

MANME MAYH:

Gardens of the Stone Country

Secondary: Activity sheet

The following activities are designed to help students enjoy the Manme Mayh exhibition and assist them interpret and understand the art, people, place, history and environment of the Stone Country of western Arnhem Land.

Classroom activities can be adapted for students of various ages and abilities and can be undertaken individually or as an ongoing unit of work.

The Manme Mayh Catalogue and Project Notes can provide additional information to help students learn about the exhibition.

Additional print and electronic resources can be used to further research, (see website section of the Project Notes).

Additional information can be found at the Nomad Art and Injalak Arts website at www.nomadart.com.au and www.injalak.com



Social Education / History / Art

Web Search - page 1

Use the Injalak Arts website as a starting point for your research. Look at the slide show titled **Injalak Days Photo Album**, (see link below). Discuss in relation to the questions below.

http://www.injalak.com/Injalak_days.html

Show students the Manme Mayh Catalogue - discuss.

Student Activity

Divide into small groups and research following subjects in a computer lab. Expand on your information by finding other relevant sites and making notes. Report back to the class with your findings.

1 Manme Mayh Exhibition

Read the introduction Foreword and Nadjamerrek Family statement in the Manme Mayh Project Notes. Summarise the exhibition. What is it about? Who are the people involved and where do they live? What do the words Manme and Mayh mean?

Manme Mayh Catalogue - <http://www.nomadart.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Manme-Mayh.pdf>

2 Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO

Read about Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (dec) in the Manme Mayh Catalogue or Project Notes. Who was he and why was he important?

Bardayal Nadjamerrek AO (Dec)

<http://nadjamerrek.mca.com.au/>

Manme Mayh Catalogue- <http://www.nomadart.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Manme-Mayh.pdf>

3 Injalak Arts

Read about Injalak Art Centre. What is Injalak Arts? Where is it located? Who works there, how do they operate, and what do they do? What is ANKAAA and why is this organisation important?

Injalak Arts - <http://www.injalak.com/>

ANKAAA - Association of Northern, Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists - <http://www.ankaaa.org.au/>

4 The Kunwinjku People

Read pages 7 & 8 in the Manme Mayh Project Notes. Who are the Kunwinjku people? How do they organise their society into Clans, Kinship and Moiety groups? What are some basic Kunwinjku words?

Manme Mayh Catalogue - <http://www.nomadart.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Manme-Mayh.pdf>

Bininj Gunwok, Kunwinjku language website -

<http://bininjgunwok.org.au/>

5 Climate and Environment

Read about the six seasons or Nagudjii Andjeuk (One Rain) on pages 17 & 18 of the Manme Mayh Project Notes. Describe the seasons and environment. How did the Kunwinjku people adapt to this climate and seasonal variation.

Bureau of Meteorology - http://www.bom.gov.au/iwvk/climate_culture/Indig_seasons.shtml

Kakadu National Park Fact Sheet - <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/education/pubs/factsheets/kakadu-national-park.pdf>

Kakadu National Park Visitor Guide - <http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/kakadu/pubs/visitor-guide.pdf>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/kakadu/pubs/barrk.pdf>

Tropical Savannas CRC - http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/Tropical_Savannas_CRC

Wetland Habitats Of The Top End - Michael Michie - <http://members.ozemail.com.au/~mmichie/habitat1.htm>

5 Pre-History of Western Arnhem Land

Read pages 9, 10 and 11 in the Manme Mayh Project Notes. Discuss the different periods of history including Pre Estuarine Period, Estuarine System and Freshwater Period. What happened in each of these times? How long have Aboriginal people lived in Arnhem Land? How do we know this?

Web Search - page 2

6 Contact Period

Read pages 11 of the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*. Describe the early non-Indigenous exploration and settlement at Gunbalanya. What is Gunbalanya like today? How have the lives of the Kunwinjku people changed since contact? What are some of the social and health issues faced by the Kunwinjku people?

Western Arnhem Land Council

<http://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/>

<http://www.westarnhem.nt.gov.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=5MT7soqf5kE=&tabid=236>

7 The Art

Read pages 13 – 16 in the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*.

Describe the materials and techniques used to make art. How has the art changed from pre contact times? How is it the same?

