



Alexander Seton *Bake a nice cake – pram* 2008 white Carrara marble, 45.0 x 30.0 x 56.0 cm Gift of Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation 2008 Newcastle Art Gallery collection

EDUCATION RESOURCE

MATERIAL REALITY

Sculpture from the collection

30 June - 12 August 2012

NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY

Laman Street Newcastle NSW 2300 T: 02 4974 5100 www.nag.org.au

This education resource has been produced to support the exhibition, *Material Reality: Sculpture from the collection* 30 June - 12 August 2012.

Material Reality features sculptural works from the Newcastle Art Gallery collection that explore and challenge perceptions of materiality. These works push the boundaries of how materials are traditionally used in the making of sculpture and how, through an alchemic like process, they can become something else entirely.

These sculptures push the limits of three dimensional object making through their manipulation of form, shape and architecture. They are made from a diverse range of materials including marble, steel, spinifex grass, wood, ceramic, glass, feathers, paper and engine parts to name a few.

This resource is designed for students in years 5 - 9 and examines eight artists in the exhibition, providing background information on each work of art. This resource can be used as a printed or online document, or on an interactive whiteboard or data projector within school.

Each artist's work can be explored through looking, thinking and making.

look: Quality reproductions and details of images are provided for each artist, and suggestions for shaping students' interpretation of the work of art during their visit. Connections have been drawn with two significant works of public art in the Newcastle CBD.

think: Enquiry questions are provided to encourage discussion and analysis of each work.

make: Tasks are provided to engage students in their own art making activities and to respond to each work.

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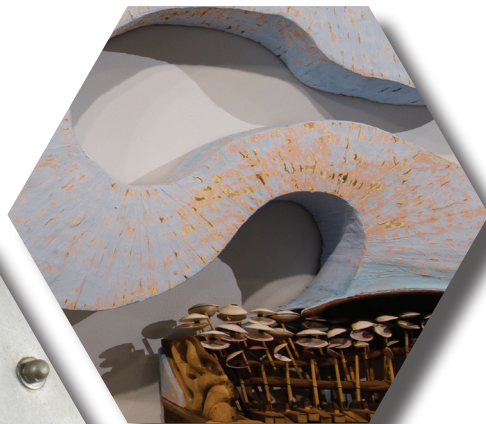
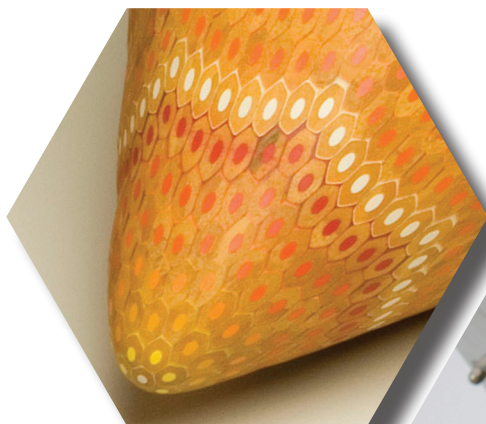
MATERIAL REALITY: EDUCATION RESOURCE

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MATERIAL REALITY Sculpture from the collection
30 June – 12 August 2012.

**look
think
make**

look

click to explore
by artwork



look

click to explore
by artist

Lionel
BAWDEN

Rosalie
GASCOIGNE

Fiona
HALL

Margel
HINDER

Alexander
SETON

John
TURIER

Hossein
VALAMANESH

Louise
WEAVER



Lionel Bawden
Esque - thoughts brought forth by our fingers 2001
coloured staedtler pencils, araldite, linseed oil
38.0 x 78.5 x 39.0 cm
Purchased 2002
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

LIONEL BAWDEN

Lionel BAWDEN

Lionel Bawden explores the tangible and sublime growth of ideas within an individual's imagination, achieved through his meticulously crafted organic and sculptural forms. Bawden's use of coloured pencils as the dominant sculptural medium contrasts the rigid machine made individual pencils with the elegant and sensual forms of the sculpture. This generates a strong connection between the confined physical world and the thriving landscape of the mind.

