

UPPER PRIMARY /SECONDARY

Pre-visit Activities

Pre-visit activities are designed to inform students about *ReCoil* and assist them interpret and understand what they will see at the exhibition.

The *ReCoil Catalogue* can provide a context for appreciating the exhibition. Additional print and electronic resources (see **Teachers Notes**) can be used to research different aspects of the exhibition.

Activities

Divide students into small groups to research and report on the following subjects:

- 1 Find out about the coiling technique.
Demonstrate the technique to the class.
Have the students experiment with the technique to make a simple object.
- 2 Find out about the nature of handmade baskets and ceremonial objects in Indigenous societies.
What are they used for and how are they made?
- 3 Find out where the artists live – use maps to locate the regions and communities (see Map PDF; also see www.aiatsis.gov.au/aboriginal_studies_press/aboriginal_wall_map).
- 4 Find out about how natural dyes are made from plant roots and other natural materials. (see *Twined Together*)
- 5 Discuss the shapes of baskets and their use.
- 6 Discuss the sculptural forms and the way in which they represent the environment and beliefs and activities of the artists.
- 7 Read the Greta Mathews story (see *Twined Together Education Kit* from the Museum of Victoria (www.museum.vic.gov.au/twinedtogether)) discuss how the coiling technique has spread to different communities.
- 8 Visit the *Twined Together* web site at the Museum of Victoria (www.museum.vic.gov.au/twinedtogether)

for the story of **Yingarna**, a spirit figure associated with the creation of Aboriginal peoples in Western Arnhem Land. She carried a cluster of baskets filled with the spirits of the original people.

Visiting the Exhibition

- Students should come with a clipboard and pencil
- Discuss the activities and exhibition upon arrival at the venue
- Provide copies of the activity for each student, where applicable
- Encourage students to talk and share ideas about what they are seeing/hearing/learning and to ask lots of questions

Post visit activities

- 1 Coiled arm band or necklace
- 2 Flat sculpture
- 3 Coiled woollen basket
- 4 Coiled natural fibre basket

1 Coiled arm band or necklace

Materials

- Cotton rope 7 x 15 cm or enough length to comfortably go around a child's arm or neck.
- Various coloured lengths of wool.

Method

- Tie the end of a piece of coloured wool around the end of the cord
- Wrap the wool 5 times along the cord, and then make a loop stitch to hold the wool in place
- Tie on another coloured piece of wool and wrap around the cord and the tail of the preceding piece of wool five times before tying off with a loop stitch
- Repeat the procedure by adding new colours or reintroducing previous colours
- Once the woollen coils cover the length of the cord tie off leaving two lengths of wool at either end so the bracelet or necklace can be secured.



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2 Flat sculpture

Materials

- A4 paper and pencil
- Soft wire
- Raffia

Method

- Make a simple outline drawing of your favourite animal. Make the drawing in one single line without taking the pencil off the paper
- Use soft wire to replicate the drawing
- Coil around the wire using raffia
- Different body parts can be highlighted with a second coiled string



- Wrap the yarn around the loop five times and then use the needle to go into the centre of the loop to secure the shape
- After completing the first round, continue to wrap the cord five times and then insert the needle through the previous round to hold it together
- Students may also like to experiment with different kinds of wrapping configurations to develop colour patterns with the yarn or just regularly change colours every time they come to add more yarn



- Once the base has been coiled to the desired size (10 – 15 cm), start raising the sides of the baskets
- To add more yarn, leave a two-centimetre tail from the previous thread and place the end of a new piece beside it against the cord. Wrap the new yarn around the ends and the cord, and then stitch to attach it to the previous round.
- To add more cord, trim the ends to taper and cover the splice with masking tape. As the cord is completely wrapped with yarn, the splices are not visible.
- End the basket by tapering the cord and wrapping and stitching. Students who finish early may want to make tops for their baskets



3 Coiled woollen basket

Materials

- At least one metre of cotton rope 1 cm thick
- Lengths of coloured woollen yarn
- A needle with a large eye
- Objects for decoration (optional)
- Masking tape

Method

- Wrap the yarn around the last two centimetres of the cord.
- Bend the cord to make a small loop

Welcome to *ReCoil*

Activity Sheet 1

What to do

Imagine you are a reporter.

