

Teacher Notes:

Agatha Gothe-Snape

ENCOUNTER THE ARTIST

– AGATHA GOTHE-SNAPE

Museum of
Contemporary
Art Australia

 mca.com.au/learn



CLASS KIT

This class kit introduces the artist practice of Agatha Gothe-Snape. Utilising key examples and inquiry questions, the Encounter is designed to provoke class discussion and offer an entry point to the suite of resources available through MCA Learn.

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AGATHA GOTHE-SNAPE

– *meet the artist*



Agatha Gothe-Snape, 2015, Carriageworks
<http://carriageworks.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/7666.1334275884.1024.683>
 Agatha-Gothe-Snape.png

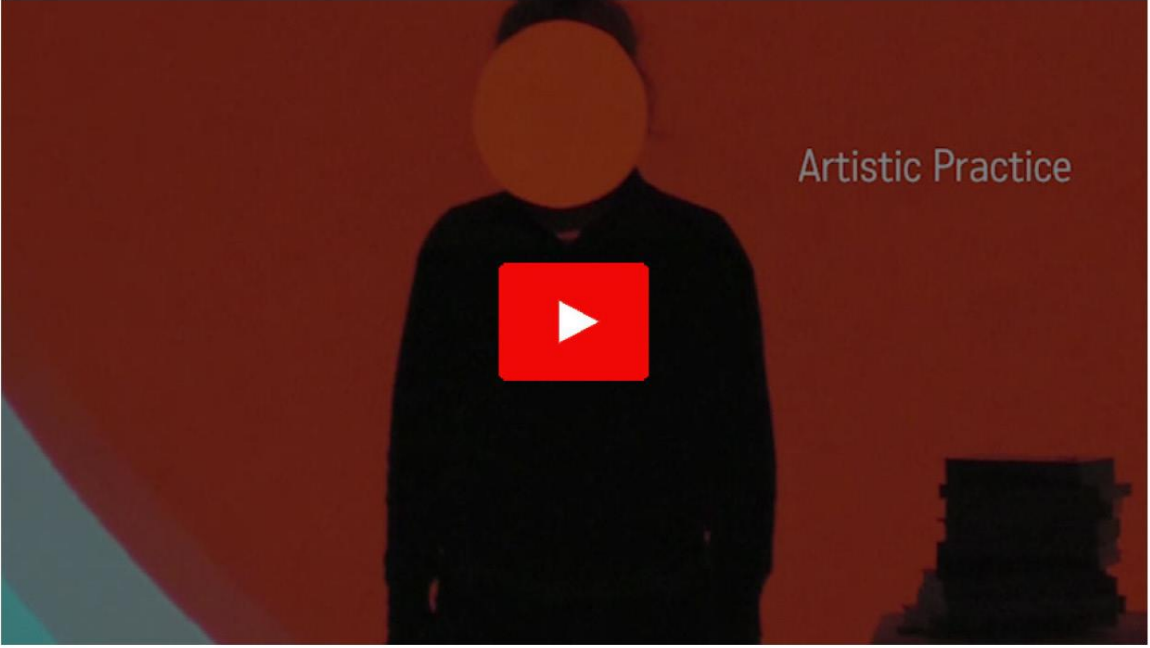
Agatha Gothe-Snape is a young Australian artist who lives and works in Sydney. She is a conceptual artist who describes her practice as being closely related to performance. However, the medium of her work constantly changes - taking many forms including performance, installation, text, and PowerPoint.

Across mediums, Gothe-Snape's works often incorporate text, colour, and space. Her works engage audiences through the use of humour, conversation and instructions.

Three themes in Agatha Gothe-Snape's work that will be explored in this class kit are: **Challenging Conventions**, **Collaboration**, and **Use of Text**.

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MCA Artist's Voice: Agatha Gothe-Snape, 2013 (excerpt)
click on image to play video.

View this extract of Artist Voice interview with Agatha Gothe-Snape. Recap with students Gothe-Snape's major themes and intentions as an artist.

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MCA Challenging Conventions 5

“

I don't want to make art that is immediately identifiable as art.

I'm interested in making things that we don't really know what they are yet.

”

Agatha Gothe-Snape, MCA Artist's Voice Video, 2013

Ask students to consider what things they might immediately identify as art. You may also wish to brainstorm as a group what unidentifiable art might look like.

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Challenging Conventions

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Agatha Gothe-Snape, *PowerPoints Catalogue*, 2008 - ongoing

Microsoft Powerpoint Files, subscription-based edition, Installation view - NGV 2013
image courtesy and © the artist

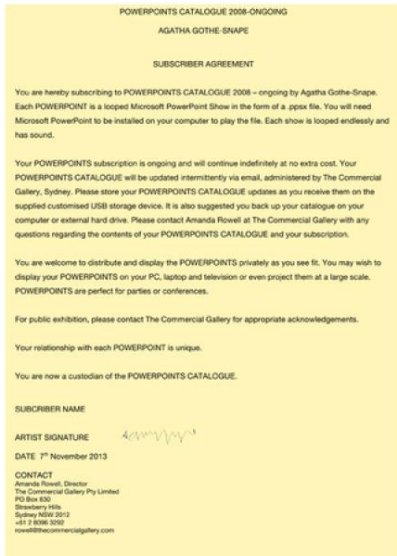
Discuss with students the following: if you had to classify this as an artwork, what categories would you put it in? Why? Do you think this is an 'immediately identifiable' artwork? Why or why not? An explanation of the work follows on the next slide.

