

James Makin Gallery

Resource by Mariah Calman

Artwork images by Ben Wolstencroft

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Suggested for Pre School, Foundation-Year 4

1. What can you see in each of the artworks?
2. What do you think the flowers feel like?
e.g. Soft, fluffy, prickly, spikey, slimey, sharp, silky, rough, wobbly
3. Describe each of the colours you can find in the artworks. What do each of the colours remind you of?
e.g . Fairy floss pink, Sunshine beach yellow, Rainforest green
4. Do you think the flowers in the artworks are alive? How do you know?
Guiding Questions; How are the flowers sitting in each work? Do they look freshly cut or growing? Are the colours bright or more grey? Are the works light or dark?
5. What type of artwork do you think this is?
e.g. Is it a photograph, painting or drawing?
6. Do you think the artist drew this fast or slow? Pretend that your finger is a paintbrush, in the air draw how you think the artist used their pencils and pens.
7. These are Australian flowers. Can you think of any Australian plants or animals?
8. Why would you give someone flowers?
9. How do flowers make you or people you know feel?
10. Draw a happy flower with happy colours and happy marks. (sad/relaxed/excited etc)
*If it helps put on happy music.

Suggested for Years 5-10

1. What are the subjects (object or person) in each work in the exhibition 'Garden'?
2. What art materials do you think have been used in these works?
e.g. Neon markers, charcoal etc
3. What type of flowers has the artist drawn?
Guiding Questions; What are their names? Where could they be located? Have you seen them before?
4. These flowers are known for being resilient (strong) as they can survive in harsh Australian climate conditions.
 - a. Discuss the various weather and natural events that occur in Australia that these flowers need to survive in. i.e. Drought, high temperatures, flood, fire, snow.
 - b. Research a flower that has been drawn by the artist. Explain how it survives in the various climate and/or natural events that occur in the Australian landscape.

Guiding Questions; How does the tree adapt to the climate? How does it survive and thrive in harsh events such as drought or fire? Can the flowers or seeds be preserved?

- c. The artist could have drawn any flowers. Why do you think he chose to draw these Australian flowers specifically?

Guiding Questions; What could they symbolise or represent? Do you think they could hold a meaning or memory for the artist?

Suggested for Years 9-12

1. Compare the similarities and differences between these two works by the artist Nic Plowman. Write your reflections in a table or mind map.

Guiding Questions; What is the subject of each work? Does the subject look different, if so why? Look at the citations (available text with the artworks) when were they made? Describe the colours and materials used. Does the style of the artworks look different? How does each artwork make you feel? How do you think the artist felt making these works? Explain your answer.



Image 1: Nic Plowman, (2022), Avalanche 15. From the exhibition 'Avalanche'.

Image 2: Nic Plowman, (2022), Escape, 84 x 60 cm, watercolour, charcoal, graphite, paint pen and enamel on 300 gsm cotton rag paper on canvas. From the exhibition 'Garden'.

2. Nic Plowman's stylistic traits include the layering of various materials and multiple drawings within the one artwork.

Using the below images to assist in your answer, describe what you think the artist's process may involve.

Guiding Questions; How do you think the artist uses materials? What methods might the artist use when making a work? Where can you see deliberate art making choices?



Image 1: Studio preliminary work for 'Garden', 2022.

Image 2: Nic Plowman in the studio working on the 'Garden' body of work, 2022.

Image 3: Nic Plowman, (2022), 'Remember', 42 x 30 cm, Mixed media on 310 gsm cotton rag paper

Suggested for Years 11-12

1. Explain how the works in 'Garden' challenge traditional representations of Still Life scenes.

Guiding Questions; Consider still life paintings or works throughout different art movements. How does Plowman's contemporary work differ stylistically, materially and/ or conceptually?

2. Choose a work in the exhibition 'Garden'. Discuss the composition of various elements and materials within the work.

Guiding Questions; Where has negative space been used? Where are organic and geometric shapes positioned? How has the artist been thoughtful in placement of materials, patterns and colours?

3. Use the below text and works from 'Garden' to inform the following answers.

Plowman's previous exhibition 'Avalanche' depicted wilting, dying and dried flowers. During the art making process, the artist experienced challenging personal events including cancer diagnosis, surgeries, and infertility.

- a. Does knowing the context of the artist's life affect how an audience interacts or observes these works? Explain your answer.
- b. Discuss why the artist may have chosen to name the previous body of work 'Avalanche' and this new body of work 'Garden'?

4. Plowman states he sees the flowers in his body of work as both fragile and resilient.

Examine how materials and subject matter are used symbolically and conceptually by Plowman. Discuss a work in your answer.

Guiding Questions; Refer to suggested content for years 5-10 to assist in this answer. Where can signs and symbols about Plowman's life be seen in this work?

5. What do the following images reveal about Nic Plowman's art making practice?

Guiding Questions; Where does he work?

What is his process of art making? (Does he work directly from life? Does he work on one work at a time?)

What materials does he use?

What stylistic traits are noticed across his works (colours, symbols, materials, patterns, size)?

What details about the artist's personality or personal life can you notice?

What role does Plowman's young daughter have within his art making practice?

What are the similarities and differences between Plowman's still life and life drawing works?





Image 1: Plowman working in his Melbourne studio with his daughter.

Image 2: A preliminary collaborative work between Plowman and his daughter.

Image 3: Detail of work in 'Avalanche'.

Image 4: Plowman in the studio with his daughter.

<https://jamesmakingallery.com/artists/nic-plowman/>

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