You have been asked to write a review about the exhibition for your local newspaper. Look around the exhibition, spend time reading and looking and making notes. Use the following as a guide.

- What is the title of the exhibition and where did you see it?
- What does the title refer to?
- What is the exhibition about?
- What is the coiling technique?
- Where do the artists come from?
- Name the different kinds of objects in the exhibition

Pick three art works you like best.

- Describe the works
- What materials have been used?
- Where do the materials come from?
- Describe the colours and shape of the objects
- Describe how you could use the baskets
- What special skills and knowledge does the artist have?

Make a drawing of one of the artworks to illustrate your report.

Make a diagram of the coiling technique to show the method.

What did you like most about the exhibition?

Make a list of the new words have you learnt and their meanings.

Sit down as a group and discuss your findings with the gallery curator. Ask questions about things you do not understand or would like to know more about.

Welcome to *ReCoil*

Activity Sheet 2

Find the following works in the exhibition, read the story about the work/artist and discuss with the class.



Treahna Hamm
Gulpa Ngar-Wu, 2005

*Deep listen not only with your ears
Deep listen with your eyes
Deep listen with all your senses
It's connected to a spiritual realm
We respect our elders
They teach us wisdom
They see when we're ready for knowledge
Sometimes images turn up in the landscape
They reinforce the stories that the old ones tell us
They reinforce our beliefs
Our culture and our identity
There's always the question:
Why do certain images come to us?
We know the spirits of the ancestors
And the spirits of the land are connected to us
We can feel them
In Indigenous culture there's
knowing on many different levels
It goes unsaid a lot of the time
But there are deep connections
They are always there
This spirit came to me in a dream
No mouth
Deep listening to the land
To my elders, to my ancestors
Connecting me to my culture.
(Treahna Hamm)*



Nalda Searles
Samplers, 2006

These small forms have been developed as explorations of materials and the ability to manipulate them. One could say they are fibre drawings or doodles. (Nalda Searles)

Welcome to *ReCoil*

Activity Sheet 2/1



Yvonne Koolmatricie
River Bunyip, 2003

That's Mulwan, the River Bunyip. His name was Gampi and he used to put the net right across the river. It's a story of sharing and caring too and about being aware of danger. He used to trap all the big fish and just let the little fish go through so the people down stream just got the little fish. So the old people said to him, 'You know Gampi, you're very greedy, you don't believe in sharing, so we're going to turn you into the River Bunyip.' And I tell the children, 'Be careful, don't go near the river because the Mulwan, he was put back into the river and now he's very cross. He's waiting for children to come to the river and he'll pull you in.' He's got kangaroo fur on him 'cause he's hairy looking.

So I got a kangaroo skin and cut that figure out you know and made him like he's got clothes on. It's like a collaboration with the weaving and the skin; kangaroo skin [cloak] and I put some rushes around him to represent him coming out of the rushes. But he was interesting and some of the kids would look and they'd run away screaming. (Yvonne Koolmatricie)



Mavis Ganambarr
Decorative Bag, 2001

Mavis was originally taught skills in netting and twining by her grandmother Djulka. She learnt coiling later when she attended school at Elcho Island. This work is unusual because she has combined the different techniques of coiling and string-bag netting.

I learnt how to make the string bag from my grandmother with different string. The banyan string from the root is hard, but the kurrajong one is soft. I use pandanus as well. I am very proud of what my grandmother taught me to do, but now I am making different, new styles of my own ideas ... Making the coiled baskets is easy for me. (Mavis Ganambarr)