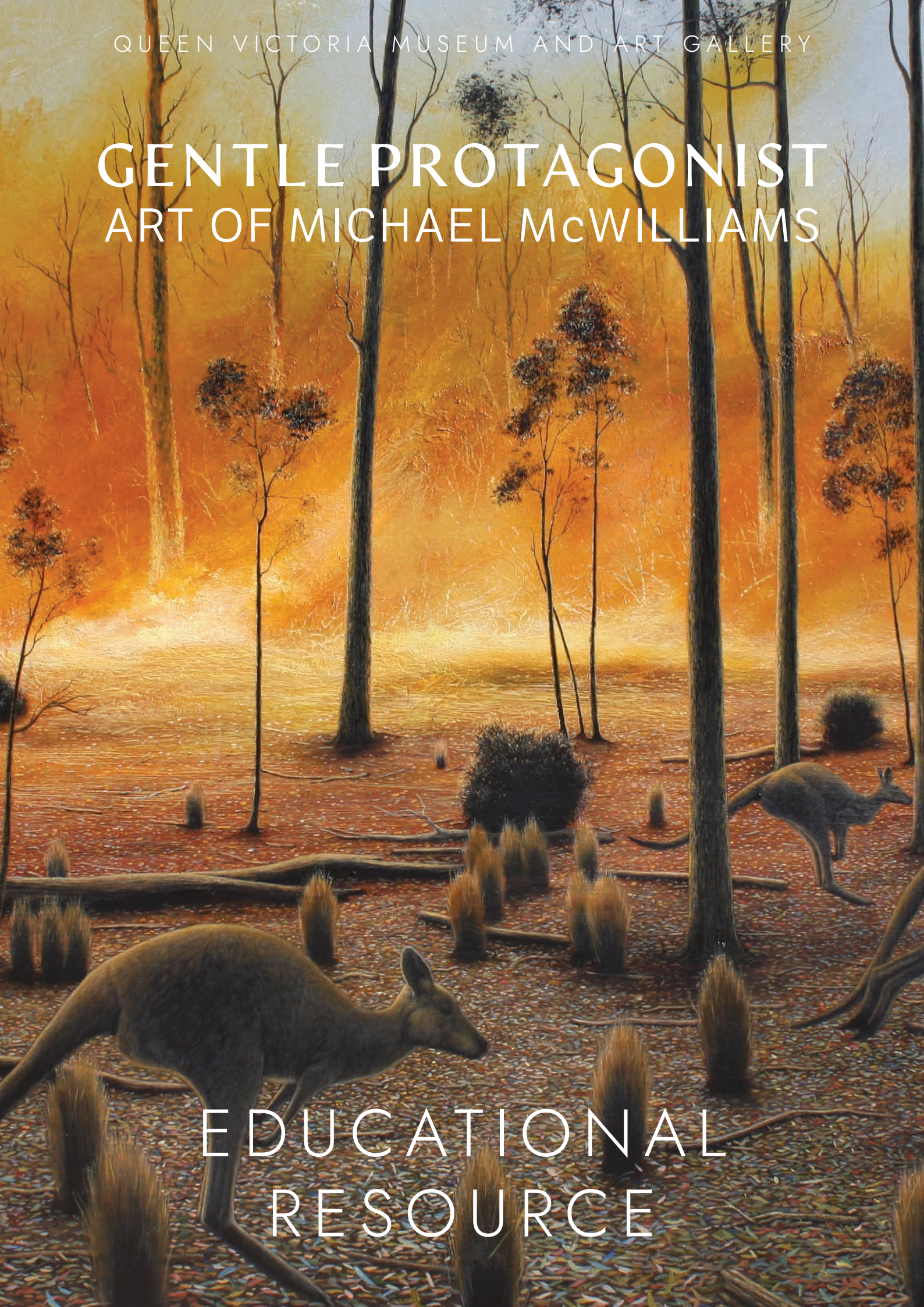


QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

# GENTLE PROTAGONIST

## ART OF MICHAEL McWILLIAMS

EDUCATIONAL  
RESOURCE





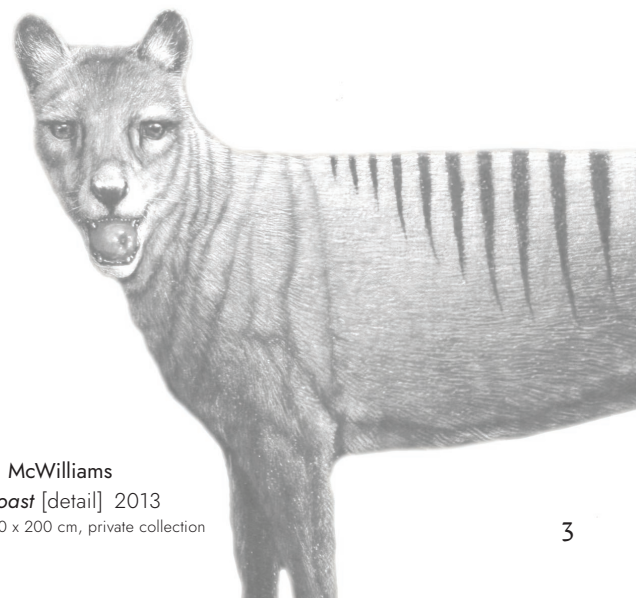
Michael McWilliams  
*Rainforest dancer* [detail] 2015  
Acrylic on linen, 120 x 150 cm, private collection



## PROTAGONIST:

**noun:** someone who works hard to try and make the world a better place.  
A hero who fights for a good cause, like protecting the environment.

Explore the remarkable journey of Tasmanian artist Michael McWilliams within *Gentle Protagonist: Art of Michael McWilliams* exhibition, showcasing a comprehensive survey of his life's work.



Cover: Michael McWilliams  
*Escaping the roast* [detail] 2013  
Acrylic on linen, 150 x 200 cm, private collection

# CURRICULUM LINKS

## VISUAL ART

### YEARS 1-4

#### EXPLORING & RESPONDING

- Explore where, why and how visual arts are created and/or presented across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts

#### CREATING & MAKING

- Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

### YEARS 5 & 6

#### EXPLORING & RESPONDING

- Explore ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are combined to communicate ideas, perspectives and/ or meaning in visual arts across cultures, times, places and/ or other contexts

#### CREATING & MAKING

- Use visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials to plan and create artworks that communicate ideas, perspectives and/ or meaning

### YEARS 7 & 8

#### EXPLORING & RESPONDING

- Investigate ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are manipulated to represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning in artworks created across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts

#### DEVELOPING PRACTICES & SKILLS

- Reflect on the ways that they and other artists respond to influences to inform choices they make in their own visual arts practice

#### CREATING & MAKING

- Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that represent ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

