



Shape Shifters: Collage from the Collection

Education Kit

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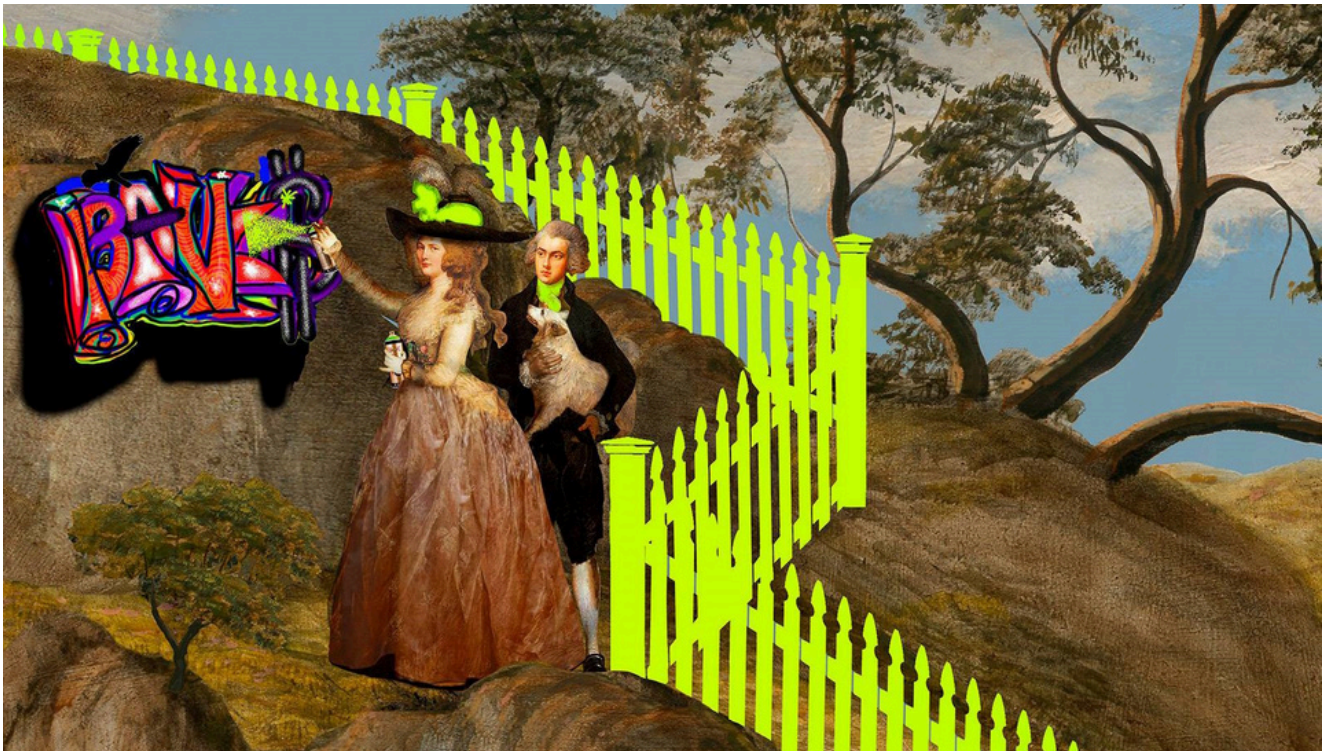
Using the Education Kit

This Education Kit has been developed by Wollongong Art Gallery to help students understand and appreciate art through exploring themes and works in one of our current exhibitions.

Each kit features history and information about the mediums, styles and themes represented in the exhibition, a selection of artworks with images and information about the artist's life and practice, and questions and activities for students.

This kit will be most effective if combined with a visit to the Wollongong Art Gallery to see the original works and used as pre-or-post-visit material.

The questions and activities have been designed to engage students with the artwork through looking, interpreting and art making. The activities also provide entry points for more in-depth study and analysis of techniques and strategies, issues and theories in contemporary art practice.



