

HOTA HOME OF THE ARTS

DORANTINE
MICHELLE
LE PLASTRIER
DAYS



EXPERIENCE
GOLDCOAST.™



Emmanuel
COLLEGE



MEET THE ARTIST

Michelle Le Plastrier is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus on hand-built ceramics exploring identity, socio-political and environmental issues all in her signature candy coloured style.

Infused with the spirit of the 1980s, Michelle Le Plastrier's *Dopamine Days* is the artist's own unique vision of the Gold Coast.

Using precariously balanced geometric shapes, Michelle creates everything from a phone-gazing self-portrait to a riotous palm tree; from a perfectly poised kitty-kat to an abstract view of the Gold Coast Skyline from rolling ocean to mountainous hinterland.

INQUIRY

- What is the overall message or story of Michelle Le Plastrier's work in *Dopamine Days*?
- How have the possibilities of sculpture been explored in this showcase?
- What does *Dopamine Days* tell us about contemporary ceramics?



Credit: Installation View – *Dopamine Days*

MEET THE WORK

I CAN'T REMEMBER WHY I CAME TO THIS ROOM, 2023

This sculpture shows a cross legged figure, comprised of geometric shapes. The figure is holding up a thin rectangular prism, with small sphere-shaped hands. We see bright red patterns adorning the face.



RESPONDING

Using the Feldman's Inquiry Method

Naming – Describe

- What can you see in the artwork? List everything that can be seen. Take the time to notice all the details that may be overlooked otherwise.

Analysing – Collecting evidence and discriminating/describing

- Think about the artwork in terms of the art elements. Analyse the use of colour. How would you describe? What shapes and forms can you see? If you were to touch the sculpture, how would you describe the texture? Do you notice any areas of value/tone?
- How do the elements and principles of design work together?

Interpreting – Collecting evidence from stages 1 and 2 to create meaning

- What do you think the artist is trying to communicate with this sculpture?
- What could the title *I can't remember why I came to this room* be referring to?

Evaluating – Making a qualitative judgement. Requires an opinion about the artwork based on the previous three steps.

- What do you think about the artwork?



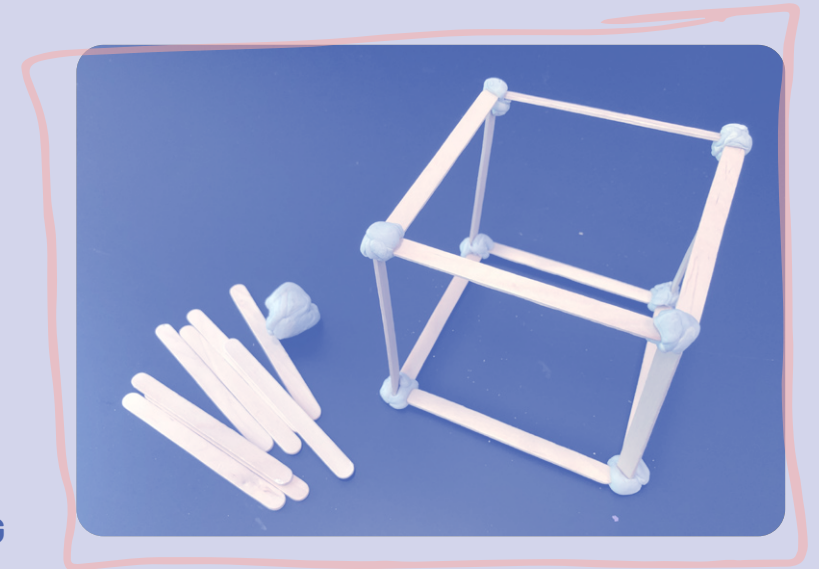
MEET THE WORK

CUTIE, 2023

This sculpture was made in memory of Michelle's life-long cat. The animal is made up of three-dimensional shapes and is painted in a selection of mostly pastel colours. Some of the forms are further decorated with patterns

RESPONDING

- Be a 3D shape detective and list some of the 3D shapes you can identify in *Cutie, 2023*. How many can you find?
- Think about how the artist has used space in this artwork. How would you sum up the use of both positive and negative space in this sculpture?
- Notice the way the sculpture has been lit. What impact does lighting have on the artwork?



