



LINDY LEE

Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Divided Worlds

ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE Open daily 10am–5pm artgallery.sa.gov.au





Born in Brisbane, artist Lindy Lee uses a variety of mediums including painting, sculpture and installation to address themes of identity and belonging. From her photocopy works of the early 1980s to her portraits of the 1990s, Lee has explored her complex family history relating to her Chinese-Australian heritage. Over the past 10 years, Lee has shifted away from figurative work and moved towards a more abstract approach, reflecting her long-standing engagement with Buddhism.

Situated at the entrance of the Art Gallery of South Australia, Lindy Lee's six-metre sculpture *The Life of Stars* links the Art Gallery of South Australia and its exterior forecourt. Fabricated by Lee in China, the work displays a densely perforated surface and creates dappled light, which together suggest a universe within, while its oval form suggests the beginnings of life itself. Visible by day and night, *The Life of Stars* appears both to contain and radiate light. This delicate play between interior and exterior, form and emptiness is significant. The concentric circles on the surface reference Indra's net, which is a metaphor of Mahayana Buddhism, symbolising the universe as a vast web of connections.

image detail (cover): Installation view: Lindy Lee, *The Life of Stars*, 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Divided Worlds and Electric Canvas and Lindy Lee Adelaide Fringe projection, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

image detail (above): Lindy Lee, Australia, born 1954, *The Life of Stars*, 2015, Shanghai, stainless steel, dimensions variable; Courtesy the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney and UAP, photo: Charlie Xia

IN THE COLLECTION – *FIELDS OF SADNESS*, 1992

Fields of sadness has been created by taking multiple photocopies of reproductions of paintings created during the Renaissance through to the French Revolution. These copies leave a sediment of the photocopy ink and are repeatedly copied until they fade into black. *Fields of sadness* references postmodern theories of originality and the idea of the copy as well as the artist's experience of feelings like a copy or inauthentic.

RESPONDING

Investigate artists who have challenged ideas of originality such as Imant Tillers.

MAKING

Using photocopies of photographs create a series of portraits of members of your family. Consider the idea of the multiple or repetition.



image: Installation view 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Divided Worlds featuring works by Lindy Lee, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

RESOURCES

Adelaide Biennial – Lindy Lee

<http://bit.ly/2rIECGP>

Artist Profile – Lindy Lee

<http://bit.ly/2FpwVr4>

University of Queensland – Lindy Lee

<http://bit.ly/2rLaNoR>

Reach Out – Relaxation and Meditation strategies

<http://bit.ly/2DFudNy>

Smiling Mind – Meditation App

<http://bit.ly/2COv8KS>

VIDEO

Art After Hours – Fenella Kernebone talks to Lindy Lee

<http://bit.ly/2rL8WjW>

The Dark of Absolute Freedom

<http://bit.ly/2GqYlxR>

Lindy Lee – Flung Bronze video

<http://bit.ly/2nn76R5>

The Gallery's Learning programs are supported by the Department for Education and Child Development.

EARLY YEARS

RESPONDING

Lee is inspired by the universe and how big it is. Light radiates from her sculpture *The Life of Stars* which means it will appear differently at night. During one week record the patterns you see in the sky such as the appearance of the moon, stars and sky. What weather conditions changed what you saw?

What qualities make *The Life of Stars* an inviting work of art? Create your own maquette using these ideas.

Lee has three works of art on display in *Divided Worlds*. How are *Life of Stars*, *True Chi'en* and *Unnameable* similar? How do these works of art differ?

MAKING

Lee uses a variety of materials to create her works including paint, wax, bronze, fire and even photocopies. *True Chi'en* has been created by making small holes into a surface. Using a range of tools experiment with mark making. Which tool makes the most interesting mark?

Create a work of art that responds to your observations of the night sky. Consider how the weather and different seasons affect what you see.



image detail: Installation view Lindy Lee, *The Life of Stars*, 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: *Divided Worlds* and *Electric Canvas* and Lindy Lee Adelaide Fringe projection, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING – PHYSICAL SCIENCES (YEAR 2)

Unnameable has been created using a flung-bronze method where pools of molten bronze are poured onto a factory floor in organic forms. The process and material used reference the push and pull of opposing forces. Gather a range of materials and conduct an art experiment. How far can you stretch plasticine, clay or dough before it breaks? How much force is needed to propel a material like paint? What variables change the outcome?

