

# Iterate : Elaborate

## Leigh Schoenheimer

This resource includes suggestions for activities to undertake and points to discuss before, during and after visits to **Iterate | Elaborate**.



Image: Louis Lim

Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #10 2018

## Teacher notes

A former long-term art educator, Brisbane based artist Leigh Schoenheimer conducts a multi-disciplinary practice focussing on painting and sculpture. Schoenheimer's whimsical use of found objects and pieces of brightly coloured timber toys spark familiarity and joy. Seductive colour schemes tie her complex works together and are fundamental to both a delicious viewing experience and the creation of meaning in the work.

In **Iterate | Elaborate**, Schoenheimer sets out to demonstrate the difference between **seeing** and **knowing** a subject. Through the genre of still life painting, her work offers a visual explanation for the *alternative* logic of abstraction and post-modern approaches to art making.

In recent years, the artist's paintings and sculptures have collided in a series called "*Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Constructions*". In the manner of their titles, these multi-panelled works investigate the relationship between **perception** (seeing a subject) and **meaning** (knowing a subject). The starting point for each of the *Constructions* is an abstract sculpture. By then painting a realist description of the 3D abstraction, Schoenheimer begins each of these 'storyboards' with a visual pun. The subsequent panels move beyond realism to explore other more interpretive responses to her subject matter.

Previously exhibited at Onespace Gallery, **Iterate | Elaborate** was the last of three exhibitions on this theme - the two prior, connected shows being held at the Redland Art Gallery - Capalaba and the Stanthorpe Regional Art Gallery. In conjunction with the artist and Onespace Gallery, Flying Arts are now touring this engaging exhibition.

More information and links about Schoenheimer can be found at [www.leighdesigns.com.au](http://www.leighdesigns.com.au)

*"I think about those first abstract paintings of the early 1900's. At the time they attracted the scorn of the critics and shocked the public. Why is it though, that Picasso's Cubist works and Malevich's minimalist abstractions still have the capacity to baffle people, more than **100 years** after they were made? It should be old-hat by now, but a lot of people still seem to find these works confronting! In part, the **Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing** series is my way of addressing these issues."*

Leigh Schoenheimer



The Ark - 2017

An extensive case study of artist Leigh Schoenheimer's work has been included in "*Creative Inquiry - Visual Art for Queensland Senior Secondary Students*" (Brown et al), published in 2019 by Cambridge University Press.

# Iterate | Elaborate Leigh Schoenheimer

These education resources have been developed by the Flying Arts Alliance in collaboration with artist Leigh Schoenheimer to support teacher and student engagement with the touring exhibition of **Iterate | Elaborate**. It is understood that teachers will be best placed to determine the potential for each of these activities to be used within or alongside their work programs. Focussing on the Visual Arts, the kit can be used by teachers from Foundation to Senior levels. The information and activities provided have been designed to help teachers identify entry points for students. Though some of these entry points have suggested year levels assigned to them, they should be considered for use beyond those parameters. The Artist's Statements page is intended as a starting point for class discussions which could take place before, during or after an exhibition visit. The two worksheets devoted to Making activities can be used as discrete activities, or as preliminary exercises prior to further development. The curriculum links below have been taken directly from the syllabuses as indicated in the side panel.

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## AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

### Content Descriptions

Foundation to Yr 2

**Respond** to visual artworks and consider where and why people make visual artworks, starting with visual artworks from Australia, including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. ACAVAR109

Yrs 3 - 4

**Identify** intended purposes and meanings of artworks using visual arts terminology to compare artworks, starting with visual artworks in Australia including visual artworks of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. ACAVAR113

Yrs 5 - 6

**Explain** how visual arts conventions communicate meaning by comparing artworks from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks. ACAVAR117

Yrs 7 - 8

**Analyse** how artists use visual conventions in artworks. ACAVAR123  
**Develop** ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how artists use materials, techniques, technologies and processes. ACAVAR119

Yrs 9 - 10

**Analyse** a range of visual artworks from contemporary and past times to explore differing viewpoints and enrich their visual art-making, starting with Australian artworks, including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and consider international artworks. ACAVAR131

## QUEENSLAND VISUAL ART SENIOR SYLLABUS LINKS

### Area of Study

Art as Lens

**Research** as they question and re-evaluate traditionally held values and assumptions of art and representation.

**Reflect** on the impact of different lenses that filter and distort representations in artworks. Consider ideas and information, media, techniques and processes.

Participate in an authentic experience as audience to reflect on diverse art practices, traditions, cultures and theories.

