

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

EDUCATION RESOURCE

VETERINARY SCIENCE

PRE-PLANNING AND YOUR GALLERY VISIT

This education resource is designed for teachers and students. It features information and strategies on how the collection and exhibitions at the Ian Potter Museum of Art can be used to teach and learn about **veterinary science**. The resource contains sample images of works of art, from a larger variety, that can be used to enhance understanding, discussion of concepts and skills across a broad range of subject disciplines that involve **working with animals**. Students can access original works of art on display and in storage during a gallery visit, and also use this resource in the classroom.

A gallery visit and/or talk with the Curator of Academic Programs (Research) will need to be booked in advance. Please **contact** Dr. Heather Gaunt to book a date and time and to discuss key ideas, curriculum or subject objective outcomes appropriate for the students' course, subject and year level.

Further information: <http://www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au/education/academic-programs/>

VETERINARY SCIENCE

Artists convey both domestic and wild animals through art; it has long been a subject matter for artistic exploration. Whether depicting massive, powerful creatures or diminutive and delicate ones, artists combine nature and fine art in a myriad of ways. Sometimes symbol and metaphor, sometimes curiosity and marvel – their presence as a visual component of human culture endures. Moreover, contemporary perspectives have prompted an in-depth philosophical examination regarding the complex relationship between human beings and animals. Despite the fact animals are the obvious focus of these artists' objects and images, human beings and their impact upon the natural world are always a subtext. The works of art featured in this resource are made using a variety of media and techniques. Whether utilizing glass, painting, drawing or jewelry, these artists create engaging works that reflect on both animal and human nature.

Examples of applicable courses

- Veterinary Science
- Science: Animal health and disease major.
- Animal health in production systems

Contact Academic Programs

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William Strutt. *Untitled (Study of a lamb)*, 1883.

- What do you see?
- Who do you think might hold possession of this lamb?
- Where might you find this lamb?
- What environmental factors must be taken into account to care for the lamb?
- How might caring for this animal be different caring for a domestic pet?
- What are some possible threats to the lamb?

William Strutt (1825-1915) was born in England. He was trained as an artist in Europe before coming to Australia in 1850. Much of the artists' drawings are executed on the spot, as Strutt aimed to paint with greater realism and historical accuracy. Strutt was friends with Eugene von Guerard, Ludwig Becker, Nicholas Chevalier and the art critic James Smith. William Strutt was on the search for an Australian national identity; on what is distinctive about the land and its people. Like other artists at the time, he ended his search among convicts, bushrangers, the shearers, the gum trees and wide-open spaces, particularly evident in 'Australian' Colonial art.



Chinese. *Green crystal turtle or mythical animal with a head not unlike a monkey & tail*, 19th century

- Describe the turtle in as much detail as possible.
- What is unusual about this turtle?
- What is the texture of this object? Why do you think the artist decided to use a crystal-like material?
- In what environments might this turtle be found? How might this differ between Eastern and Western countries?
- How might the cultural value and significance of an animal evolve or decline over time? Can you think of any examples that illustrate this?
- What might be the signs of disease or poor nutrition in turtles?

Turtles are depicted in art as symbols of longevity and stability in many cultures around the world due to their long lifespan, slow movement, sturdiness and wrinkled appearance. Sea turtles are used as symbols of the marine environment and environmentalism. They are depicted in popular culture as easy-going, patient and wise creatures. In China, the traditional Chinese character symbolizing the turtle shows a head like that of a snake at the top, to the middle left of the paws, to the middle right of the shell, and at the bottom of the tail. Chinese legend also states the tortoise created the world and symbolizes the universe.

The object is reminiscent of the last Neolithic Jade culture (Liangzhuculture) that spaced over a period of approximately 1,300 years. This culture is characterized by finely made jades such as Cong cylinder, Bi discs, Yue axes and also pendants and decorations in the form of chiselled open-work plaques, plates and representations of small birds, turtles and fish.

Today, millions of U.S turtles hatched in farms or caught in the wild are consumed in China, where the delicacy has become more available to the masses. Conservationists are concerned that high demand will cause some U.S. freshwater turtle species to be eaten to extinction. View article:
http://news.nationalgeographic.com.au/news/2009/07/090724-turtles-china_2.html



Venise Alstergren, *Hound Dog*. Hand coloured photograph.

- What do you see?
- What breed is the dog?
- What is the dog doing?
- In which environment might this dog be found?
- Describe the dog based on an objective analysis (based purely on what you *see*).
- Comment on the health condition of the dog, based on what you *think* and *see* (subjective analysis).
- What factors might contribute to the dog's overall health and well-being in his environment?



Jutta, Hosel. *Young elephant seal*, 1968.

- Look at the artwork carefully. What do you see?
- What is the focal point of the picture? Describe this element.
- What emotions does the young elephant seal convey to you? What makes you say that?
- In which environment might the seal be found in?
- What might the condition of the seal's health be? What makes you say that?
- Why do you think the artist chose to produce an artwork of a young elephant seal?
- How might the time period in which this artwork was made, influence the way in which the young elephant seal is depicted in the picture?
- What are the immediate differences between the young elephant seal in the artwork and the image of the seal depicted below from a 2012 news media article?



