Education Resource
Stonework

EDUCATION SUPPORTER
Novo Resources

Castlemaine Art Museum

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

For Teachers
Primary Years F–6
VCAA Visual Arts Curriculum

How to Use this Education Resource

This resource has been designed to assist teachers in embedding this exhibition within their classroom curriculum. Broader information about the exhibition, curation and artists has been included alongside more detailed student-focused explorations of specific artworks.

Focus artworks are presented with contextual information, discussion questions for the exhibition or classroom, and a variety of classroom-based practical activities to allow students to creatively respond to the work. These activities are of varying complexity and could be used to address all Visual Arts Curriculum components from years F–6. They are designed to be flexible and adapted to your classroom and students.

Artworks, discussion questions and practical activities have been divided into three themes:

- Collecting Stones
- Stones as Tools
- Stones as Storytellers

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Stonework

7 September 2023—8 December 2024
Castlemaine Art Museum

"The Jaara people here in the Upper Loddon Valley were lucky with this rich old volcanic soil and a healthy river system: the Campaspe, Coliban, Loddon and Avoca rivers are within our traditional lands. It was a very resource rich environment. Volcanic activity tens of thousands of years ago also provided stone that was found almost exclusively on Jaara Country."
– Uncle Rick Nelson, Community Elder, (Jaara) Dja Dja Wurrung

Exhibition Outline

There are many ways of looking at a stone. For First Nations artists with a deep knowledge of their Country, stones and rock formations have a spiritual and cultural energy as well as intrinsic and material qualities of colour, sharpness, hardness and weight.

A different attitude to stones developed in Europe in the 19th century. Sharp-eyed natural historians turned their attention to mountains and valleys and developed a controversial new discipline: geology. These thinkers challenged the traditional, Biblical view that the Earth was only 6,000 years old. Many artists had a working knowledge of these dangerous new ideas, and expressed them in their art. With the discovery of gold in the Castlemaine region in the early 1850s, an obsession with faults and seams, uplift and anticline was almost universal in Central Victoria.

With rocks in mind, works by Louis Buvelot, Arthur Streeton, Frederick McCubbin, W. B. McInnes, Elma Roach and Penleigh Boyd show landscapes that are dynamic and alive, constantly weathering, warping, folding, eroding, erupting or sinking.

Contemporary artists, sculptors, photographers and jewellers also reveal unexpected aspects of rock and stone: geometry, ritual, even relationships to memory and trauma. These artists include Stephen Bram, Alvin Darcy Briggs, Pete Curly, Brodie Ellis, Sally Marsland and Felix Wilson.

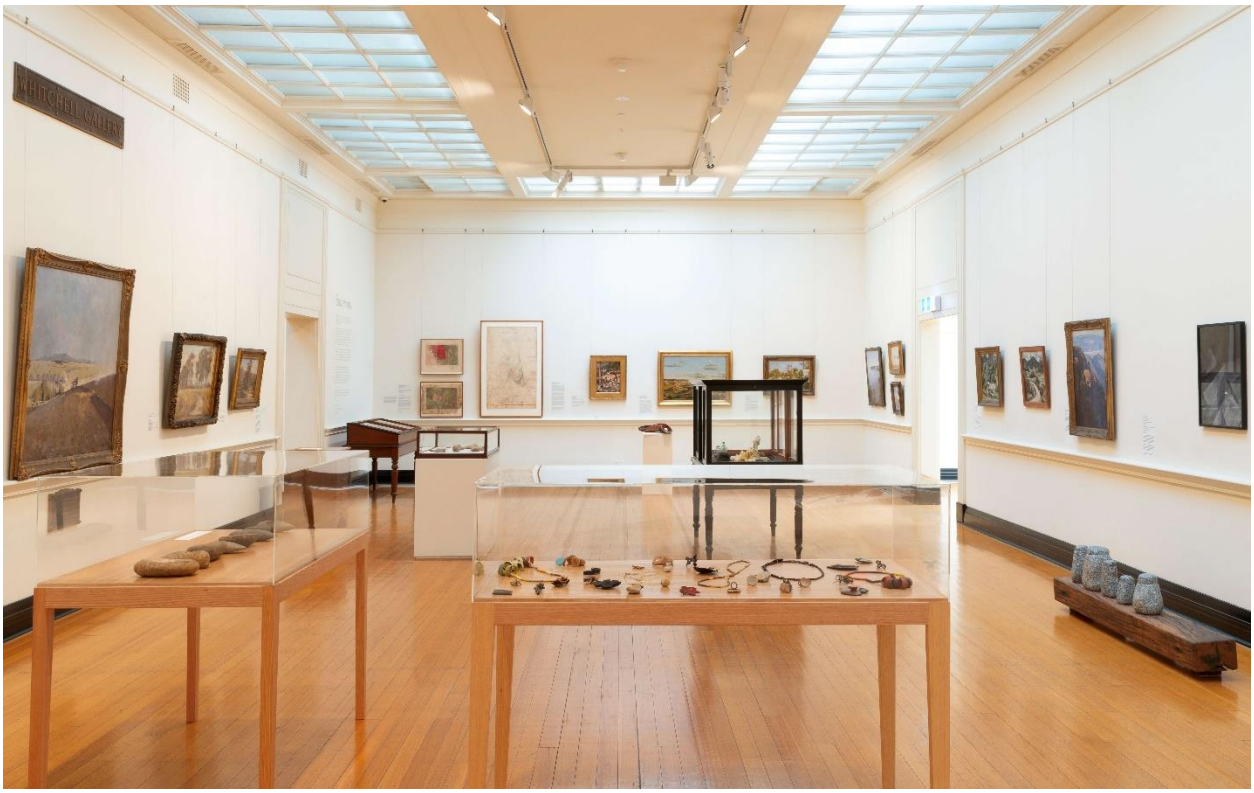
The exhibition also includes historical maps. These are the work of geologists and cartographers from the Surveyor General's Department and the Geological Survey of Victoria, who in the 19th century meticulously surveyed and mapped both the visible and the subterranean flows of rock and sediment. The museum cases are filled with the rock collections of local amateur enthusiasts who, in the 20th century, returned home with pockets full of stones after a day walking in the country. Specimens of minerals and fossils ground the exhibition in the physical world and introduce the viewer to the concept of deep time.

For Teachers

Stonework represents the intersection between art and sciences. Artists can be considered innovators, explorers and researchers, using their creative practice as a way to learn, understand and teach new and old scientific discoveries.

Within this exhibition, artists provide a diverse range of approaches to this intersection. First Nation artists ABD (Alvin Darcy Briggs) and Pete Curly respond to the historical and ongoing use of stones by Indigenous people and call into question the Western views of stones and their hierarchy of value. Artists Elma Roach, Arthur Streeton and Fred Williams sought to create representations of rocks, geology and their unique formations across the Victorian landscape. Stephen Bram's abstract works could be interpreted as inspired by the formation of minerals. Felix Wilson has photographed and carved in response to local granite quarries, and Sally Marsland has made jewellery using found stones and pebbles.

Stonework provides a variety of entry points into learning about art, geology and the history of this region. This education resource will also explore stones through their visual and artistic appeal. If we look closely at the stories the stones are telling, we can learn about the land, the past and the people of this region.



Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Collecting Stones

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

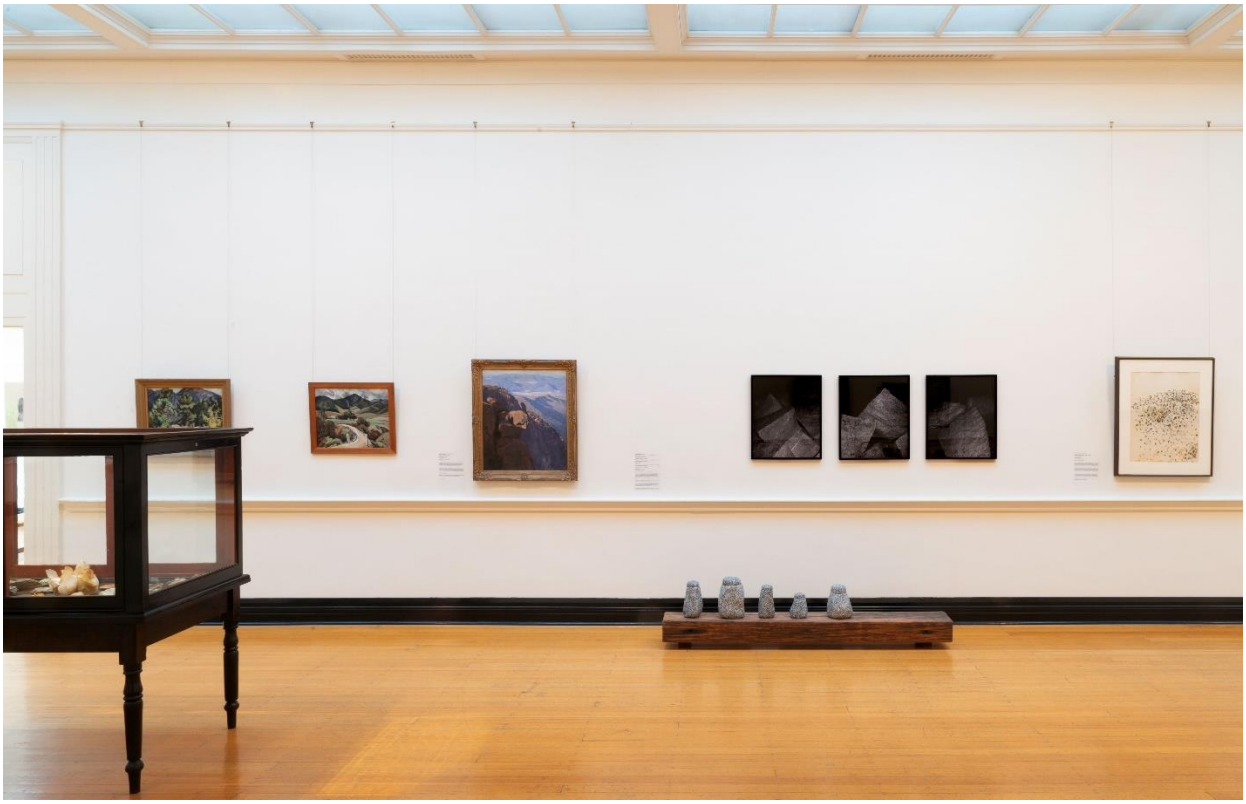
An artwork is something that is appreciated through its visual qualities or appeal. While stones are useful for scientific research and are important for human tools, one way they are often valued is for their visual appeal. Stones are often viewed as art objects, with high value because of their lustre. Therefore, they are very interesting to artists as well as scientists, historians and geologists.

In *Stonework*, stones from the Castlemaine Historical Museum have been collected and documented based on their scientific and geological importance, such as in the vitrines and specimen drawers. However, because they are on display within an art museum, the stones are again talked about and valued in relation to what they look like. Stones can be considered, valued and constructed as artworks, whether precious or not.

In one vitrine, Co-Curator and Geologist Clive Willman has brought together different kinds of quartz to indicate what geologists and miners are looking for when searching for precious gold deposits. Once labelled within the vitrine and displayed under gallery lights, quartz can be considered for its shine, colour, texture, and unique and striking crystal form. The specimens within the vitrines can remind us of the beauty and wonder of the natural world – especially those elements which are typically hidden underground.

The artist ADB has responded to the images of early gold mining in the region with a work that draws attention to the historical treatment of the First Nations people in the course of the gold rushes, and questions the western hierarchy of stones.

Arthur Streeton and Felix Wilson both focus on granite. Arthur Streeton celebrates the dramatic granite outcrops at Mt Buffalo, whilst Felix Wilson has collected granite blocks from disused quarries and transformed them into containers (or vessels). Through this resource, viewers can consider these works through their sculptural or visual qualities within the exhibition.



Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Artwork
Rock and Mineral Collections at Castlemaine Art Museum

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

The two large cases contain collections which have been donated to the Museum over the years since 1913 by local enthusiasts. The specimens tend to be of a size that would fit in a pocket while walking through the landscape. This exhibition includes stones from the Thompson, Leaney, Prentice and Daley collections.

David Thompson, the son of one of the original partners in Thompson's Foundry, collected rocks and minerals which had an industrial application: native copper and cerussite from Broken Hill, malachite from Burra, tin samples, lead chromate from Dundas in Tasmania.

The Leaney and Daley collection also had a strong focus on minerals that had some practical uses while Herbert Prentice had a stronger focus on fossils, particularly graptolites.

Discussion Questions

1. When you walk through nature do you ever pick up stones or leaves and take them with you? Why do you do this?
2. Look closely at the vitrine, what colours can you see?
3. Choose one stone that you like the look of, what do you think this stone could be used for?
4. Choose one stone that catches your eye, can you image the story of how this stone was made?

Practical Activity: Stone Collage

Stones are hard and tough. This activity asks students to recreate some stones thinking about colour and form but in an unfamiliar texture.

1. Select one or more of the interestingly shaped or textured stones on display in the vitrine.
2. Look closely at the specimen or image, notice the shape of its form and the different colours or textures you can see.
3. Provide paper or other collage materials in a variety of textures – tissue paper, corrugated, cartridge etc., that are similar tones and colours to the stones.
4. Create a college that looks like the image of the stone and fills most of an A5 piece of paper.
5. Demonstrate different techniques such as cutting and glueing, scrunching tissue paper, folding, and bending.
6. When completed, present your work to the class and explain how you made your rock collage and why you choose different materials.
7. An extension activity would be to create multiple stones on the same piece of paper.

Artwork
ADB, *Deep cut* and *Scars*


Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

ADB (b1985) (Yorta Yorta, Taungurung), *Deep cut,* 2023, Yellow box vessel, river stone, gold leaf, enamel paint. Collection of the artist.
ADB (b1985) (Yorta Yorta, Taungurung), *Scars,* 2023, Red gum vessel, river stone, gold leaf, bees wax, oil and acrylic paint. Collection of the artist.

"Scars are the evidence of wounds that are still visible on Jaara land today."
– ADB (Alvin Darcy Briggs)

ADB uses gold, a material that symbolises the colonial value of stones, to alter the importance of a river stone and tell First Nations histories. In western society, gold is one of the most highly valued elements, for its price and lustre and shine. Gold jewellery is the most expensive and usually considered the most beautiful. Gold is also important to the history and landscape of the local Goldfields region. The goldrush brought people and money into central Victoria and defined the lives of people in the area for almost 200 years. However, as Uncle Rick Nelson, Community Elder (Jaara) recalls, for Aboriginal people "gold… was not valued because it couldn't be used."

In a coolamon shaped vessel, ADB has placed a rock covered in gold paint, and has used red paint to remind us of the bloodshed and destruction to both the land and First Nations people. The colour, texture and arrangement of these river stones have been manipulated by the artist to comment on how different cultures place different value on objects. The artworks tell the story of the impact that western valuing of gold, through the gold rush and beyond, had on Aboriginal

people specifically across Dja Dja Wurrung Country. In this way, changing how stones look can produce unexpected and startling effects.

Artist Biography

Alvin Darcy is a Yorta Yorta, Taungurung man through his father and a Ngarigo, Walbunja man through his mother. Alvin lives and works on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Castlemaine, Central Victoria. His father was a knowledge holder in the making of artefacts, design, and poker work to express and share understandings of culture. Alvin continues this practice and is currently using pyrography - 'writing with fire'. Alvin's pyrography practice is finely attuned to climate change, as he depicts fauna from endangered species lists in Australia. Through his pyrography and sculptures, he seeks to capture the fragility and power of the land, and the remaining culture and knowledge of his community. It is also his response to living and working on Dja Dja Wurrung Country – the unceded sovereign lands of the Djaara people.

Alvin studied graphic design and has since worked in building and construction, landscaping, screen printing, logo design and bronze sculpture. In 2019 he was awarded the People's Choice Award – Koorie Heritage Trust Art Prize. His works are held in public galleries and private collections in Victoria and South Australia. He has collaborated with Punctum Inc. as an artist and cultural contributor for a participatory work investigating river systems and cultural flow. In 2021, he had a solo exhibition at Castlemaine Art Museum. Alvin's most recent works celebrate rare native animals and birds of Djaara Country. In collaboration with an agricultural scientist, he is currently illustrator and advisor on cultural practices for a forthcoming publication.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think people like and value gold?
2. Why did First Nations Aboriginal people not value gold as a material? How is this shown in ADB's artworks?
3. When you pull a rock or stone out of a river what does it look and feel like? Why does it look and feel like this?

Practical Activity: Colour

Stones are usually thought to be grey and black. Gold and coloured jewels are more highly valued in Western society. How does colour change how stones are considered or perceived?

1. Find, choose or source a stone. This could be from the school grounds or backyard.
2. Paint this stone a different colour. This could be something bright, fluorescent, lustrous, unexpected or patterned.
3. Stick other types of adornment onto your stone. Anything goes here, for example features, glitter, paper, stickers.
4. Discuss: How have you changed your stone? Do you like it better now? Why/why not?

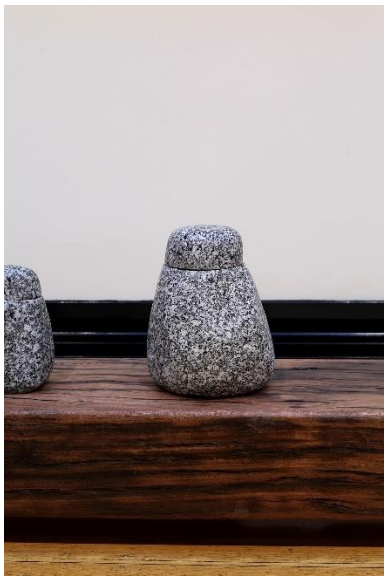
Practical Activity: Containers

Stones can look different according to how they are displayed. They can be kept in specimen boxes, drawers or vitrines. They can be placed on a plinth like a sculpture, or in specifically made vessels to tell a story.

