

2

PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS

LUCIAN FREUD

Double portrait 1988–90

YASUMASA MORIMURA

Daughter of art history: princess B 1989

GERHARD RICHTER

Helen 1963

MAPPING PLACE

OLIVO BARBIERI

Siena (3) 2002

PHILIP GUSTON

In the studio 1975

ROY LICHTENSTEIN

Post visual 1993

NATURAL AND CREATED ENVIRONMENTS

TONY CRAGG

Grey moon 1985

ANDREAS GURSKY

Aletschgletscher 1993

NAOYA HATAKEYAMA

Blast 5707 1998

LUCIAN FREUD
DOUBLE PORTRAIT 1988-90

OIL ON CANVAS
111.76 X 134.62 CM
© 2007 Lucian Freud

PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS



It is hard to imagine any artist of recent times who has approached figure painting with the same intensity as British artist Lucian Freud. A slow painter who learned his craft by trial and error, Freud's portrait sessions extend over months, with the painter carefully wiping his brush after every stroke. The artist speaks of literally willing his materials and technique to yield up the psyche of his sitters, which he perceives as inherent in their flawed physiques.

Freud's subjects are usually drawn from the artist's circle of intimates: children, lovers, friends or fellow artists. While his exposure of vulnerable flesh might at times seem almost clinical, it cannot be said that Freud lacks empathy with his subjects. 'I'm only interested in painting the actual person', he has stated, 'not in using them to some ulterior end'.¹ Paradoxically it is through assuming this disinterested stance that Freud enables his sitters' 'essence' to emerge.

Double portrait 1988–90 features two of the artist's favourite models: his daughter Bella and her whippet Pluto, which he initially bought for her and later came to care for on a permanent basis. A 'good sleeper', Pluto's companionable presence in Bella's arms serves to highlight the tension in the young woman's angular frame. Pluto appears in a number of other portraits painted during the 1980s and '90s. As Freud (a dog-lover from boyhood) once stated, 'I'm really interested in people as animals ... I like people to look as natural and as physically at ease as animals, as Pluto, my whippet'.²

In *Double portrait* a restricted palette — of greys, blues and blacks at the cool end of the spectrum, and pinks and browns at the other — brings out vital similarities between dog and woman. Veins and sinews are visible beneath the delicate skin of both creatures; breathing, body heat and even thoughts seem as one. Elsewhere Freud has spoken of the subtle role of colour in producing such effects. 'I don't want any colour to be noticeable. I want the colour to be the colour of life ... I don't want it to operate in the modernist sense as colour, something independent ... Full, saturated colours have an emotional significance that I want to avoid.'³

Painted 14 years after *Double portrait*, *Head of a naked girl* 1999 features the novelist Nicola-Rose O'Hara. Freely painted with bold gestural strokes, this small but powerful study, along with the full-length portrait of O'Hara which succeeded it, reveals a new degree of intimacy that Freud — now in old age — has begun seeking with his subjects. His inspiration was John Constable's *Study of the trunk of an elm tree* 1821, a painting whose portrait-like qualities have intrigued Freud since student days. In painting Nicola, Freud consciously tried to get as close to his sitter as Constable had stood to the elm tree in Dedham two centuries earlier.⁴

Despite his commitment to portraying the seen world 'as it is' and his known dislike of contrived poses, Freud does not aspire to record images in a camera-like way. As he freely admits, any random effects of pose and subject in his canvases tend to be the result of careful selection. 'When I look at a body I know it gives me choices of what to put in a painting; what will suit me and what won't.'⁵ Nor does Freud's rejection of theatrical devices in his works mean that the artist himself lacks a sense of showmanship. 'What do I ask of a painting?' he once remarked. 'I ask it to astonish, disturb, seduce and convince!'⁶ SM

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Compare Freud's handling of the different textures of skin, fur and fabric. **Observe** the wide range of colours and brush strokes used to reproduce these textures. **Look** in a mirror and identify the various colours you can see in your face.

Experiment mixing skin tones using only the primary colours and white. **Paint** your self-portrait using a mirror and apply various layers of skin tones.

ENGLISH: Imagine interviewing Bella, the artist's daughter who posed several times for this double portrait. **Consider** questions examining her expression, clothing and relationship with her dog. **Explore** how she felt modelling for this painting. Who decided on this informal pose? **Debate**.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: Research the chemistry of oil painting and its role in western art history. **List** the materials required by the artist. **Discuss** some of the occupational health and safety issues for an artist using this medium. What impact did the introduction of oil paint in tubes have for artists in the mid 19th century?

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Does oil paint still play an important role in contemporary art practice? Research Freud's progression from a draughtsman to a master painter. Explore his oil painting techniques. Why does Freud require extended periods of time to complete his paintings? Examine the importance of Freud's friendship with Francis Bacon. Compare the work of Bacon and Freud. Discuss how each artist approaches the figure and depiction of flesh.

How does Freud present a bold and contemporary approach to portraiture? Do you find Freud's work confronting? Freud's meticulous and intensely subjective portraits have been described as realist art. Research realist art. Do you agree with this classification of Freud's work?

Freud has been quoted as saying, 'What do I ask of a painting? I ask it to astonish, disturb, seduce and convince!' Explain what Freud means by this quote. What implications does it have for his practice? Suggest how *Double portrait* reflects Freud's approach to his art-making process.

