The Moon — VCE Studio Arts

Art Industry Context education kit

Exhibition dates
15 June to 1 September 2019
The Moon Art Industry Context education kit

This kit is designed to assist students in addressing the key outcomes for VCE Studio Arts: Unit 4 Outcome 3: Art Industry Context.

This kit provides an overview of the methods involved in the presentation of artworks in a range of gallery and exhibition spaces and also considers professional art practices related to the installation of artworks and the subsequent audience experience.

Students are encouraged to use this education kit pre- and post-visit to the Gallery to extend their understanding of the processes, and considerations, involved in displaying artworks in a public gallery.

Information provided in this education kit is collated from interviews with:

Lisa Sullivan - Senior Curator
Pip Minney - Exhibition Manager
Penny Whitehead - Deputy Director — Development and Commercial Operations
Elishia Furet - Learn & Audience Engagement Manager
Introduction

20 July 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the first Moon landing. The Moon is programmed to coincide with this significant milestone, and brings together artistic responses to the celestial body that orbits the Earth.

Introduction to the exhibition

For centuries artists from many cultures have been inspired by the Moon, the most prominent feature of our night sky. The Moon includes historical works created when the Moon could only be viewed from afar, works from the era of the 1960s space race, and more contemporary responses informed by the imagery and scientific knowledge acquired through space exploration. Just as the Moon itself can be viewed from multiple vantage points from the Earth, works in the exhibition are located throughout the galleries. Links with literature, film, music and science are explored, highlighting the Moon’s capacity to engender creativity and inquiry. The Moon invites a new engagement with, and provides new perspectives on, this enigmatic celestial body that we all see and are influenced by.

Exhibiting artists include: Clarice Beckett; Damiano Bertoli; Charles Blackman; Marion Borgelt; John Coburn; Janet Dawson; Lesley Dumbrell; Albrecht Dürer; Mikala Dwyer; GA Gilbert; ST Gill; James Gleeson; Kawase Hasui; Utagawa (Andō) Hiroshige; Clare Humphries; William Hunter; Hector Jandany; Mabel Juli; William Kentridge; Kiyohika Kobayashi; Rosemary Laing; Michael Light; Arthur Loureiro; Georges Méliès; Godfrey Miller; Paul Nabulumo Namarinjmak; Sidney Nolan; Susan Norrie; Luke Parker; Katie Paterson; Steven Rendall; Catherine Rogers; Ernest Smith; Felicity Spear; Arthur Streeton; Arthur Suker; Louise Weaver; Walter Withers and John Wolseley. The exhibition also includes NASA photographs and images from the era of the space race.

Geelong Gallery

Geelong Gallery was established in 1896 and is an incorporated association governed by a Board of Directors. The Gallery holds a magnificent collection of 19th, 20th and 21st century Australian and European painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and decorative arts. The Gallery has important holdings of 18th and 19th century British, Irish and Welsh porcelain, and colonial Australian silver. The historical collection has been developed with a special focus on early images of the Geelong region, the exemplar of which is Eugene von Guérard’s 1856 masterpiece View of Geelong. The Gallery’s outstanding collection includes many works of national significance such as Frederick McCubbin’s A bush burial (1890).

Public art gallery

Geelong Gallery is a public art gallery. As you walk around the Gallery you will notice that many of the works on display have come into the collection as a result of a bequest or gift to the Gallery or through donations made via the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program. Purchases have been made from donations and bequests or with the assistance of grants provided by state and federal governments. The Gallery Board and staff have the responsibility of preserving the collection for future generations of Gallery visitors. Works of art deteriorate with age, and there are a number of factors that accelerate this process including climatic conditions, air pollution, pests, light and handling. At the Gallery the conservation of art works includes good housekeeping, monitoring climatic conditions, fumigation to prevent pests and visitor education programs.
The curatorial rationale behind *The Moon*

Ideas for exhibitions emerge in many different ways, and in the case of *The Moon* it was a single work that was the starting point: Michael Light’s *Drift: 29 days, 18 hours, 2 minutes* (1999).

