Hazelhurst Arts Centre

Secondary Education Kit – Stages 4 & 5

Christopher Langton *Colonies*

Christopher Langton *Colonies* (detail) 2021. Installation size varies. Photo: Silversalt

Hazelhurst

SUTHERLAND SHIRE ARTS CENTRE

Developed by Hazelhurst's Public Programs & Education team, 2021

Christopher Langton – *Colonies*

28 November 2021

Hazelhurst Arts Centre

Stages 4-5

This Installation references science fiction, space colonies, meteorites and other celestial bodies, as well as microscopic viruses, bacterium, fungi and infested alien humanoids. The artist tricks us with scale- the incredibly large celestial bodies and microscopic viruses and bacteria, are given the same human scale. Walking through this installation, the viewer experiences an overwhelming sense of being miniaturised, surrounded by giant microbes or as a giant, surveying space colonies or asteroids in space.

The artist looked at the many colours and shapes, (some are artificial) that can be found in many viruses, bacteria and microorganisms from scientific images. Some of these colours are artificial and the forms were similar to larger organisms such as coral, fungi and even objects from outer space. This gave rise to the idea that both the microscopic and enormous objects drifting in space could be scaled up or down to a human scale. These objects are suspended at different heights so an immersive environment is created for the viewer to walk through.

Langton's 3D structures are first designed on 3D modelling software on a computer, and then printed with a 3D printer in sections layer by layer. The finished pieces are glued together and hand painted. Some of the installations are made using a pattern and turned into hybrid polymer, biodegradable plastic inflatables. The works in this exhibition took two years to complete. With the 3D printer working continuously some individual works could take took weeks or months to complete.

Directions for use:

Step 1: View the video

Christopher Langton in conversation about his exhibition *Colonies*: Christopher Langton Colonies

Step 2: Look at artworks engage in discussion questions

Step3: Select an artmaking idea and make an artwork

Curriculum Objectives and Outcomes:

Students develop knowledge, understanding and skills to:

- Make artworks
- Critically and historically interpret art

With the following outcomes:

Stage 4 Outcomes:

Art making: 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

Critically and historically interpret Art: 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10

Stage 5 Outcomes:

Art making: 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6

Critically and historically interpret Art: 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10

Image: Humanoid figure from the installation

The artist explores ideas about contamination, as the artist had a personal experience of a viral infection. Since the pandemic, this work takes on a universal theme of our current existence.

Discussion Questions

- This humanoid figure is life size. What has happened to the figure?
- Describe the use of colour and texture in this work. What does it remind you of?
- The artist explores ideas about contamination, how is this emphasised in this work?
- How does this work make you feel? Is it frightening or mysterious or something else?
- Do you consider this figure to be human or something else?

Image: Hybrid Polymer inflatable of a virus.

Discussion Questions

- What does each object remind you of?
- Describe the forms, use of colour, texture and scale.
- How has the upscaling of a microscopic virus changed our perception of it? Does it heighten a fear of germs?
- How do you expect the audience to react?
- Why do you think the artist chose to give the title: *Colonies* to this installation, especially when we view these large scale viruses and germs and the infested humanoids?

Image: A 3D printed microbial virus

Discussion Questions

- Describe the forms, use of colour, texture and scale.
- How do you feel when you look at this sculpture?
- What effect does exaggerating the size have on the viewer?

Image: Humanoid and Space Colony

Discussion Questions:

- Here we see a gold humanoid form suspended over a black space colony. What has the artist done to the scale of each object? How does this change our perceptions of these objects?
- Does this question the viewer's sense of reality? If so how?
- Looking at the humanoid form, what do you think happened to them? Who could they have been? How does the blurred obscured form make you feel?
- The space colony is a rounded bubble shape with many windows, a home to life forms who reside inside. Who do you think lives there?
- Does this remind you of a sci-fi movie, a video game, or something else?
- What meaning is created?

