**CA-Visual Arts- Joining the dots-transcript**

(Duration 52:06 minutes)

This talk is called, "Joining The Dots”: preparing for the HSC visual arts written examination, and it's designed to show you how to do just that. How can you connect up the different elements of the syllabus content, so that you're really well prepared for the written examination, and you can show the HSC examiners, the extent of your knowledge and understanding of the visual arts?

Before we begin though, with this detail of a painting by Emily Kame Kngwarreye, I'd like to pay my respects and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which this meeting takes place, and pay respect to elders, both past and present. This painting reveals the artists deep attachment to country, and, it's one that we'll revisit in a little while.

So, what exactly is the visual arts syllabus content that's examined in the written exam, and how can you best prepare to show that you have that deep understanding of it? We're going to look at how you should study for each section of the visual arts exam, and how you can join the dots of the different aspects of content, and then apply them both to the previously unseen material that you'll be confronted with in section one, which is probably the most challenging part of the written exam. Also, how you should join the dots between your five case studies, so that you can write a thorough, and well supported extended response in section two. So, that's the territory we're going to navigate in this presentation.

So, there'll be no need for the tears shown in this work by pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein. Here's the diagram that illustrates, what visual arts syllabus content is. Each of these three interlocking circles, represents one aspect of that content, and it shows you, of course, that in the HSC course, they're no longer separate, they're overlapping and interlocking. This Venn diagram really shows that you have to be confident to use all of these elements together. The frames, practice, and the conceptual framework, as you analyse and interpret artworks in the visual arts exam. The HSC examiners are assessing how well you understand and can use each of these aspects of content. So, what we're going to do now, is take each of these three circles separately, and unpack what they are, how they function, and how you can use them. We'll look at how they might appear, in an HSC type question, in section one of the exam, and also talk about how you could approach them, in the context of the exam and in revising for that.

So, our first area of content is practice. The important thing to remember, is that you already know a lot about practice, because you are a practitioner. You've been working on your own body of work, over an extended period of time. Whether that be as a painter, a sculptor, a filmmaker, a photographer, or in any other expressive form, or combination of forms. You're also an art writer in training. So, you know a lot already, about the practice of the art critic and the historian, which we must also examine, and you've researched your case study artists and you've tried different kinds of art writing. As you've been doing that, you've been engaging in this kind of practice, as well.

The image on this slide, shows the American painter, Kehinde Wiley, at work in his studio. It's an example of the practice of the artist. If you were presented with this image in the exam, even if you had never ever heard of Kehinde Wiley, you'd be able to make a lot of inferences, or deductions, about what he does, and how he does it. First of all, it's clear that in some ways, he's a really traditional artist. We see him working on a canvas, upright on an easel, using a paintbrush. We can see that his work is very detailed, and highly realistic. Which is why he needs such a tiny little brush. He appears to be working from photographs, pinned up in front of him. He's very close to his canvas, and working with great concentration and patience, one small section at a time, and, we can see the passion, in the background behind his figures. We're going to take a further look at Kehinde Wiley, a bit later.

Remember, you have to understand aspects of the practice of the critic and the historian as well. You will have encountered different kinds of writing, during your preliminary and HSC courses. So, try to be clear about the differences, as well as the connections between these two distinct practices. Of course, just to complicate things a bit further, many critics are also art historians, and some are practicing artists as well. So, there are many ways in which these three areas of practice, overlap and connect with each other. So, the key questions that we ask ourselves about practice; What is it? Who does it? How and why do they do it? and how can we write about it? That's what we'll talk about with some examples.

The syllabus tells us certain things about what's important to know, and be able to do in relation to practice. Firstly, it talks about the agency of artists, art critics and art historians, and the work they produce. This word, agency, is important here. It's cluing us in, to the fact that practice is very active, involving practitioners in multiple decisions. The dictionary defines an agent as a person or thing that takes an active role, or produces a specified effect. So, to have agency, is to be empowered.

It also talks about social structures, positions, actions, and sequences that affect choices, procedures, and judgments. So, that again, I think is cluing you into the really active nature of practice. Students learn also, that the nature of practice involves intentional, informed human activity. It talks about the inculcation of beliefs, actions, motives, and ideas, over time. That word, over time, that phrase, over time, is important as well because it recognises that practice is not static, it's continuously transformed, as technologies develop, as people gather new knowledge, as the world changes, and the world of art changes too.