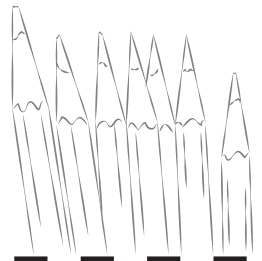
Bawden's work also explores the transformation from early childhood familiarity to myriad possibilities of the adult imagination. The recurring organic honeycomb motif is reminiscent of beehives, and alludes to the microcosms of cellular organisms existing in our world and the endless possibilities surrounding them.

look

Investigate Bawden's work to establish how his sculptures were made. Discuss your theories as a class, using information or evidence you can see in the work.

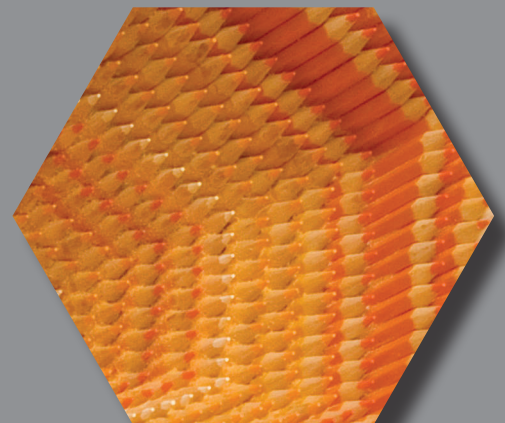
make

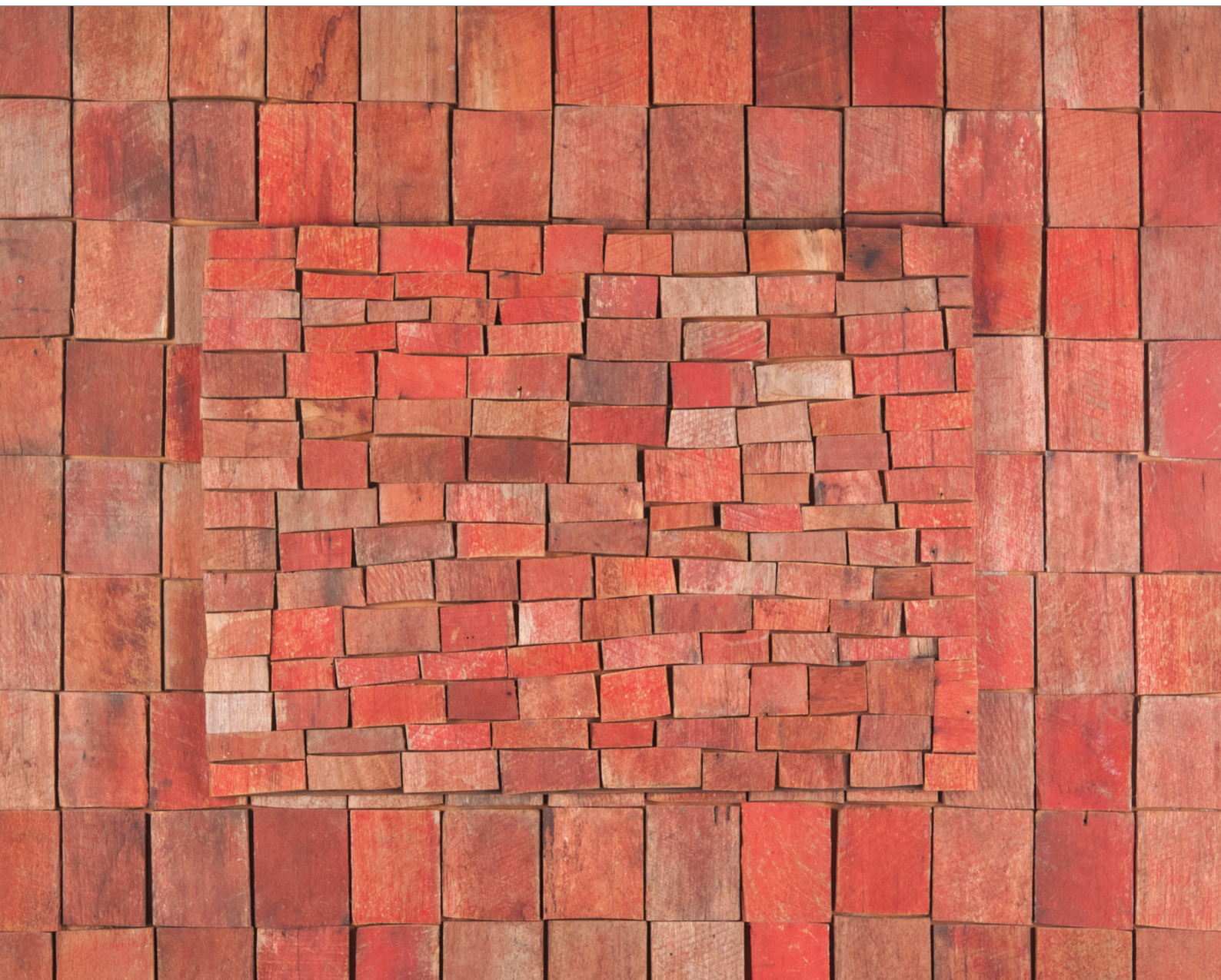
Using crayons with any paper wrappings removed, place them in a flexible baking mold, and bake in an oven on low heat until the crayons have melted. Carefully remove from the oven and allow to cool. Carve an organic shape from the cooled block of crayon, to reveal different sections of colour.



