

# Canal to Creek

WestConnex

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THE WESTCONNEX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

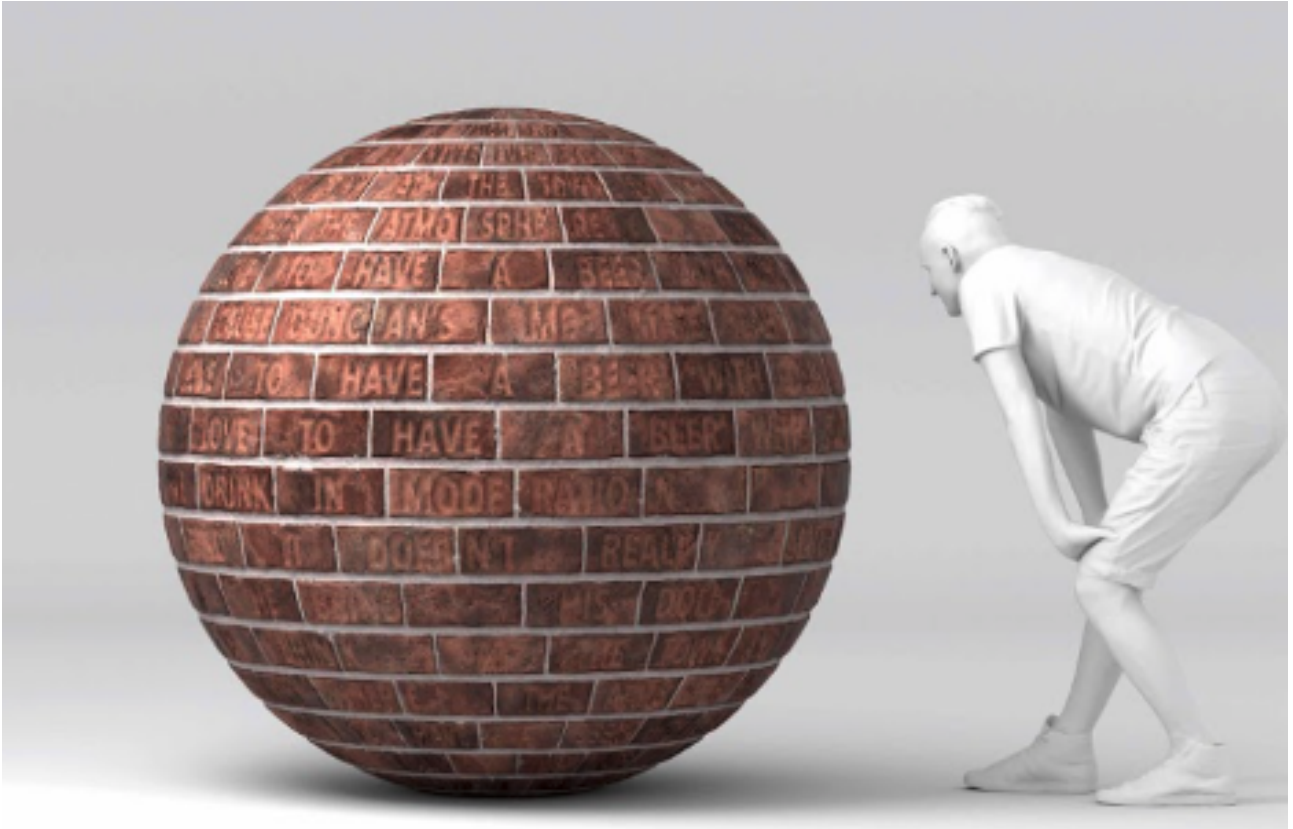


VADEA  
NSW

VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN  
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

# GORDON YOUNG

DOWN TO EARTH | STAGE 4 WORKSHEET



Gordon Young, *Down to Earth*

## CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

**VOCABULARY** - Site-specific, installation, sculpture, public art, spherical, text, typographical, bespoke, appropriation, re-contextualise, re-configure, circumnavigate, heritage, identity, clay, kiln

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTWORK

**Down to Earth** is a series of eight text based sculptures that form a writer's walk along Campbell Road, St Peters. Each sculpture incorporates recontextualised historical and contemporary texts from Australian lyrics, poetry, diaries and stories that speak of the diversity of Australian culture and identity.

Constructed from bespoke handmade bricks, the artworks materiality directly references Sydney Park's iconic heritage. The artist intends this work to be a celebration of the cultural significance of brick for the local community with historical connections to the iconic heritage of the brick kilns, chimneys and vast clay pits, as well as the urban character of St Peters brick homes.

