

Teacher Lesson Plans

Lesson Title	Fiona Hall: Wrong Way Time Exploring the work of one of Australia's leading contemporary artists Two 50 minute lessons: Responding, research and analysis and Practical art making
Stage	4 and 5
Year Group	Years 9 and 10
Resources/Props	Work books and writing materials, or digital equivalent Online resources listed in Appendix A Art materials and found objects as per the Practical art making lesson below

Lesson overview:

In these lessons, students will be introduced to the art of Fiona Hall, one of Australia's leading contemporary artists, through a focus on the exhibition *Wrong Way Time*. This exhibition represented Australia at the 56th Venice Biennale, one of the world's oldest and most prestigious international art festivals. It is display at the National Gallery of Australia in 2016 alongside other works of art by Fiona Hall from the NGA's collection. These works of art and contextual information can be accessed by visiting the NGA, or by using the online resources listed in this lesson plan.

Fiona Hall brings together hundreds of diverse materials and images to explore three intersecting concerns: global politics, world finances and the environment. Hall's art will provide students with a lens through which to examine these major topical issues, and to identify some of the ways in which artists choose to respond to contemporary society. Visual Arts students will focus particularly on analysing, manipulating and interpreting a diverse range of materials, while History students will focus on the themes of war and conflict, the environmental movement, and the impact of world events on Australia. Fiona Hall's work is global in its scope and references, providing teachers and students with the opportunity to also address the Cross-Curriculum Priorities of Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History and Culture, and Australia's Engagement with Asia.

Aims and objectives:

Upon completion of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Critically analyse and respond to selected works of art by Fiona Hall
- Participate in an art-making experience
- Gain insight into the diversity of contemporary art practices
- Use historical terms and concepts and identify and analyse historical interpretations relating to Australia and its relationship to the modern world

Australian Curriculum:

Key Learning Area: Years 9 and 10 Visual Arts

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)

Plan and design artworks that represent artistic intention (ACAVAM128)

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)

Key Learning Area: Year 10 History

Overview of the modern world and Australia, specifically:

The nature of the Cold War and Australia's involvement in Cold War and post-Cold War conflicts (Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf Wars, Afghanistan), including the rising influence of Asian nations since the end of the Cold War (ACOKFH023)

Developments in technology, public health, longevity and standard of living during the twentieth century, and concern for the environment and sustainability (ACOKFH024)

Migration experiences (1945 - present) depth study: The impact of at least ONE world event or development and its significance for Australia, such as the Vietnam War and Indochinese refugees (ACDSEH146)

The environment movement (1960s – present) depth study: The intensification of environmental effects in the twentieth century as a result of population increase, urbanisation, increasing industrial production and trade (ACDSEH125)

Cross-curriculum Priorities:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures
- Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability

General capabilities:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Personal and social capability
- Literacy
- Intercultural understanding

Introduction to both lessons: (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to read the curator's introduction (below) and to define the words and terms in bold in their own words.

Curator's note:

With a career spanning over four decades, Fiona Hall is one of Australia's leading **contemporary artists**. Her exhibition *Wrong Way Time* at the 2015 Venice Biennale received international **acclaim** and is brought back to Australia for local audiences to enjoy. Hall's diverse and detailed art **transforms** everyday objects to address a range of contemporary issues such as **post-colonialism**, **consumerism** and **natural history**. *Wrong Way Time* explores three main concerns: global **politics**, world **finances** and the **environment** in a remarkable, dramatic **installation**. The exhibition also includes an adjoining display of well known, breathtaking works from the NGA's collection including *Paradisus Terrestris* 1989-90 and *Leaf litter* 1999-2003.

Hall's seemingly random **conjunction** of things in a **wunderkammer**-like installation appeals to our human impulse to make connections, or perhaps a **propensity** for **paranoia** born of the deep uncertainty and fear of our times. Yet despite a prevalent darkness, Hall's exhibition is fundamentally **life-affirming**, its own vitality in **perverse distinction** to the subjects it ranges across, which provide rich pickings for Hall's extraordinary transformation of **materials, images** and **objects**.

Responding, research and discussion lesson: (45 minutes)

After completing the introductory task above, divide students into small groups and assign each group 2 to 3 questions from the list below. Students can either submit written answers or present their responses to the class for further discussion.

