

**THE DOWSE  
EDUCATION TEAM**

Teaching Notes

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# Zina Swanson: For Vivian Solid Ground

Estimated Time: 1.5 hours

## **BACKGROUND INFO**

Have you ever sat back and considered how Aotearoa's natural beauty has an impact on our identity? These exhibitions, *Zina Swanson: For Vivian* and *Solid Ground*, allows students to see how a range of New Zealand artists have explored the concepts of place, identity and belonging through depicting nature in their art.

*Zina Swanson: For Vivian* gives us a window into the world of plants. Intricately using both sculpture and watercolour, Swanson explores the reciprocal relationship between plants and humans and the idea that plants have thoughts and feelings of their own.

*Solid Ground* is a collection of unconventional landscapes that reflects on the culture and environment of Aotearoa. Using landscape as a form of personal expression, artists delve into themes of identity and belonging. This is a great opportunity to celebrate a collection of impressive New Zealand artists including Colin Mc Cahon, Ralph Hotere, Ronnie van Hout, Robert Ellis, Shane Cotton and many more.

Come and view a collection of landscapes and nature inspired art in the form of printmaking, sculpture, photography and painting. Students of all ages are welcomed and will have fun exploring their identity through connecting with nature.

# **THE SESSION**

## **Learning Experience**

Students will discover how artists explore their connection to the environment and create their own artwork using natural resources

## **Curriculum Links**

*We can adapt our programmes to fit your curriculum level*

### **Visual Arts: (Level 2)**

**Communicating and Interpreting:** Share the ideas, feelings, and stories communicated by their own and others' objects and images

### **Social Sciences: (Level 2)**

Understand how places influence people and people influence places

## **Key Competency**

- Thinking
- Participating and contributing
- Relating to others

## **Lesson Sequence**

- Students will explore the exhibition with an educator and discover artworks that reflect New Zealand's landscapes and environment
- Students will be supported to make connections and interpret the artworks and encouraged to share ideas, thoughts and questions
- Weather permitting, we will go out into our own local environment to take part in an activity that connects us with nature and explores the idea of place

## **Hands-on creative workshop**

- Students will make their own paints from the environment and create an art work using them
- Clay workshop



Contact our education team:  
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## **Pre-Visit Activities**

- Discuss the idea of place and identity - *What do you think of when you think of home?* Compare New Zealand's landscape with other countries
- Explore ways of making art using nature e.g. leaf rubbings, collages using natural materials
- Experiment growing plants from seed. *What do they need to survive? Do they act differently if you talk to them? What happens if you play them calming music?*

## **Post-Visit Activities**

- Learn more about one of the artists you discovered at the Dowse
- Experiment with other ways you can create art using natural resources e.g. clay, carving, painting rocks and wood, creating dyes
- Delve deeper into the concepts of belonging , identity and place and what this might look like for you students



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