
STRANGE GARDEN

Eliza-Jane Gilchrist

Teacher Resources

2016



The 2016 Education and Families Program is
Proudly Supported by:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE	3
ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA.....	4
EDUCATION & FAMILIES TEAM	5
CURRICULUM LINKS	6
INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM	8
BIOGRAPHIES	10
RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE THE VISIT	11
ACTIVITIES TO EXPAND ON AFTER THE VISIT	14

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource has been created to provide teachers with some preliminary ideas as to how to extend their experience of **Strange Garden** beyond the presentation and workshop. The activities are designed to be open-ended and multi-ability. They may need differentiation for your specific cohort.

The performances and workshops included in the Education & Families program are designed to offer students engaging arts experiences with strong links to the Victorian Curriculum, (some to AusVELS) and to VEYLDF, and VCE subjects where appropriate. Each Education & Families performance varies in its content and as a result the scope for integration across the curriculum varies. Please feel free to contact the Education and Families team on (03) 9644 1808 or at education@rav.net.au if you have any questions about this resource, its content or its implementation within your classroom.

ABOUT REGIONAL ARTS VICTORIA

Regional Arts Victoria inspires art across the state. Through creative facilitation, touring, education, specialised resources, artistic projects and advocacy, we develop and sustain creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

Regional Arts Victoria is an independent, not-for-profit, membership-based organisation working in long-term partnerships with every level of government, fostering contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice across five decades. We advise and impact on decision-making across multiple portfolios and levels of government.

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria.

Our artistic program

Regional Arts Victoria inspires creative communities, creative places and creative catalysts.

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES	CREATIVE PLACES	CREATIVE CATALYSTS
Regional Arts Victoria stimulates and connects our state's communities of practice.	Regional Arts Victoria champions the places where art is made, experienced and discussed.	Regional Arts Victoria fosters current and next generation creative capacity and practice.
<p>Members and membership services: fostering active and engaged artists and arts organisations across the state; supporting arts professionalism through specialised resources and professional insurance</p> <p>Resources, workshops and events program of forums and activities through our Regional Cultural Partnerships Program</p> <p>Networks: hosting specialised state-wide and national networks (including Regional Cultural Network, Festivals Network, Arts Teachers); participating actively in regional development networks; accessing and developing New Networks at membership and organisational level</p> <p>Strategic partnerships with governments, universities, tourism, planning and development bodies as well as arts and cultural organisations</p>	<p>Performing Arts Touring: opportunities, tools and support for regional and remote touring across Victoria and Australia</p> <p>Education & Families: performances, workshops and projects in schools, accompanied by AusVELS aligned teacher resources</p> <p>State-wide place-making projects including –</p> <p><i>Home is where the hall is:</i> November's month-long celebration of arts events in regional community halls</p> <p><i>Eco-Cubby:</i> promoting the principles of sustainable design and architecture in schools, hands-on</p> <p><i>Small Town Transformations:</i> innovative projects of significant local and regional impact, combined with state-wide thought leadership on "How can art transform your town?"</p>	<p>Advocacy and leadership: leading state-wide arts conversations; creating exposure for regional artists; providing strategic advice</p> <p>Creative Leadership Program: annual program for emerging arts and thought leaders</p> <p>Creative Arts Facilitators: our regional staff team work directly with artists and communities, in close partnership with local and federal government</p> <p>Access and diversity including Indigenous engagement and cultural exchange</p> <p>Grants programs: facilitating and supporting high quality applications to quick response, presentation and project grants, administered on behalf of state and federal government</p>

EDUCATION & FAMILIES TEAM

Regional Arts Victoria's Education & Families team pride ourselves on providing relevant and exciting activities for children and young people that are complementary to both Victorian and Australian curriculums. All of our tours come with a free set of education resources to further enrich your arts experience.

Our team is available to provide local contacts and links to research, and offer advice on how to make the most of the arts at your school or centre. Our office is a resource for Victorian teachers, so we encourage you to make use of us!

We also provide significant subsidy assistance (up to 50% of program costs) to eligible remote and disadvantaged schools. Your school may be eligible so please contact us to find out more!



