

## EDUCATION RESOURCE

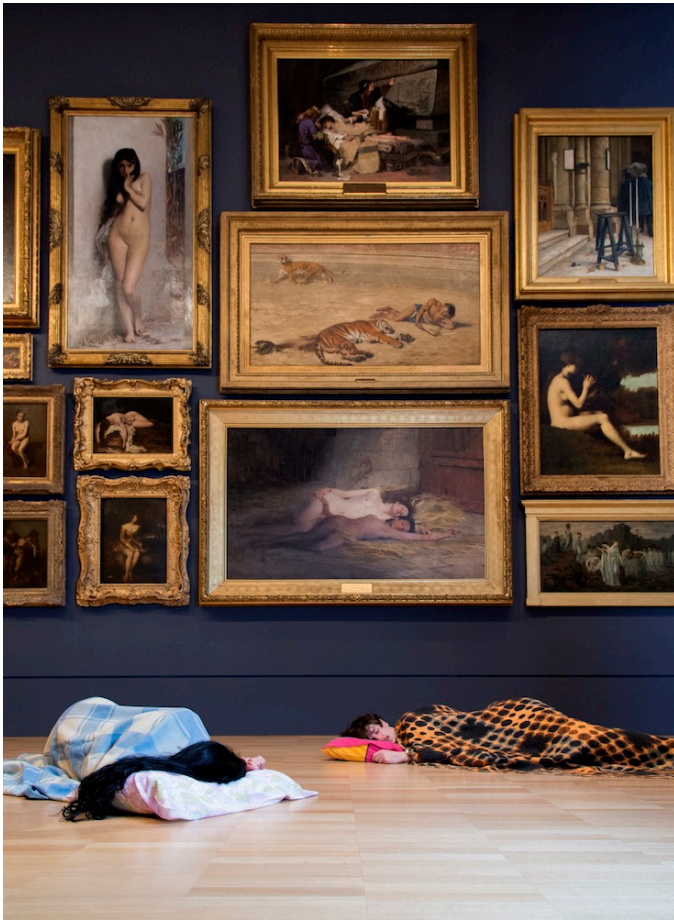
*ZZZZZ: Sleep, Somnambulism, Madness*  
Curated by Mark Feary

You are feeling sleepy? Very, very sleepy?

It's the land you visit nightly, but any souvenirs vanish upon arriving home.

Every animal sleeps in some form, yet the workings of the slumbering mind remain largely a mystery. No wonder the sleeping figure has been a staple of Western painting and sculpture for millennia, suggesting beauty, vulnerability, sexuality or fatigue. Now: forget all that.

This is a major international exhibition that explores how artists have tried to understand sleep not merely as a passive subject but as the cryptic and confronting thing that it is. From bold and dramatic encounters with the subconscious to altered states and waking dreams, artists from Andy Warhol to Chicks on Speed open windows onto the bizarre and fascinating world we spend a third of our lives within.



The Telepathy Project, *Dreaming the Collection*, 2013. Site-specific participatory performance as part of NGV Now Installation view, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Courtesy the artists.

*ZZZZZ: Sleep, Somnambulism, Madness* assembles and commissions works by a selection of Australian and international artists to explore the representation of the sleeping figure within contemporary art, and how artists attempt to explore ideas of the subconscious, sleep psychosis and altered states. Other works within the exhibition explore the politics of sleep in our rapidly evolving times, to consider the impacts of work and economic pressures upon relaxation, but also in terms of the consequences of sleep deprivation as a form of military persecution. At times serene and tender, and at times deeply disturbing, the exhibition considers what transpires during our sleeping life as a way to reflect upon the relationship between our physical being and mental processes.

The exhibition presents new and recent works by: Javier Tellez (Venezuela / USA); Andy Warhol (USA); Ronnie van Hout (New Zealand / Australia); Lee Hadwin (UK); Chicks on Speed (Aus / USA / Germany); The Telepathy Project (Australia); Barbora Kleinhamplova (Czech Republic); Kate Mitchell (Aus); and Mabel Juli (Aus).



Chicks on Speed, *Sleep Symphony*, 2015, installation view at 401 contemporary, Berlin.

## 7-10 CURRICULUM LINKS

### Visual Arts Levels 7 – 8

#### **Explore and Express:**

#### **VCAVAE033**

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks

#### **Respond and Interpret:**

#### **VCAVAR038**

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks and how they are viewed by audiences

### Visual Arts Levels 9 - 10

#### **Explore and Express:**

#### **VCAVAE040**

Explore the visual arts practices and styles as inspiration to develop a personal style, explore, express ideas, concepts and themes in artworks

#### **Respond and Interpret:**

#### **VCAVAR045**

Analyse and interpret artworks to explore the different forms of expression, intentions and viewpoints of artists and how they are viewed by audiences

## 7 – 10 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Question:

Before you enter the gallery space, what do you observe? Are there artworks displayed in areas other than the exhibition spaces? Why do you think this might be?

This exhibition deals with the multiple ways artists make ‘sense of the process of dreaming’, what does dreaming mean to you? Think of and share the first three words you think of that relate to dreaming and sleep.

### Suggestion:

As you walk around the gallery space, think about how the artworks are displayed. How does this display enhance or detract from the artists’ work and the ideas and concepts they are exploring? Is there an order or theme visible? Does one artists’ work stand out or overpower another? Why do you think is?

