



Teacher's Resource

Cherine Fahd
A portrait is a puzzle



AUSTRALIAN
CENTRE
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY



@acp.photo #acpexhibitions2018 #acpportraitisapuzzle

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The Australian Centre for Photography acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of Country featured in this exhibition and across the nation. We celebrate the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Images

Cover Image: Cherine Fahd, *You look like a ... Matthew*, 2016. Courtesy and © the artist

Page 2: Installation image from *Photostart 2017* Courtesy and © Michael Waite / ACP 2017.

Pages 3-4: Installation images from *Cherine Fahd: A portrait is a puzzle*. Courtesy and © Michael Waite / ACP 2017.

Page 6: Cherine Fahd, *You look like a....(youme)*, 2016

Page 7: Cherine Fahd, *You look like a.... Jason*, 2016

Page 8: Cherine Fahd, *You look like a.... Thomas*, 2016, Cherine Fahd, *You look like a.... Mac*, 2016, Cherine Fahd, *You look like a.... Rami*, 2016

Page 9: Cherine Fahd, *Shadowing portraits*, with Anne Zahalka (2014-16)

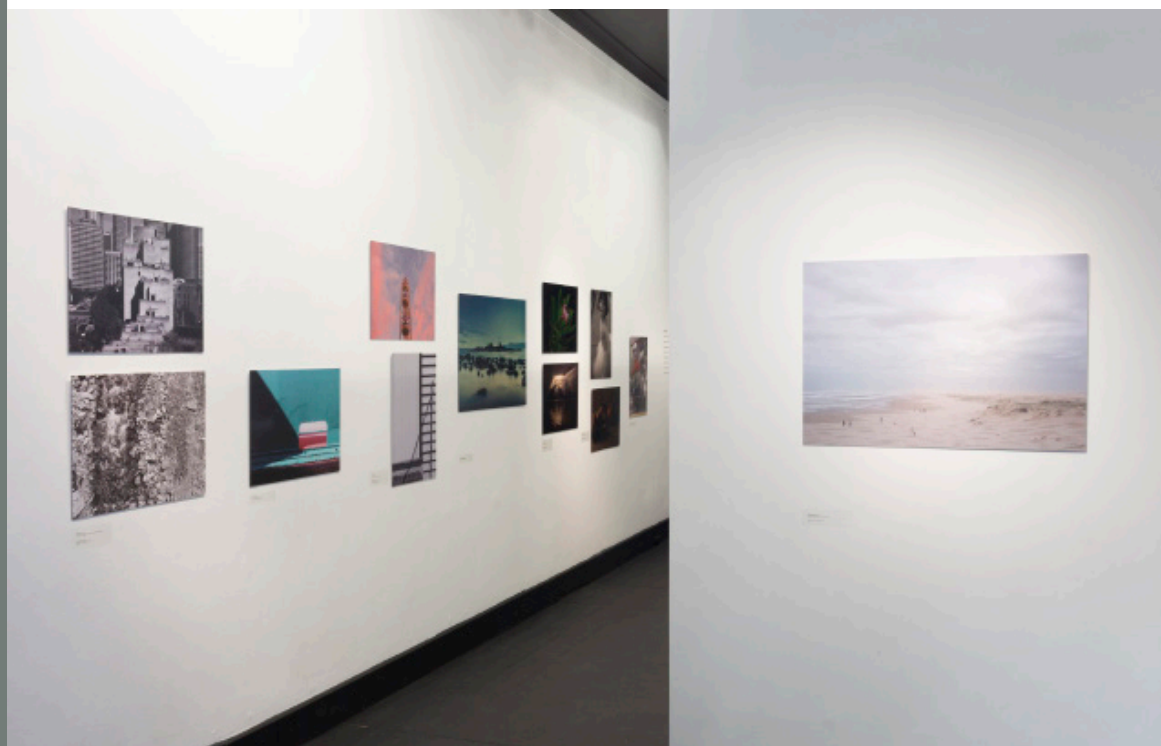
Page 10: Cherine Fahd, *Shadowing portraits*, with Anne Ferran (2014-16), Cherine Fahd, *Shadowing portraits*, with William Yang, (2014-16), Cherine Fahd, *Shadowing portraits*, with Clare Rae (2014-16)

Page 11: Cherine Fahd, *Kylie from the series I was half French, half Australian*, 2018. Cherine Fahd, *Simone from the series I was half French, half Australian*, 2018.

