

Canal to Creek

WestConnex

Transurban

THE WESTCONNEX PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

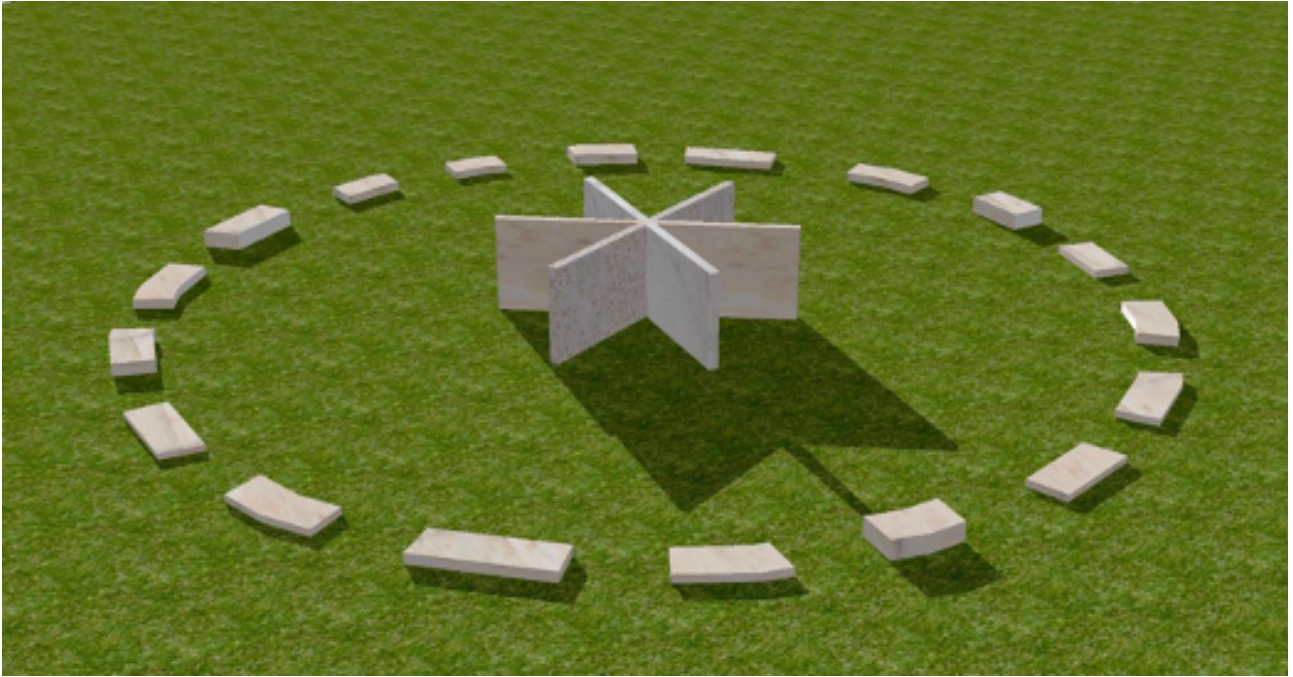


VADEA
NSW

VISUAL ARTS & DESIGN
EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

GILL GATFIELD

ASTERISK | STAGE 4 WORKSHEET



Gill Gatfield
Asterisk
Public Art Commission 2019/2020
Sydney NSW
WestConnex Canal to Creek Public Art
Australian stone (Pilbara marble, Chillagoe marble, Sydney 'Tunnel stone', heritage sandstone)
Approx. 12m Dia. x 1m H

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION

VOCABULARY - Public art, Commission, Collaboration, Sculpture, Installation, Site-specific, Landscape, Symbolic, Abstract, Geometric, Minimalist, Asterisk, Compass, Interactive, Texture, Tactile, Monumental, Timeless, Ancient, Heritage, Celestial, Navigation, Astronomy, Inclusive, Point of view, Augmented Reality



RESPONDING TO THE ARTWORK

Visit the artwork on location or virtually.

