



Claire Lambe:
Mother Holding Something Horrific
8 April – 25 June 2017

Education Kit

Australian Centre
for Contemporary Art

HOW TO USE THIS KIT

The *Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific* Education Kit has been developed by ACCA Education to assist and extend upon learning alongside the exhibition. The writing is pitched at a senior secondary level, with the intention teachers can use and adapt the information to suit their needs. The information provided can inform further research or studies. An additional resource with links to Victorian and VCE Curricula has been provided, with examples of learning activities to be used in the classroom.

Content warning

The exhibition and some of Lambe's references include content, such as nudity, which may be sensitive to some audiences. It is advised that content is reviewed by teachers first before referencing in the classroom.



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CURATORIAL INTRODUCTION

Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific is a major exhibition of newly commissioned work, the artist's most ambitious project to date. Encompassing sculpture, photography and theatrical *mise-en-scène*, Lambe creates intimate and intense psychological spaces in an ambitious attempt to describe the human condition in its cruel reality and horrifying glory. Known for her strange and often abject sculptural forms, Lambe's work explores psychological narratives of gender, sexuality, identity and class, leading to anxious objects full of revelatory and emancipatory potential.

In a deeply subjective and sometimes transgressive practice of psychodrama and catharsis, Lambe draws upon a rich bank of personal history and reference material as a starting point for her investigation into the ambiguity between memory and experience, reality and re-enactment. *Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific* charges ACCA's gallery spaces with a series of corporeal sculptures and dramatic installations that are at once uncanny, anarchic and full of life and libido. The installation will be further enlivened by an occasional series of performances by contemporary dancer and choreographer Atlanta Eke, to be developed in the gallery space over the course of the exhibition, continuing an ongoing collaboration between the two artists.

Max Delany & Annika Kristensen, Curators

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Claire Lambe lives and works in Melbourne. Born in 1962 in Macclesfield, Northern England, she began her art education with a Bachelor of Fine Art at Bristol College of Art in 1985. After completing her degree Lambe moved to London where she worked as a prop maker for a community theatre company. Following this she relocated to Japan to participate in *Operation Raleigh*, a *Survivor*-style television reality show. After that project finished Lambe chose to extend her stay in Japan and supported herself by working as a club hostess. Subsequently, in 1987 Lambe moved to Sydney, where she worked making props at the Sydney Opera House, and in the same period began a postgraduate diploma at the University of New South Wales, before returning once again to London to complete a Master of Fine Art at Goldsmiths.

After completing her studies Lambe returned to Australia, this time basing herself in Melbourne. In 2010, alongside artist Elvis Richardson, she established artist-run project DEATH BE KIND, which they ran for two years. Lambe was a resident studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary from 2014-17 and since then has exhibited in many group and solo exhibitions including *Miss Universal* (with Atlanta Eke and Phebe Schmidt), Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2015; *Strangefellows* (with Lisa Young) Wyndham Arts Centre, Werribee, 2015; *Lurid Beauty*, NGV International, Melbourne, 2015; *Spring 1883 Art Fair*, Establishment Hotel, Sydney, 2015; *Neverwhere*, Asialink/Margaret Lawrence Gallery project, Gaia Gallery, Istanbul and *Melbourne Now*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2013.



ARTIST PRACTICE: MAKING, MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES

Sculpture; Modernism;
Physicality; Art History

Lambe maintains a hands-on, studio-based art practice which involves the use of a variety of materials including foam, unfired clay, steel, bronze, jelutong wood, perspex, glass, mirror and found objects. Her processes and techniques are equally diverse - including assemblage, casting, carving, film and photography, amongst others. When Lambe first trained in sculpture, at Bristol College of Art, she was taught techniques associated with “hardcore Modernism.”¹ This meant working with raw materials, like metal and stone, in a very physical manner, and learning heavy-duty industrial techniques such as welding. This type of sculptural education can be attributed to the powerful influence of modernist sculptural practices that were prominent in the 1950s and 60s.

