**Task 4 – Unit 3 Commentaries**

**William Kentridge**

**Assessment type:** Investigation

**Conditions** Period allowed for completion of the total task: eight weeks

**Part 1: Research** – six weeks (includes class time and requires out-of-class work time also).

**Part 2: Essay**– two weeks (includes some class time and out-of-class work time).

This is a semester-long unit that requires self-direction and independent work. Activities are to be completed during the week identified in the program outline. Tasks not completed in class are to be completed in your own time or in accordance with the College assessment policy.

**Task weighting 10%**

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**Investigation (30 marks)** Commence task Week 3, due Term 1 Week 8

**Part 1: Research the work on William Kentridge. Completed in your own time for homework.**

- Commence your investigation/research by constructing a research table. Select three artworks by the artist one of should include the Film ‘Felix in Exile’ Complete the research table by responding under specific headings and referring to the same three artworks (see example).
- Use the research table to record the information you have gathered. Remember to list all your sources so that you can provide a bibliography and references for any direct quotes you choose to include in your essay.

**Part 2: Essay**

**“And now, I'm just trying to change the world, one sequin at a time.”**

**QUESTION:** With reference to the quote above and the social, cultural and historical context/s of your investigation/research artist, explain the purpose and meaning of his/her artwork. Submit your response as an essay (2000 words) The essay must include visual information, supported by the research table and appropriate bibliography.
What you need to do in your essay:

Visual analysis (5 marks) Style and artistic approach of artist

- Analyse and contextualise the style and artistic approach of an artist of your choice, using the research table provided.

Personal response (5 marks) Appeal

- Express your interpretation or judgement with reference to at least three artworks by your selected artist.
- Use your analysis of the artist’s work as the basis for comment on how the artist has influenced your own art making.
- Provide an alternative meaning to each artwork.

Meaning and purpose (10 marks) Artist’s intention

- Discuss the meaning and purpose of the artworks.
- What ideas are communicated, or concepts challenged, by the artists in his/her work?
- Consider political and social comment, dissent, protest, critique, alternative points of view.
- Discuss those related to the selected artist’s work.

Social, cultural and historical contexts (10 marks) Contextualising visual arts practice

- Investigate the emergence of the artist and his/her work within broader social, cultural and historical contexts.
- Use the information provided in your research table to briefly outline how the artist’s background, influences and artistic training have influenced his/her art making.
- In your opinion, how important is the artist’s work in defining new directions in art or influencing others?
- Support your argument by giving reasons for your opinion.
- What have other critics and historians said about the artist and his/her artwork?
- Describe the historical, social, religious, political or artistic influences you have identified in the artworks and what impact were artworks experiencing.

https://int.search.myway.com/search/AJimage.jhtml?&n=7857b12c&p2=%5ECPX%5Exdm168%5ETTAB03%5E
Use the chart as a guide below to assist you understand what to research. Always check your marking key.

### Evidence Chain – Example – Artists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Artwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong></td>
<td>What are the contextual factors that have influenced the artist?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Context - History of Australia = Colonization</td>
<td>Mellor is aware of the changing and tentative nature of Australia's Colonial history form both European and indigenous perspectives. He uses symbolism and techniques synonymous with European settlers such as Spode china and decorative techniques from the 1700s. Mellor depicts historical techniques from European history with contemporary materials. Mellor draws on his own social context to expose the darker side of European settlement through an indigenous perspective by adding recognizable Australian images (flora, fauna).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal culture has been significantly shaped and manipulated by the action of Europeans. The reality of the first collision of cultures between Indigenous Australians and British colonials has gone unacknowledged for most of our shared history.</td>
<td>Mellor felt that recognition of both cultural viewpoints are important in conveying an accurate Australian history. Mellor believes it is important to take on his own context to portray a European perspective during Australia's colonization and what it is like to be stuck between two cultures. Mellor felt that the European culture dominated that of the inhabitants of the land they were settling. He is optimistic regarding the shared history and co-existence of Indigenous and western cultures in Australia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How is this influence evident in the artists’ ideas?</th>
<th>How are these ideas evident in the artists’ work? (General overview of work)</th>
<th>Artworks – describe – analyse Link to context (Specific Artwork)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(on colonization)</td>
<td>Mellor's artworks are a product of the postcolonial, post-modern society in which he inhabits.</td>
<td>Dreaming Through Paradise (Let Sleeping Giants Lie)' Mixed media 60x75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As an Australian with both Indigenous and European heritage.</td>
<td>He uses symbolism and techniques synonymous with European settlers such as Spode china and decorative techniques from the 1900s.</td>
<td>• Spode china patterning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mellor feels that recognition of both cultural viewpoints are important in conveying an accurate Australian history.</td>
<td>• Blue and White = recognisable to viewer, their own memories etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mellor believes it is important to take on his own context to portray a European perspective during Australia's colonization and what it is like to be stuck between two cultures.</td>
<td>• Harmonious in nature (calm) yet visually clashing/incompatible scale and subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mellor felt that the European culture dominated that of the inhabitants of the land they were settling.</td>
<td>• Focal point - Kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He is optimistic regarding the shared history and co-existence of Indigenous and western cultures in Australia.</td>
<td>• Scale exaggerated – deliberate reference by Mellor to Colonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Decorative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Intricate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Patterned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Contrasting yet complimentary colours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Designed to highlight the incompatible yet harmonious relationship between cultures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Art for God / History’s sake

- 
- 
- 
- commissioner by the Catholic royalty

### Naturalism

- Figure / ground composition

### Figure

- chiaroscuro (the illusion of depth)
- sfumato

### Chiaroscuro

- The illusion of depth.