1 Freud quoted by Robert Hughes in *Lucian Freud paintings*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington 1987, p 20

2 Conversation with William Feaver, *Third ear*, BBC Radio 3, 10 December 1991, reproduced in William Feaver, *Lucian Freud*, Tate Gallery, London 2002, pp 41–42

3 Hughes 1987, p 16

4 Feaver 1991, p 47

5 Hughes 1987, p 20

6 Feaver 1991, p 37. Feaver is quoting from *The artist's eye: Lucian Freud*, National Gallery, London 1987

YASUMASA MORIMURA
DAUGHTER OF ART HISTORY: PRINCESS B 1989

PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS

COLOUR PHOTOGRAPH VARNISHED
MOUNTED ON BOARD IN ARTIST'S FRAME
213.4 X 162.6CM
© 2007 Courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York



MORIMURA'S OWN MALE JAPANESE FACE TRANSPOSED ONTO THESE ICONIC AND IDEALISED IMAGES OF FEMALES FROM WESTERN ART HISTORY ASKS FURTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND THE ASSUMPTION THAT WESTERN CULTURE IS A GLOBAL HISTORY.

Wayne Tunnicliffe, senior curator Contemporary art, Art Gallery of New South An *incomplete world*, catalogue p57

From the late 1970s photographer-artists such as Cindy Sherman explored how visual identity and a sense of self are shaped by images in the popular media, for example films, magazines and television. Through photographing themselves in the guise of already familiar 'types', such as 'the secretary' or the 'pin up girl', and in common media genres, it was as if the artist was an actor in so many pre-ordained movie plots, TV serials or photo-essays. Traditional ideas of the self-portrait as revealing an essential identity were turned on their head and selfhood became a deferred series of self-images that could be exchanged at will. Simultaneously, other artists such as Sherrie Levine were exploring the legacy of art history, through rephotographing images by earlier photographers such as Edward Weston, and thereby examining how the experience of the unique artwork had been affected by the endless reproductions that photography and the mass media had made possible, a critique that had been pre-figured by Walter Benjamin's highly influential essay from 1936, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction'. Many other artists also began appropriating images from earlier painters and reworked them in their own art to question originality and the ways in which culture participated in certain exclusionary power relationships, such as the absence of women and other races from Western art history. These strands of self-representation, media-influenced imagery, appropriation and a critical examination of art history come together in Yasumasa Morimura's photographs.

Daughter of art history: Princess B 1989 is a photograph based on one of Diego Velázquez's last paintings, *Infanta Margarita in blue* 1659. Typically, Morimura's version stars himself, standing behind the improbable cut-out version of the Infanta's dress he constructed in his studio. What is even more improbable is the detail in the image: the Infanta's left hand now has beautifully manicured long red nails while her right hand holds a parasol. On the stand behind her, the small sculpture of what appears to be a dog in the original has been replaced with two modern soft toys. On the wall behind these is a very recent looking clock. In *Angels descending a staircase* 1991, Morimura has depicted himself as the angels in Edward Burne-Jones enigmatic painting *The golden stairs* 1880. Morimura, however, has doubled the original composition and now the angels descend both sides of the staircase as if in an over-the-top Busby Berkeley choreographed Hollywood musical number.

Both these works call upon the 'aura' and beauty of the original paintings, and at a passing glance they could be seen as being the heirs to this art history. But at a second glance the gold frames, stagy drama, thick varnish over the surface to emulate a painterly quality and 'incorrect' contemporary elements add to a sense of post-pop kitsch, anathema to any traditional sense of beauty. Morimura's own male Japanese face transposed onto these iconic and idealised images of females from Western art history asks further questions about the representation of gender and the assumption that Western culture is a global history. WT

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Find an image of Diego Velázquez's painting *Infanta Margarita* 1659. **Compare** the painting with Morimura's staged photograph. **Identify** the elements that the artist did not include from Velázquez's painting. **Draw** a picture of yourself as *Daughter of art history: princess B* in your own contemporary environment. **Consider** the objects that are important to you and include them in your artwork.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: **Locate** photographic portraits taken in the late 19th century. **Compare** the poses and facial expressions to the work of Velázquez and Morimura. **Research** photographic techniques from the late 19th century. Explore why early photographic portraits seem so serious. **Stage** your own portraits and photograph yourself and classmates in similar poses.

MUSIC: **Research** composers of the 17th and late 20th century. **Listen** to music from these periods and compare. Imagine the sounds you could hear if you were sitting next to the *Daughter of art history: princess B*. **Compose** a piece of music. **Include** elements of music you have collected and incorporate sounds you may hear from the objects in the artwork.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Identify how Morimura has constructed this image. Why has Morimura deliberately created a composition that looks kitsch? Discuss how Morimura draws our attention to the nature of constructed histories and gender stereotypes. Can you define this image as a self-portrait or is the artist placing himself in the role of the subject to make a particular statement? Discuss.

Survey Morimura's photographic practice. Explore how Morimura uses irony and parody in the appropriation of iconic artworks of Western art history. Does the success of his photographs rely on the audience being familiar with the original artwork? Debate in class.

Research the work of Sherrie Levine, who photographed reproductions of paintings and photographs and presented these as her own works of art. Compare Levine's work with the work of Morimura. How does the work of these artists challenge the notion of the original idea in contemporary art practice?