1. Discuss the practical and symbolic implications of Fiona Hall's frequent use of recycling in her art. Where do you think it is most successful, and why?
2. Write a visual analysis of **Tender**, and discuss the artist's intentions and materials. What connections do this work helps us make between human society and other life forms on our planet?
3. Research the time that Fiona Hall has spent in Sri Lanka. What impact do you think this engagement with Asia has had on the artist's life and work? Use one of the focus works of art as an example.
4. Study detailed images of **Where the wind blows**. Examine the artist's choice of materials and imagery. What might these say about the experience of people and communities in an increasingly globalized world? How does the title of the work fit with this interpretation?
5. Can you find any banknotes from Asia in **Where the wind blows**? Whose portraits feature on these notes? Ask students to summarise the impact that one of these people has had on politics and society in Asia. Has this impact been felt in Australia too?
6. Explore Fiona Hall's body of work to find all the different ways that she refers to gardens. What exactly is a 'garden' – how is it different to 'nature'? What do you think gardens mean to the artist? What do they mean to you?
7. What does **Lying in the dark** refer to? Analyse the complex mixture of words and imagery in this print. Do you think it can be classified as an historical source?
8. List the specific nations from which the military uniforms in **All the king's men** were taken. Do they have anything in common? How did you feel when you first saw this work of art? Have your feelings changed now you know what it is made from?

9. Using **Leaf litter** as a reference point, discuss how human beings have affected their environment in the twentieth century and beyond. What is the symbolism of each different part of this installation?
10. Describe the ways in which **Kuka Irititja** and **Burning bright** refer to the special relationship Indigenous peoples traditionally have with their Country – the land, sea, sky and waterways.
11. Research the role of collaboration in the art of Fiona Hall.

Practical art making lessons: (45 minutes each at minimum)

Fiona Hall's art shows a formidable range of practical skills. Each work of art incorporates multiple techniques and media, creating layers of materials and meanings. Two options for practical art making activities are suggested here, each focusing on work from *Wrong Way Time*. In addition to addressing the Visual Arts curriculum, these two activities address the Cross-Curriculum Priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures, and Sustainability.

The techniques and ideas suggested within each lesson have the capacity to be built on over multiple lessons and making sessions. Further in-depth practical making and problem solving will be enhanced when delivered in conjunction with the theoretical components of this resource, exploring Fiona Hall's art practice as a whole.

ACTIVITY ONE: WEAVING AND COLLABORATION

Focus work: *Kuka Irititja (Animals from Another Time) 2014*

Fiona Hall created this group of woven animals alongside 12 women artists from the Tjanpi Desert Weavers of the Central and Western Desert region of Australia: Roma Butler, Stacia Lewis, Rene Nelson, Takiriya Tjawina Roberts, Angkaliya Nelson, Sandra Peterman, Yangi Yangi Fox, Molly Miller, Nyanu Watson, Rene Kulitja, Niningka Lewis and Mary Pan. These women have a long history of making animals woven from the local grasses and other materials from their country and Fiona suggested that they work together to weave a group of extinct animals. The work was created in June 2014 at an artist camp at a place near Pilakatiyuru (in the tri-state border region of Western Australia where it meets South Australia and the Northern Territory). The Tjanpi artists have a deep and intricate understanding of their country and were able to incorporate this knowledge into the woven pieces. Fiona as a non-Indigenous Australian brought her own thoughts about the impacts of colonisation on our environment and the animals that inhabit it.

Both the Tjanpi weavers and Fiona Hall share a mastery of weaving with various materials and this shared skill helped to inform the collaboration. The Tjanpi weavers harvested tjanpi (grass) and Fiona supplied printed camouflage fabric. The artists used each other's fibres and also added in other found materials to create the final group of work.

Thinking:

- How do the properties inherent in the materials influence the possibilities of the final work of art?
- What sorts of shapes can your materials be used to create?
- Think about the final object you wish to create, is it an animal inspired by *Kuka Irititja (Animals from Another Time) 2014* or do you have another idea based on something in your own environment?
- Create some initial sketches to help guide your making process.

Making:



Rene Kulitja in Venice with *Kuka Iritija (Animals from another time)* 2014 A collaboration between Fiona Hall and the Tjanpi Desert Weavers of the Central and Western Deserts.

- With an idea of your final shape in mind, gather some materials (fabric or more natural fibre) and form them into that shape.
- Thread your needle with a long fibre.
- Start binding and weaving around your bundle of materials to set the shape.
- You can continue adding to your initial shape by attaching more elements as you go.
- Use your needle to weave the components together.
- When you are happy with your final shape you can continue to weave more material to create a final layer of colour and texture.

Remember weaving is a skill to master; don't expect your first attempt to be exactly what you had in mind. Like all new techniques and processes it is a journey that takes time. For extra help you can watch some online weaving demonstrations and 'how to' videos. The internet is a great place to learn basic skills to try.