Injalak Arts

<http://www.injalak.com/>

8 Spiritual Ancestors

Read pages 14 - 16 of the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*. Discuss the Rainbow Serpent, Namarrgon the Lightning Man and the Mimi Spirits. What are these spirits, where do they live and why are they important?

Manme Mayh Catalogue

<http://www.nomadart.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Manme-Mayh.pdf>

9 The Warrdeken Rangers

Read pages 20 - 21 in the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*.

Discuss the role of the Warrdeken Rangers. What do they do? Why is their work important? Describe the Out Station movement. What difference has the establishment of out stations had on the environment and culture of the Kunwinjku people? What are some of the issues the Warrdeken Rangers are dealing with?

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2009-2010

[http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/01/Warddeken AR 2009-2010 web.pdf](http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/01/Warddeken%20AR%2009-2010%20web.pdf)

Warddeken Land Management Limited Annual Report 2010-2011

http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/12/WARDDEKENWEB2012.pdf

Warddeken and Djelk Indigenous Protected Areas

http://savanna.cdu.edu.au/news/topical_savannas_125.html?tid=670851

10 The Artists

Read the Foreword and pages 20 - 21 of the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*.

Find out about the *Manme Mayh* artists. Who are they? Why are they important? What is unique about their art and style?

Manme Mayh Catalogue

<http://www.nomadart.com.au/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Manme-Mayh.pdf>

Injalak Arts

www.injalak.com/

11 Indigenous Protocols

Find out about Indigenous protocols.

What kind of things should people be aware of when travelling to Indigenous communities in Arnhem Land?

Northern Land Council

<http://www.nlc.org.au/>

Art Activity

Metamorphoses

The Rainbow Snake has life giving powers and is associated with rain, growth and fertility. It can transform into any number of forms or combinations of animals including kangaroo, crocodile and snake. The barbs attached to the face and chin are used to hook and sweep people into its body.

The Rainbow Snake usually lives in large deep waterholes and in pools below waterfalls, where its presence is indicated by the rainbow spectrum created as the sun strikes the spray. It can also travel long distances under the ground and is associated with the didjeridu.

Creations figures from the Djang (Dreaming) are able to change from animals and objects to human form. This phenomenon occurs in nature (i.e. a grub changing to a butterfly), the idea also occurs in mythology and stories and is often called *metamorphoses*.

Look at the *Metamorphosis of Narcissus* (1937) by the Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dalí. Find other paintings or movies that have used this device?

Make an artwork titled *Metamorphoses*.

Choose an animal or creature you know well, or invent a mythological one. Show how your creature changing from one manifestation to another.

Write a story about the creature, which tells things that are not shown in the painting. Where does it live? What special powers does it have? What does it do?

Looking inside

Look at the images by Allan Nadjamerrek in the Manme Mayh Catalogue, of animals showing the inside organs of animals. Make your own art work depicting the inside structure of an insect or animal.

Try making brushes from natural materials by binding hair, grasses, bark or feathers onto a stick to make your painting. Experiment with the kind of marks that can be made with each brush. Try making a brush that makes fine lines. Try making a brush for filling in lots of colour.

Try another painting, which incorporates patterns within the shape of the animal. For example it may be a bird with stylised feather patterns, or a reptile with scale patterns. Or it may show what the animal eats, or where it lives by making patterns of water, clouds, rocks or leaves.

Observational illustration

Look at the scientific illustrations of plants on page 18 of the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*. Discuss this method of drawing and how to render a plant accurately.

Think about the kind of drawing materials or paints that might be useful to make a subtle illustration. Using a plant or insect specimen, paint or draw two different representations of the same species.

Draw a botanical illustration, focusing on the reproductive, structural or protective features of the plant or insect (you may even want to dissect the plant to record it in greater detail).

Using the same specimen, complete a more creative interpretation from memory and imagination, thinking about the beauty, geographic, historical, mythology or cultural associations of the plant or insect. Add notes or a story to your illustration.

Natural Science / Art Activity

Botanical Illustration

Botanical illustration is an art form that shows the makeup of plants for scientific purposes.

Materials:

- Sketch paper, hard pencils and eraser
- Tracing paper
- Water colour paper, watercolours and brushes
- Knife or razor blade to dissect plant material
- Fresh plant material

Discuss the following:

How can an artist achieve accuracy when drawing from live plant materials? Discuss use of tools, such as rulers, compass, grids, photocopier and scanner to help make an accurate drawing.

