

nivus
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50 years of Found Materials

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Yuko Mohri, *More' More' (Leaky): The Waterfall Given #4-6*, 2018. Installation view from Biennale de Lyon 2017, Lyon, France. Photo: Blaise Adilon.

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Introduction

This archival resource has been created to help learners and educators engage with distinct art making methods that are integral to the 23rd Biennale of Sydney, rīvus and across our 50-year history of delivering cutting-edge exhibitions in Australia. It is part of a larger project Liquid Languages that features participant videos, active exercises and archival PowerPoints that encourages learners to engage deeply with their local context and to map the water stories of their local environments.

50-years of Found Materials charts the shifts and developments in approaches to art making across time, geography and space and aims to expand students' understanding of what Found Materials can be. The resource also demonstrate to learners and educators the diverse ways themes such as Found Materials, Sound, Mapping, Words and New Materials have been dealt with by artists and creative practitioners and intends to inspire new methods of making and reflection in formal and informal classrooms.

50-years of Found Materials is available for free download on the Biennale of Sydney's website, and may be used to support a school visit to the exhibition, as a stand-alone tool or in learners and educators participation in our larger education project Liquid Languages. Educators are encouraged to adapt questions, focused artists and supporting activities to suit the interests and needs of the learner and to integrate this resource into other areas of study.

Why are 'Found Materials' fascinating to build with?

Things to consider

3rd Biennale of Sydney (1979)

Daniel Spoerri

Born 1930 in Galati, Romania

Lives and works in Vienna, Austria

Daniel Spoerri began his career as a dancer, studying ballet in Zurich and Paris in 1950. He worked in various roles in the theatre, most notably as a choreographer and stage designer until he turned to poetry and then object production. His multidisciplinary approach to artistic practice led to his renowned body-of-work known as “tableau-pieges” (snare-pictures). Presented in the Biennale, this work, titled *Fallenbild*, replicates dinner as a performance, in which the remains of a meal are fixed in place – dirtied napkins and dinner plates, emptied glasses and used napkins – are mounted to the surface of tables and hung from the wall in the gallery. Spoerri’s tableaux-pieges cemented his reputation as one of the central figures of the Nouveau Realiste movement of the 1960’s, alongside member such as Yves Klein- making him one of the leading figures in contemporary art.



Daniel Spoerri, *Fallenbild*, also known as *After the banquet*, 1979. Installation view of the 3rd Biennale of Sydney (1979) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Daniel Spoerri, *Fallenbild*, also known as *After the banquet*, 1979. Installation view of the 3rd Biennale of Sydney (1979) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

9th Biennale of Sydney (1992-93)

Charles Anderson

Born Unknown

Lives and work in unknown

For the Ninth Biennale of Sydney titled 'The Boundary Rider', Curator Anthony Bond bought together participants to explore the theme of conceptual and cultural boundaries and the transgression of them. Through the Australian mythology of the lonely outsider, many of the works explored the theme through strategies of post-colonial art, such as bricolage and the ready-made. Charles Anderson is an artist, designer and landscape architect broadly interested in procedures that shift the spatial hierarchies of the lived environment. Following this tradition of the ready-made, Charles Anderson explored the relationship between the body and objects in a site-specific installation titled *dis/appearance: still life* (1992). Anderson collected objects he found while on-site in the former wool store in Sydney. Each object is modified with white bandages, wrapped layer upon layer as if to mend the history of these old objects for a new context.



Charles Anderson, *dis/appearance: still life*, 1992. Installation view of the 9th Biennale of Sydney (1992-1993) at the Bond Store. Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Charles Anderson, *dis/appearance: still life*, 1992. Installation view of the 9th Biennale of Sydney (1992-1993) at the Bond Store. Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

16th Biennale of Sydney (2008)

Marcel Duchamp

Born 1887 in Blainville, France

Died 1968 in Neuilly-Sur-Seine, France

Marcel Duchamp was one of the most revolutionary artists of the early twentieth century, when consumer culture was just beginning in Europe. After some years of painting, in 1913 Duchamp turned to experiments with mechanical drawing and notations and began producing ready mades. He took industrially produced everyday objects, removed them from their usage in daily life, from their cycle of production and consumption, and re-designated them as works of art. The Bicycle Wheel was the first of Duchamp's ready mades. The wheel is mounted upside-down upon a painted wooden stool, forming an iconic image of two functional items transformed into a non-functional art object. The implications of this gesture for artmaking were enormous, foregrounding surrealist assemblages and the gesture of selection as a creative act in itself, paving the way for the conceptual movements of the 1960s to today.



