



BEE-STUNG LIPS

BARBARA HANRAHAN

WORKS ON PAPER 1960-1991

A Flinders University Museum of Art touring exhibition

EDUCATION RESOURCE

BEE-STUNG LIPS

Bee-stung lips: Barbara Hanrahan works on paper 1960-1991, is the first major survey exhibition of Barbara Hanrahan's prolific 30-year printmaking career that was set in motion in 1960 and ended with her untimely death at the age of 52. The exhibition features some 180 works made in her town of birth Adelaide, as well as London and Melbourne.

The exhibition considers several overarching themes which Hanrahan focused on throughout her career, such as sex, beauty and the stage; domestic comforts and anxieties; becoming plant, becoming animal; and celestial bodies and the afterlife.

Acknowledging the 30-year anniversary of the untimely passing of one of South Australia's brightest creative lights, *Bee-stung lips* is an ambitious exhibition that pays homage to the extraordinary life and work of uncompromising artist Barbara Hanrahan.

Before and after visiting the exhibition:

Educators and students may wish to further research aspects of Hanrahan's work, such as:

- Exploring the playful and complex narratives within Hanrahan's work that draws on both her personal experience and fantasy.
- Using her direct and decorative style as a starting point for their own artworks.
- Comparing Hanrahan's work to other artists from different times and cultures.
- Investigating the social, cultural contexts within

Barbara Hanrahan, *Moss-haired girl*, 1977, screenprint, colour inks on paper, 63.3 x 33.1 cm (image), ed 10/11, Gift of Jonathan P Steele, Flinders University Museum of Art, Adelaide, 5769

Hanrahan's depiction of gender and social issues.

- Examining her viewpoints on being interconnected to the natural world and her representation of spirituality.
- Experimenting with the materials, techniques and processes used by Hanrahan such as printmaking (woodcuts, linocuts, screenprints, lithographs, etchings and drypoint), as well as drawing, painting and collage.

During your visit:

- What do you think of when you hear the term "bee-stung lips"? Why do you think this term has been used as the exhibition title? Can you find evidence of "bee-stung lips" in Barbara Hanrahan's work?
- How have the artworks been arranged? What do you notice about the frames? Was there an artwork that you were instantly drawn to when you entered the gallery?

For more information visit:

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/museum-of-art/exhibitions/bee-stung-lips-barbara-hanrahan>

Bee-stung Lips: Barbara Hanrahan works on paper 1960-1991

A Flinders University Museum of Art exhibition

Curated by Nic Brown

26 July – 1 October 2021

FUMA Gallery | Social Sciences North Building | Bedford Park





BARBARA HANRAHAN

Barbara Hanrahan (1939 – 1991) was born in Adelaide and throughout her life she lived between Adelaide, London, and Melbourne. She developed a prolific career as an artist and writer, producing more than 400 works on paper, and publishing 15 books.

Hanrahan grew up in the suburb of Thebarton. She was an only child and moved in with her mother, grandmother and great-aunt after her father died. She studied art teaching at Adelaide Teachers College, including courses in English at Adelaide University and art classes at South Australian School of Art.

She saw **Antonio Frasconi's** woodcut *The storm is coming*, in an exhibition at Royal South Australian Society of Arts and was inspired by its floral patterns and strong female form. She began making linocuts, etchings and lithographs, influenced by **Marc Chagall**, **Georges Henri Rouault** and **Pablo Picasso's Blue Period**. Later she made woodcuts of women, influenced by **German Expressionism**.

In 1963 Hanrahan left Adelaide for London by ship. Here she studied at Central School of Art with British wood engraver and sculptor **Gertrude Hermes**. She saw the work of **David Hockney**

along with the **English Pop artists**, who influenced her work. Hanrahan also encountered the work of English artist and poet **William Blake** whom she admired throughout her life.

In 1964 she returned to Adelaide and started lecturing at South Australian School of Art while widely exhibiting her work. In 1966 she met and fell in love with **Jo Steele**, who collaborated with her on many prints. Her first book, *The scent of eucalyptus* was published in April 1973. Hanrahan and Steele returned to London in 1975, and in January the following year she began to work on linocuts and wood engravings with renowned wood engraver **Blair Hughes-Stanton**.