So, this recognition that practice is fluid, and constantly changing, is something that's really important for you to be aware of. Think about Kehinde Wiley, in his studio, he's using Renaissance traditions of painting, but, he's using them to make contemporary portraits of people of colour, in America. His work is actually highly political. So, it's a good idea to know, about how art has changed over time. It's good to be able to explain that knowledge, by using artists or artworks from your case studies as examples. Think about ways you can link your case studies, in terms of the practice of the artists’ critiques or historians that you've studied. How are they similar and, how are they different? How, for example, has one artist practiced changed over time?

Summarising practice, then, we're thinking about how artists create bodies of work, that are built and developed over time, they respond to their world, they're experimenting with materials and techniques, and we call that material practice. They're doing that in order to convey ideas or beliefs. We call that the conceptual practice. Here, we've got an example of the modernist artist, Pablo Picasso, in his studio. So, this idea of artworks being built and developed over time, can we see that in the photograph of Picasso? We see that he's surrounded by many works in different media. Some are more experimental, and some are less so. We see a couple of different versions of a portrait of his wife, Jacqueline, behind him. About responding to aspects of the world, we see that as well, in this photograph of Picasso in his studio. We know that he responded to both his personal world, his life in the south of France, his wives and lovers, his children. We see a portrait of his children there, and Picasso is standing beside it. But, also to the broader world one of his most famous works, is his response to the bombing by the German Air Force, of a small town in Spain, in 1937, during the Spanish Civil War. The very famous painting called, "Guernica." We see that he's experimenting with materials and techniques. He's got works in the studio that are in the forms of painting, drawing, sculpture, and ceramics, and he's doing that, in order to convey his ideas. You need to remember, then, about practice, that the two elements of material practice and conceptual practice, are equally important. We need to be able to discuss both, when we're writing about an artist and their work.

So, let's see if we can test this idea out now, with this work, by Australian artist, Brett Whiteley. "Self Portrait in the Studio," painted in 1976. Look closely, just as you would, at the plates in section one of the exam. There's a lot going on here. We know that Whiteley is showing us something important about his life. He's also challenging conventions of painting. This was made back in 1976, at a time when painting was undergoing something of a transformation. He has blurred genres or styles of painting. We've got the interior, the self-portrait, the nude, there's still life with the objects on the table, and even a landscape, with the harbour view outside the window of his Sydney studio. We can guess that Whiteley was a bit in love with ultramarine blue, and with the sinuous curves of the female nude. Although, we don't see her head. So, that might tell us something about his attitude to women. There's a lot of distortion going on here too. Let's break it down into those components of material or physical practice, and conceptual practice. We see, it's an oil painting on a canvas. It's a very detailed, expressive portrait of the artist, as reflected in the mirror. But, there's this funny, strange additional collage, with a piece of hair stuck on the canvas. Representing his developing drawing of his own self portrait. Why would he do that? He said is it a reference to humour, or to parody in some way. We see that we've got distortion and simplification. There's this dominant blue, juxtaposed with the red of the oriental rug on the floor, and the creation of space, and depth, and distance. Although, it's an odd perspective, sort of flattened, simplified perspective. When we think about the artist's conceptual practice, we can see that he has these blending of genres, as we mentioned. Self-portraiture, interiors, still life, the nude, and landscape. We see, it's really about the artist in his intimate, enclosed world of the studio. But, even more than that, it's looking within. It's the artist examining his own psychology, his own psyche. He's making a lot of art historical references, in this work. Then, we have the important symbolism of the mirror. The mirror has been a very significant symbol, throughout art history. It symbolised different things at different times. Here, it's really relating to this intense, self-examination, that Whiteley is engaged in. I recommend that you make some summaries like this, of some of the key works from your case studies, and then, also try applying that to examples of artworks that you've not studied before. It's a really great way to prepare for section one of the exam. So, one of the things that Whiteley was doing, was making some very deliberate art historical references, in his self-portrait.