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The Australian Centre for Photography

About the Schools Program



The Australian Centre for Photography is a not for profit arts organisation dedicated to photography and new media. The ACP provides exhibition, education and community programs to engage audiences in a dynamic conversation about the role photography plays in visual culture. Our Schools Program is developed in collaboration with our experienced team of photographers and educators to align with curriculum outcomes and to connect your classroom with the world of photography in exciting ways:

Teacher Professional Development: Monday 23 April 2018 from 10am - 4pm

Over morning tea, teachers will have the opportunity to meet Cherine Fahd and discuss her approach to photography. A lecturer at University of Technology, Sydney the artist offers practical ways to engage with students of photomedia. Led by ACP Curator Allison Holland, this Professional Development event will also consider the significance of the digital image in a society fixated on social media.

Workshops: We will create the perfect workshop experience to match your students' skills and interests. We can also send one of our experienced and dedicated educators to your school for an engaging and informative photographic workshop covering a range of interests and practice.

School Tours: Students and teachers will experience our latest exhibition with educational tours from our experienced educators and curators. The ACP also provides Education Kits to accompany school visits to promote critical-thinking and enhance curriculum outcomes.

School Memberships: School Membership offers an exclusive range of benefits and opportunities for schools, staff and students.

Visit our website for more details www.acp.org.au

About the resource

Important information



Curriculum: The Cherine Fahd's *A portrait is a puzzle* learning resource is closely aligned with the Australian Curriculum through:

- The Arts: Drama, Dance, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts
- Humanities and social science; history, geography, economics and business
- English

Before using the resource: We encourage you to visit the *A portrait is a puzzle* exhibition before using this resource. To book a tour, please call 02 9332 0555 or email m.seeley@acp.org.au.

Set classroom ground rules: Due to the political nature of the content, setting classroom ground rules with your students before viewing is an important step in creating a safe space. It helps to develop mutual respect and understanding between the members of your classroom community.

Cherine Fahd in Residence: New work development: The artist has initiated a new project, *Two eyes, a nose and a mouth*, especially for the ACP Project Space Gallery. This project continues Fahd's interest in photographic portraiture, the human face and appearance, and the ways in which we 'make' and 'mask' ourselves for the camera.

You are welcome to create your own portrait in the gallery and contribute to *Two eyes, a nose and a mouth* by uploading your photos to Instagram [#FahdWorkInProgress](https://www.instagram.com/FahdWorkInProgress) and [@cherinefahd](https://www.instagram.com/cherinefahd)

About the exhibition

A portrait is a puzzle



Each work in this exhibition is a unique piece in the puzzle of Cherine Fahd's ongoing self-portrait. Merging her own identity with those of others, Fahd reveals, disguises, universalises, and empathises. Separated into four series, Fahd's artists, hipsters and glamorous celebrities elicit our adaptive unconscious. They question the veracity of first impressions and the norms that produce social stereotypes.

In *Shadowing portraits*, the artist playfully asserts her position amongst noted Australian photographers and art critics, promoting their identity while retaining her anonymity.

For *'You look like a ...'*, Fahd initially persuaded her brothers Kristan and Matthew to be her initial subjects. Terrorists or urban hipsters? All the men in this series sport beards as a lifestyle choice, not as a religious, cultural or political comment. Our response to this current trend for facial grooming is influenced by the disquiet of current global events, while also reflecting our national fascination with the outlaw Ned Kelly.

In the series *I was half French, half Australian* it is the blink of the artist's eye that disrupts our ability to 'thin slice'. For these unsettling and humorous portraits, Fahd has merged her features with Australian celebrities and French intellectuals to create dream-portraits. Here the artist's Lebanese background coalesces with vestiges of past, as well as continuing, colonial agendas. These animations oscillate between self and other, familiar and unknown, in effect creating a collection of 'un-portraits'.