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**Curatorial considerations**

*Lisa Sullivan*
Senior Curator

In late 2016, a general search of the Australian Centre for the Moving Image’s online collection delivered the record for the work which described it as a compilation of images from the NASA archive (collected since the first Apollo Moon landing in the 1960s). The 50th anniversary of the first Moon landing was due to fall in July 2019, and this became a strong foundation on which to develop an exhibition.

An initial exhibition idea then goes through many stages: developing the concept through preliminary research, formulating an exhibition proposal that is shared with the Director and members of the Collection & Exhibitions committee of the Gallery Board, and once approved, the scheduling of the exhibition into the program calendar. The timing of this exhibition was very specific – it needed to coincide with the anniversary of the Moon landing in July 2019.

Once scheduled into the calendar, the curatorial rationale is further developed. This involves more detailed research of works that align with the curatorial brief.

For this project, the 1969 Moon landing was the starting point, but I wanted to expand on this to explore artists’ fascination with the Moon over centuries. Research into potential works for exhibition – from national and state collections, regional galleries, artists, dealers and private collectors – helped formulate exhibition themes. Three distinct ‘eras’ were the focus: works created before the Moon landing, works of the era of the 1960s space race, and works post-landing. The Moon has also inspired writers, musicians and filmmakers, so consideration of these creative areas was also important.

Further refinement occurs through the process of negotiating loans, until the final list of works is made. Five exhibition themes have evolved: Journeys to the Moon, The light of the Moon, Phases of the Moon, Paper Moon, and Evocations and imaginings.
Exhibition design

A concept that emerged early on in the exhibition’s development was that of displaying works throughout the building.

Curatorial considerations
Lisa Sullivan  
Senior Curator

The Gallery-wide display was driven by the idea that we see the Moon from many different vantage points on Earth, it appears to be constantly shifting in the night sky, and its form also changes across the lunar cycle. The curatorial concept therefore, was to place works throughout the building so that visitors would “encounter” the Moon as they progress through the galleries.

The exhibition content and design evolve simultaneously – the physical dimensions of the space determine selections and the exhibition themes are shaped with design in mind. There are also occasions where a lender may outline specific requirements for a work – in relation to environmental conditions such as light levels, or display issues such as plinths that act as a barrier or locked display cabinets. These requirements are factored into the final curatorial layout and exhibition design, as is ensuring all works are located in safe and appropriate locations (in consideration of artist’s mediums, security, artist’s intent, and visitor engagement etc).

The five exhibition themes are installed across seven galleries: Journeys to the Moon in the Temporary Exhibitions Gallery, The light of the Moon encompasses two single artist installations in the Myer Gallery and Bell Gallery, Phases of the Moon in the McPhillimy Gallery, Paper Moon in Richardson (a room dedicated to works on paper), and the theme of Evocations and imaginings is installed in the Douglass Gallery and the Hitchcock Gallery with exhibition works hung on feature walls alongside works from the permanent collection of a similar era (ie 19th century works in Hitchcock and 20th century works in Douglass).

The exhibition design extends to large-scale vinyl decals of the Moon: a contemporary photograph in the entry foyer and an historical photograph (taken by the Melbourne Observatory’s telescope in the 1870s) on the rear windows adjacent to the Hitchcock Gallery (in which 19th century works hang). The development and design of text panels and extended labels also extends from curatorial activity – the dimensions of these, for example, must be considered in the final layout of works and the content must make logical connections with the works. A feature paint colour (simulating the night sky) appears throughout the exhibition in varying scales.

For example, the Temporary Exhibitions Gallery and Richardson Gallery are painted with “full” coverage of the feature colour, and one wall in McPhillimy, Douglass and Hitchcock is painted in feature colour suggesting a “quarter” (representing phases or segments of the Moon, albeit dark blue rather than the white of the Moon). Two sound stations are also installed on which Moon-themed music plays – iPad stations stand on circular carpets.
Exhibition design

Exhibition management

Pip Minney
Exhibition Manager

Sometimes a physical barrier is required to protect the works and this must be factored into the exhibition design. This was the case for the Louise Weaver install. A floor plinth, or stage, was constructed to lift the work off the floor and to mitigate the risk of visitors standing on the work. In the case of the Mikala Dwyer, we have installed low bollards to protect the works (NB: removed for the supervised photography session).