“I think that’s why I use quite ephemeral materials, because it changes - it’s not permanent”

As Lambe’s practice developed beyond art school she moved away from traditional techniques of making toward less concrete (fixed) processes and materials, one example of such being unfired clay. Lambe has said this shift in attitude reflected a desire for her artworks to remain unfinished and unfixed. In choosing to use ephemeral materials such as unfired clay, she was subverting the commodification of her artworks, because they could not be preserved, which meant every time a certain piece was to be re-exhibited it had to be remade by the artist. The work could not exist in any ongoing way without Lambe, because she refused to allow these pieces to become finished by using other more stable, permanent materials, such as

wood, bronze or steel. Lambe recognises the moment that an artwork leaves the studio as one in which the artwork becomes defined as ‘finished’, but she also disagrees with and pushes back against this idea, because she believes there are new relationships to be had when an artwork comes into being in a new arrangement, alongside another artwork.

“I think I’d like to push beyond that, maybe be a bit bolder and say “yeah, this is finished”

In recent years though, Lambe has shifted direction and started producing more stable, permanent art objects. This reflects a change in her thinking about her art practice and the way that she wants her artworks to be in the world. An example is her work *Ma femme au chat ouvert*, exhibited at ACCA, which is a bronze sculpture modelled on a readymade image that Lambe found. This sculpture uses traditional bronze casting techniques to produce a very contemporary and unusual sculptural form. The surface of the work has been highly polished, making it reflective, acting like a distorted mirror for viewers surrounding it. Lambe is interested in the concept of the artwork as a ‘witness’.² It is interesting to think of all the events, conversations and environments that a sculpture might ‘witness’ after it leaves the artist’s studio. The soundtrack that accompanies this work at ACCA is the result of a collaboration with sound artist Daniel Jenatsch, who Lambe has worked with before on collaborations involving dance. The sound element of the work serves to expand the parameters of the work spatially and sonically, so it opens outward from the sculptural object to become an immersive installation. *Ma femme au chat ouvert* was produced using traditional bronze casting methods. The original form was molded and formed out of wax, which was then used to create moulds. The emptied moulds were then filled with red-hot molten bronze, an alloy typically made up of 88% copper and 12% tin. It can be patinated (given a particular type of surface finish, such as verdigris) or polished smooth and highly reflective, such as in this artwork.

Lambe has also used mirrors in her practice and her work *The waterfall* in ACCA’s large exhibition hall is an example. Mirrors can reflect the world and the viewer. Sometimes when we see our reflection in the mirror we can be surprised, because without thinking about it consciously we have developed a ‘self-image’ which does not quite match reality. Our reaction to our own image tells us about the way in which we think about ourselves. Lambe’s hall of mirrors enmeshes the viewer with their own reflection from multiple angles and also with an array of artworks, images and objects placed by the artist. This work might be seen to reflect Lambe’s interest in psychoanalysis, which is also indicated by the inclusion of her sculpture based on Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud’s chair. Lambe’s use of mirrors could also relate to French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s theory of the Mirror Stage, a stage of psychological development where a child identifies their own image for the first time, becoming aware of their own body and distinct identity in relation to wider social relations.³

1 NGV Melbourne, URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gV6dDTX7Fw>

2 Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific

3 Saylor.org, URL: <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/themes/Edu/curriculum/curriculumQAAJAX.php?action=getcourseunitqas&courseunitid=8440>



BIOGRAPHY

Personal histories;

Experiences; Northern England;

Formative years; Sexuality; Fetishes;

Psychoanalysis

Lambe draws heavily upon personal history, particularly her formative years growing up and coming of age in Northern England in the 1970s. She speaks often about class systems and sexual identity, and how difficult it was to break out of social norms during that time. Lambe has said she comes from an ignorant and foolish 'Benny Hill world', raised above a fish and chip shop, where her mother worked, and she shared a bed with her siblings.⁴ Growing up, Lambe says her working-class was a constant reminder of who she was, describing the difficulty in breaking out of that class or being subversive in any way. The brutal fun, cruelty and humour of the people in Northern England was a way of coping, surviving and being truthful. Leading up to her exhibition at ACCA, Lambe travelled back to her hometown of Macclesfield in Northern England to revisit old filmic memories, which led to the work *House of bones*, where the artist buries family members wrapped in plastic. Throughout her life Lambe has observed herself moving from one place to another, one class to another, leaving a part of herself behind. An instance of this is when Lambe moved into art education and perceived herself to be inferior to the other students.⁵

"I am at a point where I have more time behind me than I do in front, so maybe it's more about restaging memories now..."