**Resolve** ideas as they respond in visual, written or spoken forms

Art as Code

**Research** diverse art-making approaches and 'read' visual language as they react to stimulus. **Analyse and interpret** artworks in teacher-directed, reverse chronology case studies to investigate historical influences on contemporary artists who incorporate literal and non-literal symbols into artwork.

**Reflect** on languages in artworks and the dialogue between artist and audience as they consider ideas and information, media, techniques and processes.

**Apply** language conventions to construct written responses that analyse, interpret, evaluate and justify visual language, expression and meaning in artworks.

Art as Knowledge

**Analyse and interpret** visual language, expression and meaning in contemporary and traditional artworks and practices using the contemporary, personal, cultural and/or formal contexts.

**Evaluate** art practices, traditions, cultures and theories to inform student-directed making and responding.

**Examine and interpret** artworks and practices by questioning the influences and theories of key artists from various contexts and times to build on their knowledge of diverse visual language and influences.

**Evaluate** a range of primary sources and secondary sources, art practices and art approaches from diverse traditions, cultures and theories to guide investigation and inform student focus and making.

Within each unit, reverse chronology is an effective approach to investigate arts practice. This approach begins with a contemporary focus and follows logical pathways backwards to learn about relevant historical, cultural and traditional styles and art forms. Reverse chronology follows a cause-and-effect pathway to understanding influences on artists, styles and practices. This differs from a customary chronological approach that would begin in the past and follow a sequential path to the present.

## CURRICULUM

ACARA Australian Curriculum  
[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)

Queensland Visual Art General Senior Syllabus  
[www.qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Iterate | Elaborate**

Gallery brochure - essay by Louise Martin-Chew

**Creative Inquiry - Visual Art for Queensland Senior Secondary Students** - Angela Brown (McCormack) et al., Cambridge University Press. 2019.

Other information, images and Youtube video links to artist interviews are available on the artist's website: [www.leighdesigns.com.au](http://www.leighdesigns.com.au)

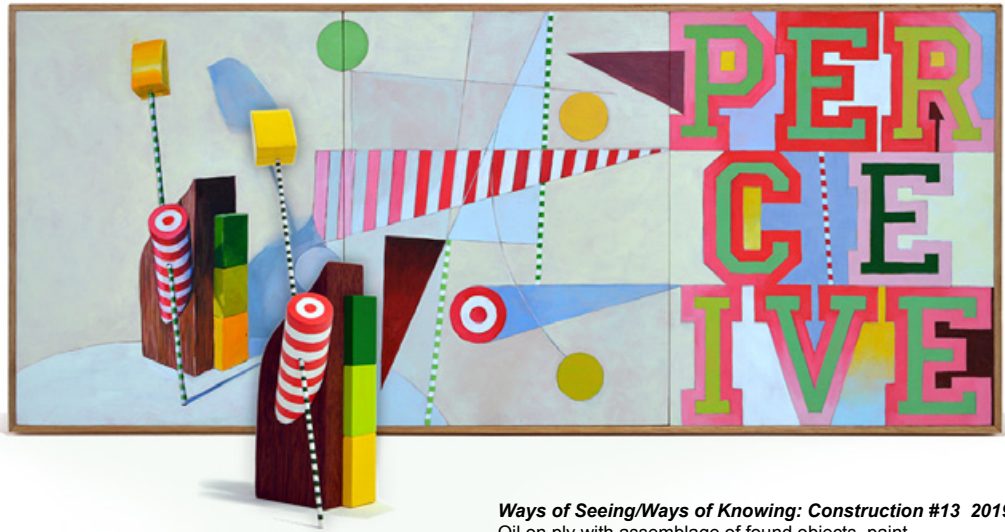


Hope Target - 2015 Found objects, paint



# Iterate : Elaborate

## Leigh Schoenheimer



*Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #13* 2019  
Oil on ply with assemblage of found objects, paint.

## Primary student education resource

### BACKGROUND information about the artist:

Leigh Schoenheimer is a Brisbane based artist who works as both a painter and sculptor.

Schoenheimer's sculptural works are playful assemblages, which often feature bits and pieces of old wooden toys and other objects that she has collected and re-purposed.

Her paintings take the form of multi-panelled **still life** images. Schoenheimer represents her still life subject in several different ways and displays these together in one frame, as a single artwork.

In recent years, these two separate areas of her work have collided in a series of paintings with associated sculptures called "Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Constructions". These colourful still-lives investigate the differences and similarities between painting what we **see** and painting what we **know**, or imagine.

