

LOWER POWER

Marco Fusinato

10 February – 21 April



Image:
Marco Fusinato, *The Infinite 6* (detail), 2019.

Contents

3	About PICA
4	Exhibition Summary
5	Key Themes & Curricular Connections
6	About the Artist
7	Background – More about Marco Fusinato
9	Looking in the Gallery
10	Activities
15	Partners

About PICA

Housed in a large and striking heritage building in the heart of Perth, Western Australia, PICA is the city's focal point for those wishing to experience the best of Australian and international visual, performance and interdisciplinary art.

PICA is both a producing and presenting institution that runs a year-round program of changing exhibitions, seasons in contemporary dance, theatre and performance and a range of interdisciplinary projects. It boasts one of the largest and most breath-taking exhibition spaces in Australia and has become known for the leading role it plays in the presentation of significant new work.

PICA's key aim is to promote, support and present contemporary arts and to stimulate critical discussion around the arts and broader cultural issues. Providing a site for experimentation, critical analysis, discussion, and debate is fundamental to its charter. PICA is known for the rigour and breadth of its artistic and education programs, high production standards and impeccable presentation.

PICA is an icon of contemporary thinking – it is a catalyst for innovative and groundbreaking art and culture. Not constrained by convention, PICA gives artists and audiences a glimpse of what is possible.

To learn more about our coming program, or to make a booking, visit pica.org.au or call 08 9228 6300.

Exhibition Summary

Lower Power features new works from Melbourne-based Marco Fusinato's *Infinitives* series. Commenced in 2009, the series features images sourced from international mass media, depicting an individual brandishing a rock in the decisive moment of a riot. Using the latest commercial print technologies, Fusinato enlarges the images and reproduces them to monumental, history-painting scale.

A visual artist and musician, Fusinato's work has taken the form of installation, photographic reproduction, drawing, sculpture, performance and recording. His projects often investigate opposing tensions, such as the ones between noise and silence, Minimalism and Maximalism.

Lower Power is Fusinato's first exhibition in Western Australia and premieres two new works in the *Infinitives* series. *Infinitives* explores the relationship between noise and silence in visual art by presenting images that we know represent scenes of rage, chaos and cacophonous noise but that nevertheless remain audibly silent.

Outgoing PICA Senior Curator Eugenio Viola connects Fusinato's *Infinitives* to paintings of the Baroque era, as the movement is frozen at the height of the action to emphasise the dynamism and drama of the composition and its frozen inner theatricality.

On 10 February, in conjunction with the exhibition, Fusinato also presented *Spectral Arrows*, an on-going series of improvised durational performances for guitar and mass amplification.



Image: Marco Fusinato, *The Infinitive 6 and 7*, 2019. Photo: Bo Wong.

Key Themes & Curricular Connections

Marco Fusinato: *Lower Power* explores themes that connect with a range of courses in the Western Australian curriculum. This guide is intended as an introductory reference for educators, outlining the key ideas in the exhibition, as well as offering activities for Years 10, 11 and 12. To discuss further ways to tailor the exhibition to your classroom, contact info@pica.org.au

Themes

HISTORY – histories of violence and oppression; history of political movements and social uprisings; Arab Spring and other 21st century protests

MEDIA – photojournalism, photography and the media; the role of media and political movements; relationship between truth, photography and the media; relationship between photography, media and political movements; advertising and consumerism

THE ARTS – visual art; photography; appropriation; postproduction art; painting; relationship between visual art and sound; music

HUMAN RIGHTS – global politics, war, violence

HUMAN RELATIONS – empathy, apathy, self and other

Curricular Connections

THE ARTS: Design, Media Production and Analysis, Visual Arts, Music

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: Civics and Citizenship, Geographies, Modern History, Philosophy and Ethics, Politics and Law

ENGLISH: English, Literature

SCIENCE: Psychology

GENERAL CAPABILITIES: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability; Ethical understanding; Intercultural understanding; Information and communication technology capability

CROSS-CURRICULAR PRIORITIES: Asia & Australia's Engagement with Asia

About the Artist

Working across a wide variety of mediums, Melbourne-based artist and musician Marco Fusinato creates work grounded in his interests in conceptual art, experimental music, punk rock and radical politics.

Many of Fusinato's works, including the *Infinitives* series, involve appropriation – they use existing imagery or texts to create new associations and raise new questions. Much of the original material comes from Fusinato's own archives; *Noise and Capitalism* (2010) responded to his collection of anarchist pamphlets, *Mass Black Imposition* (2008) utilised a selection of historical avant-garde music scores, and the *Infinitive* series uses images he collects from twenty-first-century international newspapers.