This exhibition is accompanied by a publication. *A portrait is a puzzle* is in itself an artwork; a pairing of two photographic series that invites the reader to turn the book over and around, to reach two endings in the middle and to interrogate the function of a portrait and the people it depicts, as an infinite and unsolvable puzzle. Available for sale in the gallery or online www.acp.org.au

About the photographer

Cherine Fahd

“Interestingly, if you live in the Arab world as one of my brothers does, dark skin, thick eyebrows, dark eyes and a beard constitute the desirable norm. However, in Australia it’s far from typical. While being Australian guarantees all the subjects in my portraits the rights of Australian citizenship, they cannot escape the heritage of their appearance.”

Cherine Fahd, 2018

Cherine Fahd (b.1974) lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

Since 1999, she has produced an extensive range of photographic work presenting a contemporary approach to the genre of portraiture. Her work is typically created in series, creating typologies of people, actions and themes that explore the body, concealment, and the performance of identity.

Fahd’s extensive exhibition history includes major public institutions in Australia, such as the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Australia. Globally the artist’s work has been displayed at Recontres Internationales de la Photographie, Arles, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo and Haifa Museum of Art, Israel.

Her work is represented in national and international public, private and corporate collections. She has been the recipient of numerous New Work Grants from the Australia Council for the Arts, with some of these works included in this exhibition. The art awards and residencies Fahd has secured include the NSW Women & Arts Fellowship from Arts NSW (2005), Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Foundation for the Arts Photography Award (2004), National Photography Prize (2010) and the Moya Dyring Studio from the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2003).

Exercise 1

On Portraiture - Traditional to Contemporary



Portraiture began as a way of documenting a person's physical appearance. Wealthy people often commissioned artists to create a realistic representation of themselves, their family, or people of importance. The process was both lengthy and expensive, and therefore not accessible to everyday people. A contemporary portrait can be a literal or symbolic representation of a person, or a combination of both.

By the turn of the 20th century, photography increased in accessibility and popularity as the main mode of documenting a subject's physical appearance. It didn't take long for photographers to also start playing around with ways of injecting symbolic representations of the subject's mood or personality into their images. Both photographers and artists began to pay less attention to capturing precise physical features and focus more on developing compositional devices, playing with the use of angle, scale, pose, and non-realistic colour, and making measured choices about the subject's dress and the background to convey certain messages about the subject. Constructing and deconstructing the viewer's perceived reality of the individual photographed.

Modern portraits are created for a variety of reasons, and the boundaries of portraiture have expanded significantly.

QUESTIONS

After looking at Fahd's exhibition *A portrait is a puzzle* please answer the following:

- Choose one of the series in the exhibition and list the ways in which Fahd has drawn on traditional and contemporary portraiture techniques.
- Fahd draws heavily on her cultural identity and her experiences as a Lebanese-Australian woman in her work. Come up with a concept for a photographic work, considering your own cultural identity and heritage in relation to Australian history and the current political climate. Write a short artist statement
- Fahd blends both reality and fiction in her work. In *I was half-French, half-Australian* for example, she takes two representational portraits and blends them to create a fictitious image. Using digital technology, create an artwork that blends both representational images and imaginative elements. Write a reflection on your success.

Exercise 2

You look like a



“Fahd is questioning an assumption that to choose to adopt particular modes of appearance – in this case the beard – is to willingly choose to associate with an assumed identity, to be conscious of that association or to accept it within its broader cultural, societal and political resonances”
Blair French, 2017

Can a young man with a dark beard and dark ‘look’ enjoy the same style choices and physical freedoms as his fairer Anglo counterparts?

This is the question that Cherine Fahd explores in her 2016-2017 photographic series *You look like a.....*, a project she started after her parents pleaded with her brothers to shave off their beards, so they would blend in to Australian society and look less ‘like terrorists’.

In this series, Fahd photographed 12 men of Arabic appearance (regardless of their ethnicity) who chose to wear a beard for style, and not for religious, cultural or political reasons. She is intrigued by the similarities between the cultural image of the ‘hipster’, and the bearded jihadi who feature so prominently in Western media and film.