In this way, each of the works in the Construction series playfully investigates ideas about **realism** Vs **abstraction** in art.

#### DEFINITION:

A **still life** is an artwork that represents a subject that is 'lifeless' - ie that doesn't move.

#### Artist Quote

*A photograph of an object looks exactly like it, but in a painting, the artist is free to interpret the object as they wish. The camera is just a piece of equipment - it has no brain. The artist has a mind and an imagination. By thinking about their subject matter, the artist can 'see' many different possibilities to those that the mechanical camera lens 'sees'!*

- Leigh Schoenheimer

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Leigh Schoenheimer has been working on the body of work called: **Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing** since 2014. The Construction series is one of several related groups of work. You can see these bodies of work at: [www.leighdesigns.com.au](http://www.leighdesigns.com.au)





**Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7** - 2017  
Oil on ply with assemblage of found objects, paint.

**CONSIDER:** What do you think will be inside the building with the two arched doors? What might be happening in the building in the far distance?

**EXPLAIN:** Outline why you think the artist uses stripes in all of her works.

**OBSERVE:** What shapes / objects can you see repeated in each of the four parts of this artwork? Make a list.

**CREATE:**  
Can you think of another way to represent Construction #7? Colour your design using only 4 colours plus black.

Use a dictionary to **DEFINE** the term **abstract** as used in painting.

**IDENTIFY:** Schoenheimer's sculptures are made up of many bits and pieces of timber. Do you recognise any of these pieces? Where have you seen them? What was their original function?

**OBSERVE:**

Choose a work in the exhibition that you like. See how many striped things you can find in that artwork. Count them.

**CREATE:**

Make a coloured pencil drawing of an imagined building. Give your building some archways.

**JUSTIFY:**

Together with some other students, discuss why do you think the artist responds to her subject matter in several different ways and then presents these all together as one artwork. Give reasons.



Preliminary sketches for **Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7** - 2017 Graphite, ink, watercolour

**RESEARCH:**

Use the weblink from the Tate Gallery to find out more information on the history of **still life** as an art form.  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/still-life>

**RESEARCH:**

By using library books or the internet, find out what traditional still life paintings looked like in Europe (France, England, Holland) before the camera was invented in the early 1800's. Compare these to some that were painted by Pablo Picasso between 1912 and 1950.

**OBSERVE:**

1) Make a list of the colours you can see in a chosen work from the exhibition.

**EXPLAIN:**

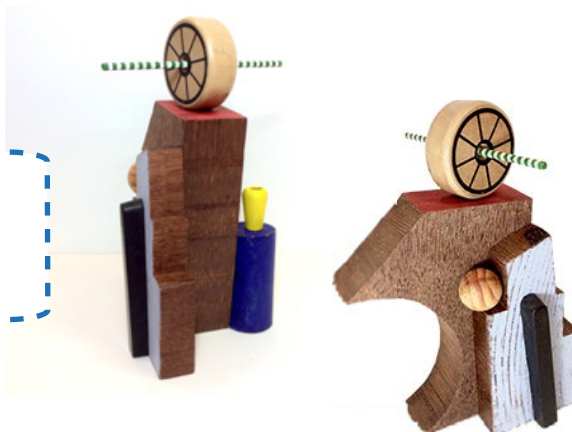
In a paragraph, give reasons why you think the artist uses repeated colours throughout each of her multi-part works.



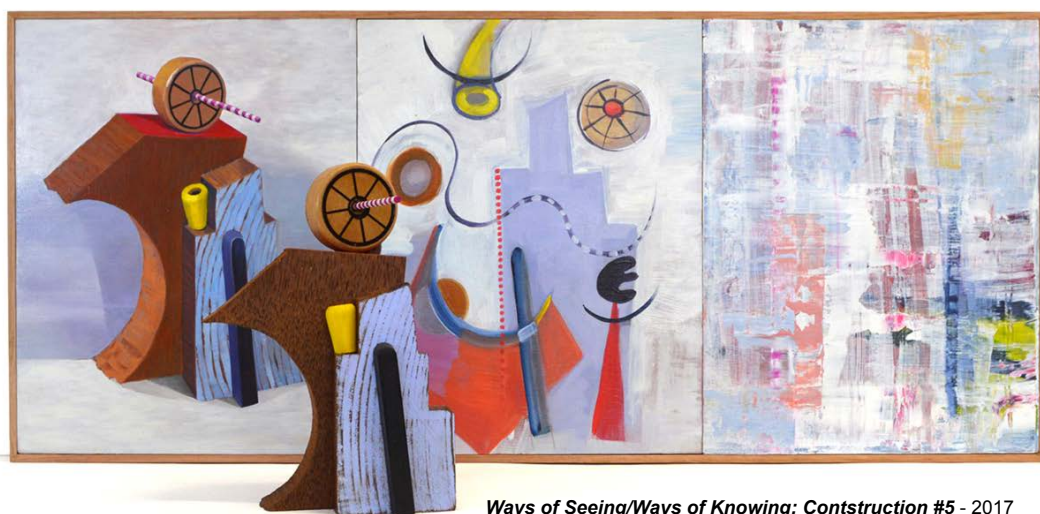
**Composition with Fork** - 2017  
Found objects, paint