Materials to use:

Grasses	Gather natural grasses from within your environment. Experiment with different plants that you find, long grass is easier to work with when you are learning. You will need to weave with freshly picked grasses or it will dry out and become brittle and difficult to use. Be aware of the impact of your harvesting and never damage the entire plant.
Raffia	In addition or instead of grasses you pick yourself, raffia is a weaving material that can be easily found at local craft supply stores.
Wool in any colour	Wool can be cheaper sourced from second hand and charity stores which is not only cheaper but recycles materials, which is better for our environment.
Fabric	Any fabric can be torn into strips and used as a weaving material.
Found objects	You can include found objects as stands for your artwork, or additions.
Tools	Large ticking or sewing needle; and scissors.

Further information: Visit the Tjanpi Desert Weavers web site to find out more about the group
<https://tjanpi.com.au/>

ACTIVITY TWO: FOUND OBJECTS

Focus works:

When looking at Fiona's Halls works we often see familiar objects used as an art materials. These objects are at once familiar and understood for their original purpose, and through the artists' additions and changes different meanings emerge.

Wrong Way Time

Clocks are a recurring object within the body of work collectively titled *Wrong Way Time*. They have a specific function, a set meaning, within our culture, yet these clocks have been altered. By adding text and images in paint, the artist adds to our understanding of what a clock is and what it does. Fiona Hall's clocks become more than a means to tell the time, they have been transformed into a warning. The cheerful cuckoo clock becomes a desperate plea to wake up and look at the world in which we live, its always-expected chimes a reminder that time is precious and finite.

Paradisus Terrestris

Fiona Hall's works made from sardine tins and aluminium cans were created over a fifteen year period. These otherwise discarded materials have been transformed into beautiful objects. Each sardine tin has been wound down to reveal within an embossed depictions of the human form. At the top of the tin grows botanically correct representations of flora; the plant and the body interconnected in form. The connection we as humans have with our natural world is emphasised through ideas of fertility and reproduction, growth and natural cycles.

Leaf Litter

Paper money or bank notes are used as canvases for delicate x-ray like paintings of leaves in a major work by the artist. While money is the bottom line in our contemporary economy and overrides crucial environmental concerns, plants are often the raw material for generating income (and money, made from paper, is also produced from plants). Fiona Hall's witty and elegant work captures this perfectly.

Thinking:

- How do the properties inherent in the materials influence the possibilities of the final work of art? Think about the inherent meaning of these objects, do they have a purpose or context that adds to your work?
- What sorts of shapes can your materials be used to create?
- Think about the final object you wish to create.
- Create some initial sketches to help guide your making process.

Making:

- Your challenge is to make an artwork that costs nothing to produce.
- Use only found objects and basic art supplies that you already have.
- You already have a multitude of objects and materials in your house, things that might otherwise be thrown away such as paper beads, fabrics, pens, cotton etc. Don't forget the garage and garden as a source of materials.

When upcycling found objects, the process and materials used are open to experimentation. Allow the materials and found objects to help inform your art making process. Add paint and appropriate media that work with your concept, such as pencils, textas and paper.

Materials to use:

Found objects	In a world full of objects and consumerism, the possibilities of found objects are limitless. Second hand opportunity shops are a great source of cheap materials or think of the multitude of objects you have in your house, things that might otherwise be throw aways.
Paint	Paint can be used to transform found objects and add meaning through text imagery or simply shape and colour
Aluminium cans	The aluminium in soft drink cans can be easily cut into sheets using a pair of scissors. Aluminium from drink cans is very soft and is easy to work with for shaping and embossing. Similarly sardine cans or other metal containers can be used keeping more to their original forms and elements. When working with metal be aware of sharp edges.
Tools	Various tools can be used to emboss onto soft metal sheets such as cutlery, pens, pencils etc. Use your imagination and experiment to get the effect you want.

Further research

Artists all over the world use upcycled or found objects within their art practice. Research one artist whose work you appreciate who has used found objects in their work like Fiona Hall. How have they selected objects to help convey meaning?

Appendix A: Further reading

Art by Fiona Hall in the NGA collection:

Leaf litter	http://nga.gov.au/federation/Detail.cfm?WorkID=26201
Fern garden	http://nga.gov.au/sculpturegarden/fern.cfm
	http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=15999&PICTAUS=TRUE
Paradisus Terrestris	http://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=168518&PICTAUS=TRUE
Burning bright	http://nga.gov.au/CreatingWorlds/

Gallery of Fiona Hall's work at RoslynOxley9 Gallery

http://www.roslynoxley9.com.au/artists/17/Fiona_Hall/1615/

Websites:

NGA exhibition site for *Wrong Way Time*

<http://www.nga.gov.au/WrongWayTime/Default.cfm>

Biography and overview

<http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/fiona-hall>

Works in AGNSW, with bibliography and exhibition history

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/54.2000.a-dddd/>

Timeline of Australian artists at the Venice Biennale since 1954

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/strategies-and-frameworks/timeline/>

