

Canal to Creek

WestConnex

Transurban

THE WESTCONNEX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



VADEA
NSW

VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

MIKE HEWSON

ST PETERS FENCES | STAGE 5 WORKSHEET



Mike Hewson

St Peters Fences

40 x 20 x 6m approx.

Materials: Heritage brick & sandstone, rubber concrete, refurbished play equipment, structural steel

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

VOCABULARY - Interactive, blur boundaries, pastiche, recontextualisation, displacement, diaspora, whimsical, poetic, metaphor, archival, immigration



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTWORK

Hewson's ***St Peters Fences*** in Simpson Park is part of the [WestConnex Public Art Program](#) - Canal to Creek which was commissioned by WestConnex a tunnel and motorway project in south-western Sydney. The theme of the overall project was **TRANSFORMATION** with artist's encouraged to explore responses to changes in place and culture. Hewson has created an assemblage sculpture that has dual functions as a children's playground as well as documentation of the many homes, past and present, in this culturally diverse neighbourhood of St Peters. Hewson reconstructed climbable brick fences using images of front fences of homes in St Peters demolished for infrastructure expansion projects around the area combined with play equipment to create a whimsical magical space for children to play and adults to question and remember. It is a large-scale play area, utilising salvaged brick, heritage sandstone and Victorian terrace fencing where possible, most of which has been salvaged from homes recently demolished along Campbell St.

INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS - CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

AUDIENCE: The primary audience of local children responds to the site by climbing over, through and around the various elements in the playground. The sculpture acts as an interactive artwork that directly engages with various audiences in differing ways. Local residents respond by conjuring up memories of neighbours past and present, while other visitors to the site might question why the artist has reconstructed fences - what they might represent and how they might connect them to the diverse architectural heritage of the local area.

1. Hewson encourages physical, emotional and intellectual connections between his intended audiences and his playground/sculpture. Explain how different audiences respond to '***Fences***' in different ways. Refer to the primary audience of children, the St Peters community (past and present) and outsiders. (200-250 words in 3 paragraphs)

ARTIST: Hewson acts as an inclusive, collaborative artist in the way the local community and school children were consulted and collaborated in the ideas and design. He is primarily a public artist who works on commission with institutions and communities rather than private collectors.

2. How does Hewson's role as an artist differ from an artist who exhibits in a gallery? Refer to collaboration, inclusivity, community and public art. (150-200 words)



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

CULTURAL FRAME: Mike Hewson is interested in issues around urban renewal, displacement and cultural history. The St Peters communities are familiar with unwelcome and unfair treatment and displacement, from the original indigenous population, later families displaced for historical construction and expansion of community infrastructure and now those directly and indirectly impacted by recent capital works. The use of fences as a symbol for barriers represents this displacement. Yet they also represent the sense of belonging and cultural identity the people of St Peters have shared over many decades.

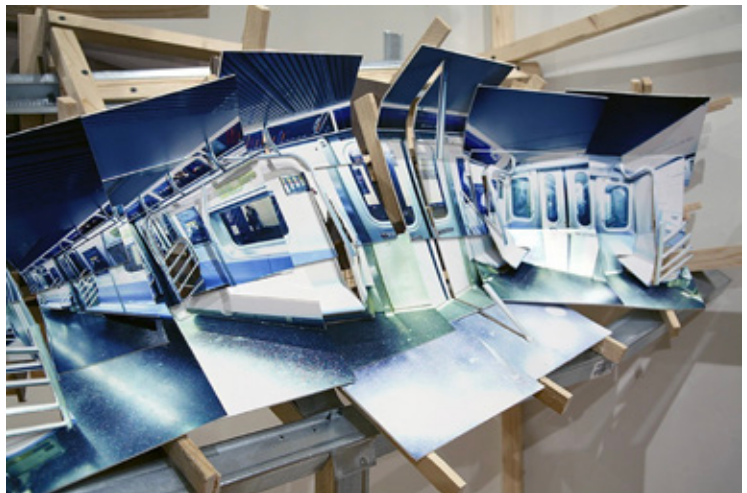
3. Explain how Hewson explores issues of belonging, identity and displacement in ***St Peters Fences*** and compare his work to how another artist you have studied explores similar themes. (300 -400 words)

ARTMAKING TASK

Artists have always drawn inspiration from the urban world of architecture as a way of exploring both the aesthetic features of urban architecture and make links to a sense of belonging and identity. Mike Hewson has taken architectural features from the local area and recontextualised them within this playground. Another artist, Isidro Blasco, takes photographs of buildings and fragments, abstracts and ultimately recontextualises the site as a photographic sculpture.

<https://isidroblasco.com/home.html>
accessed on 07/01/21

Your task is to take a series of photographs of architectural features in your local area or while on excursion. Select and cut out the features and mount onto foam core, thin ply or cardboard. Reconstruct into a 3D sculpture that reconfigures and fragments the architectural features into a multidimensional and multifaceted abstract photographic sculpture. Therefore, recontextualising features of domestic architecture.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

As a class, curate and light the finished photographic sculptures as an installation and exhibition. Consider lighting internally and creating spaces within and through the sculpture.



Student work samples based on images taken in Sydney City and Cockatoo Island