

FIGHTING FEAR II: IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING

MYANMAR EXHIBITION

EDUCATION KIT STAGE 5 & 6



Untitled #9, Anonymous 2022

Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying: The voice in the crowd and Contemporary Arts role in speaking for social justice

These resources are designed for students in Years 11 and 12 studying Visual Arts through either the NSW Preliminary and HSC or IB syllabuses. They may also be useful for tertiary students from different disciplines visiting the exhibition. They aim to provide interesting entry points through which teachers and students can engage with works in the exhibition, and suggestions for more in-depth case studies. The five artists selected for particular focus demonstrate the place and power of art in diplomacy and social critique. They employ media ranging from painting, photography, and performance art to drawing, revealing aspects of their personal, social, cultural and political worlds. Questions and activities invite students to engage with the material and conceptual practice of the artists, to consider the themes that emerge from the exhibition's curation, and to make significant connections with their wider study of contemporary art.

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Omen (part 1), Bart Was Not Here, 2021

THE EXHIBITION

Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying is the follow-up to 16albermarle's May 2021 exhibition *Fighting Fear: #whatshappeninginmyanmar*, in which 11 artists from Myanmar made work responding to the military coup of 1 February 2021, which deposed the elected government, instituted military rule and deprived the people of democracy and freedom.

Coinciding with the second anniversary of the military coup, *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying* revisits the ongoing struggle of the people in Myanmar, showcasing the varied responses of artists to developments and the current situations in Myanmar now. The exhibition examines more deeply what fear means in post-coup Myanmar and how people live with it. The revolution has changed and censorship has returned, but those artists still living in the country – whether in Yangon or safer areas – are finding new ways to work and exist despite the terrible day to day reality of living under a military regime. While many horrific events have ceased to be reported on international media, life continues in cities, towns and villages across Myanmar. The exhibition also explores the experiences of artists who fled the country for their own safety. They now face new and daunting circumstances living as refugees and immigrants, far from home and their families and having to cope with feelings of powerlessness about events in Myanmar.

FOR TEACHERS

Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying presents exciting opportunities to integrate new works by Burmese artists into existing curricula and case study investigations. The exhibition revisits the impact of the military coup d'état in February 2021 and readdresses the critical relationship between art, culture, democracy and social justice.

Consider examining the exhibition as an in-depth focus study within a broader investigation of Art & Voice, Art & Democracy, Art & Symbolism or Art & Fear. Through these lenses students investigate the exhibition to examine artists as activists, dissidents and social critics.

CURRICULUM LINKS AND SYLLABUS OUTCOMES

Teachers are encouraged to adapt this education resource for their curriculum, in and outside NSW. This education kit makes the following connections to:

Visual Arts Syllabus:

- *Artists' Practice* – the role of the artist as a social commentator / contemporary use of medias and techniques / ideas and inspiration
- *Conceptual Framework (Artist/Artwork/World/Audience)* – Art as a reflection of society and contemporary culture / the relationship between artists, subject matter, art work, world events and audience
- *The Frames* – Postmodern approaches to artmaking / impact of time and place on artwork

Art Criticism and Art History Outcomes:

Stage 5 Course: 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10

Stage 6 Year 11: P7, P8, P9

Stage 6 HSC Year 12: H7, H8, H9

International Baccalaureate Diploma Syllabus:

Focus: *Visual Arts in Context*

- *Theoretical Practice: Students examine and compare the work of artists from different cultural contexts.*
 - *Curatorial Practice: Students develop an informed response to work and exhibitions they have seen and experienced.*
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CASE STUDY: ART & VOICE

Students investigate the presence of artistic voice and activism throughout world history, beginning with works such as Picasso's 1937 'Guernica' and 'Massacre in Korea' 1951, and politically critical works by Jacques-Louis David and Francisco Goya.

To explore the evolution of art as a tool for cultural, political or generational voice, students reflect on exhibitions such as 'Guerrilla Girls Review Of The Whitney' at the American Art Biennial in 1987, Ai Wei Wei's series 'S.A.C.R.E.D.' (as part of his larger 'Disposition' exhibition) at the 2013 Venice Biennale and the opening of the 105 mural public open-air gallery on The Berlin Wall in 1990.

Within their own national context, students are encouraged to examine Australian artists whose practice encompass calls to action for social justice, for example Tony Albert's 'Hunter' (2007) and 'Sorry' (2008) or works presented by Jason Wing and Blak Douglas in the 'Resist Stance' exhibition, at the Grafton Regional Gallery (2022).

Using tools such as The Guardian article '*A brief history of protest art from the 1940s until now-in pictures*' and the Google Arts & Culture '*A Visual Voice*', students consider the power and impact of art which create a communal voice for the oppressed, censored or silenced by social or political circumstances.

They might look comparatively at works by artists such as Theodore Géricault, Honoré Daumier, Diego Rivera, Norman Rockwell, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Johnson Jones, Vivik Vilasini, Shirin Nashat, He Jianping, Jason Wing, Tony Albert, Blak Douglas, William Kentridge, Yongsun Suh, Keith Haring, Tiana Bruguera, Banksy, JR, Shepard Fairey.



