Education Resource
Stonework

EDUCATION SUPPORTER
Novo Resources

Castlemaine Art Museum

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

For Teachers
Secondary Years 7–10
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 7–10. 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 the intersection between art and science. 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 and Euro-centric 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.

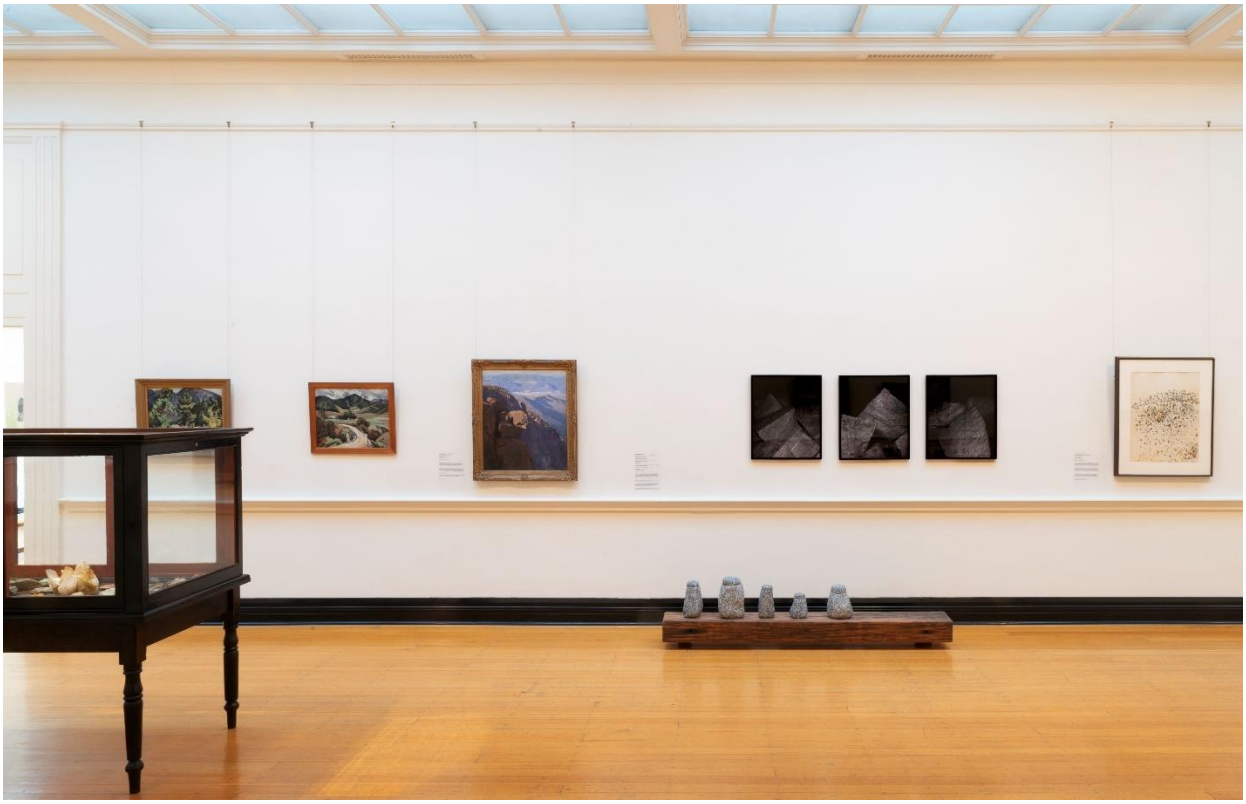
While stones have scientific and historical importance and material qualities, one way they have been valued across history is for their visual appeal. Stones can be viewed as art and design objects of high value and are therefore of great interest to artists as well as scientists, historians and geologists.

In *Stonework*, stones from the Castlemaine Historical Museum have been collected and documented based on their scientific and geological importance. However, once on display within an art museum exhibition, viewers can also explore these specimens for their visual qualities. Stones can be considered, valued and documented aesthetically, 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. Closely observe the stones in the vitrine: which stones catch your eye and why?
2. If you saw one of these stones somewhere outside, would you notice it or pay attention? Why or why not?
3. How have the curators selected these stones from the collection? Why do you think these specific specimens have been included? Can you find a theme that draws them together?
4. Can you imagine any of these stones as jewellery? Which ones and how would they be displayed?
5. Aside from the aesthetic quality, how else are these stones valued? What purpose or importance do they have?

Practical Activity: Selection, Observation, Documentation

During exhibition visit:

1. Choose a stone from the vitrines that catches your eye.
2. Photograph it.
3. Record your choice, answer the question: Why have you selected this stone?
4. Describe the stone using the following words: colour, texture, form, scale.
5. Using pencils, draw your stone with as much detail as possible.