### YEARS 9 & 10

#### EXPLORING & RESPONDING

- Investigate the ways that artists across cultures, times, places and/or other contexts develop personal expression in their visual arts practice to represent, communicate and/or challenge ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

#### DEVELOPING PRACTICES & SKILLS

- Reflect on the way they and other visual artists respond to influences to inspire, develop and resolve choices they make in their own visual arts practice

#### CREATING & MAKING

- Select and manipulate visual conventions, visual arts processes and/or materials to create artworks that reflect personal expression, and represent and/or challenge, ideas, perspectives and/or meaning

# PRE-LEARNING

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Michael McWilliams is a Tasmanian artist who, after training to be an art teacher, began his artistic career by painting on antique furniture from his family's furniture restoration business. His extensive body of work features familiar Tasmanian landscapes and animals, exploring themes around the environment, the impact of native versus introduced species, and the effects of agriculture on our native wildlife and landscapes.

McWilliams' detailed paintings often carry strong messages of environmentalism, animal rights and nature conservation. His whimsical and sometimes humorous style adds a unique appeal to his art, often contrasting serious and bleak themes with a playful touch. As you view his paintings, notice how the creatures and characters seem to stare back at you, inviting you to ponder the stories they might be telling you.



Michael McWilliams  
*Escaping the roast* 2013  
Acrylic on linen, 150 x 200 cm, private collection

# SIX THEMES

The artworks in this exhibition have been grouped into six different themes. Read the descriptions for each of the themes. When you visit the exhibition, discover how McWilliams has presented them in his work.



1.

## CLIMATE | IMPACT

Works that illustrate how modern human impact has caused changes in the climate and natural environment.