TIP *Unnameable* is an ideal prompt to learn about Physical Sciences by exploring the way objects move or change shape. Watch *Lindy Lee is Flung Bronze* video to see bronze in its liquid state and to see how it is poured.

PRIMARY

RESPONDING

Brainstorm the term 'belonging' and share your ideas with the class. Compare *Life of Stars* to work by Daniel Boyd, also on display in *Divided Worlds*. How are these works similar and how are they different?

True Chi'en has been created by burning holes through sheets of metal and paper. The way the work is hung also allows light to shine through the holes casting shadows on the wall. Why do you think light and shadow play such an important part in Lee's work?

Lee's most recent work has been the result of her Buddhist practice which includes meditation. Practice some meditation techniques as a class.

TIP Check the Smiling Mind App or the Reach Out Guide to Meditation in the resource list.

When Lee began working as an artist the colour black was an important element of her work. At the time, black represented loss and mourning, however now the meaning has changed for Lee – it now represents mystery and the cosmos. Investigate the meaning of colours. How have these meanings changed over time and what do they mean in different cultures? Did you discover any colours that have multiple representations? For example, the colour red is often associated with love and anger. What other meanings can you find for the colour red?

MAKING

The Life of Stars appears smooth and radiates light. Select a planet, star or moon in the universe. Without making a direct copy of this object, create a sculpture that captures the essence of your chosen astronomical body or object. Consider 'in the round' versus a relief view.

Family portraits are important to Lee. Think about a family member or friend you don't see very often. Using a photograph, create a stippling drawing (fine circular dots) of this person.

True Chi'en is inspired by a Chinese ghost story about a young girl and her father. What is your favourite story? Create a work of art that captures one part of this narrative.



image: Lindy Lee, Australia, born 1954, *Unnameable*, 2017, mirror polished bronze, 150.0 x 80.0 x 100.0 cm; Courtesy the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney and UAP

SECONDARY

RESPONDING

Lee's work has been inspired by her practice of Buddhism. What do you know about Buddhism?

Discuss the following statement: Form affects space. Use one of the works by Lee in *Divided Worlds* to respond to this statement.

Lee has spent her career investigating the meaning of home. What does home feel like or mean to you? Investigate other artists who explore the concept of home. As a class compare their work. How does their representation compare to your understanding of home? Which artist did you most connect with and why?

TIP Look at the work of Ian Strange, Claire Healy and Sean Cordiero.

MAKING

Create a sculpture from paper. Experiment with folding, cutting, tearing or perforating paper. Play with light to cast interesting shadows so that light and shadow become an integral part of the sculpture.

Imagine you are an artist exhibiting in the 2020 Adelaide Biennial and you have been commissioned to create a site-specific work for the front of the Gallery. Begin by brainstorming a title for the overall exhibition, this brief may help drive the concept for your sculpture. Create a maquette of your design.

TIP Consider contrast, balance, harmony, emphasis, and rhythm/repetition.

Investigate the term materiality. Materials often come first for Lee when creating a work of art, first it was colour, then a photocopier, wax, now fire. Take a material for a walk. Select an unusual material to push, pull and stretch. How many different ways can you use your material to create a work of art. Document your experiments.

SCIENCE UNDERSTANDING – EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCES (YEAR 10)

Investigate the formation of galaxies and stars that has continued since the Big Bang. Explain how *The Life of Stars* references the evolution of the universe.



image detail: Installation view Lindy Lee, *The Life of Stars*, 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: *Divided Worlds* and *Electric Canvas* and Lindy Lee Adelaide Fringe projection, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

HISTORY: THE GLOBALISING WORLD – MIGRATION EXPERIENCES (YEAR 10)

Due to the Chinese Revolution and the White Australia Policy, Lee's parents and two brothers were separated for around 8 years. Lee talks about her Chinese-Australian heritage openly during an interview with journalist Fenella Kernebone (link in resources). Lee shares difficulties she experienced while growing up, often on the receiving end of racist comments that resulted in her feeling out of place, neither Australian or Chinese. Investigate government policies on Australia's migration policy between the 1950s and 1970s, including the abolition of the White Australia Policy. What does Australia's migration policy look like today? Analyse the perspectives of people from the past and compare these opinions to today. Create a work of art that responds to your own heritage and sense of belonging.