

# JAMFACTORY ICON 2019

## **ANGELA VALAMANESH:**

### **ABOUT BEING HERE**

EDUCATION RESOURCE



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Left: *Natural Histories #D*, 2008, ceramic, 2 parts, 560 x 440 x 55

## OVERVIEW

**1. THIS RESOURCE** provides information and curriculum connections for primary and secondary students seeing recent works by South Australian ceramic artist Angela VALAMANESH

**Curriculum connections** throughout this resource address State Curriculum frameworks developed by New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victorian education departments in response to the Australian National Curriculum developed by ACARA, the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.

Due to the nature of Angela Valamanesh's work it can be linked to the ACARA Science curriculum, particularly Biology, as well as to the Arts curriculum.

**Curriculum Priorities** (specified by ACARA) addressed in this resource include links to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experience, seen in Section 1. Connections with Asian culture seen in Section 1, Section 2 and Theme 1 Sustainability is a core issue explored in this artist's work, particularly relating to her use of recyclable materials that are not harmful to the environment or contribute to the depletion of these natural resources.

**2. THIS JAMFACTORY ICON 2019 Exhibition** is one of a series of annual events celebrating South Australian masters of creative excellence. *ICON* exhibitions present work by established designer-makers, displayed in the JamFactory Exhibition Gallery initially, before going on tour to interstate galleries.

\* **Bolded terms** are explained in the Glossary at the end of this resource

Right: *Earthy Garden #5*, 2011, ceramic, 500 x 210 x 60

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS



## SECTION 1 MEET THE ARTIST



### 1950s

Angela Valamanesh (nee Burden) is a fourth generation European South Australian born in 1953 in Port Pirie, a steel smelting city north of Adelaide and within sight of the Flinders Ranges. Angela's mother worked as a nurse and her father as an accountant. Angela fondly remembers her childhood home being full of books and many of her weekends were spent foraging for hours in her local library, searching out more reading material.

### 1960s

1961 When she was eight years old Angela's family moved to Adelaide she attended Plympton Primary School, moving to Plympton High School in year eight. Her senior schooling was completed at Seacombe High School.

### 1970s

1973 After a short break from study Angela returned to high school to complete her schooling. Luckily she was able to include art studies as it had just been added to the senior syllabus. During Year 12 Angela was pleased to meet other students in her art class who shared a common interest and ability in visual arts. While completing her year 12 Angela was introduced to a local potter, Verna Calaby who was a studio-potter making domestic wares. As Calaby was an elderly lady Angela helped her with some of the heaviest tasks like **wedging** clay. Towards the end of her final year Angela convinced her parents she could earn a living based on her artistic talents, so she enrolled at Western Teachers College to train as an art teacher.

1974 Following her first year at both Western Teachers College and the South Australian School of Art (SASA) in North Adelaide, Angela changed her career path to become an art **practitioner** rather than a teacher. She wanted to focus on ceramics.

One of her teachers was the influential Australian ceramicist, Milton Moon, who instilled in his students the importance of hard work and a love of Japanese ceramics.

Angela met her future husband, a fellow student, Iranian sculptor Hossein Valamanesh while they were both studying fine arts at the SASA.

1975 Hossein and Angela married and as newly-weds travelled through Asia and India. By the end of that academic year they had arrived in Iran to meet Hossein's family. This trip was Angela's first experience of travelling outside Australia.

1977 Angela completed her Diploma in Design at the School of Art.

1978 Angela joined a new pottery studio in Adelaide's Jam Factory, a group of newly established innovative design/craft studios set up (in an old jam factory) in the Adelaide suburb of Payneham. These workshops were established by the South Australian Government in 1975 to develop strong design expertise through training craft-makers in trainee workshops, run by Master crafts-people. Now the 21st century Jam Factory is called **JamFactory** and has relocated to central Adelaide in the city with several world class purpose-built workshops. Angela's first exhibition as a ceramics artist was shown in the original Jam Factory gallery on Payneham Road.

1978 Following the birth of their son Nassiem, Angela moved her studio to be at home, setting up a studio at their Norwood residence, in an old backyard chicken shed.

### 1980s

1982 After four years in Norwood the Valamanesh family moved into their current house in Forresterville where they built two studios, one for Hossein and one for Angela, where they still work today. Both artists share a love of nature, particularly our Australian landscape which is often reflected in their individual artworks and personalised styles.

Angela's work from this period shows an understated, quiet appearance. She often made series of small vessels and objects carefully arranged on a shelf, to be exhibited as grouped **installations**. Angela worked with a restricted range of subtle natural colours, perhaps influenced by historic Australian potters she admired, particularly Gladys Reynell and Gwyn Hanssen-Pigott.

### 1990s

1992 With her husband Hossein Angela worked on the first of many collaborative public projects, designing a garden called *Garden of Memories* in Pennington, a suburb of Adelaide.

1993 Angela completed further studies, a Masters of Visual Arts at the University of South Australia. Here she enjoyed contact with university staff and fellow students also studying for their Masters Studies in other specialist art fields. The university workspace provided a stimulating environment for Angela who was more familiar with working in a solitary space.

1997 Angela completed a year long Samstag Scholarship (from the Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art in Adelaide) as an Artist in Residence at Scotland's famous Glasgow School of Art. Following her discovery of an old medical book of historic anatomical photographs, showing human bones and internal organs, a new direction began for her own work.

Based on these images she produced a large number of small watercolour and pen drawings which she coated with wax, to intensify the image. This completed work, called *For a long while there were only plants*, contains over 100 images exploring many intricacies of the human body. Angela has found this large compilation of drawings to be a major influence on many subsequent artworks to the present day.

1999 Angela worked collaboratively with her husband Hossein on a public artwork called *Irish Famine Memorial* for the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney.

