



**Painting Unit** Emily Hartley-Skudder 9 May – 2 June 2013. ArtBox, Christchurch. **In order of appearance:** Aaron Pearce · Abbey Sutherland · Alisha Drukpa · Anna Pryor · Anna Welham  
 Ashton Williams Dallow · Bayley Graham · Bonnie Duggan · Briah Handa-Oakley · Bridget Nolan · Bryn Hughes · Cara Keohane · Charlie Gladwell-Hunt · Cynthia Jones · Danielle Endacott · Daphne Leung  
 David Lin · Emily Taunt · Esther Tay · Flynn Marshall · Georgia Hinterleitner · Hamesh Ravji · Hamish Wilson · Hannah Davis · Helena Feng · Imogen Smith · Izzy Hurley · Jack McNeill · Jaden Manawatu  
 Jake Ceelen-Thomas · Jasmine Rou · Jason Chai · Jason Embling · Jason Ui · Jemma Thompson · Josh Boyd-Wilson · Joshua Thorne · Kaila Robertson · Katelyn David · Kelvin Gong · Laura Bormeister  
 Lauren Wield · Linda Wang · Liv Whiteside Jenkins · Louise Shinner · Mary Chey · Matt Robinson · Matthew Kim · May Clancy · Mirie Kim · Montana-Rose Parry · Nic Adams · Oli Heath  
 Olivia Selinger · Rosalie Richards · Sameen Hashemian · Seerat Noori · Sophie Choi · Sophie Williamson · Stephanie Wallace · Sismita Sharma · Tal Yosef · Taylah Pawson · Tom Fraser · Will Roberts · Wilson Shen

# Painting Unit

# Emily Hartley-Skudder

Works by Burnside High School, Year 9 Art Students

Text by Chloe Geoghegan

## Painting Unit Emily Hartley-Skudder

9 May – 2 June 2013

Opening: Wednesday 8 May 5.30pm

### ArtBox

Corner Madras & St. Asaph Street, Christchurch

Tues – Fri: 10am-5.30pm

Sat – Sun: 10am-4pm

Aaron Pearce	Jason Ui
Abbey Sutherland	Jemma Thompson
Alisha Drukpa	Josh Boyd-Wilson
Anna Pryor	Joshua Thorne
Anna Welham	Kaila Robertson
Ashton Williams Dallow	Katelyn David
Bayley Graham	Kelvin Gong
Bonnie Duggan	Laura Borrmeister
Briah Handa-Oakley	Lauren Wield
Bridget Nolan	Linda Wang
Bryn Hughes	Liv Whiteside Jenkins
Cara Keohane	Louise Shinner
Charlie Gladwell-Hunt	Mary Chey
Cynthia Jones	Matt Robinson
Danielle Endacott	Matthew Kim
Daphne Leung	May Clancy
David Lin	Mirie Kim
Emily Taunt	Montana-Rose Parry
Esther Tay	Nic Adams
Flynn Marshall	Oli Heath
Georgia Hinterleitner	Olivia Selinger
Hamesh Ravji	Rosalie Richards
Hamish Wilson	Sameen Hashemian
Hannah Davis	Seerat Noori
Helena Feng	Sophie Choi
Imogen Smith	Sophie Williamson
Izzy Hurley	Stephanie Wallace
Jack McNeill	Sismita Sharma
Jaden Manawatu	Tal Yosef
Jake Ceelen-Thomas	Taylah Pawson
Jasmine Rou	Tom Fraser
Jason Chai	Will Roberts
Jason Embling	Wilson Shen



Figure 1 Teacher's still life photograph (2013). Laminated colour copy.



Figure 2 Emily Hartley-Skudder, Vintage Library Still Life (2012), Oil on Calico.