1. Find, source or make a collection of stones and specimens. This can be done in a variety of ways. One suggestion would be to ask students to bring in a stone or specimen remembering to note where, when and how they found it.
2. Create a box for this specimen. Match-boxes could be collected and repurposed, otherwise thin cardboard or paper can be cut down to construct boxes. Students need to consider material, size and colour.
3. Decorate the specimen boxes to highlight the chosen stone. This can be done with paint, collage or other materials.
4. Collect students' specimens and arrange them into a broader structure, for example a drawer, plinth or vitrine – specimens could be stuck down, and boxes stuck onto a board so they are stacked vertically. Ensure the boxes are arranged in a Tetris like formation, with minimal space wasted.
5. Ask students to present their specimen box, explain their stones and their choices of colour, materials and display.

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Artwork
Felix Wilson, *Offering for a speculative quarry ceremony*



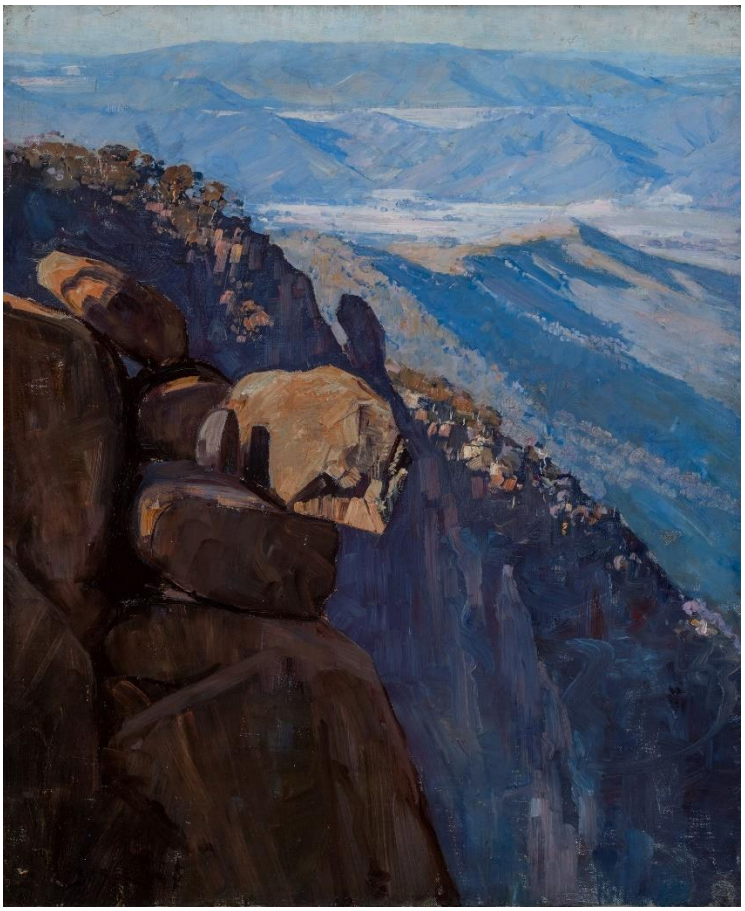
Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Images: Felix Wilson.

Felix Wilson (b1981), *Offering for a speculative quarry ceremony*, 2023.
Vaughan Vessels 1-5, 2023, harcourt granite salvaged from the Loddon River at Vaughan, polishing medium.
Bench, 2023, timber (unknown species) beam salvaged from the Loddon River at Vaughan, Danish oil.
Leanganook quarry 1-3, 2023, inkjet prints.
All works collection of the artist. Dja Dja Wurrung Country.

"Working with the stuff of the landscape is a new endeavour, shaping the matter extracted from the earth, drawing from sites changed irrevocably by human beings in the creative use of material, in grand monumental works of architecture and the mundane; road surfaces and retaining walls." – Felix Wilson

Artist Biography
Felix Wilson is an artist based on Dja Dja Wurrung land on the goldfields of Central Victoria. His practice explores the continuities and interconnections between human culture and the non-human, particularly place-based extractive histories and relationships across sites. Having completed a project-based PhD at RMIT in 2019 which focussed on photographic images, he has recently moved into integrating stone objects and sculptural pieces into his practice.

Artwork
Arthur Streeton, *Buffalo Mountains*



Arthur Streeton (1867-1943), *Buffalo Mountains*, 1913, oil on canvas. Castlemaine Art Museum. Featuring Taungurung Country.

"Mt Buffalo is entirely composed of granite which formed about 395 million years ago, when hot magma cooled well below the land surface. Over the millennia all the surrounding and overlying rocks were stripped away by weathering. But as the Buffalo granite is particularly hard and is very resistant to erosion, it was left standing as a prominent plateau.

As the heavy weight of overlying rock was slowly removed, the granite started to form 'unloading' cracks (called joints) that criss-cross the rock forming large rectangular blocks. Chemical weathering widened the joints and over time the weathered material was removed leaving large blocks of granite (called tors) that look like they were stacked on top of each other like "stacked buns". Streeton has accurately painted the cracks in the granite showing a tower of "stacked buns" at Bents lookout near the Buffalo Chalet."
– Clive Willman, Geologist and *Stonework* Co-Curator

Streeton and Wilson's work both feature piles of rocks. In Streeton's paintings we see towers of 'stacked buns' originally formed by cooled magma and then eroded by weathering. Wilson has shaped granite blocks to make jars or vessels which seem to almost have a religious purpose. Under the lid of each vessel, a small piece of granite from the original block has been placed like a hidden offering. In Wilson's photographic works, he has photographed stones in local granite quarries.

Stacks of stones may remind the viewer of a cairn, which is a man-made pile of stones. In some cultures, cairns are used as markers for burial sites or trails. They are also often created as man-made landmarks for and by tourists, to feature in photographs and Instagram posts of natural places. The early land surveyors sometimes built cairns on prominent hills as survey markers. Whether naturally occurring or man-made, piles of rocks have a visual appeal. They evoke balance and scale, accentuate natural materials and can often appear to be defying gravity itself: an everlasting totem in the face of adversity and erosion, or a human intervention in a natural place.

Discussion Questions

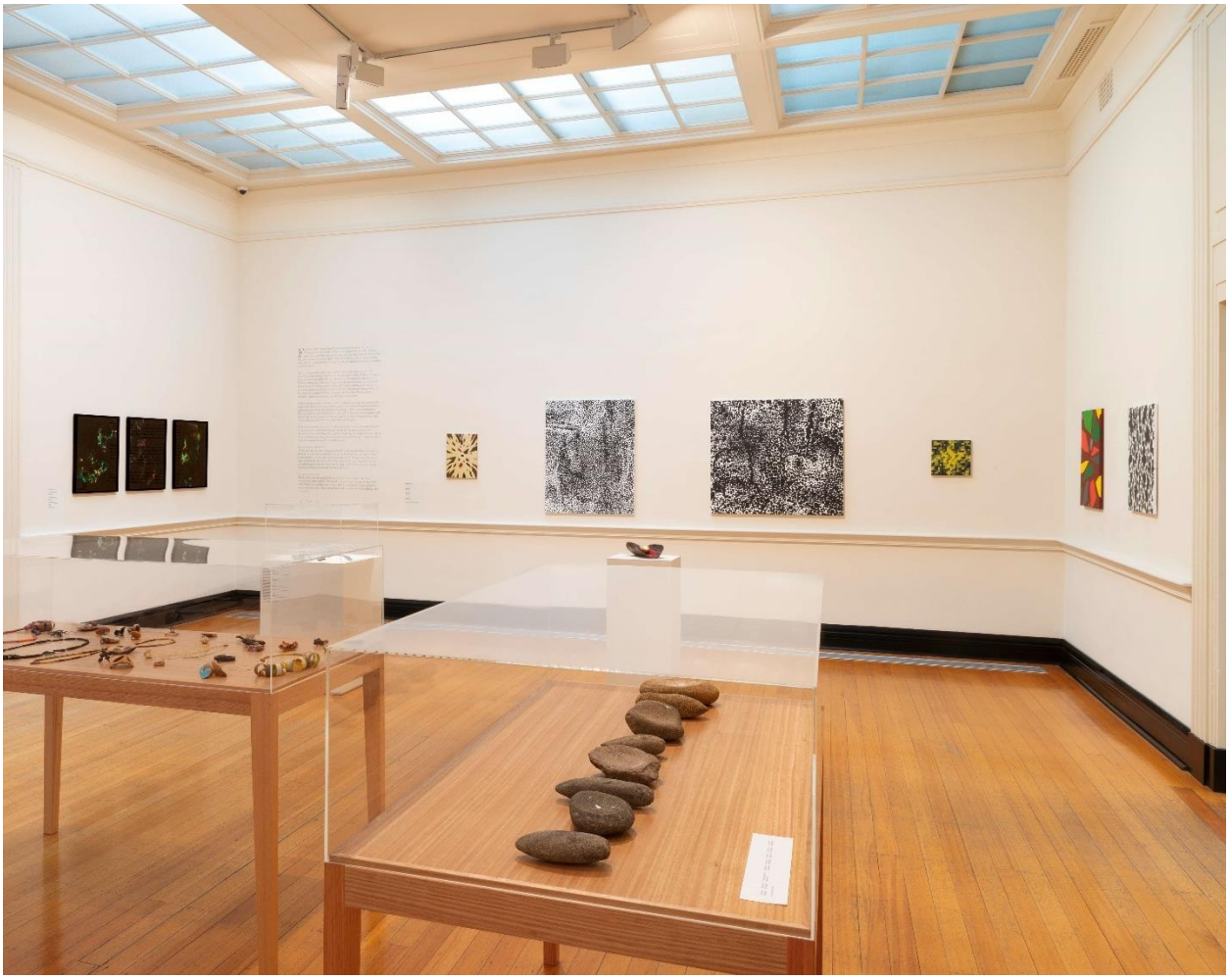
1. Have you ever seen a stone vessel or a stone cairn built in a natural place before?
2. Why do you think people like to move or take objects from natural places?
3. What do you think Wilson's vessels look like?