All artists do this to some extent, as all artists have studied the work of others, and draw upon their work at times. You've probably made references to the work of other artists in your own body of work as well. If you look at this work by Matisse, called "The Blue Window," painted in 1913, you can see straight away that Whiteley was drawing on his knowledge of, and love for, the work of the early modernist, Henri Matisse. From almost 70 years earlier. Right down to the dominant colour, the use of sculptures and vases and still life objects. The view out the window, and this slightly tilted, flattened perspective. Matisse was influenced by the post-impressionist artists who preceded him. Especially, by Van Gogh and Cezanne. He was also influenced, as they were, by Japanese art, especially, by the flat colour, and linear qualities of Japanese woodblock prints. Brett Whitely, was influenced by all these precursors as well. So, it's almost like a giant art circle. If we were looking at this work, or the Brett Whiteley work as an art historian, we'd be asking ourselves questions like these. They start with obvious questions, and then, they become slightly deeper, and more significant. So, we start with, what is this? What's it made of? Who made it? When? Where? Who was it made for? For example, a patron, a collector, a gallery, an exhibition, or for the artist himself, perhaps. Who owned it and, who owns it now? That's the provenance of the work or its pedigree. What purpose did it have? What influenced its production? How does it compare with other works by the same artist? By different artists? From the same time? From other times? Who saw it when it was produced and who sees it now? What meanings did it convey? What meanings does it convey now? They're not necessarily the same thing at all.

The practice of the art critic is different, because the purpose of criticism is different. Critical writing is distinct from art historical writing. It is based on some of the same questions, but also, some very different questions like these. You can see that we start with the same questions about what is it? What is it made of? How? Who made it? And then, starts to think about intentionality. Then, starts to think about evaluative aspects, about its impact. What's the impact of this work on me? What might its impact be on others? And, critics and making judgments, is it successful? Is it significant? And, thinking about meaning, about symbolism and visual codes, and the possible multiple meanings of an artwork. Now, not all critical writing is intended to critique. Art writing does also appear, in galleries and museums. For example, on the wall texts, or on websites, and in catalogues. Sometimes, the purpose of art criticism is indeed to be provocative, to challenge accepted ideas. Like this example from Australian art critic, John McDonald, in 1995, when he accused Brett Whiteley, of being vulgar, shallow, and very, very overrated.

Now, Emily Kngwarreye, again, you are asked to make informed deductions about artistic practice. You can make deductions here, about how she worked. Think about the layering of paint, with lines and dots that overlay a layer of underpainting beneath them. Think about her earthy choices of colour. This is a contemporary work, made using acrylic paint. Not made with ochres, such as would have been used for ceremonial body painting. Although, these artists, also, would have participated in ceremonies. But you can go further than that. When you're faced with unfamiliar artworks in the exam, you need to ask yourself, what knowledge do you have, from your study of art, that you can link it to? So, here, for example, what do you know about indigenous art, that you can apply to this example? So, in this image, here, we're seeing a detail, a close up, to give you a sense of the patterning across the surface. Here's the whole work here, and you can see its complexity. You're asked to speculate, about the meanings of artworks, and, locate them in critical narratives and significant histories. But, the way we use the word speculate, here, is very different from making wild guesses. Your speculation is informed by your study of artists and their works. You use the frames and the conceptual framework, as well, to analyse and interpret artworks.

So, here [slide of Emily Kngwarreye’s painting ‘Ntange Dreaming], about this work called, "Ntange Dreaming," from 1989, the curator, Aboriginal art consultant and art writer, Wally Caruana, said, her energetic paintings, are a response to the land of her birth, Alhalkere north of Alice Springs. The contours of the landscape, the cycles of seasons, the parched land, the flow of flooding waters and sweeping rains, the pattern of seeds and the shape of plants, and the spiritual forces which imbue the country. Wally's vision of the land is unique. Now, you may not have known those details, but you would certainly have been able to speculate successfully, about the spiritual significance of a work like this, in relation to the connection to country, of an indigenous artist.

So, what might this speculation......informed speculation look like, when it comes to the visual arts HSC examination? Here's a sample question. It's a question asking you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of practice. The question asks you this, "Describe the art making decisions made "by Subodh Gupta in plate one". One of the things that you need to be prepared for, is to read the citation, very, very carefully. It tells us that Subodh Gupta, is a contemporary Indian artist, born in 1964. The title of the work is, "Line of Control." We have to think about what that might mean. You can see what it's made of. It is stainless steel pots, pans, and kitchen utensils. So, clearly, very non-traditional art media. It is a very large work, which would really overwhelm members of the audience, entering that room in the museum, and you have some extra information. The title, "Line of Control," alludes to the Indian-Pakistan border, a zone of military control. Both nations, are nuclear powers. So, you have a lot of information, in the plate itself, and in the citation. So, think carefully about what you can learn from the artwork in plate one. Can you make links with other artworks? For example, those that also are made with non-traditional media, with found objects or everyday objects. What additional information do you learn from the citation? And, what kind of art making decisions has Gupta made? He's made decisions about what materials he's going to use, about the size of the work, about the form of the image that he's suggesting here, which recalls the mushroom cloud that follows a nuclear explosion. You have enough material, here, in the plate and the citation itself, to write a really informed response about the decisions that he's made, in both his material practice, and in his conceptual practice.