GERHARD RICHTER
HELEN 1963

OIL AND GRAPHITE ON CANVAS
108.59 X 99.38CM
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.
PARTIAL AND PROMISED GIFT OF UBS, 2002
© 2007 Gerhard Richter

PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS



Gerhard Richter grew up in Dresden and studied there after the war while it was a part of the Soviet block. Before the Iron Curtain made travel impossible, Richter visited the groundbreaking exhibition *Documenta* in Kassel, where he was exposed to the work of Joseph Beuys and other Avant Garde artists from the West. This experience convinced him to leave Dresden in 1961 to complete his studies at Düsseldorf. Richter, along with several other artists who escaped from Eastern Germany, brought a critical attitude to the analysis of contemporary art. They also benefited from an academic training in drawing and painting that gave them options not always available to Western students for whom pop art and abstraction short circuited traditional skills. Richter has used his traditional training to mount a masterly investigation into the structure of paint and optics.

Richter's early paintings such as *Helen* 1963 gave pop art a political edge. His subject matter was often based on newspaper photographs, mimicking the blurring of surveillance images taken from a moving car. He has continued to explore the effects of photography in all his painting even though his choice of image continuously shifts between landscape, historical paintings and apparently minimalist abstraction. It is not realism or abstraction as such that interests him but the possibility of photographic error, with the potential for blurring and loss of focus, which he skilfully reproduces in the painted surface. The sense of motion generated by his images makes us sensitive to the process of seeing and interpreting paint as surface and as illusion.

Richter has accumulated an enormous repertoire of photographs of colours, textures and patterns found in nature and the built environment. These elements invariably show up in his brushwork and use of colour. His paint is often dragged with a squeegee or blurred out with a brush creating a broken surface that can be translated into a painterly tradition that is connected to Titian and Velázquez. This tradition is typified by the Baroque tendency to break the surface of the paint and blur the image to stimulate imaginative interpretation and active seeing. Richter has taken this Baroque tendency to a new level of conceptual and optical sophistication. His works constitute an analysis of the fundamental structures that determine how we see painting.

Helen is an early example of his figurative painting that simulates a shaky camera lens or possibly a faulty print. While this reference to mass media has been interpreted as a pop art tendency, it is also the basis of a conceptual strategy in his work, whereby the manipulation of paint emulates incidents in mass reproduction. The effect is to suggest movement within the picture but it also implicates the viewer in the motion as the eye attempts to still the motion of the camera. TB

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Discuss how Richter documents movement in *Helen*. Create three small paintings and experiment with wiping your work to create a blurred image when the paint is still wet. Are you pleased with the results? Is there an element of chance in this technique? Press your wet painting onto another surface and compare to your previous experiments. Try to perfect this technique.

HISE: Richter directly experienced the effects of living in a country (Germany) that was divided after World War II. Find out about the division of East and West Germany. Explore the effects of this division on the population of Germany

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: Examine the process of printing black and white photographs in a darkroom. What chemical reactions occur in this process? Experiment with taking photographs that include movement, either by varying your shutter speed, by asking people to move or by moving the camera itself. Discuss your results.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Describe the woman in the painting. What is she doing? Is the subject aware she is being observed? What connotations does the blurring have? Examine the painted surface closely. What techniques and equipment has Richter utilised?

Investigate Richter's desire to make a photograph with paint. Consider Richter's interest in the possibility for photographic error and his desire to replicate these effects in paint. Research the relationship between painting and photography in contemporary art.

Examine Richter's body of work. Assess the influence of Richter's academic training in drawing and painting. Discuss how Richter applied his training to mount an investigation into the structure of paint and optics.

OLIVO BARBIERI
SIENA (3) 2002

MAPPING PLACE

TYPE C PHOTOGRAPH
100 X 126CM
© 2007 Courtesy of the artist and Isabella Brancolini
Arte Contemporanea, Florence



Olivo Barbieri has photographed urban landscapes for 30 years. His portraits of cities include views of skyscrapers, aerial photographs and, most recently, short films that show Rome, Las Vegas and Shanghai from a bird's eye perspective. The most striking characteristics of these two *Sienna* 2002 photographs are the unusual camera angle and selective focus. At first glance, the images seem to depict an artificially lit miniature model of a city square crowded with small figures. However, these are aerial photographs of a real event: a crowd gathered in Siena's Piazza del Campo during the traditional Palio horse race. Barbieri takes his aerial photographs from a helicopter flying at around 90–150m above ground. He uses a camera fitted with a tilt-shift lens, which allows the photographer to control perspective lines and to alter the angle between the lens and the film, thereby controlling which parts of the image are in focus.

Rather than showing the horse race, the artist has chosen the crowd of spectators as his subject. The presence of people is rare in Barbieri's work, and when they are included, they are shown in groups where individuals are indiscernible. In one of the *Sienna* photographs, some figures are separated from the crowd, casting long shadows reminiscent of a Giorgio de Chirico painting. Barbieri cites the modernist painter as an inspiration, and his influence is particularly apparent in Barbieri's non-naturalistic representation of space and light. The blurring and overexposure that are normally accidental and unwanted side effects in photography are deliberately produced to heighten the sense of the surreal in *Sienna*.