Ten of the men photographed stated fashion trends as the reason for choosing to wear a beard. The remaining two simply hadn’t shaved. One other participant also mentioned that, like Fahd’s brothers, his parents had also asked him to shave to blend in or become less conspicuous.

Fahd positions each subject identically – head slightly turned, gaze looking away from the lens, set against a stark white background. Each deliberately chosen to challenge the clichéd appearance of identification photos, while creating a sense of consistency amongst the portraits and drawing attention to their similar features.

Exercise 2

Cont.

QUESTIONS

After looking at Fahd's series *You like like a....* please answer the following:

- Considering your own cultural background and those of your classmates, and taking into account how this may impact your perspective, discuss and list the ways in which this series
 - a) plays with and challenges the cultural stereotypes the artist's family have experienced as Lebanese Australians.
 - b) creates a dialogue about the current media representations of Muslim Australians.
- Study this series carefully. Despite Fahd's choice to pose each subject in the same way, does close inspection reveal any differences? Consider the men's facial expressions, gaze, and body language. Choose one of the portraits and document how you think the subject may have been feeling, and what photographic elements led you to draw these conclusions.
- Consider other contemporary Australian artists that draw from their own personal experience and family to create portraits that explore culture politics and stereotypes. Research your selected artist and share your findings with the class. Artists to consider are Petrina Hicks, Lui Xiaoxian, Tracey Moffatt, Abdul Abdullah, Liam Benson, Anne Zahalka, Vernon Ah Kee, Daniel Boyd and William Yang.



ART-MAKING

Think of a time, or a situation in which you, or someone close to you, has been affected by 'first impressions'. Consider how you could communicate this experience in a photographic series. Draft and execute a plan for this series. Be sure to consider lighting, angles, backdrops and subject across each image.

Exercise 3

Shadowing portraits



Cherine Fahd's *Shadowing Portraits* (2014–2016) is a series of twenty portraits depicting artists she admires and who are key figures in photographic community, including Anne Ferran, Julie Rrap, Eugenia Raskopoulos, William Yang, Darren Sylvester, Patrick Pound, Jacqui Stockdale, Marilyn Fairskye and Anne Zahalka.

A combination of their photographic knowledge and their placement in front of the camera rather than behind it, are key aspects of this series.

While these images appear to be portraits, they also self-portraits. Although it is not immediately obvious, close inspection reveals another body concealed behind the subject, mirroring their pose for the camera. Fragments of Fahd's body peak out from behind those of her peers, as she mirrors their stance like a shadow for the lens.

“Making this work I was able to satisfy my photographic penchant to observe and photograph others; ... their attempts to pose and how they appear at a particular point in time, on a certain day, during a precise experience called posing for a portrait. Fundamentally, *Shadowing Portraits* interrogates the act of posing the self for a portrait. It highlights notions such as awareness, awkwardness, unease and doubt”

Cherine Fahd, 2017

Exercise 3

Cont.

QUESTIONS

After looking at Fahd's series *Shadowing portraits* please answer the following:

- Fahd studied drawing, painting and sculpture at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, and in her work often makes reference to photography's connections to these disciplines. Examining *Shadowing Portraits*, how & why does Fahd draw on the classic museum setting and traditional disciplines? Make a list.
- Consider the relationship between the subject and the photographer, and how this might work in self-portraiture. Would you feel a conflict between your expectation as the photographer and your potential discomfort as the subject? Put these thoughts into action by producing a series of self-portraits.
- Fahd creates most of her work at home. As a class, discuss some of the challenges an artist might face when creating photographic works without having a dedicated studio space.
- Many photographers express discomfort when being photographed. Discuss Fahd's choice to 'photograph photographers'. Is the discomfort of any of the subjects noticeable? Consider their stance, facial expression, body language. What does this tell us?



ART MAKING

Choose someone you would like to take a portrait of. Working individually, write down 5 key words to describe this person. Ask them to write down 5 key things about themselves. Now work together to brainstorm/workshop how you can represent both points of view in the portrait. Consider, pose, expression, angle, lighting, and props.

As an extension activity, consider writing down 5 key words to describe each other, and combining these in to one portrait work, drawing on both representational and symbolic elements.