We now come to part two, and the second aspect of our syllabus content, the conceptual framework. I'm sure you can tell, because of the image here of an artist at work in her studio, making a sculpture, that there's a connection with practice. Here's the familiar diagram that positions the artwork at the centre of a network of relationships, and shows us that the conceptual framework is a concept, that exists in order to help us to analyse and interpret artworks in sophisticated ways. So, you can think of it as a set of interconnecting lenses, for analysing and interpreting artworks. We have the four agencies of the art world. The artwork, artists, audience, and world that actively interact with and upon each other, and they also interact with practice, and the frames. Let's see how this plays out in practice, as we examine the work of the artist you saw a moment ago [Title page depicting Barbara Hepworth in the Palais studio in 1963 with unfinished wood carving Hollow Form with White Interior]. The British modernist sculptor, Barbara Hepworth. So, artworks are made in many different combinations of materials, technical skills, concepts, and subjects. They can be physical or material, virtual or ephemeral. And here, of course, we're seeing a fairly traditional, three dimensional sculpture, that's made of plaster that has been polished, to be very smooth and white. Artworks, in this context, can be 2D, 3D, or 4D works, time-based works. They can be art or craft design, architecture or new and multimedia forms. We know that artworks represent ideas, and that, when they're viewed by audiences who interpret them, they become representations of meanings as well. The meaning of an artwork is not established only by the artist, but exists in a kind of interesting dialogue between the artist and their audience. So, in this way, we can talk about the work shown here by Barbara Hepworth, in formal terms. It's three dimensional, it's abstract. It's about shape, space and void. It's a cast form, made from plaster. Later, it was cast as a bronze sculpture. It appears to be very pure and minimalist. But, of course, straightaway, it reminds us of an egg. So, it's organic, biomorphic. It's a rounded form that might symbolise birth and life, and regeneration, when we start to think about the conceptual aspects of the artist's practice.

When we think about the agency of the artist, we think about a person who either makes artworks individually, or possibly, collaboratively, as a group, or a school. Or a movement. Like, for example, the Cubist movement. Or, enlisting others to produce their work, as many contemporary artists do. We think about, not just fine artists, but also craftspeople, designers, architects, filmmakers, performance artists, digital and multimodal practitioners. And, remember that last part, because you may be required in the examination, to adapt your knowledge of practice and practitioners, to thinking about the work of an architect, or designer. Or someone who works in ways that are very different, to the traditions of an artist in their studio, as we see on this slide, in the image of Barbara Hepworth, with her hands in a dish full of plaster, making large sculptures in her studio in Britain. When we think about the audience, it's also quite complex. You have experience as a member of an audience, whether, that's by physically visiting an exhibition in a gallery or a museum, or virtually, in your art classroom, or maybe by following artists on Instagram. It's best to think about how audiences interact with artworks as broadly as possible. Remember that the process of making meaning from artworks, is not solely in control of the artist. It's like this unfolding dialogue between artists and many different audiences at different times, and in different places. The meaning of artworks is not fixed and constant. For example, in the photograph here [referring to a slide depicting two visitors in an art gallery], we see two visitors to an exhibition of works by Barbara Hepworth, and both seem to be using their phones. Perhaps to read an exhibition text, accessed by a QR code. Or perhaps to take a photo of the work for their own Instagram post. Many museums internationally now think carefully about the design of their exhibitions, in terms of how they're going to appear on social media. It's all part of their intentional marketing. So, the question here, do new technologies and social media, change how audiences encounter and interact with artworks? Something that's quite important to think about, and have a response to?