Photo: Liz Hafalia, The Chronicle, elephant seal birth defects due to near-extinction. Source: <http://www.sfgate.com/science/article/Elephant-seal-birth-defects-due-to-near-extinction-3492461.php>

- What may account for the differences between the two images? Think about factors including animal environments, human intervention, nutrition and toxins.
- *"Health: not just numbers; numbers alone cannot measure the species"*. What might this sub-heading from the news article imply about the elephant seal population?
- What kind of management practices can be put into effect to improve the health and well being of the seal population?



William Strutt. *The home of the kangaroo*, 1885.

- Describe the landscape and environment in the picture.
- Imagine where this scene might be situated.
- What do you think the artist is aiming to convey about the nature of the Australian landscape? How does the artist communicate this?
- What changes might have taken place in the Kangaroo population since European settlement till now? What might have contributed to these changes?
- There is no farming of kangaroos in Australia. Kangaroos are harvested in the wild by licenced hunters, and is permitted under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Why do you think this approach is important to the Australian environment?
- The kangaroo is a wild animal and cannot be kept as a domesticated pet. What kind of issues might this present?

The kangaroo first appeared as a symbol of Australia in 1773 with the publication of an account of Captain Cook's first voyage to the Pacific. Emblematic of Australia's 'curious' nature, the kangaroo soon appeared in exhibitions, collections, art and printed works across Europe.

Hunted for meat and for sport, and used as a motif in the decorative arts, the kangaroo finally achieved official recognition with its inclusion on Australia's coat of arms in 1908. Since Federation in 1901, the kangaroo has appeared on currency and stamps, on Royal Australian Air Force planes and as a mascot at sporting events.

Kangaroos continue to be used as a resource, but only under strict government controls. All Australian states and territories have legislation to protect kangaroos. Only the four most abundant species of kangaroo and small numbers of two common wallaby species can be commercially harvested for export, and then only by licensed hunters in accordance with an approved management plan. These species are the Red kangaroo, Eastern grey kangaroo, Western grey kangaroo, Common Wallaroo (Euro), Bennetts wallaby and Pademelon (a type of wallaby). Source: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/facts/kangaroos.html>



William Strutt, *The Melbourne fire wood cart – what's the price of the load?* 1885.

- Look at the artwork. What do you see? What might be happening? Where might the scene taking place?
- How are the cattle being used? How might this impact upon the animals' health and well-being?
- What kind of advice would you provide to the animal-owners for this animals' care?
- What are some of the differences between caring for farm animals and small animals?

William Strutt began depicting images of native animals in Australia in search for an Australian identity. The dryness of the landscape is evoked through the golden brown shades of the land and the scarcity of green foliage.



William Strutt. *Untitled (oxen team)*, 1851.

- What is occurring in this picture? What makes you say that?
- Comment upon the land and environment in which this scene is taking place. How might this impact farm animal care?
- How might the change in weather conditions impact farm or large animal care?

William Strutt enforces the stereotype of the Australian land as one of hardship and privation. The almost white expanse of the sky reflects a dry atmosphere.



Gill Samuel Thomas (S.T.). *Swagman at fault*, 1864.

- What is going on in the picture?
- What is the mood of the painting? What emotion does the man convey? What makes you say this?
- Who do you think the man is?
- What is the role of the dog in this picture?
- What do you think the dog is feeling?

Gill S.T. arrived in Australia in 1839. He established a studio to produce portraits of human beings, dogs and horses. Gill usually worked in landscape or townscape, often with figures of human beings and with horses and dogs, much in the manner of Rowlandson. In South Australia Gill's work was marked by delicacy and care, but he will no doubt be remembered mainly for the work he did after he left that colony, and particularly his convincing pictures of life on the diggings, which he executed with vitality.



Henry Burn. *Melbourne from the South, near St Kilda Road*. 1855.

- What do you see in the landscape?
- Where do you think this is?
- What is different in the site between Melbourne then and now?
- What were the cattle used for?

Henry Burn was born in Birmingham, England, about 1807. Burn's paintings and lithographs of early Melbourne and the neighbourhood provide valuable evidence of the local scene. On 16 October 1852, Burn sailed from Liverpool on the barque *Baltimore*, arriving in Melbourne on 30 January 1853. He is described on the Passenger List as 'Artist', aged 43. Also on board were Samuel Cane of Southwark, Surrey, his wife Mary and a family of six sons and three daughters, the eldest of whom, Susan Cane, Burn was to marry seven years later.



Georgina Shatin. *Fish*, 1955. Oil on linen.

- Describe the fish objectively in the picture (base your description only on what you can see).
- Are these aquarium fish? How do you know?
- What is going on in the picture? How do you know?



George Lambert. *Untitled (Clerk of the Course – a study for the 'Tirrana picnic race' meeting)*. 1929



Lindsay Norman. *Untitled (Story of a Small Dog No.2)*, 1909. Pen and ink.