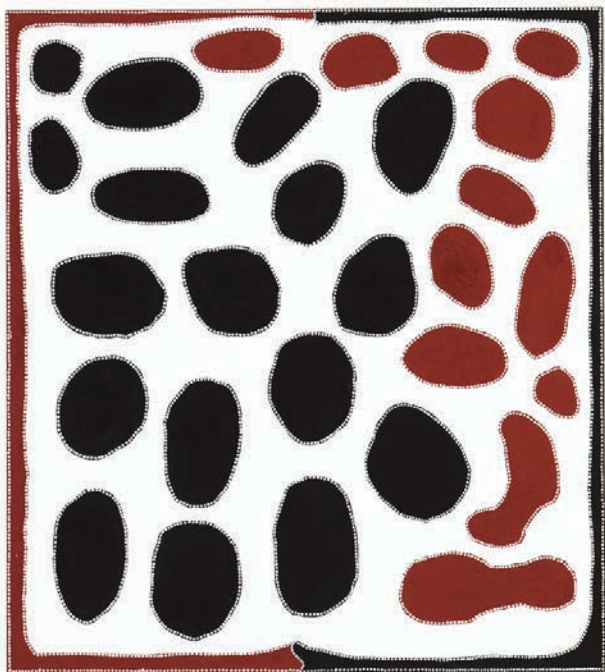


TWO LAWS ONE BIG SPIRIT

RUSTY PETERS & PETER ADSETT



EDUCATIONAL PACK

PRIMARY: Years 3–6

EXHIBITION FOCUS

Two Laws One Big Spirit explores the deep artistic relationship between late Gija artist Rusty Peters and Aotearoa/New Zealand artist Peter Adsett.

During two weeks in Humpty Doo in 2000, the artists set shared rules for their work: scale, format, a limited palette of black, white and red, and a rhythm of painting on alternate days. The resulting paintings show how two artists can work side by side while preserving their own visual language, knowledge and spirit.

The exhibition offers rich opportunities for students to explore:

- collaboration and trust
- visual language and abstraction
- different ways of understanding the world
- respect between cultures

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Students will:

- observe and describe artworks using visual art language
- explore how rules, collaboration and trust shape creative outcomes
- understand that art can communicate ideas, relationships and cultural connections
- create their own artworks using shared constraints

TEACHING SEQUENCE OVERVIEW

Before viewing

- Introduce the idea of collaboration and working with shared rules.
- Discuss what it means to show respect when learning about First Nations art.

During viewing

- Encourage slow looking and open ended discussion.
- Avoid interpretation of specific cultural symbols; focus on process, connection, feeling and relationship.
- Students should not copy sacred, cultural or Country-specific symbols from Rusty Peters' painting.
- Focus discussion on relationships, not decoding cultural meaning.
- TEACHER PROMPTS
 - » Some paintings do not show a horizon. Ask students: *Where might the sky or ground be?*
 - » Ask: *Could this painting be turned another way? Would it still work?*
 - » Encourage students to notice how shapes and colours feel close to them, rather than far away.

After viewing

- Use practical artmaking to reinforce the idea of "same rules, different voices".
- Reflect as a group on teamwork and creativity.

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STUDENT WORKSHEET



1. DISCUSS

Two Artists, One Conversation

Rusty Peters, *Great Grandfather's Father's Burial Place*, paired with Peter Adsett's related painting from the series.

The image shows Peters' work on the left using red, black and white forms, and Adsett's work on the right using a stark black-and-white geometric composition.

Teacher introduction:

"These two paintings were made as part of a shared series. The artists used similar rules, but their paintings look very different. Let's look closely at how two artworks can speak to each other."

Looking prompts:

1. What colours do both artists use?
2. What shapes can you see in each painting?
3. Which painting has shapes that feel more like bodies, landforms or living things?
4. Which painting has shapes that feel more like buildings, signs or design?
5. If these two paintings were having a conversation, what might they be saying?
6. What is similar? What is different?
7. How can two people follow the same rules but still make something completely their own?
8. Can you tell which way is up in these paintings?
9. Do the shapes feel close to you or far away? Why?
10. What do you notice first – the shapes or the empty spaces?

QUICK ACTIVITY

Artwork conversation:

In pairs, choose one word for each painting, such as:

Rusty Peters' painting	Peter Adsett's painting
memory	balance
Country	structure
movement	quiet
family	edge

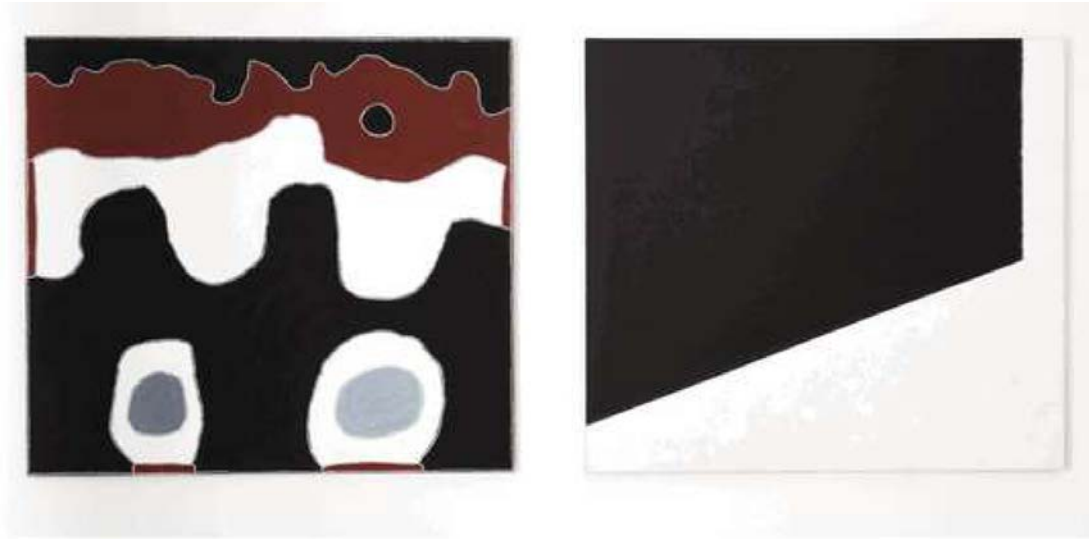
Combine the words into a sentence:

"This artwork conversation is about..."

