



OUR JOURNEYS | OUR STORIES

Guan Wei

'Our Journeys | Our Stories is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.'

Georges River Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land in which the Georges River Local Government Area is situated – the Bidjegal people of the Eora Nation.

Cover image: Top, Guan Wei *Georges River concept sketch* (detail).
Bottom, Guan Wei *Georges River* (detail).

OUR JOURNEYS | OUR STORIES

Our Journeys | Our Stories explores the Chinese migration history of the Georges River area, interweaving social and cultural history with the work of contemporary Chinese-Australian artists Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen, Guo Jian, Lindy Lee, Xiao Lu, Jason Phu, and Guan Wei.

This educational resource was created for *Our Journeys | Our Stories*, exhibited at Hurstville Museum & Gallery. It is designed to assist Visual Art and Visual Design teachers and students from years 5 - 12. The images and suggested activities are to be used together with relevant syllabus documents and teaching resources, and should be used as a guide for teachers, adjusting activities to suit the needs of their students.

A hard copy of the exhibition catalogue is also available for purchase from Hurstville Museum & Gallery and is a valuable tool that can be used alongside this resource.

For the *Our Journeys | Our Stories* exhibition Guan Wei created *Georges River*. Learn more about her practice and process for creating this work throughout this educational resource.

“When I received the documents sent by Georges River Council on the earliest Chinese migrants living in the region, I became instantly interested in a vegetable grower called Tiy Sing. I selected 12 images from the documents and created this Chinese-styled panel screen. The screen itself is a historical reflection on the change of time and space.”

Guan Wei

ARTIST Q&A

What advice would you give to a person who is passionate about their art making but doesn't know where to start? What is the best piece of advice you have been given?

Pick one of your favourite artists. Study their work and understand why they did it. Step by step, you will benefit from it.

Has your work undergone a particular development/transformation?

I will be based on time and place, such as in China, in Australia. Is there an epidemic, and is there something big happening in the world, such as 911 anti-terrorism, refugee issues and so on. These will all be reflected in my work. These also led to the continuous development and transformation of my work.

Do you plan for an exhibition or produce constantly and chose work for a particular exhibition?

I will prepare works for an exhibition. This is my normal practice. Two or three solo shows a year, so I'm constantly doing work for the show.

What is next?

I have two solo exhibitions coming up this year: one is at Arc One Gallery Melbourne in May. Another one is at Martin Brown Contemporary Sydney in September.



Guan Wei, *Georges River* 2021 (Front)
Photography: Silversalt
Acrylic on board, 4 panels



Guan Wei, *Georges River* 2021 (Back)
Photography: Silversalt
Acrylic on board, 4 panels

MATERIAL AND PRACTICE

Can you explain your technique; how you manipulate the medium?

I came to Australia 30 years ago and started using acrylic to paint. I developed my own method, which is a combination of Chinese meticulous painting techniques, such as brushing, rubbing, pointing, dyeing, delineation and so on. The picture is looking to be rich and delicate.

Can you give us an insight into your artistic process? Is your work pre-planned or created intuitively? How long does each work take to complete?

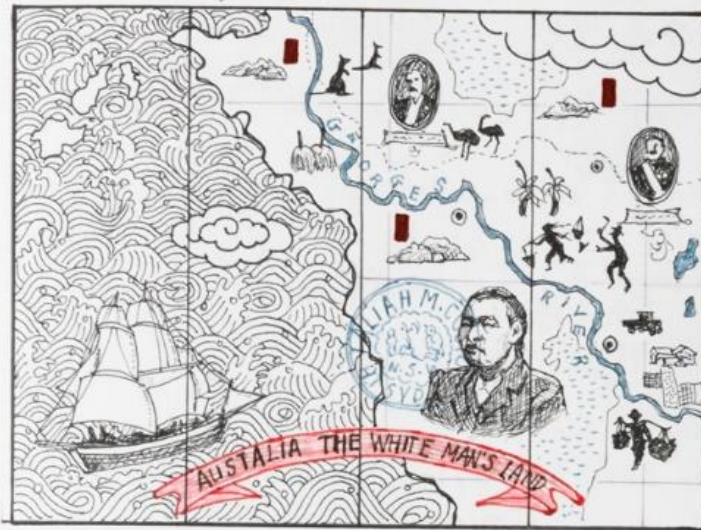
I would start with intuition and inspiration and then proceed to rational analysis. The process consists of three steps: sketch, colour drawing and finally paint on canvas. Works vary in time according to its degree of complexity and size.

Where do you draw your inspiration or source for the idea which the artwork explores and/or expresses?

