

My artwork, *Backwards in Time*, explores of land use and development in Australia over time. I was inspired to create this artwork when I was exploring the area of The Rocks, Sydney, an area with an extremely rich history, both indigenous and non-indigenous. I collected written accounts, artworks and photographs from the time periods displayed in each panel as references to base my own representation.

My artwork showcases the way a single landscape changes across five time periods.

The first time-period is the background scene which lies behind the four fragmented panels. This displays what the landscape originally looked before any land development occurred. It also serves to represent how the other time periods are physically built onto the original landscape.

I wanted to use medium in my artwork to uniquely represent methods of documentation and convey time. Each medium used represents a different method of capturing image that matches the respective time periods. In the earliest panel (1800s), photography was not yet invented so painting or drawing were the predominant ways of recording image. This is why I chose to use watercolour for this panel, mirroring many art pieces done in the area at the time. In the second panel (early 1900s), I used varying graphite pencil grades. This was to imitate the monotone effect of a black-and-white photo, which was the prominent method of image then. I also used vertical lines to create a “grainy” look. For the third panel (1970s), I used coloured pencil, as that was when coloured photography became widely available. I used the technique, ‘burnishing’, to shine it, while blending for increased opacity, combining to create a photo-like finish. I additionally used light colours to create the faded look typical to 1970s photographs. For the last of the four panels (present day), I used alcohol markers to represent the age of digital photography as this medium is opaque and vibrant.

Because of the nature of different mediums used in my artwork, the four panels increase in opacity and vibrancy from right to left, as they get closer to modern day. This is a visual signpost so the audience can identify the time-period. It also communicates age, as the first panels appear fainter while the later ones are more vibrant. However, the background does not follow this same method, as oil paint is extremely opaque. This is intentional as it communicates how even though the contents of the panels are physically built onto it, the original landscape remains underneath and endures longer than the impermanent human constructs that drastically change between panels.

Symbols are used effectively in my artwork to represent major changes in land use in the area. In the first panel (1800s), the paddock, sandstone quarry and colonial homesteads represent early land development: farming, quarrying and housing. The second panel (early 1900s), shows how a small colonial settlement has grown into a busy town, using symbols of chimneys, concrete and an increased number of houses. In the third panel, the town has grown into a city. Cars, factories, public transport symbolise industrial growth. In the final panel, the entire space is taken up by multi-story office building, hotels and skyscrapers symbolising how the land-use has evolved to be predominantly tourism and businesses.

The tree appears in the panels and the background, serving to both visually link them together, connecting the story for the audience. It also represents a message of hope that even though land is developed, and landscapes continue to change, nature still exists and can thrive. The road running through each of the panels symbolises the passage of time.