Marcel Duchamp, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1913, wooden stool, bicycle wheel, dimensions variable. Installation view of the 16th Biennale of Sydney (2008) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Photograph: Jenni Carter

What are the stories
'Found Materials' tell
of everyday life?

Things to consider

21st Biennale of Sydney (2018)

Abraham Cruzvillegas

Born 1968 in Mexico City, Mexico

Lives and works in Mexico City, Mexico

Abraham Cruzvillegas grew up in a poor neighbourhood of Mexico City where immigrants seeking a better life, built homes from found and recycled materials. Arising out of poverty, this method of building slowly over time necessities creativity, adaptation and assistance from relatives, neighbours and friends. Its aesthetic, along with the principles of the strongly politicised, tenacious community, are reflected in Cruzvillegas' artworks. Following this method, Cruzvillegas has created *Reconstruction I: The Five Enemies*, 2018, a site-specific sculpture built from discarded objects and building materials left over from events and restoration projects in the Industrial Precinct at Cockatoo Island. Recognising the life and history inherent in each article, Cruzvillegas, through a process of alchemical transmutation, converts them into artworks that retain traces of a genealogy of migration and labour.



Abraham Cruzvillegas, *Reconstruction: The Five Enemies I*, 2018, mixed media, dimensions variable. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from the Neilson Foundation. Installation view of the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018) at Cockatoo Island. Photograph: silversalt photography. Courtesy the artist; kurimanzutto, Mexico City; Galerie Cha Crousel, Paris; Regen Projects, Los Angeles; and Thomas Dane, London.



Abraham Cruzvillegas, *Reconstruction: The Five Enemies I*, 2018, mixed media, dimensions variable. Commissioned by the Biennale of Sydney with generous support from the Neilson Foundation. Installation view of the 21st Biennale of Sydney (2018) at Cockatoo Island. Photograph: silversalt photography. Courtesy the artist; kurimanzutto, Mexico City; Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris; Regen Projects, Los Angeles; and Thomas Dane, London

23rd Biennale of Sydney (2022)

Yuko Mohri

Born 1980 Kanagawa, Japan

Lives and works in Tokyo, Japan

Yuko Mohri is an installation artist. Her kinetic sculptures, using reconfigured everyday objects and machine parts, highlight various facets coming from the encounter between objects and invisible energies such as magnetism, gravity, wind, or light. She authorises uncontrollable and nonhuman elements to conduct within their networks, which are often compared to a self-contained “ecosystem”, incessantly channeling the surrounding environment. In *More' More' (Leaky): The Waterfall Given #4-6* (2018), Mohri prepared frameworks inspired by Marcel Duchamp, such as the ready-mades, *The Large Glass*, and *Étant donnés*. Mohri produces kinetic sculpture made by actually causing water leaks to appear at various sites, and attempting to plug them. The work is finished when she successfully manages to control the leak and cause the water to recirculate. A landmark for Mohri, this work looks upon previously neglected corners of the city with a humorous yet critical eye.



Yuko Mohri, *More' More' (Leaky): The Waterfall Given #4-6*, 2018. Installation view from Biennale de Lyon 2017, Lyon, France. Photograph: Blaise Adilon.



Yuko Mohri, *Moré Moré (Leaky): The Waterfall Given #4-6*, 2018, from the series 'Moré Moré (Leaky)', Wood, umbrella, hose, PET bottles, rubber glove, bucket, wheel, duster, sponge, pump, acrylic resin, 272.5 x 175.8 x 50 mm (x 3 pieces). Installation view from Biennale de Lyon 2017, Lyon, France. Photograph: Blaise Adilon.

Activity | Language of the Forest

The forest is a place where an abundance of plants, animals, trees, bacteria, moss and insects live. Materials break down and decay and new life emerges. The edges of the forest are unkept, they don't fit perfectly into a little box, but they do hold an intricate and interwoven story of many textures, fibres, materials and species. How can we use the metaphor of the 'forest' as outlined above to generate a new artwork using 'Found Materials' collected from the urban landscape, the natural world and the domestic space?

1. The first step is to gather your materials, this may take place over a day, a week or a month. Time is on your side and guided by your preference. Consider not only the key features of the forest but also how you might connect different pieces together.
2. Working individually or in pairs we you to use your salvaged materials to create a forest! Your forest can be realistic, abstract, conceptual, magical and/or poetic – spend some time considering how you might approach the creation of a forest. Remember: Forests are considered enchanting places because they are full of mystery. They are often damp, wet and mossy places where new life is continually emerging. Your creation should take this into consideration.
3. Reflect upon any time you have spent in the forest to gather inspiration or gather resources online forests to guide the making process.
4. Start making. Be patient. Remember: Forests have been growing, changing and emerging since the dawn of time.