### Invention

- The Renaissance

### Invention of perspective

- Classical academic training based on the masters
- Aesthetic balanced, harmonious compositions

### Classicism

- Invention of sfumato and chiaroscuro (the illusion of depth).
- Figure / ground composition

### Figure

- Naturalism

### Grand portraits of dignitaries and royalty

- Commissioned by the Catholic church

### Church

- Grand European architecture

### Art for God / History’s sake

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the contextual factors that have influenced the artist?</th>
<th>How is this influence evident in the artists’ ideas?</th>
<th>How are these ideas evident in the artists’ work (general overview of work)?</th>
<th>Artworks - describe - analysis - link to context (Specific Artwork)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ The context will fit into a contextual type - identify this (social, historical, cultural, personal, religious, political)</td>
<td>+ The influence of the context on the artists' ideas is the point of this column.</td>
<td>+ The influence of the context on the artists' ideas/feelings (about the context) on the direction of their work</td>
<td>+ analysis of an artwork that best defines and exemplifies the connection between the artist and context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Key points/events/people that define and describe the context</td>
<td>+ Points should begin with - He/She thought--- - He/She felt--- - He/She observed... - He/She witnessed--- - He/She was influenced by---</td>
<td>+ Processes, styles, materials, themes, body of work</td>
<td>+ terms include - elements, principles, conventions, techniques, processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Language that is context specific</td>
<td>+ This column should not refer to any artworks directly, any artistic processes etc</td>
<td>+ General features of the artists' work that show influence of context</td>
<td>+ Points should refer back to the 'context as evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ The artists' bio/background or specific artwork(s) are not mentioned in this column</td>
<td>+ This column often is one of the hardest to research for students as they want to find definitive statements - sometimes they have to infer!</td>
<td>+ only themes/styles/materials that directly relate to the context are valid here.</td>
<td>+ Points should refer back to the artists ideas as evidence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pre Modern Characteristics

**Classic 800BC -1880AD**

- Biblical scenes
- Invention of ideal human proportion
- Classicism, academic art training based on the masters
- Aesthetic balanced, harmonious compositions
- Invention of perspective
- The Renaissance
- Invention of sfumato and chiaroscuro (the illusion of depth).
- Figure / ground composition
- Naturalism
- Grand portraits of dignitaries and royalty
- Commissioned by the Catholic church
- Grand European architecture

### Modern Characteristics

**1880 – 1945AD**

- Invention of photography
- Rejection of classical academic training.
- Rejection of proportion, embracing distortion.
- Optimism for the future and technology
- Reactions against the war
- Belief in innovation and originality
- Invention of abstraction
- Invention of installation art and the found object.
- Value for the proletariat (lower class worker).
- Social comment is invented.
- High art considered old fashioned, advertising and media communications becomes the new inspiration.

### Art for Art’s sake

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Belief in innovation and originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Everything has already been done before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Disbelief in originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conceptual art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Post Modern Characteristics

**Contemporary 1945-present**

- Disbelief in originality, ‘everything has already been done before’.
- Conceptual art – the idea is more important than the skill.
- Challenging accepted cultural values esp; War, power, sexism and racism.
- Borrowing images and styles from the past (appropriation).
- Re-contextualization of image and style.
- Use of irony, parody, paradox
- New Media: digital media, mixed media, soundscape...
- Installation & projection.
- Use of non-traditional media; recycled objects, fashion, wearable art, living art, ephemeral (temporary) art.

### Art for humanitarian sake

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STYLe / PERIOD CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When analysing an artwork it is essential understand where it fits within the history of art and be able to identify its style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing the period and more specifically the art ‘movement’ that any artwork belongs to helps you to discuss the social and cultural influences of the time and place but also to compare the characteristics with periods or movements that directly were preceding it. This is important because art movements exist in a ‘cause and reaction’ pattern. This helps you to see where creative attitudes have come from and what artists have reacted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listed here are the three main periods of time of which the history of art can be broken into. (Ancient Art is not included here). The characteristics are the ‘collective’ interests in subject matter, intentions, style, beliefs and values representative of many artists of that period.
**Investigation Framework – HISTORICAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outline Biographical information relevant to shaping the artists practice (artwork / theme).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Factors: What Social, cultural events (Government laws, wars, theorists, revolutions, epidemics, natural disasters etc.) were influential at the time the artist was working.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What art movement is this artist associated with? Give evidence of characteristics within their artwork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other artists / movements style characteristics appear to influence this artist? Ex. natural classicism, distortion, popular culture, Impressionist brush strokes etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think the artist’s Intention and or themes are communicated in their work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visual Art Language
Familiarise yourself with the following list of art terms.
Unsure of what they mean? Go to artlex.com (Online art dictionary).
Refer to this page when working through the Frames Subjective & Structural analysis headings.