Plinths can also provide security, because small works can be tethered with fishing line (monofilament) and then drilled in to the plinth. Louise Weaver’s fox and hare are secured to their plinths with monofilament.

Outcome 3 — Key knowledge
The curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions

Outcome 3 — Key skills
Analyse how specific artworks are presented in different exhibitions and demonstrate an understanding of the artists’ and gallery curator’s intentions

Activity
As you walk through the Gallery list all the key factors in the exhibition which have contributed to the design and presentation of the artworks

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The Moon
Installation view, Geelong Gallery, 2019, works by Mikala Dwyer, Michael Light, Steven Rendall, Susan Norrie and William Kentridge
Photographer: Andrew Curtis
The Moon — VCE Studio Arts

Conservation methods

The Moon exhibition requires a number of different methods to protect the works whilst they are on display, as well as in transit, interim storage and whilst being handled/installed.

Exhibition management

Pip Minney
Exhibition Manager

Firstly, before artworks enter the space the Gallery needs to be clear and clean. Many of the galleries feature painted walls and so we need to factor in a period of off-gassing to ensure paint fumes do not permeate artworks and paint is not 'soft' on the wall as it can mark and transfer to works of art.

We also regularly ensure that the Gallery itself has a stable temperature and relative humidity. There is some contention on the exact temperature requirements, but most galleries agree on approx. 20 degrees Celsius +/- 2 degree, and an RH of 50% +/- 10%. The most important element is that the space is stable and does not experience major fluctuations. When this occurs, artworks can alter in response to the environment, e.g. paper can warp, timber can bend, wax can melt and dust will stick to synthetic polymer paint.

Art that has travelled a distance needs to 'acclimatise' in crates – meaning that the works need to be delivered to the gallery and then stored for 24 hours in a stable environment where the temperature of the crate can match the temperature of the display space.

Some lenders choose not to crate their works – which can be expensive – and instead ‘soft-wrap’ meaning to use bubble wrap, Tyvek or acid free tissue paper to protect the works.

Once the artworks are unwrapped or un-crated they rest temporarily on chocks made of felt-wrapped timber or ethafoam, which lifts them off the floor. Then a condition report is filled out for each work. This is either done by a conservator of the lending institution, or the registrar of the borrowing institution. A condition report includes a detailed analysis of the condition of the work and any other elements, such as frames or supports. It also often includes a photograph with a layer of acetate for the conservator to mark any original, or change, in condition – such as craquelure, foxing, accretions, paint loss, abrasions and warping (the following link is a good resource). The condition report is filled out again at the end of the exhibition, highlighting any change that has taken place.

Albrecht Dürer
The Virgin on the crescent c. 1511
from ‘The Life of the Virgin series’, 1511
woodcut
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1956

Outcome 3 — Key knowledge

Methods used by, and considerations of artists and curators working in galleries in conservation of artworks, including lighting, temperature, storage, transportation and presentation of specific artworks in current exhibitions

Outcome 3 — Key skills

Analyse and evaluate methods and considerations involved in the conservation of specific artworks related to the exhibition
Conservation methods

Lighting is also an important consideration as bright lights can compromise the materials in fragile works of art.

Incandescent (tungsten) lighting is preferred to fluorescent light which, like natural light, has harmful UV rays. We use the term lux to define the light levels in a gallery. Works on paper, barks and textiles should be displayed under lights no greater than 50 lux. Paintings can be displayed at 200 lux and inorganic materials such as plastics can be displayed at 300 lux. Once a work on paper, for example, is damaged there is little that can be done. ‘Resting’ the artwork does not recharge it; therefore most galleries have a policy for how long fragile materials can be on display.

Security methods are used to protect the works, including security cameras and invigilators, plinths and acrylic vitrines and bollards. Small works require tethers or mirror plates and these are often affixed to the wall with a security screw.