think

- The repeated pattern of pencils in Bawden's work is reminiscent of beehives. The organic shape of his sculptures is also suggestive of smoothed river stones. What other associations can you see?
- What does the overall shape of the two sculptures remind you of?
- What effect does limiting the colour range of the individual pencils have?





Rosalie Gascoigne

Wild strawberries (detail) 1995

sawn wood on craftboard

75.0 x 93.8 cm

Purchased with the assistance of Robert & Lindy Henderson, Les Renfrew bequest,
Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation and Newcastle Art Gallery Society 2012
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

ROSALIE GASCOIGNE

Rosalie GASCOIGNE

Gascoigne described this wood as heavy and 'hairy', sourced from the circular ends of smaller spools used for copper and barbed wire. The intensity of the colour varies, from tomato red to bleached white, according to how long the reels spent facing the sun, or lying face down.

Wild strawberries 1995 is one of Gascoigne's most evocative titles. One easily imagines a box of foraged strawberries, irregular and slightly brown, with the odd triangular spaces between the fruit. The overlaying or framing of one grid within another is a composition that appears from the beginning to the end of her career. In *Wild strawberries* 1995, the series of slats and squares are awkward, stubbornly curved like a country road or a crooked mud brick wall. There is a subtle violence in their ill-fitting composition, a twist of angst even – a very rare feeling in Gascoigne's repertoire.

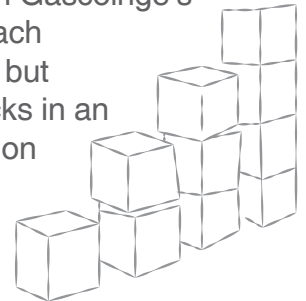
written by Hannah Fink

look

Consider the way that Gascoigne constructs harmony and haphazardness in her composition by the careful placement of each block. It is similar to piecing together a jigsaw puzzle.

make

Gascoigne's work *Wild strawberries* is wall mounted and made out of found materials. Replicate her artistic process. Try to find a material with a subtle variation of colour, like the sawn wood in Gascoigne's work. Don't fix each piece as you go, but place all the blocks in an overall composition before securing them.



think

- Why do you think the work is called *Wild strawberries*?
- Read Hannah Fink's writing above. What else do you imagine when you look at Gascoigne's work?
- Research other works by Rosalie Gascoigne. What similarities in materials and composition can you find?