MAKING

Maths | Geometry

Geometry is a branch of mathematics that studies the sizes, shapes, positions, angles, and dimensions of things. 3D shapes in geometry have three dimensions: length, width and height. This in turn creates faces, edges and vertices, as explained below:

- Faces - A face is a flat surface on a 3D shape, e.g. a cube has 6 faces
- Edges - An edge is where two faces meet, e.g. a cube has 12 edges
- Vertices - A vertex is a corner where edges meet, e.g. a cube has 8 vertices

- Michelle's Le Plastrier's sculptural works uses 3D shapes, which unlike 2D shapes, have thickness or depth. Pick one of the 3D shapes you have identified in the sculpture and redraw it. Work out how many faces, edges and vertices it has.
- Model this 3D shape using sticks and blu-tak or toothpicks and play dough, to replicate the form.

MEET THE WORK

SCRAMBLED, 2023

This sculpture has various three-dimensional shapes stacked upon each other. They have been cleverly positioned to enable the sculpture to be free standing, and viewed in the round. Michelle notes that the work, *Scrambled, 2023*, was inspired by her experience of always having many things on the go – she likens it to having 20 tabs open at once.



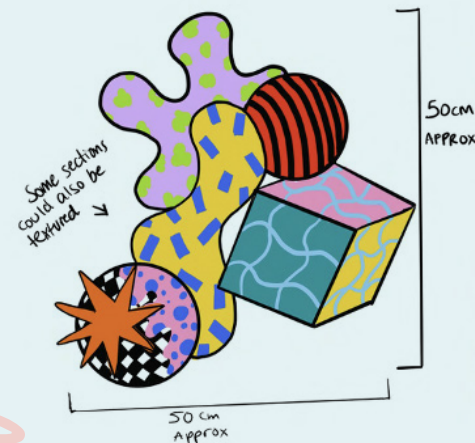
RESPONDING

- Think about the process of creating this artwork, considering it has been created from clay.
- List the different stages the artwork would have undergone from beginning to end?
- What challenges do you think the artist would have overcome to create this piece successfully?

Health

The overall showcase of Michelle Le Plastrier's artworks at HOTA Gallery is called *Dopamine Days*. Dopamine is a chemical released in the brain that makes you feel good.

- Research the effects of dopamine on your brain.
- Are you aware of any ways you can increase your dopamine levels? Create a diary that includes some activities you can undertake to make yourself feel better if you're feeling a bit down.





MEET THE WORK

GC LANDSCAPE, 2022-2023



This artwork is made up of different sculptural pieces, arranged to show Michelle Le Plastrier's interpretation of the Gold Coast landscape. These pieces are arranged in a particular composition, with some pieces placed in front, closer to the viewer, while others are situated behind. Different colours and patterns contrast throughout.

RESPONDING

- Knowing that this sculpture is Michelle Le Plastrier's unique vision of the Gold Coast, how do you think she feels about this place? What is it about the sculpture that makes you think this? Do you agree with this vision from your own experience of the Gold Coast?

MAKING

Geography

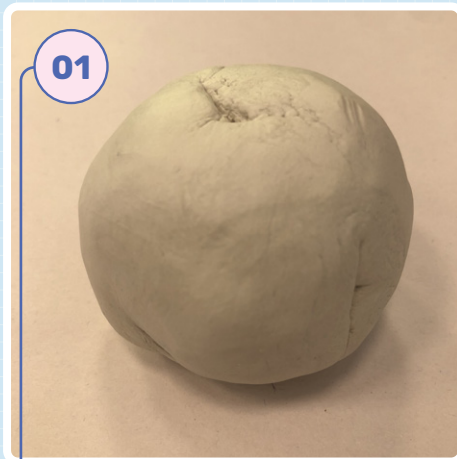
Geography is the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere. It is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. *GC Landscape, 2022-2023* explores the interplay of natural versus manmade geography on the Gold Coast.