## ARTIST'S STATEMENTS Starting point for discussions...

*I rotate the sculptures on a turntable as I assemble the components, checking the composition carefully from each side to be sure that they look good, from every angle.*



*I often use circles, spheres and / or stripes in my designs.*



**Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #5** - 2017  
Oil and Acrylic on Ply with Assemblage of found objects, paint.



*I'm constantly on the lookout for discarded items that have an interesting shape, or colour.*

*When starting to build each assemblage, I'm always searching for a heavy piece of timber to provide a very stable base for the rest of the components.*

*My paintings always move away from realism, towards abstraction.*

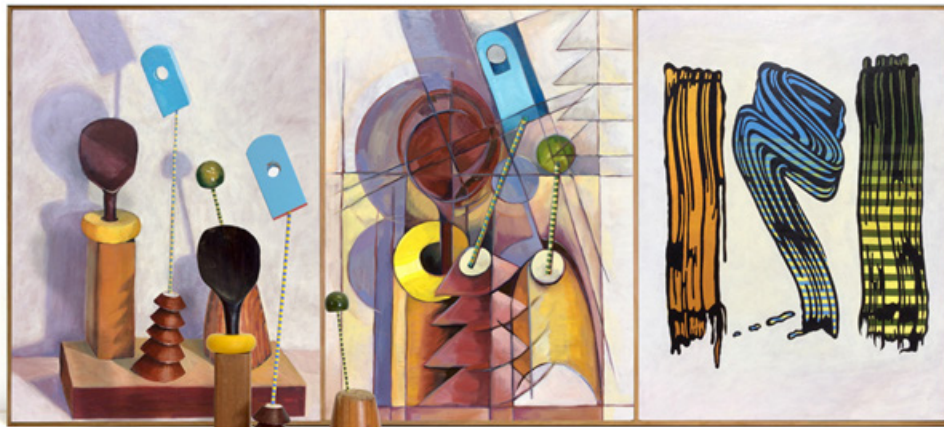


**Dreamscape #1** - 2016  
Found objects, paint



# Iterate : Elaborate

## Leigh Schoenheimer



**Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7 2017**  
Oil on ply with assemblage of found objects, paint.

## Secondary student education resource

### BACKGROUND

Leigh Schoenheimer is a Brisbane based artist who conducts a multi-disciplinary, contemporary art practice. Through the genre of still-life painting, Schoenheimer poses questions about what it is 'to make pictures'. By contrast, her sculptural works are playful assemblages, which reflect both her sense of humour and a bowerbird curiosity.

Schoenheimer's whimsical use of found objects and pieces of brightly coloured timber toys spark familiarity and joy. Seductive colour schemes tie her complex works together and are fundamental to both a delicious viewing experience and the creation of meaning through her art.

In recent years, these two separate areas of her work have collided in a series of paintings with associated sculptures called "Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Constructions". In the manner of their titles, these colourful still-lives investigate the relationship between **perception** (seeing a subject) and **meaning** (knowing a subject).

Each work in the Construction series begins with the making of an abstract assemblage of found objects and up-cycled scrap materials. Each sculpture is non-representational, having no visual origins in the objective world. Schoenheimer then paints a realistic two-dimensional image of the three-dimensional form, treating it as the subject of a traditional still-life. Each still-life painting forms the starting point of a triptych (a three panelled work), which is displayed behind the matching sculpture. Set out like a storyboard, the triptych moves the original representation purposely away from realism and back towards abstraction and beyond. In this way, each of the works in the Construction series playfully investigates ideas about **realism** Vs **abstraction** in art.

References to specific artists, styles and technologies of the 20th century are evident throughout this body of work. Reflecting her background as a teacher, Schoenheimer's work is created in part, to demonstrate the alternative logic of abstract and conceptual approaches to art making.

