



Natalya Hughes: *The Interior* Education Resource

This education resource has been developed for use alongside the exhibition *The Interior* touring nationally from 17 March 2023. Aimed at a secondary school audience, educators can adapt the suggested gallery and classroom activities to suit their students.

The Interior is organised by the Institute of Modern Art and toured by Museums & Galleries Queensland. The tour has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, the Australia Council's Contemporary Touring initiative, the Fini Artist Fellowship through the Sheila Foundation, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, and Porter's Paints, New Farm. Natalya Hughes is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane, and Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Project Supporters:



Image: Natalya Hughes, *The Interior*, work in progress, 2021. Courtesy of the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, and Milani Gallery.

About the Exhibition:

This exhibition is an installation artwork called *The Interior* by the artist Natalya Hughes. An installation is a type of artwork with multiple pieces that form one larger piece of art, designed by the artist for a particular space and time.

The Interior is a room filled with playful designs and objects. It is set up like a therapist's office and based on the life and work of Sigmund Freud, who was a therapist. Freud created the term 'talking cure', which is a type of treatment through talking.

In her art practice, Hughes repeats images, objects, and ideas of well-known male artists of the past to better understand why they made the artwork they did, the way they represented their subjects, and how people remember them.

Freud found women more challenging to treat; their symptoms often didn't respond to his approaches, and this negatively affected his view of treating women. Hughes is interested in how in recent times there are examples of people still viewing women in this way.

Through *The Interior*, the artist has created a space to address how people understand, and mis-understand women in the past, and our own ability to shift the idea of what a woman is.

We invite you to slip off your shoes, lie on the couches, and talk.

Gallery Discussion:

- What does it feel like to be in a space filled with fragments of other people's dreams and fantasies? What do the symbols and motifs hidden in Natalya's patterns and designs tell you about these fragments?
- How might these symbols convey the artist's interest in the role of women and gendered power dynamics between public and private spaces? Hint: think about the title of the exhibition (*The Interior*) and the multiple meanings this could have.
- *The Interior* invites the viewer to be part of the work. How does this change your experience of the installation?

Classroom Activity:

- Write down a dream you remember, including as many details as possible. Were there any symbols or motifs you can draw out? You may like to use a dream dictionary to analyse your dream. Then, use the identified symbols to create a decorative artwork or pattern using paper and collage, or digitally to create a recurring motif.
- Explore the role of gender and power dynamics in a 2D or 3D artwork. Are there any historical references you can draw upon, that speak to the ways in which men or women have been portrayed throughout history? Possible techniques to explore include collage, pattern making, textiles and soft sculpture. Think about the use of repetition, colour and shape to increase the impact of your work.
- Extension: Research the male modernists Hughes references in her work, namely Willem de Kooning, Ernst Kirchner and Sigmund Freud. How do they depict their female subjects? Write a short paragraph to compare and contrast their approach.