# Approaches to visual arts 7–10 Life Skills

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# Overview

This resource covers a range of approaches to meet visual arts 7–10 Life Skills outcomes focused on the theme of self. The activities can be extended upon, delivered in isolation or sequenced in an order that meets the needs of the students and school context.

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# Visual arts Life Skills

## Outcomes

A student:

LS.1 experiences a variety of artmaking activities

LS.2 explores a variety of materials, techniques and processes

LS.3 explores the function of a variety of artists and audiences

LS.4 explores the ways in which experiences of the world can be communicated in artworks

LS.5 recognises that various interpretations of artworks are possible

LS.6 makes a variety of artworks that reflect experiences, responses or a point of view

LS.7 explores how ideas and interests in the world can be represented in their artmaking

LS.8 explores ways to develop ideas in artworks

LS.9 uses a range of materials, techniques and processes to make artworks

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## Concept development activities

To initiate artmaking ideas students can:

* create a brainstorm with points about themselves including their interests, appearance, hobbies, family and lifestyle
* complete a scaffold to write and draw about themselves using the prompts given. The prompts could include the student’s favourite book, film, quote, who they live with and what they want to do when they leave school
* create a moodboard using magazines or a digital collage in Canva or Microsoft PowerPoint using online images.

## Warm up activities

To warm up students can:

* look at how other artists have communicated ideas about the identity of others and themselves. The table below shares some examples that could be shown to students for class discussion

Table 1 – Sample artist examples

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Artist name | Expressive form | Style |
| Ah Xian | Sculpture | Representational |
| Joy Hester | Drawing | Abstract |
| Ben Quilty | Painting | Gestural and expressive |
| Vincent Van Gogh | Painting | Post-impressionism |
| Eric straw | Sculpture | Cubism |
| Camilla Catrabone | Photography | Still life |
| Chuck Close | Drawing and painting | Realistic and semi-abstract |
| Kaylene Whiskey | Painting and video | Illustration and animation |

* watch Ahn Do’s [Brush with Fame](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/anh-s-brush-with-fame#:~:text=Anh%20Do%20paints%20some%20of,that%20have%20shaped%20their%20lives.) to see an artist in action, learning about his subject and creating a large scale portrait to represent the person and their life experiences
* create a continuous line drawing of a face. This activity can be repeated with eyes closed to deliberately distort the final result and create an abstract portrait. Sections of the continuous line drawing can be filled with colours and/or patterns the student feels represents their personality or identity
* use a camera to take portraits of one another in poses and with facial expressions that represent their identity.

## Sample project sequences

The following sample projects are scaffolded into steps that can be completed over a series of lessons.

### Distorted ink drawings

1. Students consider a series of Joy Hester works and discuss the ways she distorts the features of the faces she draws and how her choices impact the meaning of her artworks.
2. Students experiment with shape, scale, elongation and shortening of facial features drawn in pencil, watercolour and/or ink.
3. Students experiment with techniques to create distorted images of faces such as using a long stick dipped in ink and standing back from their drawing surface to reduce their control of line and shape and creating their own painting or drawing tool using recyclable or natural materials.
4. Students discuss the relationship between facial features and their senses (sight, smell, sound and taste). Prompting questions might include:
5. Which of your senses are the most sensitive?
6. Which of your senses are the least sensitive?
7. How does it feel when you hear a loud sound?
8. How does it feel when you smell something good or bad?
9. Students consider how their facial features communicate feelings. Students could cut out a range of facial features from a magazine or print outs provided by the teacher and arrange them to represent different emotions.
10. Students plan a self portrait representing the way they feel emotionally or using their senses by distorting their facial features. They may choose to plan their image or work spontaneously to create a series of ink drawings.

### Illustration and/or animation

1. Students consider the work of Kaylene Whiskey and learn about her artmaking practice by viewing a range of her artworks.
2. Students are provided with key information about Kaylene Whiskey. Teacher’s could summarise or modify excerpts from the [NGV x MECCA: Kaylene Whiskey](https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/ngv-x-mecca-kaylene-whiskey/) article.
3. Students consider the symbols and imagery Whiskey uses in her paintings and what aspects of popular culture they represent.
4. Students brainstorm the celebrities they like, and the food, music and other popular culture activities and objects that are part of their everyday lives. They select 3–5 items from their brainstorm to include in their artwork.
5. Students collect reference images of each of their selected popular culture items/celebrities online.
6. Students refer to their reference images to draw each of their items on art paper in pencil, colour the drawings with pencil, markers or paint. Once dry, students outline the items with black marker and cut them out.
7. Students take a photograph of a local outdoor environment. The teacher prints the environment photograph on paper large enough to glue the popular culture item drawings/paintings on top. Students arrange their popular culture items on the photograph before gluing them in place.
8. Students can alternatively animate their drawings by scanning them and using free software like [Animated drawings](https://sketch.metademolab.com/).
9. Students present their work to the rest of the class and explain the artmaking techniques they have adopted from Whiskey’s artmaking practice.

### Gestural painting and drawing

1. Students look at the works of Ahn Do and Ben Quilty and discuss the similarities and differences.
2. Students hypothesise how the artists create their painting styles before viewing a clip from Ahn Do’s [Brush with Fame](https://iview.abc.net.au/show/anh-s-brush-with-fame#:~:text=Anh%20Do%20paints%20some%20of,that%20have%20shaped%20their%20lives.) to see his use of palette knives to apply paint.
3. Students create a narrative about a memory they have. It can be documented in writing or as a voice recording.
4. Students are given one colour and white paint and are taught to mix 3 tones of their colour (dark, medium and light). Students should select a colour that resonates with them or aligns to their narrative.
5. Students work with palette knives, cardboard squares and/or paddle pop sticks to apply paint in broad gestural strokes to a sheet of art paper or canvas. Leaving unblended sections and streaks.
6. Students take photographs of each other with facial expressions that represent their personality. Encourage students to play with a range of angles and expressions.
7. Students select their most expressive photograph and trace the portrait onto the painting using oil pastels in a contrasting colour from the background once the painting is dry. Students could transfer the image using a printout and tracing paper or a projection.
8. Students select a word, phrase or sentence from their narrative to write on their textural painting. The placement of the text is important to create balance. Students can write their text on paper and cut out each word to play with the composition of the text. The words do not need to be placed side by side like a sentence, they can be spread out, repeated and written in different sizes. The text can be added with a marker.
9. Students look at the work of Kaylene Whiskey and her use of objects as symbols of popular culture.
10. Students draw or paint an object that represents something meaningful to them onto their canvas. The object may be repeated a number of times in different sizes to balance the artwork.

## References

[Visual arts 7–10 Syllabus](https://educationstandards.nsw.edu.au/wps/portal/nesa/k-10/learning-areas/creative-arts/visual-arts-7-10) © NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales, 2003.

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