In his depiction of the world in miniature Barbieri subverts the common purpose of aerial photography, namely to record detailed visual data and to map landscapes and cities as clearly and objectively as possible. In the *Sienna* photographs recognition is deliberately obscured. The artist shows the familiar as something unfamiliar, he makes the real appear unreal. His aim is to represent 'the world as a temporary site-specific installation, structures and infrastructures, the foundation of our sense of belonging and our identity, seen from afar, as a great scale model: the city as an avatar of itself'.¹ Barbieri's distanced, unfamiliar view of the world prompts us to re-examine our surroundings, and to navigate the spaces we inhabit with a more curious and perceptive eye. PK

¹ Olivo Barbieri, artist's statement, www.yidalinian.org/english/2006/09/barbieris_site_specific_shangh.php

K–6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: **Identify** what you can see. **Imagine** you are standing in the crowd. **List** the sights and sounds you experience. **Discuss** why the artist has used a bird's eye view. **Use** a camera to document your school playground from unusual perspectives and at different times of the day. **Print** and exhibit your class photographs and discuss.

HISE: **Locate** Siena on a map of Italy. **Search** the Internet for images of Piazza del Campo and compare them to Barbieri's photograph. **Research** the historic Palio horse race that occurs in this piazza. **Explore** how the Palio has changed over several centuries.

MATHEMATICS: **Find out** the dimensions of the Piazza del Campo. **Calculate** the area. **Devise** a formula to calculate the number of spectators that could stand in the piazza to view the Palio. **Discuss** your results.

7–12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

View *Sienna (3)* in light of Barbieri's aim to represent 'the world as a temporary site-specific installation'. Deconstruct the meaning of this quote. Debate whether Barbieri has succeeded in this photograph.

Identify how Barbieri subverts the common purpose of aerial photography in *Sienna (3)*. Research Barbieri's photographic techniques. How has this photograph been taken? How does the perspective, short depth of field and colour saturation affect the audience's interpretation of the photograph?

Search the Internet for images of Siena's Piazza del Campo during the Palio horse race. Compare these images to the manipulated images by Barbieri. Does the Palio seem to be occurring? What spectacle is Barbieri actually documenting? The presence of people in Barbieri's work is rare. Discuss the treatment of the spectators.

PHILIP GUSTON
IN THE STUDIO 1975

MAPPING PLACE

OIL ON CANVAS
208.28 X 200.66 CM
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.
PARTIAL AND PROMISED GIFT OF UBS, 2002
© 2007 The Estate of Philip Guston;
Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York



**'I GOT SICK AND TIRED OF ALL THAT PURITY!
... I WANTED TO TELL STORIES.'**

Philip Guston, *An incomplete world*, catalogue p77

A 'tug-of-war' between the opposing calls of abstraction and figuration brought Philip Guston to an artistic standstill for two years in the late 1960s. Frustrated and unable to paint, Guston spent 1966 and 1967 working on monochrome ink and charcoal drawings. Finally, out of this impasse, burst a series of paintings in which the common object reassessed itself: crude and insistent, cartoon-like in all its bathos and vulgar narrative thrust. This breakthrough of 1968 coincided with Guston's retreat from New York into a studio he had recently built for himself in rural Woodstock. The new cinder-block studio, described as 'grim, and grey as a factory on the outside, but huge and light on the inside', rapidly became the centre of Guston's world.¹ It housed his collection of found objects and provided a refuge from the Manhattan art scene.

Painting at night with acrylics applied to small squares of sawn masonite, Guston produced numerous studies of single objects — a shoe, a book, a ball. This outpouring soon gave way in 1969 to larger, more complex works in which the same motifs were orchestrated into images of the studio world that the artist now inhabited. 'I got sick and tired of all that purity!' he later remarked of this period. 'I wanted to tell stories.'

In the studio 1975 is the culmination of that series, commenced six years before. Notably it is one of the few works in which Guston portrays himself without disguise. We see him in profile, grey-haired, wrinkled and liver-spotted: in failing health. The simple objects which Guston first painted in 1968 have now become the components of a resolved autobiography. A naked light bulb evokes Guston's night-time painting sessions, but also the illuminated closet in which he spent hours as a boy, after his father's suicide. An eyeball pressed against the tacked edge of a canvas alludes to Guston's well-known habit of working so close to the canvas that paint would splash back into his eyes. But it is the Camel cigarette portrayed not once but twice in the painting which reveals the depth of Guston's concern with self-inscription.

Few gestures could have been so calculated to incense the priests of abstract expressionism as Guston's 'regression' to autobiographical painting. Having committed the cardinal sin of literalism, Guston was accused of joining the pop art bandwagon, with his clownish lolly-coloured figures and swipes at 'high art'. But such comparisons were at best only superficial in the case of Guston's late works. Guston's post-1968 oeuvre reveals, above all, his abiding reverence for Rembrandt and the Old Masters, for it is their position that he ultimately adopted. Put simply, 'the visible world, I think, is abstract and mysterious enough, I don't think one needs to depart from it to think about art.'² SM

¹ Musa Mayer, *Night studio: a memoir of Philip Guston by his daughter Musa Mayer*, Penguin, London 1988, p 147

² Philip Guston, lecture, University of Minnesota, March 1978. Reproduced in *Phillip Guston*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, London 2004, p 27

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Guston has drawn himself in his studio. **List** the objects you can see. **Examine** his use of perspective, or lack of it. Can you tell what is in the background, middle-ground and foreground? **Make** drawings of parts of your classroom. Using a variety of materials, **draw** individual objects on separate pieces of paper and layer them together to create a collage.

ENGLISH: **Write** an acrostic poem using the letters of *In the studio*. Include references to the painting's textures, colours, objects and space. **Hold** a poetry reading in class.