The 1990s was a busy decade with international Artist in Residencies in Germany and Pakistan. Not only did Angela absorb many artistic and cultural experiences of these host countries but she also shared this newly gained expertise and artistic journey with her students overseas and fellow artists back home in Adelaide.

### 2000s

Working away from home, either by herself overseas or with her husband Hossein, Angela found these experiences had influenced their world views, inspiring more creative ideas which they applied in their home-studios.

2005 Hossein and Angela completed a **collaborative commission** for a site outside the South Australian Museum on North Terrace, Adelaide. Their sculptural fountain is called 14 Pieces because it refers to special bones in the South Australian Museum collection from an **opalised dinosaur skeleton**.

2006 Angela made a series of **unglazed** ceramic objects called Been Here and Gone, which grew out of her investigations into the natural world. The series was shown at the JamFactory Gallery in Adelaide.

2007 Angela's work *Animal Vegetable Mineral* was completed in clay, based on her observations of scientific illustrations showing human anatomy.

2008 Angela commenced her PhD, which had both practical and thesis components expanding her research of rare books containing early botanical illustrations.

### 2010s

2011 Angela's *Earthly garden* series became her focus as she experimented with a range of clay colours and with scoring, or marking, surfaces to create textures and colours that reflect Australia's ancient rocky landscapes.

2011 Working in partnership again, Angela and Hossein created a large cast metal swing gate, the *Ginkgo Gate*, for a new western entrance to Adelaide's Botanic Gardens.

2012 Angela was awarded her PhD from the University of South Australia. Her chosen area of research were early scientific illustrations, drawn by early illustrators through microscope viewfinders.

2012 In collaboration with both her artist husband Hossein and their son Nassiem, now a 34 year old film-director, Angela exhibited a multi-media work in *HEARTLAND* at the Art Gallery of South Australia. *HEARTLAND* was the Art Gallery of South Australia's 2012 Biennial exhibition of Contemporary Art. The Valamanesh trio presented a moving image art work recording and exploring the movement of snails around their home garden.

This team of artists was selected as contributors to *HEARTLAND* because their artistic production is driven by a mutual love of the Australian landscape. They explore the value and importance of understanding where they live, as suggested by this exhibition's title.

Both artists had previously travelled through the APY (Anangu Pitjantantjara Yankitjantjara language groups) Lands in Central Australia, developing a closeness with many Indigenous Australians and a respect for their deep connection to Country.

2015 Angela was awarded an Artist in Residency at Adelaide's new South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) to develop her understanding of **medical imaging techniques**

2018 Angela's series *Insect/ Orchid* resulted from another residency, this time at Adelaide University's Barr Smith Library, in its Rare Books and Special Collections. Angela was inspired by her discovery of intricate hand coloured watercolours by a well known historic South Australian botanical illustrator, Rosa Fiveash. Fiveash painted Australian orchids native to the Adelaide Hills, publishing them in 1911.

2019 Angela was selected as the JamFactory Icon 2019 for Adelaide's SALA (South Australia Living Artist) Festival, which is a commission to prepare an exhibition of work. She presented a collection entitled *About being here* which, after showing in Adelaide for a month, will travel to a range of venues around Australia into 2022.

### 2020s

2020 Angela and Hossein Valamanesh presented a collaborative exhibition at Adelaide's GAGPROJECTS Greenway Art Gallery for Adelaide's 2020 Festival of Arts. Their exhibition, *ANGELA VALAMANESH AND HOSSEIN VALAMANESH* presented individual works by both artists. Angela's mixed-media works included painted and ceramic forms while Hossein's sculptures, made of his hallmark natural materials, also incorporated English and Farsi text as visual elements (Farsi is Hossein's first language).

Their pieces share many commonly held aesthetic ideas, developed over decades of working individually and together as a team.

## SECTION 2 EXPLORING THE EXHIBITION THROUGH FOUR FRAMEWORK THEMES



### THEME 1 - ANGELA VALAMANESH THE MAKER FRAMEWORK: FORMAL/STRUCTURAL

Three works:

***Shelf life, yellow green yellow***, 2004, glazed ceramics on MDF shelf

***A little bit of everything***, 2009, plaster

***Natural history collection***, no 14 2008, ceramic

*"Not many of us immediately grasp the technical difficulties arising from the production of a perfectly cylindrical form on the wheel. Clay can be a temperamental animal, yet Valamanesh gives the impression that she has thoroughly tamed it".*

Angus Trumble, Angela Valamanesh Selected works, 1993-2002, catalogue essay, University of Adelaide, 2002

The work ***Shelf life, yellow green yellow*** demonstrates how Angela Valamanesh graduated from initially producing functional domestic clay objects in her early career, to making creative installations in her later works that contribute to the art world's long tradition of still life subjects.

Unlike traditional still life works, Angela's ceramic still lifes are not painted onto flat surfaces but instead are three-dimensional forms modelled from clay. She carefully arranged them as compositions on simple shelves, themselves a crucial part of her 'grouped' artworks. Valamanesh glazed her small vessels and bowls in subtle shades of yellows and greens, inspired by the colours of her local South Australian landscape.



Left: *Been here and gone #3*, 2007, Ceramic, 90 x 300 x 300

Above: *Shelf life, yellow green yellow*, 2004, glazed ceramics on MDF shelf, 260 x 1200 x 110. Photo:



Early in their marriage Angela travelled with her husband Hossein through parts of Asia and the Middle East where she was introduced to soft green **celadon** and the blue ru and **Qingbai ware** of China, which she admires. The softer colours and refined shapes of Japanese, Persian and Indian ceramics have also played a part in widening Angela's knowledge of her craft.

Closer to home as a school student, Angela had visited the Art Gallery of South Australia in her senior high school year. She had been impressed by its ceramic collection and particularly attracted to the Vietnamese and Thai ware. The simplicity of form and understated decoration of Vietnamese ceramics made them favoured pieces for Angela.