Shape Shifters: Collage from the Collection

9 November 2024 - 2 March 2025

Collage is a stimulating medium. Many artists have employed collage to vitalise, warp or amplify a message. Others have challenged notions of perception, deployed wit and parody, or elevated its materiality for balance and beauty.

Shape Shifters will reflect on these themes, examining how collage is made and why it has such intoxicating appeal.

Including works by Tony Albert, Suzanne Archer, Bill Brown, Country Women Artist (Northern Rivers Chapter) Malcom Benham, Lee Bethel, Rosie Deacon, Garry Jones, Robert Klippel, Edith Kouto, Diego Latella, Alun-Leach Jones, Elwyn Lynn, Arthur McIntyre, Danie Mellor, Allan Mitelman, Jenny Orchard, John Peart, Marilyn Puschak, Joan Ross, Julie Rrap, Martin Sharp, Vicki Varvaressos and Brett Whitely.

A Brief History of Collage

The term Collage originates from the French word 'colle' meaning to paste. Collage is one of the most important techniques in the development of art in the 20th century. It began a long process of questioning what defines an artwork, and what **representation** really means. The development of collage is strongly linked to the increasing mechanisation of the printing industry, as most of the images that artists have used to make collages are printed images. They are 'throw away' images because they are printed in large numbers, and so are not considered precious.

Pablo Picasso was the first artist to incorporate collage into his paintings in 1908. Picasso and his friend and colleague, **Georges Braque** together created the art movement called **CUBISM**. They looked for ways to break up a traditional image of an object, a still life for example, to challenge how we think about 'seeing'. Picasso used text cut from newspapers, wallpaper and objects nailed to his canvases to experiment with composition, challenging traditional ways of representing objects.

DADA artists embraced collage as the perfect technique to express their dissatisfaction with the existing social order. The Dada movement developed during and after World War 1 (from about 1916 - the early 1920s). The trauma caused by this war (known as 'The Great War'), the number of men who died, and the suffering and poverty that resulted, especially in Germany, forced artists to think about values and meaning in new ways. Dada artists used found objects and images to make art works. They combined them in improvised and spontaneous ways. Dada artists wanted to create 'anti-art': art that seemed meaningless, that used everyday objects. They questioned the definition of art itself, they questioned the idea of artistic skill and its value, they wanted to destroy the distinctions between 'high' and 'low' art.

They questioned the art market and the values of the middle classes, or the 'bourgeoisie'. Dada artists used a lot of text in their collages, and everyday items such as bus tickets. Dada artists that made collage included **Raoul Hausmann**, **Kurt Schwitters** and **Hannah Hoch**. Dada artists used collage to criticise the 'status quo' - the establishment.



Image: Jenny Orchard, *Blue floating conscious mind, into the galaxies, into the trees*, 2020, watercolour, collage and gouache on paper, 76 x 56cm.

What is Surrealism?

SURREALISM evolved out of Dada. Surrealist artists also combined images to create new forms. They did this through painting (Salvador Dalí and René Magritte) and also through collage. The Surrealist artist most famous for his collages is **Max Ernst**.

Surrealists were not so interested in politics and values – they were influenced by Sigmund Freud and his work on the ‘unconscious’; they used collage, like dreams, to expose unconscious desires. During the social changes and increased consumerism of the 1960s artists were influenced by Dada art, artworks from this era are sometimes referred to as Neo-Dada. POP art was one of the most important movements of this era.

Pop artists used collage techniques to criticise consumer culture and the cult of celebrity. Probably the most famous Pop artist is Andy Warhol. He began his career as an illustrator in the advertising industry. Pop artists **Richard Hamilton** and **Robert Rauschenberg** specialised in collage.

What is Collage about?

Collage is about breaking up (or literally cutting up) old worlds and creating new ones.

Collage is about **IMPERMANENCE** and **IMPROVISATION**.

Collage is about **FINDING, GATHERING, COLLECTING** and **RECYCLING**.

Collage is about using images that are specific to a particular moment in time (newspapers and advertising images).

Collages are like dreams – they are made up of fragments of information that can be strung together to create meaning.