Fiona HALL
Drift net 1998
pvc pipe, glass beads, mother-of-pearl buttons, wire, engraved bottle, compass
129.0 x 160.0 x 76.0 cm
Purchased with assistance of Newcastle Art Gallery Society 2004
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

FIONA HALL

Fiona HALL

Drift net was initially exhibited in 1999 in an exhibition titled *Fieldwork* where Fiona Hall visited the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and responded to the various collections connected to migration found in the natural history section. The collections she focussed on were of migratory birds, shipping knots, Southern Ocean seaweeds and plant specimens collected from the east coast of Australia by Captain Cook and Vice Admiral William Bligh. Hall states that the work is about crossing water making reference to Australia's geographic position and colonial history founded by exploration.

A list of the specimens Hall found can be seen engraved on the glass bottle within the top cabinet of the work and in the cabinet below sits a piece of knotted plumbing loosely referencing shipping knots and the flow of water. At the end of the perforated plumbing conduit is a compass, a more poetic reference to migration and 'finding one's way'. In this work Hall attempts to create a drifting feeling and alludes to the dislocation felt by people moving within different cultures. Contemporary readings of the work highlight concerns of the

environment and refugee movements across the world.

look

What impact does the limited colour palette of *Drift net* have on our experience of this work? White can infer purity and cleanliness, or make something appear clinical or cold, pale or sick. Compare this to the vivacity of most tourism images of the Australian Great Barrier Reef.

make

Identify an environmental concern in your community. Create your own work of art that illustrates your concern. Consider the impact of the material you choose to use on the meaning of your work.

think

- *Drift net* 1998 comments on the impact of humankind on the natural environment, specifically the marine environment. Investigate and research the ecosystems of coral reefs, and the various threats they face.
- The work also recalls presentation methods more commonly seen in museum display cabinets, as opposed to art galleries. Why do you think this is so?





Margel Hinder
Tri-form 3, 1983
Aluminium and stainless steel
156.5 x 66.0 x 64.0 cm
Gift of Marilyn Zschau 2012
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

MARGEL HINDER

Margel HINDER

Margel Hinder was an American born artist who arrived in Sydney in 1934. Hinder and her husband Frank aligned themselves with a group of artists committed to exploring an Australian modernism and experimented with popular industrial materials of the time such as aluminium, wire and plastics. Hinder studied traditional sculpture in Boston and married the Australian born Frank Hinder in 1930. This partnership extended their professional practice and was celebrated in two major joint retrospectives, one at the Newcastle City Art Gallery in 1973 and the other at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1980.

From an early stage, Hinder's sculptures embraced abstract and organic forms inviting the viewer to move around the constructions and experience the work from all perspectives. Hinder aimed to create movement within sculpture and

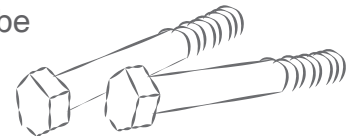
this can be seen in her most recognised piece the *James Cook Memorial Fountain* 1966 in Civic Park, Newcastle which was completed in 1966.

think

How has Hinder incorporated aspects of architecture and engineering in her work? Why do you think she has done this? What does the work remind you of?

make

Using stiff cardboard, nuts and bolts create your own freestanding geometric sculpture using a repeated shape. Remember that your sculpture will need to be viewed from all sides.



look PUBLIC ART

In 1961, Hinder was awarded 400 pounds for her design for an illuminated fountain for Civic Park in Newcastle and a further 100 pounds for a maquette. Hinder said of her design that she tried to develop a fountain in which the water and sculpture formed one unit. Hinder's completed fountain, *James Cook Memorial Fountain*, *Civic Park Fountain* or *Hinder Fountain* as it is fondly known, is regarded as one of the most distinguished landmarks in Newcastle.