Valamanesh resists including unnecessary details. Instead she creates artworks of simple shapes, reduced colours and inconclusive meanings, inviting viewers to make their own interpretations. This approach culminates with her concave forms in ***A little bit of everything***, which presents the viewer with hollow shapes, perfectly cast in pristine white blocks of plaster. Angela's artwork has therefore recorded the memory of recognisable objects which could be either animal, mineral or vegetable in origin.

***Natural history collection no 14*** represents a series of works that further demonstrates Angela's avoidance of unnecessary decoration. Valamanesh has moved away from coloured glazes to explore ways of colouring the clay itself, or selecting different natural clays to give her the gentle nuances of colour she desires. Angela embraces both aspects; the variables present in clay and the impact of heat on her objects' final shape and colour, delivered by her firing kiln.

As Valamanesh wants to be true to the natural, sometimes grainy, qualities of clay she often exaggerates its gritty quality by lightly sand blasting surfaces of her pieces.

Valamanesh deliberately uses recyclable materials such as clay, plaster, paper, wax and organic fabrics. She insists her materials are natural, readily available and not wasteful, thereby guaranteeing the sustainability of her practice.

Above: *A little bit of everything*, 2009, plaster, 11 parts, 375 x 3160 x 50  
 Right: *Natural history collection no.14*, 2008, ceramic, 510 x 105 x 75



**THEME 2 - ANGELA'S MICROSCOPIC WORLD:**  
 FRAMEWORK: PERSONAL, SUBJECTIVE

Three works:

**Observation no's 1-4**, 2014, acrylic and watercolour on paper

**Shades of Pollen: yellow to red**, no. 2 2018, ceramic, MDF, hessian, grouting compound

**Shades of Pollen: yellow to green**, (remembering Dorothy Hodges) 2019, watercolour on paper

*"Perhaps the most prominent recent theme encompasses microbiology. Valamanesh's PhD studied at the University of South Australia were [sic] richly inspired by early illustrations of the tiny, geometric forms seen under the first microscopes.....perhaps she was drawn to these Lilliputian creatures as they embodied the clean, simple lines exemplified by much of her previous ceramic work; she also mentioned imagining the thrill of scientists discovering an entirely new universe right under their noses."*

Michael Lee, Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Flinders University and Senior Research Scientist, Palaeontology, South Australian Museum. JamFactory Icon exhibition catalogue essay, JamFactory, 2,2019

Angela Valamanesh's fascination with scientific discoveries and ideas started in the late 1990s while she was in residence at the Glasgow School of Art. Her childhood love of searching through local libraries led her to exploring the art school's famous library. She was attracted to its rare books containing hand drawn illustrations of early scientific discoveries. This first step led to ongoing research at more scientific institutions around the world, including a 2014 residency at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, researching botanical illustrations.

Her latest scientific foray was placed locally at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) exploring medical imaging techniques. As Valamanesh explained in a recent exhibition statement *'I am interested in the interconnectedness of life and the potential of a union between science and poetry, the rational and irrational, formal and symbolic'*.

Angela Valamanesh, A little bit of everything' extract from Artist's Statement, GAGPROJECTS, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide, SA, 2010

Artworks in this theme are linked in a number of ways. They are inspired by tiny life forms not visible to the naked eye, but clearly defined under a microscope. Valamanesh demonstrates her admiration of the pioneering scientists whose discoveries she acknowledges through her artworks.

An example is the seventeenth century botanist Nehemiah Grew who discovered the structure of individual pollen grains.

Valamanesh is also interested in the 20th century work of Dorothy Hodges, a highly talented watercolour artist and bee keeper who produced comprehensive pollen colour charts linking various pollens, collected by bees, to specific plants.



**Observation no 1-4**, 2014, acrylic and watercolour on paper

In *Observation no 1-4* Valamanesh's artwork on paper represents floating **amoebic forms** created by her brushstrokes on the paper surface as though seen through the eye-piece of a microscope. They appear to be momentarily frozen in time before they wriggle and gyrate across the surface of her paper, as they would on a glass slide viewed through a microscope.

While each form is unique they also have similarities, and looking around the exhibition you will find large, three dimensional forms of these microscopic creatures captured in clay.

**Shades of Pollen: yellow to red, no 2**, 2018

Valamanesh honours the research of Grew and Hodges in her own ceramic pollen grains, by portraying their brilliant colours and varied sizes of natural pollens. She suggests the observer is examining her larger-than-life ceramic pollen grains through the circular lens of a microscope.

**Shades of Pollen: yellow to green, (remembering Dorothy Hodges)**, 2019

In her watercolour works on paper Valamanesh has enlarged the scale of the pollen grains she examined, while maintaining their brilliant colours, which are reminiscent of artworks from the 1970's Pop art movement. Pop Artists such as Claes Oldenburg and Roy Lichtenstein, like Angela, used exaggerated colour and scale in the creation of their artworks.



Above: *Observations no.1-4* 2014, acrylic and watercolour on paper, framed, 495 x 495

Above Left: *Shades of Pollen: yellow to red, no 2*, 2018, ceramic, MDF, hessian, grouting compound, 490 dia x 100  
 Above Right: *Shades of Pollen: yellow to green*, (remembering Dorothy Hodges) 2019, watercolour on paper



### Theme 3 ANGELA FASCINATED WITH SCIENCE

#### FRAMEWORK: CULTURAL

Three works:

***For a long while there were only plants***, 1997, watercolour on waxed paper

***Various friends and enemies no 6***, 2016, ceramic

***Earthly Gardens #12***, 2011, ceramic

In this exhibition Angela Valamanesh is drawing the viewer into her world of scientific curiosity. She demonstrates the natural curiosity of human beings who want to learn more about the natural world. Her sources of inspiration are frequently scientific men of the **Age of Enlightenment**, who risked personal criticism from other men of science, church and state authorities for making their discoveries and ideas public.