Collage can be surprising, beautiful, intriguing and sometimes shocking or even horrifying. [1]



Image: (detail) Tony Albert, *Card up your sleeve*, 2018, vintage playing cards, coasters and matchboxes on board, 37.2 x 48.2cm

[1] netsvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Education_kit.pdf



Danie Mellor

born Mackay, Queensland 1971, lives and works Southern Highlands, New South Wales

Marri diramu: balam dugurrba

2016

mixed media on Saunders Waterford paper with wash, glitter and Swarovski crystal, 147 x 97cm

Marri diramu: balam dugurrba depicts a birthing site beneath fig trees, significant for generations of Aboriginal people (the title combines Dharawal and Jirrbal words for mighty and tree).

Mellor, an artist with Ngadjon/Mamu, Scottish, Irish, and American heritage, incorporates adapted Western clothing to depict a post-settlement context where change is already underway.

The complex hybridity of First Nations and Colonial cultures is represented in the contrasting cool blue and white of the imported willow pattern ceramic, and the warm skin tones of the women and the bodies of the indigenous animals.

The image is laced with small crystals and glitter, an ironic decoration on this majestic natural landscape.

K - 6 Discussion Questions and Activities

Danie Mellor has referred to the Willow Pattern in this artwork. The Willow pattern is a design used to decorate crockery, most often seen in blue and white, that features common elements. These elements are a willow tree, an orange or apple tree, two birds, people on a bridge, a fence, a boat and a tea house, which looks like a pagoda. [2]

The scene painted in this artwork is referencing a painting done by Conrad Martens which depicts Illawarra forest scenes, including fig trees.

- Research the First Nations term of 'Country'.
- **Activity:** Design a Willow pattern inspired plate, featuring a scene located within the Country you live in. In your design include First Nations flora and fauna.
- How many birds can you see in this artwork? Can you name each species?

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

Appropriation is the intentional borrowing, copying, and alteration of existing images and objects. A strategy that has been used by artists for millennia, it took on new significance in the mid-20th century with the rise of consumerism and the proliferation of images through mass media outlets from magazines to television.[3]

Danie Mellor has appropriated elements of the Willow pattern in his art practice. The blue and white colouration of this work is derived from Chinese designs on white ceramics decorated with cobalt blue underglaze. These wares were globally disseminated through exploration, trade and colonisation for centuries. Here the blue signifies the cultural space around indigenous peoples, as they move through a landscape undergoing irrevocable change. [4]

- How has the artist used the Willow pattern to generate new cultural meanings?
- Explain how this use of appropriation further impact our understanding of colonisation and its impact.

[2] & [4] The Contemporary Collection Education Kit, Wollongong Art Gallery

[3] www.moma.org/collection/terms/pop-art/appropriation



Tony Albert

born Townsville, Queensland 1981,
Girramay, East Cape region, Kuku
Yalanji, East Cape region, Girramay,
Yidinji + Kuku-Yalanji people

Card up your sleeve

2018

vintage playing cards, coasters and
matchboxes on board, 37.2 x 48.2cm

Tony Albert is satirising the voyages of Captain Cook in this collaged pseudo board game. The title refers to the hidden advantage of a player having a secret skill. Albert's game draws attention to the weaponised invasion of Australia by the British in the eighteenth century. The elevated hardboard characters on the orange background originate from 1980s computer games such as Space Invaders. The winner gets to be eaten up by Pacman, a symbol of rampant consumerism.

Albert is known for his collages and assemblages made from racist kitsch, which he terms 'Aboriginalia'.

Albert challenges superficial interpretations of these once-popular souvenirs and household objects to ask foundational questions around First Nations' rights to self-determination.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- How has the artist used the format of a board game to depict historical events?
- What symbols have been repeated in this artwork? What ideas do these symbols communicate?
- Look up the definition of the terms 'Aboriginalia' and 'kitsch' and describe the ways in which the artist used these practices to create meaning in this artwork?