Recently, a number of new media and conceptual artists are experimenting with the possibilities of virtual reality. So, here [referring to a slide], we see an audience member, with a VR headset, in an exhibition of work by the Chinese artist, Yang Yongliang. It's a very different audience artwork experience, than the traditional white cube of the gallery space. With singular carefully leash artworks, and the audience standing back to gaze at a work in a frame. This is part of the magical and imaginary world that she's entered. She's fully immersed in the experience. It's quite unlike looking at a painting in a frame, hung on a wall, or a sculpture on a plinth, and of course, when you're in a gallery or a museum, wearing a VR headset, you can't tell where any other members of the audience are, either. So, it can be quite unnerving.

What about art that is completely outside of the art spaces of galleries and museums? Public art is a distinct aspect of audience encounters with artworks. Whether that is street art, or integrated into architecture. Like, this sculpture at Sydney's Wynyard station, made from the old wooden escalators, when the space was refurbished, and some artworks, of course, are designed to be ephemeral, non-permanent. This includes installations made with deliberately temporary degradable materials, such as ice, water, melting wax. Even sugar, in a recent example. It also includes performance art. Sometimes, audiences see these works as they happen. Sometimes, they only see these works as documentation after the event, in photographs, or videos.

Then, we come to the agency of the world. This includes aspects of time and place, including changing technologies, philosophies and belief systems. The modernist world of Henri Matisse in the early 20th century, is very different in all these ways to the 21st [century]. As is the mid-century world of Barbara Hepworth. So, art doesn't stay the same, art changes as the world changes. This also includes the art world of studios, exhibitions, galleries, art dealers, auction houses, art fairs, museums, curators, collectors, patrons, critics, theorists and art writers. Audiences, then, interpret artworks, in relation to their understanding of their own world, and they see works through that prism. Artists, of course, are responding to their own world too, and their responses, shape the dynamics of their practice, as a vigorous and changing entity. For example, changes in technology. Or global conditions, such as the recent pandemic. Change how art is made, and where and how it's viewed. So, we think about the question here, with his poster, for Tate Britain's 2015 exhibition of Barbara Hepworth and think, how do exhibitions and museums, confer significance on the work of artists? You might consider focusing, on one particular exhibition that you've seen or read about, to answer that question, and to think about, how museums and exhibitions engage audiences. Also, how that's different in different contexts.

Let's now consider all four agencies, in relation to a work, by the Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei. "Law of the Journey," made in 2017, is a gigantic sculpture made of reinforced PVC, with an aluminium frame. It was shown at the 21st Biennale of Sydney, on Cockatoo Island, in 2018. The Biennale text for this describes the work in this way. Much of Ai Weiwei's work, exists in the space between art and activism, often, blurring the boundaries between the two. Politically outspoken, and an avid user of social media, Ai creates works rich with symbolism and metaphor that draws attention to social injustice. In recent years, Ai has focused his practice on advocating for refugees human rights. Documenting the experiences and conditions faced by millions of people who have been forcibly displaced from their homes. Speaking about this situation, Ai states, "There's no refugee crisis, "only a human crisis." So we can see that the writers of this text, were very much thinking about Ai Weiwei's conceptual practice, his intentions as an artist. If we use the four agencies as a very careful lens to unpack this work, we start to ask ourselves different questions, which elicit different kinds of information. So, thinking about Ai Weiwei as the artist, what do we know? We know that he's considered an artist and an activist. That he was born in China, but now he lives and works in Berlin, and also in the UK. So, thinking about his material and his conceptual practice, he's one of the contemporary artists who generally outsource their work to be fabricated by others. So, in that way, he's a conceptual artist. When we then look at the artwork, we ask ourselves, what do we see? What's it made of? How large is it? Would we describe it as a sculpture, or rather as an installation? Remember, revise and use your art terminology, as you prepare for the exam. And then, we think about what does this represent, this giant lifeboat, that's filled with enormous figures of refugees, crossing the oceans and wearing their life jackets? We know from the news media, the numbers of tragedies that had resulted from this global wave of people seeking safety. So, we can use the frames, to think about this too, of course. In particular, as we'll see in a moment, we could use the cultural frame, to look at how the artist’s intentions relate to this social injustice. When we think about audience, we think about where and when this was shown. Who saw it? And, how did they respond? We know it was exhibited on Cockatoo Island. So, not in the traditional gallery space of the white cube. We know that audiences had to intentionally catch a ferry to go to Cockatoo Island, because they wanted to see works like this, in the Biennale. So, think about how that's different, to people seeing a work in a gallery or a museum. It's a different kind of encounter. Then, finally, if we think about the world, what deductions can we make? We know the refugee crisis is prompted by war, and global displacement. It's considered a humanitarian disaster. It's an issue of human rights. Then, we have this idea of contemporary art, as a form of social activism. But, it's also art as spectacle. It's enormous, large scale, immersive works that are intended to be spectacles, for people visiting Biennale's and visiting large museum exhibitions. So, there's really a lot to think about here.