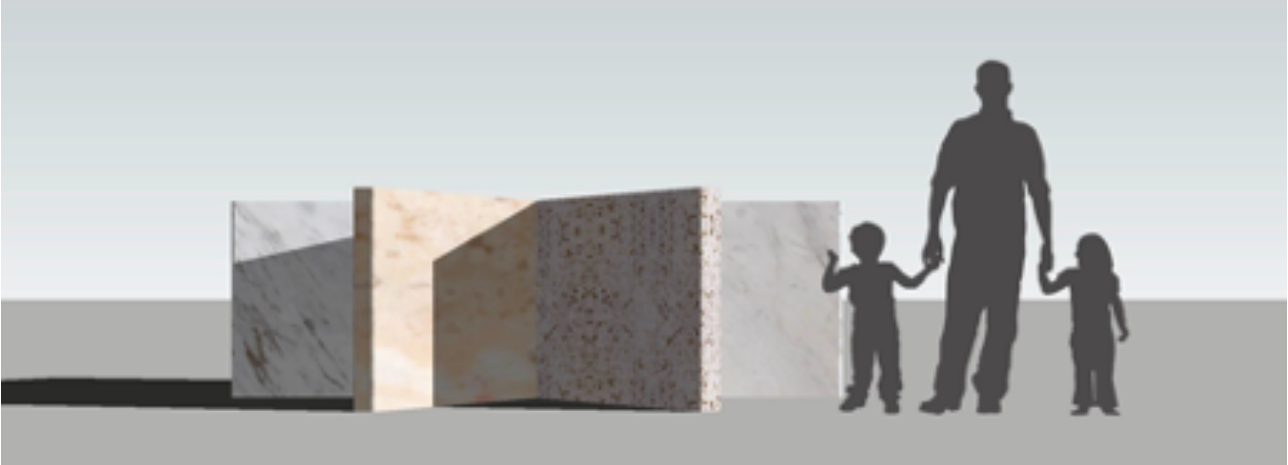
1. What do you notice about ***Asterisk***?

2. What are your first thoughts or questions when you look at ***Asterisk***?

3. What does ***Asterisk*** remind you of?

4. What signs or symbols can you identify in ***Asterisk***? Brainstorm possible meanings.

5. What do you find most interesting about ***Asterisk***? Why?



ARTWORK CONCEPT

Named after the Ancient Greek word 'asteriskos' meaning 'little star', the distinctive star shaped sculpture **Asterisk** makes connections across cultures, time and place. Combining ancient stones and celestial form, the sculpture explores the metaphysical realms of earth and sky. It speaks to human journeys and ancient stellar navigation systems used to guide Indigenous travellers on journeys far and wide. Made from four unique rock types sourced from across Australia, the sculpture's intersecting planes reveal markings that trace the history of the oldest continent in the world. One plane is a composite of stone discovered during construction of the WestConnex M8 tunnels, found deep within the earth below the site of the sculpture. This stone, anchored by rock from the North and the West, holds the memory of this land, reshaped to enable new destinations. **Asterisk** is orientated to Ginan, the smallest star in the Southern Cross, recently officially given its Australian Aboriginal star-name. Situated on Cadigal and Kameygal land, welcoming visitors at the entrance to new sculpture parklands, **Asterisk** is a modern compass placing equal value on different perspectives.

<https://www.gillgatfield.com/asterisk/>

ARTIST'S PRACTICE

New Zealand artist Gill Gatfield creates conceptually-powerful, abstract sculptures and installations, exploring ideas and narratives drawn from history, philosophy, politics, science and psychology. She has exhibited widely in New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Europe, gaining national and international recognition and commissions for place-making work.

Gatfield was recently recognised by CODAworx as one of 25 'Creative Revolutionaries'; leaders of positive change in the field of commissioned art. As she notes:

all artists at heart are creative revolutionaries...we're engaged in the process of often collaborative, disruptive change with an objective of setting a better tomorrow for all'.

Gatfield is informed by her earlier 10-year career in public policy and law reform, focused on human rights.

Gatfield's minimalist sculptures and installations are characterised by an inventive use of materials, forms, scale and site. She uses highly symbolic materials such as rare stones, unique timbers, glass, fibre and native grass to construct her often large-scale artworks. For example, her artwork [Native Tongue](#), 2011, consists of a totemic I-figure carved from the heartwood of a 45000-year-old ancient kauri and her installation [Glass Ceiling \(NZ Aotearoa\)](#), 2019, involved 16.5 tonnes of smashed glass displayed within a disused silo.

Gatfield is 'motivated by the beauty of form and materials and what they also speak to'. Through her use of simplified, abstract geometric forms, Gatfield creates bold, monumental sculptures and installations that invite touch, provoke thought and create reflective spaces within urban and natural environments.