Practical Activity: Stacks

Stacking stones is an essential human endeavour. When attempting to create a stone pile many considerations have to be made, such as size, shape, balance and structure. Typically, cairns start with larger stones at the bottom that get smaller as they reach the top of the stack. The stones chosen are usually of the same type and colour to create a sense of unity.

1. Using cardboard, paper, glue or tape, construct a variety of large stones. These could be round, cube-like or flat. Stones could be painted or covered for different colours and textures. For example, try replicating the look of the stacked buns or Wilson's photographs of speckled granite.
2. Build these stones into a variety of stacks or cairns. Remember, these structures usually start with the larger stones at the bottom and finish with the smallest stones at the top. These could be assembled and disassembled a few times and then stuck down for a more permanent sculpture.
3. Place these stacks into a display around a room. Invite people to walk in, play in the space, and interact with them.

Stones as Tools



Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

“For at least 60 thousand years, Aboriginal people, including the Dja Dja Wurrung, used the resources of the land to support everyday life. Basically wood, stone and fibre were used to create tools that made life easier. Stone was used in many ways and is highly valued for its ability to be worked and, unlike wood and fibre, stone does not deteriorate. Gold for example, was not valued.

The Jarra people here in the Upper Loddon Valley were lucky with this rich volcanic soil and a healthy river system: the Campaspe, Coliban, Loddon and Avoca rivers are within our traditional lands. It was a very resource rich environment. Volcanic activity tens of thousands of years ago also provided stone that was found almost exclusively on Jaara country, such as the highly sought after greenstone. Jaara tools have been located 600 kilometres away into New South Wales and South Australia - greenstone was traded up and down the east coast.

Another highly valued stone was Trachyte, a dark glossy stone that occurred when a type of lava flow ran into a nearby river system. The rapid cooling process produced a blade like stone which, when flaked, is very sharp. Trachyte is also found across Western, Northern and Central Victoria, and used for skinning and butchering small animals and for shaving spears and boomerangs in a scraper type motion. On Jaara Country, Trachyte is found around Malmsbury and Kyneton.

On Jaara Country there were quarries where stones were sourced to make stone axes, hammer stones and flaked stones for cutting and shaving wooden tools. There is evidence of stone tools with grinding grooves for shaping and sharpening tools; and in the preparation and grinding of foods, medicines and ochre for ceremonies. The Jaara made stone arrangements for ceremonial purposes." – Uncle Rick Nelson, Community Elder, (Jaara) Dja Dja Wurrung

Stone is highly valuable for strength and hardiness. The history provided by Uncle Rick Nelson above demonstrates the variety of ways the Jaara people used stones as tools in their daily life. The Jaara discovered the plentiful and useful stones across their Country. The qualities of all the individual stones, such as a greenstone and the Trachyte, were learnt and adapted to put these stones to use, whether for hunting, food and medicine preparation, creating tools or ceremonial.

An artist is nothing without their tools. An artist understands and uses the unique qualities of their tools and materials to make them work in the best way possible, whether it's a specific way a paint can be applied to a surface, or a brush can be used to draw lines. An artist is also resourceful. They know the tools they have and the best ways to use them. An artist experiments with new materials and tools to see the different effects they create.

This exhibition celebrates a variety of ways that stones can be used as inspiration and tools by people. Stephen Bram's work shows a curious visual effect that can be created using stones. Pete Curly demonstrates the beauty of stones when they are turned into tools. Graptolites demonstrate the preserving quality of stone and let us consider the shape of these fossils by making tools inspired by them.

Art can be made *with* stones as well as *about* stones.

Artwork
Graptolites

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Dr T S Hall and fossil graptolites. Pioneering 19th century scientist and Director, Castlemaine School of Mines 1890 – 1893.

Castlemaine, Chewton and Yapeen have honoured places in international geological circles, all thanks to the pioneering work of Thomas Sergeant Hall. Several time intervals within the Ordovician geological period are named after these towns; the Castlemainian, Chewtonian and Yapeenian stages encompass a period in Earth's history from 474 to 468 million years ago.

When T. S. Hall became director of the Castlemaine School of Mines in 1890, he decided to unravel the story of Castlemaine's most common fossils – the graptolites. Hall systematically scoured the district looking for as many fossil specimens as he could find, spending hours breaking open rocks with his pick and noting carefully in which rock strata they were found.

He quickly recognised that the shape of graptolites had changed over time and the different species could be used to date rock strata. T.S. Hall left Castlemaine in 1893 to follow a distinguished career at Melbourne University and as President of the Royal Society of Victoria. He encouraged others to further the work like William J. Harris, who taught science at Castlemaine High School for six years.

Another researcher was David Evan Thomas, a geologist with the Geological Survey of Victoria, who was based at Castlemaine between 1939 and 1942. Harris and Thomas worked together to expand Hall's graptolite system and cemented the local names of Castlemainian, Chewtonian and Yapeenian in the world literature. Harris was awarded the degree of Doctor of Science in 1934 for his work on graptolites.

In 1995 Castlemaine geologist Clive Willman further updated Harris and Thomas's work for the Geological Survey of Victoria. He produced a detailed map of the whole Castlemaine area showing the age of rock strata, based on the species of graptolites found in the rocks.

What are Graptolites?
Graptolites are the fossil impressions of now-extinct animals that lived in the oceans between about 520 to 350 million years ago. The word 'graptolite' literally means 'writing on rocks' from the Greek graphein, to write, and lithos, stone.

In life, graptolites were small planktonic marine animals that floated in the upper parts of the world's oceans. graptolites were colonial animals like corals.

The preserved shapes we find in rocks are the impressions of the collagen frameworks that supported the colony. Dozens of individual zooids lived together, each residing in one of the tiny serrated 'hooks' called theca. Graptolites are great for comparing the age of rocks in different continents because species evolved very quickly and their planktonic lifestyle meant they spread worldwide very rapidly.

On death, graptolites drifted down to the sea floor and were buried in layers of deep marine mud, separated by layers of sand. Over time the mud and sand turned to layers of hard mudstone and sandstone until earth movements raised the strata above sea-level to form land. Despite these upheavals, the fossilised impressions of the graptolite colony have survived to the present day.

Once the fossil species is identified, it is possible to place it in a relative time sequence. The age of the fossil tells us the age of the rock strata in which it was found.

Discussion Questions

1. Look closely at the graptolite specimens: what do they look like?
2. What are fossils?
3. After listening to the information about graptolites, imagine them when they were alive. What did they look like? How did they move?
4. Fossils and other artefacts are often found in the ground and tell us about history, even before people. What do you imagine the world would have been like when graptolites were alive 350 million years ago?

Practical Activity: Graptolites Stamps

Inspired by the graptolites case, students create stamps that make marks, lines and shapes that mimic the shape of Graptolites, including the 'U', the 'saw', the 'tentacles' and the 'stars'.

1. On cardboard using pencils, trace the shape of the graptolites, using the guide to make the 'U', 'saw', 'tentacles' and 'stars'.
2. Using scissors or a utility knife, cut carefully along the lines to create the stamp. A cardboard handle (a piece of cardboard bent at a right angle) can be stuck using a strong glue to give students something to hold. A variety of stamps in different shapes and sizes can be created.
3. Using paint and paper, either neutral colours to mimic those of the fossilised graptolites or bright colours, students press the stamp into a thin layer of paint and then press it onto the paper. This can be done repeatedly in a variety of shapes and colours to cover a single piece of paper.
4. Students work collaboratively to cover large pieces of paper in these graptolite shapes, observing how they fit and work together to create repetition, pattern and fill space.