### Artist Quote

*Through my work I investigate the nature of 'perception', by setting up a dialogue between seeing and knowing a subject.*

- Leigh Schoenheimer

### DISCUSSION POINT

Schoenheimer begins each of her 'Constructions' by assembling an abstract sculpture, which she then records realistically in a two dimensional format. In two further steps, she proceeds to **abstract** the realistic image. What point do you think she is making?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Leigh Schoenheimer has been working on the body of work called: **Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing** since 2014. The **Construction** series is one of several related groups of work. You can see these bodies of work at: [www.leighdesigns.com.au](http://www.leighdesigns.com.au)



**Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7** - 2017  
Oil on ply with assemblage of found objects, paint.

For yrs 10 - 12

**REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:**  
Look at the work of Surrealist painter Giorgio de Chirico and the Cubist works associated with the period known as 'Synthetic Cubism'. What aspects of each artist's style are evident in **Construction #7**?

**DEFINE** the term **abstract** in the context of art making.

For yrs 11 - 12

**IDENTIFY**  
some themes that underpin Schoenheimer's **Construction** series.

**EXPLAIN:**

In a paragraph, give reasons why you think the artist uses repeated colours throughout each of her multi-part works.

**ANALYSE:** What design strategies does the artist use to establish strong connections (visual unity) across all 4 components of each work in the Construction series? Focus on one specific work when answering.

For yrs 10 - 12

Can you **IDENTIFY** any artists or art styles from which Schoenheimer's work borrows? Make a list. Why do you think the artist has referenced so many other styles?

For yrs 10 - 12

**RESEARCH:**

Define the term **appropriation** in the context of contemporary art making. How is this practice relevant to Schoenheimer's work?

**REVERSE CHRONOLOGY:** Consider how the invention of photography impacted the way painters approached making images in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Before you formulate your answer, compare the pre-camera portrait of Princesse de Broglie painted by Auguste-Dominique Ingres in 1853, to the post-camera portraits of Pablo Picasso's "Portrait of Ambroise Vollard", 1910 and Willem de Kooning's "Woman V", 1953.

For yrs 9-12

**JUSTIFY:**

Why do you think the artist responds to her subject matter in several different ways and then presents these all together as one artwork? Give reasons.



Preliminary sketches for **Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #7** - 2017 Graphite, ink, watercolour

**RESEARCH:**

Use these weblinks from the Tate Gallery to find out more information on the history of **Still Life** and **assemblage** as art forms.  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/s/still-life>  
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/assemblage>

**DISTINGUISH:**

In what ways does the artist's work align with and/or differ from a traditional approach to "Still Life painting"? In your answer, you will need to describe the characteristics of a traditional still life.

**EXPLAIN:** In one or two sentences, give reasons why you think the artist uses stripes in all of her works.

**IDENTIFY:** Schoenheimer's sculptures are made up of many bits and pieces of timber. Do you recognise any of these pieces? Where have you seen them? What was their original function?



**Composition with Fork** - 2017  
Found objects, paint



## ARTIST'S STATEMENTS Starting point for discussions...

*I paint each panel so that it works compositionally on its own - visually satisfying and complete - without the help of the other panels. At the same time, I'm also very concerned with how the three panels sit together as one painting. So really, I'm thinking of the composition of each separate component within the whole, whilst simultaneously designing the whole, multi-part work.*

*I'm constantly on the lookout for discarded pieces of timber that have an interesting shape, or colour.*

*It is important to the meaning of these works, that all three panels are viewed together. If any one panel is viewed in isolation the context would be lost. The little sculptures in the Construction series add another layer of context and meaning to the work.*

*The progression always moves away from realism, towards abstraction.*

*Even though my paintings are underpinned with meaning and references to art history, primarily it's the aesthetics and design of the work that excites me. I'm a fervent colourist, interested in making harmonious and satisfying compositions.*

*I rotate the sculptures on a turntable as I assemble the components, checking the composition carefully from each side to be sure that the visual dynamics work from every angle.*

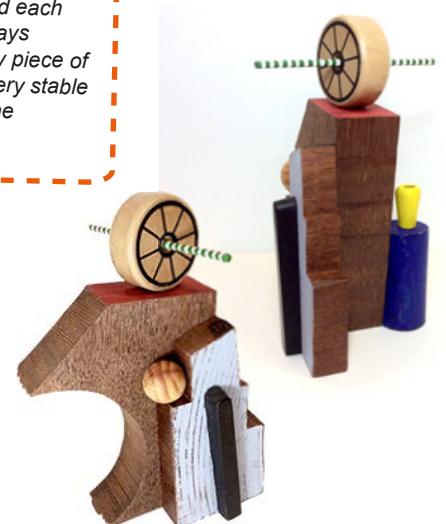


**Ways of Seeing/Ways of Knowing: Construction #5** - 2017  
Oil and Acrylic on Ply with Assemblage of found objects, paint.