Fusinato began exhibiting his work in the 1990s with the Melbourne-based artist-run space Store 5. In addition to exhibiting artwork, Fusinato has been active in Melbourne's experimental music scene performing, creating and recording music with guitar, amplification and electronics. Dead C guitarist Bruce Russell has described Fusinato's sound as combining 'extreme sonic assault with complete aesthetic control and an implacable will towards conceptual totality.' (*Artforum*)

Noise as a material often appears in Fusinato's artwork, either directly or metaphorically. Examples of the former include *FREE* (1998–2004), a series of guerrilla performances of noise-guitar improvisations in unsuspecting music stores, and *Constellations* (2015), an installation that invites audiences to strike a baseball bat against a gallery wall with hidden microphones and PA, which cause the wall to amplify and reverberate.

Fusinato's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the ICA Singapore, Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane and Artspace in Sydney, amongst many others. His work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions nationally and internationally, including the 2015 Venice Biennale, 21st Biennale of Sydney at Carriageworks and The National 2017 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Background

More about Marco Fusinato

Website: <http://marcofusinato.com/>

Anna Schwartz Gallery: <http://annaschwartzgallery.com/artists/marco-fusinato/>

Interview: <http://www.fluorodigital.com/2015/09/interview-with-marco-fusinato/>

Writing by Fusinato: http://marcofusinato.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Soundings_PREVIEW.pdf

Spectral Arrows recordings: <https://ujikaji.bandcamp.com/album/spectral-arrows-singapore>

Appropriation in art is a term used to describe a method of art-making that intentionally borrows, copies and/or alters existing images or objects.

Explore more:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/appropriation>

https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/pop-art/appropriation/

Postproduction art is a term coined in 2002 to examine the ways that artists today use appropriation differently from their historical predecessors, largely due to the internet's profound change on our relationship to images. Ideas of authorship and originality, important to appropriation artists, are no longer key components when using images for postproduction artists. Rather, these artists edit, adapt, combine, mix and play with the multitude of images that are now circulating globally.

Appropriation and postproduction are often strategies artists use to question society's relationship with visual images.

Explore more:

<http://www.remixthebook.com/the-course/postproduction>

Background

Art Historical Influences

History painting is a style, or genre, of painting in the history of Western art, influential from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Of the various 'genres' of Western painting, history painting was considered the most prestigious. Its aim was to tell stories considered serious and important, typically of historical, allegorical, mythological or religious events. These paintings were always large in scale and theatrical in style.

Explore more:

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/h/history-painting>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/g/genres>

Baroque painting was a style of painting during the seventeenth century European Baroque art movement. It was popularised in Italy by painters such as Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi. Baroque painting is characterised by deep colours, intense dark and light shadows and a sense of drama and movement.

Explore more:

<http://www.hatjecantz.de/baroque-art-5034-1.html>

<http://www.essential-humanities.net/western-art/painting/baroque/>

Andy Warhol is an American artist that appropriated newspaper images in the Death and Disaster series (1963-1965) which depicted violent scenes, including images of the atomic bomb, suicides, riots and murder.

Explore more:

<https://artsearch.nga.gov.au/Detail.cfm?IRN=116213>

<https://www.warhol.org/lessons/death-and-disasters/>

Musical Influences –Fusinato's musical influences include:

Crass

Cornelius Cardew

Bela Bartok

John Cage

Iannis Xenakis

Looking in the Gallery

What do you think is happening in the artwork? What do you see that makes you say that?

How is the artwork constructed? What colours, materials, shapes and forms are employed?
What similarities do you see between the two works? What differences?

How does the artwork make you feel? What is it about the work and its structure that could be eliciting that response?

What does the artwork remind you of? Are there images, objects or issues in the media or in your daily life that the artwork makes you think of?

Questions

How do the works explore the following questions?

How do images in the media frame our understanding of global events?

How do we understand concepts of fact and fiction, right and wrong, hero and villain within the arena of complex geopolitical relationships and biased media outlets?

In what ways do socio-political movements become commercialised and commodified by mainstream media? In what ways can this impact a movement's cause?

What is the relationship between images and sound? Can visual images conjure sounds?



Image: Marco Fusinato, *The Infnitive 7*, 2019.