Suzi Cordell
Education & Families
Manager

Ph: (03) 9644 1805
Mob: 0402 460 080
Email: scordell@rav.net.au



Joanna Gould
Education & Families Coordinator

Ph: (03) 9644 1808
Mob: 0405 722 789
Email: jgould@rav.net.au



Jo Chapman
Education & Families Administrator

Ph: (03) 9644 1819
Email: jchapman@rav.net.au

Learning Areas	Capabilities
<p>The Arts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students learn as artist and viewer • Students learn through making and responding. <p>Visual Arts</p> <p>F-6 Strands: <i>Strange Garden</i> gives students the opportunity to explore all Visual Arts Strands appropriate to their levels, for example:</p> <p>Levels 5 & 6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and Express ideas: Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to create artworks that express different ideas and beliefs • Visual Arts Practices: Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks • Present and Perform: Create and display art work considering how ideas can be expressed to an audience • Respond and Interpret: Identify and describe how ideas are expressed in artworks by comparing artworks from different contemporary, historical and cultural contexts <p>Achievement Standard: By the end of level 6: students explain how ideas are expressed in artworks they make and view. They demonstrate the use of different techniques and processes in planning and making artworks .They use visual conventions and visual arts practices to express ideas, themes and concepts in their artworks.</p>	<p>The creative processes that Eliza-Jane Gilchrist uses in <i>Strange Garden</i> demonstrate Critical and Creative Thinking and Personal and Social Capability</p> <p>As students engage in the activities, observe how aspects of these capabilities are embedded into the ways of doing and thinking modelled in <i>Strange Garden</i>.</p> <p>Critical and creative thinking aims to ensure that students develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of thinking processes and an ability to manage and apply these intentionally • Skills and learning dispositions that support logical, strategic, flexible and adventurous thinking • Confidence in evaluating thinking and thinking processes across a range of familiar and unfamiliar contexts. <p>Personal and Social Capability: enabling students to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively.</p>

<p><i>Strange Garden</i> also provides opportunities to learn in other areas of the curriculum, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science , levels 5-6, Science Understanding Biological Sciences: <p>Living things have structural features and adaptations that help them to survive in their environment The growth and survival of living things are affected by the physical conditions of their environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Sciences • Light from a source forms shadows and can be absorbed, reflected and refracted • Energy from a variety of sources can be used to generate electricity; electric circuits enable this energy to be transferred to another place and then to be transformed into another form of energy 	<p>Ethical capability: Key Concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key concepts and ideas important to identifying ethical problems and their relative importance • concepts concerned with ethical outcomes, such as good, bad, right, wrong, just and unjust • concepts that have ethical significance such as tolerance, greed, freedom and courage <p>Decision Making & Actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature and justifications of ethical principles • ways to respond to ethical problems • factors that influence ethical decision making and action • challenges in managing ethical decision making and action
<p>Mathematics, Level 6, Measurement and Geometry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using units of measurement; Solve problems involving the comparison of lengths and areas using appropriate units • Shapes: Construct simple prisms and pyramids • Location and transformation; Investigate the effect of combinations of transformations on simple and composite shapes, including creating tessellations, with and without the use of digital technologies 	<p>.</p>

CROSS CURRICULAR PRIORITIES

Sustainability: Sustainability is a cross curriculum priority which is embedded across the entire Victorian Curriculum from F-10. *Strange Garden* provides opportunities for students to learn about sustainability by exploring ways of repurposing and recycling materials.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Background

Strange Garden is a project that explores and creates patterns and shapes through drawing and building sculpture out of cardboard. It was developed as part of the Artlink programme at The Art Gallery of Ballarat in 2010. That project invited artists to devise a workshop for school children visiting the gallery based on an art work in the collection. Eliza-Jane Gilchrist chose a small papier mâché sculpture by James Morrison called *Mt. Hesperus* (2008). This sculpture is intricately patterned all over with black ink and features fantastical plants and creatures.

Content

The workshop Eliza devised begins by taking participants outside to find patterns and shapes in the environment to draw. These drawings are then brought inside and reproduced with black markers on flat, cardboard shapes. These shapes have been designed to fit together, stuck with sticky tape, to make 3D organic forms. The students then assemble their forms together and add them to cardboard 'base' shapes, larger versions of the shapes they are creating, supplied by Eliza. In this way we build our collaborative sculptural 'garden' installation, kept by the school to be exhibited after the residency.