In 1981 Hanrahan travelled to the United States and Mexico. **The art and culture of Mexico** had a lasting impression on her work and she would later revisit this country. Hanrahan practised meditation after being diagnosed with cancer, and from 1988 the angel subject became the focus of a series of prints. Barbara Hanrahan passed away in 1992 at the age of 52.

Artistic inspiration: Research the artists that inspired Barbara Hanrahan. What aspects of their work do you think has influenced her work and why? What artists have influenced your art making?

Early Years & Primary

BECOME A PRINTMAKER

Barbara Hanrahan was a printmaker who explored different printmaking techniques. This activity is designed as an introduction to printmaking and can be done at home or in the classroom.

Vocabulary:

- **Printmaking:** the process of impressing an image onto a surface, with the help of ink and pressure. **Stamping** is a simple printing technique.
- **Pattern:** a repeated element such as a series of shapes.
- **Collaboration:** working with someone to produce a work of art.

Materials required:

- **Found objects** to print with such as corrugated cardboard and foam shapes, old marker lids, bubble wrap, a piece of Lego, a plastic comb, leaves, dried flowers
- **Kitchen sponges**
- **Empty containers with lids**, such as takeaway or margarine tubs
- **Paint**
- **Paper**
- **Art Smock**, such as a large old shirt

Preparation:

- Before you begin, prepare some **paint pads** by placing a damp kitchen sponge in a lidded container and top with paint so it absorbs into the sponge. Keep the lids

for the containers so you can pop them on later and continue printing another day.

Printmaking process:

- **Experiment with techniques:** dip objects into the paint pads and stamp onto the paper. Experiment with printing a variety of found objects. Try different edges of the object. What objects work best?
- **Create patterns:** Look at the patterns Barbara Hanrahan created in her work. What shapes and lines have been repeated to create these patterns? Try making your own patterns by repeating and overlapping stamped objects.
- **Collaborate:** Barbara Hanrahan often collaborated with Jo Steele to create her prints. Work with another person or as a class to create a print.
- **Display** your print as a finished artwork.
- **Create a patterned background** for your own animal, like *Tyger! Tyger!* (1962).
- **Collage:** cut up your printed patterns once dry and create a sunrise, like *The sun is up* (1983).
- **Make your own stamps:** flatten a ball of plasticine on one side, impress objects into the surface or draw into it with a pencil. Dip the plasticine into the paint pad and stamp onto the paper.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM107
- ACAVAM108





Early Years & Primary

OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS

Girl, cat, bird (1989) shows a young girl holding a cat. She is surrounded by flowers and has a bird upon her head. The artwork tells a story and shows a connection to animals and the natural environment.

Vocabulary:

- **Line:** a point moving in space. Line can be straight, curly, thick or thin.
- **Shape:** a flat area surrounded by edges, including circles, triangles, and squares.
- **Collage:** a technique of making an artwork by gluing pieces of paper onto a surface.

Looking:

- Look closely at ***Girl, cat, bird***.
- What can you see?
- What types of line and shapes can you see?

Tell a story:

Barbara Hanrahan was a writer as well as an artist. Imagine this is a scene from the middle of a story. What would the story be?

- Who is the girl, who is the cat and who is the bird?
- What might the girl, cat and bird be thinking about?
- Where are they?
- Why is the girl holding the cat?
- Why is the bird on the girl's head?
- What was happening before this moment?
- What will happen next?
- How might the story end?
- Create a series of drawings that tell your story about the girl, cat and bird.

My animal friends collage:

Create a collage inspired by Barbara Hanrahan's ***Girl, cat, bird***. This activity can be done at home or in the classroom.

What animals do you consider your friends? Do you have a pet or are there birds and other animals that visit your backyard, street or school? Make a collage of yourself with these animal friends.

Materials required:

- **Pencil**
- **Paper** (in black, multi-colours or recycled magazines)
- **Scissors**
- **Glue stick**
- **Marker** (or crayon)

Collage activity:

- **Cut out shapes** to create your body, face, arms, legs and hair. Use simple shapes to create the bodies of your animal friends.
- **Glue** all the shape onto your page.
- **Draw** details over the top with a marker or crayon, such as the facial features or to add lines like Barbara Hanrahan has done in ***Girl, cat, bird***.
- Display your artwork and explain what shapes you have used.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM106
- ACAVAM108
- ACAVAR109

Primary

FUN AND GAMES

Barbara Hanrahan grew up on Rose Street in Thebarton. *Rose Street girls* (1988) shows a group of girls playing.