Margel Hinder
James Cook Memorial Fountain 1966
copper sheet, granite and bronze, Civic Park



Alexander Seton
Bake a nice cake - pram 2008
white Carrara marble
45.0 x 30.0 x 56.0cm
Gift of Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation 2008
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

ALEXANDER SETON

Alexander SETON

Alexander Seton is a Sydney based artist working with traditional materials such as Italian marble and stone by using a hand-carving technique that he has developed over many years. His tactile sculptures often replicate everyday items such as t-shirts, teddy bears, a lounge, beanbags, dooners or coffee tables creating a contradiction of perception when viewing the surface. Seton uses these items as a canvas often playing with ideas inspired from politics, popular culture, news headlines or current events and places them in a new context.

Bake a nice cake – pram 2008 was first exhibited with a series of cloaked works all playing with the idea of aspirations and goals while demonstrating Seton's skill in delicate marble carving. The intricate folds of a white shroud completely conceal a pram underneath yet we only know it as such by the way the drapery seems to fall on the wheels, handle and

shade covering. Seton provides clues in the title of what is beneath yet due to the limits of the medium, the pram itself can never be revealed. The puzzle is left to the viewer to contemplate and imagine why the object has been hidden.

look

Seton's marble sculpture is diminutive; it is smaller than life size. Marble is also a remarkably heavy stone, and so the piece is substantially heavier than it's size infers. What impact does this have on our interpretation of the work?

make

Cover an everyday object with a piece of satin to conceal it entirely, then set up a single source of light and point it at your shrouded object. Use this object to exercise your life drawing skills, focusing on shadow and tone rather than the shape or outline.

think

- Marble is an established sculptural material, and has been used for centuries. How has Alexander Seton deviated from traditional sculpture?
- Reflect on Seton's chosen subject matter and the scale of his work. what effect does the size have on the work?
- Seton's sculpture depicts a shrouded pram. What connotations can be drawn by the act of shrouding or covering?





John Turier
The lone piano of the apocalypse (detail) 1992
timber, cloth, wire, pippi shells, cricket balls
320.0 x 150.0 x 60.0 cm
Purchased with the assistance of Sir Kenneth Myer 1992
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

JOHN TURIER

John TURIER

There are two works by John Turier in this exhibition, *The lone piano of the apocalypse* 1991 and *Puff* 2004. Turier has resided in Newcastle since 1976 and has contributed over thirty sculptural commissions to New South Wales. A musician and qualified plumber, Turier acquires diverse materials for his practice combining elements spontaneously until he reaches the desired form. Some works are abstract yet many have surrealist qualities with figures, animals, boats and bridges placed in a new context.

The lone piano of the apocalypse 1991, is a dramatic sculpture at almost three and a half metres tall. A clear reference to his musical background the work is theatrical and playful. A lyrical invention with pippis for notes and cricket ball hands, the work, as Turier explains, is like exhibiting a song.

think

Compare *Puff* 2004 with the Turier work in the exhibition, *The lone piano of the apocalypse* 1991. Research the word 'whimsy' and discuss how Turier utilised a notion of the whimsical in his works of art and in their titles.

make

A significant influence on Turier's work is his experience playing in bands and writing music and lyrics. Use the lyrics of your favourite song to develop the concept for an work of art.

look PUBLIC ART

Foundation seed 2005 is the tallest public sculpture in Newcastle at fourteen metres high. Inspired by the *Toona Ciliata*, or red cedar, that grew prolifically in this area in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the sculpture's base references the seed of the plant and the moving upper section recalls the leaf of the cedar. It can be viewed from the traffic lights in Stewart Avenue, in the Newcastle CBD, with sightlines continuing to the Obelisk in the distance.



