **technologies** and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions (ACAVAM126)

Develop and refine techniques and processes to represent ideas and subject matter (ACAVAM127)

Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention (ACAVAM128)

Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks (ACAVAM129)

Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making (ACAVAR130)

Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing **viewpoints** and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)

Years 11-12

Links to senior Visual Arts curriculum in different regions.

DRAMA

Year 9/10

Structure drama to engage an **audience** through manipulation of **dramatic action**, **forms** and performance styles and by using **design elements** (ACADRM050)

Perform devised and scripted drama making deliberate artistic choices and shaping **design elements** to unify **dramatic meaning** for an **audience** (ACADRM051)

Years 11-12

Links to senior Drama curriculum in different regions.

GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Ethical understanding

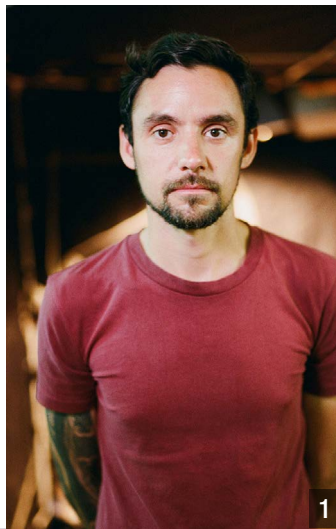
1: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist James Tylor (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

2: All of Your Women and Some of Mine by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Natalya Hughes (Courtesy of the artist)

3: Karrawirra Yerta by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist James Tylor (Courtesy of the artist)

4: Exotica (Mid Century Modern) by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Tony Albert (Courtesy of the artist)

5: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Vincent Namatjira in front of his piece The Richest at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)



» BEFORE VIEWING

1. *Making a Mark* celebrates the passion and resilience of artists. What are you passionate about?
Create an image, short story, poem or visual presentation that encapsulates and explores your passion.
2. Define the word philanthropist.
3. What does it mean to 'make your mark'? Where have you heard this saying before? Write a definition in your own words.
4. Consider the following statement, 'People respond to intensity, concentration and thought'⁴. Conduct a class debate on this topic.
5. Research the Venice Biennale. What opportunities does this event provide for Australian artists?
6. *Making a Mark* follows a group of Australian artists as they prepare to enter the Ramsay Art Prize. Read the information on the websites below and answer the questions that follow.
<https://ramsay.artgallery.sa.gov.au/about/>
<http://www.jdrfoundation.com.au/#about>
 - How often is the art prize held and what are the conditions of entry?



6: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Celeste Chandler (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

7: Director Richard Jasek with Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Celeste Chandler at her home in Melbourne

- The James and Diana Ramsay Foundation support the prize. What is the mission of this foundation?
- Why do you think the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation supported the Ramsay Art Prize?

(Curriculum links: Art, English, Drama)



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» WHILE VIEWING

1. What are the issues that the artists at the beginning of the film identify as being part of their profession?
2. How might Khadim's family background inform his work?
3. Exhibiting in the Venice Biennale is identified as a measure of success for visual artists. What other measures are identified?

1: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Celeste Chandler in front of her piece Heroic Painting at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

2: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Tony Albert in front of his piece Exotica (Mid Century Modern) at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)



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4. Discuss the meaning of the following quotes in the context of the film:

'You can't be an artist without a thick skin' _____

'The decision is often in the hands of others' _____

5. List the ways that the artists featured in the film supplement their incomes.
6. Celeste Chandler's work is a block of 15 images of versions of herself created with the use of shaving foam. Celeste wonders if the process of creating the work 'doesn't seem that sophisticated'. What is your impression of the process and the finished work?
7. Artist Baden Pailthorpe muses that 'prizes create losers'. What does he mean by this?
8. Discuss the impact that having children could have on the lives of artists.
9. Analyse Khadim Ali's work 'The Arrival of Demons' that is featured on the wall of the MCA building in Sydney. What is the work about? Who do the figures represent?
10. Tony Albert uses ashtrays in his work. What is he communicating via this choice of medium?