Collect plant materials and choose a plant for the illustration. Lay the plant or parts of the plant to form a composition. Measure and plan an arrangement of the plant material so all the parts fit on the paper while maintaining a pleasing arrangement.

Pay attention to the number and type of leaves, petals, length and girth of stems (internodes) and colours. Consult leaf type diagrams and anatomy graphics. It will not be possible to show all phases of the plant simultaneously (bud, bloom, fruit). It may not be possible to show roots if plant has been cut or is in the ground.

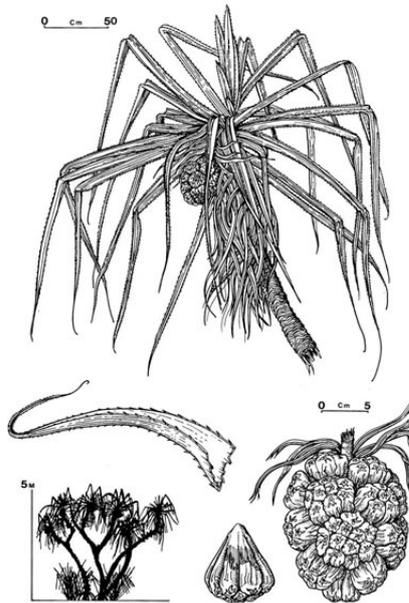
Begin the drawing process with a hard-lead pencil onto paper. Try different drawing methods to refine the drawing. Use botanical sources for examples. Make all the necessary changes on this sheet until the drawing is satisfactory in scale, proportion, shape and accuracy. Use tracing paper to lightly transfer the drawing onto water colour paper.

Begin painting with light washes of water colour with small brushes. Experiment with techniques for creating washes, shading and textures.

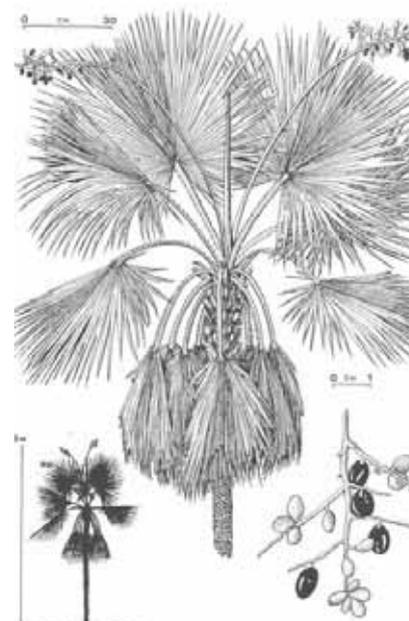
Between the sketch and final drawing phases, compare the drawing of the plant to a written description, found either online or in a field guide.

Check for accuracy, scale and proportion. This written description can be used as a label for a display. Display them with labels telling the name of the artist, name of plant (common and Latin names), medium, date and text description.

Try a second version of the drawing using pen and black ink. Use lines and dots to create textures and tones. Try 'blowing up' a section of the illustration as a separate drawing. Use a grid to enlarge the drawing to scale.



Pandanus spiralis



Livistona humilis

Natural Science

Creating a Herbarium

The activity involves gathering, identifying, researching and preserving local plants and creating a scientific-style herbarium. Plant pressings can be bound into booklets or designed as a field guide to your local area. Visit your local herbarium. Find out about the role of herbaria nationally.

Collecting plants

First decide on rules for collecting plants; these may include the following:

- Never collect an endangered plant
- Respect other people's property when you are collecting
- Do not pick a plant until six are seen, and never pull one up for the roots until ten are found

Go on a bush walk or walk in the garden. Look at the plants that are growing in the area; compare flowers, leaves and other plant parts from different species. Note plants that are similar and plants that are different to each other. Use field guides to identify plants and species.

Make a collection plan

A herbarium collection usually features plants that grow naturally in a region. Decide on your purpose for collecting and pressing plants, it may be to distinguish plants from weeds that grow in your garden, or plants that do thrive in the natural environment and ones that are not so suitable and need lots of water? You can form a thematic study by focusing on specific plant categories such as bush foods and medicines, native trees or plants pollinated by bees, for example.