### Activity:

Artist Lee Hadwin is described as a ‘scientific anomaly’ and has ‘confounded scientists since his teenage years, as someone who cannot draw during his waking hours, but prolifically draws during his sleep.’ The works’ by Hadwin in the *exhibition ZZZZZ: Sleep, Somnambulism, Madness*, were all produced while the artist was sleeping, and ‘without any consciousness of what he was doing.’

Using Hadwin’s works as inspiration, create an artwork whilst blindfolded. Discuss what effect perceptual isolation might have on your ability to create the artwork.

- You will need a partner, a dark coloured marker, a large piece of paper, coloured pencils and a blindfold.
- Each student should blindfold themselves, and then use a dark marker to draw on a piece of paper or board for 5 minutes.

- Then, remove your blindfold, switch papers with your partner and repeat the process.
- Once 10 minutes is up, take off your blindfolds and exchange papers again.
- Finally, use the coloured pencils/markers to complete your artwork and share the works with your class.

How are these works different from other artworks you have made this year, and what effect do you think perceptual isolation has had on your work?



Barbora Kleinhamplová & Tereza Stejskalová, *The Sleepers Manifesto*, 2014, HD Video still.



Javier Tellez, *Caligari and the Sleepwalker*, 2008, HD Video still.

## VCE CURRICULUM LINKS

### VCE Studio Art

#### **Unit 3**

##### **Area of Study 3:** Artists and studio practices

In this area of study, students focus on professional studio practices in relation to particular art forms. Students investigate the ways in which artists have interpreted subject matter, influences, historical and cultural contexts, and communicated ideas and meaning in their artworks.

### VCE Art

#### **Unit 2**

##### **Area of Study 1:** Contemporary Artworks and culture

In this area of study, students focus on the ways in which art reflects and communicates the values, beliefs, and traditions of the societies for and in which it was created.

## VCE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Question:

Upon entering the gallery, what do you observe?

This exhibition is titled, *ZZZZZ: Sleep, Somnambulism, Madness*, what do you think this title could refer to? What sort of artwork do you think you will encounter in this exhibition space?

This exhibition deals with the multiple ways artists make 'sense of the process of dreaming', what does dreaming mean to you?

### Suggestion:

As you move around the gallery spaces consider the exhibitions curatorial premise. How have the artists' expressed sleep, and how does this relate to your own experiences with this universal human condition?

### Activity:

Work with a partner, and together choose one artwork within the exhibition and apply the Analytical Frameworks below to this work. Take notes and discuss with others what you discover through this process of close observation and reflection.

- **The Structural Framework** – analyse how the style, symbolism and structural elements of the artwork contribute to the meanings and messages conveyed within it and the exhibition as a whole.
- **The Personal Framework** – analyse how you think the artwork might reflect the artist's personal feelings, thinking and life circumstances. Also, consider how your interpretations are influenced by your own life experiences.
- **The Cultural Framework** – analyse the artwork in relation to the context in which it was made. Consider, time, place and society.
- **The Contemporary Framework** – how have contemporary ideas and issues influenced the making, interpretation and analysis of this artwork.

## Glossary

**Cryptic** - having a meaning that is mysterious or obscure.

**Madness** - the state of having a serious mental illness, or a state of wild or chaotic activity.

**Curator** – Traditionally, a curator was someone who cared for a collection of artworks or artifacts within a gallery or museum. In this case, a curator is someone who researches, designs and organises an exhibition around a specific theme or idea.

**Western art canon** – The Western art canon is a body of work that stems from a white, European heritage, that has shaped the way we look at and appreciate contemporary art throughout history, often leaving out the stories of Indigenous Australian artists as well as those from Africa and Asia.

**Somnambulism** - Sleepwalking or noctambulism, is a phenomenon of combined sleep and wakefulness. It occurs during slow wave sleep stage, in a state of low consciousness, with performance of activities that are usually performed during a state of full consciousness.

**Subconscious** - of or concerning the part of the mind of which one is not fully aware but which influences one's actions and feelings.

**Wakingdreams** - an involuntary dream occurring while a person is awake.

**Art practice** – In Visual Arts the use of conceptual and practical processes in art making such as the use of sources of inspiration, exploration of ideas, exploration of and experimentation with materials and techniques, and the development and refinement of art works.

**Audience/s** – Individuals or groups of people who experience the arts in a range of settings and contexts (formal, informal, virtual or interactive) through intellectual, emotional and social engagement.

**Artists and Artworks** – Artist is the term for the creators and makers of an artwork. Artwork is the term for a work or performance.

## Key Resources

**Gertrude Contemporary:** <http://www.gertrude.org.au>

**Chicks on Speed:** <http://chicksonspeed.com/>

**Javiar Tellez:** <https://www.guggenheim.org/map-artist/javier-tellez>

**Andy Warhol:** <https://www.theartstory.org/artist-warhol-andy.htm>

**Lee Hadwin:** <http://www.leehadwin.com/>

**The Telepathy Project:** <http://www.thetelepathyproject.com/>

**Barbora Kleinhamplova:** <https://www.sjch.cz/en/barbora-kleinhamplova/>

**Kate Mitchell:** <http://annaschwartzgallery.com/artists/kate-mitchell/>

**Mabel Juli:** <https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/artists/mabel-juli/>