3: Director Richard Jasek with Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Khadim Ali at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
 4: Untitled (from The Arrival series) by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Khadim Ali (Courtesy of the artist)



11. What is the role of the art dealer according to Ralph Hobbs? What does it take for people to buy art?
12. A number of art collectors are interviewed about the role art plays in society and why they collect. Summarise their responses in 50-100 words.
13. Rebecca Selleck talks about her journey following her passion. Her entry for the Ramsay Art Prize is Lapin Plague. How do the audience react to Rebecca's work? Would you react in the same way? What is your interpretation of the piece?
14. A number of the artists discuss issues they have faced in the past. What role has their art practice played in working through these difficulties?
15. Alexie Glass-Kantor (Executive Director Artspace Sydney) states; 'Art is an opportunity to experience the world as others see or perceive it and that experience should be altering. We are not living in a time of truth. We are living in a time of uncertainty and its boundaries are more prevalent than ever before.'¹⁵ What is your view? What are some ways we try to share our perception with others?
16. Vincent Namatjira is introduced as the Great, Great Grandson of famous Indigenous artist, Albert Namatjira. How does Vincent explore his past and his culture through his art work?
17. Lisa Slade (Assistant Director Artistic Programs Art Gallery of South Australia) discusses the process of presenting the Ramsay Art Prize Exhibition. What are the considerations?
18. People often say that judging art is subjective. How is the Ramsay Art Prize judged?

1: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Rebecca Selleck with her piece Lapin Plague at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

2: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Vincent Namatjira in front of his piece The Richest at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

3: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Owen Leong at the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

19. Compare and contrast the work submitted by Jason Phu, Owen Leong and Justine Varga. Elements to consider: style, form, subject matter, colour, size, texture, the feeling the work evokes in the viewer.
20. How does the winning artist describe the artistic process? What does she identify as being important?





- What is the focal point?
- How do the elements of composition draw you into the work?
- How does the line quality, colour relationships, shapes, spatial considerations and **textural** surface contribute to the understanding of the painting's content?
- Is the texture slick or matte? Shiny or dull?
- Describe the colour harmonies and contrasts in the composition.
- Are warm colours (those colours that are warm in nature, red-yellow-orange) used by the artist?
- Are cool colours (those colours that are cool in nature, violet-green-blue) used by the artist?
- Is there an overall colour theme or tonality used?
- Has the artist used dramatic light and dark lighting effects, much like stage lighting (chiaroscuro) effects in the painting or work of art?
- Where are you the viewer in relationship to the painting?
- Are they organized on a flat plane or are they set deep into space?
- How does the artist achieve this?
- What objects are low on the compositional plane? What objects are high?
- What objects or figures are clear and distinct? What object are blurry?
- Is the composition closed or open?
- Is harmony achieved in the composition through formal, asymmetrical, or intuitive balance devices?
- Are the shapes biomorphic? geometrical?
- Are the shapes diffused? highly delineated? painterly?
- What are the relationships of the elements of composition to the overall meaning of the work of art?⁶

» AFTER VIEWING

1. CREATIVE RESPONSE

How do you define success?
Brainstorm this idea and then complete one of the following activities:

- a) Create a piece of art that depicts your ideas on the theme of success.
- b) Work with a group of 4-5 students to devise a 10 minute performance that explores the theme of success.
- c) Write a creative response to the film. Explore the idea of how driven we are to 'make a mark' and the ideas and issues that surround this.
- d) Film your peers' responses to questions surrounding the theme of success and turn the work into a short documentary.

(Curriculum links: Art, English, Drama, Media)



1; Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Sarah Contos in front of her piece Sarah Contos Presents: The Long Kiss Goodbye at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

2: Maxx Corkindale (Cinematographer) and Richard Jasek (Director) at Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy (Credit: Anna Vincent)

3: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Vincent Namatjira at Iwantja Arts in Indulkana, APY Lands (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

2. ANALYSIS OF THE ART WORK

Choose one of the pieces that made it into the finals of the 2017 Ramsay Art Prize to analyse. Use the questions below to guide your analysis.

<https://ramsay.artgallery.sa.gov.au/finalists/> (images can be accessed on this link)

- What is the mood of the piece?
- What is your initial reaction to it?
- How has the artist utilized the elements of composition, line, texture, space, colour and shape to create this mood, or establish the content of the work?
- How would you describe the line quality? (if applicable)
- How would you describe the brushwork? (if applicable)





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3. CREATIVE WRITING TASK

Use one of the works as stimulus for a short story, poem or drama script. Consider how you can weave the different elements in the piece into your own creative work.

4. CREATING A FOLIO OF WORK

We're living in a time where uncertainty and its boundaries are more prevalent than ever before, and if artists and their ideas can do something to speak to an audience and to provide a third alternative then that's really powerful, and culture is still a great space for that conversation and encounter to occur.