Finally, when it comes to handling and installing the works, there is an industry mantra to plan all moves ahead, and only move once. This is because of another industry saying that an artwork can only handle 1000 touches before it is irreversibly damaged.

Activity
Research the roles of other staff in relation to installation, registration, handling, storage and transportation of works of art.

We acquire works of art for the future benefit of our community and as custodians we want to preserve them for the long-term. Handlers are trained to handle the works minimally but supportively, and to touch the most stable and secure part of a work only — e.g., when installing a ceramic jug we handle it by the base, not the handles.

Handlers are also trained to handle one object at a time and to use either nitrile gloves, cotton gloves or clean hands depending on the material of the object we are moving and installing. We also make equipment work for us — to protect the works and the physical safety of our installers we use a-frames, object trolleys, dolleys, scissor platforms and elevated work platforms (scissor lifts).
The Moon exhibition is one of Geelong Gallery’s major exhibitions for the calendar year which dictates our approach to marketing and promotions.

**Marketing**

**Penny Whitehead**  
Deputy Director —  
Commercial Operations & Development

Our aim is to attract a state-wide audience of all ages with a target of 15,000 visitors through the Gallery in the 3 month period. Our marketing campaign will focus on a number of key strategies including:

1. Design: bespoke masthead and exhibition creative;
2. Signage: external window signage, internal foyer signage, map, wayfinding signage and reception desk creative;
3. Publications: newsletter (4,500 printed), exhibition opening invitation (1,500 printed), postcards to promote VCE Forum and Learn program, promotional video, Learn Space video, posters and e-catalogue;
4. Extensive events and public programming schedule: opening, school holiday program, First Friday lectures (1–2), floortalks (2), a creative conversation and after-hours events;
5. Advertising campaign: local and state-wide media;
6. PR campaign: national, state and local media (print, online, radio and TV);
7. Digital marketing: enews focus (1 per fortnight), website listing, and social media focus (1–2 per week);
8. Stakeholder management: engagement and communications strategy including exhibition sponsors, volunteers/staff/Board/committees, community groups, educational institutions, Gallery members, media and visitors;
9. Gallery Shop merchandising correlating to the exhibition; and
10. Major Learn program associated with Victorian curriculum including VCE Studio Arts Forum, STEM trail during Science Week, school tours and more.

All these marketing strategies are engaged and coordinated by Gallery staff members in the Commercial Operations arm of the Gallery with the support of external specialists including Graphic Designers (Pidgeon Ward), PR & Communications (Miranda Brown PR), web designers (eFront), photographer (Hails & Shine) and video producers (Hebron Films).
Marketing and promotion of the exhibition

A comprehensive suite of programs was designed around the exhibition to extend audience engagement and enhance learning experiences for access groups, early childhood, students, children, families and carers.

Learn & audience engagement

Elishia Furet
Learn & Audience Engagement Manager

The Gallery Learn Space is also an important part of the overall exhibition experience and was transformed into a mini-theatrette, titled Destination Moon, in which three educational videos created by NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre are shown.

A Pop-Up planetarium will be constructed at the Gallery for three days during the week of the Moon landing anniversary dates available for both schools and the public.

The Gallery’s Learn program for students F to VCE, includes a Visual Arts & STEM trail resource developed for students Levels 5 to 8 that provides many opportunities for STEM, STEAM, and Project Based Learning within the Gallery, as part of the Australian Government, National Science Week initiative.

Further programming includes, school holiday workshops and tours, early learning activities, after hours events, and academic, artist and curatorial lectures and floortalks. All learn and public programs are promoted via the Gallery printed program and the Gallery website.

Outcome 3 — Key knowledge
The processes associated with promotion of specific artworks in current exhibitions

Activity
What information is provided in the Gallery to assist with your understanding and interpretation of the artworks?
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The Moon
(Installation views, Geelong Gallery, 2019)
Photographer: Andrew Curtis
Commissioning artists

Have you commissioned any artists to produce new works specifically for this exhibition?