Two examples are Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace who independently presented their scientific theory of evolution by natural selection in the mid 19th century.

One of our worlds most prominent scientist was Albert Einstein who was known to have conflicting views with some of Darwin's theories of evolution.

Another source of inspiration for Valamanesh are several historic and highly talented female artists who, in the privacy of their homes, quietly dedicated their lives to recording the beauty of nature. Sadly, sometimes the value of their contribution was not fully appreciated until after their deaths, as in the case of early Australian botanical illustrators like Helena Scott and Louisa Atkinson. Social expectations of the time did not encourage women to establish careers outside their domestic role. While delving into the world of science Valamanesh was repeatedly attracted to the area where art and science overlap.

During her 1997 Samstag Scholarship residency at the Glasgow School of Art it was the discovery of an old medical book full of early anatomical photographs that took Angela in a completely new artistic direction. She not only adopted new subject matter but also explored new media and art techniques.



Based on images in this remarkable book, Angela began producing small sepia coloured ink drawings which resulted in her work ***For a long while there were only plants***. It comprises over one hundred drawings illustrating human body-parts, skillfully connected through Angela's changes of their scale, relative to each other, where a vertebrae bone is drawn on a similar size paper as a thigh bone. Her use of a consistency of paper sizes and minimal colours, enable individual works to become one harmonious artwork, all parts of a whole.

Depending on the viewer's medical knowledge, a sense of familiarity with some of her images is possible. Tentative links to the human body can be made identifying bones, teeth, maybe even internal organs like the lungs and stomach. However not all Valamanesh's objects can be clearly identified.

***Various friends and enemies no 6*** 2016 consists of 13 skilfully crafted clay forms in delicately muted colours which explores the same dilemma Valamanesh presents in other artworks on show. Viewers are faced with questions about the origins and true scale of these forms and finally, and which scientific category they belong to. Valamanesh explores whether they are animal, mineral or vegetable. Valamanesh's title for the grouping suggests some forms are a food source for others amongst them. Maybe the addition of small red dots on each form and where they are placed suggests eyes or small openings. These artworks, like many in this exhibition, are seeking "to embrace broader goals questioning life's origins inspired by her research into natural history collections and scientific illustrations."

Liv Spiers, Angela Valamanesh: About Being Here exhibition review, JamFactory, 23 August 2019, Artlink magazine.



Above: *For a long while there were only plants*, 1997, watercolour on paper dipped in wax, 1760 x 3800

Above: *Various friends and enemies no 6*, 2016, ceramic



**Earthly Gardens #12** is another example of how Valamanesh teases the viewer with more questions than answers. This incredibly ornate ceramic form could have been inspired by a living creature under the sea, or by a minute organism attached to a rock like a tiny mollusc or coral. The final artwork is so credible and lifelike that its appearance could only have come from the creative mind and skilled techniques of this artist.

Above: *For a long while there were only plants*, 1997, watercolour on paper dipped in wax, 1760 x 3800

#### Theme 4 ANGELA'S METAMORPHOSIS FRAMEWORK: POST MODERN/ CONTEMPORARY

Three works:

***Insect/ Orchid 2***, 2017 ceramic

***Dark life 4***, 2018, ceramic on plywood backing

***The Story of the Eye, part 2, no 2***, 2018, ceramic

"These insect-like shapes create a new spectrum of imagery and narratives that call to mind both floral and human forms."

<http://www.copyright.com.au/tag/university-of-adelaide/> spoken by Angela Valamanesh

During her residency at the Barr Smith Library at Adelaide University Angela Valamanesh was privileged to spend time in its special collection. Her well established interest in rare illustrated scientific books led to her awareness of several volumes by a historic South Australian botanical artist, Rosa Fiveash.

This wonderful find supported Angela's previous research into highly talented female artists with an interest in nature and who, because of the historic era in which they lived, rarely got the recognition they deserved.

To successfully publish her extensive watercolour images of Australian native orchids Rosa Fiveash had to work collaboratively with the **orchidologist** and physician Richard S Rogers in 1911. She contributed illustrations to Rogers' *Studies of South Australian Orchids* for 30 years and produced many scientific illustrations for Edward Stirling at the Adelaide Museum. Fiveash's skills as a Botanical artist were well recognised and her illustrative works were sought after to compliment texts published by these scientific scholars.

Inspired by her research of Rosa Fiveash's paintings of native orchids, exquisitely delicate and accurate works in themselves, Angela developed a series of very different ceramic works of larger scale, more darkly coloured and with highly glazed surfaces.

Describing her new artworks Angela said "*I am interested in imagery that is ambiguous, that has a certain familiarity to it but is not completely or easily recognisable*" says Valamanesh "*I became aware of the amazing quality and quantity of scientific illustrations located in the Barr Smith Library's collection and I knew I wanted to base future work on them.*"

<http://www.copyright.com.au/tag/university-of-adelaide/> spoken by Angela Valamanesh



Valamanesh's three artworks described below were made in response to her research into Rosa Fiveash.

*Insect / Orchid 2* is an example of Angela's transition into the realm of **artistic metamorphosis**. Its title suggests the art work to be neither animal or vegetable but a combination of both. Her use of highly glazed surfaces could be a reference to the outer waxy cuticle of an orchid, or of the hard shell body of beetles often found around orchids. This large scale creature is more confronting than the delicacy of its tiny inspirations. Angela's convincing reality of this work suggests this creature, quietly resting on a wall, could sprout wings and fly off. Perhaps her seed-like forms clustered in their central resting place will sprout or tiny caterpillars will emerge, bringing the creature to life.