The anatomy of a graptolite

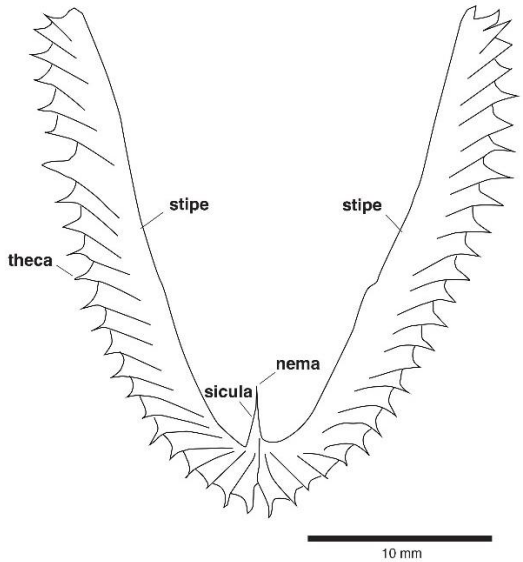
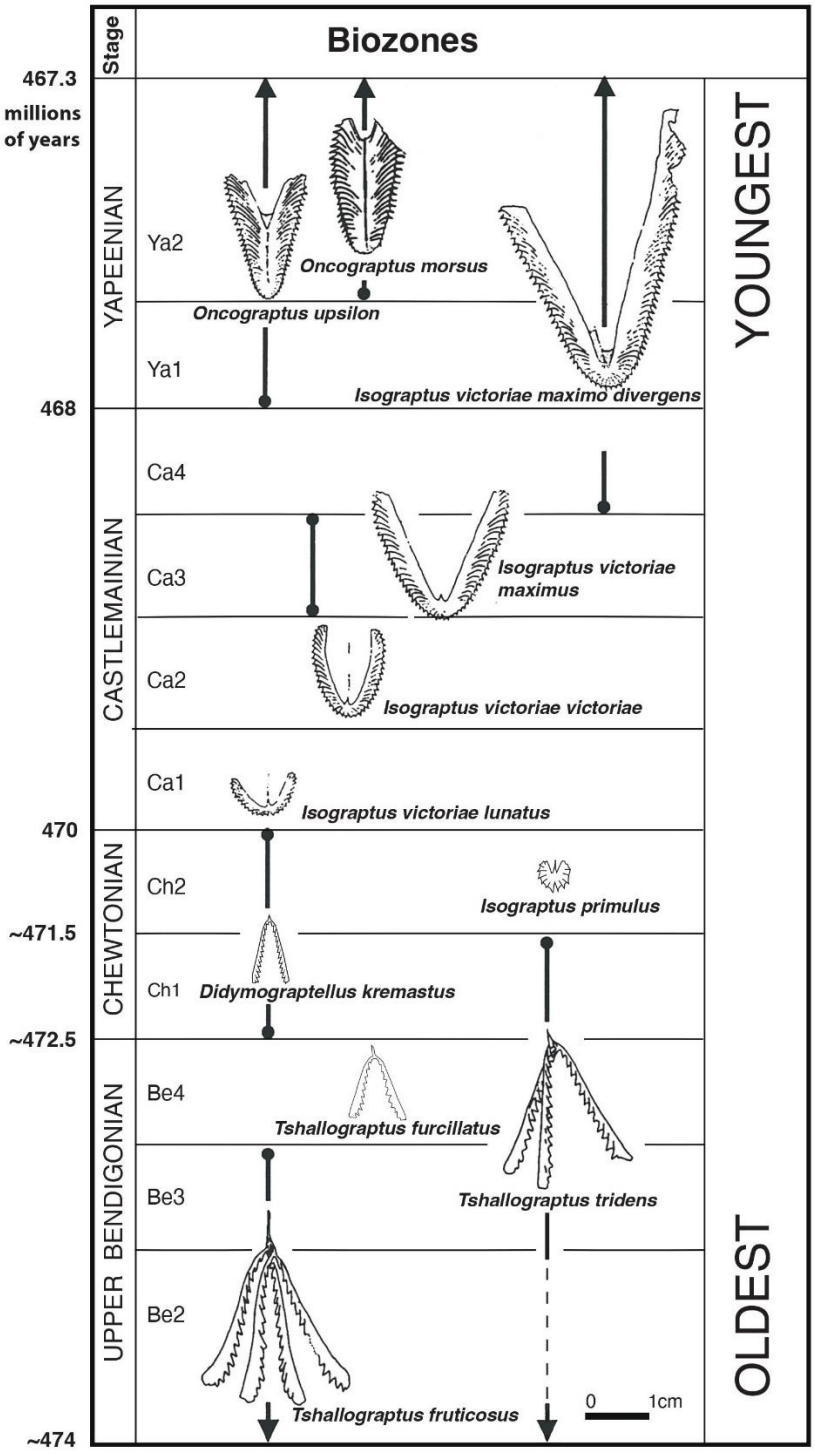
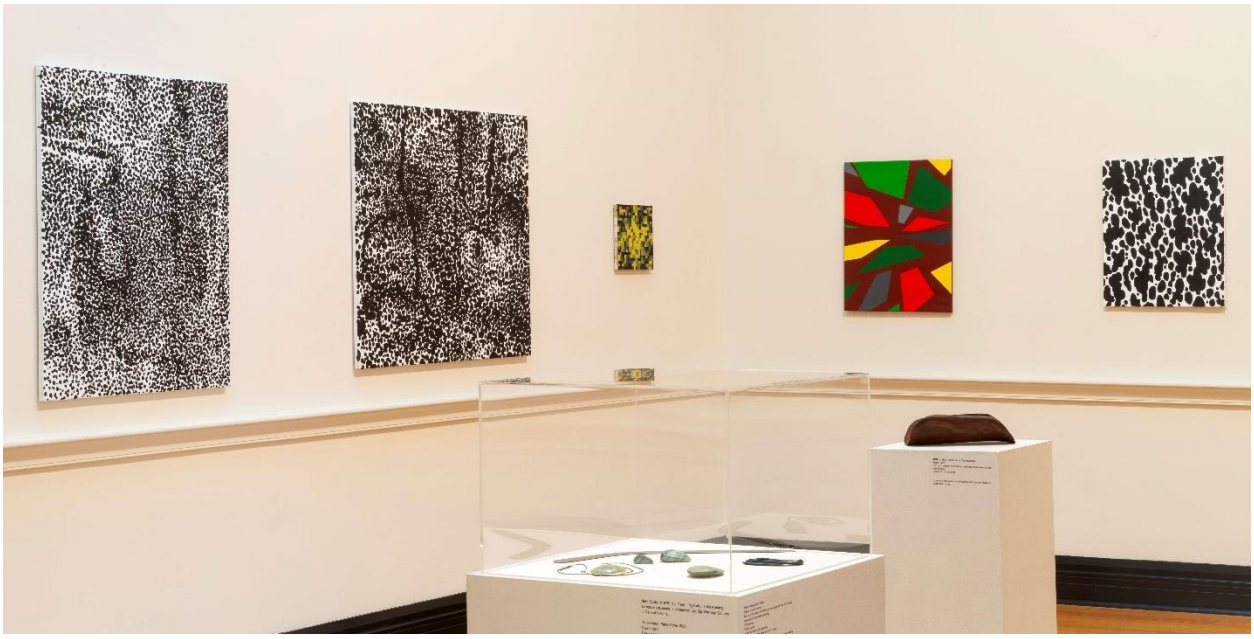


Chart of graptolite species used to identify the age of rock strata
Lower Ordovician rocks of Castlemaine

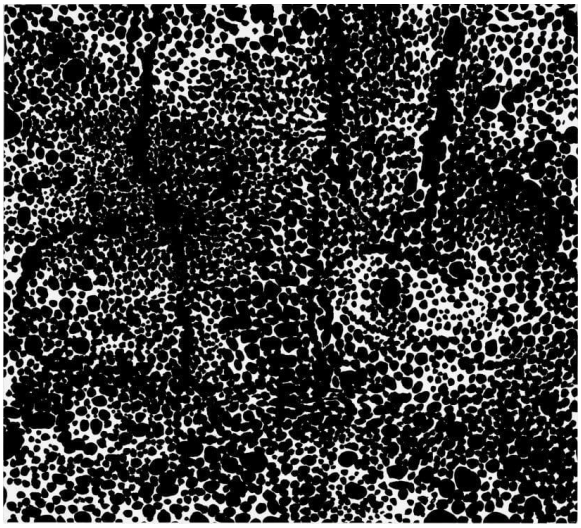


The vertical lines show the length of time that some species lived through successive biozones. Note that the internationally recognised time stages are named after Central Victorian places.

Artwork
Stephen Bram



Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.