*Through my work I, pose questions about what it is 'to make pictures'. At first, each work takes the form of a seductively coloured still-life painting. Through the device of multi-panelled 'storyboards', I take the viewer on a visual journey from realism to abstraction and beyond, in order to establish a connection between different modes of visual expression. Throughout this pictorial conversation I make continual reference to the imagery and styles of the many 20th century artists who re-wrote the rule-book on image making, and whose work continues to pose challenges to many viewers today, over 100 years later!*

*I noted that people in general, measured the value of an artwork by the degree of realism it employed. The more realistic an image, the more impressed they were. The most minutely detailed works often got the most enthusiastic audience response. Meanwhile, pure, minimalist abstractions, such as Malevich's "White on White" 1918 were dismissed as nonsense, often with statements along the lines of "Oh, but I could do THAT!", or "Why is that so good?" In part, the "Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing" works are my way of addressing those questions.*

*When starting to build each assemblage, I'm always searching for a heavy piece of timber to provide a very stable base for the rest of the components.*





You will need some satay sticks, tape and a pair of scissors to complete this activity.

# Iterate | Elaborate constructing - with Leigh Schoenheimer

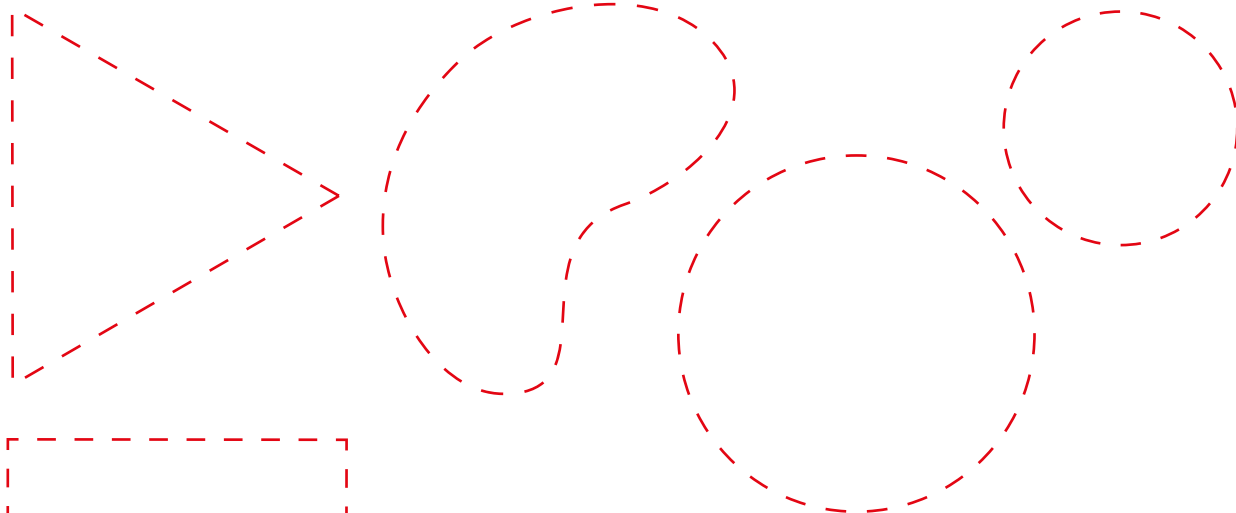
join to other straight side with tape or glue