Joan Ross

born Glasgow, United Kingdom 1961,
arrived Australia 1962, lives and
works in Sydney, Gadigal Land

The claiming of things

2012

single-channel HD video animation
duration: 7 min 36 sec

In the animation *The claiming of things*, Joan Ross takes John Glover's landscape as the backdrop for a commentary on the impact of colonisation for First Nations people.

The viewer watches a fluorescent fence being erected to demarcate a settler couple's purchase of Aboriginal land. Later, the wife figure tags a rock with the word 'Banksia', a wry nod to Joseph Banks and the guerrilla graffiti artist, Banksy.

Towards the end, a pile of rubbish is subsumed by rain into the river. Ross superimposes her signature fluorescent palette onto Glover's muted scenes to suggest colonial interventions as alien or toxic in the natural environment.

Ross describes herself as a gleaner rescuing bric-a-brac from local council clean-ups and garage sales. She memorialises found items using her trademark wit to political ends.

Watch the animation by Joan Ross and then answer the following questions.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- How has the artist used the practice of collage in the making of this animation?
- The title of this animation is called The claiming of things. List the ways how Aboriginal land has been claimed in this animation.

Ross uses the lurid presence of fluorescent colour as a visual metaphor for colonisation and contemporary culture. Using a palette well-known to hi-vis workwear, she highlights an incompatibility between the colonisers and the landscapes they occupy. [5]

- List the things that are fluorescent green in this animation and what symbolic reference they have to colonisation or contemporary culture.
- **Activity:** Create a collage using an Australian Colonial painting as your background image. Using other images from magazines, unwanted books and newspapers, develop a collage work by combining it with other contemporary images from popular culture. Consider the meaning and symbolism in your artwork.



Robert Klippel

born Sydney, New South Wales 1920
- 2001

(untitled)

1986

collage of cut photocopies, ball-
point pen on paper, 24.8 x 26.7cm

The photocopier is an important instrument in modern collage. In this artwork Robert Klippel has photocopied images of machine objects from industrial manuals and reconfigured them in a delicate and airy abstract composition.

By switching across a range of dark and light machine settings Klippel has been able to suffuse his collage with grainy textures and heavy lines. Where necessary he has hand-drawn lines of connection.

Klippel was a playful and analytical artist who made collages as stand-alone artworks and as precursors to his metal sculptures. Few other artists in the history of Australian collage exemplify the joy and energy of this medium quite so quintessentially as Klippel.

