

Transurban

# Canal to Creek

TRANSURBAN PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN  
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

# NICO NICOSON & KIM SIEW

## A PERFECT SETTING | STAGE 4 WORKSHEET

***A Perfect Setting*** is a joyful celebration of the craft of ornate plasterwork and its presence in the homes of Inner West residents. Located on the façade of the Unique Plaster workshop in St Peters, the mural's playful motifs transform the building with references to plasterwork traditions. With its exciting design, the artwork reconnects the community to its urban and domestic environments.



Nico Nicoson & Kim Siew, *A Perfect Setting*

## CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

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**VOCABULARY** - mural, stylised, motifs, decorative plasterwork, ornamental, domestic architecture, collaboration, partnerships

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## STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

1. Research and write your own definition for the following terms:

a) Stylise

Definition:

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b) Motif

Definition:

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2. Complete the following activities in the table below:

a) Make a list of the different motifs you can see throughout ***A Perfect Setting***.

b) Describe the techniques the artists have used to stylise these motifs. Hint: think about the way the artists have used colour and shape.

What motifs can you see?	How has the artist stylised these motifs?

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - AUDIENCE

3. **A Perfect Setting** is situated on a busy road in St Peters, a suburb in Sydney's Inner West. Make a list of some of the different people who would make up the audience for this artwork.

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4. Read the quote from artist Kim Siew below. How might **A Perfect Setting** encourage audiences to experience their homes and local urban environment in new ways?

*"...you could walk down a really busy intersection like this and not pay any attention. But once you have a huge public work you notice that, and then you start to look around a bit more and you notice all the little houses and heritage buildings and industrial buildings that are around here too."*

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## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTWORK

5. **A Perfect Setting** was created by the artists in partnership with the Canal to Creek Public Art Program, the Inner West Council and a local business, Unique Plaster. Using this information and your ideas from Question 4, discuss the following question with a peer.

**How is A Perfect Setting different to artworks you might visit in a museum or gallery?**

Record notes from your discussion in the space below.



## ARTMAKING TASK

### Domestic Designs

In **A Perfect Setting**, Nico Nicoson and Kim Siew have based their mural design on the plasterwork motifs found in the houses of Sydney's Inner West. Explore their practice by creating a design using motifs based on objects, animals or decorative features from your own home.

1. Choose a combination of five objects, animals or decorative features from your home. For example:
  - Houseplants
  - Pets
  - Decorative items like vases or lamps
  - Building features with a decorative finishes, like the front door or gate
2. Sketch the five objects you have chosen in your Visual Arts Diary.
3. Experiment with creating stylised or simplified sketches of the objects. Look to the ways Nico Nicoson and Kim Siew stylised their designs to support your ideas. Tip: focusing on the silhouette or outline of an object can be a good way to simplify it.

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY

  **Extension:** Research a popular design style of houses or buildings in Australia, such as Victorian, Federation or Art Deco (Tip: use Google to search a phrase like “Victorian design style” to find ideas). Use your Visual Arts Diary to document the features of these styles. Experiment with modifying your sketches to match one of the design styles.

4. Create a pattern from your stylised sketches by experimenting with repeating and arranging the objects you have drawn. You might try some of the following:
  - Change the scale of your objects, making some smaller and some larger
  - Overlap your objects
  - Rotate your objects
  - Multiply or repeat some of your objects more than others
5. Once you have decided on your pattern, create a final, coloured version of your design on an A4 or A3 scale. Use a limited colour palette by choosing no more than three colours for your design (*Tip: you can vary your three colours by using tints and shades of each, e.g. use both a light and dark blue*). Your final design could be created using coloured paper cut-outs, acrylic paint, coloured pencil or watercolour.
6. Finish your artwork by giving it a title and displaying it alongside those of your peers. As you view the artworks together, consider what they tell you about homes in your local area and the objects or creatures we value.