



ONLINE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING Danie Mellor Activity

SUITABLE FOR: Years 9-10, Visual Arts or Photography, Film and Digital Media.

OVERVIEW:

Students investigate the practice of contemporary First Nations artist Danie Mellor, responding to his blue Australian landscapes. Referencing Mellor's idiosyncratic style, students will construct a digital collage scene, merging buildings with native animals. Teachers may choose if students artworks will conceptually focus on colonialism or the urban/natural environment.

OUTCOMES/INDICATORS

- **ACAVAM125** – Students respond to the art making practice of Danie Mellor, referencing his explored subject matter of romanticised, post-colonial landscape scenes of Australia.
- **ACAVAM126** – Students develop technical skills in Photoshop such as colour adjustment and layer transformation with strong focus on composition in the construction of a digitally cohesive photographic collage.
- **ACAVAR131** – Students compare works by Danie Mellor, Jonathan Jones and Ah Xian, exploring how porcelain/fine bone china and related imagery can be explored symbolically in art making.

ARTWORK/ARTIST NOTES

In Mellor's works such as 'At Play in the Fields of a Lord' (2009) the artist has created postcard like drawings of the Australian landscape. These romanticised, post-colonial scenes of both the natural environment and imperial buildings are constructed in monochromatic tones of royal blue and white, decorated with borders of flowers and presented in gold, ornate, frames. This imagery references illustrations produced for fine bone china, owned by affluent English estates since the 18th century. In contrast to the overwhelming blue, Mellor has inserted coloured imagery of Australian animals and First Nations people within these compositions. They appear friendly and submissive, yet out of place, emphasising Eurocentric narratives of the British Empire.

MAKE

1. Introduce students to the practice of Danie Mellor. Investigate themes within his practice including ceramic painting, colonisation in Australia and materiality.
2. Students research colonial buildings or urban structures in Australia and images of Australian flora and fauna.
3. Images of buildings are made blue in Photoshop by; changing to black and white > Adjust levels > Modify rotation and cropping > Overlay with a fill layer of navy/royal blue and alter the blending mode to a suitable light > Adjust Colour Balance to emphasise blue > Adjust Hue/Saturation if necessary > Use Dodge and Burn tools if required > Merge and position this scene within an A4/A3 document.
4. Animals can be transferred to scenes by; open an image in a new window > Use the Object Selection/Quick Selection tool to digitally cut around an image > Use the eraser tool to modify any clipping inaccuracies > Pull over to 'blue scene' open window > Use the transform tool to adjust the size and placement.
5. Apply a thin blue border underneath the scene by using the shape tools. Research porcelain imagery by Josiah Spode to use as a digital border, or draw the border using mixed media materials. Print and exhibit the work in a cut-out gold frame or similar.

EXTENTION

- How do artists use signs, symbols and materials to comment on histories within their work? In your answer compare a 'blue' work of Danie Mellor to Jonathan Jones' site-specific installation 'Untitled (Oysters and Tea Cups)' (2012) and Ah Xian's 'China, China – Bust 81' (2004).

MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT

Access to Photoshop, Internet and Colour Printing

CB455 - Pre-Cut Mounts Suit A4

CB736 - Cardboard with Printed Frame A3 10pk

PN031 - Grip Finepens 20pk

PN082-AS - Staedtler Ballpoint Pens 10pk