Stephen Bram (b1961), *Untitled (Two point perspective)*, c1992, oil paint on cotton.
Stephen Bram (b1961), *Untitled*, 2018, acrylic on cotton.
Stephen Bram (b1961), *Untitled*, 2018, acrylic on cotton.
Stephen Bram (b1961), *Untitled*, c2005, acrylic on cotton.
Stephen Bram (b1961), *Untitled*, 2017, acrylic on cotton.
All works collection the artist. Courtesy of Anna Schwarz Gallery, Melbourne.

Stephen Bram's artworks are created by painting a series of different sized circular shapes in black across a white backdrop. In sections these circular shapes are clustered together, creating denser clumps of dark paint, while in other places, space is left between the circles so more bright white paint shines through the shapes.

When the clusters of black circles join together, they appear to sink back. The darker tone creates depth and form in the flat canvas. Conversely, the slightly broader sections of white contrast against the depth, sitting out and up off the canvas. Where the shapes are closer together a darker tone is created, where the shapes are separated by more space, the tone is lighter. This is a simple technique to create tone, form and depth in a flat painting.

These paintings play with abstraction, depth and illusion. If you squint your eyes the black shapes morph together and become something else entirely. At certain moments they are bubbles, rocks, pebbles and others they are merely black painted shapes.

Artist Biography

Stephen Bram is known for his paintings, large-scale wall drawings and three-dimensional, room-size installations, which have been executed in galleries and museums around the world. He was one of a small group of artists who established Store 5 in 1989, an artist-run exhibition space in Melbourne, which reinvigorated abstract painting in Australia.

Bram's work engages perspective and architecture, constructing spaces where hard-edged abstract shapes collide. His paintings reveal the flatness of the canvas and at the same time its potential to create spatial depth. The artist is engaged in a deep and long-lasting conversation regarding abstraction, illusion, representation, idealism, architecture, modernism and postmodernism.

Bram's works are in important public and corporate collections including, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; Daimler Collec- tion, Berlin; B.H.P., Melbourne; Monash University, Melbourne; University of Queensland, Brisbane; Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Discussion Questions

1. Look closely at one of these paintings, as though you are spotting shapes in clouds, what shapes or figures can you see amongst the black circles?
2. Why do you think Stephen Bram chose to use only black and white for some of these paintings? What would they look like if other colours were used?
3. Can you see any natural materials or landscapes in these paintings?
4. What tools do you think you could use to create this painting?

Practical Activity: Stone Painting

Inspired by Stephen Bram's black and white paintings, students find/source and use stones as stamps to build up tone and depth.

1. Find or source a variety of stones or rocks. While flatter edges and rounded shapes are ideal, others can also be used.
2. Students to select the stone/s they would like to use.
3. On pieces of white paper, students use the rocks as stamps with black paint to build up an artwork.
4. Students experiment with different edges and sizes to see what different shapes can be created on the paper.
5. Repeat this experiment with different coloured paper and paint, using one colour for the background and another for the stamps.
6. Share your work and describe what you have made and why you chose those colours.

Artwork
Pete Curly

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Pete Curly, *To be held - Palm Stone,* 2023, Cowell jade. Collection the artist.
Pete Curly, *Steel in stone*, 2023, Damascus steel Boomerang. Collection the artist.
Pete Curly, *Pendant*, 2023, Cowell black jade. Collection the artist.
Pete Curly, *To be held - Palm Stone*, 2023, Cowell jade. Collection the artist.
Pete Curly, *To be held - Palm Stone*, 2023, NZ Pounamu greenstone. Collection the artist.
Pete Curly, *Pendant – Shell Form*, 2023, NZ Pounamu greenstone. Collection the artist.

Poem by Pete Curly

Steel is always stone. Waiting.
Steel is a human concern.
Not just in the making, it exists by our hand and mind, steel can't survive generational time without our tending.
It's temporary.
Which is good.
Steel is the dance of the elements.
Always the earth of the rocky red iron-ore range.
Stone carries story, that's its way.
That's why so many of those rocky outcrops are dreaming places holding these cautionary tales.

Steel is birthed in fire.
By the furnace and forge.
In the life of a fire earth becomes iron.
Carbon the stuff of living bodies is temporarily bound.
Without carbon, steel stays soft.
It's the life in the blade.
By water steel is worked,
Without water the temper is lost.
A blade's edge like clean thought sums up my greatest ambivalence.
I'm not at ease with steel's story.
Wary.
When we throw up novel combinations of nature we are outside of the checks and balances.
However temporarily.
Steel arms the hand of human will.
What though can temper the will?
I fear our evolution hasn't kept pace with technology.
We need the psychotechnology of story to bring steel back into relation.
We need steel dreaming.
Until then
Maybe the sword best stays stuck in stone.

Pete Curly uses stone and steel to create tools. These tools have practical uses but are presented here as beautiful artworks. The Cowell jade and NZ Pounamu greenstone repeat the importance of greenstone across Dja Dja Wurrung Country expressed by Uncle Rick Nelson. These stones are not precious or valued highly across the world for their visual appeal, but have been chosen and forged to make use of their strength and feel. Pete Curly has then added fine details to present the tools as artworks. The tools are both useful and beautiful.

A Gaelic and Ngarabul artist, Curly expresses his identity and culture through these artworks and his poem. He is thinking about how stones and steels are elements from nature and also human materials.

These tools have beauty, usefulness and a spiritual connection for Pete Curly. They show his expert skills as a craftsman and understanding of the materials. He has an incredible ability to looks at an unworked piece of stone and imagine its use as a tool. He is then able to create a tool that is also interesting and curious to look at. In this way, Curly is equally concerned with the beauty and practicality of stones.

Artist Biography

Pete Curly (b1976) is a Gaelic, Ngarabul artist working across wood, stone, and steel on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Central Victoria.

Discussion Questions

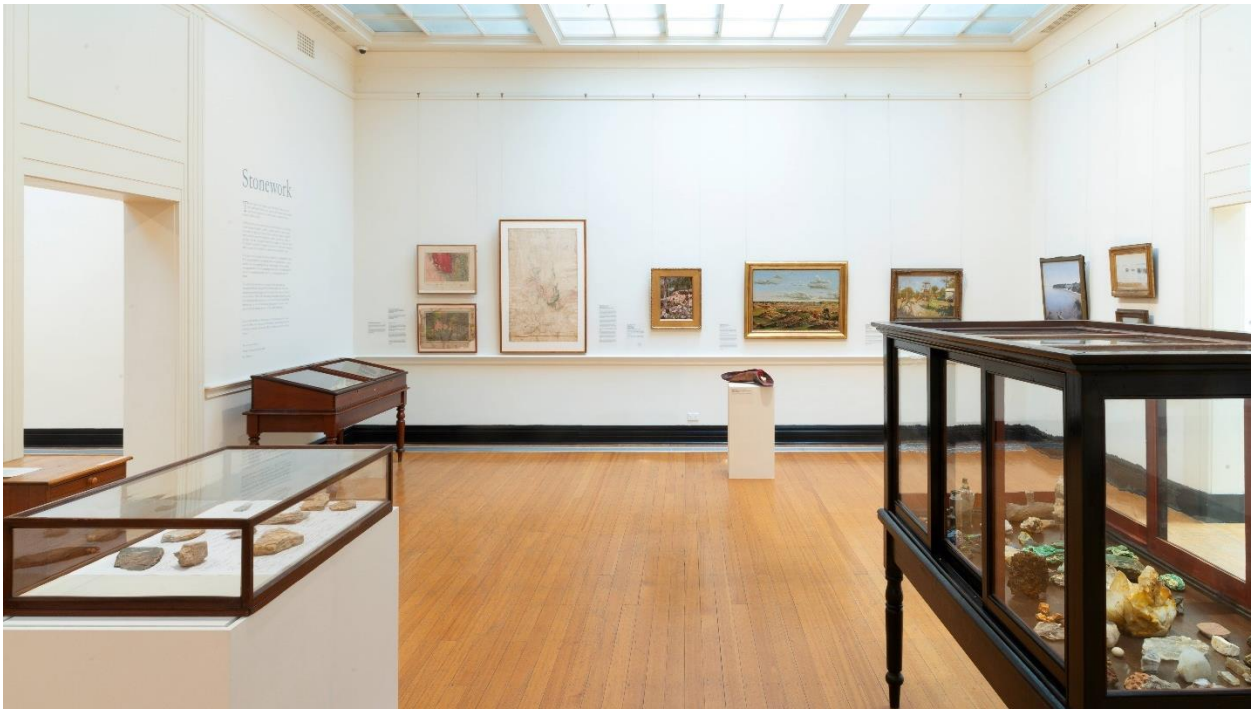
1. Look closely at the two palm stones. What do you imagine this stone is used for?
2. Look closely at the Damascus steel Boomerang. How do you think it was made?
3. What is steel? Can you think of other things that are made of steel?

Practical Activity: Creating Tools

Following Pete Curly's approach, students are asked to create tools out of stones and make them visually interesting using lines and patterns. Tools are practical, useful items, and can also be beautiful.