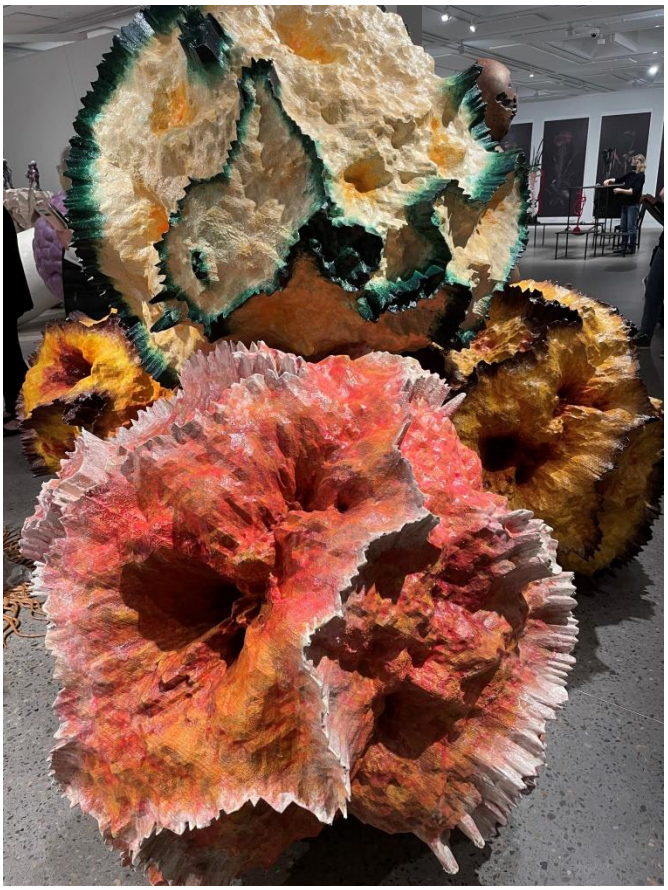


Image: Meteorites

Discussion Questions:

- These meteorite forms were 3D printed and hand painted. Describe the use of colour and texture of these forms. What do they remind you of?
- These meteorites have been down sized. How does this change our perceptions of these outer space objects?
- Colonization can take place when the colonizer and the host live together, even at the cost of the host. How has the artist explored these ideas in the microscopic world and the vast areas of outer space?

Art making

Space Junk Asteroid

Materials

- A ping-pong ball / foam ball or old soft toy ball
- Thumb tacks and push pins
- Wool, string, cotton

STEP 1

Using thumb tacks, push them into the ball.

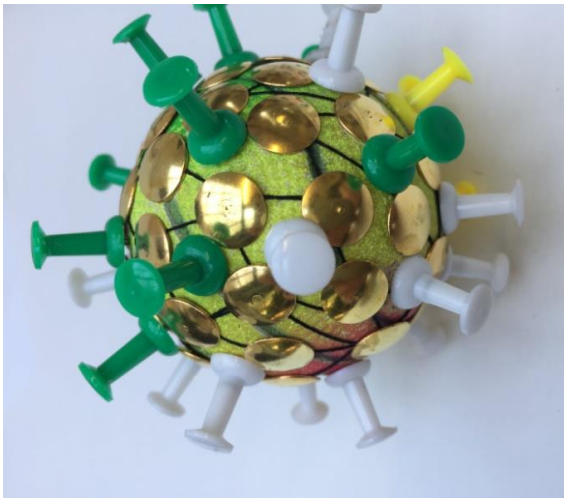
Try to place them evenly around the ball.

STEP 2

Wrap your cotton or wool (or both around) each tack. This makes an overall pattern, keep repeating it and change colours.

STEP 3

Place the push pins in the gaps between the tacks.

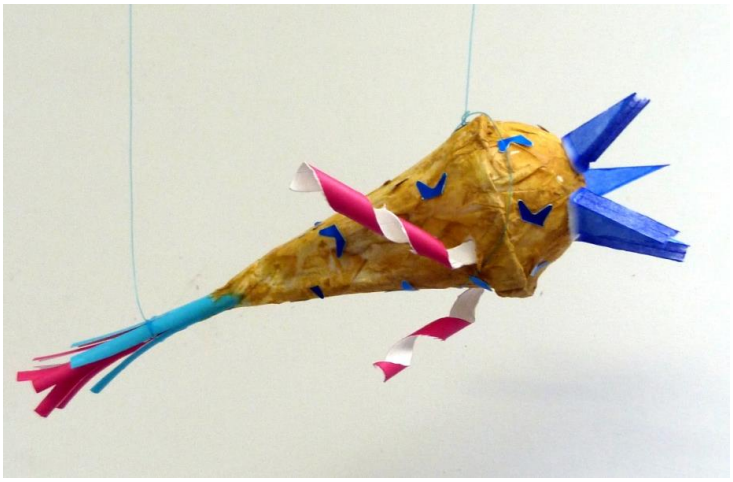


STEP 4

Continue to wrap more cotton around the tops of the push pins. Make sure to wrap the cotton around the top twice to hold it in place.

Art making

Sci-fi Assemblage sculpture



Materials:

- Reference images of Christopher Langton's work
- Drinking straws
- Tissues (or toilet paper)
- Ping-pong ball or similar
- PVA glue or similar
- Thick cardboard
- Egg Carton
- Paint or markers to decorate

STEP 1

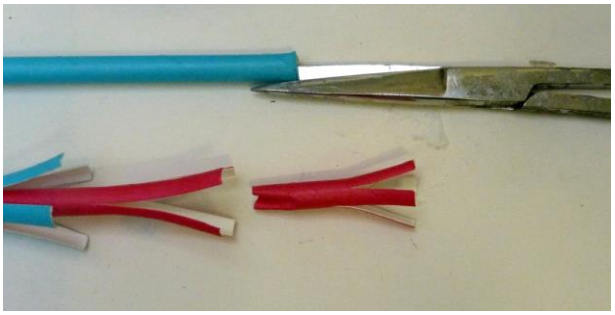
Cut out one of the middle stands from the egg carton.