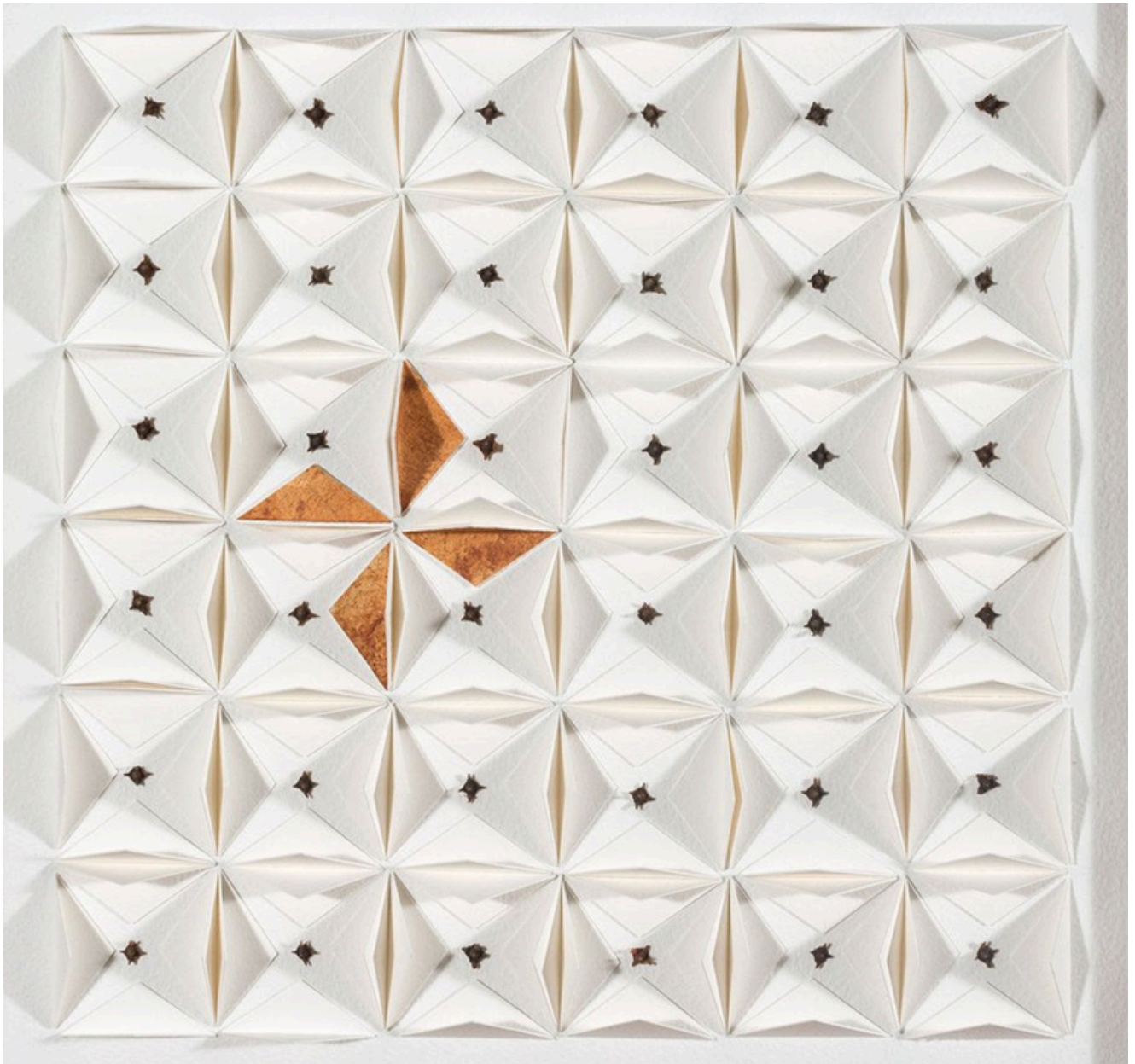
K - 6 Discussion Questions and Activities

- **Activity:** Create a collage on a piece of paper using images that are themed to profession. For example, themes could be school, animals, cooking, sewing, or technology. Images can be collected from the Internet, magazines, unwanted books and newspapers.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

Klippel aimed to create an art that expressed the defining aspects of twentieth-century life by exploring the interrelationship between the cogwheel and the bud. While best known for his sculpture born from the fusion of mechanical and organic forms, Klippel also worked extensively with drawing media, producing approximately five thousand works on paper in his lifetime. [6]

- Explain the ways in which this collage shows Klippel's connection to his sculpture practice.



Lee Bethel

born Sydney, New South Wales 1956

Calyx

2017

seeds on handcut and folded paper
on board, 30 x 30cm

In *Calyx*, Lee Bethel has merged the raw plant material with its mass-produced kindred form, paper. Seeds, foraged from her garden in Bundeena, are contained within orderly paper husks. The open petals applied to a section of the artwork give the collage its name: calyx, meaning the outer whorl of a flower.

For Bethel, light itself is a material. She constructs space and builds boundaries in her deceptively simple collages.

K - 6 Discussion Questions and Activities

- **Activity:** Draw a flower using only geometric shapes.
- Research the art of origami and learn how to fold a flower out of paper.



Suzanne Archer

born Great Britain 1945, arrived
Australia 1965

Private grounds

1987

collage, ink and PVA glue on board,
137.0 x 157.0 cm

Private grounds is one of Suzanne Archer's early abstract collages built from a dislocated field of torn paper, overlaid with strong calligraphic strokes. A line in perpetual motion travels through it.