After exhibition visit:

1. Share your selection with the class.
2. Using oil or soft pastels draw your stone from your photographs, capturing colour, texture and surface.
3. Paint your stone as a still life, again focusing on documenting colour and texture.
4. Display all observations and documentations of your stone in a visual arrangement.

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, the material that symbolises the western hierarchy of stones and visual appeal, to reconsider the value of gold and tell First Nations histories. In western society, gold is one of the most highly valued elements, both economically and visually. Gold is also an essential part of the history and landscape of the Goldfields region; not just because it can be found amongst the stones and land, but also because it defined the lives and lifestyles 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 and use of gold has been manipulated by the artist to draw our attention to how different peoples placed value on different objects. The artworks tell the story of the impact of this difference on Aboriginal people, specifically across Dja Dja Wurrung Country. In this way, altering the visual quality of stones 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. What do you think is more important: visual qualities or usefulness?
2. What is the difference between a western perspective on gold and a First Nations perspective? How is this difference represented in ADB's artworks?
3. What impact has mining and the economic valuing of stone and land had on the Aboriginal people across the goldfields?

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. Considering its form and texture, paint it a different colour. This could be something bright, fluorescent, lustrous, unexpected or patterned.
3. Discuss and comment on how this visual difference changes the impact, aesthetics, texture, form or meaning of this object.

See artist Ugo Rondinone for more inspiration for this activity:



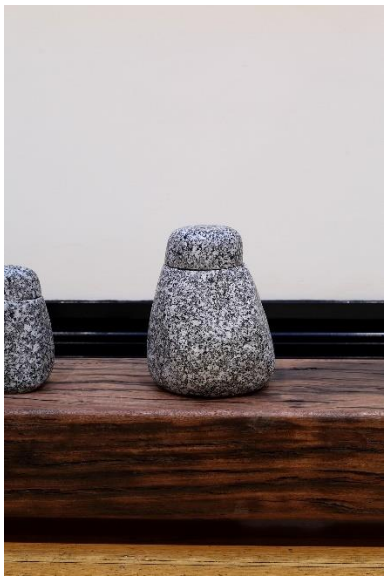
Practical Activity: Containers

Stones can be accentuated by altering their aesthetic context or how we view them. They can be kept in specimen boxes, drawers or vestibules. They can be displayed on plinths as art objects, or placed on specifically crafted objects or vessels to embed them with a story.

1. Create a display for a found or sourced stone that accentuates elements of it, its story or visual impact. This might be the creation of a backdrop or paper, a box, or a plinth. Colour, texture, form and space of the stone and the display should all be considered.

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

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

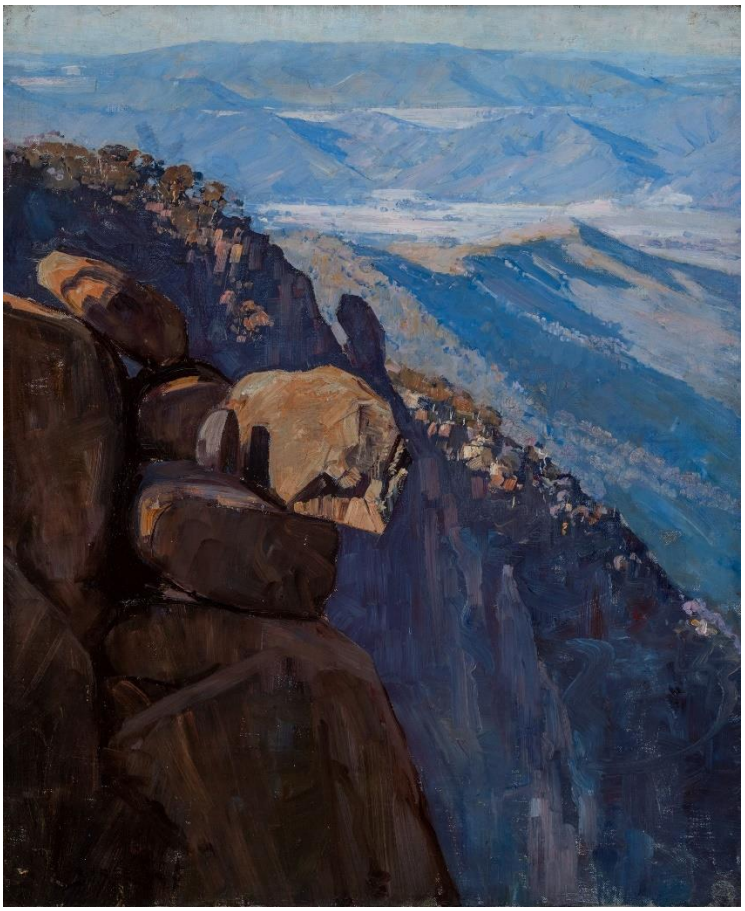
Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Images: Felix Wilson.

