QUESTIONS
FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

The Arts: Visual Art

During your visit

DIVERSITY: A great diversity can be noted among the work of the Lockhart River artists.

What reasons can you identify for the diversity of styles and subjects among the Lockhart River artists? Write down examples of this diversity.

MEDIUM AND MEANING: Sandbeach country, culture and community underpins the work of the Lockhart River Art Gang, regardless of the medium chosen by the artist.

Choose works in different media by Rosella Namok and two other Lockhart River artists and write down how they portray the significance of Sandbeach country and culture. How is the medium used by the artist to portray this?

COUNTRY: The work of the Lockhart River artists is closely connected to 'country'.

Describe how Adrian King's paintings New Site (1999) and Wenlock Outstation (2001) show how the artist is connected to country and community. Write down points arguing why these works might be described as naïve and/or political (in terms of a return to 'country'). How are they different from other works?

PRINTMAKING: The Lockhart River artists were first recognised for their fine art printmaking.

Analyse how paintings by Rosella Namok and Fiona Omeenyo reflect the screenprinting technique and make a list of the similarities and differences. Refer to specific works.
OUR WAY
CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ART FROM LOCKHART RIVER

PRINTMAKING: Choose examples of fine art prints made by Rosella Namok, Fiona Omeenyo, Terry Platt and Sammy Clarmont.

Identify different printmaking techniques used by these artists, giving examples. List the similarities and differences between their works, and note how Sandbeach culture is translated through these techniques. Do you perceive a difference between the prints of the male and female artists?

PERSONAL EXPRESSION: Samantha Hobson explained, in an artist's statement for her painting *Bust 'im Up* (2000) (National Gallery of Victoria), how on a Thursday or Friday night, after drinking at the local canteen or at parties, 'people get drunk … people get jealous'. On occasions when violent fights erupt, community police 'bust 'im up', with men sometimes taken to 'lock 'im up' and women, as the victims of this domestic violence, to hospital or to a shelter. Samantha Hobson has herself experienced domestic violence. Locate a painting from this series and make a list of the visual means (shape, line, texture, colour, paint handling, etc.) by which the artist portrays domestic violence.

Compare *Bust 'im Up* by Samantha Hobson with one of her fire paintings (about landscape), one of her 'Stressed Out' series (about youth suicide), and Rosella Namok's *That Day* (about the loss of a baby before birth). List visual points of difference, and note how the artists depict emotion.

ABSTRACT?: Some of the Lockhart River artworks may appear to be abstract (not figurative) and yet are embedded with meaning and stories about country and culture.

Choose works by different artists and list how they have used visual means (shape, line, texture, colour, etc.) to articulate meaning. You may, for instance, wish to consider one of Rosella Namok's paintings on the theme of Kaapay and Kuyan about 'moiety' (see Glossary).

After your visit:

COMMUNITY VERSUS INDIVIDUALITY: The Lockhart River Art Gang have arguably created a new aesthetic tradition for their community.

Discuss whether you think this new aesthetic tradition remains linked to family ownership of stories, symbols and styles. How does the diversity of styles among the young artists fit in this relationship? Give examples.

COMMUNITY VERSUS INDIVIDUALITY: Consider the tensions between a sense of community and individuality in the work of these young Indigenous artists.

Research the artwork of a remote Central Desert Aboriginal community (focusing on two artists) and analyse how Lockhart River art differs from the work of that community. Identify reasons for the difference.
'OUR WAY': Lockhart River artists say they are making art 'our way'.

What might explain the individuality in the work of the Lockhart River artists? Analyse how innovation and tradition are linked in their work, referring to the work of four artists. Does their work reflect elements of global culture?

BEFORE TIME: Research the Quinkan rock art found near Laura.

Describe how the figures in Fiona Omeenyo's artworks are similar (and different) to the Quinkans. What techniques does she use to merge figures from the past with figures from the present? Why might she do this?

BEFORE TIME: Do a web search to find Fiona Omeenyo's version of the story 'Miiku, Parrot Sisters and Kuchuutu'. The artist has painted a series of works to tell this story.

Select two art works by Fiona Omeenyo and explain how she has told parts of the story of 'Miiku, Parrot Sisters and Kuchuutu' in visual terms, noting if there are differences in her approach. Compare them with two paintings from Sidney Nolan's 1940s 'Ned Kelly' series.

CRITICAL REVIEW: Identify a major newspaper or art magazine in the USA or Australia.

Write a critical review of the exhibition for this newspaper or magazine. Identify the newspaper or art magazine for which you are writing, and follow the format used by that newspaper/art magazine (e.g. the way the exhibition details are listed). You will need to consider your audience.

CRITICAL REVIEW: Identify a respected Indigenous newspaper or magazine.