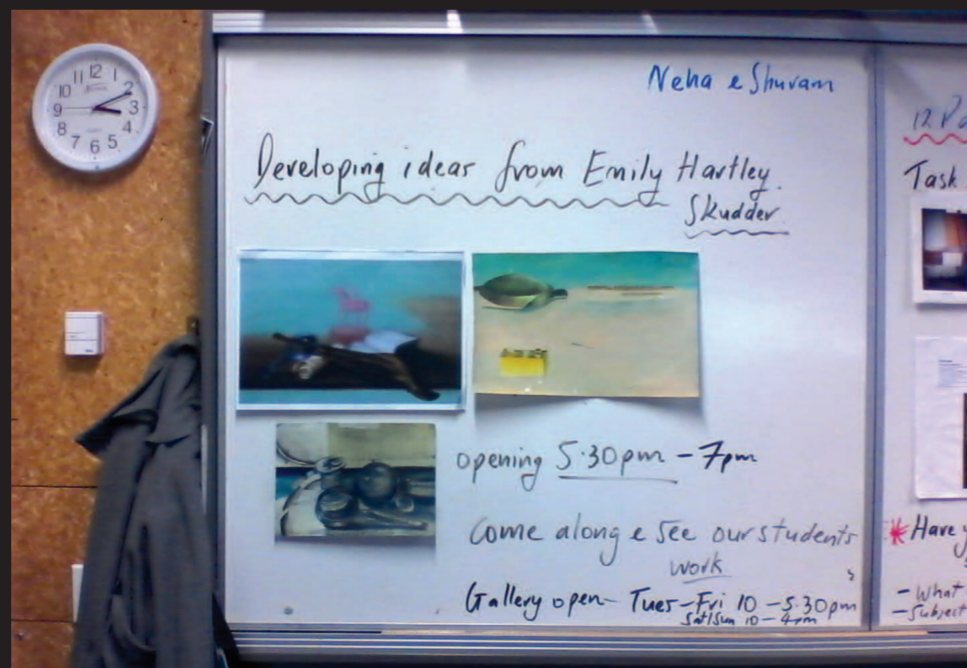


Figure 3 (Top left) Artist model reproduction and (Top right) teacher's exemplar displayed in class at Burnside High School.

*"ART (Visual): Visual Arts in Year 9 is a practical half-year course that provides students with the essential skills needed to continue with this subject in the senior school. It also gives students an understanding of art – how and why it is made. Students produce work within a range of disciplines including sculpture, painting, printmaking, photography and design.*

*"In addition to these practical activities, students learn about the purpose of art and the role it plays in our lives and the communities we live in. Students also learn about a range of artist models and are taught how to analyse artists' works and apply their own ideas and approaches to their own art work."<sup>1</sup>*

No high school painting unit is easy. If it were, art and the history of art in general would look a lot different today. Year 9 is the first time in which a secondary school student can choose art as a specialty subject, giving each student the opportunity to take on a core subject such as painting with the idea that they wish to learn more in the field of visual arts now and possibly in the future. This is where the all-important concept of the 'artist model' comes into play. An artist model and their work is a representation of what visual arts is and could be for a young student starting out. In fact, there are thousands of historical and contemporary painters that are used as exemplars of different genres and styles in the classroom.

*"Good artist models offer something of value to a student; ideas for composition, approach to a subject, creative use of media or outstanding technique. It is not necessary that the artist be investigating the same subject (indeed, while this can sometimes make it easier, at times this can hinder originality and leave a student tending to copy rather than extending their own ideas)."<sup>2</sup>*

The idea of the artist model reaches far back into the history of art education. Influential 20th century artist associated with the Impressionist movement Edgar Degas (1834-1917) famously spent much time in the Louvre drawing and painting after the accepted old masters.<sup>3</sup> Even at the height of their careers the *ateliers* (studios) of masters such as Titian (1490-1576) would be filled with student apprentices eager to assist great painters and sculptors in order to master the art themselves. The tradition of the artist model in this instance harks back even further to the ancient Japanese art practice of *utsushi* (copy). Although the idea of copying in Western culture denotes quite strong pejorative connotations, in Japanese culture the epistemology of the *utsushi* centres around "movement or transference of some subject or object, from one material or metaphorical location to another."<sup>4</sup> In an effort to learn an art form, student artists in Japan would strive to create an exact replication of a masterwork or model as a way of mastering technique.<sup>5</sup> Thus any experience of studying, working with, or even copying existing artworks early on in the career of an artist would generate skills and practical knowledge of what came before them and how one can create originality in consideration of history and tradition.

There are inevitable contradictions generated by any method of teaching art, to which the artist model structure is not exempt. It is a practical and relevant educational framework shared by secondary schools across New Zealand, yet the experience of which often still raises questions around what is considered *copying* in a plagiaristic sense and what is considered *learning* by emulating an artist model to help in "extending their own ideas."<sup>6</sup> The New Zealand painting curriculum often focuses on classic contemporary still life artists such as established llam graduate Jude Rae who is often paired in comparison to Italian still life painter Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964). This year, the Burnside Year 9 painting unit 'Formal Still Life Painting' is centralised around the work of Emily Hartley-Skudder, also an llam graduate but somewhat of a wild card considering she has just graduated with an honours degree in painting last year. For Hartley-Skudder, the challenge of negotiating an artist model-based painting unit remains relevant, providing her with an awareness and critical mind set she extends on and exploits within her emerging practice. Her work centres on Freud's theory of the *uncanny*, abstracting common ideas within the practice of still life painting by constructing overtly familiar, yet subtly uneasy domestic scenes.<sup>7</sup> Hartley-Skudder's process begins with the selection and arrangement of found miniature replicas typical to a traditional still life painting. These are then photographed before being translated into painted form. Her paintings are vivid yet vacuous, solidifying tiny plastic miniature toys within classic historical still life scenes.