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

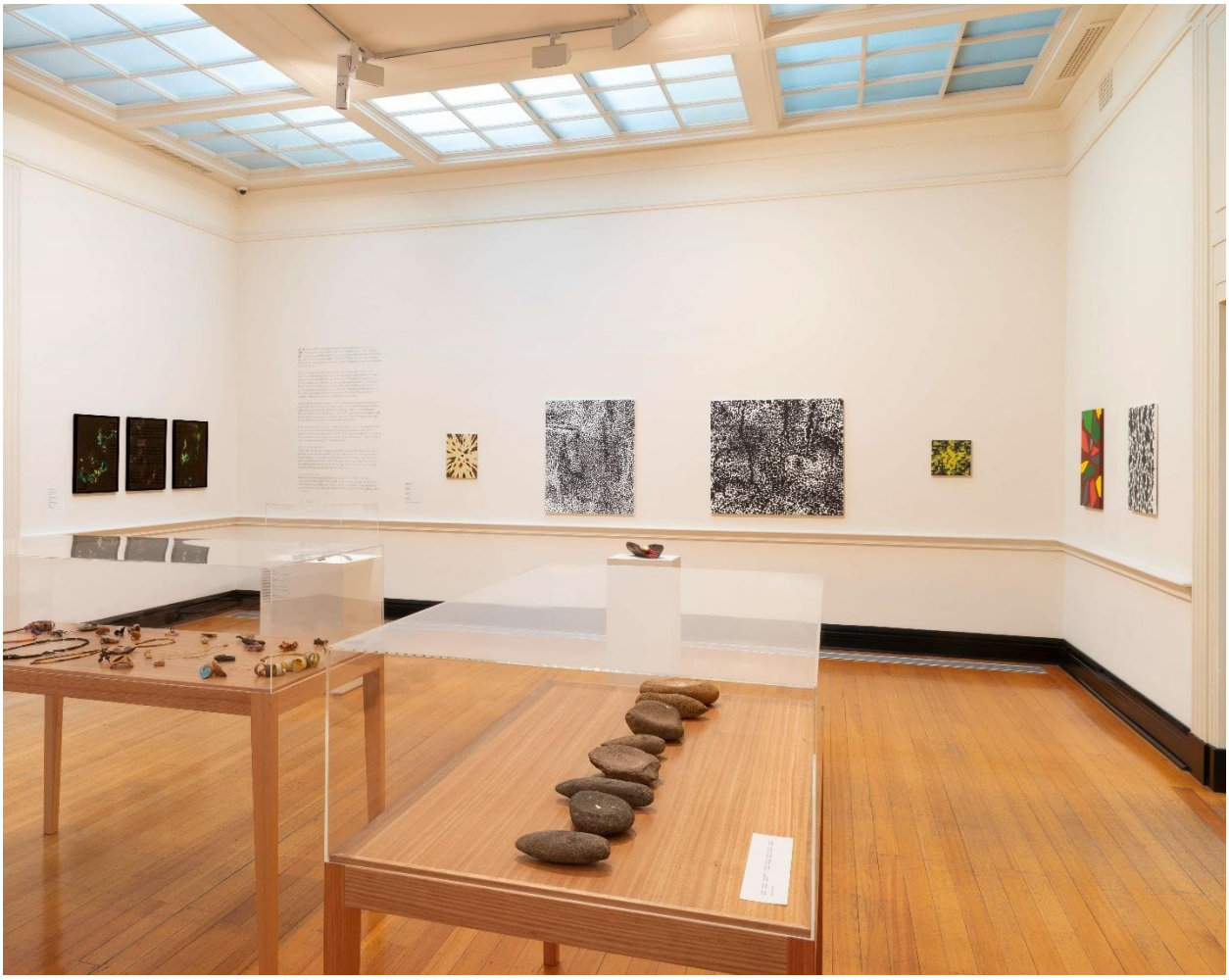
1. Describe the stacks in Streeton's and then Wilson's artwork. How are they different? How are they similar?
2. Have you ever seen a stone vessel built in a natural place before?
3. Why do people move or take objects from natural places?
4. The rock formations painted by Streeton are described colloquially as 'stacked buns'. 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 and scale, shape and flatness, balance and texture. Not only is there a physical consideration of the tower staying upright, but there is also a visual composition that is being created.

1. Using cardboard or paper construct a variety of stones. These could be round, cubic or flat. Include a variety of textures, colours, shapes and sizes. 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 granite in a local quarry.
2. Build these stones into a variety of stacks or cairns. These could be assembled and disassembled or stuck down for a more structurally sound sculpture.
3. Experiment with creating different sizes or forms that are figurative.
4. Place these stacks into a display. Open the display up to visitors. Photograph and document these structures and how the visitors 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 its hardiness and ability to be worked. The history provided by Uncle Rick Nelson above demonstrates the variety of ways the Jaara people used and valued stones as useful tools for their lifestyles. 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, mastered 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 manipulates the qualities and characteristics of their tools and materials to make them work in the best way possible. An artist is also resourceful, and knows the tools available to them and the easiest and best ways to use them. An artist experiments with newfound materials and tools to understand the effects they can offer.