We can look now at how that might play out in a different HSC section one question. Here we've got a sample conceptual framework, question two. So, in the exam, that might be worth eight marks, and, you might be allowed approximately 15 minutes, to answer a question like this. [Question on slide is ‘Analyse the relationships between the artworks and the audience revealed in Plates 2 and 3’]. It asks you to analyse the relationships between the artworks, and the audience revealed in these plates. We have two very, very different, kinds of work from different times and places. The first is a group work, by random international group called Rain Room. You can see from the photographs, that it's this completely immersive experience for the audience, who enter an enclosed space. And, because of the way that it's been created with sensors, rain begins to fall all around the members of the audience. But, magically, somehow, they don't get wet. So, it's there in the dark. There's the sound of gushing falling rain. But, somehow, the audience themselves are staying dry in this space. In plate three, we have something entirely different but equally immersive. It's the Basilica of Saint Vitale, in Ravenna, in Italy, which is absolutely covered with glittering mosaics, representing biblical stories. We can see from the angle of the photograph, that the members of the worshiping community in this church, would be rendered very, very small, by the vast space at the height of the ceiling, and, by the filtered light that is gleaming off the mosaic tiles, here, representing these sacred stories. So, you have to think carefully about the relationships that exist here, between the artworks and the audience to answer this question.

So, summing up the conceptual framework, then, we know that the agencies of the art world are active, engaged and interconnected. You have to consider relationships between artists and their artworks, their collectors and patrons, their dealers and critics, their students, their curators and galleries, and, their audiences, whoever and wherever they might be. We need to consider relationships between audiences and the artworks that they encounter. Whether that's intentionally, or accidentally. In public spaces, galleries, museums, art fairs, in print reproduction, and also, increasingly, in online spaces. Consider real versus virtual encounters with art, and how they differ. Think about relationships between artists and the world in which they create and exhibit their works. These are complicated networks of relationships. I think of them as being like a kaleidoscope for interpreting art. When we turn that kaleidoscope around, we can see different things.

So, part three of our syllabus content, of course, is the frames. We think about, what they are. Structural, subjective, cultural and postmodern. And, here's a very familiar diagram, again. We see that, the frames, in fact, provide different points of view, and these points of view, help us to arrive at different interpretations and ways of knowing about art. So, with all of this syllabus content, we have multiple lenses, through which we can examine, analyse and interpret, the work of artists and other practitioners. So, we'll take each frame separately and look at how it provides us with different information.

Firstly, the structural frame. I like to think about these frames as something that we actively look through. So, through the structural frame, artworks are seen as a visual language that is made up of signs, symbols and visual codes, which may be interpreted by audiences. So, what is a sign? And, what is a symbol? A sign is an entity which signifies another entity. It's something that stands for something else and it might be very subtle. A symbol, is a little more obvious. It's an object, a character, or another concrete representation, of ideas or concepts, or other abstractions. It's something that represents something else by association, resemblance or convention. So, think about a red light, and what that symbolises when you're driving a car. It's something visible, representing something invisible. And, a symbol can be imbued with very rich layers of meaning. So, visual codes, then, are all the signs and symbols in an artwork, but it also includes the materials used by the artist, and the techniques that they used. So, for example, in a painting, that might be the colours, the application of paint, the texture, the focal point, and the composition. Even the use of light and dark, all of these things point to meaning, and all together, make the visual language of an artwork. We can use the structural frame, to look at this work, by Australian artists, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, called "Deceased Estate," from 2004. So, how would we figure out what are the visual codes here? Firstly, what's it made of? It’s objects, furniture, carpets, an old radio, laundry basket. It's assorted, old fashioned junk. It's every item, taken out of a deceased estate. A house where the owner has died, and how are they organised. They're not stacked, they're not on the footpath waiting for the council collection, they're organised here, in the white space of the museum or the gallery. They're bundled together and tied up with rope, to create a giant, oddly shaped and lumpy sphere, of sort of mishmashed colours and textures. It implies perhaps that they're no longer valued, and none of these objects have a function any longer. Even though, they were all once functional every day, ordinary objects inside a home. So, what could this symbolise? Is it about the pointlessness of acquiring material possessions? Or the sadness of a departure from the earth and all the trappings left behind that no longer have any useful meaning? Ask yourself, how would the work be different, if the artists had carefully laid them all out on the ground and sorted them by colour, or shape, or had stacked them neatly in piles? These decisions that they've made in their practice, are highly intentional, and very important, because they all point to possible meanings that you can interpret.