Lambe's work also draws upon her experiences in relation to the sexual promiscuity and violence associated with the experimental art, music and club scenes of late 1970s Northern England.⁶ She is particularly interested in the sense of bodily freedom and liberation that people expressed through their self-presentation and behaviour in nightclubs and the music scene. She tries to revisit her headspace in these 'first experiences', and often restages these experiences so that she can remake or change them retrospectively. Many other personal histories enter Lambe's work, including working as a hostess in Japan, and her experiences as a teacher and a mother.

The idea of 'fetish' also enters Lambe's work, and she became interested in the form of iconic psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's chair when she saw it on display in the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna. This chair was made for Freud by an architect Felix Augenfild, as a gift from Freud's daughter Mathilde after she observed Freud sitting with one leg over a chair arm and his head cocked to the side when reading. Augenfild designed this unique chair to accommodate Freud's unusual reading posture.⁷ Lambe describes her interest in the chair as subconscious, and relates this back to artmaking, as a psychological space where she can be 'out of control', and not necessarily understand what she is doing.

⁴ Lambe, Claire, 2017

⁵ Lambe, Claire, 2017

⁶ Sarah Scout Presents, URL: <http://www.sarahscoutpresents.com/web/claire-lambe/>

⁷ BBC, URL: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/EPqt8An_Sj2ii9ulOnCr3w





RESEARCH & REFERENCES

Collected images; Film influences;
Studio; Assemblage; Bricolage;
Theatricality; Mise en scene;
Dramaturgy; Costume/set design

Lambe works at home in her studio, and has said she enjoys the unruly nature of artmaking. Her studio is often a bricolage of collected images, props, objects and materials, that combine form an intoxicating brew of contexts and influences – from Jacobean architecture and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to British television and European cinema of the 1970s, from art history, philosophy and Freudian psychoanalysis, to popular cultural references and ritualistic practices.⁸ Within her studio practice, Lambe researches and reframes these influences and inspirations, all of which she documents through process images. This reframing is often achieved through layering, using mirrors, windows and panels of glass; all evident in her installations for *Mother holding something horrific* at ACCA.

In her practice Lambe frequently references European films, particularly from the 1970s and early 80s. In many of the photographic prints in the exhibition Lambe has experimented with using subtitles, seeking to utilise film conventions without conforming to typical narrative, which, for the artist, has opened up new spaces and possibilities in the work.⁹ Lambe often cites Ulrike Ottinger as an influence, a German filmmaker working from the 1970s to the present. Ottinger refers to her films as 'living pictures' and tableaux, and Lambe's recent studio work involves people, sculpture and photography to create *mise en scène* a French term which describes the staging of visual themes and subjects in theatre and film.¹⁰ On a surface level Lambe is drawn to the way

Ottinger used different social groups from Berlin during the '80s in her films. In her work Ottinger collages references from everyday motifs, fantasy and symbolism found in ethnographic studies.¹¹

"Perfection is boring...you want to see people's vulnerabilities because it makes them human"

Lambe is interested in dramaturgy, and utilises props, costumes and set design to develop characters and situations. She wants the audience for her work to be able to relate or feel empathy toward the characters she creates. She explores the different roles people play in daily personal and professional lives, like the mother or artist.¹² In this way Lambe was also drawn to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* from the late fourteenth century, which is said to be one of the first English-language fictions. The tales were written using vernacular of that time, and characters from all classes in society, including lower class characters such as the Plowman, Miller and the Pardoner.¹³

⁸ Delany, Max, & Kristensen, Annika, 2017

⁹ Unsworth, Emma Jane, 2017

¹⁰ Lambe, Claire, 2017

¹¹ TATE, URL: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/ey-exhibition-world-goes-pop/artist-biography/ulrike-ottinger>

¹² Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

¹³ Cliffs Notes, URL: <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/c/the-canterbury-tales>