This exhibition celebrates a variety of ways that stones can be used as inspiration and tools in the creative process. Pete Curly demonstrates the new aesthetic value given to stones when their usefulness as a tool or object to be held is put first. Stephen Bram is an abstract artist, so his artwork may not specifically represent stones, however, he is an enthusiastic collector of stones and you can imagine this passion has influenced some of his works within this exhibition. Graptolites demonstrate the preserving quality of stone and let us consider the shape and aesthetics of these fossils.

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. Why are fossils such as graptolites so important for scientists and geologists?
3. What do you think graptolites looked like before they died and were fossilised? Draw a picture.
4. Why is it important that such a unique geological find was discovered in the Castlemaine region?

Practical Activity: Graptolites Stamps

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

1. Using pencils and cardboard or sponges, draw around the shape of the graptolite, using the guide to trace the 'U', 'saw', 'tentacles' or 'stars'.
2. Using scissors or a utility knife, cut carefully along the lines to create the stamp. A cardboard handle can be affixed using a strong glue to give students something to hold. Students may create a variety of stamps in different shapes and sizes.
3. Using paint and paper, either neutral colours to mimic those of the fossilized 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

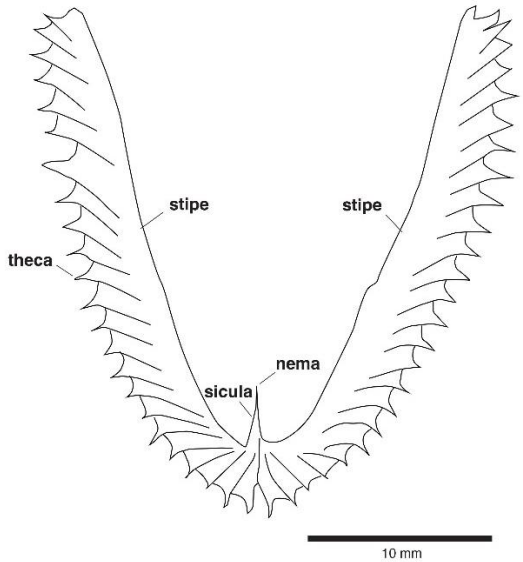
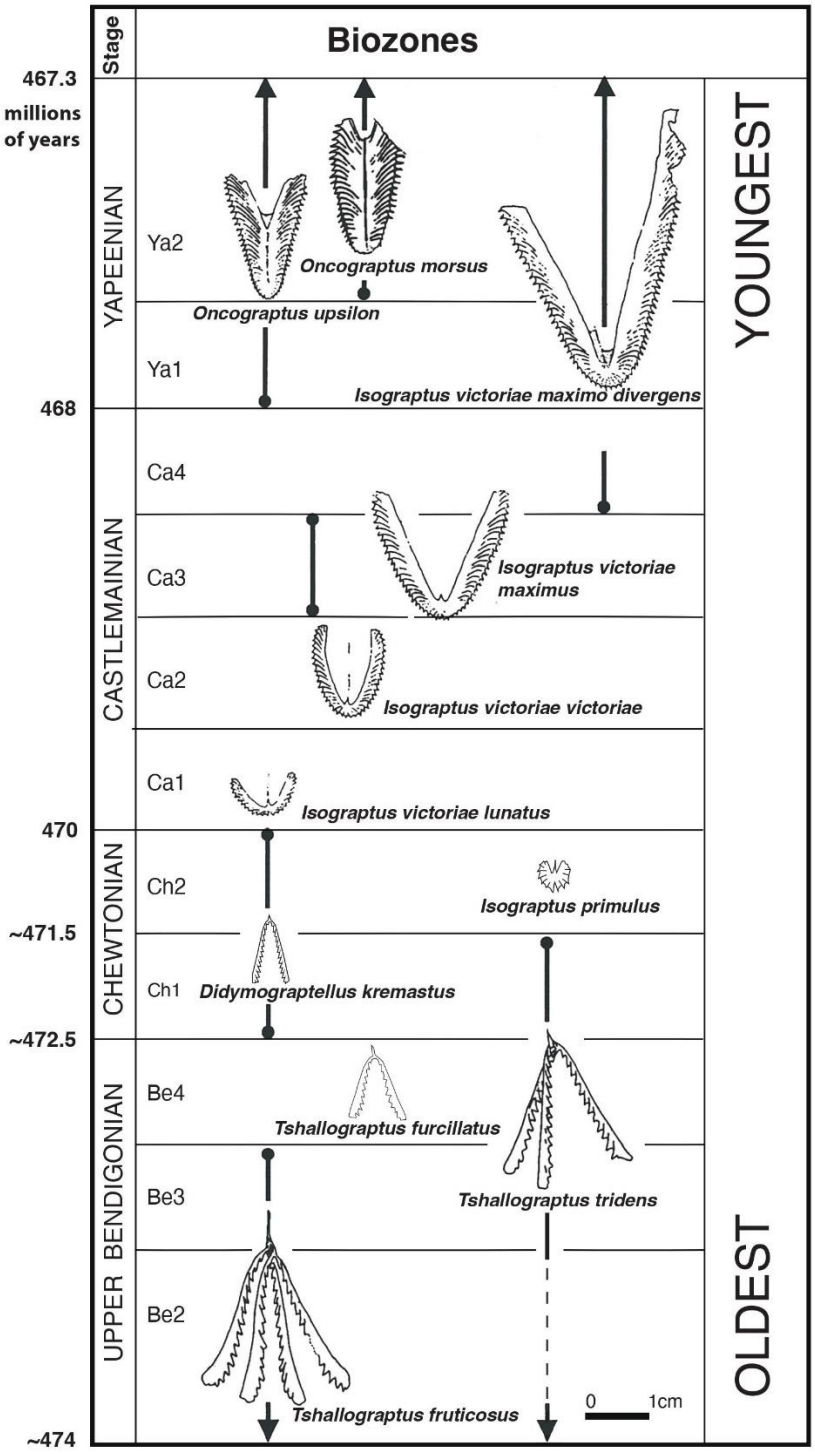
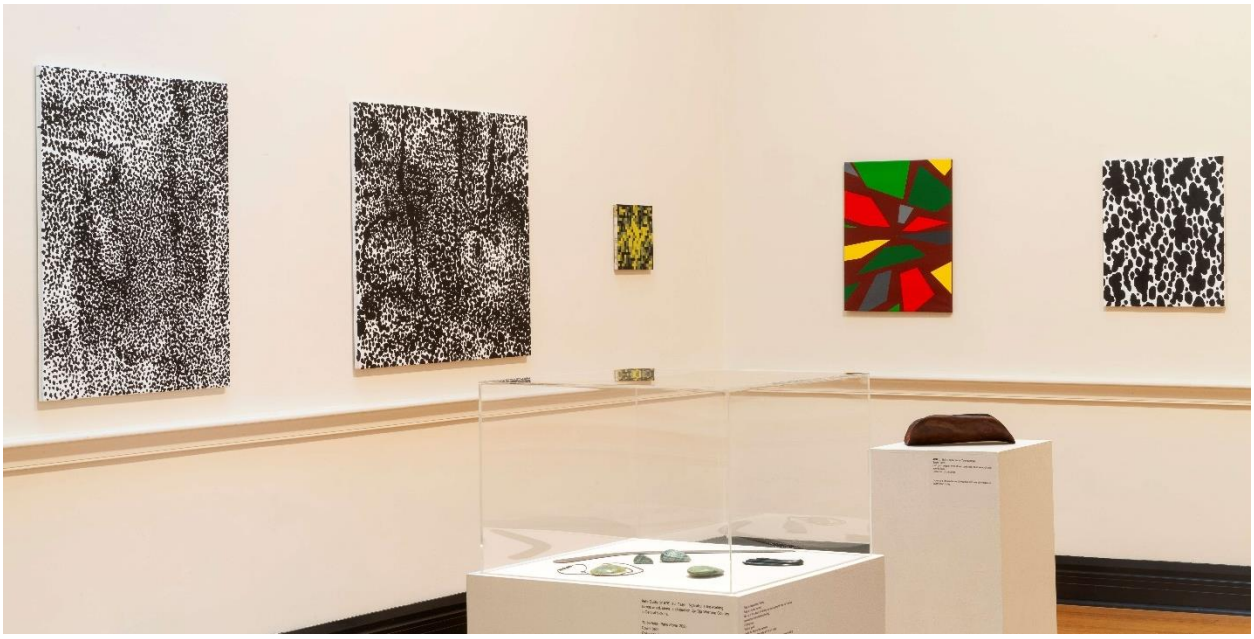


Chart of graptolite species used to identify the age of rock strata
Lower Ordovician rocks of Castlemaine

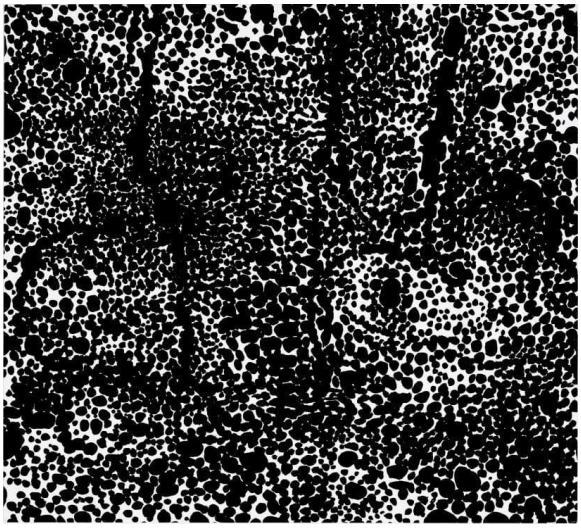


The vertical lines show the length of time that some species lived through successive biozones. Note that the internationally recognised time stages are named after Central Victorian places.