The project is primarily about building beautiful sculpture, however the process also involves several mathematical concepts as well as developing personal and social skills. Students observe symmetry and asymmetry, learn to recognize solids in 2D and understand the properties of shapes by building them in space. They also learn about scale. There are also skills such as sharing information to achieve intended outcomes and recognizing the benefit of teamwork.

Students start building simple shapes and progress through to more intricate ones with more pieces to assemble. By selecting the complexity of the shapes the workshop is made suitable for any age. *Strange Garden* grows into a beautiful installation that participants enjoy contributing to, looking at, walking through and playing in.



INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM

Context

Strange Garden is about understanding patterns, both two dimensional and 3 dimensional, in the sense of a template (a 2d tool that we draw round to create identical pieces that fit together). The workshop begins with an introduction where we talk about the difference between a pattern and a picture and the difference between 2D and 3D.

Students also learn about representation and abstraction. *Strange Garden* is an abstract sculpture, based on a diverse range of source material and not an attempt at representing actual plants or flowers. This enables us to be very imaginative with our creations and promotes the students to play with shape and composition. It is also a collaborative venture where often students have to help each other to build their shapes, and work together on the overall look of the sculpture.

Within the creation of *Strange Garden* are a set of parameters that students adhere to, such as the monochrome colour scheme for pattern making and the range of shapes available to build. These 'rules' promote the students to solve the problem of how to invest their creations with individuality while still fitting in with the strange world of the *Strange Garden*. The choice of material for this installation is integral. We use cardboard; boxes, and thick brown construction card. It is a marvellous and magic material as it is lightweight, but strong enough to hold its shape with no other structural support necessary. We can defy gravity with cardboard providing our glue is strong enough! Its most utilised characteristic is in flat planes, as in boxes. However it is made of plant fibre, so the curvilinear forms we use in *Strange Garden* relate it back to its organic origins. The boxes would otherwise be discarded, so our recycling gives a clear environmental message. It is also cheap and easily available making it accessible to use for anybody.

Value: How Strange Garden aims to impact student learning

The value of participating in a *Strange Garden* residency for the students is in the wonder engendered by observing the natural world closely; the fun in building something from nothing, in creating something beautiful from something bland; the chance to engage imaginatively in inventing new shapes and configurations, the satisfaction of contributing to a much larger endeavour than could have been achieved on their own and the opportunity for their work to be presented and exhibited to the other students in the school.

BIOGRAPHIES

Eliza-Jane Gilchrist

Eliza-Jane Gilchrist is a sculptor, prop/set/puppet builder and puppeteer. She has a BA (Hons) in Fine Art (Sculpture) and has exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in the UK and Australia. She conducts workshops with children and adults building sculpture and puppets; past projects include Artlink with the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Lead Artist and with the Village, ArtPlay in Melbourne and recently a large inter-generational community arts project at Bayside Arts and Cultural Centre. Eliza-Jane is also Co-Director of Such As They Are, an experimental installation/puppet company who construct and perform shows in purpose-built spaces.

www.elizajaneilchrist.com



RESOURCES & ACTIVITIES FOR BEFORE THE VISIT

Visual Aids & Context

- Have a look at pictures of previous *Strange Gardens* made.
www.elizajaneilchrist.com/strange-garden.html
Why do I call it 'Strange' Garden do you think?
- Look up James Morrison's sculpture Mt. Hesperus.
<http://www.darrenknightgallery.com/artists/morrison?url=/artists/morrison/>
Look at the Antique Egypt exhibition (from menu on left)
What do you think of these sculptures? Can you see any link between *Strange Garden* and these works?
- Look at **Ernst Haeckel's** botanical images in his book *Art Forms in Nature*.
http://www.rarebooksberlin.de/fileadmin/haeckel_artforms.pdf
These shapes and patterns are huge inspiration and influences for *Strange Garden*.

Exercises For Practising Patterns

Look at the work of the following artists:

- **Aubrey Beardsley**, particularly illustrations for *Le Morte D'Arthur*
IMPORTANT NOTE: teachers: select any other works to reference with care, as some are quite racy
- 'Golden age illustrator' **Kay Nielson**, particularly the borders in his illustrations for the *Arabian Nights* collected in the book "The Unknown Paintings of Kay Nielson" (pub. Peacock Press / Bantam Books; Illustrated edition (1977).
- **Harry Clarke's** illustrations of Perrault's Fairy Tales.