COLLABORATION

Photography; Performance; Dance; Sound; Family

Lambe is interested in collaboration within her art practice, and often engages with different artists, dancers, photographers and musicians on her projects, and some of these relationships have spanned several different projects. Lambe encourages and invites people to respond to her work. As part of her exhibition at ACCA, she has invited collaborators Atlanta Eke and Daniel Jenatsch to respond through dance, performance and sound. Jenatsch's sound piece will accompany the work *Ma femme au chat ouvert*, with four speakers surrounding the bronze sculpture, and Eke will be performing *Mother Holding Something Horrific – The Dance* in the gallery every Saturday for three hours during the first six weeks of the exhibition. Eke's performance will have a visual residue in the gallery space.

Lambe has created work with collaborator Atlanta Eke on several projects. The exhibition *Miss Universal*, at Gertrude Contemporary gallery in 2015, involved the exhibition of a large photograph set within an ephemeral installation and alongside dance performances. Eke choreographed the placement and encounters with the objects in the exhibition, thereby bringing her dancer's perspective to the exhibit. The photo itself was shot in collaboration with Phebe Schmidt, a photographer with whom Lambe has collaborated many times. Schmidt's background is in commercial photography, which has translated to a very high level of technical ability and finish in her photographic works. Schmidt's use of lighting and other photographic studio techniques result in hyper real, crisp images with rich saturated colours. This quality perhaps references Lambe's interest in various films and filmmakers as influences on her works.

Towards the end of 2015 after the exhibition at Gertrude Contemporary, Eke created a dance work that was performed at Chunky Move, a contemporary dance company neighboring ACCA, born out of the earlier collaboration with Lambe, which was itself inspired by a jelly wrestling experience Lambe had while living in Japan. For *Miss Universe* at Chunky Move, Lambe created sculptures for the production and also joined Eke and three other dancers onstage to weld a piece live.¹⁴ Footage from this work can be seen here www.chunkymove.com.au/our-works/current-repertoire/miss-universal/.

Lambe's family are important in the process through which she conceives of and realises her artworks. She frequently collaborates with family in her studio and in the production of her work, mainly involving her sons, Marlon in particular, and also his ex-girlfriend Emily, who each feature repeatedly in the photographs included in the exhibition at ACCA. In the production of works for the exhibition, Lambe's son Marlon also acted as her studio assistant, and they both travelled to Northern England to involve other members of their family for work included in *The waterfall*.

14 The Weekly Review, URL: <https://www.theweeklyreview.com.au/play/chunky-moves-miss-universal-when-dance-turns-to-jelly/>





ARTWORKS

The manual of instructions 2017

mild steel frame, jelutong wood, wooden birthing stool, photographic prints, audio booth on tripod
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

Manual of Instructions was the name of a detailed guidebook prepared by French conceptual artist Marcel Duchamp to assist with the disassembly of *Étant donnés* 1946–66 in his New York Studio, and the work's eventual reinstallation at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. *Étant donnés* is an elaborate assemblage in which the body of a naked woman – face obscured and legs spread – appears through a pair of peepholes in a wooden door. Reclining on a bed of twigs and leaves, the woman holds up a gas lamp to illuminate a landscape in the distance.

Ideas of perception, distance and depth continue throughout Lambe's installation – named in reference to Duchamp's manual. Upon a sculpture which takes the form of a cyclorama wall, a photograph of the artist giving birth appears, together with a stool that features in the image, worn now from years of use. Elsewhere are the scenes of a photographic shoot in Lambe's studio: her son, Marlon, covered in melted chocolate in homage to a scene from the 1974 art house film *Sweet Movie*. Surrounding him, source material and reference images are taped to the studio walls; assistants in the background reveal the artifice of their trade; and sculptural works in progress – now finished objects elsewhere in this exhibition – serve as backdrops and props. The openness of these images, together with that of Lambe giving birth, provides a glimpse into the real, despite the staged environments of the studio, cyclorama and gallery space.