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. Describe one of these paintings: What can you see?
2. A figurative painting represents reality, whereas an abstract one uses pure colour and shapes. Are these paintings figurative or abstract?
3. Are these artworks flat or have they created the illusion of depth? How has Bram created depth on a flat canvas?
4. What natural elements or landscapes does this painting look like?

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. Allow 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. Demonstrate and practice the technique of building up tone by placing more shapes closer together to create darker tone and leaving more space to create lighter tone.
6. After experimenting, ask students to attempt to create forms and images just using the stones and black paint on a white surface.

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 pendants and stones to be held. Cowell jade and NZ Pounamu greenstone echo 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 selected and manipulated according to their intrinsic properties and characteristics. This in turn, accentuates the natural beauty of the materials.

A Gaelic and Ngarabul artist, Curly expresses this intersection of identity and culture through these artworks and his poem. He is considerate of and challenged by the dual nature of stones and steel as natural force and human implements.

These tools seem to have visual, material and spiritual value which is allowed to flourish through expert craftsmanship and intimate understanding of the materials. To see an unworked piece of stone and be able to imagine its use is a unique skill. Another unique skill is giving a tool a high visual and aesthetic impact while not endangering its usefulness. In this way, Curly seems equally concerned with aesthetic and practical use 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

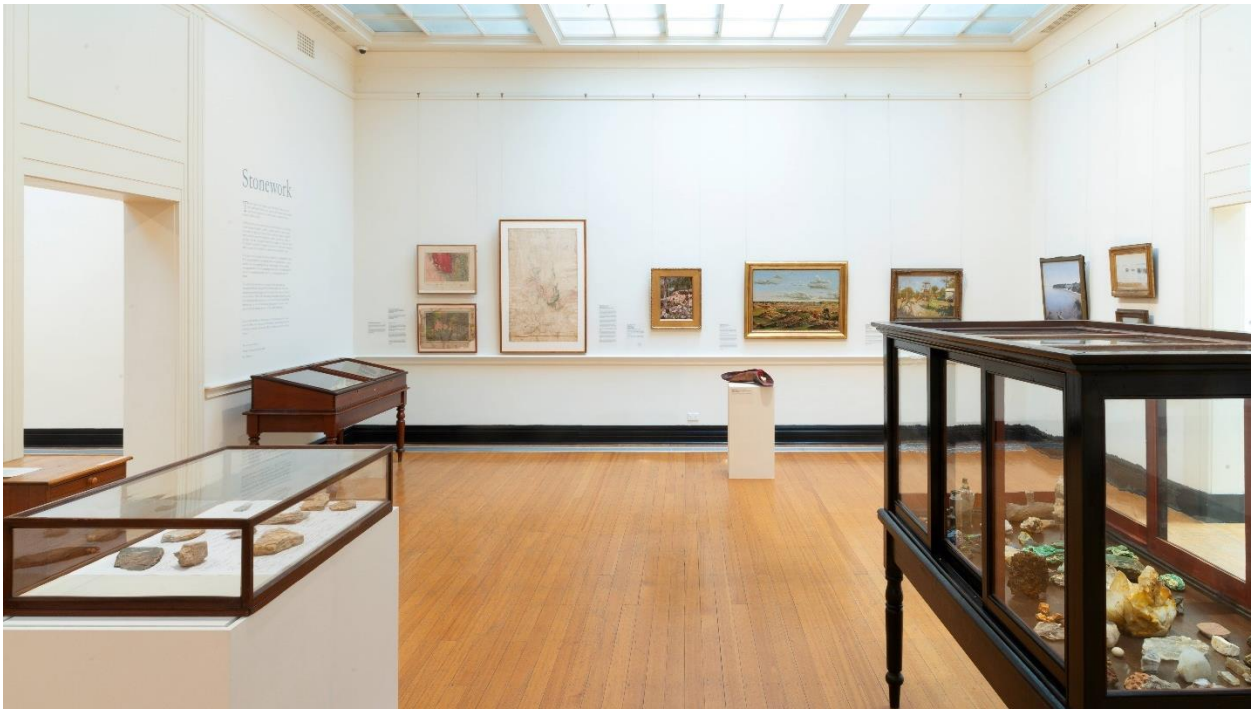
1. What is a palm stone? Discuss this as a group then conduct research to understand the importance of this stone work.
2. Look closely at the Damascus steel Boomerang. How do you think it was made? Discuss the steps that must be required. Pay attention to the unique marking across the surface and discuss how these were created.
3. Read Pete Curly's poem. What do you think this poem is about? How does it relate to the objects on display?
4. What negative and positive impacts do you think the mining and use of steel have had on society? Do you think 'the sword best stays stuck in stone'?