#Response365 #339, Emily Pho, 2022

QUESTIONS

Questions for Years 9 – 12

The questions provided in this resource may be used for written responses, examination preparation, or for open-ended discussions in the gallery or the classroom.

- What is artistic activism?
- Why do/should artists risk their personal safety to create a communal voice?
- How can art influence the community outside the art world?
- What benefits or complications can social media and the digital world have on contemporary artistic activism?
- How important is art as a form of social critique?
- Does art have a role in politics and democracy?
- Does art need to be accessible to everyone if it is also activist?

Questions for Written Response Years 11 – 12

Cultural Frame – Conceptual Framework:

How do contemporary artists communicate ideas about cultural, political or generational voice through their artmaking?

Art is not merely a mirror that reflects society, but a hammer with which to shape it; a powerful tool that can transform the way we see the world.

Discuss this statement with reference to specific artists and artworks from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying*.

Subjective or Postmodern Frame:

Examine two artists from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying* that create new meaning using symbolism and/or postmodern techniques.

Conceptual Framework:

Analyse how a place's past and present can be explored through visual arts. Refer to two artists from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying*.

Practice:

As part of their practice, artists navigate emotional states and rational choices.

Discuss this statement with reference to 2 artists from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying*.

Evaluate the impact the 2020 coup has had on 2 artist practices from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying*.

VOCABULARY

- **Art activism:** a dynamic practice combining the creative power of the arts to move us emotionally with the strategic planning of activism necessary to bring about social change.
- **Dissidents:** a person who opposes official policy, especially that of an authoritarian state.
- **Social justice:** justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
- **Marginalise:** to treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.
- **Oppression:** prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or exercise of authority.
- **Communal voice:** Communal voice: the group operates as commentator on the action while speaking from the same perspective, or individuals speak the words of many.
- **Call to action:** an exhortation or stimulus to do something in order to achieve an aim or deal with a problem.
- **Propaganda:** information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.
- **Censorship:** the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, art, etc. that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security.



Son, Kuang Su, 2021

ARTIST IN FOCUS ACTIVITIES

Here you will find focus questions about 5 artists from *Fighting Fear II: It Goes Without Saying*. You can deep dive into researching individual artists, or compare and contrast their work with others, considering how they communicate ideas about Myanmar's history and a post-Coup life.



Bart Was Not Here

Dancing on your Grave 2022

inkjet print on matte poster paper, 64.5 x 105 cm

Think About/Discuss:

How can knowing the historical context of the cherubim inform our understanding of 'Dancing on your Grave' (2022) by Bart Was Not Here?

Renaissance and Baroque art were heavily measured by religious and political authority. Is contemporary art still as influenced by the same factors?

For information to support this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ff2-education-bart>



Emily Phyo

#response365 #365 2022

inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 43 x 43 cm

Think About/Discuss:

What are the benefits and issues of social media when used as a public platform for artistic activism?

Should an audience's experience of art be slow and intentional or fast and reflexive?

Can art influence and change society outside of the art community?

For information to support this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ff2-education-emily>



Richie Nath

Maya and the Burning Village 2017

inkjet print on matte poster paper, 90 x 53.5 cm

Think About/Discuss:

How does Rich Nath incorporate both the traditional and the contemporary in his artmaking practice?

Analyse how Richie Nath represents and interpret his worlds in this image?

For information to support this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ff2-education-richie>



Min Ma Naing

Faces of Change: Research consultant, 28 2022

inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 61 x 40 cm

Think About/Discuss:

Compare Min Ma Naing practise with any of the following:

- Eddie Adams, 'General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Viet Cong prisoner in Saigon' (1968).
- August Sander, People of the 20th Century series (1928)
- Dorothea Lange, 'Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California.' (1936)
- Tracey Moffat
- Eugenia Lim
- Paintings and photographs affiliated with #Georgefloyd (2020 – current)
- Liu Heung Shing, 'Couple on a bicycle take cover beneath an underpass as tanks deploy overhead during the Tiananmen Square protests' (1989)

For information to support this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ff2-education-naing>



Kaung Su

Untitled #4 2022

inkjet print of Ilford Galerie Smooth Pearl photo paper, 38.5 x 50 cm

Think About/Discuss:

Su captured the colour red being washed away in the rain. Discuss what message he is communicating to the audience?

The colour red has been used across history to represent strength, pride, war, pain, fear and anger. The colour red also has a historical alliance with far-right political systems. Artists across history have used the colour red to symbolically depict social and political critique.

Find examples of historical artworks that communicate an artist's personal or political view through the use of the colour red.

For information to support this activity please visit: <https://www.16albermarle.com/ff2-education-kaung-su>

REFERENCES

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A 16albermarle Project Space resource to support Australian teachers and students in the education of Contemporary South-east Asian art.