House of bones 2017

acrylic screens, steel and wood frames,
photographic prints, rocking chair
3 screens: 220.0 x 320.0 x 20.0 cm; 220.0 x
180.0 x 20.0 cm; 180.0 x 220.0 x 20.0 cm
Courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout
Presents, Melbourne

In *House of bones* three Perspex screens divide the space of the gallery into both physical and metaphorical layers. Physically, they serve as architectural dividers, dictating the viewer's movement through the space and framing their perception of images and objects that appear visible through their transparent surfaces. Metaphorically, the screens can be read as dividing time: serving as symbolic markers of our past, present and future.

Time is ever-present across Lambe's body of work for this exhibition. Made in a contemporary moment, her works frequently make reference to a remembered cultural or personal experience. Here, a wooden window frame appears within one Perspex structure – a nod to an architectural feature in Antoni Gaudí's famous building Casa Batlló. Another screen frames a rocking chair from the artist's studio, its floral upholstery and decorative wooden frame appearing instantly nostalgic. Two framed images on the walls, reminiscent of film stills, depict images of the artist's family and friends in compositions that reference the respective film works of Helke Sander and Pier Paolo Pasolini. A central image, taped to the middle screen brings us back to the reality of the artist's present. Simply taped to structure as if a reference or a reminder, it recalls the detailed process of visualising and thought that has gone into the making of otherwise minimal and abstract sculptural forms.





Ma femme au chat ouvert 2017

bronze, sound, speakers

sound: Daniel Jenatsch, singer: Sarah Byrne

90.0 x 75.0 x 75.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

Taking centre stage within this composition of sculpture, light and sound is a bronze flower, positioned as if growing up directly from the gallery floor. Based on an illustrated form from a 1970s graphic, the flower here becomes an extra-terrestrial character, for which sound artist Daniel Jenatsch has created a filmic score.

Lambe is interested in the transformative potential of sculpture, and how the meaning of objects can shift and change in response to their environment. In a neighbouring gallery the flower appears in photographic form, in flirtatious proximity with a young woman. Elsewhere, it is seen as a work in progress amidst images of the working chaos within the artist's studio. By contrast here, issuing from the floor of this darkened gallery, the sculpture assumes a powerful presence and agency of its own, changing in mood according to the arrangement of Jenatsch's accompanying soundtrack.





The waterfall 2017

glass mirror, mild steel frame, photographic prints, sculptural objects, found furniture, memorabilia, LED lights
250.0 x 500.0 x 1000.0 cm

She hasn't got much money 2017

C-type photographic prints on aluminium composite panel
3 prints: 94.0 x 140.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne

The waterfall takes its name from the alternative title of Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* 1946–66; the final – and somewhat subversive work – that the late artist produced. Conceptually, the title also alludes to the double meaning of a waterfall: being a sublime natural phenomenon, with abject allusions to bodily expulsions.

Part sculpture, part-stage set, *The waterfall* speaks to Lambe's long-held interest in dramaturgy and the conventions of film and theatre. In amongst the mirrored corridor of architectural details are images and sculptural objects that reflect the wide-ranging interests that filter throughout the broader exhibition. A sculpture of Sigmund Freud's chair appears in relationship with images of the real thing; stills from films feature alongside other reference material and process shots taken directly from Lambe's studio walls; a photograph of the artist giving birth appears, returning an element of the real to the illusion of the sculptural set. Constructed from mirrors, *The waterfall* becomes a psychological space of encounter, prompting visitors to literally reflect upon their own influences and experiences, and consider universal ideas of space and time.





CURRICULUM LINKS

VCE ART: UNIT 1 & 3

UNIT 1 / AREA OF STUDY 1 / Artworks and meaning

Structural Framework: Lambe's *Ma femme au chat ouvert* is a multisensory sculptural and sound installation that draws together the structural elements of form, texture, sound, tone and light. The inspiration for the sculptural object was a found image.

Activity: As a whole class, use the Structural Framework to analyse Lambe's approach to representing the flower form. Focus discussion on the materials, techniques and processes employed. For example, how has she approached sculptural expression? Also, consider the style and symbolism Lambe has employed, and how her work contrasts with another traditional bronze sculpture such as *Flying on the ground is wrong* 2005-06, by fellow Australian artist Ricky Swallow, in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. For instance, how does Lambe's choice to polish the surface of her work to a high mirror finish change the way we view it? And, how does the element of sound affect the still, sculptural form?