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STUDENT WORKSHEET



2. INVESTIGATE

Rules can make art stronger

The series' shared rules:

black, white and red palette, set scale and format,
paintings made in one day, alternating days over fourteen days.

Teacher introduction:

*"Sometimes artists use rules to help them create.
A rule can be a fence, a ladder or a launchpad.
In this exhibition, the artists chose rules together."*

Student investigation:

1. What rules did Rusty Peters and Peter Adsett use?
2. Why might artists choose to use only three colours?
3. Would having rules make art easier or harder?
4. What happens when two artists use the same rules but different ideas?
5. Can art be a kind of conversation? Why or why not?
6. What could potentially happen if no rules were applied to each artist?

Looking prompt:

These artists use shapes and spaces in a way that makes us look carefully. Sometimes shapes can be a “thing”, and other times they can be “background”.

How does this change how we see the artwork?

3. MAKE

A painted conversation

Activity:

Students create a paired abstract artwork with a partner.

Materials:

Paper, 3 colours of paint or markers, masking tape, pencils, collage paper.

Instructions:

1. Work with a partner.
2. Together, choose three rules. For example:
 - Define only 3 allowed colours.
 - Each person must include one large shape.
3. Fold or divide a page in half. One student works on the left, the other on the right.
4. Take turns adding marks or shapes.
5. Do not copy your partner. Instead, respond to them.
6. Think about how shapes and empty space work together. What happens if you swap them?
6. Give the finished work a title beginning with Two...
Examples:
 - Two Places One Story
 - Two Voices One Shape

Reflection prompts:

- What rules did you choose?
- How did your partner's artwork influence yours?
- What did you keep different?
- What did you keep connected?
- Did shapes change meaning while you were working?
- What was tricky about working together?

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CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

VISUAL ARTS

Years 3–4

- AC9AVA4E01 – Explore how artists use visual conventions to represent ideas, beliefs and observations
- AC9AVA4E02 – Explore visual artworks from different cultures, times and places
- AC9AVA4C01 – Experiment with visual conventions, materials and techniques

Years 5–6

- AC9AVA6E01 – Explore how artists communicate ideas through visual conventions and viewpoints
- AC9AVA6E02 – Explain how visual artworks from different contexts reflect beliefs and values
- AC9AVA6C01 – Develop and refine visual artworks using intentional choices

CROSS CURRICULUM PRIORITY

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures

- Country/Place – Art as a way of expressing connection to Country and memory
- Culture – Respectful engagement with First Nations knowledge and creative practices
- People – Understanding cultural difference and shared humanity

English

- Interpreting Visual Texts – Reading artworks as visual stories through colour, shape, line, composition and title
- Speaking and Listening – Sharing ideas, asking questions and building respectful discussion around different interpretations
- Creating Responses – Using descriptive language to write gallery labels, reflections and artist statements about artworks and creative choices

HASS

- Place and Belonging – Exploring how places can hold personal, family, cultural and historical meaning
- Community and Connection – Understanding how people from different backgrounds can share ideas, collaborate and build respectful relationships
- Rules and Responsibility – Considering how shared rules, agreements and respectful behaviour help people work together and learn from one another

GENERAL CAPABILITIES

- Critical and Creative Thinking – analysing, responding and creating
- Personal and Social Capability – collaboration, trust, reflection
- Intercultural Understanding – recognising different ways of knowing and working

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover:

Image left:

Rusty Peters

Gija people, Western Australia

born Springvale Station, Western Australia
1935

died Kununurra, East Kimberley, Western
Australia 2020

Different Languages for Aboriginal and
non-Aboriginal People

from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit
2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory
earth pigments on linen

135.0 x 122.0 cm

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Image right:

Peter Adsett

born Gisborne, Aotearoa – New Zealand 1959
Painting number 8

from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit
2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory
(pictured on right) synthetic polymer paint
on linen

135.0 x 122.0 cm

© Peter Adsett

P4:

Image left:

Rusty Peters

Gija people, Western Australia

born Springvale Station, Western Australia
1935

died Kununurra, East Kimberley, Western
Australia 2020

Great Grandfather's Father's Burial Place
from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit

2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory
(pictured on left) earth pigments on linen

122.0 x 135.0 cm

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photo:Silversalt Photography

Image right:

Peter Adsett

born Gisborne, Aotearoa – New Zealand 1959
Painting number 10

from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit
2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory
(pictured on right) synthetic polymer paint
on linen

122.0 x 135.0 cm

© Peter Adsett

P7:

Image left:

Rusty Peters

Gija people, Western Australia

born Springvale Station, Western Australia
1935

died Kununurra, East Kimberley, Western
Australia 2020

Father and Grandfather Teaching Place for
Me

from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit
2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory

(pictured on left) earth pigments on linen
122.0 x 135.0 cm

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photo:Silversalt Photography

Image right:

Peter Adsett

born Gisborne, Aotearoa – New Zealand 1959
Painting number 6

from the series Two Laws One Big Spirit
2000, Humpty Doo, Northern Territory
(pictured on right) synthetic polymer paint
on linen

122.0 x 135.0 cm

© Peter Adsett

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