PDHPE: Guston is depicted with what appears to be a cigarette in his hand and mouth. **Discuss** the health issues related to smoking. **Use** this image to create an advertising campaign warning against the dangers of smoking.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

This autobiographical work maps Guston's experience of his studio. Assess the composition of this painting. What has he included and eliminated? Identify the various personal symbols. Why has Guston compressed so much into the picture plane?

Examine the tug-of-war Guston experienced between figuration and abstraction in the mid 1960s. Survey Guston's career. Compare the painterly abstract works associated with Abstract Expressionism with his later, bold, figurative paintings. Identify the elements in his later work that have led critics to classify him as a Pop artist. Do you agree with this labelling of his work? Discuss.

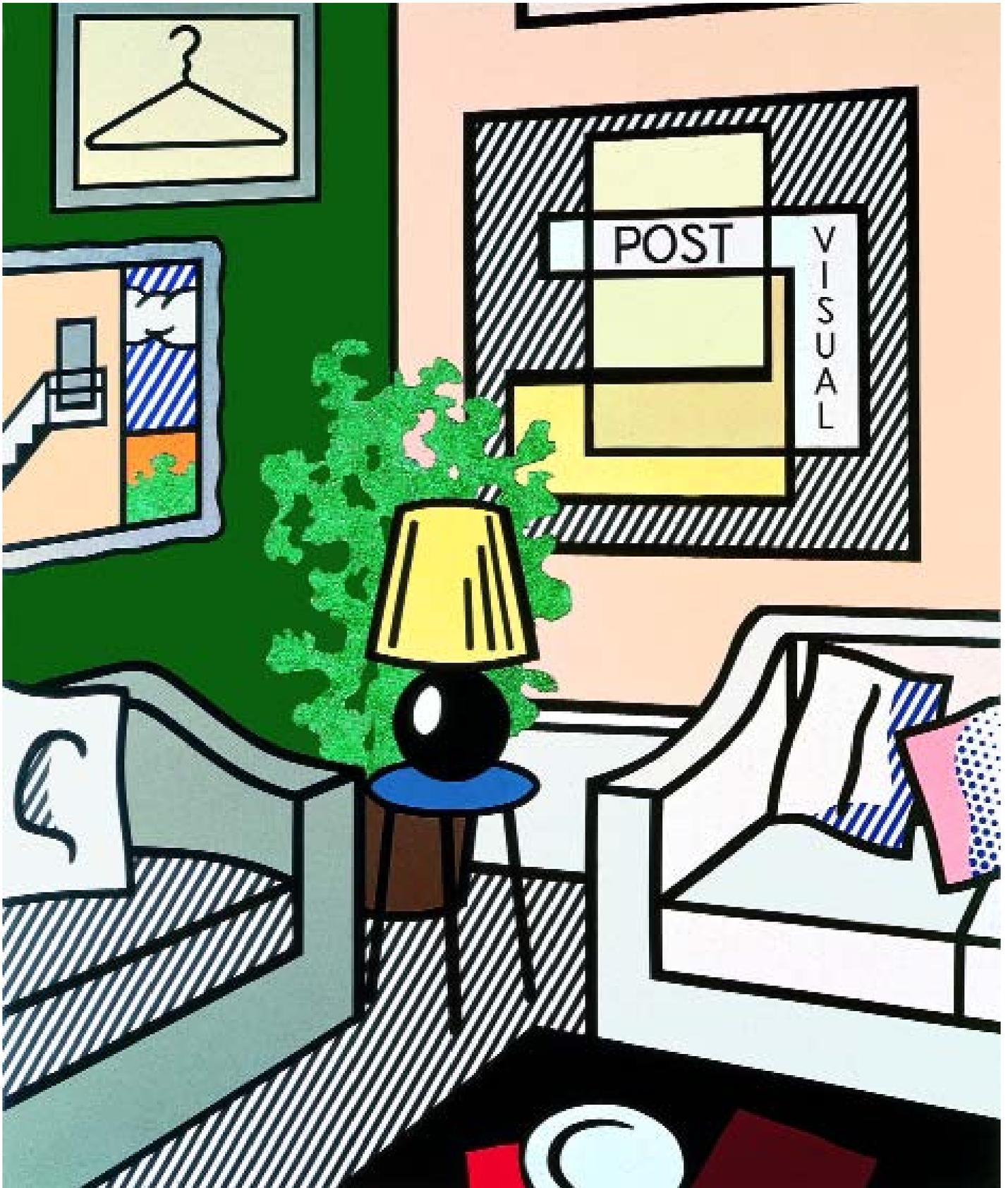
'I got sick and tired of all that purity!... I wanted to tell stories.' Explore this artist's statement. Find examples of Guston's paintings and write a critique on his body of work for an arts journal. Discuss why sections of the artworld were critical of his return to figuration, accusing his work of being regressive.

ROY LICHTENSTEIN
POST VISUAL 1993

OIL AND MAGNA ON CANVAS
243.84 X 203.2 CM

© Estate of Roy Lichtenstein. Licensed by Viscopy, Australia

MAPPING PLACE



Along with his contemporaries, Claes Oldenburg, James Rosenquist and Andy Warhol, Lichtenstein embraced the new technologies and mass-production of post-war America as a reaction against abstract expressionism. These artists combined a new witty and quotational visual language with mass-consumption images such as cartoons and advertising.