Personal Framework: The exhibition *Mother holding something horrific* includes many images of Lambe's family including her sons and family still living in Northern England. There are also images of Lambe giving birth and her birthing stool in the exhibition. These choices tell us that Lambe's family are important in the way that she conceives of and realises her artworks. For instance, her son Marlon was production assistant for this project and also modelled for several images.

Activity: Using the Personal Framework research and compile Lambe's various references to family into a rough list and discuss what you think they might communicate about Lambe's biography. What do you think this says about Lambe's family relationships? What is your interpretation of how the artist's feelings toward her family have been represented through her artworks, and, how might these representations be linked to their personal experiences? Create a mind map that draws linkages between each representation of family in Lambe's artworks and your interpretation of her motivations.

UNIT 3 / AREA OF STUDY 3 / Interpreting art

All the individual artworks included in *Mother holding something horrific* have been produced since 1990, however many reference artworks produced before 1990. Apply the Cultural and Contemporary frameworks to write two separate comparisons, each a paragraph. The two artworks to compare are Lambe's *House of bones*, which includes a replica of Freud's chair, and the original chair on which it is based, made in 1930 by architect Felix Augenfeld for Sigmund Freud, and given to Freud by Mathilde, his daughter. For the purposes of this activity consider the original chair as an artwork.

Activity: Using the *Claire Lambe: Mother holding something horrific* Education Kit and other information that you source independently, write a comparison of Lambe's work *House of bones* and the object upon which it is based, the chair that Augenfeld's designed for Freud. Divide your interpretive comparison into two one-paragraph sections and in each address this comparison from the distinct perspectives of the Cultural and Contemporary Frameworks. This is an opportunity for you to consolidate your knowledge of these two very different frameworks.

Considerations:

Cultural comparison: What is the particular cultural symbolism that the sculpture takes from its source object? How do the materials of the original chair indicate its cultural origin?

Contemporary comparison: How does Lambe's choice of unfinished wood as a material for her sculpture reflect contemporary sculptural practice? Freud's psychoanalytic theories were developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. What does it mean to symbolically bring his ideas into present day?



VCE STUDIO ARTS: UNIT 1 & 3

UNIT 1 / AREA OF STUDY 1 / Researching and recording ideas

There is a huge diversity to the forms that artworks take in *Mother holding something horrific*. This can be largely explained by the great diversity of inspirations and sources that Claire Lambe draws upon in her art practice.

Activity: Spend 20-30 minutes in *Mother holding something horrific* with your visual diary, a pencil and a digital camera. Choose four artworks to focus on and devote a page of your visual diary to each one. Trace the evolution of each work back to its inspiration. First, accurately note details such as title, date and materials, then sketch the work and take a photograph. Finally, go to the wall label for each work and read about its origins and inspirations. The idea is to unpack Lambe's thinking and making process so you can better understand how artworks come about being created.

UNIT 3 / AREA OF STUDY 3 / Artists and studio practices

Lambe's practice is multidisciplinary (meaning she uses different forms of expression) and draws in many influences and inspirations from various sources. Concentrate on Lambe's use of photography and sculpture in her exhibition *Mother holding something horrific*, and analyse how Lambe has used these different materials, techniques and approaches to interpret both her historical influences (E.g. art history) and cultural influences (E.g. culture of Northern England), and biographical references (E.g. her role as a mother and an artist).

Activity: Choose two artworks from the exhibition, making sure that one expresses Lambe's historical influences and the other her cultural influences. Try using the exhibition wall labels as clues as they will discuss the most important aspects of each work's origins. Create a presentation that combines important information with images of the artworks you are discussing. Imagine teaching the content and communicating what you know about these artworks. Concentrate on showing links between each work and historical contexts; biographical and cultural contexts; influences; and interpretation of subject matter.

SECONDARY VISUAL ARTS LEVELS 9-10

Visual Arts / Levels 9 and 10 / Visual Arts Practices

Select and manipulate materials, techniques, and technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts and themes (VCAVAV042)

Some of Lambe's photographs in *Mother holding something horrific* include captions like the subtitles you would see in films and advertising. Select two photographs with captions to analyse. In your analysis imagine the prints without captions. How do captions change the meanings or messages in the artwork? Do they subvert the message?