I have a sketch book. Any ideas and inspiration come up. I will write it down in this book, both written and drawn. These records are very important. It's all good material for my future work.

"Georges River"

11.



Front.

171 x 208 x 3.5 cm
(1-4 panels)
Acrylic on Board.



Screen.

Back.



Guan Wei, *Georges River* 2021 (design sketch)



(草图)
 'Georges River'
 Acrylic on Board.
 174 x 208 x 3.5 cm
 (1-4 panels screen)
 Guan Wei 2021. 8月.
 《乔治河》. 丙烯/木板.
 (1-4块 屏风 可站立)
 关伟 2021. 3.31 完成.
 (反面)



2021. 6. 6

Guan Wei, Georges River 2021 (design sketch)

What do you want your work to do? Is there a particular reaction that you want to evoke?

I have three main elements in my artwork. They are humour, knowledge, and wisdom. Now I also pursue mystery and happiness in my work as well.

Do you keep some kind of sketchbook or diary? Or a collection of images or photographs for inspiration?

I have a collection of my sketchbooks and diaries. I also collected pictures of my works, and related catalogues, albums, magazines, newspapers and other related materials.

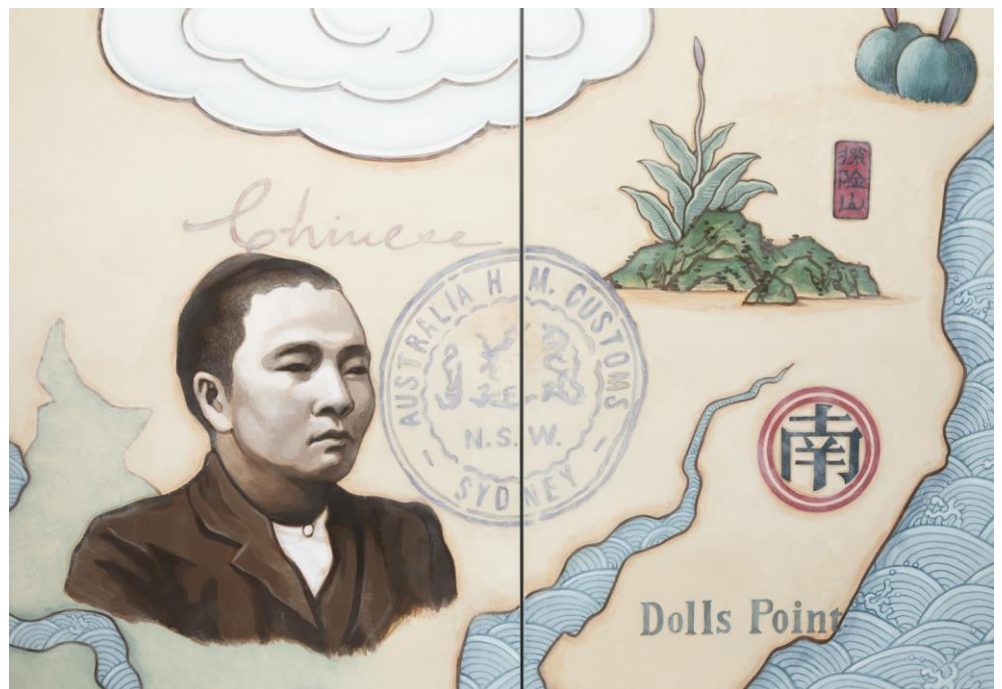
Who are your favourite artists? Who do you draw inspiration from?

There are so many artists I like. For example: Emily Kam Kngwarreye, Imants Tillers, Marcel Duchamp, David Hockney and more.



Guan Wei,
Georges River 2021
 (Front details)
 Photography: Silversalt
 Acrylic on board





Guan Wei,
 Georges River 2021
 (Front details)
 Photography: Silversalt
 Acrylic on board

FRAMES

Cultural: Constructs of identity, race, merging of historical and contemporary experience.

Structural: Visual symbols embedded in the material and form. Interpretation is conveyed throughout the artmaking process.

Subjective: Works are linked to memory and experience.

Postmodern: Challenging the interpretation of historical objects, stories, and figures. Recontextualising historical objects by viewing them through a contemporary perspective on racism.

Subject – People, Objects, Places and Spaces

KEY WORDS

Delineation: Marking the outline of a space or shape with a clear line.

Intuition: Something known from a feeling rather than by thinking about facts.

Discrimination: The unjust treatment of different categories of people.

Legislation: Laws.

Symbolic: An object or image in an artwork which represents a greater meaning.

Recontextualise: Change the meaning of something by thinking about it from a new point of view.