Practical Activity: Creating Tools

Echoing Pete Curly's approach, students are asked to consider the intrinsic and material value of a stone before the visual quality. While tools are practical items, they are also carriers of visual culture.

1. Source or find a stone.
2. Experience and note down its material qualities: texture, shape, form, weight, dimensions, colour.
3. Create a tool out of it by adding or subtracting materials. This may include wood, cardboard, found materials, tap, glue, or paper.
4. Decorate this tool to give it aesthetic value without endangering its usefulness.
5. Draw an image demonstrating the tool at use.

Stones as Storytellers



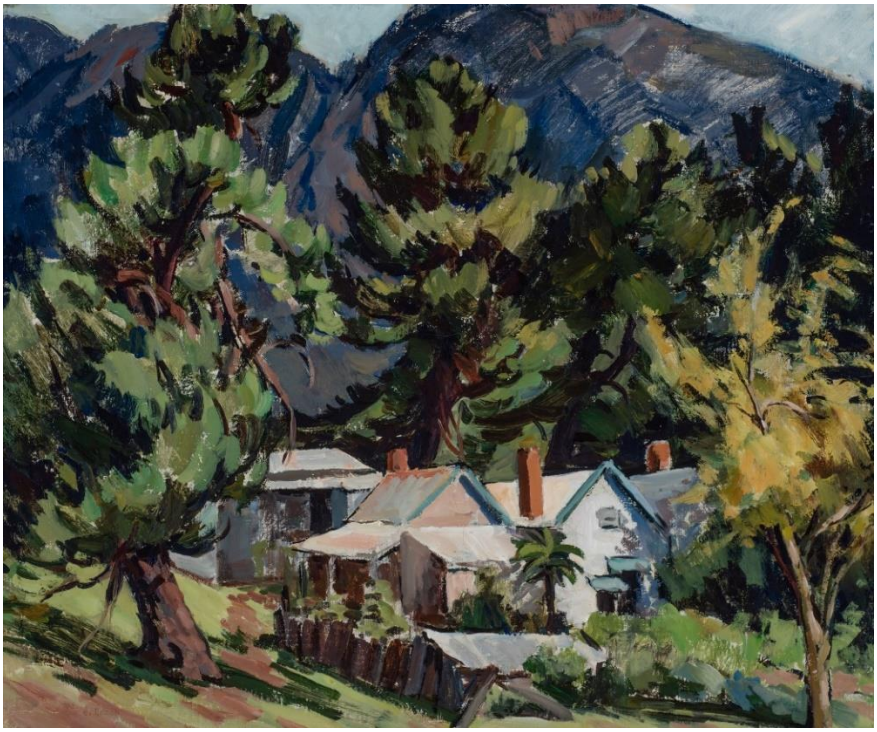
Installation view, Stonework, 2023, Castlemaine Art Museum. Image: James McArdle.

The lifespan of stones is far beyond our own. 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 the residue of monumental earth movements. Geologists can piece together the stories of how mountain ranges were created through analysing and understanding 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 decode. 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. The scale of this feels sometimes incomprehensible to us, but it is through complex understanding of simple stones that we know about the earth's past.

How do we tell these stones' stories? This is the complex job of a geologist and one of the core aims of this exhibition. When captured or considered as art, we can recontextualise stones to tell these stories to the public. The displays you see throughout *Stonework* are designed to express and inform about the past and future of these stones and the great impact they have had on the lives of this region and its 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. 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. Describe the scene in *Farmhouse near Bright*. What role do the mountains play in this composition?
2. Consider the didactic description of the creation of the Great Dividing Range. Are elements of this geological story visible in Roach's painting?
3. How can someone connect, understand or relate to things that were happening 100 million years ago? Why is this history relevant or important to us today?

Practical Activity: Changing Landscapes

To explore changes in landscape and understand geological description from didactics such as the one above, students visually represent written or text-based explanations, translating written stories into visuals and documenting the formation of the landscape.

1. Look closely at Roach's work to understand how she has represented the Great Dividing Range.
2. Select a didactic from this exhibition. Three examples are included below (Geological Descriptions).
3. Select a material for the students to use, this could be pencil or oil pastel to mimic Roach's brush strokes.

4. Read out the geological description and ask students to draw or visually represent what they hear. Ensure you are reading slowly and clearly - pauses and repetition are helpful for more careful understanding.