Create a hand-coloured polystyrene foam print that shows children at play during recess and lunch.

Vocabulary:

- **Plate:** in printmaking this refers to the surface (such as lino, woodblock, stone, or metal) that has been scratched, carved into or built up from.
- **Brayer:** also known as a hand roller and used to apply a layer of ink onto a relief printing plate.
- **Baren:** A flat, hand-held tool used to burnish (firmly rub) paper that has been placed on an inked plate.

Looking:

- Look closely at *Rose Street girls*. What is happening in the image?
- What activities are the girls doing? What activities do you and your friends do during recess and lunch?

Materials required:

- **Polystyrene foam** (you can purchase polystyrene foam printing sheets from art supply shops or use old meat/vegetable trays. Alternatively try the inside of long-life milk packets)

- **Block printing ink** (water-based)
- **Hard rubber brayer**
- **Pencil**
- **Sheet of acetate or printing tray**
- **Baren** or spoon
- **Paper** for printing on
- **Art apron**

Printmaking activity:

- **Design** your image on a separate piece of paper or in a sketchbook.
- **Draw** your design on to the styrofoam plate with a pencil.
- **Roll ink** onto a sheet of acetate or tray until it is evenly distributed on the brayer
- **Roll** the brayer onto the polystyrene foam plate, being careful not to get ink in the grooves created by the pencil marks.
- **Place paper** over the top and use a baren, spoon or clean brayer to transfer the ink onto the paper.
- **Hand-colour** once dry with coloured pencils, pastels or watercolours.
- Present your print in a public location, or online.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM111
- ACAVAM114
- ACAVAM115
- ACAVAM116



Barbara Hanrahan, *Rose Street girls*, 1988, hand-coloured etching, colour inks on cream paper, 50.6 x 45.5 cm (image), ed 4/6, Private collection, Adelaide



Primary

FLOWERING PORTRAIT

Flora (1970) shows a detailed portrait of a woman with facial features made of flowers. In Ancient Rome, Flora was the goddess of flowering plants. The flowers could also symbolise growth and rejuvenation.

Vocabulary:

- **Rejuvenation:** the act of restoring youthful energy or renewal.
- **Symbol:** an object that represents or stands for something else.
- **Gouache:** an opaque water-based paint that can be used straight from the tube or watered down like watercolour paints.
- **Monoprint:** a one-of-a-kind printed image.

Analysis and comparison:

- What are the similarities and differences between Barbara Hanrahan's *Flora* and the work of Italian artist **Giuseppe Arcimboldo** (1526 or 1527)?
- Why do you think Hanrahan and Arcimboldo chose these objects, such as flowers, fruits and vegetables?
- What do you think these objects **symbolise**?

Flowering portrait:

Make your own portrait using flowers, plants or objects from the natural world. You might like to research botanical illustration or spend some time drawing plants and vegetation outside.

Materials required:

- **Graphite pencil**
- **Gouache paints** (or watercolour)

Process:

- In graphite pencil sketch a portrait using flowering plants and natural objects you observed.
- Colour areas using gouache or watercolour.
- Create a border for your portrait using the same flowering plants.
- Display your artwork with an artist's statement explaining the flowering plants you have used and what they symbolise to you.

Natural details monoprint:

Create a monoprint based on detailed observation of plants, flowers and natural objects such as shells.

Materials required:

- **Hard rubber brayer**
- **Block printing ink** (water-based)
- **Sheet of acetate**
- **Pencil**
- **Paper** for printing on
- **Art apron**

Monoprinting process:

- Roll ink onto a sheet of acetate or tray until it is evenly distributed on the brayer.
- Gently place paper over the top of ink and draw onto the back of the paper (experiment with different implements).
- Carefully lift off paper to reveal your image.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM114
- ACAVAM115
- ACAVAM116
- ACAVAR117

Secondary – Middle School

ANGELS & THE NATURAL WORLD

From the late 1980s to her final work before her death in 1991, Hanrahan regularly depicted angel subjects as another means to explore the eternal afterlife. In *The angel* (1989–90) a winged figure hovers on tiptoes above a forest. The roots of the trees can be seen beneath, and hanging above in the dark night sky is a heart with an eye at its centre.