QUESTIONS

STAGE 3

- Look at Guan Wei's artwork *Georges River*. List 5 objects that you can see.
- One side of the artwork is designed like a map. Where do you think this is a map of?
- The portrait in the centre of the artwork is of a man named Tiy Sing. He was a Chinese migrant to Australia and worked as a market gardener. Looking at the scenes painted on the panel, do you think he felt welcome in Australia?
- Think about leaving your home to live in a completely new place. Create a list of 6 words to describe how you might feel. Working with your group/class, use a word cloud generator to create a word cloud from your lists and compare the different words that were chosen.

ARTMAKING

Primary

Materials



Lightweight
white and
coloured
cardboard



Drawing materials
e.g. coloured pencils,
markers, watercolour
pencils or paint



Scissors



Glue



A printed
photo of
yourself

Process

1. On one side of piece of A4 or A3 lightweight white card make a map of your home suburb, your street, or your school. Include pictures of important features in the area you are mapping like your house, local park, roads, rivers, or your school. You can use materials such as coloured pencils, watercolour pencils, markers, or watercolour paint.
2. Print a small photo of yourself. You can use your school photo. Carefully cut it out and glue it in the middle of your map. Cut out a frame from coloured card to surround your photo.
3. On the other side of your card draw or paint an object that is important to you. It might be your favourite book or toy, sporting equipment, a musical instrument, dance shoes etc. Write your name as a decorated heading on this side of the cardboard.
4. Once you have finished carefully fold your cardboard into four sections to create a screen fold like Guan Wei's work.

STAGE 4

- Describe the colours used in *Georges River*. How do they make the audience think of historical items e.g. an old map?
- Describe the portrait of Tiy Sing in the center of the artwork. How is it different to the other portraits included in this artwork?
- Why do you think Guan Wei chose to paint his artwork on a folding screen?

STAGE 5

- Identify and describe 5 different objects which symbolize Tiy Sing included in *Georges River*.
- Explain how each of these objects symbolises Tiy Sing.
- In the artwork *Georges River*, Guan Wei refers to the racist laws directed towards Chinese migrants. Which other community does Guan Wei acknowledge in this artwork? Why do you think he does this?

STAGE 6

- What does the text “Australia the White Man’s Land” refer to?
- Guan Wei has appropriated the portrait of Tiy Sing from his *Certificate Exempting from Dictation Test*. How has Guan Wei recontextualised this image in *Georges River*?
- How does Guan Wei challenge his audience in his representation of Australian history in *Georges River*?

DISCUSSION

- How does Guan Wei's painting *Georges River* and the story of Tiy Sing reflect his own experiences?

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Investigate how artists create a visual language of signs and symbols to create layers of meaning in their work.

Explore ways in which artists challenge their audiences to question traditional or mainstream points of view.

FURTHER RESOURCES

ARC ONE – Guan Wei	https://arcone.com.au/guan-wei-artist-profile
MCA – Guan Wei	https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/artists/guan-wei/
MCA – Guan Wei artist interview	https://www.mca.com.au/stories-and-ideas/guan-wei-artist-interview/
Artist Profile – Guan Wei	https://www.artistprofile.com.au/guan-wei/
Art Gallery NSW – Archibald 2016	https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2016/29727/

GETTING TO HURSTVILLE MUSEUM & GALLERY

Parking

There is limited free 2 hour parking next to Hurstville Museum & Gallery, via MacMahon Street. Please note the time restrictions and rules on all street signs when parking.

By public transport

Train services to Hurstville run on the South Coast and Eastern Suburbs & Illawarra lines. Both the Bus Interchange and Hurstville Station are a 5 minute walk to Hurstville Museum & Gallery. For further details and to plan your trip, visit: www.transportnsw.info/trip

Accessibility

The MacMahon Street carpark contains one accessible parking space. All public areas within the Hurstville Museum & Gallery building are wheelchair accessible and companion animals are welcome. A wheelchair accessible bathroom is located in the Main Gallery. This bathroom contains a fold-down baby change table. Hurstville Museum & Gallery is a Companion Card affiliated venue and accepts Companion Cards for our ticketed events.

Contact details

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Find us on:

Facebook: [hurstvillemuseumgallery](https://www.facebook.com/hurstvillemuseumgallery)

Instagram: [hurstvillemuseumgallery](https://www.instagram.com/hurstvillemuseumgallery)

Blog: hurstvillemuseumgallery.wordpress.com

Back cover image: *Teapot and basket* (c. 1890-1920)
White china, bamboo and straw.
Courtesy of North Sydney Heritage Centre, Stanton Library.