FLYING ARTS  
ALLIANCE INC



onespace

join to other straight side with tape or glue



## INSTRUCTIONS

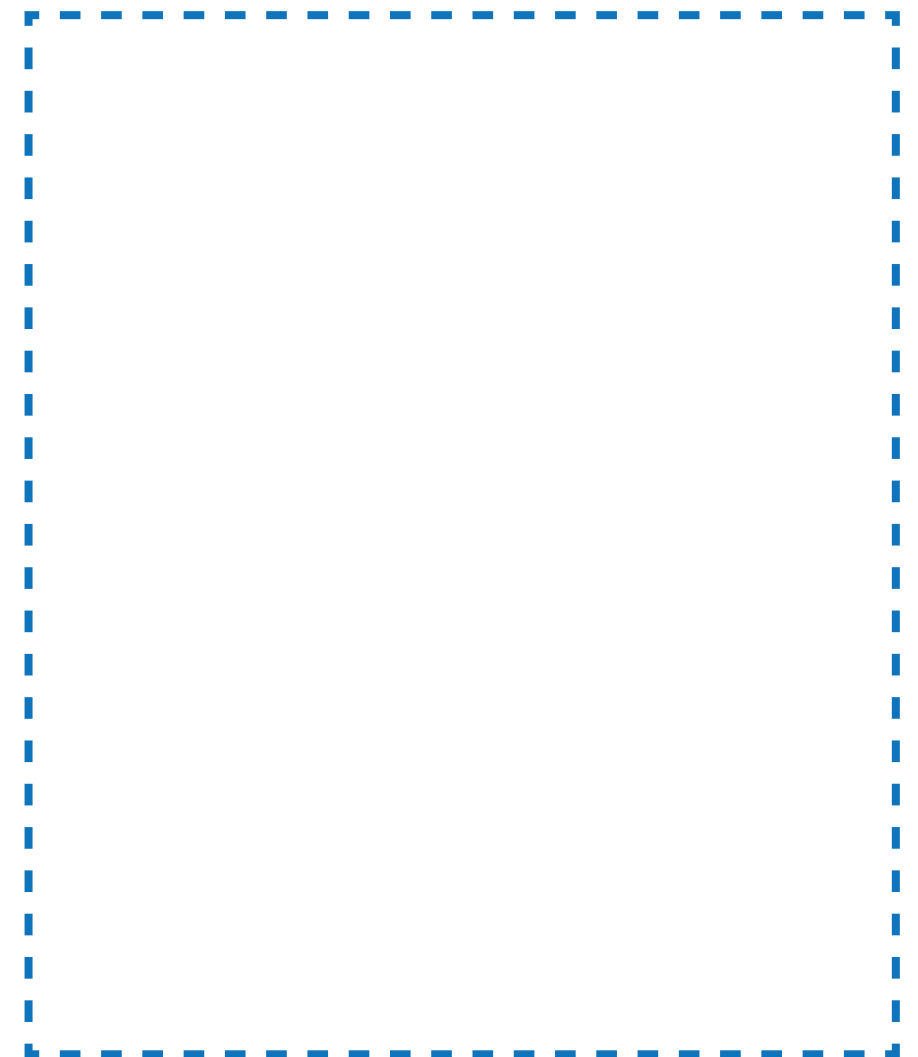
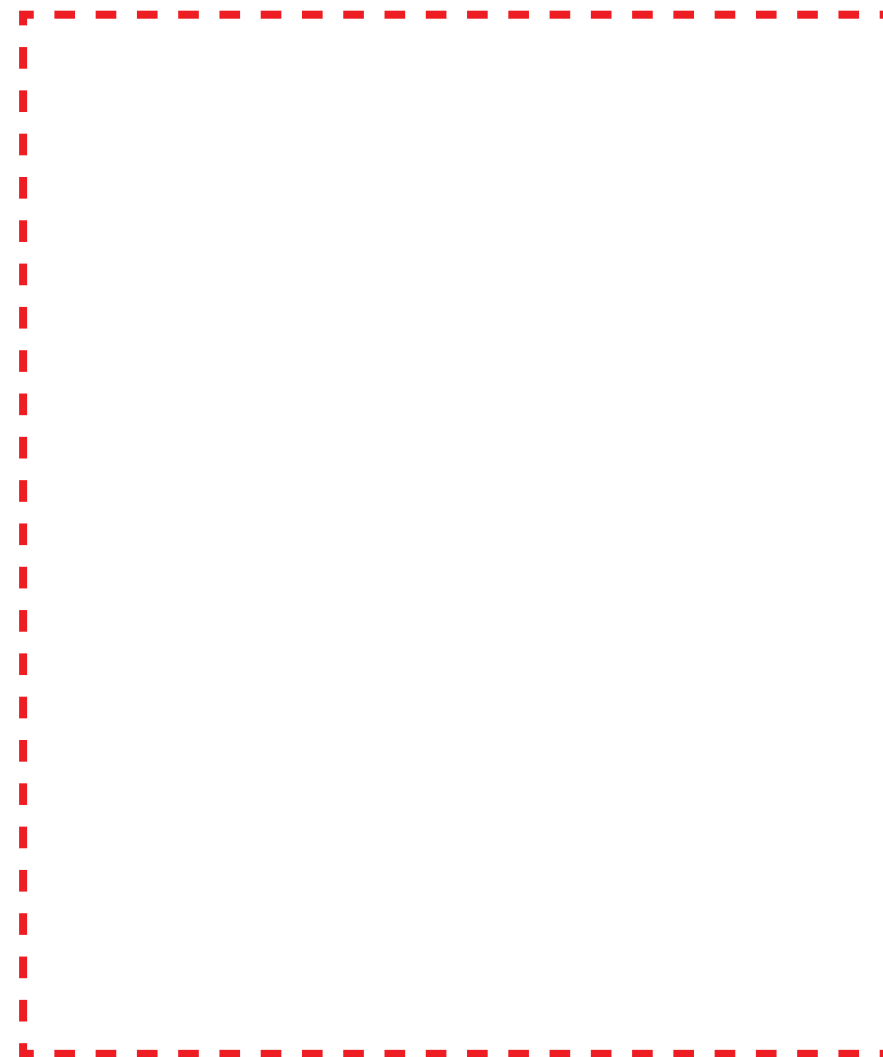
- 1) Colour the shapes provided or make some shapes of your own.
- 2) Cut along the dotted lines, then colour the backs.
- 3) Use sticky tape or glue to join the quarter circle and make a cone to form a stable base for your construction.
- 4) Poke some satay sticks through the paper cone to form supports for your shapes.