Activities

Visual Art

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability; Information and communication technology capability

Developing Ideas & Process

- *Analyse Infinitives no. 6 and no. 7. What meanings do they convey and how?*
- *Consider the ways Fusinato has appropriated and altered the original images to convey meaning.*
- *Consider Fusinato's process in creating the artworks, and the following statement from the artist: 'It's really like being a crow sitting on a power line...looking down and making an observation on things that are going on below you. Then you go down and scavenge the bits that you find interesting, and make something from that'. (Saturday Paper)*
- *Consider the ways the two works relate to each other, as well as to the larger body of Infinitives works. How would their meanings change if they were not part of a 'series'?*
- *Respond by creating a 'finder' – cut out a rectangular frame from a small piece of cardboard and use it to frame the way you look at the world around you. Bring it with you as you walk around and use it as a tool to find interesting visual compositions and to decipher patterns in the things you see. Use your finder as a starting off point to develop ideas for new work.*

Activities

English

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability; Ethical understanding; Information and communication technology capability

Writing on Art

- Select one artwork and explore writing in various styles in response to it. Experiment with prose and poetry.
- *Descriptive/Ekphrastic* – describe the artwork, its visual characteristics and the impression it gives you. Try to convey a sense of the artwork’s meaning in your own text.
- *Analytical* – explain the central issues in the artwork and how the artwork visually addresses those issues. Critically engage with the work and how successfully you think it uses visual tools to convey its message.
- *Imaginative* – considering the work’s visual evidence and its message, imagine possible scenarios in the production of the image. Where was the image taken? Who is the figure? What happened before? What will happen after?
- *Reflective* – what was the experience of writing in response to an artwork like for you? How is it similar to writing in response to a text? How is it different? In what ways are text and image similar in the ways they convey meaning? In what ways are they different?

Activities

Media Production and Analysis

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability; Ethical understanding; Information and communication technology capability

Cross-curricular priorities: Asia & Australia's Engagement with Asia

Photojournalism & Media Art

Analyse Fusinato's work and explore his use of images from the media. In what ways has Fusinato altered the original images? How is the meaning conveyed through the artwork now different than the meaning that the image may have had in its original context?

- *Consider* the differences and similarities between visual art and photojournalism.
- *Consider* the following statement from the artist, noted in response to curator Eugenio Viola's query about the original source of the images: 'It's not important to me where they are from. Although they are from different parts of the world, often years apart, they all look the same: jeans, hoodie, and their face covered. International style'.
- *Consider* the ways that Australian media sources have depicted political events in China, such as Tiananmen Square or conflicts with Tibet.
- *Respond* by creating a media work that appropriates an image (or multiple images) from the Western media's portrayal of political events in China. Experiment with various methods for altering the original image, such as scale, colour and combining and cropping images. Experiment with ways your work could raise questions about the ways the issue is depicted in the media.

Activities

Media & Political Movements

Analyse Fusinato's works and consider the meanings they convey about the way the media impacts our understanding of socio-political events.

- Consider the following question posed by the IMA, Brisbane in relationship to the *Infinitives* series: 'Do these images exemplify an authentic archetype of revolt or rather its clichéd, default-setting characterisation by mainstream media?'
- Consider the ways that you see socio-political movements depicted in the media. What are some of the similarities and differences?
- Consider ways that some socio-political movements have been used in advertisements, such as the Me Too movement in this Gillette advertisement:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>
- Respond by exploring the ethics of appropriating the message and imagery associated with a socio-political movement in an advertisement. Is such a method helpful by spreading the message of the movement? Or is it unethical for a company to profit from the movement's message? Why would a company choose such an approach in their advertising?

Activities

Music

General Capabilities: Literacy; Critical and creative thinking; Personal and social capability; Information and communication technology capability

Composition & Visual Scores

Analyse *Infinitives no. 6* and *no. 7* visually. What meanings do their visual forms convey? Imagine the sounds the artworks might convey. Consider not only the sounds of the appropriated images, but also sounds that would relate to Fusinato's works and the composition as a whole.

– Consider the recordings of Fusinato's performances of *Spectral Arrows*. In what ways do you think these could relate to the *Infinitives* series?

– Consider ways of thinking about everyday noises and their relationship to music. Try out a Deep Listening exercise by composer Pauline Oliveros:

http://www.deeplistening.org/site/sites/default/files/files/Dissolving%20your%20Ear%20Plugs_Pauline%20Oliveros.pdf

– Consider the ways musicians and artists have used visual images to compose musical scores, including Fusinato's work *Parallel Collisions* (2008) and Cornelius Cardew's piece *Treatise* (1963-1967).

<https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/works/2015.10A-X/>

<http://davidhall.io/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Music-Graphic-Notation-Cardew-Treatise.compressed.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMzIXxlwuCs>

– Respond by creating a composition with a visual score. Consider the ways different musicians might respond to your score. Experiment with ways your imagery could keep the score highly open to interpretation by the individual musicians or more defined.

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PICA's ongoing programs are primarily supported by an investment from the State of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in association with Lotterywest, assistance from the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. PICA is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. *Lower Power* is presented in association with Perth Festival.