Influenced by the cubists, Lichtenstein's reductive imagery, or what he referred to as visual shorthand, takes familiar subjects from 20th century art masterpieces or urban contemporary living including television, dating or graphic novels. These subjects are reduced into strict painting structures and systems such as figure, background, foreground, line, shape and colour as formal elements that reference rather than represent reality. At the basis of all his paintings was a laborious process of initially composing the structures and subjects in a drawing that was then used as a conceptual and compositional device to inform the final work. In the 1990s when he commenced his *Interiors* series he began to use collage as an additional process in devising components such as the Benday (dot matrix) patterns, with dots graduated in both size and colour. This approach continued his interest in eliminating both the artist's hand and the painterly gesture from the work, despite the fact that the image was completed in his slow methodical way of painting with a brush.

Post visual 1993 is from his *Interiors* project, which began in the early 1990s and continued through to his death in 1997. This painting combines his interest in the formal or classicist approach to form and surface, his analytical and ironic reflection of art itself and a sense of play with the visual field. Lichtenstein made ironic paintings about art, images and vision throughout his career: from the early 1960s with *Image duplicator* 1963, appropriating cartoons, Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne or Henri Matisse; through the *Painting* series that combined comments on abstract expressionism and cartoons in the 1980s; to the *Interiors* series in the 1990s that play with spatial ambiguity and self-reflexivity. His interiors are also generally close to life-size giving the viewer a bodily relationship to the scale of the work, illusively implying an ability to enter the room depicted, yet visually confining the space with contrasting elements. The disjunction that is set up by Lichtenstein, between the image and its perspective, the depth of the visual field and the flatness of the canvas itself, questions the process of image-making in our contemporary and visually literate society. Pop art may be seen as insouciant and gimmicky, yet there is clearly a trajectory from Dutch still life and interiors to pop art's formalist structures, particularly in Lichtenstein's paintings, in the way that they play with traditional pictorial processes and conventions such as perspective and chiaroscuro. This observation led art critic David Sylvester to consider Lichtenstein to be the heir to Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin or Nicolas Poussin in his classicist approach to form and surface. DB

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: How is this lounge room similar to your own? **List** all the things you can see. What would it be like to live in this house? **Use** felt markers to draw another view of this room. **Continue** the use of dots and diagonal lines within your composition.

VISUAL ART: Lichtenstein is considered to be a Pop artist. Pop artists often use everyday objects and advancements in technology as subject matter. **Research** other Pop artists and compare their art and what they choose to paint. Are they responding to their environment in a positive way. Why? **Discuss.**

ENGLISH: **Invent** an advertising campaign for modern living using this painting as a starting point. **Compose** a jingle and plan a thirty second television commercial. **Video** your commercial and play them all in class. **Discuss** the various approaches taken by students.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Discuss how Lichtenstein has transformed the familiar space of an interior into a survey of 20th century art. Examine the references made in the three artworks depicted on the wall in the painting and identify the styles illustrated. How has Lichtenstein used irony?

Survey Lichtenstein's body of work. Lichtenstein rose to prominence in the 1960s and continued practicing in a Pop Art style until his death in 1997. What did Lichtenstein mean when he said he wanted his paintings to look as if they had been programmed?

Define the term Pop Art. Discuss why artists of the 1960s embraced images of commercial and consumer society they worked within. Is Pop Art relevant to a 21st century audience? Debate in class.

TONY CRAGG
GREY MOON 1985

NATURAL AND CREATED ENVIRONMENTS

GREY AND WHITE PLASTIC FOUND OBJECTS
218.44 X 132.08CM
THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.
PARTIAL AND PROMISED GIFT OF UBS, 2002
© 2007 Anthony Cragg



CRAGG'S TENDENCY TO SEEK ASSOCIATIONS AND LAYERS OF MEANING FROM BOTH CULTURAL AND NATURAL SOURCES MAKES HIS WORK MUCH MORE AKIN TO EUROPEAN ARTE POVERA THAN TRANSATLANTIC CONCEPTUALISM.

Anthony Bond, director of Curatorial Services, Art Gallery of New South Wales, *An incomplete world*, catalogue p57

Tony Cragg first began his studies as a scientist and worked as a laboratory assistant before going on to art school. He also worked in a steel foundry as a student and it was this that stimulated his love of materials and processes. He was greatly impressed by the massive energy of molten metal and the sparks that showered the space as the metal was poured from the crucible into the mould. The time Cragg spent as a scientist stimulated an enquiring approach to the natural world and the man-made environment. This way of seeing is still fundamental to all of his work.¹

Cragg was to be a key figure in the reinvention of British sculpture in the 1980s and he has since become one of the most persistent and powerful innovators in modern European sculpture. Since the early 1980s he has used traditional sculptural techniques such as modelling and casting alongside assemblages of modified found objects. *Grey moon* 1985 is part of an early series where Cragg collected fragments of a consumer society including discarded plastic toys and packaging, pieces of furniture, linoleum and painted boards. These objects were configured as wall drawings which often had political or poetic resonance.

The use of plastic fragments often retrieved from the flotsam and jetsam along the Thames embankment in London was in itself a political comment on Thatcher's materialistic culture and its attitude of short term gain at the expense of the environment and genuine quality of life. *Grey moon* is a more poetic work that suggests the passage of time or the partial occlusion of the light of the moon. A number of the found objects that make up the quarter moon are disc-shaped, such as a toy wheel and various lids and jars etc. In this way the full shape of the moon is hinted at. In Cragg's work this kind of suggestion is often inspired by his scientific training. In this case, the discs may be thought of as parts that contain the whole – for example, the genetic code held in a single cell or even the fragment of a hologram that can be made to project an image of the intact original.