Exercise 4

I was half French, half Australian



Kylie Ann Minogue (Australian)

In this new series of work, Fahd plays with portraits of both Australian and French icons from her childhood. Fahd melds her face with popular celebrities such as Jason Donovan and Olivia Newton-John, replacing key features with her own. Each moving-portrait has been transformed into a black and white image and given a white border, reminiscent of classic Hollywood portrait postcards from the 1930's. This series was created in response to Fahd's childhood belief that her father was Australian, and her mother, (who spoke fluent French) was from France. After a class mate from school indicated they were cousins, Fahd's grandmother informed her that she was, in fact, Lebanese. At a time when the media portrayal of Lebanon was predominately negative, Fahd recalls struggling with this revelation. Fahd longed instead to align herself with the French intellect Simone De Beauvoir, or carefree sun-kissed Aussies like Kylie.



Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir (French)

“In this work I have transformed myself into these dreams. Given a part of myself over to the fantasy all the while asking questions of such desires as an enduring and problematic vestige of past and continuing colonial agendas.”

Cherine Fahd, 2018

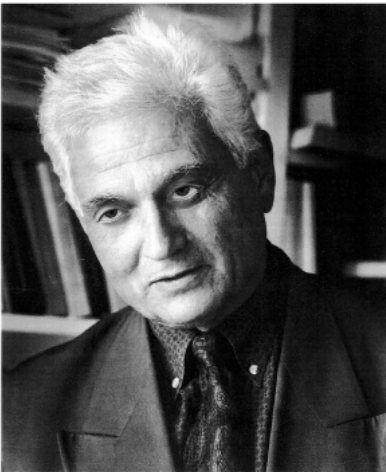
Exercise 4

Cont.

QUESTIONS

After looking at Fahd's series *I was half French, half Australian* please answer the following:

- How does this series highlight issues of identity, gender and heritage? Consider the relationship between the artist and the world, the artist and the work and the artist and the audience. Present your argument in a persuasive text.
- Think about the way in which popular culture influences your everyday life. Who are your favourite celebrities? Write a short essay on the creation of celebrity as promoted by popular culture. Include discussion on the role the media plays in influencing our perspective on culture and religion.
- As a class, discuss the role photography plays in the construction of identity. Draw on Cherine's work as a platform for who she is and who she would like to be. What contemporary examples of this can you draw on?



Jackie Elie Derrida (French)



Olivia Newton-John (Australian)



Roland Girard (French)

ART MAKING

Choose 3 celebrities or popular culture icons that you look up to. How are you alike and how do you differ? Create a work that includes and showcases the qualities you admire and aspire to and a work that explores those characteristics you associate with yourself. Consider working with moving image, collage or timelapse.

Glossary

Abstract - relating to or denoting art that does not attempt to represent external reality, but rather seeks to achieve its effect using shapes, colours, and textures.

Anglo - a person or descendant of a person of English origin who has settled in Australia. It is a term often used to describe anyone of British or European origin in Australia.

Cliché - a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought.

Collaborative – the action of working with someone to produce something.

Composition - Is the placement or arrangement of visual elements or ingredients in a work of art, as distinct from the subject of a work. It can also be thought of as the organization of the elements of art according to the principles of art.

Contemporary – Modern, current. Belonging to or occurring in the present.

Culture – Is the behaviours and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.

Document- record (something) in written, photographic, or other form.

Hipster - a person who follows the latest trends and fashions, especially those regarded as being outside the cultural mainstream.

Icon - a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration.

Jihadi – a person involved in a jihad; an armed or violent confrontation.

Marginalise - treat (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral.

Penchant – a strong or habitual liking for something or tendency to do something.

Political – Pertaining to or concerned with Politics.

Politics - Is a process by which groups of people make collective decisions. The term is generally applied to the art or science of running governmental or state affairs. It also refers to behaviour within civil governments. However, politics can be observed in other group interactions, including corporate, academic, and religious institutions.

Prejudice - Is a prejudgment, an assumption made about someone or something before having adequate knowledge to be able to do so with guaranteed accuracy, or judging a book by its cover. The word prejudice is most commonly used to refer to preconceived judgments toward people or a person because of race, social class, gender, ethnicity, homelessness, age, disability, obesity, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.