Videos:

Watch the episode 'Fiona Hall' from *Hidden Treasures* with Betty Churcher:

<http://dl.nfsa.gov.au/module/853/>

Wrong Way Time at the Venice Biennale, May 2015

<http://vernissage.tv/2015/06/08/fiona-hall-wrong-way-time-australian-pavilion-at-venice-art-biennale-2015/>

Education Resources (downloadable PDFs):

Museum of Contemporary Art

https://www.mca.com.au/media/uploads/files/Fiona_Hall_Force_Field_Education_Kit.pdf

City Gallery Wellington

<http://citygallery.org.nz/assets/New-Site/Education/Education-Resources/Fiona%20Hall%20Secondary%20Education%20Kit.pdf>

Heide Museum of Modern Art

https://www.heide.com.au/sites/default/files/HeideEdResource_Fiona%20Hall_BigGameHunting_Final%20online.pdf

National Gallery of Victoria

https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/ngv_edu_edres_contempora.pdf

Biennale of Sydney

http://www.biennaleofsydney.com.au/20bos/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/10/TEACHERS_KIT-FINAL_low_res.pdf

Appendix B: Focus works of art

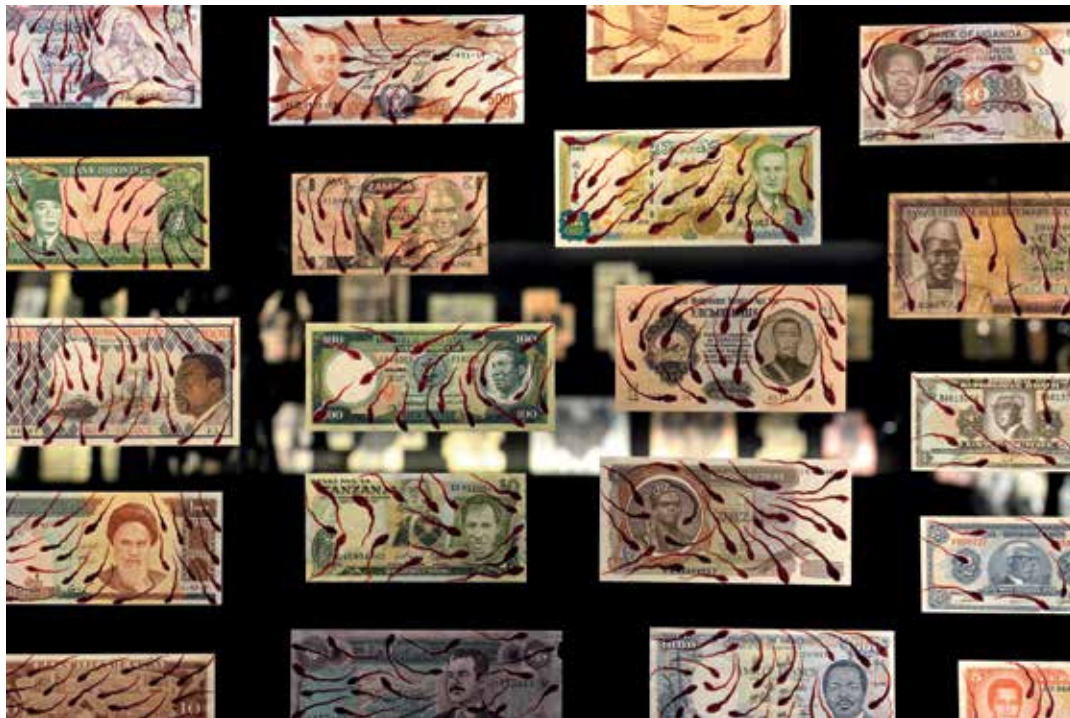
Installation view of *Wrong Way Time* at the Australian Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 2015. Photograph: Christian Corte © Fiona Hall



All the king's men 2014–15 Australian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2015 (installation view) Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Photograph: Christian Corte © Fiona Hall



Where the wind blows 2015 (detail) Australian Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2015 (installation view).
On loan from the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Photograph: Christian Corte © Fiona Hall



Wrong Way Time 2013 from the series *Wrong Way Time* Bernard Shafer © Fiona Hall



Plantanus orientalis – Oriental plane (Greek currency) detail from *Leaf litter* 1999–2003
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra © Fiona Hall



Leaf litter 1999–2003 National Gallery of Australia, Canberra © Fiona Hall



Untitled 2013 from the series *Big Game Hunting*.
Private collection © Fiona Hall



Quercus robur; English oak 1990–2005. On loan from
the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney © Fiona Hall