Archer is known for her powerful earthy landscapes. She prepares the foundations of her paintings with collage as if she were physically wrenching materials from the ground itself.

K - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- Describe the types of lines in this artwork.
- What does this artwork remind you of?
- **Activity:** Teacher/Tour Guide will distribute pieces paper cut into a rectangle shape with a black permanent marker to each student. Students will be invited to draw marks on their piece of paper and combine these drawings together to form a large collaborative artwork.



Vicki Varvaressos

born Sydney, New South Wales 1949

The best face value for autumn

1978

synthetic polymer paint, collage of cut magazine illustrations on canvas, 155 x 155cm

Best face value for autumn is a painterly collage parodying advertising tropes that regard women as passive sex kittens. In stark contrast, the protagonist in Varvaressos' collage is a self-possessed woman wrestling a big cat into submission.

The ghostly faces beneath her are pages cut and pasted from a Vogue magazine article about seasonal make-up ideas.

By painting over the beauty tips, Varvaressos links artmaking with gendered beauty rituals by contextualising the gendered and ephemeral act of 'putting on a face' with the heroic and traditionally male-dominated act of painting.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- This artwork depicts how women are portrayed in the media, specifically beauty magazines. Describe how the artist has portrayed the woman and tiger in this painting.
- The collaged elements featured in this artwork are located at the bottom of this painting. They are pages cut and pasted from Vogue magazines. The artist has covered these faces with a thin veil of paint. What message or hidden meaning do you think the artist is trying to convey by doing this?



Tony Convey

born Prahan, Victoria 1946

Magnetic animals

1998

oil on tin on painted wood, 74 x 121 x 8cm

In his teens, Tony Convey escaped from boarding school and was pursued by two teachers until the path ended and he was standing on the edge of a cliff.

In that moment a fox appeared beside him and gazed up. Convey says that the warm energy in the animal's eyes saved him.

In *Magnetic animals*, Convey has painted himself and his totemic fox as twins united by a rainbow stream of bubbles.

K - 6 Discussion Questions and Activities

- The haiku is a Japanese poetic form that consists of three lines, with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the third. Write a haiku poem about Magnetic animals.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- This artwork is an assemblage but can be regarded as a collage due to the way this artwork has been constructed. Research the art term 'assemblage' and then discuss the similarities and differences between 'assemblage' and 'collage',



Jenny Orchard's quirky aquarium in *Blue floating conscious mind, into the galaxies, into the trees*, is swimming with whimsical lifeforms; eccentric plankton, uprooted trees and talking orchids.

Conveying quiet empathic purpose, Orchard combines exquisite cut-outs and pigments to create an imaginary world where all creatures are equal.

Orchard's collage belies her interest in the Greek philosopher Parmenides who held that existence is a unified whole, despite changing forms and motion over

Jenny Orchard

born Ankara, Turkey 1951, arrived
Australia 1975

Blue floating conscious mind, into the galaxies, into the trees

2020

watercolour, collage and gouache on
paper, 76 x 56cm

K - 6 Discussion Questions and Activities

- **Activity:** Using *Blue floating conscious mind, into the galaxies, into the trees* as inspiration, create an underwater scene using watercolours. In your artwork use cut-outs of the human eye and other facial features from magazines, newspapers or old books to help form your sea creature creations.

7 - 12 Discussion Questions and Activities

- Jenny Orchard's collages can be regarded as examples of Surrealism. *Surrealism is a twentieth-century literary, philosophical and artistic movement that explored the workings of the mind, championing the irrational, the poetic and the revolutionary.* [7] Research Jenny Orchard's collages then in your own words, list the connections her art practice has to Surrealism.
- **Activity:** Using *Blue floating conscious mind, into the galaxies, into the trees* as inspiration, create an underwater scene using watercolours. In your artwork use cut-outs of the human eye and other facial features from magazines, newspapers or old books to help form your sea creature creations.

Bonus Activity: Follow our online tutorial on how to create Jenny Orchard Inspired Collages

[Youtube Video - Jenny Orchard Inspired Collage Tutorial](#)