

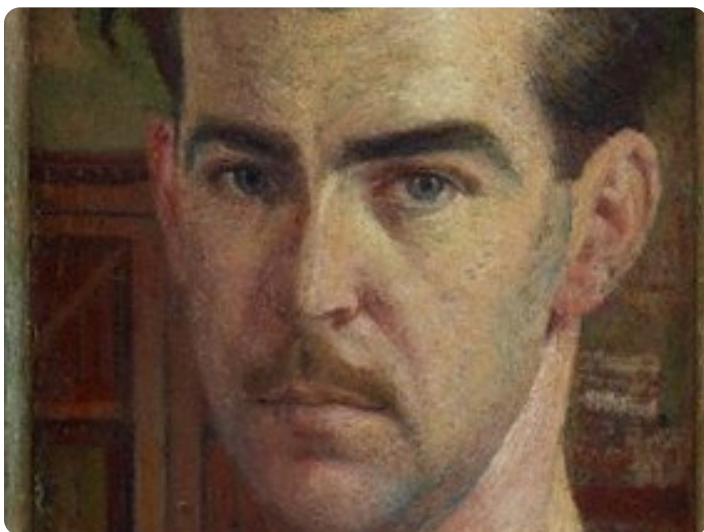


## Teachers notes

Sir William Dobell (1899–1970) was one of Australia’s most celebrated artists, renowned for his distinctive portraiture and landscape paintings. He won the prestigious Archibald Prize three times and is best known for his bold use of colour and unique style that captured the personalities and emotions of his subjects.

Dobell’s artworks often portrayed people and places with a sense of character and depth, using strong, expressive lines and a range of vibrant colours. His approach to portraiture challenged traditional norms, and his works were often praised for their ability to convey both the physical likeness and the essence of the subject.

A key figure in Australian art, Dobell lived in Lake Macquarie for a time, and his connection to this region is celebrated today in the Young Dobell competition. His legacy continues to inspire young artists to think creatively and to express the world around them through their unique perspectives, whether through portraiture or landscape painting.



**Artistic Style:** Dobell's style evolved from more traditional techniques to a freer, more abstract expression of both people and landscapes, often using thick brushstrokes and exaggerated features.

**Impact on Australian Art:** Dobell challenged the conventions of portraiture and landscape painting in Australia, offering a fresh perspective that influenced future generations of artists.

# Stage 1 (K-2) Activity 1: My Special Person Portrait (Portrait)

- **Task:** Students will create a portrait of someone significant in their life (e.g., a family member, friend, or teacher). They will use Pastels or Coloured Pencils to express the emotions and personality of the person.
- **Skills Developed:** Drawing facial features, experimenting with different materials, recognising basic proportions.



**Pastel**



**Coloured Pencil**

**Reflection:** Discuss how the portrait makes them feel and why they chose the person.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: Personal and Social Capability (Health and Physical Education):** Students reflect on their relationships and the positive qualities of those close to them, fostering a sense of empathy and respect for others.

**Wellbeing Idea: Positive Relationships:** Encourage students to reflect on why the person they chose for their portrait is special, fostering appreciation for close relationships and emotional support.

# Stage 1 (K-2) Activity 2: My Favourite Place (Landscape)

- **Task:** Students will create a landscape of a place they love using simple shapes and colours (e.g., a park, their backyard, or the beach). They can use paint or watercolours.
- **Skills Developed:** Observational drawing, creating a sense of space, and using colour for mood.



Paint



Watercolour Pencils

**Reflection:** Talk about why this place is special and how the landscape makes them feel.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: Geography:** Students could learn about different environments and places while creating their favourite landscape, linking geography with artistic representation.

**Wellbeing Idea: Connection to Place:** Discuss how places make students feel and the emotional connection to environments. This can promote mindfulness and a sense of belonging.

**NSW Outcome:** VAES1.1 - Develops skills in using the forms, techniques, and processes of visual arts to make artworks.

**Australian Curriculum Link:** The activities in Stage 1 support exploration of fundamental techniques in art, such as using different materials and tools to create basic portraits and landscapes.

Students are encouraged to express emotions and stories through visual art, which aligns with the curriculum's focus on creativity and skill development in early childhood art education. The exploratory drawing and painting processes align with **ACAVAM106** and **ACAVAM107**

# Stage 2 (3-4) Activity 1: Portrait of a Pet (Portrait)

- **Task:** Students will create a portrait of a pet or animal that means something to them. Encourage them to explore textures (fur, feathers, etc.) and use various materials like pastels, charcoal, and watercolours.
- **Skills Developed:** Exploring texture and line in portraiture, improving drawing skills, using mixed media.



**Charcoal**



**Watercolour**

**Reflection:** Discuss the personality of their pet or animal and how that can be shown in a portrait.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: Science:** Students could learn about the characteristics of animals (e.g., fur, feathers, habitat) in science, and apply this knowledge in their artistic portraits of pets.

**Wellbeing Idea: Compassion and Responsibility:** Encouraging students to observe their pets deeply helps develop empathy and compassion for animals and the responsibility of pet ownership

# Stage 2 (3-4) Activity 2: Dream Landscape

## (Landscape)

- **Task:** Students will imagine a dream landscape and draw it using A4 paper. They can include imaginative elements (e.g., a landscape with floating islands, or a city in the clouds). Students will use a variety of materials such as coloured pencils, paints, and markers to build their scene.
- **Skills Developed:** Using imagination in landscape creation, layering colours, developing artistic storytelling.