Write a critical review of the exhibition for this Indigenous newspaper or magazine. Identify the newspaper or art magazine for which you are writing, and follow the format used by that newspaper/art magazine (e.g. the way the exhibition details are listed). You will need to consider your audience.

CRITICAL REVIEW: Identify a major newspaper in the USA or Australia. Access the Virtual Tour of the 'Our Way' exhibition on the Mayne Centre website: http://www.maynecentre.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=56344&pid=0.

Write a critical review of the Virtual Tour of the 'Our Way' exhibition for a major newspaper or a journal aimed at a museum audience. Analyse the benefits and any problems of this program and how it might be considered in terms of 'audience development'.
Human Society and its Environment;
Marine Studies

During your visit:

‘COUNTRY’: An important relationship exists between Indigenous culture and country (including sea country).

Examine the work of four different Lockhart River artists and list how ‘country’ and Sandbeach culture is represented.


Write down what different techniques are used by four of the artists and how those techniques are used to tell you about the environment and its marine life. Focus on two works by each of the four artists.

MARINE & COASTAL SPECIES: A number of marine and coastal species are represented in works in the exhibition.

Record examples of 10 images that include such species and list the creatures depicted. Can you identify which of these might be on the menu for Lockhart River people, and which might be of ‘totemic’ (see Glossary) significance, or both? Write down what helped you identify the difference (e.g. title). Note the name of the artist.

COMMUNITY LIFE: Some of the artists depict aspects of community life in the Lockhart River region.

Focussing on three or four artists, make a list of what they have depicted about community life, and note the different techniques used by them to do so. Choose at least one artist who uses more abstract (non-figurative) means of representing community issues.

FIRE, RAIN AND SANDBEACH COUNTRY: Fire, rain and other features of Sandbeach country and its environment are depicted in the works in the exhibition.

Write down what different techniques are used by four of the artists and note how those techniques are used to tell you about the environment. Focus on two works by each of the four artists, featuring different aspects of the environment.
**OUR WAY**

**CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL ART FROM LOCKHART RIVER**

*After your visit:*

**COUNTRY:** The work of the Lockhart River Art Gang is not like the work of artists from other remote Indigenous art communities in Australia.

Research the work of two Lockhart River artists and the work of two Indigenous artists from another remote Aboriginal community in Australia. Referring to examples of their work, discuss the different ways in which they represent country and culture. Can you identify reasons for difference in their work?

**ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE HUNTING:** Starting with the material you gathered during your visit to the exhibition, research what marine species (e.g. dugongs and marine turtles) and marine environments are under threat in the Great Barrier Reef region.

Examine the circumstances in which damage to the marine environment has occurred. Identify how Indigenous communities are cooperating with government and its agencies to manage these resources. (As the Lockhart River region is one of the more pristine regions of the Great Barrier Reef region, you may need to look at other parts of the Reef and Queensland coast.) Discuss images in the exhibition pertaining to the environment and marine species.

**EUROPEAN HISTORY & TODAY’S RETURN TO COUNTRY:** Research the impact of Europeans and other outsiders on the Indigenous people of north-eastern Cape York (or elsewhere in Queensland) in the early 20th century.

Argue how particular art works in the exhibition address issues such as a return to ‘country’ and cultural heritage.

**FIRE:** Research how Australian Aboriginal people traditionally used fire to manage their environment.

On the web or in the library, find an image by another Australian Aboriginal artist concerning fire and compare it with a fire painting by Samantha Hobson. Describe the importance of fire for Aboriginal people.
**Practical ideas after your visit:**

- **Portray your street or school in a way that tells the viewer something about the environment.** Consider what medium (drawing, painting, linocut, screenprint, etc.) and visual means (line, shape, texture, colour) you will use to articulate the point you are making.

- **Make a painting or print about some creature or group of vegetables that appears regularly in your diet.** Emphasise qualities of line in your artwork. Consider using pattern to activate the 'negative space' between objects.

- **Use abstract (non-figurative) forms to construct an artwork portraying a story or symbolic meaning.** You will need to rely on visual means (line, shape, texture, colour, etc.) to convey visual drama and subtlety, and a sense of meaning. You may wish to give your work a title that assists the viewer to interpret your work.

- **Make an artwork depicting a place where you once lived to which you feel a strong sense of connection.** Decide whether you will make your work minimal or detailed, and choose a medium that will help you achieve this end.

- **Complete three drawings that contain elements of an ongoing narrative or story.** You will need to consider how realistic you wish to make your drawings. The story may or may not be well known. You might use titles to assist the viewer.
OUR WAY
Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River

Glossary

‘Before time’: ‘Before time’ refers to the past age when traditional law was created for the first time and when it was ‘proper strong’.

Country: ‘Country’ is a term that is important to Aboriginal Australians. It is the way they understand themselves, their society and culture in relation to a particular area of land. They learn important things about how they should live their lives through their parents and elders, knowledge which relates to one’s country. Their language also relates to their country.

