

Transurban

Canal to Creek

TRANSURBAN PUBLIC ART PROGRAM



VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

ALEX LEHOURS

THE SPIRIT OF ST PETERS | STAGE 5

The Spirit of St Peters is a large-scale mural on the wall of the City Star Motors and Antoniou Fillo factory building in the Sydney suburb of St Peters. The precisely hand-painted tribute to these long-standing businesses evokes a strong sense of nostalgia while celebrating their histories. For artist Alex Lehours, the families and stories behind these local businesses are reflective of the broader “hard-working, honest and authentic spirit” of St Peters.



Alex Lehours, *The Spirit of St Peters*

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

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

STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

1. *"I wanted to capture a sense of nostalgia by focusing on the history, culture and strong sense of family that is apparent in each business ... Above all I wanted the artwork to act as a tribute to the area, as it is families like these that embody the hard-working, honest and authentic spirit of the St Peters community."* - Alex Lehours, artist

Focus Question: What ideas does the artist communicate through his use of imagery, text and scale in *The Spirit of St Peters*?

Looking carefully at the artwork, and with the above quote from Alex Lehours in mind, complete the table below to begin to answer the focus question.

	What can I see? Use the guiding questions to describe the artist's use of techniques	What ideas does it communicate? Use the ideas from the artist's quote to guide you
Imagery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of images has the artist included? • In what style has he depicted them? • How has he used colour? 		
Text/Typefaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does text appear? • What styles are the typefaces? 		
Scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the overall size of the artwork? • How has the artist used scale to highlight some parts of the compositions over others? 		

2. Use your ideas from the table above to write a response to the focus question: What ideas does the artist communicate through his use of imagery, text and scale in *The Spirit of St Peters*?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3. ***The Spirit of St Peters*** is a public and site-specific artwork. While appealing to a broad audience because of its vast scale and engaging style, the artist's intention is for the artwork to communicate nostalgia and pride in the local area.

Imagine the following audience members are standing in front of ***The Spirit of St Peters*** at the same time. Describe the different ways they might respond to the artwork.

Audience Member	Response
Elderly resident who has lived in the area their whole lives	
Person who has just moved to the area	
Art-enthusiast visiting the site	
Person passing by on their commute to work	

4. How does the audience of a public artwork shape its meaning? Using ***The Spirit of St Peters*** discuss or debate this question with a peer or in a small group. Write notes summarising your discussion in the space below.


ARTMAKING TASK

Pop Culture Collages

Alex Lehours' murals are characterised by an engaging combination of realistic portraiture and vividly stylised imagery and text. The artist developed his composition for ***The Spirit of St Peters*** through detailed sketching and the creation of digital collages of typographic elements, symbolic imagery, advertising references and original photographs. Plan and create your own mural design inspired by a person or business from your local community.

1. Familiarise yourself with Alex Lehours' style by visiting his [website](#). As you explore his artworks, consider the following questions:
 - What do you notice about his use of colour, text and images?
 - How does he use repetition and pattern?
 - How does he make some elements of his compositions stand out more than others?
2. Research your local area and identify a person, family or local business with a story you would like to tell through your mural design. Document your research in your Visual Arts Diary.
3. Identify a location for your mural, considering how the site of your artwork will match the story you are telling. Use a tool like Google Maps or Street View to help you locate the best possible site.
4. Research and collect as many images as you can that relate to your chosen subject. Try to include a combination of portraits, symbolic images and text (e.g. a logo or typeface associated with the figure).
5. Start to experiment with ideas for your mural's collaged composition using sketching, cut out prints of your images, or a digital tool like Adobe PhotoShop. As you plan, think carefully about:
 - **Scale and hierarchy:** what are the most important images? How big should they be compared to other images?
 - **Layering and direction:** Can I rotate some elements to make them horizontal or vertical? Which elements can go behind or in front of others?
 - **Repetition and pattern:** Can I add interest to my composition by repeating some elements to create a pattern?
6. **Colour:** Will my composition be more effective if I limit my use of colour (e.g. make any portraits black and white or only use three main colours). Can I digitally edit some of my images to change their colour?
7. Once you have sought feedback from a peer or teacher and finalised your composition, begin to create a small-scale (e.g. A4 or A3) version of your proposed mural design. Use materials like watercolour, acrylic paint, markers or coloured pencils.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

-  Write a short concept statement to accompany your finished design that explains your choice of site and intention for the artwork. *Tip: Read an example of an artist statement by visiting Alex Lehours' profile on the [Canal to Creek Art Portal](#).*