The cultural frame, gives us different information about artworks. So, what is it? How can you use it? Through the cultural frame, the value of art lies in its social meaning. We know that we can see artworks through different lenses of interest. Think about how art reflects and represents social organisations, identities, or structures. Things like gender, class, race, religion, ideology, philosophy and belief systems, power structures that operate in the world, and other elements of our social world that include things like technology, the economy, science and medicine. We can look at a particular work and see how can this play out when we examine, the possible meanings of a work using the cultural frame. And, we're going to look at this particular work, by the Chinese artist, Zhang Xiaogang, called, "Bloodline- Big Family No.3," made in 1995. We can see, a very sad looking family here, with a small boy dressed in a military uniform in between his parents. The artist is actually reflecting on his own very sad, early life during China's Cultural Revolution, which was a period of extreme chaos and violence. A time when families were torn apart by extremist political campaigns. But, in doing so, he's also representing the bigger picture of the historical period. Through this imagery of the melancholy family, with a son dressed in the uniform of the Red Guards, who were responsible for much violence, and sometimes, for betraying their own families. Zhang says that the people in his portraits seem calm, but that's because they had to learn to wear a mask at all times, to hide their true feelings and beliefs. So, the work is about politics, revolutionary history, and the impact on the individual and family bonds. Of course, we could also examine this work using the structural frame, or the subjective frame, and it would reveal different aspects and nuances of meaning and interpretation. So, how could we use the cultural frame, then, in section one of the examination, where you're looking at a work that you may very well not have seen before? Here's an example. It's a cultural frame question, about the Australian indigenous artist, Michael Cook, and it's asking you, to look at this very specific work called, "Civilized #13." A photograph that depicts an indigenous man, seated on a horse. He's not seated on the horse as if he's riding it, he almost looks as if he's sitting in an armchair, or on a throne. He's wearing European military clothing from the late 18th century. So, in this work, you would have to start to think about, the meaning of the title. Why is it called civilized? He's represented, seated on this horse at the very edge between the land and the ocean. So, these waves just behind him, encroaching on the sand. So, really, Cook's questioning the definition of the word civilized in this series of works. He's asking audiences to think about, how indigenous people have been portrayed in the past. Therefore, he's questioning assumptions about race and power.

We could also, of course, look at this work through the postmodern frame. We'll start to have a look in a little while at how we do that. When we then think about the subjective frame, it's a frame that elicits different information again. So, when we look through the subjective frame, we think about art representing and expressing deeply felt experiences, imagination, originality, creative expression. So, if artists are working in this way, they might work from their own experience, their imaginings, and their feelings, psychological and emotional states. Perhaps, think about the work we saw earlier by Brett Whiteley, and, how Whiteley was doing that in his self-portrait. By doing so, they're establishing a connection with audiences. The subjective frame, though, is about more than feelings. You need to consider the important roles that are played by intuition, the subconscious mind, imagination, memory and nostalgia. So, we might think about Zhang Xiaogang’s family portrait in that way as well, and think about how this is very much about memory, and trauma that's remembered and that the artist is expressing through his painting. So, art through the subjective frame, can have powerful impacts, through our responses to imagery, media, and visual codes which work at a primal level. Here's a sample HSC question one. Probably in the exam, it might be allocated five marks. It asks you to briefly outline three ways that an audience may respond intuitively, or emotionally, to the work in plate one. This plate shows a work by the Japanese artist, Yayoi Kusama, called, "With All My Love For The Tulips, I Pray Forever." You can see that it's a completely immersive experience for the audience. Interestingly, this question is really asking you to think about the audience's subjective response to the work rather than being focused on the artist. So, again, it's overlapping, with the conceptual frame agency of audience. You can see how you need to use these aspects of syllabus content together. So, think here about the immersive nature. What would it be like to experience Yayoi Kusama's work? It would be an experience of wonder and delight, and as we see here in this photograph, a temptation for an Instagram selfie.