Vocabulary:

- **Lino print:** a relief printing technique where a linoleum block is carved into.
- **Edition:** the number of identical prints made from a plate or set of plates. Prints are numbered 1, 2, 3 and so on out of the total number of prints (ie 1/10). This appears on the left with the title in the centre and artist's signature and date on the right.

Responding:

- What symbols do you think Hanrahan has used in *The angel*?
- Find all the angels depicted in the exhibition. What key features do these angels share? Why do you think Hanrahan chose to depict angels in this way?
- Angels are supernatural beings that appear in various religions. Research and compare the depiction of angels from different religions across time.

At home in the natural world lino print

Being immersed in nature can be good for our wellbeing and help us to feel interconnected with the natural world. Create a lino print artwork to visually represent this feeling. Think of a favourite place in nature you like to visit or an activity you enjoy outdoors.

Materials required:

- **Pencil**

- **Transfer paper**
- **Lino block**
- **Lino carving tools**
- **Hard rubber brayer**
- **Block printing ink** (water-based)
- **Black permanent marker** or **ball-point pen**
- **Acetate** or **printing tray**
- **Baren, spoon** or **clear brayer**
- **Paper** for printing on
- **Art apron**

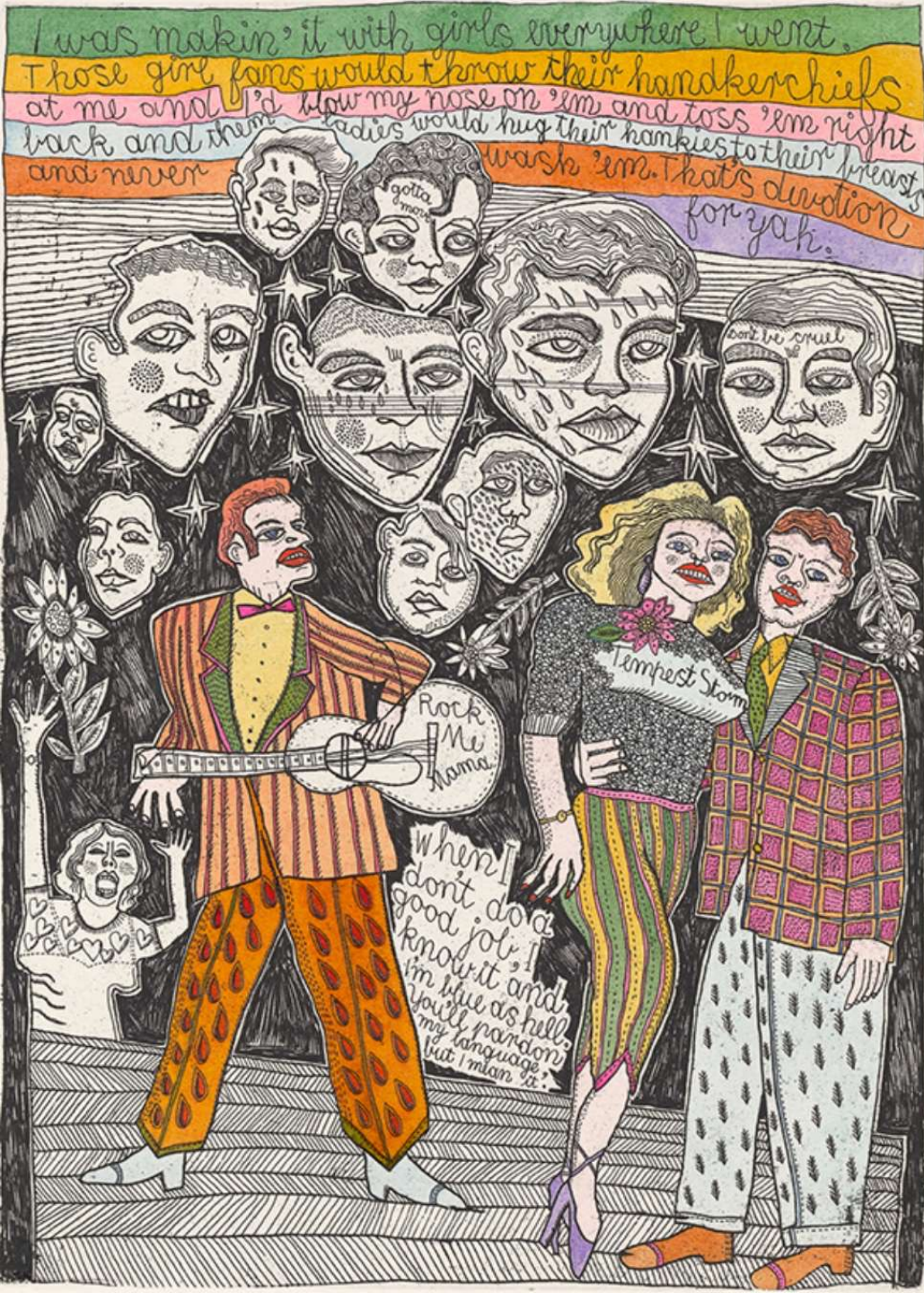
Linoprinting process:

- Draw your design onto a separate piece of paper.
- Using transfer paper, transfer image onto lino block.
- Use a black marker to fill in the positive space. (You will carve all the 'white' areas or negative space).
- Safely use lino tools to carve out your design.
- Roll ink onto a sheet of acetate or tray until it is evenly distributed on the brayer.
- Roll the brayer onto the lino block.
- Place paper over the top and use a baren, spoon or clean brayer to transfer the ink onto the paper.
- Edition and sign your prints.
- Experiment with hand-colouring your lino prints once dry.
- Write an artist statement about your ideas and intentions.
- Present your print in a place that encourages the audience to appreciate nature.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM118
- ACAVAM119
- ACAVAM120
- ACAVAM122
- ACAVAR123
- ACAVAR124





Secondary – Middle School

FAME AND FANDOM

Rock me mama (1983) shows Elvis Presley at the height of his fame surrounded by a star-struck fan and his one-time girlfriend Tempest Storm. Elvis stands on stage with his guitar to the left of the composition with the floating heads of the heartthrob, song lyrics and quotes above.

For this activity you will create a drypoint etching exploring fame and celebrity culture.

Vocabulary:

- **Intaglio:** means to engrave or to cut into, and describes the making of metal or plastic printing plates.
- **Drypoint etching:** the process of directly scratching designs into a metal or plastic plate.
- **Acetate:** a transparent or translucent plastic sheet material engraving tool.
- **Limited colour palate:** using a small range of colours.

Responding:

- What message do you think Hanrahan might be communicating about Elvis and his fame?
- How is this different from celebrity and popular culture today?
- What might be the negative sides of celebrity culture?
- What are the benefits of being a fan?

Developing ideas:

- Who or what are you a fan of? Why do you admire this person, band, book, video game etc.? What distinguishes you and your fellow fans?
- Create a sketch reflecting on fame and celebrity culture. This will be the basis of your drypoint etching.

Materials required:

- **Etching press** (alternatively use a metal spoon)
- **Acetate or Plastic Drypoint etching plate**
- **Drypoint needle**
- **Water-based intaglio ink**

- **Card** (such as mat board, cut in 4cm widths for applying ink).
- **Tarlatan cloth**
- **Old phone books or newsprint**
- **Printmaking paper**
- **Tray** for soaking paper
- **Clean cloth or towel**
- **Art apron**

Drypoint etching process:

- Tear paper to size and soak in a water-filled tray.
- Use an etching needle to scratch into the acetate plate.
- Build up lines to create pattern and tone or use sandpaper to create tonal area.
- Firmly press ink into scratched lines using piece of card.
- Fold tarlatan into a flat ball and gently remove excess in slow circular motions.
- Use newsprint or old phone book pages to gently polish the plate in light circular motions.
- Remove paper and blot on a cloth or towel so it is no longer shiny.
- Place plate on the etching press and carefully lay paper on to, cover with blankets and run through the press (Alternatively use the back of a metal spoon to apply firm pressure).
- Hand-colour your finished drypoint with watercolour using a limited colour palate, like Hanrahan's **Rock me mama**

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM118
- ACAVAM119
- ACAVAM120
- ACAVAM125
- ACAVAM126
- ACAVAR130
- ACAVAR131

Barbara Hanrahan, *Rock me mama*, 1983, hand-coloured etching, colour inks on paper, 35.3 x 25.5 cm (plate), artist's proof, Private collection, Adelaide.