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Challenging Conventions

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PowerPoints Catalogue (2008-ongoing) is a subscription-based artwork consisting of digital artworks created in Microsoft PowerPoint. They are endless loops with sound.

When you pay for a subscription, you receive the full series of PowerPoints on a customised USB. You are also sent new works periodically via email.

PowerPoints Catalogue can be viewed at any scale on any device that has Microsoft PowerPoint.

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Agatha Gothe-Snape, *PowerPoints Catalogue*, 2008 - on going

Microsoft Powerpoint Files, subscription-based edition,
Subscriber Agreement
MCA Collection

Read through the Subscriber Agreement and discuss the idea of a subscriber-based artwork as a class. Encourage students to think about the benefits and complexities of collecting such a work. How would you feel about owning an artwork that exists on a USB stick in a digital form?

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Challenging Conventions

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If you had a subscription to *PowerPoints Catalogue* (2008-ongoing) and were going to display the work in your gallery, how would you present it?

- How many PowerPoints would you show (there are over 40)?
- Would you include the USB, letter and documents like emails?
- How many screens and what type?
- What scale?
- Considering that you've made these decisions, what is your role in the artwork?

**DISCUSSION
IDEAS**

Go through each decision and discuss as a class. Students may also wish to draw a plan of how they would present their work. In considering their role in the artwork encourage students to reflect on the decisions they had made in previous steps. Do these align with the role of a collector, curator, artist, collaborator or other? How easy is this to define and why?

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Challenging Conventions

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How does *PowerPoint Catalogue* (2008 - ongoing) challenge the conventions of art?

**DIG
DEEPER**

When answering this question, encourage students to think about factors including materiality (what an artwork can be made of), authorship (who makes art), skill and value.

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MCA Collaboration 11

“

Conversation is a big part
of my practice.

”

Agatha Gothe-Snape, MCA Artist's Voice Video 2013

Encourage students to think about what conversations could occur as part of artist's practice.

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Collaboration

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Agatha Gothe-Snape, *Every Artist Remembered*, 2009-2011

posca pen on arches paper, 180.00 x 140.00 cm,

Pictured above: *Every Artist Remembered* with David Haines and Joyce Hinterding, 2011, Performance on Friday 4 November, 2011 at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne as part of the exhibition *Power to the People*, curated by Hannah Matthews.

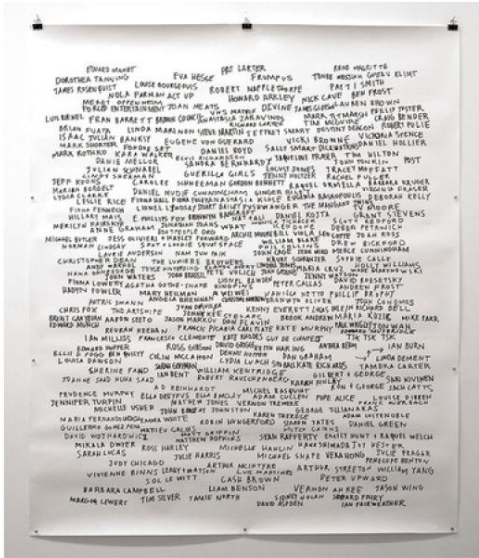
Every Artist Remembered is a series of performances where Gothe-Snape and nine Australian artists engaged in a two-hour dialogue consisting solely of the names of artists that came to mind. Gothe-Snape began each performance by asking the collaborator to say the first artist name; then Gothe-Snape responded with another name and so on. Gothe-Snape recorded the names on the paper as they went. The names were not recorded in order of their recollection, but were intuitively placed on the page. What was left at the end of these performances are nine written records of this oral process. Each performance is an improvisational map of an artistic community. It serves as an act of commemoration and an exploration of relationships and multiple histories.

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Collaboration

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A section from Gothe-Snape's instructions for *Every Artist Remembered* (2009-2011)

I give each collaborating artist very similar verbal instructions before each appointment commences. It goes something like this:

The task is, as the name of the work suggests, to remember every artist. This is of course impossible but in this 2 hours we will attempt to do so. The definition of 'an artist' is yours. I put no limitations on this and will not censor any name you say. We will alternately recall artists name for exactly two hours. You will name the first and last artist. I will note the artists on this piece of paper as we go, although where I place each name is intuitive and bears no relation to the linear formation of our conversation. I ask that each name be said in relation to the name before. This specific nature of the relation is up to you – it could be linguistic, social, historical, lateral, geographic, sexual, intuitive etc. . . .