STEP 2

Glue the ball to the egg carton (like an ice cream cone) and leave to dry.

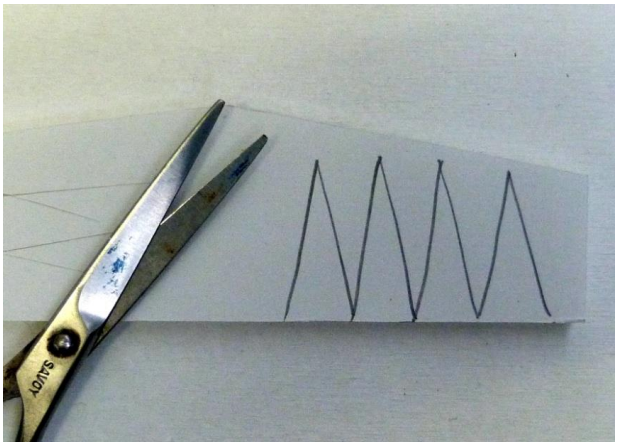
STEP 3

Cut 3 or more sections of drinking straw - big, middle size and small. Slip them inside each other and glue them together. This will be used to create a tail.



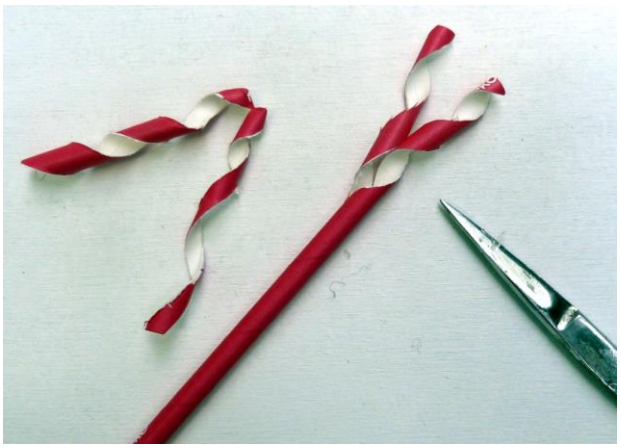
STEP 4

Cut out 4 (or more) small triangular shapes from the thick cardboard. This will be used as decoration for the top (or could be used as fangs!).



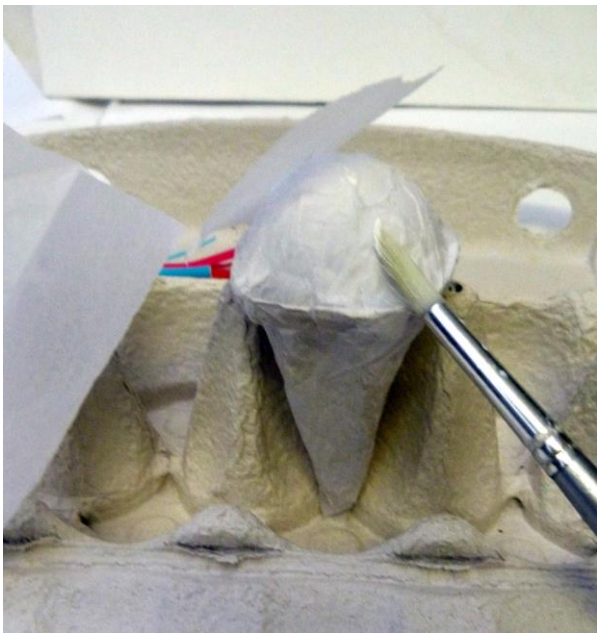
STEP 5

Cut down the spiral of the drinking straw. These will become tendrils that you can add to the outside of your sculpture.



STEP 6

When the glue has dried and the ball and cone are stuck, cover the entire form with tissue paper. You can make this as thick as you like.



STEP 7

TIP: You can rest your sculpture in the egg box to secure it while it dries.

Widen the hole at the base of your egg box cone and attach your tail using glue. Then add colour using paint or markers when dry.

STEP 8

Using scissors, make a slot in the side. Glue your straw tendrils into the slot. Attach your fangs with glue to the top of your sculpture.

TIP: You can rest your sculpture in the tube of paper towel roll to hold the sculpture steady.

STEP 9

Finally, cut up and stick on some sticky stars to make odd shapes placed around the sculpture. When your sculpture is complete, hang it up. Make a few of these until you have a colony.

Vocabulary	
Colony	A group of people of one nationality living in a foreign place; a group of living things of one kind living together.
Humanoid	Having human like qualities in appearance.
Hybrid	Combining two different elements such as species to create a new variation
Meteorite	A piece of rock from an object (eg: an asteroid or comet) that originates in outer space and survives its passage to enter Earth's atmosphere.
Pandemic	An epidemic of an infectious disease that spreads across a large resign or multiple continents.
Virus	The smallest type of parasite to exist. An infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cells of an organism.