*Dark life 4* and *The Story of the Eye, part 2, no 2* were both produced in 2018 and demonstrate Valamanesh's further searching into the origins of her morphed creatures. Artists since Leonardo de Vinci (1452-1519) and Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) the German artist, philosopher, botanist, zoologist) have seen the artistic beauty of nature and attempted to reproduce it scientifically from observation.

In contemporary times images of morphed creatures fill our cinemas and computer games, as they did in mythological stories of Greek, Nordic and Hindu gods. Angela's work comfortably fits into the realm of metamorphosis art, where an artist's imagination is the only limitation in combining images sourced from the natural world.

Although Angela's dark specimens are connected by colour, common features and the same glistening finish, they are all very different from each other. Some forms appear to have **multi faceted** eyes like spiders and flies, while others have dimpled abdomens common in most insects. The plant world is also represented by Angela's curled, bud-like petals and her broad flat leaves, seen in both works. Viewers must make up their own minds about the origins of these creatures.



Left: *Insect/Orchid 2*, 2017, ceramic, 310 x 140 x 65

Above Left: *Dark Life 4*, 2018, ceramic on plywood backing, 825 x 130 x 95

Above Right: *The Story of the Eye, part 2, no 2*, 2018, ceramic, 490 x 180 x 80

## SECTION 3 FOR TEACHERS



### Planning a group visit to

#### JamFactory Icon 2019 Exhibition: Angela VALAMANESH: About being here

This resource is designed for teachers of F-10 students and secondary senior Visual Art students and could also address aspects of the ACARA Science curriculum in particular Biological science.

#### Background Briefing: before you visit:

**Inform** the students about the origins and content of the exhibition.

**Focus** on student understanding of the history and technical requirements of working with clay as a production and creative medium.

**Prepare** students by viewing videos on clay work, in Section 5 FURTHER RESEARCH

**Download** the *ANGELA VALAMANESH: About being here* Education Resource and

**View** the accompanying Angela VALAMANESH videos from the JamFactory website.

**Devise** activity and task sheets prior to your visit, perhaps using the Getting Started activities in this Resource.

**Refer** to the four Framing Themes in Section 2 of this Resource, Exploring the exhibition.

**Visit** selected websites from Section 5: FURTHER RESEARCH in this Resource

#### Ready for Action: before entering the exhibition

On arrival your group will be met and welcomed by a member of the exhibition venue staff.

If you wish to view the exhibition in class sub-groups for more individual responses to the viewing tasks below, smaller groups are recommended.

**Organise these groups before** students enter the exhibition space, **with their viewing tasks.**

This is the best time to distribute prepared activity sheets, perhaps from the Getting started Viewing activities included in this Education Resource, in section 4 below.

**Prior to groups dispersing** remind students of usual gallery viewing protocols, such as being aware of others using the space (noise) and not touching the works

**Scribing or note taking** is useful for on-site reporting and post-visit research. During your visit students may be involved in both group and individual analysis and response.

**Emphasise** the nature of viewing this kind of exhibition. Students should be encouraged to spend reflective time with art works, immersing themselves by examining each piece for a minimum of several minutes.

**Familiarise** students with their tasks to ensure they will focus on at least six works, many of which are in sets of multiple pieces and require some committed viewing time.

#### In the exhibition: extra material

**We suggest** students look at the Angela Valamanesh video, several times. It will be located in the gallery.

Students will gain understanding of two aspects presented in the exhibition: they are technical processes used by the artist and particular works illustrating themes presented in this resource.

Prior to visiting the exhibition students will benefit from previously accessing the Angela Valamanesh Education Resource, enabling them to make thematic selections for their follow-up tasks.

#### Unravelling student impressions: after the exhibition

Post-exhibition activities mostly consist of sharing and analysing information and opinions gathered during the visit. This feedback might be

- information gathered on-site
- individual opinions shared
- findings reported by groups focusing on tasks or themes
- taking photographic images for later reference

## SECTION 4 FOR STUDENTS



### Viewing activities

#### Task 1 Response to the works

Choose any work that attracts your attention and answer the following questions:

- How are the visual qualities of this work appealing?
- Can you see any connections between this kind of art and other forms you know about?
- What do you think this work explores or might be saying?
- Has this work given you an idea for something you could make as part of your art studies?
- Tell someone else your reasons for selecting this work.

#### Task 2 Response to the exhibition

##### For Art students

Write a review of the exhibition describing any links or relationships between the works in one or more series.

Choose one of the themes suggested in this Education Resource and review the exhibition from this perspective.

Select two or more works from a series, for example Insect/Orchid series and describe their similarities and differences using visual art language.

Angela Valamanesh mentions her admiration of the botanical illustrator Rosa Fiveash. In today's world Botanical Illustrators are employed to illustrate books about plants. Research this occupation then select and describe the work of a botanical illustrator you admire.

Mythological stories of many cultures involve morphed creatures. Select a culture you are interested in which has myths about morphed creatures. Draw and document some examples you can share with your classmates.

As Angela Valamanesh shows, many artists are inspired by their love of nature to create artworks.

Select and research an artist who inspired Angela Valamanesh

After viewing videos (found in Section 5: FURTHER RESEARCH) of works by Angela Valamanesh describe how she responded to some particular influences.

##### For Science students

Science and art have crossed paths for centuries, from historical times through to the present day. In (Section 5: FURTHER RESEARCH) of this Education pack are references to several videos about this cross-over.

- Watch the videos before discussing how art and science contribute to human society.
- Research and write a report on the impact microscopes have had on scientific discoveries.
- Describe some differences between metamorphosis in art and in science
- Find a historic figure of science and art to study. Prepare an illustrated description of how their work contributes to both disciplines.