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS (Describe subject matter) Portrait, landscape, figure in the landscape, still life
Is the style figurative or abstract?
Representational / nonrepresentational
Distorted or natural (photo-realistic)
Narrative, aesthetic or social comment?
Audience
Meaning / communicates (alternatives)
Artist’s intention

STYLE (Art movement / period)
Traditional (Renaissance rules)
Realism / Naturalism (based on truth)
Expressionistic distortion, unnatural, exaggeration
Surrealist – dream like
Abstraction – non-representational, unrecognisable
Stylised, cartoonised, simplified
Clarify the difference between ‘belonging’ to a movement and ‘influenced’ by a movement.

ELEMENTS (Where in the artwork?)
Line, straight, curved
Shape, geometric or organic
Space, positive, negative
Form, volume,3D, solidity, length, depth
Colour see colour relationships above
Value; shading, tone, sfumato
Texture; real or implied surface texture

PRINCIPLES
Balance; weight, size, colour
Movement, suggested through assym
Contrast; difference and similarities
Emphasis; focal points, colour, detail
Repetition & Pattern;
Harmony; aesthetics, colour scheme
Unity; common characteristics

STRUCTURAL Frame #1.
Colour Scheme / Palette
Natural / Unnatural
Expressive / Intense / subtle
Earthy
Hue, shade, tints and tones
Primary / Secondary /Tertiary
Contrasting
Harmonious
Cool /warm
Complimentary
Analogous
Monochromatic

STRUCTURAL Frame #2.
COMPOSITION
Formal (symmetry) or Informal (assym)
Orientation: portrait / landscape/ square
Foreground, mid & background
Symmetry / asymmetry
Scale
Proportion
Viewpoint
Perspective –Linear or atmospheric
Leading lines
Focal Point
Interest & variety
Direction of light
Horizon line
Rule of thirds
Figure / ground relationship
Positive negative space
Soft focus / depth of field
Framing

STRUCTURAL 3. (Media Techniques)
Relief
Impasto
Chiaroscuro
Brushwork, palette
knife
Screen print
Layers
Blending
Scumbling
Modelling
Carving
Casting
Sgraffito, engraving
Assemblage
Collage
Stencil
Overlapping

STRATEGIES
Symbolism
Re-contextualisation
Stereotyping
Metamorphosis
Juxtaposition
Dislocation
Humour/ Parody /irony
Foreshortening
Illusion of space
Layering
Scale
Perspective
### Visual analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify and discuss key features of artworks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognise how artworks have been constructed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss materials, techniques and processes used in artworks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret and make judgements about artworks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical and contextual analysis of the selected artist’s work. Interpretation of artwork demonstrates cogent use of visual language</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Personal response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express personal opinions about artworks</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support opinions with evidence from artworks</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss alternative readings of artworks</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal opinions stated but not supported with reasons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses evidence to justify own viewpoint and personal opinions that takes into account varied readings and interpretations of artwork</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates own viewpoint and supports personal opinions with reference to specific features of artwork</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides reasons for personal conclusions based on subjective and objective evidence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few reasons offered to support opinions and personal conclusions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Meaning and purpose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer reasons for why artwork is produced</td>
<td>9–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret meanings of artworks</td>
<td>7–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss alternative readings of artworks</td>
<td>5–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensively discusses concepts, meaning, purpose and value of artwork, offering a complex, engaging and insightful reading and interpretation</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informed and thorough discussion of concepts, meaning, purpose and value of artwork, synthesising varied interpretations</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive discussion of meaning and purpose communicated in artwork</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Social, cultural and historical contexts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss artist practice and support a thesis through analysing and contextualising artwork</td>
<td>9–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the social, cultural and historical influences on the work of an artist</td>
<td>7–8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the impact and influence of artists socially, culturally and historically</td>
<td>6–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulates a perceptive and in-depth explanation of relevant contexts impacting on and influencing an artist and his/her work</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensive explanation of the contexts impacting on and influencing an artist and his/her work</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficiently detailed explanation of the contexts impacting on and influencing an artist and his/her work</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic explanation of the contexts impacting on and influencing an artist and his/her work</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited explanation of the contexts impacting on and influencing an artist and his/her work</td>
<td>1–2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final total /30

Comments

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________________________________________________________________________

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