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. Does this painting look like a typical landscape artwork? Why or why not?
2. Describe the colours, shapes and lines used by Fred Williams. If you did not know this was a landscape depicting the You Yangs, what would you think this artwork was depicting?
3. Fred Williams has used chalk to create this artwork. What does chalk feel and look like? What qualities of chalk as a material are visible in this artwork?

Practical Activity: Capturing Landforms

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.

In this artwork, rather than recording landforms, Fred Williams records the presence and placement of stones, rocks and trees through marks, lines and circles in correlated earthy tones. Students take inspiration from this approach to reconsider how landscape can or should be represented.

1. Select a material. Following Williams this could be chalk or soft materials, but oil pastel, ink, watercolour or acrylic paint would also work. Generous sized paper should also be provided.
2. Ask students to replicate portions of Fred Williams's You Yangs to understand the variety of lines, shapes and marks he uses.
3. Then, present students with a photograph of an alternative landscape or image of the You Yangs. Ask students to use Fred William's approach of marking locations of trees, rocks and bushes to document the landscape.
4. This exercise can be repeated with a variety of colours, source images or materials.

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 values and uses stones. Jewellery is considered a way to display beautiful and flawless stones, and working with precious and semi-precious stones is the expertise of a jeweller. Sally Marsland's choice to create jewellery is conscious of this tradition and the economic and aesthetic value that comes with it. However, she purposefully chooses her materials to defy our expectations of what jewellery and adornment is or should be.

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. While all beautiful in their own way, they are not typically thought of in the creation of jewellery. Similarly to toolmakers and artisans, Marsland looks carefully at the material to understand what effects it can create. She starts with the intrinsic characteristic of the material and then uses that to create unexpected aesthetic

effects, such as making resin appear light as paper. Secondly, the shapes and forms she creates are sometimes unexpectedly large and while not literally heavy, they take up space. They are not what may be typically thought of when considering jewellery. Lastly, the way she uses her materials evokes creativity and storytelling. The form of a certain piece begs 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 does typical or traditional jewellery look like or use as materials? How is Sally Marsland's work different and similar?
2. Look closely at the display containing Sally Marsland's work: Can you see figures, shapes and objects amongst the abstractions? What does her work look like or resemble?
3. Choose one artwork: Describe how you think she made this work.
4. What kind of person do you imagine would wear this jewellery in real life? What do they look like? What are they 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 or small rocks, sand, leaves or shells can also 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.
4. 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 wire structures.

Artwork
Specimen Drawers

The chest of specimen drawers in the exhibition belonged to Herbert Prentice, an amateur geologist and teacher based in Newstead. Prentice had a Bachelor of Science and taught for many years in Wodonga before relocated to the Castlemaine hinterland. He donated a substantial collection of rocks, minerals and fossils to the Castlemaine Historical Museum in the 1960s. Prentice was a passionate collector of local graptolites but also fossicked in the places such as the Beaumaris Cliffs and the Mornington Peninsula.

Stones that are collected and documented for their geological importance can be stored in a variety of ways. In this exhibition there are vitrines, drawers and boxes. The placement of stones into this display or storage context gives them a greater sense of importance - because they have been carefully collected, documented, labelled, and stored or displayed they must be of some significance.

The labels and boxes provide important contextual information, mostly for the benefit of the collector or custodian, but which can be used to decode their history. Boxes denote size, shape, heaviness and have texture and colour. The arrangement within a drawer is a Tetris pattern of texture, colours and materials. Small notes are written to explain the stone, the geological labelling and categorising or the documenting of the place and time of its find.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think stones are stored this way? What other ways do you imagine they could be stored?
2. Look closely at the drawers: what colour and material of boxes are the most common? Why do you think this is the case?
3. Choose one stone and describe its storage: what does the placement and labelling tell you about that stone? How is the story and history of this stone told?
4. Why do some people love to collect stones and other objects from nature? It is just for science or other reasons?

Practical Activity: Specimen Stories

A key part and aesthetic consideration in handling and collecting stones is the placing and documenting of found stones or other objects in specimen boxes. There are many factors to consider: the material, size and colour of the boxes themselves, the arrangement of the boxes, notes or labels included and the structure or storage of the boxes. All of these choices impact the visual representation of the specimen and therefore tell its 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. Create a specimen note or label that describes location, time and date of finding. Students may wish to be more poetic and note feelings, atmosphere or thoughts at the time of discovery. This could also be imaginary: giving the stones or objects imagined or fictionalised histories.
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.

Glossary

Aesthetic	Relating to visuals or appearance, for example an aesthetic object is something valued for its visual qualities or appeal.
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.
Euro-centric	Focusing on European culture, history and ideas while excluding the views of the wider world; a belief in the greater importance and superiority of Europe.
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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