Cragg's tendency to seek associations and layers of meaning from both cultural and natural sources makes his work much more akin to European arte povera than transatlantic conceptualism. Although Cragg's work has always been subject to rigorous systematic processes typically used by conceptualist artists, there was always room within this order for random variation, just as there is in nature. The moon, itself a powerful symbolic and material force in the world, is undoubtedly invoked by Cragg to create many associations with the climate and the human mind as well as romantic traditions of natural observation. TB

¹ Cragg gave a recorded lecture at AGNSW at the time of his exhibition here in 1997 in which he discussed these early influences.

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: Identify the various objects or fragments that make up this work. Where do you think Cragg collected these materials from? What system did Cragg use to order this work? What impact does colour have on the work? What does the geometric shape represent?

VISUAL ART: Make your own collection of small objects that are all the same colour. Compare the shades of colour when you place them together. Arrange your objects into a specific shape of your choosing and either stick them down or photograph them as an art installation.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: Research the invention of plastic. How has plastic influenced the modern world? List all the items in your classroom which are made of plastic. Are they soft or hard? Create a table to document your findings.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Consider why Cragg creates work out of discarded material. Consider the political connotations suggested by the materials in *Grey moon*. Do the materials utilised by an artist impact on the meaning of a work? Define the term found object. Research other artists who incorporate found objects in their practice.

Examine how Cragg's practice is influenced by his earlier career as a scientist. Discuss the layering of references Cragg makes to the artificial and organic worlds in *Grey moon*. What role do systematic processes play in Cragg's work?

Survey Cragg's sculptural practice. Explore the range of sculptural techniques utilised in his body of work. Research the group of artists whose work was referred to by critics in the 1980s as New British Sculpture. Assess the role Cragg played in reinventing British sculpture.

ANDREAS GURSKY
ALETSCHGLETSCHER 1993

NATURAL AND CREATED ENVIRONMENTS

TYPE C PHOTOGRAPH
180 X 215CM
© 2007 Andreas Gursky, ProLitteris, Zurich.
Licensed by Viscopy, 2007



Andreas Gursky's *99 cent* 1999 has become an iconic contemporary photograph. In this large scale image of the interior of a discount store in America where nothing is priced over 99 cents, ranks of shelves of food and goods fill the photograph, seeming to extend out of the frame and potentially forever. The shelves and architecture provide a grid structure across which the highly coloured goods are displayed in groupings, giving the photograph an abstract appearance from a distance. The only random elements in this somewhat chaotic order are the heads of the browsing shoppers which float above the aisles. While Gursky was influenced by the objectivity practised by his Düsseldorf Academy teachers Bernd and Hiller Becher in the 1970s, he moved away from their typographic groupings of black and white photographs of a single subject matter to individual colour photographs with subjects ranging across landscapes, architecture, crowd scenes and interiors. Gursky embraced developments in colour photography in the 1980s, which enabled images to be photographed and printed on a previously impossible scale, rivalling the size and presence of paintings on the gallery wall. *99 cent* is typically sharply focussed, highly detailed, taken from an elevated viewpoint and epic in scale, involving the viewer in the image as they approach more closely to view the detail. While Gursky's photographs have been described as cinematic, the intense stillness of this scene is purely photographic.

One strand of Gursky's photography since the early 1990s has become an anthropology of the spaces of global capital, trade and consumption such as stock exchanges, trading floors and consumer displays. Gursky's photographs participate in these spectacular zones: their immersive scale, sense of order and coolly disorienting excess emulate the conditions of the architecture and environments photographed. While these images may at first glance appear documentary, the choices Gursky has made in how he portrays these sites are further enhanced through digital manipulation. Gursky does not usually specify what changes he has made; rather the digital enhancement seems the inevitable correlative of desire for more and better things, adding in *99 cent* to the sense of an unreal and cheap plenitude. This image of discount largesse embodies the excesses of consumer capitalism: who could possibly need all this? That the discount store has become the subject of the art is even more ironic as another photograph from this edition is one of the most expensive photographs to be sold at auction.

In contrast to this intensely urban interior, Gursky's *Aletschgletscher* 1993 is a sublimely beautiful image of the largest glacier in Switzerland. The vast landscape, elevated viewpoint, subtle muted colours and broiling clouds have the appearance of a painting from the heyday of 19th-century German romanticism. However, Gursky's seeming romanticism is not unalloyed, as the viewpoint from which he has chosen to take the photograph (and this image has not been digitally altered) is one from which many tourists take snaps of this glacier, so while his image is still spectacular it also points to the ubiquity of how landscapes are perceived and photographed and how these images circulate and in turn shape our view of the landscape. There is an element of poignancy to this photograph as well, as glaciers the world over are melting rapidly and this sublime photograph is as much a memorial as a document. WT

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: **Imagine** what it would be like to travel to this landscape. What can you see, hear and smell? **Write** a travel article promoting this region and make illustrations of places of interest.

