

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

THIS **VANISHING WORLD**

PHOTOGRAPHY OF OLEGAS TRUCHANAS

**SKETCHING THE
SUBLIME LANDSCAPE**

ACTIVITY SHEETS



PRIOR LEARNING

INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION

ACTIVITY: MAKING VIEWFINDER

ACTIVITY: SKETCHING LANDSCAPE AROUND SCHOOL

DISCUSSION: CAPTURING THE 'SUBLIME' LANDSCAPE

Olegas Truchanas dedicated years of his life to exploring, photographing and documenting some of the wildest and most remote parts of the Tasmanian landscape. Born and raised in Lithuania, his family fled the country when it was invaded during WWII, and he spent time in refugee camps in Germany. It was there in the mountains where he first discovered and learnt the art of photography. When he relocated to Tasmania, he brought his passion for the outdoors and photography with him. In his photography the viewer sees Tasmania through Olegas' eyes, a Tasmania many of us will never venture to see. His passion for Tasmania's wild places and the inherent value in their natural beauty drove Olegas to join the campaign against the damming of Lake Pedder, using his photographs of the beach and beauty of Lake Pedder as ammunition for its salvation. He lived and worked in a time before digital photography technology and used entry level camera equipment. Although he may not have had a professional's tools, he had a professional's eye for capturing the sublime landscape.

In art terms 'sublime' refers to art that produces feelings of awe, terror, wonder and a feeling of our minuteness in comparison to the grand and powerful or *terrifying vastness*.¹ Art that depicts nature in dramatic scenes of breathtaking landscapes, powerful seas and storms and the feelings that they produce can be referred to as capturing this idea of the 'sublime'. Artists try to recreate the experience of these feelings of awe through dramatic scenes of nature.

Art can be a language through which you express feelings that you cannot find words for; overwhelmed, extreme, intangible feelings; feelings that are difficult to describe in words.

"Artists employ the sublime to comment not only on our relationship with nature, but the fast-changing pace of technology as well as troubling contemporary events of war and violence".²



Caspar David FRIEDRICH *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* c1818
Oil on canvas. 94.8 cm x 74.8 cm. Hamburger Kunsthalle

In this oil painting from 1817, Casper David Friedrich depicts a scene of a hiker standing on top of a mountain looking over a fog-filled valley. The view is vast, but the sea of fog has it hidden from view, perhaps as a metaphor for life's journey into the unknown?

DISCUSSION

Discuss the idea of the sublime in art in relation to the Caspar David Friedrich painting

What is it about dramatic scenes of nature that can lead to these feelings of awe, terror and wonder?

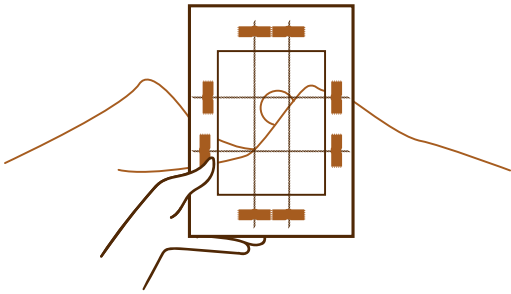
Why do you think this is?

1 Emmanuel Kant located the sublime in humans' incapacity to understand terrifying vastness and because of this we recognize our own smallness and limitations. Source: *The Art Story: The Sublime in Art - Modern Art Terms and Concepts* | TheArtStory
2 Source: *The Art Story: The Sublime in Art - Modern Art Terms and Concepts* | TheArtStory

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MAKE YOUR OWN VIEWFINDER

A viewfinder can help you to focus on the area you are drawing. It will help with composition, perspective and scale.



TO MAKE A VIEWFINDER YOU WILL NEED

- 
scissors
- 
string
- 
tape or glue
- 
thick paper

TIP you can glue the print-out onto thicker card to give your viewfinder more stability.

HOW IT WORKS

Closing one eye, hold the viewfinder at arm's length. Notice that what you can see will change depending on how far away you can hold it.

In some respects, it works as a zoom, much like that in a camera. The closer to your eye you hold it, the 'wider' the view becomes, the further away you hold it, the more 'zoomed in' the view appears.

Use the string grid points to mark areas onto your page in the correct position. Remember to draw what you see, not what you think you see.