#### Task 3 Making

Experimenting with several hand drawn and photographic images create your own morphed creatures, perhaps using a computer programme.

Research and draw your own morphed creature. Using a modelling material create a 3D version of your invention.

As a class project, make a large art-work to display across a wall. Begin by collecting and drawing natural objects to create a collaborative montage based on Valamanesh's work For a long time there were only plants. Use a limited range of colours with a similar size paper as the artist.

Devise your own artwork exploring metamorphosis by photographing and digitally arranging images of several natural objects.

## SECTION 5 FURTHER RESEARCH



### ART RESOURCES

**Angela Valamanesh** 'Everybody's Everything': Insect/Orchid Catalogue Aug/Oct 2017  
<http://www.copyright.com.au/tag/university-of-adelaide/>

**Angela** talks about her exhibition based on research of 16th century hand drawn images of objects viewed through early microscopes.3:13 min  
<https://vimeo.com/356347853/>

**Angela Valamanesh**, *A little bit of everything*' extract from Artist Statement GAGPROJECTS, Greenway Art Gallery, Adelaide, SA, 2010

**Dr Mike Lee**; THE UNION BETWEEN SCIENCE AND POETRY, Catalogue essay for Angela Valamanesh: About being here, JamFactory Icon Exhibition JamFactory,2019  
Dr Lee is Professor, College of Science and Engineering, Flinders University.  
Senior Research Scientist, Palaeontology, South Australian Museum

**Fiveash, Rosa** (1854-1938)-People and organisations-Trove,  
<http://trovenla.gov.au/people/469545>

**Gladys Reynell** (1881-1956) early South Australian potter who worked in a Modernist style using local South Australian clays.

**Gwen Hanssen-Pigott** (1935-2013) Australian born artist who, on her death, was accredited as being one of the greatest potters in the contemporary world.

**JamFactory Icon Angela Valamanesh: About being here** exhibition catalogue, JamFactory, 2019

**JamFactory profile** of Angela Valamanesh  
<http://www.jamfactory.com.au/marmalade/2019/8/1/video-profile-angela-valamanesh> 3:13 minutes

**Liv Spiers**, *Angela Valamanesh: About Being Here* exhibition review, JamFactory, 23 August 2019, Artlink magazine.

**Rob Linn**: Hossein Valamanesh and Angela Valamanesh interviewed, 2007, TRC5915.National Library of Australian

**Wendy Walker** (independent writer, editor and curator): SYMBIOSIS, *Angela Valamanesh: About being here*, JamFactory Icon exhibition catalogue essay, JamFactory, 2019

### SCIENCE RESOURCES

**Albert Einstein**, theoretical physicist , who developed the theory of relativity. His ethical views were in opposition to those of Charles Darwin.

**BBC Homepage**: In the search panel type in Microscopic art and scan down to several videos on the topic of a cross over between art and science

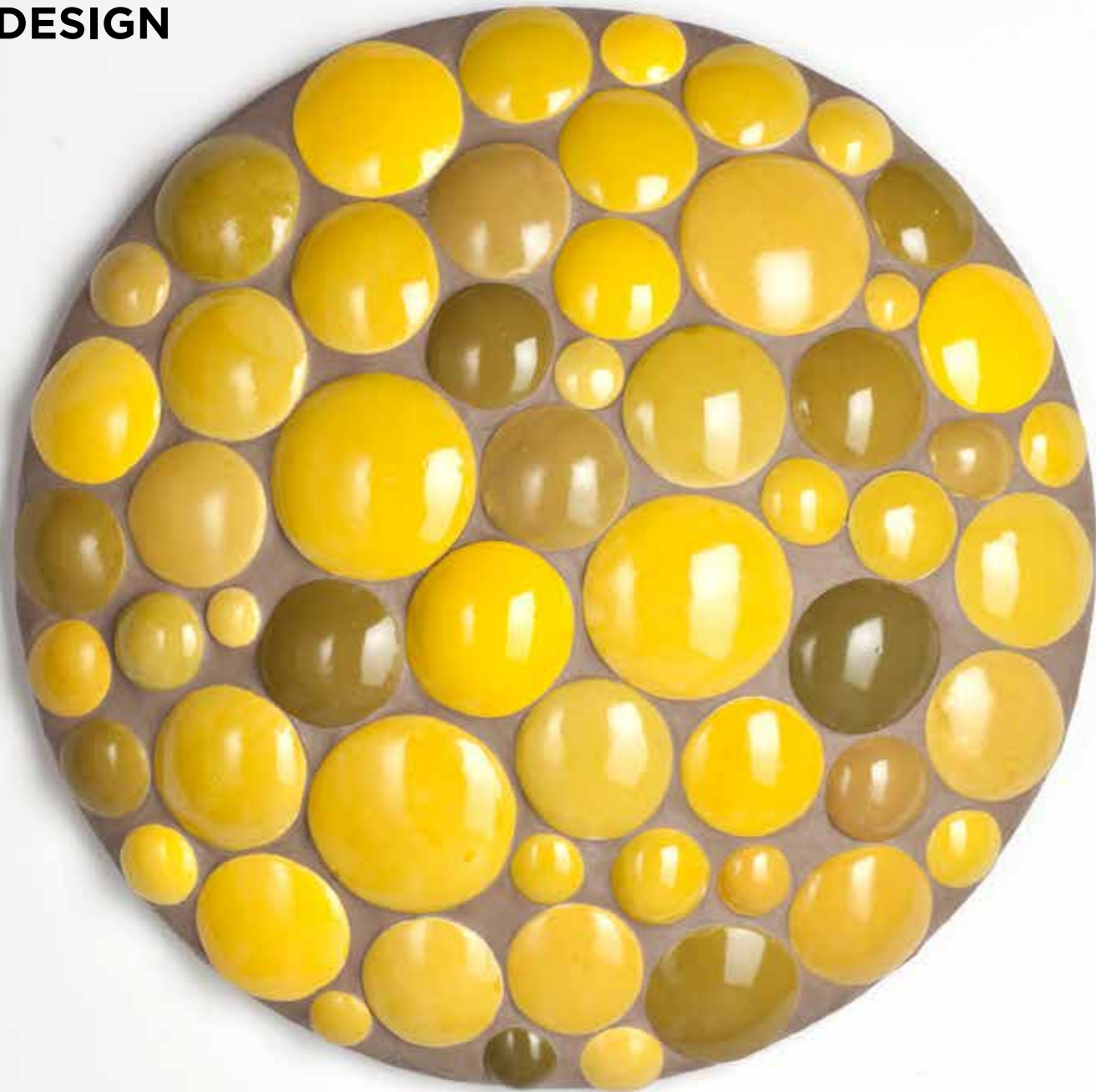
**Dorothy Hodges** (1898-1979) 20th century botanical and zoological illustrator and bee keeper, famous for her book 'The Pollen Loads of the Honey Bee'.