Activity: Storyboard an idea for a photo shoot in your visual diary around a theme. Include notes on the characters and props you are planning to use, and the story you want to tell. With your storyboard as a guide, use digital camera equipment to capture your planned photographs. Next, think of ways you could subvert the meaning or message of your photographs by adding captions, and using Photoshop or other software, experiment with layering and adding captions. Consider how the style of text can also change or distort the message.

Visual Arts / Levels 9 and 10 / Present and Perform

Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artwork considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience (VCAVAP044)

Lambe is represented by the Melbourne contemporary commercial art gallery *Sarah Scout Presents*. Commercial galleries play an important role in the arts industry by exhibiting, promoting and

selling artwork. Research Sarah Scout Presents and the type of artists they represent. Discuss as a class: who do you think would buy or collect artworks by Lambe? Would her work be challenging to sell? Why or why not? Why might it be important for artists like Lambe to be represented by a private art gallery?

Visual Arts / Levels 9 and 10 / Present and Perform

Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artwork considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience (VCAVAP044)

Lambe is interested in psychoanalysis, and has even recreated Sigmund Freud's chair to include in the exhibition - Freud was the founder of psychoanalytic theory. What is the human psyche? Research theories and histories of psychoanalysis, including Lacan's 'Mirror Stage'. Next, analyse Lambe's installation called *The waterfall* at ACCA. How could this work affect the viewer's psyche? How does the use of mirrors make the viewers think about themselves? How does it develop a relationship between the artist and the audience?

Visual Arts / Levels 7 and 8 / Respond and Interpret

Identify and connect specific features of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary times (VCAVAR039)

When Lambe first went to art school, she was taught techniques associated with Modernism. This meant working with raw and industrial materials, like metal and stone, in a very physical manner, and learning heavy-duty industrial techniques. What is Modernism? Research two historical artists from the 1950s and 1960s that are associated with modernist sculptural practices. Choose one artwork from each artist and conduct a short visual analysis using art elements and principles, and research how the artworks would have been made. Identify some of Lambe's artworks that adopt similar materials and/or techniques.

Visual Arts / Levels 7 and 8 / Visual Arts Practices

Experiment with materials, techniques, technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts and themes in artworks (VCAVAV036)

Lambe's hands-on, studio-based art practice involves many different materials with diverse techniques - including casting, assemblage, photography and performance. She also uses props and objects from her studio. Over the course of a week collect found objects at school, home and off the street. Using these found objects, experiment with casting, assemblage or photography. An example is making a sand cast using plaster, and pushing the objects into the cast. Another example is assembling the objects to photograph in different arrangements. How do the different arrangements affect the meaning communicated by the objects?

Visual Arts / Levels 5 and 6 / Visual Arts Practices

Select and apply visual conventions, materials, techniques, technologies and processes specific to different art forms when making artworks (VCAVAV030)

Lambe's work is centred upon her personal experiences, and through her artworks she revisits and remakes her memories. On a piece of paper with a time limit of one minute, write down the first five memories that come to mind from your own life. Using one more minute quickly write down three emotions you associate with each memory. Reflect upon the memories and emotions you have written down and select one to develop further into an artwork using any medium. What medium will you choose? What elements and principles will reflect the mood of the work? How does your present situation influence your memory of the past?

Visual Arts / Levels 3 and 4 / Present and Perform

Making decisions about how their artwork could be displayed, for example, mounted and framed, in public spaces, on the internet, and in the media (VCAVAV026)

Lambe presents her artworks in the galleries at ACCA in many different ways. She even uses different objects to reframe the work, or for viewers to look through. For your next class art project, start thinking about a new way you could display your artworks collectively. You might experiment with different spaces in the school and consider the kinds of audiences that will experience the artworks.

Primary Visual Arts Levels F-2

Visual Arts / Levels 1 and 2 / Visual Arts Practices
Experiment with different materials, techniques and processes to make artworks in a range of art forms (VCAVAV022)

Lambe experiments with many different materials to create her artworks, both two-dimensional and three-dimensional. Discuss: what is the difference between a 2D and 3D artwork? Is Lambe's bronze flower artwork *Ma femme au chat ouvert* a 2D or 3D artwork? What material do you think this was made from? How do you think it has been made?

