

## LESSON PLAN: SCULPTING NATURE

Brisbane is a sub-tropical city, where unique native plants flourish. Many of these plants feature in the artworks at the new underground stations, including in several sculptures. Explore the texture of plants through the sense of touch and get inspired to create your own sculpture.

This activity is based on a study of Reflection by Tamika Grant-Iramu, reflecting on the importance of nature to the artist and the use of pattern in art. This lesson was developed for students with low/no vision, relying on tactile materials, so there is no accompanying presentation. The lesson is suitable for all students.

The session begins with an introduction to the artwork and the artist. There is a storytelling component that ties to elements of the artwork. The session culminates in a creative task using clay to create a tactile response to the natural materials from flora. At the conclusion, students will reflect on their work.

**Suitable for:** early childhood to year 4

**Duration:** 60 mins

### Objectives

In this activity students will:

- build their knowledge of Queensland artists
- study, reflect on and respond to an artwork
- consider the concept of public art.

### Curriculum Learning Area/s

- Visual Arts

### General capabilities

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Ethical Understanding

### Cross-curriculum priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Sustainability

### Resources

- [Download from Cross River Rail](#)
  - Lesson plan
- Copy/copies of Reflection by Tamika Grant-Iramu
- In this lesson plan, a guided reading of The Trees by Victor Steffensen is included. Similar questions could be used to discuss another picture book with relevance to the theme of trees and nature.
- Clay and tools (a tile-sized piece per student)
- Natural stimulus materials (optional)

## Teaching notes

### Introduce the activity and Cross River Rail

- Ask students if they have heard of the Gabba? What do they know about it?
  - It is a sport stadium
  - It is located in the suburb of Woolloongabba (the Gabba) in Brisbane
  - Opposite the Gabba Stadium a new train station is being built, Woolloongabba station.
  - The new station is part of the Cross River Rail (CRR) project (a new 10.2km rail line that includes 5.9km of twin tunnels running under the Brisbane River and CBD; with four new underground stations at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba, Albert Street and Roma Street.
  - The project will also deliver a new above-ground station at Exhibition, a rebuild for seven stations between Dutton Park and Salisbury; construction of three new stations on the Gold Coast; construction of two new train stabling facilities and installation of a new world-class signalling system.
- If delivering the lesson to students with full vision, watch this video: [Everything you need to know about Cross River Rail](#)

### Introduce the concept of public art

- Today we are going to be learning about one of the artworks that will be in the new CRR train stations.
- If delivering the lesson to students with full vision, watch this video to find out more about the station art.: [Find out about the art inside the four underground stations](#)
- Has anyone ever seen art in a train station before, or in some other public place?
- Why do we have art in public places? (Art can be beautiful to look at, or make you think about something, or send a message, or all of these.) It can make a place more interesting.
- What are some things you might need to consider when creating public art?
- The decision to include art in the stations was made many years ago, long before the construction of the tunnels and stations started. A panel of art experts chose the artworks. Imagine how hard it would be to choose the artworks from all the artists in Queensland.

### Introduce the artwork

- The artwork we are going to look at is Reflection by Tamika Grant-Iramu and it will be right outside the station building at Boggo Rd station.

### Introduce the artist: Tamika Grant-Iramu

- Tamika lives in Brisbane, and her family has connections to Papua New Guinea and Torres Strait in North Queensland.
- She is very interested in nature and the natural environment around her.
- In this artwork, she has carved a design that represents two different trees found locally: the Moreton Bay Fig and black wattle.
- Has anyone heard of those trees before?
- If relevant to the age of the audience, provide info about the trees:
  - Moreton Bay Fig: these are large trees (up to 60 m high with a crown as wide as 76 m) that have very special roots called buttress roots – where the roots are visible above the ground and spread out from the trunk. One of the other interesting facts about Moreton Bay figs is that they don't usually grow from a seed in the ground; the seed will usually germinate high up in the canopy of another tree, where the seedling grows, sending down roots that

eventually strangle the host tree, and the Moreton Bay fig becomes a free-standing tree. The tree produces purple figs that birds and other animals eat.

- Black wattle: These trees grow to about 10 m, and have pale yellow flowers and dark pods. The flowers attract birds and many other insects live in the bark.

We have a sample of the artwork, and in a while, when we are sitting at the table, we will pass the sample around for you to feel.

Tamika wants us to think about the First Nations people who lived here, and she wants us to think about nature.

## Story telling: The Trees, by Victor Steffensen

Today we are reading this story called The Trees. It is written by Victor Steffensen. Victor is a Tagalaka man through his mother's connections from the Gulf Country of north Queensland. He is a well-known author as well as expert in how Aboriginal people used fire to look after the bush.

This book is illustrated by Sandra Steffensen, Victor's sister.

Victor wrote The Trees to help us think about how important trees have been in the past and continue to be for us today. He wants us to know about the ways that First Nations people looked after Country, and how trees give us things in return.

Ask: What do you think a tree can give you?

Read the story, pointing out any features you think are interesting.

Note:

- The Moreton Bay fig buttress roots
- Discuss the soundscapes of different locations: rainforest, open grassy country, riverside, cleared land
- Discuss the meaning of 'lore': traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group

Ask: who liked that story?

## Creating

- Explain: on the tables are samples of materials from nature – there are pieces of bark, seeds, twigs, and flowers. The samples are there for you to feel. Pass them around and feel the patterns, shapes and textures.

Sculpture

- We are going to create a sculpture just like Tamika's. You can think about some of the textures you felt with the natural materials, and recreate those in the clay.
- In front of you, you have a small square of clay and some tools to help you sculpt the clay. Imagine you are making an artwork for a train station or somewhere else – what part of nature would you like to show in your sculpture.

## Reflecting

- Let's think about the beautiful artworks we created.
- Can you tell me some of the important things that you included in your artwork.
- Which pattern do you like the best?.

Wrap up and thanks – we hope you enjoyed visiting us today. What are some of the things we talked about today?

## Additional resources

- [FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CROSS RIVER RAIL](#)
- [FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE STATION ART](#)
- [WATCH VIDEOS ABOUT CROSS RIVER RAIL](#)
- [GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CROSS RIVER RAIL EDUCATION PROGRAM](#)

## Australian Curriculum alignment

VISUAL ARTS	
Foundation	Years 1 and 2
<b>Exploring and responding</b>	
Explore how and why the arts are important for people and communities (AC9AVAFE01)	Explore where, why and how people across cultures, communities and/or other contexts experience visual arts (AC9AVA2E01)  Explore examples of visual arts created by First Nations Australians (AC9AVA2E02)
<b>Developing practices and skills</b>	
Use play, imagination, arts knowledge, processes and/or skills to discover possibilities and develop ideas (AC9AVAFD01)	Experiment and play with visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials (AC9AVA2D01)
<b>Creating and making</b>	
Create arts works that communicate ideas (AC9AV AFC01)	Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks (AC9AVA2C01)
<b>Presenting and performing</b>	
Share their arts works with audiences (AC9AVAFP01)	Share artworks and/or visual arts practice in informal settings (AC9AVA2P01)
Years 3 and 4	
<b>Exploring and responding</b>	
Explore where, why and how visual arts are created and/or presented across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts (AC9AVA4E01)	
<b>Developing practices and skills</b>	
Experiment with a range of ways to use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials (AC9AVA4D01)	
<b>Creating and making</b>	
Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning (AC9AVA4C01)	
<b>Presenting and performing</b>	
Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning (AC9AVA4C01)	