Curatorial considerations
Lisa Sullivan
Senior Curator

We have commissioned works for this exhibition that are presented alongside existing works from other institutions, artists, dealers, private collectors and Geelong Gallery’s own collection. Louise Weaver has created works to present a new iteration of her ongoing installation Moonlight becomes you (first exhibited in 2003). Once we had secured the loan of a major component from a private collector (from the artist’s first installation), Louise and I discussed additional works that would complete a new site-specific installation. She created new works including the three-dimensional forms of the fox, hare and owl, and a new painting for display in the Bell Gallery.

The Moon has been an enduring subject for Janet Dawson: earlier works on this theme had been secured for exhibition from the National Gallery of Australia, as well as a prize-winning work in Geelong Gallery’s collection. Janet now resides in the Geelong region and she was invited to create a new painting in response to her engagement with, and observations of, the Moon in our region.

Commissioning works is a very exciting process. It’s important to provide a clear outline of the exhibition and how a new work might align with the curatorial premise, but also to have the confidence in an artist to develop their ideas. It’s also important to set realistic timeframes and budgets. Dialogue continues through the process of creating, and it’s very exciting to see the finished work for the first time when it’s completed. Providing opportunities for artists to create and exhibit new works is a key part of what we do as a Gallery.

And although not strictly a new commission, Steven Rendall’s paintings are very recent and have not previously been exhibited. Steven is an artist who has had a long-standing interest in the Moon and space travel, and access to these works was made possible through a studio visit.
Contemporary art and new technology

Artists have always experimented with new technology, which raises multiple questions for curators, conservators, registrars and exhibition managers.

Exhibition management

Pip Minney
Exhibition Manager

What technology should be used to display the work to meet the artist’s requirements balanced with expensive equipment costs? How do we preserve the work for future displays and maintain its value? (e.g., if the work is digital, can a copy be made? What happens to the copy after the exhibition?) Does the work need to be presented exactly the same for its next iteration? How do we create a safe environment for the work and for people if the work is an experiential installation?

Installations as experiences are now common in art galleries. The Moon includes an installation of works by Louise Weaver. Louise was involved with all aspects of the exhibition design, including the layout of artworks, the choice of wall and plinth colour, the size and design of the stage, plinth and shelves and the lighting. It was essential that we document this installation due to the new works that were created with this exhibition in mind.

Light bulb to simulate moonlight by Katie Paterson involved liaising with both the lending institution – Art Gallery of New South Wales – as well as the artist’s studio in Scotland. Geelong Gallery was provided with instructions to construct the light bulb shelf and logbook shelf as well as requirements for the preparation of the room. This included the paint colour and electrical specifications for the single light bulb. We then contracted an electrician to undertake the electrical activity, a joiner to construct the shelving and a painter to paint it. We then contracted art handlers to install the light bulbs into the shelving unit.

For the video works by Georges Méliès, Michael Light and William Kentridge, we needed to determine a suitable location that did not have too much light that would compromise the projection or work. Equally, because the Kentridge work includes sound, it needed to be displayed away from other works with sound. Otherwise, headphones would be needed.

Outcome 3 — Key knowledge

The characteristics of different types of gallery spaces
Exhibition considerations

What are some of the considerations when installing an exhibition featuring collection works, loaned works from private and institutional public lenders and works newly created by artists?

Exhibition management

Pip Minney
Exhibition Manager

When coordinating an exhibition that includes works from multiple lenders it is important to put into place systems that allow you to track a lot of information. A list of works tracks the artwork caption details, collection credit line, physical dimensions, physical location, lender details, loan approval and freight/shipping information, permissions, labelling requirements and more. Permissions include approval to photograph the work and approval to use that image to promote the exhibition. Copyright permission is often separate to the work’s ownership, and thus it is important to contact the copyright owner – usually the artist or the estate of the artist – to secure permission to use the image.

Institutional lenders often have a process that a gallery needs to go through in order to secure the loan of an artwork. Usually, a loan request is made 12 months ahead of the exhibition. Along with the request, the borrowing institution needs to provide details about their gallery including environmental conditions (lighting specs, temperature, RH) and building construction and security details. This is then used to assess the risk of loaning something from a public collection.