Collect the plants

Use scissors to snip flowers, leaves, or entire plants. If you are creating a scientific herbarium, you may also want to collect some roots. Flat flowers tend to press better than bulky ones. You may like to experiment with different types of flowers and plant parts (by removing and pressing petals of larger flowers, for instance). If plants are abundant, collect several flowers from a species so they can display front, back, and side views. Collecting flowers at different stages of bloom can also make a more interesting display.

To keep collected plants fresh put them in sealed plastic bags out of the sun. It is best to get plants in

the press as soon as possible. If you need to keep them overnight, a wet paper towel in the bag will keep them from wilting too much. Alternatively press and protect plants in a phone book or catalogue until you get back to the classroom. Make field notes. If you are planning to create an herbarium or field guide, you will need to take notes.

Each journal or field notebook entry may include such information as date, location, environment (e.g. amount of sun), type of growth (herb, vine, and so on), description of seeds and/or fruits, and collector's name. You might also want to include information that may not be apparent once the plant is dried, such as original colour or aroma. Students may also make sketches of the plant in its natural habitat.

Finding the Key

Most field guides use dichotomous keys, which include a series of questions with only two possible answers to choose from for each question. If you want to try creating a dichotomous key, begin by dividing the plant collection into two groups based on observable characteristics (e.g. flowers or no flowers). Next take each group and choose two new alternatives. If subjective qualities are selected, such as small or large, try to be specific (e.g. leaves smaller than 10cm and leaves larger than 10cm).

The group should continue in this fashion until there is only one plant left in each category. Once these keys have been created, use your categories to write a series of questions for the beginning of the field guide (Does the plant have flowers? No flowers?) to help the user identify the plants.

Making a Plant Database

You may like to create a computer database to catalogue the herbaria or field guide information. The database might include the following: common name, scientific name, family, student discoverer, habitat, unusual features etc.

You can also scan sketches or import digital photos of the subjects into the computer. Add information based on observations made over time, such as how a plant moves from flower bud through seed and fruit.

Once the material is in the database, you can sort it in different ways, such as by plant family or native and exotic plants. Information from the database can be printed and bound and/or featured along with pressed specimens

Social Science / History / Art

Questions to Consider

Art Analysis

The artists in *Manme Mayh* combine traditional and contemporary materials to draw relationships between the past and the present. Choose two of these artists and write a paragraph about how each artist does this. From where do the artists draw their knowledge and imagery? What are the reoccurring themes and associations in their art work?

Make drawings of your favourite works. Make notes about techniques and colours used. Think about your own environment and how you might create an art work which responds to your daily life and surroundings.

Exhibition Development

Having thought about *Manme Mayh*, what roles do you think each of the following have played in the development of this art work and exhibition?

- the artists and their cultural traditions
- the environment
- the Art Centre
- the curator
- the gallery
- the designer
- yourself, as viewer

Write two paragraphs about the parts played by each of these elements

Traditions of Art

Find images of European landscape painting both contemporary and from the past. How do the works compare and contrast with the paintings by artists in the *Manme Mayh* exhibition? What knowledge and values are illustrated in the works? Discuss the materials, techniques, methods and styles used. What do the works tell us about the artists, their society and culture?

Notions of Place

The title of the exhibition, *Gardens of the Stone Country* refers to the Stone Country plateau of western Arnhem Land. The Stone Country is not a garden in the traditional western sense, but the traditional owners have cared for, and managed this country for tens of thousands of years. What knowledge and skills to do the Kunwinjku people apply to the land? How have they managed the species diversity and integrity of the region? What associations do they have with particular places, plants and animals? Provide examples of traditional knowledge or management practices that you think are important. How has the country changed since European settlement?

The Natural Environment

Read the *Pre History* section in the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*. Summarise the changes in the environment of the Top End of Australia over the last 40,000 years. Compare the changes to the environment over that period of time to the changes over the past 100 years. What are some the important recent impacts? Imagine you are the Minister for Natural Resources in the Northern Territory Government. Write a policy statement about how you would address some of the current issues. Visit the Department website for Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport (NRETAS), at www.nretas.nt.gov.au/. Discuss your policies with the class.

Society and Belief

Read the *People and Place* section in the *Manme Mayh Project Notes*. Find out more about western Arnhem Land and the traditions of the Kunwinjku people. Write a summary about the structure, organisation and beliefs of Kunwinjku society and belief. Discuss the extent to which the lives of the Kunwinjku people inter-relate with the land, plants, animals, ancestral beings, ritual and art.