



SOVEREIGNTY

Talk Think Make

Australian Centre
for Contemporary Art



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This Talk Think Make lesson plan has been developed by ACCA Education to run alongside the exhibition *Sovereignty*. It is designed to run either as part of a Talk Think Make excursion to ACCA, or to be taught in school after visiting the exhibition.

The intention teachers can use and adapt the lesson plan to suit their needs and the year level/s of their student group.

Clinton Nain, *Water Bottle Bags*, 2013 - 2016. Photo: Andrew Curtis

Key Concept/s:

The interplay of traditional Indigenous knowledge and relationship to country with contemporary conditions - focusing on the specific land on which ACCA stands and its immediate surrounds.

Key Artwork:

Clinton Nain, *Water bottle bags* 2013 - 2016

Activity Outline:

This is a creative suspended sculpture/mobile making workshop. Students will learn about the landscape as it would have appeared prior to colonisation through discussion about native plants that would have grown where ACCA stands today. Students will combine these plants with a selection of industrial, commercial and throw-away materials that are symbolically representative of the contemporary, colonised status of the environment.

Students will create hanging mobiles or suspended sculptures that will create constellations of the pre and post colonial materials in interaction. These will act as metaphors for the complex, layered Indigenous and colonial histories that constitute contemporary Australia.

This activity is inspired formally and conceptually by Clinton Nain's *Water bottle bags*, 2013-16, and, more broadly, the tension between Australian as it would have been prior to settlement/ invasion and contemporary Australia as it stands today, running through many of the artwork in *Sovereignty*.

Duration: 45 - 60 minutes.

Clinton Nain, *Water Bottle Bags*, details, 2013 - 2016.
Photo: Andrew Curtis



Materials:

- Local Indigenous flora - bark, leaves, gumnuts
- Industrial materials - such as used in construction, junk materials, or throw away items
- String
- Fixing system
- Structure for hanging mobiles during making activity - dowel and base construction

Learning Intention/s:

Students will gain an understanding of the differences between traditional Indigenous and contemporary colonial material within the Australian environment. This will include uses of natural resources and habitat engagement, and how this can be explored structurally via the making of a sculptural mobile artwork.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will finish the activity having made a kinetic hanging sculptural mobile using native flora and contemporary materials.

They will be able to explain in everyday language or art language (depending on year level) the ideas and processes involved in Clinton Nain's *Water bottle bags*

Cross-curriculum Priority Alignments:

Learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories cultures

Sustainability

Lesson Sequence:

Set up a materials table and work tables. Students are to use the edge of their table as a means of hanging their artwork during making.

Introduce the activity and show images of Clinton Nain's *Water bottle bags* to refresh student memories.

Discuss the notion of pre (Indigenous bark, leaves, other native flora) and post (plastics, synthetic, readymade materials) colonial materials as an artistic metaphor for contemporary Australia. Ask them to consider the symbolic properties of each material, what they might represent in an artwork. Tell students that there will be a period for making and after a period for sharing and reflection upon their artworks.

Demonstrate some basic techniques to tie and incorporate materials into hanging sculptures - attaching, balancing, etc.

Choose students to talk about what they have made and the choices that resulted in their artwork.

Hang an exhibition of hanging sculptures/mobiles in the classroom.

Key Vocabulary:

- Indigenous flora
- Introduced materials
- Sculpture
- Symbolism
- Metaphor