1. Source or find a stone.
2. Look closely at the stone, feel its weight and surface. What could this stone be used for?
3. Provide paper, cardboard and masking tape.
4. Create a tool out of your stone by adding handles using the materials provided.
5. Decorate this tool using paint and collage. Tissue paper can be rolled up and glued down in lines to look like the ridges in the palm stones. Textas or paint can be used to create patterned lines like in the Boomerang.
6. Draw a picture of someone using the stone tool.
7. Present your tool to the class, explain what it is used for, what you added and how you decorated it.

Stones as Storytellers



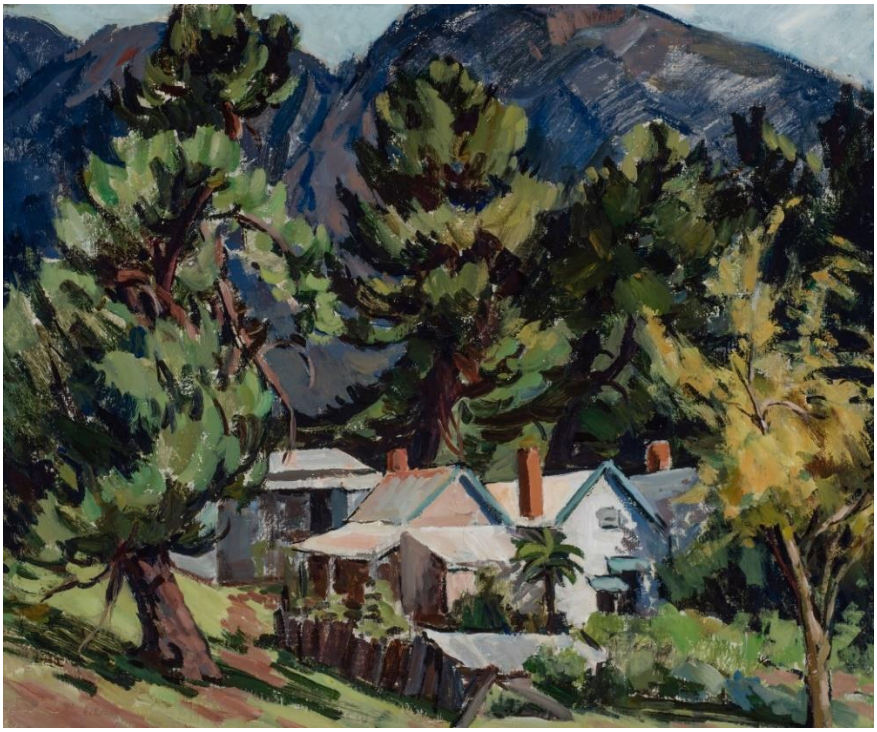
Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

Stones are much older than us. They were formed hundreds of millions of years ago and take thousands of years to erode and change. To us they seem timeless and eternal. If looked at closely, they are actually carriers of epic stories across hundreds of our lifetimes.

Stones are formed through monumental earth movements. Geologists can piece together the stories of how mountain ranges were created through looking closely at the rocks and stones that make up that mountain range. The Graptolites are an example of stones going on vast journeys that we can now understand. Each stone has markings and scars that carry these stories; rocks can be cracked open to reveal fossils and sediment that trace and tell these great journeys. Although we see them as simple and everyday objects, stones hold complex knowledge of the earth's past.

How do we tell these stones' stories? This is the complex job of a geologist and one of the aims of this exhibition. By considering stones as art, their stories can be newly understood by the public. The displays you see throughout *Stonework* have been created to speak about the past and future of these stones and the impact they have had on landscapes and people. Stones have their own traditional forms of display, seen through the specimen boxes, vitrines and drawers in the exhibition, which also give clues and ideas to their pasts and stories. If you know where and how to look, stones can tell us about recent and not-so-recent times.

Artwork
Elma Roach, *Farmhouse near Bright* & *Valley Road*



Elma Roach (1897-1942), *Farmhouse near Bright*, c1930s, oil on canvas, Castlemaine Art Museum. Featuring Dhudhuroa, Taungurung, Waywurru, Gunaikurnai and Jaithmathan Country.

Elma Roach (1897-1942), *Valley Road*, c1930s, oil on canvas, Castlemaine Art Museum. Featuring Dhudhuroa, Taungurung, Waywurru, Gunaikurnai and Jaithmathan Country.

These images of the landscape around Bright and the small town of Porepunkah by Elma Roach are set against the dramatic backdrop of the Great Dividing Range as it passes through north eastern Victoria. It is thought Victoria's eastern highlands were formed over the last 100 million years as a result of tectonic plate activity deep below in the earth's crust. The Australian Alps were initially pushed up as the super-continent Gondwana split apart. The plateau which formed the eastern highlands was then eroded and modified by millions of years of geological activity including volcanic eruptions, the action of glaciers, erosion and periodic episodes of uplift.

Today pressure from the Pacific Plate nudging Australia from the east and the Antarctic Plate pushing us north continues to apply stresses and strains which has further raised Victoria's high country. Elma Roach, who visited the area in the 1930s has captured the dark energy of the deep gorges and steep escarpments of this dynamic region.

Elma Roach, like other painters included in this exhibition, has sought to make an accurate impression of the landscape, so has captured the specific rock formation of the Great Dividing Range during this time period. We can see the dark quality of the rock and the sheer faces that dramatically appear beyond bushland and homes. She uses thick, angular, glossy paint strokes to capture these forms, which are complemented by a detailed geological understanding of this rock formation, as described in the text above. Where Roach has created a visual representation that has then inspired the written explanation, the reverse can also be practiced, to help students understand more deeply the forces that have created our landscapes.

Discussion Questions

1. Look closely at Elma Roach's *Farmhouse near Bright.* What kind of place does this look like? Is this somewhere you would like to visit?
2. How do you think mountains like the Great Dividing Range were created?
3. Read through the didactic (Geological Descriptions below) about how the Great Dividing Range was created. Can you imagine these great movements taking place? What movements or sounds can you make with your body to communicate these big earth movements and changes?

Practical Activity: Changing Landscapes

To explore how landscapes and geological features were formed, students can understand these stories through drawing the formation of the landscapes.

1. Provide paper and pencils (or other materials of your choosing) to students.
2. Select one of the didactics included below (Geological Descriptions).
3. Ask students to draw what you are saying.
4. Read the didactic slowly, out loud sentence by sentence.
5. Repeat important interesting phrases and leave space for students to draw.
6. Display all students' work and compare the differences. Ask students to explain what they drew and why.

Geological Descriptions

- From Emma Roach's *Farmhouse near Bright*

It is thought Victoria's eastern highlands were formed over the last 100 million years as a result of tectonic plate activity deep below in the earth's crust. The Australian Alps were initially pushed up as the super-continent Gondwana split apart. The plateau which formed the eastern highlands was then eroded and modified by millions of years of geological activity including volcanic eruptions, the action of glaciers, erosion and periodic episodes of uplift.

Today pressure from the Pacific Plate nudging Australia from the east and the Antarctic Plate pushing us north continues to apply stresses and strains which has further raised Victoria's high country.

- From Arthur Streeton's *Buffalo Mountains*

Mt Buffalo is entirely composed of granite which formed about 395 million years ago, when hot magma cooled well below the land surface. Over the millennia all the surrounding and overlying rocks were stripped away by weathering. But as the Buffalo granite is particularly hard and is very resistant to erosion, it was left standing as a prominent plateau.

As the heavy weight of overlying rock was slowly removed, the granite started to form 'unloading' cracks (called joints) that criss-cross the rock forming large rectangular blocks. Chemical weathering widened the joints and over time the weathered material was removed leaving large blocks of granite (called tors) that look like they were stacked on top of each other like "stacked buns".

- From Louis Buvelot's *Mt Elephant from Emu Creek*

Mt Elephant is a distinctive feature in the flat volcanic plains which stretch from the east of South Australia across western Victoria. The volcano erupted about 180,000 thousand years ago, ejecting scoria and forming a cone around a central crater. One side of this cone has been broken through or breached by a subsequent lava flow on the north eastern side of the mountain, thus creating its distinctive shape.

Artwork
Fred Williams, *Untitled landscape (You Yangs)*

Fred Williams (1927-1982), *Untitled landscape (You Yangs)*, 1964, chalk on paper, Castlemaine Art Museum, Gift of L L Smith 1964. Featuring Wathaurong Country.

The You Yangs near Geelong are part of a large granite mass which was created 365 Million years ago. Like other granite ranges the You Yangs were formed by magma forcing its way up through the earth's crust but solidifying before it reached the surface rather than erupting through the surface as a volcano. Rocks created this way are known as plutonic in a reference to the Roman god of the underworld, Pluto. Over millions of years through processes of erosion and uplift the hard granite rocks emerged from the beneath the surface. The You Yangs are in fact part of a much larger mass of granite, known as a batholith running underneath the surrounding region.

Fred Williams first visited the You Yangs in 1962. He was interested in geology and owned and consulted E Sherbon Hills' Physiography of Victoria: An introduction to geomorphology 1960. In this work, Williams characteristic abstract marks which are derived from the placement of trees and rocks in the landscape also seem to have a relationship to the speckled granite rock of the site itself.