Agatha Gothe-Snape from <http://www.thecommercialgallery.com/artist/agatha-gothe-snape/exhibition/3/every-artist-remembered-1>

Agatha Gothe-Snape, *Every Artist Remembered with Daniel Mudie Cunningham*, 2009-2011
posca pen on arches paper, 180x 140.00 cm
image courtesy and © the artist

Read through Gothe-Snape's instructions with students. Encourage students to reflect on why Gothe-Snape would create such firm instructions?

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Collaboration

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Follow these instructions:

1. Find a friend.
2. Pick one category from the list:
/ animals / drinks / food / sports / songs /
3. In two minutes, list as many items from your category as you can alternating turns.

-
- What was the experience like working with a partner?
 - How would the experience be different if you worked with someone you didn't know?



**QUICK
ACTIVITY**

This activity works best in pairs, however would benefit from whole class discussion and reflection.

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Collaboration

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When making an artwork, why would an artist choose to collaborate?

**DIG
DEEPER**

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Use of Text

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Write a newspaper headline to describe your day.

- How did you make your sentence sound like a newspaper headline?
- Ask a friend to read your headline. Can they guess the story?

**WARM
UP**

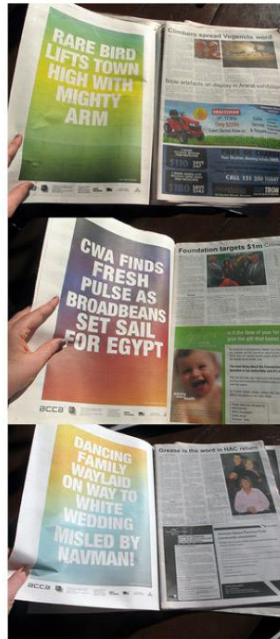
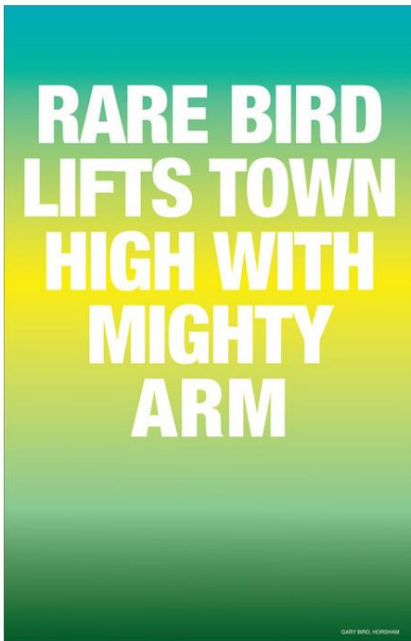
Encourage students to think about the language and structure of newspaper headlines. You may wish to share examples of real headlines with the class as a prompt.

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Use of Text

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Agatha Gothe-Snape, *Headliners*, 2011

Headliners with Gary Bird, 2011, two formats: 1) colour print in *The Weekly Advertiser*; 2) archival digi print on rag paper, 43.10 x 27.90 cm, edition of 5 + 2 AP (newspaper circulation of 50,000). image courtesy and © the artist.

Headliners is the result of a two-month project, which began when Gothe-Snape was invited to execute a project in Horsham (a town in regional Victoria) that engaged the local community. She advertised to “non-newsworthy” participants in a classified advertisement in Horsham’s local newspaper *The Weekly Advertiser*. Each week she chose one participant and called them every night that week to chat about their daily life, job, family, weather and Horsham in general. At the end of the week, she would collate her notes and devise a poetic, cryptic headline to reflect her conversations with that participant. The following week, the headline would be published in *The Weekly Advertiser*, along with each subject’s name.

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Use of Text

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Gothe-Snape interviewed local people in Horsham, VIC, speaking to each individual every night for a week to create a picture of their life in her head. She then turned it into a headline.

Quickly illustrate the headline:

“RARE BIRD LIFTS TOWN HIGH WITH MIGHTY ARM.”

- How did you interpret the text to create your drawing?
- Compare your interpretation with others.

**DISCUSSION
IDEAS**

Encourage students to draw the first thing that comes into their head, as opposed to worrying about the intended meaning of the sentence. When reflecting on how they interpreted their text, question prompts could include: Is there a narrative to their story? Did they focus on certain words in the headline or illustrate it as a whole? When comparing interpretations as a class encourage students to take notice of any patterns, similarities or differences in interpretations.

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Use of Text

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How would the audience's interpretation of this artwork differ if Gothe-Snape had used images instead of text?

**DIG
DEEPER**

When answering this question, it may be helpful for students to revisit the outcomes of the Discussion Ideas on the previous slide. Encourage students to consider the role of the audience in determining meaning, the multiplicity of meaning, interpretation and the symbolism of image and text.

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THANK YOU!