Lambe uses collections of images from films and the internet as inspiration for her work, which is where she found the image of this flower. Looking through magazines or newspapers (2D), find an image of something that catches your eye. It could be a person or object. Next, try and recreate this image using air-dry modelling clay (3D). You could finish your artwork by adding colour using paint or marker. As an extension change the object in some way that is different than the original image.

Visual Arts / Foundation Level / Explore and Express Ideas

Explore ideas, experiences, observations and imagination to create visual artworks drawing, photographing and making images and objects related to self, others and personal environments in different art forms. (VCAVAE017)

In Lambe's corridor of mirrors called *The waterfall* at ACCA, the viewer is reflected in the artwork. Using a mirror in the classroom, draw what you can see of yourself and your surrounding environment in the reflection. Try moving the mirror into different positions, beginning with four quick 2 minute drawings and then one longer 10 minute drawing. Share your sketches and reflect as a class.

Do another extended 10 minute drawing of your portrait as it is reflected in the mirror, leaving the background of the drawing blank. Afterwards draw an imaginary environment around you. For example, - in space, in a jungle. Share: what environment did you imagine, and why?



KEY VOCABULARY

Assemblage

A work of art made by grouping together found or unrelated objects.

Biography

The course of a person's life, or, and account of a person's life written by someone else.

Contemporary

Belonging to or occurring in the present.

Existential

Relating to existence, having to do with human existence as a philosophical subject.

Experimental Art

Referring to art that uses new or untried methods, materials or techniques to open up new avenues for expression.

Fetish

An inanimate object worshipped for its supposed magical powers or because it is considered to be inhabited by a spirit, or, an object or image onto which subjective desire and fantasy are projected.

Filmic

Relating to films or photography.

Mise en scène

An arrangement of scenery, props or other objects on the stage of theatrical production, or the set of a film.

Philosophy

The study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.

Psychoanalysis

A system of psychological theory and therapy which

aims to treat mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind by techniques such as dream interpretation and free association.

Verdigris

A bluish-green encrustation (also called a patina) formed on copper or brass by atmospheric oxidation, consisting of copper carbonate.

FURTHER READING

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Lambe, Claire, 'ON BEDWETTING AND FUCKING CLAY: Claire Lambe in conversation with curators Max Delany and Annika Kristensen', *Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Feb. 2017

Unsworth, Emma Jane, 'SPACES IN BETWEEN AND UNDERNEATH', *Claire Lambe: Mother Holding Something Horrific*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Feb. 2017

NGV Melbourne: Melbourne Now Artist - Claire Lambe. An artist video with Claire Lambe talking about her work in Melbourne Now, published 2014. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gV6dDTX7Fw>

Sarah Scout Presents: Claire Lambe. Artist page on representing gallery. URL: <http://www.sarahscoutpresents.com/web/claire-lambe/>

Saylor.org: What is Lacan's 'mirror stage' theory? URL: <https://www.saylor.org/site/wp-content/themes/Edu/curriculum/curriculumQAAJAX.php?action=getcourseunitgas&courseunitid=8440>

TATE: Ulrike Ottinger. Short summary of Ottinger's practice with biographical information. URL: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/ey-exhibition-world-goes-pop/artist-biography/ulrike-ottinger>

The Weekly Review: *Chunky Move's Miss Universal: when dance turns to jelly*. Review of Miss Universal at Chunky Move, 2014, a collaboration between Claire Lambe and Atlanta Eke. URL: <https://www.theweeklyreview.com.au/play/chunky-moves-miss-universal-when-dance-turns-to-jelly/>



VISITING ACCA

ACCA's Education Programs are FREE and available for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary groups.

Bookings are required for both guided and self-guided school and tertiary groups.
9am - 5pm Tuesday – Friday
Monday by appointment

acca.melbourne/learn
education@acca.melbourne

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Claire Lambe
*Mother Holding
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2016–7,
production still.
Courtesy the artist
and Sarah Scout
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