**Don't forget to try out some stripes!**



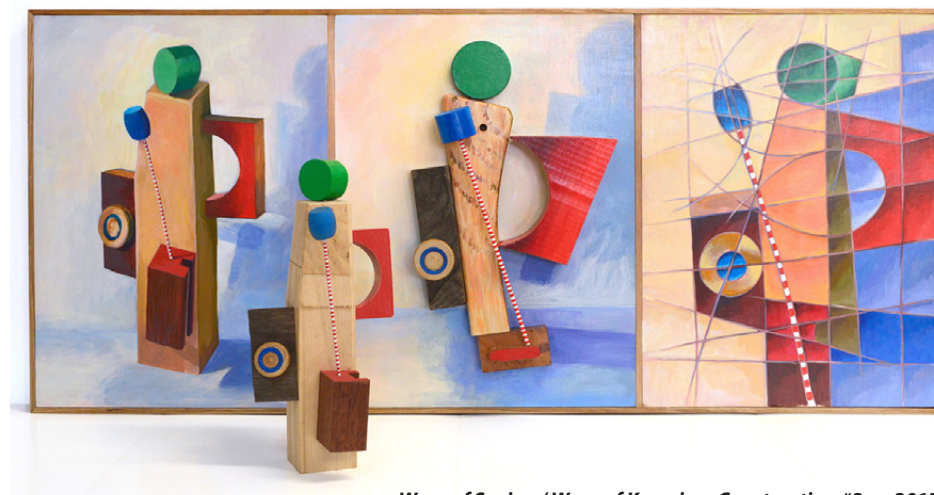
# Iterate | Elaborate

Leigh Schoenheimer

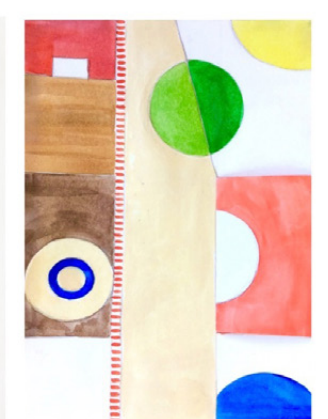
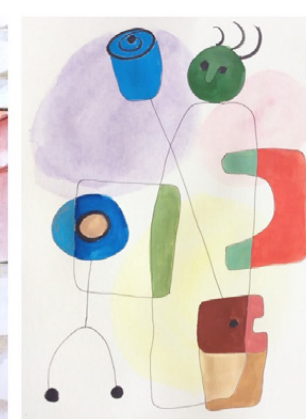
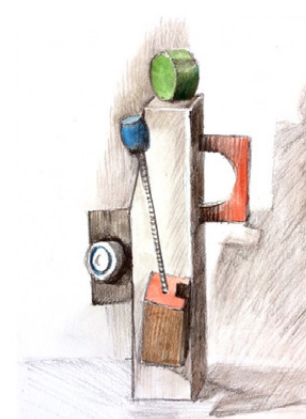


1) Make a graphite sketch based on the photograph of the still life.

2) Rework some of the key shapes from your previous sketch (or the original photo) to create a geometric abstraction of the still life.



*Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing: Construction #2* - 2017  
Acrylic on Plywood with assemblage of found objects, paint.



Four sketches for *Ways of Seeing / Ways of Knowing: Construction #2* - 2017  
Pencil and watercolour on paper