HISE: What is a glacier? **Define. Research** where they are located in the world. Are these areas easily accessible? How have these environments been affected by humans? **Investigate.**

PDHPE: **Imagine** you are planning a three to four day expedition to this icy landscape. **Consider** the conditions and stresses upon your body. **List** the items you require to protect yourself from the elements. What will you need to carry for this expedition? **Write** an extract from your travel diary describing how you coped.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Reflect on the dimensions of this photograph. Does the scale of this photograph enhance your viewing experience? Would you respond differently to this image if it were the standard size of a photograph? Assess the impact of Gursky's practice on the perception of photography as on par with the practice of painting.

Gursky has taken this photograph from a popular tourist walk. One may assume that hundreds of similar shots have been taken from the same vantage point. Explore the notion of uniqueness in contemporary art practice.

Research 19th century German Romanticism and explore the concept of the sublime.

Romanticism celebrated the awe and power of nature over humanity. Yet Gursky's *Aletschgletscher* documents the effects of man's dominance over nature. Gursky's awareness of the shrinking glacier becomes a memorial to a transforming landscape. How does our awareness of global warming affect our interpretation of this photograph?

NAOYA HATAKEYAMA
BLAST 5707 1998

NATURAL AND CREATED ENVIRONMENTS

TYPE C PHOTOGRAPH
38 X 57 CM

© 2007 Naoya Hatakeyama, courtesy L.A. Galerie – Lothar Albrecht, Frankfurt



The mining of raw materials from the earth and their use in the construction of urban Japan is the subject of Naoya Hatakeyama's photographic series *Blast* 1998. The expansion of the built world and its transformation of the natural landscape has been the thematic and conceptual foundation of his work for about two decades. In a number of distinct but related series, Hatakeyama has scrutinised: the subterranean city; the subjugation of natural river systems to concrete watercourses; quarries and their gouging of the earth; and the enigmatic but terrifying blight of industrial landscapes packed with imposing structures, chaotic networks of pipes, conveyor belts and smokestacks.

Hatakeyama has achieved international acclaim as one of several influential contemporary Japanese photographers whose work — particularly over the past decade — has redefined a style of documentary narrative, and revealed aspects of everyday experience to be simultaneously mundane and extra-ordinary, culturally specific yet able to strike a universal chord.

If the built world is one of the signs of civilisation, Hatakeyama's photographs redirect our attention to the material and structural foundations of civilisation and its inherent instabilities. The *Blast* series, commenced in 1995, followed important long-term projects in which Hatakeyama photographed limestone landscapes and quarries throughout Japan. Limestone is an abundant mineral resource in Japan and is the raw material that has fed its concrete urban development.

The *Blast* images depict spectacular explosions to mine limestone from the earth. Using a high-speed, remote control camera to capture the moment of detonation, Hatakeyama combines high resolution with high drama. *Blast* has become one of Hatakeyama's most acclaimed and recognisable series because through its powerful allusions to disintegration, *Blast* melancholically reiterates the finite resources of the earth, while configuring surreal pictorial spaces that project the viewer from an earthly to a cosmological realm. What appear to be seemingly straightforward documentations of an industrial moment capture, also, infinite, primordial space.

For Hatakeyama the interrelationship of the landscape and city is one of constant tension. Where civilisation begins and ends is under question as we come to understand the increasing fragility of the organic world. Commenting on his images of limestone quarries and processing plants, Hatakeyama has poetically stated:

'... When I learned that Japan was a land of limestone, my appreciation of its cityscape underwent a subtle change. Japan is dependent on imports for most of the minerals it uses, but when it comes to limestone it is totally self-sufficient. Every year some two hundred million tons of limestone are cut from the quarries scattered about the country.

In the texture of concrete I can feel the trace of corals and fusulinas that inhabited warm equatorial seas two hundred to four hundred million years ago ... If the concrete buildings and highways that stretch to the horizon are all made of limestone dug from the hills, and if they should all be ground to dust and this vast quantity of calcium carbonate returned to its precise points of origin, why then, with the last spoonful, the ridge lines of the hills would be restored to their original dimensions. The quarries and the cities are like negative and positive images of a single photograph ...'¹ JS

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART: **Observe** the series of *Blast* photographs. Note the diagonals of smoke through the landscape and the texture of the rock. **Use** these images as reference material for a series of landscape paintings representing earth, sky and atmosphere in natural and artificial environments. **Focus** on your use of colour and texture and how they help to convey the mood and environment you depict.

SCIENCE: **Research** how limestone is formed. **Investigate** the process involved in mining for limestone. How important is limestone in the production of concrete? **Assess** Japan's supply of limestone. How has Japan's access to limestone impacted on its pace of urban development.

ENGLISH: **Imagine** witnessing this blast. **Write** a story to accompany this photograph. **Construct** the events before and after the blast. **Present** your work to the class in a dramatic reading.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Analyse your initial response to this work. Write a list of words to describe the event photographed. Do you think this is a natural or artificial event being documented? Discuss your conclusions with the class. Read the title of the work. Does the title alter your interpretation of the photograph? What impact does the title *Blast 5707* have on the overall effect of this image?

Hatakeyama utilises a high-speed remote control camera to capture fleeting moments. Assess the importance of chance in the creation of these images.

Observe the series of *Blast* photographs and imagine the process and stages undertaken by Hatakeyama in order to create them. The allusions to disintegration and explosions almost seem contradictory to the concept of creating an artwork. Debate.

Research the work of Hatakeyama. Examine how the expansion of the built world and the transformation of the natural landscape have been a thematic concern for the past two decades. Define the term 'documentary narrative'. Assess why Hatakeyama's work is classed as redefining documentary narrative.