Revelation - a surprising and previously unknown fact that has been disclosed to others.

Symbol - a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract.

Terrorist - a person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.

Resources & Links

The Australian Centre for Photography website

<http://acp.org.au>

Cherine Fahd's website

<https://cherinefahd.com>

Classifying 'national types of beauty': From cigarette cards to Miss Universe

<https://theconversation.com/classifying-national-types-of-beauty-from-cigarette-cards-to-miss-universe-88154>

From 'Leb Bread' to 'Leb Kelly', finally we're seeing more Middle Eastern faces on TV

<https://theconversation.com/from-leb-bread-to-leb-kelly-finally-were-seeing-more-middle-eastern-faces-on-tv-87243>

Terror, Muslims, and a culture of fear: Challenging the media messages

<https://theconversation.com/terror-muslims-and-a-culture-of-fear-challenging-the-media-messages-77170>

Terrorist or hipster - what does a beard mean?

<https://theconversation.com/terrorist-or-hipster-what-does-a-beard-mean-74251>

Cherine discussing artworks in the AGNSW collection that inspire her

<https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/artsets/xx0z23>

Cherine in conversation with former ACP Director Suzanne Buljan

<https://acp.org.au/blogs/news/cherine-fahd>

Cherine discussing her series of work 'Camouflage'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUN7PJdL-hg>

National Curriculum Table

Visual Arts	Exercise 1	Visual Arts	Year 9 and 10	Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making. (ACAVAR130)
	Exercise 1 and 2			Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)
	Exercise 1, 2 and 3			Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by story, genre, values and points of view of particular audiences. (ACAMAR071)
	Exercise 2			Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes. (ACAVAM119)
	Exercise 1			Experiment with ideas and stories that manipulate media conventions and genres to construct new and alternative points of view through images, sounds and text. (ACAMAM073)
	Exercise 1			Evaluate how technical and symbolic elements are manipulated in media artworks to create and challenge representations framed by media conventions, social beliefs and values for a range of audiences. (ACAMAR078)
	Exercise 1			Manipulate media representations to identify and examine social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMAM074)
	Exercise 2			Manipulate media representations to identify and examine social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples (ACAMAM074)
	Exercise 1			Develop and refine media production skills to integrate and shape the technical and symbolic elements in images, sounds and text for a specific purpose, meaning and style. (ACAMAM075)
	Exercise 2			Develop and refine media production skills to integrate and shape the technical and symbolic elements in images, sounds and text for a specific purpose, meaning and style. (ACAMAM075)
English	Exercise 3	Literature	Year 9	Develop and refine media production skills to integrate and shape the technical and symbolic elements in images, sounds and text for a specific purpose, meaning and style. (ACAMAM075)
	Exercise 1			Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts. (ACELT1635)
	Exercises 1 and 3			Evaluate the social, moral and ethical positions represented in texts. (ACELT1812)
	Exercise 1			Plan, rehearse and deliver presentations, selecting and sequencing appropriate content and multimodal elements to influence a course of action. (ACELY1751)
	Exercise 3			Analyse how the construction and interpretation of texts, including media texts, can be influenced by cultural perspectives and other texts. (ACELY1739)
	Exercise 2			Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features. (ACELY1746)
	Exercise 1 and 3			Account for different interpretations and points of view. (ACHC3098)
	Exercise 1 and 3			How groups, such as religious and cultural groups, express their particular identities; and how this influences their perceptions of others and vice versa (ACHCK053)
	Exercise 1			Manipulate media representations to identify and examine social and cultural values and beliefs, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. (ACAMAM074)
	Exercise 1			and values for a range of audiences (ACAMAR078)
Media Arts	Exercise 1	Civics and Citizenship	Year 9 and 10	Conceptualise and develop representations of themes, concepts or subject matter to experiment with their developing personal style, reflecting on the styles of artists, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists (ACAVAM128)
	Exercise 1			Evaluate how representations communicate artistic intentions in artworks they make and view to inform their future art making. (ACAVAR130)
	Exercise 1			Analyse a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks (ACAVAR131)
	Exercise 1			
	Exercise 1			
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