**Ernst Haeckel** (1834-1919) German zoologist, marine biologist, a career scientist and professor of anatomy, who discovered and named thousands of new species. He supported Darwin's theory of Evolution and produced highly detailed illustrations of microscopic creatures in his publication *Kunstformen der Nature* (Artforms of Nature) of 1899.  
<https://mymodernmet.com/ernst-haeckel-art>

**Nehemiah Grew** (1641-1712) English plant physiologist, published 'The anatomy of Plants' 1682

*Left: Been here and gone #5, (detail) 2007, Ceramic, 80 x 40 x 280*

## SECTION 6 CONSIDERING DESIGN



### CONSIDERING DESIGN

#### 6. 1. JamFactory :What Is It?

Adelaide's present JamFactory was designed to rehouse the original Jam Factory workshops that were established by the State Government in the 1970s, in an old jam factory in Payneham, Adelaide in South Australia.

Now established in purpose built accommodation in the city, JamFactory has matured into a nationally admired centre for excellence in design and workshop manufacture, as envisioned by South Australian Premier, Don Dunstan, over forty years ago.

JamFactory now comprises four major training workshops, plus rentable studio spaces for tenants and sophisticated retail and gallery spaces. Each workshop focuses on exploring its core material, either clay (ceramics), glass, metal or wood. Workshops design and manufacture individually commissioned works and products for retail sale. Supervised by a Consultant Designer each workshop trains several associates who are graduate trainees of tertiary courses. Encouraged to develop their own practices, their individual works are often sold in the JamFactory retail outlet.

The Context: how the Jam Factory Workshops started

Over sixty years ago, during the 1950s and 1960s, a perception emerged in Australia that craft and design had an important role to play in the cultural and economic life of the Australian nation.

By 1971 a Federal Government initiative, called the National Committee of Enquiry into the Crafts, published findings that led to the creation of The Australia Council in 1973. The Australia Council, through its various boards, began developing policies that created and supported opportunities for craftspeople. This development coincided with trends within South Australia in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, for establishing design and craft education to support artisan industries emerging around the state.

Locally several factors led to the growth of craft and design, including an increasing number of Adelaide galleries exhibiting fine craft and design, the influence of South Australian School of Art lecturers such as Alex Leckie, Margaret Douglas, Helen Macintosh and Milton Moon and the professional development opportunities created by the newly formed Australia Council Crafts Board. By the beginning of the 1970s increasing support was growing within the South Australian art/craft/design community, and in government, for a programme or organization that would become the focus and key support agency for craft/design education and industry.

In 1972, the South Australian Premier Don Dunstan, through the Premier's Department, commissioned a comprehensive study of 'design and craft industries in South Australia'. The reporting committee recommended (amongst other initiatives) that a government initiated 'Craft Authority' be created to establish a craft and design training workshop in Adelaide.

The Craft Authority opened the Jam Factory retail shop and factory in 1974 in the old Mumzone Factory on Payneham Road, St Peters. The site was originally a food processing and distribution facility for the South Australian Fruitgrowers Cooperative Society Ltd, trading as Mumzone Products Ltd. The first four workshops focused on glass, leather, jewellery and textiles. They were run by leading international and national craftspeople who designed products and trained apprentices who made work for sale. The current JamFactory workshops work in glass, metal, wood and clay.

#### 6. 2 Design: Making A Mark By John Neylon

Contemporary design. Where to start or finish? Web, computer game, software, graphic, architectural, urban or landscape design? Or design as aligned with the arts such as theatre, fashion, interior, furniture or ceramics? And is this 'design' the noun (a designed something) or the verb (designing something)? The modern era has found multiple uses for this one simple word. But its origins still hold the key to its essential meaning. The Latin word 'designare' described the act of 'marking out'. Signifying something. Making a sign. In the modern era this idea of design as something distinctive,

as the product of creative thought, which impacts on the way we 'use' the world, persists. It's a privileged word in our society. So it should be. It has important work to do.

The modern design era of the first part of the 20th century thought it held all the answers with its enthusiasm for the machine aesthetic and the Utopian promises of mass production. But the second half of the century saw design subsumed into the wider contexts of pop culture and mass consumerism. This was a context in which fashion and popular taste, driven by advertising, 'celebrity designers' and iconic labels overran the idea that 'good design' was something made only by product 'designers' for people who could afford it. Enter the world of 'designer-clothing', designer-furniture' and 'designer-food'. With the 'designer-store' IKEA signifying membership of a global club, the democratization of design-for-living, looks complete. With the aid of on-line catalogues and computer graphics simulations you too can be an interior designer.