Finally, the postmodern frame. Now, what is it and how do I use this? So, through the postmodern frame, we see artworks as visual texts, which critique or comment upon other texts. So, it's this concept known as intertextuality. They reveal aspects of power relationships and hidden assumptions. For example, about those who are missing, from traditional art histories and canons of art. Meanings are challenged, and new meanings are created. Artists re-evaluate notions of artistic genius, and the masterpiece. As audiences, we deconstruct artworks to create new meanings. So, ideas about originality and authorship are challenged. For example, by the practice of artists outsourcing their works, to be fabricated by others. Importantly, though, remember that historical works can be viewed and analysed through the postmodern frame. It doesn't apply only, to viewing contemporary artworks.

Let's talk about intertextuality. What is it? And, how can I discuss it? Here's the work by Kehinde Wiley, whom we saw right at the beginning of this presentation. It's called, "Officer of the Hussars," a painting from 2007. We can see that he's appropriating a historical work. This painting by Theodore Gericault, of "The charging Chasseur," painted in 1812. Kehinde Wiley is appropriating this earlier work for a very specific purpose. He's challenging and questioning assumptions about race and power. So, by taking a historical work, that exemplifies and exalts the military power and colonialism of the French Empire, in North Africa, he then deconstructs and re-contextualises it, to comment critically on race in America now, today. So, in this series of works, Wiley used young black men, from inner city neighbourhoods as his models. He would show them historical artworks that depicted soldiers, kings and emperors, and he would ask them to choose how they would like to be painted. He challenges us to see young black men, so often stereotyped in the media, and in popular culture, in a different way, as powerful heroic figures. In the current time of the Black Lives Matter movement, this series of paintings seems even more powerful, and a really interesting example, of intertextuality.

Finally, part four, looks at the exam, in particular detail. Think about, how can you prepare and practice, make yourself very familiar with the structure of the exam, and, think about exam techniques and tips and advice that should be helpful for you. So, firstly, be very aware of how the exam is structured. You know, I'm sure it's in two parts. Each part is equally weighted. Each part is worth 25 marks. So, section one examines how well you can apply your knowledge of the syllabus content, to works you may not have seen before. You need to allow 45 minutes for that section, and there will be three short answer questions, with plates and other source materials. Similar to the questions we've looked at today. You should do this section first, and take only the allocated 45 minutes. Questions are organized in increasing degrees of complexity and difficulty, and increasing mark value in this section. So, really, a great way to prepare, is to practice with past and sample exam questions, and be confident with how you can time yourself in this section of the exam.

Section two, invites you to select one question, and write an extended response that shows your knowledge and understanding of your case studies. Again, you need to allow 45 minutes for this section. You need to choose your question very carefully, and think about it during your reading time. Discuss the specific artists and works that you have studied. Again, practice with past and sample exam questions, and for both section one and section two, it's vital that you answer the question, that is asked in the exam. Rather than going off on other strange tangents.

Preparing for the exam, for section one, which is examining the syllabus content, it's a good idea to revise your art terminology. You want to impress the examiners with your subject expertise. You need to revise the syllabus content, so that you're very sure, what the examiners are asking you to do. Practice with past papers as much as possible. Use your reading time very wisely in the exam to think carefully about each plate in section one. Read those citations very, very carefully, and write concisely. Don't waste time in your responses on anything that's irrelevant to the question. Section two, the choice of your question, is very important. Revise your case studies. Know the artists and their works in depth and detail. Think about how your case studies can be connected, so that you can mix and match in the exam. You have to adapt your knowledge to the demand of the specific question, and you must support your argument with evidence, drawn from the artwork, and other sources, for example, the critics and historians that you've studied. Again, practicing with past papers is a really great way to prepare.

So, as we see here in this work by Peter Tyndall, called, "A Person Looks At A Work Of Art/ Someone Looks At Something," from 1987, "Congratulations! You Are Now A Member Of The Art Cult." And you can find more revision material, with really excellent scaffolds on practice frames and conceptual framework, on the education.nsw.gov.au website, and the link is here for you to use.