Dugong: The dugong, or ‘sea cow’, is a marine mammal which can grow to three metres in length and weigh up to 400 kilograms. They eat grass (seagrass) like a cow.

I’wai: A leading ancestral figure in the Hero Cult Saga of the Kuuku Yau language group, who appeared with the head of a crocodile and the body of a man.

‘kaampi’: Flying fox or fruit bat in Kuuku Ya’u language

Linocut: A technique of printmaking in which linoleum (lino) is cut away with a sharp tool, with the uncut surface then covered in ink and placed on paper.

‘manita kutini’: Rainforest (‘manita’) cassowary (‘kutini’) in Kuuku Ya’u language

Mission: Communities of Indigenous people were gathered together and controlled by religious orders; the Lockhart River Anglican mission began in 1924, and handed over control to the state government in 1967.

Moiety: The concept of moiety determines differences between people across different language groups. Moieties regulate proper activity with regards to marriages and relations between families and kinship groups, among other things. Moiety helps divide Aboriginal society into two halves who are able to intermarry. Moiety is an important factor in the life of Cape York people.

‘New Site’: The new location of the Lockhart River Mission near Quintell Beach, known as ‘New Site’, is the present location of the Lockhart River community.

Ochre: Ochre is a type of coloured clay collected by Aboriginal people for use in body painting and rock art, and for decorating wooden tools. Ochres are most often red and yellow.

Outstation: People from the different language groups at Lockhart River township have begun to establish ‘outstations’ or camps on their ancestral lands.

Pama Malnkana: meaning ‘people of the sand beach’.

pama way: ‘Sandbeach’ or ‘our’ way.

para way: ‘whitefella’ way.

‘pata’: Common death adder snake in Kuuku Ya’u language

‘punkupinta’: Freshwater turtles with long necks in Kuuku Ya’u language

Quinkan spirits: Mythological or spiritual figures appearing on rock art sites in Cape York near Laura.

‘Sandbeach’: In the Lockhart River region the term ‘Sandbeach’ gives common identity to a group of five coastal and inland language groups. These people collectively referred to themselves as ‘Pama Malnkana’, meaning ‘people of the sand beach’.

Screenprint: Using a fine screen, an image is determined by blocking out certain areas of the screen, enabling ink to be forced through the remaining areas onto paper lying beneath. The blocking-out process is achieved either with a stencil or a solution.

Totem: An animal or other natural being which forms a link for individuals to their land or ancestral beings.
OUR WAY
Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River

'unta'/untha': Green ant in Kuuku Ya'u language

Recommended texts


Recommended websites

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit, The University of Queensland: http://www.atsis.uq.edu.au/index.html

Andrew Baker Art Dealer: http://www.andrew-baker.com/

ARC Quinkan Matchbox Site: http://www.jcu.edu.au/rockart/

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS): http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/home


Cultural Protocol Site, Message Stick, ABC, online at http://www.abc.net.au/message/proper/default.htm


Missions and reserves, footprints before time…: following the history of family and community, State Library of Queensland: http://publib.slq.qld.gov.au/footprints/missionsandreserves/index.htm

Hogarth Galleries: http://www.aboriginalartcentres.com/


OUR WAY
Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River


OUR WAY
Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River

Acknowledgements

*Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River* Activity Sheet
for Primary School Students produced by the University Art Museum, The University of Queensland, 2007

Activity sheet written by:
Michele Helmrich, Curator – Public Programs,
The University of Queensland Art Museum.

Based on *Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River* exhibition wall panels and text by Dr Sally Butler which appears in the publication *Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2007), and other sources as indicated in the accompanying education resource kit.

Activity Sheet published 2007 by The University of Queensland Art Museum, The James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Queensland 4072, Australia.

COPYRIGHT
The publisher grants permission for this Activity Sheet to be used only for educational purposes in relation to the exhibition *Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River*.

Copyright on images (of artworks by the Lockhart River artists) remains with the artists. Except for the educational purposes stated above, no images may be reproduced without permission of the copyright owners.

*Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River*
The University of Queensland Art Museum
Exhibition dates: 5 May – 1 July 2007

Exhibition curator: Dr Sally Butler, Lecturer in the School of English, Media Studies and Art History, The University of Queensland.

Public programs and educational resources for the exhibition *Our Way, Contemporary Aboriginal Art from Lockhart River* have been generously supported by The University of Queensland Alumni Association Inc. and through an initiative of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), in support of The University of Queensland’s year of focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues, marking the 40th anniversary of the 1967 referendum.

This project has been supported by the Australian Government and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, Department of Education, Training and the Arts, as part of the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy; and the Queensland Indigenous Arts Marketing and Export Agency (QIAAMEA), Department of the Premier and Cabinet. QIAAMEA promotes Queensland’s Indigenous arts industry through marketing and export activity throughout Australia and internationally.