A Google image search will show examples of these artist's works. Notice how these artists use just black and white in their designs.

Make a drawing on a page using just black ink or paint (or ONE colour) on white paper. Pay attention to the composition of black and white areas. Use a fine liner/black texta to pattern onto the white areas and leave unpainted pattern areas in the black areas.



Exercise for Abstracting Simple Forms from Plant Shapes

- Visit your local botanical gardens or park if there isn't a botanical garden nearby.
- Draw simplified trees and plants just as shapes. Draw how the separate shapes connect together.



Exercises to Help Students Think About Collaborating On Artworks

- **Picture Consequences / Exquisite Corpse**

This game was popular with the Surrealists due to the strange combinations that can result from it.

In this exercise each person starts with a sheet of paper on which they draw something, perhaps a plant or more usually a person. They then fold down the paper leaving only a couple of lines showing, and pass the paper on to their neighbour. The neighbour starts drawing connecting to the lines they see then folds the paper down over their drawing, leaving a bit to show the next person where to start drawing. Go round till you reach the end of the page then open up the folds and look at the drawings.

- **Monochrome mandalas**

Mandala means circle, it is a design from Hindu and Buddhist art, where the design radiates out from the centre in concentric rings.

Get the students working in groups of maybe 5 or 6 - more is good, so you could maybe get each table working on a design then when everyone has drawn at least once round, pass the circles onto another table.

Use some big sheets of paper, A1 is good. Smaller is probably more practical, but go bigger than A4. Draw round the bin/ a plate/ use a compass to draw a huge circle onto the paper. Make it so big that it touches 3 edges of the page. Cut your circle out.

For younger children, choose a shape/symbol you like, (e.g. a star, triangle, heart shape, circle). This is your shape and you will only draw this shape. For older children design a logo or a symbol for yourself. Starting with one in the centre, take it in turns to draw your symbol as many times as will fit round the shape in the centre, so that patterns radiate out from the centre to the very edge of the circle. Use a thick black marker. Draw your shape differently if you can, e.g. bigger or smaller, facing a different direction. Keep going till the page is full. If your shape has a space in the middle, fill in the space with different patterns drawn in a finer pen.

ACTIVITIES TO EXPAND ON AFTER THE VISIT

Let's Bring In Some Colour Now

We have concentrated on making patterns with just one colour so far, in order to simplify the design and aesthetic of our sculpture. But artists use patterns really effectively in colour to make beautiful, vibrant paintings. Look up the artist **Friedensreich Hundertwasser's** exuberant abstract patterned paintings and architecture.

In this highly decorative style, **Gustav Klimt** has beautiful paintings.

- Inspired by these artists make a drawing of your *Strange Garden* sculpture and go crazy colouring it in!
- Repeat the mandala exercise but this time use colour.

Drawing from nature, thinking about shape

Collect some seeds and seedpods, some suggestions; gum nuts, dried poppy heads, lotus flower heads, flame tree seed pods, prickly acacia seed pods, magnolia seed heads, plane tree seeds. Take these to your classroom, and draw them, which is a great way to look at them closely. Use a magnifying glass if they are really small. Draw them really accurately first, then draw them again in a more abstract way, selecting the features that are most particular to the object, e.g. its shape. Is there a way that you could make it 3D?

Talking about art, learning about artists

Check out some other artists making installations with paper and cardboard

- Kristen Hassenfeld, an American artist;
www.kirstenhassenfeld.com
- Tracy Luff, an Australian artist;
www.tracyluff.com
- Ann Weber, another American artist;
www.annwebersculpture.com
- Google image search Hina Aoyama's 'super fine lacy' papercuts.
- How have these artists made these works? What are the different techniques used here? Why have they used paper/cardboard rather than another material?
- Google image search 'paper sculpture' and 'cardboard sculpture'.
- Show your class which artists and artworks you like. Can you explain what it is you like about them?

Build More Sculpture

You can see by now that cardboard and paper are hugely versatile materials.

What other cardboard / paper sculpture can you make? Do some experiments. Keep playing with different ways to put things together. What are your shapes like if you use coloured card/paper?

Contact the Education and Families team at education@rav.net.au with further questions or, even better, examples of your work!

This edition is copyright Regional Arts Victoria in consultation with Eliza-Jane Gilchrist



EDUCATION & FAMILIES

© 2016