Glue or tape string to the black lines



Cut along the dotted line

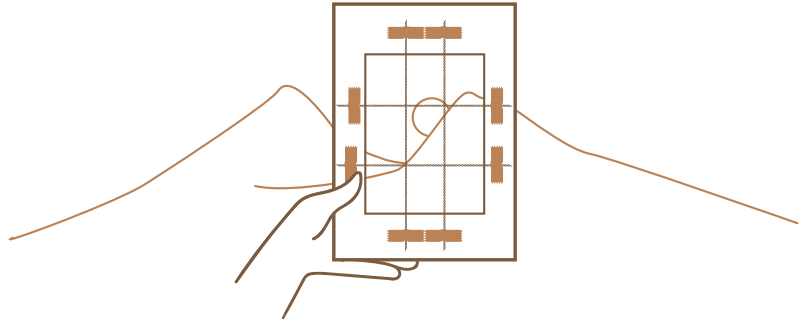


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ACTIVITY: SKETCHING OUTSIDE

1

Take your viewfinder outside with a pencil, paper and clipboard.



2

Find an interesting composition through your viewfinder to sketch.

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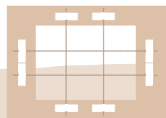
While holding your viewfinder up, close one eye. This will help you see the frame and the landscape through it.

4

Look at the composition of the framed landscape.

Composition refers to the way objects and elements are arranged throughout the frame.

A good composition leads the viewer's eye through the image.



5

Where is the focal point in your framed landscape?

What is your eye first drawn to?

6

Remember to sketch what you see, not what you think you see.



7

Continue drawing with regular checking through the your viewfinder for accuracy.

TIP You can take a photo of the view through the frame of your viewfinder if this helps you to focus.



EXHIBITION VISIT

INQUIRY QUESTIONS
GROUP DISCUSSION
ACTIVITY: SKETCHING IN EXHIBITION

THIS VANISHING WORLD



Q: As you view the exhibition, consider why it has been named *This Vanishing World*?

How do you feel about this and why?

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Q: What challenges did Truchanas face in producing his work?

How has technology changed since Truchanas' time (including technology in photography)?

How has this new technology reduced/eliminated the challenges Truchanas would have faced?

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Q: What was Truchanas' motivation/meaning behind his work?

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THIS VANISHING WORLD

Q: What is a 'lasting legacy' and why is Truchanas' work considered important?

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Q: Would you consider the photographs of Truchanas as art? Why/why not?

If the photographs had been produced by someone this year, would this affect your opinion?

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ACTIVITY: EXHIBITION THEMES



The curators of the exhibition have organised the content into four themes: resilience, passion, artistry and impact.

In pairs or groups of three, look at the photographs on display throughout the exhibition and choose one to focus on.

Discuss with your partner/group which of the four themes it best fits into and why.

SHARE your ideas with the class.

FURTHER INQUIRY QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION IN THE EXHIBITION

The time Truchanas spent in solitude in the wilderness helped him heal from traumatic experiences. It also inspired his creativity.

Why do you think this helped?

What is it about spending time in solitude/ alone in nature that can have this effect on us?



How do you feel when you look at Truchanas' photographs of vast mountains and skies?

What kinds of emotions do you think his photographs have captured?

How do you think Truchanas felt when he took these photographs?

Would you say he has captured the 'sublime' in his photographs?

Which one(s) in particular and why?

ACTIVITY: SKETCHING



1

Choose a photograph in the *This Vanishing World* exhibition that evokes feelings of awe and wonder for you.

2

Use your viewfinder to frame one part of the photograph and create a sketch of it.



3

Consider the image you see through your viewfinder may create a more abstract/zoomed in picture of the landscape photograph. This offers a different perspective and changes the mood of the image.

TIP You can take a photo of the view through the frame of your viewfinder if this helps you to focus.



POST LEARNING

DISCUSSION: INQUIRY QUESTIONS

ACTIVITY: COMPLETING SKETCHES WITH WATERCOLOUR

ACTIVITY: WATERCOLOUR



Complete your sketches from the exhibition using watercolours to bring them to life and add a further dimension of colour.

FURTHER OPTIONAL LEARNING ASSIGNMENT

Using the 'sublime' as inspiration, create a body of work that captures what the 'sublime' means to you. The work may be produced in any media you think most suitable for the assignment. Upon completion share your work with the class and explain why you think it captures the sublime.