Senior Secondary & SACE

MAKE A SOCIAL COMMENT

Fat folk fade faster (1985) is a parody of 1950s newspaper and early 1960s television advertising. The hygiene and beauty advertising slogans aimed at women reveal the influence of 1970s second-wave feminism on Hanrahan's practice. Hanrahan's social critique is just as relevant in today's online media-saturated culture.

Vocabulary:

- **Parody:** an imitation of a specific style or genre with deliberate exaggeration for comic effect.
- **Social context:** the social conditions and beliefs that may have influenced the creation of the artwork and/or continue to influence our interpretation.
- **Silkscreen printing:** involves pushing ink through a screen or mesh that is stretched on a frame. A stencil is often used to block out areas.
- **Squeegee:** a stiff piece of rubber with a handle used to drag the ink across the silkscreen.

Analysis:

- What social conditions or beliefs have influenced the making of *Fat folk fade faster* and continue to influence our interpretation?
- Research and discuss how Barbara Hanrahan and other feminist artists, such as **Barbara Kruger** and the **Guerrilla Girls** have used the conventions of advertising to make a social comment.
- In what way do the aesthetic qualities, such as colour, line and composition, communicate Hanrahan's ideas in *Fat folk fade faster*?
- What materials, techniques and processes have been used? How might they contribute to the meanings and interpretations of *Fat folk fade faster*?

Make a social comment:

Create an artwork in response to Hanrahan's *Fat folk fade faster*.

- Explore concepts surrounding consumerism, media manipulation, standards of beauty or gendered stereotypes in advertising.
- Consider a social issue that you are passionate about and investigate ways to communicate this issue to an audience.
- Create a parody about social media.

Printmaking techniques:

- Research and experiment silkscreen printing techniques and create a work of art that explores your own perspective about a social issue.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM125
- ACAVAM126
- ACAVAM127
- ACAVAM128
- ACAVAR131

SACE performance standards:

Stage 1 Visual Arts:

- PA1, PA2
- KU1, KU2, KU3, KU4
- AR1, AR2

Stage 2 Visual Arts:

- PA1, PA2
- KU1, KU2, KU3
- AS1, AS2





Senior Secondary & SACE

TIME REARRANGED

Dog of darkness (1978) depicts multiple generations of Hanrahan's family members, appearing like photos from a family album. Above is the 'Dog of Darkness', in Welsh mythology this *gwyllgi* is a spectre associated with death. To the right, the 'hare of night', scampers against the tick of the clock and the direction of the *gwyllgi*, reversing time and delivering hope, guised in its metaphoric representation of rebirth and immortality.

Vocabulary:

- **Narrative:** an artwork that tells a story, often depicting religious, mythological, historical stories or tales from literature.
- **Copper sulphate etching:** where an aluminium plate is etched in a solution made of copper sulphate and salt.

Analysis:

- What is the narrative within ***Dog of Darkness*** and how might this be connected with Hanrahan's personal philosophy or beliefs?
- What compositional devices have been used, and how does this contribute to the concept of time being disrupted or rearranged?
- What aesthetic qualities have been used, and how might they contribute to the meaning and interpretation of the artwork?
- What materials, techniques and processes have been used, and how does this influence our reading of the work?

Developing ideas:

- Develop ideas for an artwork where your personal experiences collide with events and people throughout history.
- Explore your family history, or use old photographs as a starting point for a series of prints.

- Research other creatures from different cultures that are connected with mortality, death and rebirth. Select a creature as a starting point for developing works in a range of media.

Copper sulphate printing:

- Partner with your Science faculty to create a series of copper sulphate etching plates. Research the chemical reaction that takes place and the correct safety procedures need to be followed.

An artist book:

- Create a series of drypoint etchings that convey a narrative. Experiment with hand-colouring the prints and present them as an artist's book.

Australian Curriculum connections:

- ACAVAM125
- ACAVAM126
- ACAVAM127
- ACAVAM128
- ACAVAM129
- ACAVAM130
- ACAVAR131

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GLOSSARY



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Limited colour palate: using a small range of colours.

Line: a point moving in space. Line can be straight, curly, thick or thin.

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Printmaking: the process of impressing an image onto a surface, with the help of ink and pressure. **Stamping** is a simple printing technique.

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Shape: a flat area surrounded by edges, including circles, triangles, and squares.

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Social context: the social conditions and beliefs that may have influenced the creation of the artwork and/or continue to influence our interpretation.

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