Oil Pastels



Paint

**Reflection:** Share their landscapes with the class and describe the imaginative features they included.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: English:** Students could write stories or descriptions of their dream landscapes, incorporating creative writing with visual art.

**Wellbeing Idea: Imagination and Stress Relief:** Encouraging students to express their dream landscapes can offer a creative outlet for self-expression and relaxation, promoting mental wellbeing.

**NSW Outcome:** VAES2.1 - Demonstrates an understanding of the role of visual arts in the world through artmaking.

**Australian Curriculum Link:** The activities in Stage 2 build on skill refinement and encourage students to express meaning through their artworks.

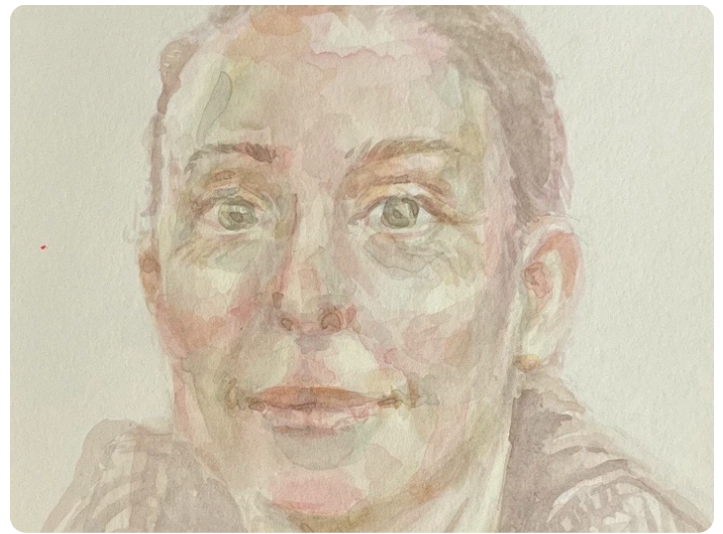
Students begin to understand art's role in society, as they explore various subject matter and concepts like animals and imaginary places. These activities align with the Australian Curriculum **ACAVAM111**, **ACAVAM112**, and **ACAVAM113**, where students investigate how art can communicate meaning and reflect ideas or themes.

# Stage 3 (5-6) Activity 1: Expressive Portrait (Portrait)

- **Task:** Students will create an expressive portrait of a current person they admire (e.g., an athlete, musician, activist, or a public figure such as a well-known Australian or global personality). The portrait should reflect the personality or emotional state of the person, using exaggerated features, colour, and line.
- **Skills Developed:** Understanding how emotion can be conveyed through visual elements like colour and line, using mixed media (watercolour, acrylics, collage).



**Collage**



**Watercolour**

**Reflection:** Reflect on how colour and line choices help convey mood and personality.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: Civics and Citizenship:** Students could learn about the values and contributions of contemporary figures, reflecting how these individuals shape and influence society today. The expressive portrait could represent these qualities.

**Wellbeing Idea: Role Models:** Reflecting on and expressing the traits of a person they admire can help students identify positive role models, which fosters inspiration, motivation, and a sense of purpose.

# Stage 3 (5-6) Activity 2: Environmental Landscape (Landscape)

- **Task:** Students will create a landscape that reflects an environmental issue, like climate change, deforestation, or pollution. This activity encourages awareness of the world around them through art.
- **Skills Developed:** Conceptualising environmental themes, understanding perspective, and using composition to convey messages.



Paint



Pencil

- **Reflection:** Students can discuss the issue their landscape portrays and why it's important to them.

**Cross-Curriculum Opportunity: Science (Environmental Education):** This activity links directly to topics on environmental issues such as climate change or conservation, where students learn about real-world challenges and represent them visually.

**Wellbeing Idea: Environmental Connection:** Discussing environmental issues through art can foster a sense of agency in students and help them develop a connection to the natural world, promoting environmental stewardship and personal responsibility.

**NSW Outcome:** VAES3.1 - Applies their understanding of the elements and principles of design in artmaking.

**Australian Curriculum Link:** This stage aligns with students beginning to manipulate elements and principles of design, like line, shape, form, and colour, to create artworks with deeper meaning.

Students are encouraged to apply these principles to develop their portraiture and landscape pieces. This meets the **ACAVAM115** and **ACAVAM116** standards, where students use the elements and principles of design to create more sophisticated works, like expressive portraiture and thematic landscapes.

## Connecting Dobell to the Activities

For students creating portraits and landscapes in the Young Dobell competition, it's important to think about how they might use bold, expressive lines and vibrant colours, just as Dobell did in his works. Encouraging students to focus on the personality of their subject or the emotion of a place, much like Dobell did in his portraiture, can help deepen their connection to their artwork and develop their skills in creative expression.



**William Dobell Landscape Study**



**William Dobell Pet Study**

In Dobell's portraits, for example, he didn't simply aim to reproduce a person's physical likeness; instead, he sought to reveal something deeper about who they were. Similarly, in landscape painting, Dobell captured more than just a scene—he expressed a sense of the environment and the mood it conveyed.



**Margaret Olley, 1948**



**William Dobell's Studio with Olley**