

Rob McLeod: Excuse me Mr Frankenstein, Vlad Is Outside Feeding

TEACHER RESOURCE



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Rob McLeod grew up in Glasgow and attended the Glasgow School of Art before moving to New Zealand when he was 24. A lot of his early work was large scale paintings in abstract expressionism which found critical success. However, Rob McLeod is not one to play it safe and stick with the status quo. He rebelled against what the art market expected him to do and started experimenting with quirky, free flowing, biomorphic shapes which are still prominent in his work today. Rob McLeod taught visual art and art history for many years and was a teacher at Wellington High School. One of our staff members at The Dowse was taught by him! While teaching he painted prolifically and exhibited widely throughout New Zealand.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

'Excuse me Mr Frankenstein, Vlad Is Outside Feeding' is a solo exhibition of artist Rob McLeod. In this exhibition you will find a series of colourful, horrific, twisted and distorted characters. Mickey mouse ears, batman hoods, swinging limbs, bulging eyeballs, grotesque bent hands, rocket ships and denture-like teeth mish-mashed together. Described by a young visitor to The Dowse as 'monsters' these paintings have been frankenstein-ed together with parts from older paintings. They take over the gallery with limbs extending off the walls like they are trying to escape! Taking inspiration from comic books and penny dreadfuls there are pages that turn and pop-out cut-outs that have moveable appendages. Rob McLeod's

love of the physicality of paint is especially evident in the skin textures which make the characters feel so nightmarishly real that they could reach out and grab you. He is experimental in his processes and uses many different tools such as brush, palette knife and spray paint. He also is not afraid to rip, burn, cut, scar, glaze and wrinkle his work for different effects. These raucous paintings, although vibrant and colourful hold a deeper darker reflection on pop culture, social commentary and art history.



ART TERMS

Abstract Expressionism- a post-World War II abstract art movement known for gestural lines and improvised mark-making (artist examples are Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko)

Figurative- art that has a strong likeness to the real world and the human figure.

Biomorphic- abstract shapes that give a suggestion of forms from nature such as plants, body parts and organisms. The name comes from the Greek words bios (life) and morphe (form)

Texture -the feel or appearance of a surface or substance

Painterly- the use of paint in a 'loose' way, resulting in brushstrokes and marks being visible in the finished painting.

Glaze- a technique where you add a transparent layer of paint over an existing layer.

Distortion- twisting, pulling or altering something out of its true or original state

Anamorphosis- a perspective technique that makes a distorted image look normal from a particular angle or using a special lens or mirror.

PRE VISIT IDEAS

EXPLORE Paint. Set up an investigative art experiment and have a multi-sensory art making experience! See what textures you can make. Try mixing things into the paint (sand, soap, petals) to see what effect each one creates or use different tools to create marks or try different surfaces to paint on plastic, sandpaper, wood...

MAKE a comic strip- Explore character and world building. Write a short story about your character, From your story choose a moment to turn into a comic strip. Maybe a funny moment or an important conversation in the story.



POST VISIT IDEAS

CREATE a hybrid monster- Choose two fantasy creatures and mish-mash them together- goblins, gargoyles, werewolves, vampires... Then write a story about your creature!

EXPLORE distortion and the math that makes this illusion happen! Try making an anamorphosis. There are many great tutorials on youtube to help you do this.

FURTHER READING:

- <https://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/CU1710/S00006/rob-mcleod-beyond-fashion.htm>
- <https://thebigidea.nz/news/tbi-qna/119186-tbi-qa-rob-mcleod>
- https://dowse.org.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/29901/Dowse-Artist-catalogue-Rob-Mcleod-2023-Web-FINAL-v1.pdf

ROB McLEOD, THE BRIDAL PARTY, 2022. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK TANTRUM.

ROB McLEOD, FRANKENSTEIN-ED TRIO, 2022. OIL AND ENAMEL ON PLY. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK TANTRUM.

ROB McLEOD, BATMAN BROKEN AND DARK ROCKET, 2022. OIL AND ENAMEL ON PLY. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK TANTRUM.



**The
Dowse
Art
Museum**

45 Laings Road, Hutt
Central, Lower Hutt 5010
T 04 560 1260
E education@dowse.org.nz