– Alexie Glass-Kantor, Executive Director, Artspace

For an audience if you come in and you experience a piece of art and if you have a moment of beauty, of wonder, a moment of anger, a moment of sadness whatever it is and whether that moment is profound or just small and passing, you've still stopped for a second and you've thought in a different way. You've opened up other possibilities and that's really rich and really important and not something that we get to do many other times.

– Peter Johnson, Director Firstdraft Gallery

PROJECT OUTLINE

Explore the ideas surrounding following your passion, resilience, artistic expression and the artistic process. What is the place of art in our society? What would a society without art look, feel and sound like? What are your dreams and passions? What does it take to achieve success? What role does resilience play in achieving success?

TASK

Create a folio of ideas and research to assist

1; Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Natalya Hughes in front of her piece *All of Your Women and Some of Mine* at the Art Gallery of South Australia (Credit: Saul Steed)

2: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Justine Varga at her art residency in London (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

3: Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Vincent Namatjira outside Iwantjira Arts in Indulkana, APY Lands (Credit: Maxx Corkindale)

4: *Sankalpa* by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Owen Leong (Courtesy of the artist)

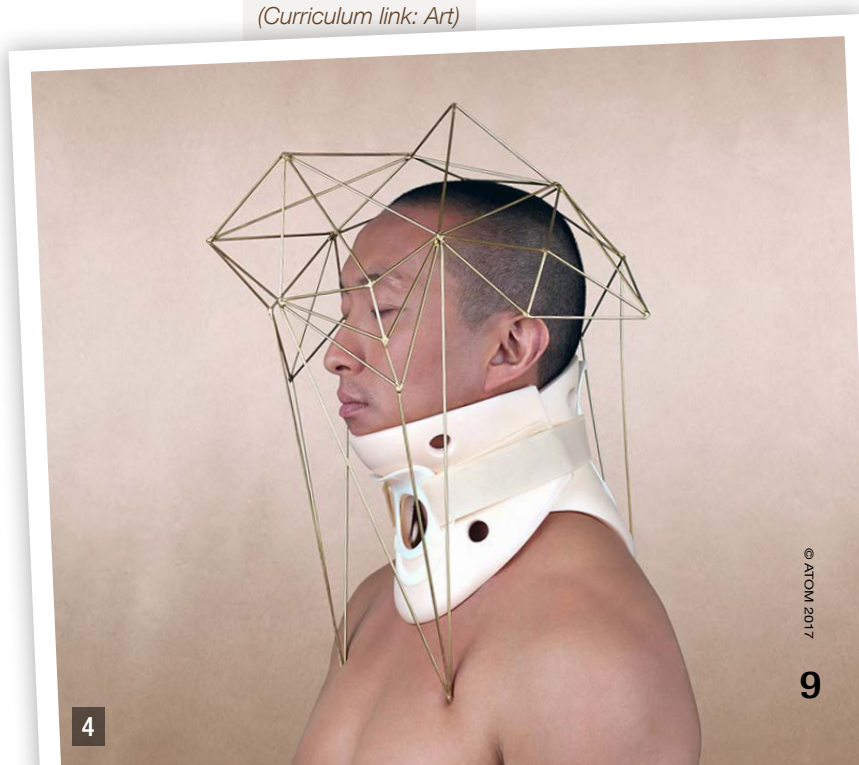
with the development of a series of art works exploring the ideas generated above.

Your folio should include:

- Brainstormed answers to the questions above
- At least 10 images relating to the brainstormed ideas
- Newspaper and magazine articles that link to the themes
- Relevant statistics and data
- Initial ideas for artworks in at least two different mediums.

Submit your work for feedback, revise your ideas after consultative discussions and begin creating work that explores the themes in two different mediums. Track the development process in your folio.

(Curriculum link: Art)



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Endnotes

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| <p>1 'Making a Mark' Press Kit P2.</p> <p>2 Ibid P2.</p> <p>3 "Australian Curriculum." Home - The Australian Curriculum V8.3. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> accessed 08 May 2017.</p> | <p>4 'Making a Mark' (Richard Jasek, 2017)</p> <p>5 ibid</p> <p>6 Vc. "Questions to Ask as You Look at Your Art Work." Questions. N.p., n.d. Web. <http://www.artmuseums.com/questions.htm> accessed 07 May 2017.</p> |
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Above: Sarah Contos Presents: The Long Kiss Goodbye by Ramsay Art Prize Finalist Sarah Contos (Courtesy of the artist)



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