The two galleries then liaise regarding the packing and transport of the work – often a customised crate is needed to protect the works during transit – and then the crates must be stored in a clean environment for the duration of the exhibition. Sometimes a courier travels with the work and oversees its removal from the crate and installation onto the wall. This is then repeated at the end of the exhibition.

Private lenders often require less time but still have the same requirements including assurances regarding environmental conditions, security and insurance. Works from private lenders often require a member of the borrowing institution (Geelong Gallery in this case) to visit the work in advance of its packing and transport so that a condition check can be made and photographs can be taken.

Outcome 3 — Key skills

Analyse how specific artworks are presented in different exhibitions and demonstrate an understanding of the artists’ and gallery curator’s intentions

Evaluate the curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and presenting specific artworks for display
Above left:
Damiano Bertoli
Whitney on the Moon (Tex) 2008
lustre print
Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Above right:
Janet Dawson
Foxy night 3 rising Moon 1978
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
Geelong Gallery
Capital Permanent award, 1978

Bottom left:
Charles Blackman
Joy Hester's House 1955
oil on paper on composition board
Geelong Gallery
Gift of Robin Ferry, 2006

Bottom right:
Rosemary Laing
NASA – Dryden Flight Research Center #1 1998
Type C photograph
Mundey Family collection
Courtesy Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne
© Rosemary Laing
Exhibition map

The Moon
1. Journeys to the Moon
2. The light of the Moon
3. Phases of the Moon
4. Paper Moon
5. The light of the Moon
6. Evocations and imaginings
7. Evocations and imaginings
Pre-visit information

Geelong Gallery Learn offers a range of tours, talks, lectures and activities covering a range of themes across the curriculum relating to the Gallery’s permanent collections and temporary exhibitions. These experiences can be tailor-made to cater for your school’s curriculum needs and student learning levels. To gain the maximum benefit from your visit to the Gallery we suggest that educators visit the Gallery in advance and view the relevant exhibition or discuss the works with a Gallery Educator.

Travelling by train
A three-minute walk through Johnstone Park to the Gallery.

Travelling by bus
Arrangements for bus parking can be made with your Gallery booking.

To help us conserve works in the Geelong Gallery’s renowned collection for current visitors and future generations to enjoy, we recommend the following:

- Prior to your visit, educators/supervisors to brief students on appropriate behaviour in the Gallery (eg walking in the Gallery, listening to instructions and not touching the exhibits)
- Students should take care entering and leaving the building from and to the bus
- Food and drinks are not allowed inside the Gallery
- Please consider other visitors
- Educators to accompany their group at all times during their visit — Stools and clipboards are available for student use
- Only pencils are to be used in the Gallery

Bookings are essential for all Learn programs and group visits: T 03 5229 3645

Visit Geelong Gallery

The Moon — Student guided tours

Victorian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Explore and Express Ideas/Respond and Interpret/Present and Perform/ Levels F—VCE

15 June to 1 September

This is your chance to explore The Moon exhibition with your students and make connections between the art and ideas presented in this exhibition through inquiry-based discussions and exploring interdisciplinary connections. The Moon includes historical works created when the Moon could only be viewed from afar, works from the era of the 1960s space race, and more contemporary responses informed by the imagery and scientific knowledge acquired through space exploration.

Cost: $5.00 per student

Book now

VCE Studio Art forum

Unit 4—Art industry context

Thursday 18 July
Forum 1: 10.30am to 12.00pm
Forum 2: 1.00pm to 2.30pm

Geelong Gallery Senior Curator, Exhibition Manager and Learning and Audience Engagement Manager, together with exhibiting artist, Louise Weaver, invite you to participate in a VCE Studio Art forum on Thursday 18 July at the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre. This forum includes an introduction to The Moon and an overview of the curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks included in the exhibition. The forum will also compare methods used by artists and will assist students with key knowledge focused on the conservation of artworks held in public galleries.

Book now