AUDIENCE

This site-specific public artwork acts as a significant place marker for locals and visitors within the community. Audiences may:

- enter the space of the artwork to gather and connect
- use the sandstone blocks as 'stepping stones' for imaginative play or places to sit and rest
- observe the effects of changing light and shadows on the three-dimensional forms
- explore the contrasting textures between the different stones
- think about the meaningful re-use of heritage stone from local community roads
- connect to history, memory, identity and place

VOCABULARY

Look up the following artworld terms to inform your art critical and historical and artmaking investigations. You may do this individually, in pairs or as a class (e.g. look up 1 term each and add to a class Google doc).

Sculpture	
Installation	
Site-specific	
Symbolic	
Abstract	
Geometric	
Minimalist	
Texture	
Heritage	
Ancient	
Navigation	
Astronomy	
Point of view	
Public art	
Commission	
Collaboration	

CRITICAL & HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION QUESTIONS

1. How might audiences respond to **Asterisk** using their imagination or senses?

2. How does **Asterisk** connect to its location (place)?

3. How might **Asterisk** change over time?

4. What meanings does Gatfield communicate through **Asterisk**? How? Consider her use of symbols and materials.

5. What ideas influence Gatfield's aims as an artist?

6. Why is collaboration important to Gatfield's artmaking process?

7. What is a meeting place? What might locals or visitors do at this meeting place?

8. What is public art? Why are public artworks such as **Asterisk** important for our community?



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Research how a sundial and compass work. Draw a diagram or example of each. Label their features.

Why can **Asterisk** be thought of as a contemporary sundial and/or compass?



ARTMAKING TASK

Visit **Asterisk** on location or virtually.

Observe the artwork from different angles and points of view, including:

- bird's eye (view from above/higher angle)
- eye level (in line with subject)
- worm's eye (view from below/lower angle)

If you are on location, experiment with a drone to photograph or film it from above.

1. Site studies

Sketch 3 different points of view in your Visual Arts diary or on paper. This could be done on-site or in the classroom by referring to photographs, video footage or virtual navigation of the artwork. Try framing or cropping different viewpoints using a cardboard viewfinder or digital editing tools. Experiment with pencil, pen, charcoal, conté crayons or ink, and drawing techniques such as continuous line drawing, hatching, cross-hatching, line build up and pointillism to record different textures, tones and shadows created by the artwork. Alternatively, you could create your drawings using a digital tablet/device.

Explore the contrasting textures of the artwork, recording these using the technique of frottage or texture rubbings. Compare the smooth surfaces and edges of the central asterisk sculpture to the rough surfaces and forms of the heritage sandstone blocks. Alternatively, or as an extension, explore a range of textures in your surrounding local environment e.g. sandstone, other kinds of rock surfaces, bark, leaves and human-made surfaces that contain traces and memories of the natural or human landscape.

2. Layered landscape artwork

Create a collage using your texture rubbings, to create an abstract impression of a landscape. This landscape could be specific to the site of the artwork or another place in your surrounding local environment. Alternatively, it could be an imagined landscape. Experiment with torn and cut edges, shifting or weaving lengths of cut paper, and layering pieces. Draw and/or paint over your collage to add visual and symbolic depth. For example, you could:

- use continuous line drawing to suggest paths, journeys and lines of movement
- apply coloured ink washes to suggest mood
- apply ink or paint using the technique of dry brush or stippling to create further textures
- create expressive, gestural marks using charcoal, ink or paint to create focal points and visual rhythm



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Class panorama and installation

Combine and layer your collages to create a class panorama or visual journey for audiences over time. Exhibit artworks along a wall, corridor or hanging at different heights from tree branches, a built structure or a web of string. The arrangement could refer to constellations, the night sky or human journeys.

Artist books and installation

Create an artist's book that contains a collection of your site studies, experiments and collages. Sections and details of your artworks and art diary could be photocopied, re-sized and re-arranged. Or you could use digital scanning and editing to layout then print your artist's book. Symbols or text could be added to suggest a story or journey. Artist books could be exhibited with their pages open and fanning out, similar to an asterisk or star. These could form an installation and be displayed in a darkened room with push button lights, string lights or on a light box, along with audio or sound recordings taken from the site. Photograph and/or film the installation, including audience interactions. Digital artist books could also be published online.

Digitally projected installation

Scan your site-studies and collages and create a class slideshow or film. Create a large-scale asterisk sculpture out of white cardboard, foam core or corflute. Project the slideshow or film onto the asterisk using a digital projector. This could be done at school in a darkened room or on location at night. Document this installation through photography and/or film. Experiment with placing seats around the asterisk, similar to Gill Gatfield's artwork **Asterisk**. Discuss how this artwork could form a meeting place for audiences to share stories, journeys and memories over time.