If you are unable to visit the site, you can access an online, interactive experience [here](#).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK - ARTIST

Gordon Young is one of the UK's leading artists in the field of public art who often includes typographical elements in his artmaking. With over 20 years' experience he has created projects as diverse as a series of 20m sculptural / climbing walls in Blackpool, a forest of typographic trees in Crawley Library, a Wall of Wishes in a Bristol school, and a cursing stone in Carlisle.

Visit the [Artist Website](#) and see what else you can learn about him.

**THE FRAMES** - are a tool we can use to unpack artworks in a search for meaning. Answer the following FRAMES questions:

**Structural Frame** - look at the visual qualities of the work and note down the following things:

- What is the dominant form/shape?
- What is the material employed?
- What other visual quality is important in this work?

**Cultural Frame** - in the slides provided, the artist researched the historical site of the work and wanted to endow it with some site-specific historical significance.

- What does the title of the work, '**Down To Earth**' suggest?
- Why is brick such an important historical feature?
- How does the choice of text relate to shared cultural experiences?

**Postmodern** - Gordon Young has **appropriated** (borrowed) text from various Australian songwriters and poets from different periods of time.

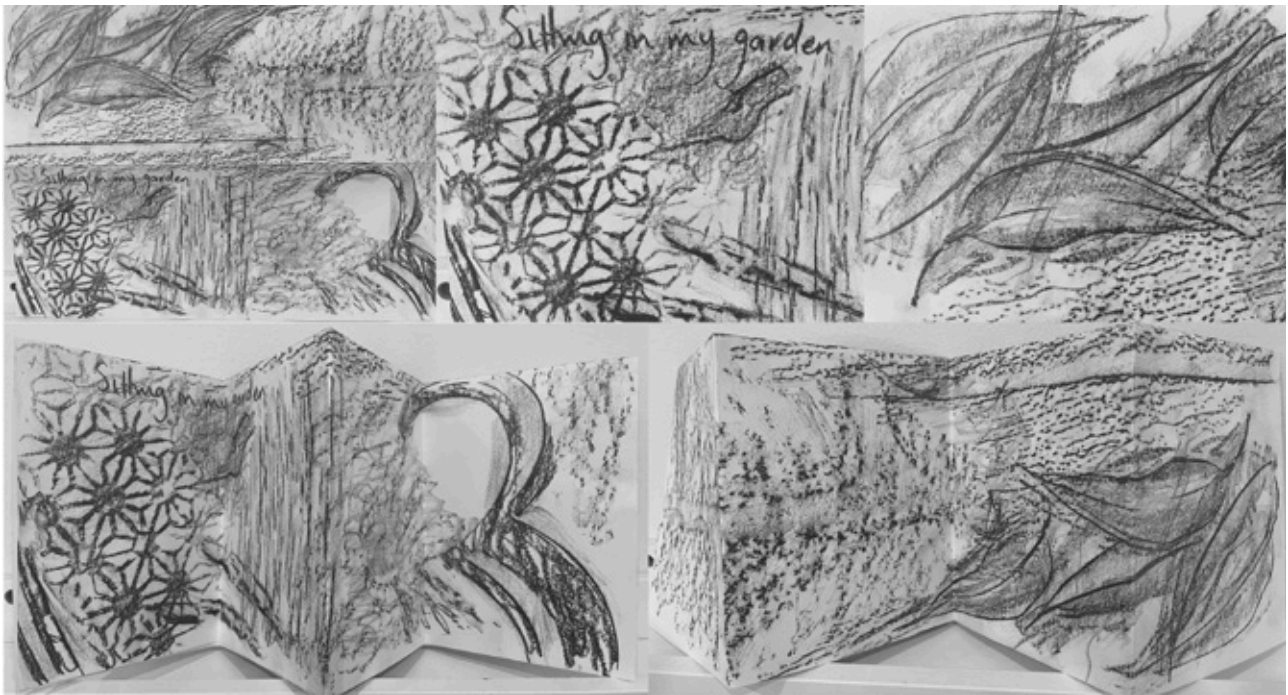
- Why is this diverse range of sources important?

Based on your responses, what do you think **Down to Earth** is about?

## ARTMAKING TASK

### 1. Go for a text-ural walk -

- Using your Visual Arts diary or maybe a panoramic format sheet of A3 paper folded into a concertina book (see sample below)... go for a sensory walk where you live or travel day to day.
- Along the way make rubbings of surfaces, objects, signs using charcoal or soft graphite.
- Consider words, poetry, songs, stories that inspire and connect to your experience of the textural rubbings.
- What words and stories reflect where you live or inspire you? How do these words connect you with the history of your place?



- Create a digital/instagram** - After visiting a site or walking to their own art specific location (this can be a constructed space at the school), each student can identify a word that reflects them and this experience. Each student produces a google slide on a brick wall image and adds music that connects to the text.

Display the digital work alongside the charcoal rubbings and write a short artist statement explaining their connections.