*"The ancient painting tradition of still life is deeply rooted in the representation of the ordinary – the world of simple, material things. This genre has travelled a trajectory through time, passed down like the ageless objects themselves. It is now manifested in stock photography, cookbooks and 'wall-art', displaying a resilience that is far removed from its historical genesis. The painted still life selects aspects from our mundane and frequently overlooked reality and re-presents them to viewers in a considered and accomplished painted form, now elevated as works of art. [...] Such scrupulous rendering and strained high focus creates a tension that would not be experienced in the real world; these objects now inhabit a hyperreal world."<sup>8</sup>*

As Hartley-Skudder describes how she conveys this sense of an external reality in her still life paintings, correlating themes of replication, removal and reproduction begin to feel not only uncanny within the visual aspects of her practice, but within the very fact that she has now become an artist model to younger students of art. "There is no longer any difference between original and reproduction and therefore the 'source' of the representation, ceases to be definable. [...] The very definition of a 'reproduction' loses its nature as secondary."<sup>9</sup> Hartley-Skudder's existing interests in these themes come full circle in this exhibition. Through curating a group of student paintings – studied, derived and appropriated from her own – she further examines her own emerging practice from a unique standpoint. From physical replica to photograph to painting,

Hartley-Skudder's process has then been repeated and built upon by the teachers at Burnside High School. Photographs of the teachers' own still life arrangements were initially taken to emulate the artist's miniature tableaux (fig.1) and passed onto the students to paint from whilst referring to one exemplar colour printout of Hartley-Skudder's work (fig.2).

Taking cue from Heather Straka's 2009-11 project *The Asian*, Hartley-Skudder's *Painting Unit* exhibits the student paintings in rows to highlight themes of replication, and present the similarities and differences between every work in correspondence to her own.<sup>10</sup> Though these rows consider the idea of reproduction, they also display the students' work as originals from the position that they have created their own unique take of Hartley-Skudder's. Intriguingly, this makes each student painting more original or individual, but also simultaneously undermines the notion of the original.<sup>11</sup> Hartley-Skudder's 'original' exemplar painting, like Straka's, was not actually shown to the students, who only viewed the work as an internet-sourced, enlarged colour print out (fig.3). Thus unlike Straka, who displayed her own painting among the copies, Hartley-Skudder has not included her original still life within the final installation, further contemplating and connecting the relationship between the original and replica within her own developing practice.

Much like *The Asian*, *Painting Unit* is a "challenge to the aura of the original, enhanced by the final painting installation."<sup>12</sup> As *The Asian* both "affirms the importance of the creative act as well as originality in production and myth around making an autonomous artwork,"<sup>13</sup> *Painting Unit* reveals a sense of this kind of development in an earlier stage of painting as a traditional artistic medium. This exhibition doesn't necessarily seek to weigh in on the existing discourse around cultural appropriation as any project centered around replication and reproduction might, it rather engages those very themes so as to contemplate how a painter's development of an original thought could be shaped by this way of learning at the very entry point of the art "institution."<sup>14</sup> Through inviting secondary school art classes to question the process between original and the replica, Hartley-Skudder continues her own explorations of the original and its origins through the consideration that perhaps supposed copies of the *real* are not equal to, but more engaging than their *originals*.<sup>15</sup> The classroom is an all too familiar and often uneasy place to be for many, but those who choose to enter into the world of art in the future will remember the days of Year 9 painting units as being often just as challenging and thought-provoking as future tertiary courses and those beyond in what many call 'the real world', where *learning outcomes* and *achievement objectives* might not be written into daily tasks and activities, but are certainly ever-present as we navigate every aspect of life.

<sup>1</sup> Year 9 Coursebook (Christchurch: Burnside High School, 2013), 6.  
<sup>2</sup> Amritia Robinson, "Inspirational artist models for painting students," accessed 19 April 2013, <http://www.studentartguide.com/articles/good-artist-models-for-painting>  
<sup>3</sup> Colin Painter, *Contemporary Art and the Home* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 109.  
<sup>4</sup> Ronald P. Toby, "The originality of the 'copy': mimesis and subversion in Haneagawa Tōei's *Chōsenjin Uki*," in Rupert Cox, ed., *Japan and the Culture of Copying* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 77.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.  
<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Das Unheimliche," *Imago* 5 (1919): 297-324.  
<sup>8</sup> Emily Hartley-Skudder, "Representation of the ordinary: the reconstructed everyday as the uncanny and the simulacrum" (BFA Hons dis., University of Canterbury, 2012), 9.  
<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.  
<sup>10</sup> Straka commissioned 50 different artisans from the village of Dafen in Shenzhen, China, to each hand-paint a reproduction of the same, singular work, chosen by Straka from her *Asian Girl* series of paintings.  
<sup>11</sup> Hartley-Skudder, 27.  
<sup>12</sup> Aaron Kreidler, "Made in China" in Heather Straka, *The Asian* (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2010), 20.  
<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*  
<sup>14</sup> Pascal Gielen, "The Art Institution in a Globalizing World," *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 40, no. 4 (December 2010): 280, accessed 6 May 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/cprj/onepageopen?openurl=nc&docview=850886637&accountid=14499>  
<sup>15</sup> Hartley-Skudder, 7.

## VISUAL ARTS YEAR 9

### FORMAL STILL LIFE PAINTING

Analyse the works of Emily Hartley-Skudder and apply similar techniques in the production of a formal still life painting.

### ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

- Develop practical knowledge in the visual arts
  - Develop ideas in the visual arts
  - Communicate and interpret the visual arts
  - Understand the visual arts in context

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Accurately describe shape and form using tonal modelling
- Describe own work in relation to the artist model

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