John Turier
Foundation seed 2005
painted steel,
aluminium, bearings
14.5 x 2.5 x 1.2 m
Public art commission
King Street, Newcastle
West



Hossein Valamanesh
Untitled (palm leaf) 2002
palm leaf
90.0 x 380.0 x 12.0 cm
Purchased 2002
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

HOSSEIN VALAMANESH

Hossein VALAMANESH

The gentle, lilting form of a palm leaf floats across the gallery wall. The contour of a reclining body slowly reveals itself. In *Untitled (palm leaf)* 2002 Valamanesh has skilfully manipulated a dried, fallen leaf by teasing out the lower frond to create a delicate fringe and plaiting and shaping the upper frond, to suggest a reclining figure. The symbol of the palm leaf and its figurative sculpting (a self portrait perhaps) are powerful signifiers of Valamanesh's perceived otherness and exoticism. Arriving in Australia in 1973 at the age of twenty-four, Valamanesh has spent almost his entire career in Australia and yet his work is haunted with ancestral connections and memory. The palm leaf is an age-old symbol of the exotic and the other. A botanic species associated with the Middle East, it is a straight forward signifier of Valamanesh's homeland of Iran. However, the palm is also a species found here in Australia. Often planted in isolation or estranged from its rainforest habitat, the palm appears dislocated in domestic, suburban Australia. As a tree endemic to both past and present homelands, the palm signals the artist's search for

a connection between both places; the plaiting of the form is perhaps the weaving of cultural influences in the formation of self and identity. The silhouette or shadow is also a signature form for Valamanesh; a mystical projection of self and a symbol of possibility, flux and change.

look

Did you recognise the reclining figure in the work immediately? Artists often construct their works to encourage closer inspection. Why?

make

The silhouette or shadow is a common motif for Valamanesh. Using chalk and working in teams, explore the garden or playground at school, and conjoin your shadow with that of a tree or plant before tracing it on the ground. Record your work using video or photography.

think

- What meaning can we draw from the usage of weaving in this work?
- What other objects in our everyday life are made by weaving?
- Consider the installation of this work, suspended, as if floating on the surface of the wall. How do you think it has been installed? What challenges do works like this pose for gallery collections?





Louise Weaver
Golden snipe 2010
hand crocheted lambswool over taxidermied Australian Snipe
26.6 x 22.5 x 16.0 cm
Les Renfrew bequest 2010
Newcastle Art Gallery collection

LOUISE WEAVER

Louise WEAVER

Louise Weaver was born in Mansfield, Victoria in 1966 and has keen interest in pre-historic artefacts and Indigenous cultures. Her themes vary throughout her practice yet there is a clear relationship to the natural world. Weaver works across disciplines in her practice incorporating works on paper, paintings, drawings, prints, ceramics, glass, photographs, digital and sound-scapes. She is recognised for her sophisticated technique in crochet and embroidery creating complex creatures and installations drenched in colour. The exaggerated colour is divergent from that found in nature creating a parallel world for her sculptural environments. The space Weaver creates is a psychological wilderness concentrating on themes of change, metamorphosis, regrowth, revitalisation and evolution.

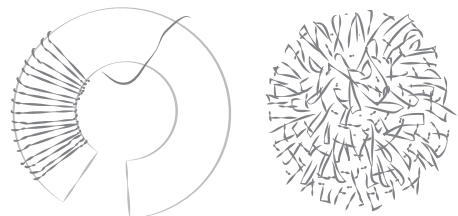
Oscillating from the real to the fabricated and created especially for Newcastle Art Gallery, *Golden snipe* 2010 is a crocheted yellow wading bird complete with the characteristic long bill, yet here it is gold-leafed along with its legs. Reminiscent of Haute Couture or super hero costumery, *Golden snipe* is alluring and stands as a museum specimen posing questions of the bird's origin in the real or magical world.

look

Weaver's work combines a taxidermied, museum style specimen with the traditional art and crafts technique of crochet. The gold leaf added to the bird's legs and beak and the bright yellow colour of the crochet thread also adds to the fascinating nature of this artwork. List all the words and connotations that spring to mind when you view this work. Is it gaudy? Clownlike?

make

Research the technique online and create a crochet patch, or even a series of pompoms, like the one atop the snipe's head.



think

- The Golden Snipe in this work has been cocooned in crochet. Research the concept of metamorphosis and consider; what impact this idea or that of transformation has on this work?
- How Weaver transformed the bird within this work. Could this be considered an evolution?
- Pom poms and crochet are common features of decorative craft techniques often used predominatly by women. What do you think is Weaver's intent?