Michael McWilliams  
*A decorated local* 2018  
Acrylic on linen, 60 x 84.5 cm, private collection

# 2.

## ECOSYSTEMS | ENVIRONMENT

Works that depict the environment and natural ecosystems, such as wetlands.





Michael McWilliams  
*In troubled waters* 2018  
Acrylic on linen, 130 x 120 cm, private collection

# 3.

## EXTINCTION | ANTAGONISM

Extinction refers to species that have been lost.  
Antagonism refers to something that is opposing  
or against something.



Michael McWilliams  
*New kid on the block* [detail] 2013  
Acrylic on linen, 100 x 150 cm, private collection

# 4.

## WHIMSICAL | HUMOUR

Whimsical means presenting playful, odd, appealing or amazing themes in a unique way.



Michael McWilliams  
*Gathering of the Friesians [detail]* 2018  
Acrylic on linen, 170 x 180 cm, private collection

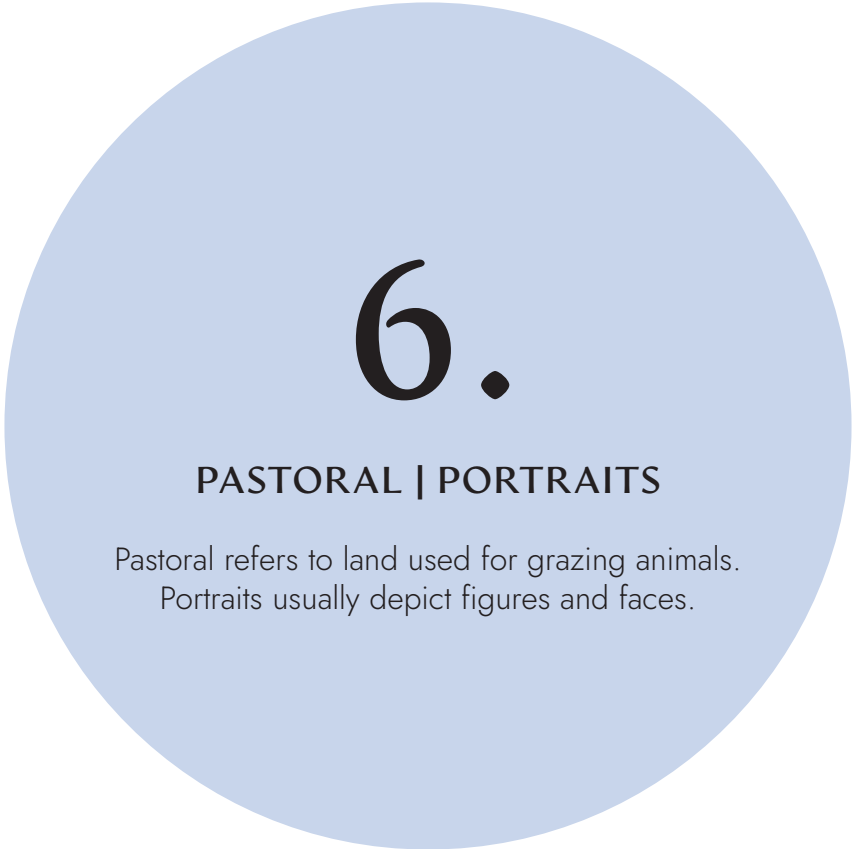
# 5.

## **METAPHOR | LANDSCAPE**

Metaphor is when something has a hidden meaning. It can be an object that is representative or symbolic of something else.  
A landscape is visible features of an area of land.



Michael McWilliams  
*Taking a stand* 2009  
Acrylic on linen, 100 x 120 cm, private collection



6.

**PASTORAL | PORTRAITS**

Pastoral refers to land used for grazing animals.  
Portraits usually depict figures and faces.





Michael McWilliams  
*The burning candle* [detail] 2009  
Acrylic on pine single door cabinet, 56.5 x 32.5 x 32 cm,  
private collection



## EXHIBITION VISIT

(downloadable print-out resource for teachers to give to students)

## POST LEARNING ASSIGNMENT

Drawing on inspiration you have gained from your visit to the *Gentle Protagonist: Art of Michael McWilliams* show, create an art piece that represents your chosen theme from the exhibition.



QV  
MAG

Michael McWilliams  
Millie's snack bar [detail] 2018  
Acrylic on linen, 100 x 120 cm, private collection