So where does that leave young artists who work hard to qualify and practice as designers and the agencies like universities, TAFE colleges and craft and design centres who support them? The answer lies in the market place and in community and individual life. The world, communities and individuals want 'designare'. They want that sign, that signature object and the experience that goes with it because it spells 'special'. Mass production has gone part of the way to satisfying that need. An easily affordable retro-light fitting can brighten up that corner in your life. But market place demand continues to demonstrate a different level of need; for designed-mediated experiences that significantly enhance daily life. This enhancement may take the form of offering beauty, compelling thought, confirming values, triggering emotions, exciting imagination, amusing, making a distinctive statement, carrying a message or simply offering brilliant functionality. Enter the artist/designer.

Anyone who has attempted to mend a piece of furniture let alone design and construct one from the bench top up; or wrestled with a lump of clay trying to turn it into a bowl appreciates the level of skill involved in making well-crafted objects that people will pay good money for. And if the market place also wants a high level of creativity to go with the fine crafting then the bar is that much higher. Creative, skilled designers deliver on this. But where do they come from and how do they develop skills in not only crafting materials but also being innovative and being successful professionals?

These are questions that JamFactory, through its diverse programs and Associates Program in particular, continues to address.'  
Extract from John Neylon, catalogue essay 'Making a mark', for Design Now, a Country Arts SA touring exhibition 2008 - 2009.

### **DESIGN: Framing questions**

1. It is often claimed that good design will 'enhance daily life'. What do you think this expression means? Do you know of any examples?

2. Reality TV shows promote the idea that anyone can be a designer and that the only thing that matters is catching the judges' eyes. Do you believe that 'you too can be a designer' - without any formal training?

### **5.3 Extended research: Design resources**

The following sites have been selected on the basis of offering research strategies, theoretical frameworks, wider context and current information about contemporary design and craft.

[http://www.craftaustralia.org.au/research/about\\_the\\_research\\_centre](http://www.craftaustralia.org.au/research/about_the_research_centre)

Craft Australia's Research Centre has an e-journal craft + design enquiry. This is an excellent resource for researching current issues and theoretical frameworks.

<http://www.dhub.org>

This Powerhouse Museum site incorporates news, articles and events covering a wide spectrum of design: fashion, interior and furniture, craft, graphic design and digital media, architecture and landscape.

[www.powerhousemuseum.com](http://www.powerhousemuseum.com)

Powerhouse Museum, Sydney

Recommend sections: Education: SCAMPER Design Activity (activity-based strategies for generating design solutions)

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/p/powerofmaking/>

This Victoria and Albert Museum link gives access to video interviews and texts related to an exhibition Power of Making (2011). Within the videos artists and designers give insights into their practices and the nature of the design process. A highly recommended resource

<http://jump.dexigner.com/directory/7244>

The Design Museum, London, is the world's leading museum of 20th and 21st century design, architecture and fashion. This site offers extensive education (interactive and pdf research downloads for teachers and students)

<http://jump.dexigner.com/directory/7248>

Smithsonian Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum  
Recommend sections: Explore Design. Learn

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/e/education-centre/>

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Recommend sections: Learning, Architecture

<http://jump.dexigner.com/directory/8815>

The Design Exchange (DX) is Canada's design centre and museum with a mission to promote the value of design.

Recommend sections: Education: Resources

<http://www.design-museum.de/de/informationen.html>

Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Germany

Recommend sections: 100 Masterpieces (history of modern design as seen through 100 chairs)

<http://jump.dexigner.com/directory/7893>

Museum of Arts and Design, New York

Recommend sections: Learn/Teacher Resource Materials. Within this section is a module 'What is Design' which introduces key terminology and concepts related to exploring aspects of contemporary design.

<http://jump.dexigner.com/directory/18860>

Bauhaus Museum, Berlin.

This site gives an introduction to the history, philosophy and collections of the Bauhaus

<http://designthinkingforeducators.com>

A 'tool kit' style site with video clips of educators talking about their understanding of design and design processes. Useful as PD resource.

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/about-design/What-design-is-and-why-it-matters/>

What is design? This feature on the UK Design Council website offers some useful perspectives. This site is also a good directory to sites which addresses ideas linked to sustainable design, meeting social needs through design and innovation.

<http://vimeo.com/5820010>

'What is design?' An UK Design Council animation introducing concepts and terminology linked to an understanding of contemporary design.

<http://startupsthisishowdesignworks.com>

This site explores the turbo-charged environment of international corporate design while asking straightforward questions about the nature and purpose of design in a modern world.



## SECTION 7 GLOSSARY



**Age of Enlightenment** (also known as the Age of Reason) a time of great intellectual questioning of traditions, beliefs and practices in Europe from the 17th to the 19th century.

**amoebic forms** - single cell organisms without cell walls which allows them to modify their shape and move freely in a liquid environment.

**artistic metamorphosis**- a term used by artists describing the process of changing a visual image from one shape into another as seen in the artworks of M C Escher. The term is also used to describe combination creatures like the half man -half horse centaur in Greek mythological who has reappeared in more recent times in Harry Potter movies.

**art practitioner** - an artist actively involved in the production of art works such as paintings, sculptures or ceramic wares

**collaborative commission** - a process where multiple artists work together to create an artwork that has been requested by an individual, company or institution

**medical imaging techniques** -visual images taken of the human body's interior to enable medical staff to clinically analyse medical conditions in the body

**multi faceted** - an object with many sides, planes or surfaces like a cut diamond or the eye of a spider

**opalised dinosaur skeleton** was formed when silica rich water was absorbed into the bones of a dinosaur fossil which was then turned into opal over millions of years

**orchidologist** is a scientist who studies orchids

**unglazed** - the matt surface of a fired clay object lacking a glossy or hard glass-like finish

**wedging** - process of working, pummeling and kneading clay to remove air pockets and other impurities to improve the clay's consistency for throwing or modelling.