Discussion Questions

1. What does this artwork look like? What makes you say that?
2. What does a landscape artwork usually have in it? Is this work a landscape? How can you tell?
3. This artwork is made out of lots of small lines, dots and squiggles. Look closely at these, what do they look like?
4. Have you made an artwork with chalk before? What do you remember about using chalk?

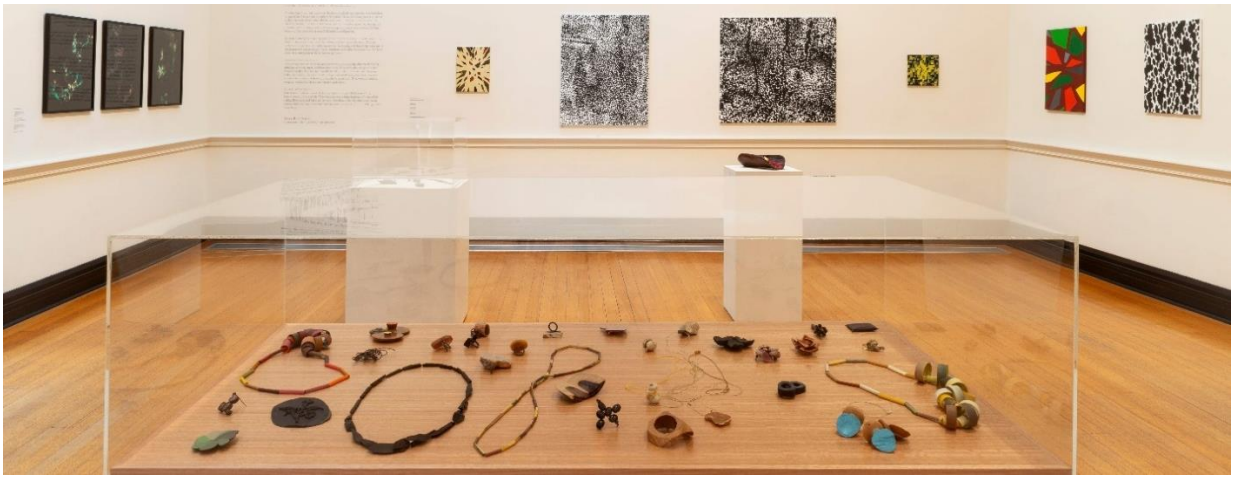
Practical Activity: Natural Collage

Fred Williams's landscapes are made out of small dots of colour and thin lines that together make up the trees and rocks of a landscape. Students can make a landscape the same way, by representing the stones and trees rather than the typical foreground and background. Williams's impasto style of painting lends itself to using natural materials to collage, and interests students in using unusual and earthy objects to create art.

1. Collect a range of natural materials: bark, rocks, gum nuts, flowers and leaves. Drier materials can be chosen for more brown and earthy tones.
2. Each student needs an A4 piece of cream or newsprint paper (rather than stark white).
3. Look closely at Fred Williams's landscape of the You Yangs. See how the different shapes are made up of earthy tones.
4. Arrange the gathered natural materials as the rocks and trees in the landscape. Materials can be trimmed down to size as needed, for example gum nuts could be cut in half and bark and leaves torn or trimmed into smaller circles. Try to include a variety of materials.
5. Charcoal or chalk can be used to add thin lines for the trees or horizon line.
6.

How do we map or capture a landscape? Typically, landforms are captured or recorded through maps or landscape painting, both Western or Euro-centric traditions of documenting. A traditional landscape tries to accurately convey a scene through use of foreground, middle-ground background, horizon line, point of interest or reference and a specific point of view.

Artwork
Sally Marsland, Selected Pieces from the Artist's Archive



Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.
Sally Marsland (b 1969), Selected pieces from the artist's archive, stone, wood, resin, metal. Collection of the artist.

Sally Marsland, *Smoky quartz cluster brooch,*2010, smoky quartz, patinated silver, handmade clasp, 4.5 x 3 x 3cm.

Jewellery is a traditional artform that uses stones. Jewellery is often used to display beautiful and flawless stones, and working with precious and semi-precious stones is the expert skill of a jeweller. Sally Marsland's chooses to make jewellery differently. She uses unexpected and natural materials that change how we typically view or value jewellery and stones.

While Marsland's work is clearly jewellery (we immediately recognise a necklace, ring, earring or bracelet) the longer you look at them the more unexpected they are. Firstly, there is her choice of materials: stone, wood, resin and metal are all beautiful in their own way, they are not typically thought of in the creation of jewellery. Like toolmakers and artisans, Marsland looks carefully at the material to understand what effects it can create. She uses the uniqueness of the material to create surprising effects, such as making resin appear light as paper. Secondly, the shapes and forms she creates are sometimes unexpectedly large. They take up space. They may question your idea of jewellery. Lastly, she uses materials to creatively tell stories. They prompt the question: how was that made? The cross-section of a stone - natural or man-made - reveals hidden depths and secrets.

Discussion Questions

1. What is jewellery? Why do people wear jewellery?
2. Look closely at Sally Marsland's works: what do you think they are made of?
3. Choose one piece of Sally Marsland's jewellery and imagine a person that would wear it. What do they look like? What are they like?
4. If you could design any piece of jewellery, what would it look like?

Practical Activity: Cross-sections

Inspired by the cut through cross-section of Sally Marsland's rings and pendants, students make rocks using polymer clay, kneading and layering different colours and/or objects. These larger stones are then sliced through to reveal the cross-sections of new shapes, lines, and colours revealed within.

1. Source a clay type material - this could be polymer clay, modelling clay or other brightly coloured malleable material. Objects such as glitter, confetti, small scraps of paper, decorative pebbles or rocks, sand, leaves or shells or other small objects can be used.
2. Students select different colours of this material and a variety of small objects. These are layered, kneaded and moulded together and then rolled into a round ball.
3. Slice through the round ball with a utility or other knife to reveal the central cross-section. Multiple slices can be made to compare different internal sections of the ball. These sections could also be baked or dried to be preserved.
5. Depending on the size of the section (for example a small ball could equate to a ring, a larger to a pendant), turn the section into jewellery by affixing it to string, paper or wire structures.

Practical Activity: Paper Rings

Many of Sally Marsland's necklaces appear to be made from simple materials such as string and paper. Paper can easily be turned into loops and rings to create sculptural jewellery.

1. Select a range of thin, natural coloured or pastel paper.
2. Cut paper into strips and squares of different sizes.
3. Loop the strips and squares over, and use sticky tape to create rings and loops that are different sizes, widths and colours.
4. Cut lengths of strings that would make suitable necklaces.
5. Select a range of rings to loop into the string.
6. Thread the loops onto the string. Larger loops should go on first, to sit in the middle of the necklace. Loops should get gradually smaller in diameter and longer in length or size towards the edges of the string, so that the smaller, longer rings can hold the larger rings in place.
7. Tie off strings, ensuring they are long enough to be able to slip on and off, or tie each end of string off onto the other end so they can slide, and the length can be adjusted.
8. Hold a fashion parade where students wear and display the jewellery they have made.

Glossary

Cairn	A human-made pile or stack of stones, usually made as a marker for something, for example a burial site.
Colonial	Describes ideas, people and society that come from England and Europe and colonised Australia in the 1700s.
First Nations	First Nations usually refers to Indigenous peoples, who are the earliest known inhabitants of an area. In Australia, First Nations people refers to people who identify, or have been identified by a representative (for example, their parent or guardian), as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.
Geologist	Someone who studies the earth, the rocks it is made up of, and how they have changed over time.
Geology	Literally the study of earth. A science that is concerned with the Earth, the rocks it is made up of, and how they have changed over time.
Graptolites	Fossil impressions of now-extinct animals that lived in the oceans between about 520 to 350 million years ago.
Greenstone	A volcanic stone called greenstone was used by quarried on nearby Wurundjeri country but was extensively used by the Dja Dja Wurrung people. Greenstone was once traded up and down the east coast of Australia and was found in quarries around Lancefield and Heathcote (Taungurung Country).
Jaara, Djaara, Dja Dja Wurrung	The traditional name and language group of the Aboriginal people, land and waters of the Bendigo and Castlemaine region of Central Western Victoria.
Precious/Semi-precious	Precious refers to gemstones that are of high value or price because of their rarity: diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, rubies. Semi-precious refers to stones that are less rare and less expensive but are still valued for their beauty.
Specimen	An individual plant, animal or piece of material used as an example of its type or for scientific study.
Trachyte	Dark glassy stone found across Western, Northern and Central Victoria which, when flaked, is very sharp. Used for skinning and butchering small animals, and for shaving spears and boomerangs by First Nations Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
Vitrine	A glass or Perspex display case.
Western	Describes ideas, people and society that originate from ‘the west’, specifically meaning Europe and The United States.

Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

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