- Find a photo of a skyline of another city in the world.
- Redraw the photo encompassing some of the fun approach Michelle Le Plastrier has taken to her artwork.
- Develop a new skyline, which is bright, bold and geometric.
- Could you include some hidden surprises for the viewer?

INSPIRED BY MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER MAKING WITH CLAY!

Dopamine Days is a series of hand built ceramic sculptures. Inspired by the artworks, create a pinch pot character out of clay.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:



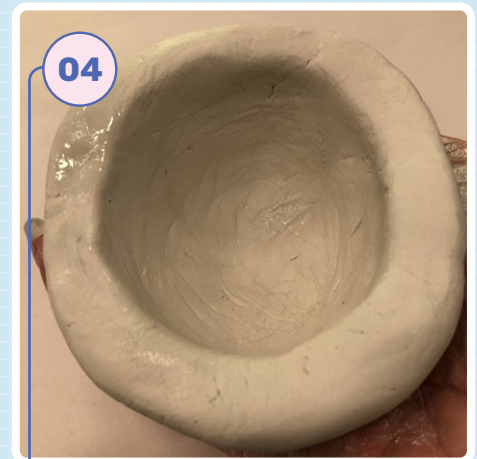
Start with a ball of clay.



Push your thumb into the centre and pinch up the walls.



Turn the piece as you pinch. Try and keep the thicknesses of the walls even as you go.



You have now made a pinch pot!

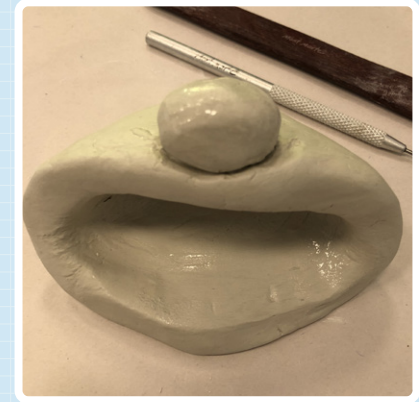
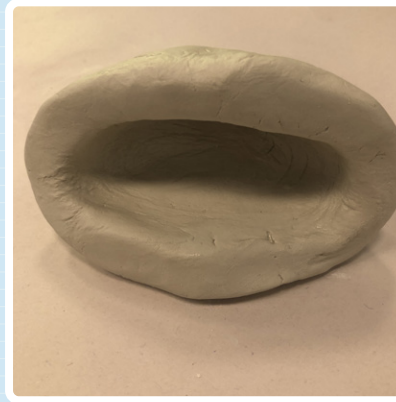
TOP TIPS FROM MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER:

- When forming the pinch pot use slow gentle pinches and repeat until desired size and thickness is achieved. Clay is thixotropic and will become more malleable the longer it is pinched and can become unstable with fast pinching.
- If your pinch pot is getting too floppy as you're pinching, putting the pot aside for a few minutes and leaving it can allow it to harden a little before working on it again.
- Adding a small coil to the outside of joins (known as a reinforcement coil) can ensure strong joins.

INSPIRED BY MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER MAKING WITH CLAY!

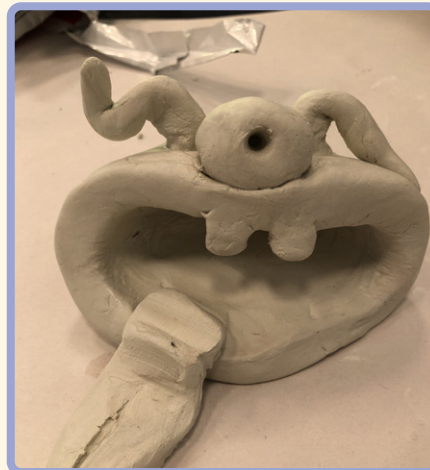
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Add features to this pinch pot to create your character. This is done by attaching extra bits of clay to the original pinch pot form. You will need to apply the "score and slip" technique.



WHAT IS THE SCORE AND SLIP TECHNIQUE?

This is a technique that is used when you need to join two pieces of clay together. This is done by cross hatching the two pieces of clay with a clay tool or toothpick. You will also need to brush on slip (a clay paste made by mixing clay with water) before you join them together.



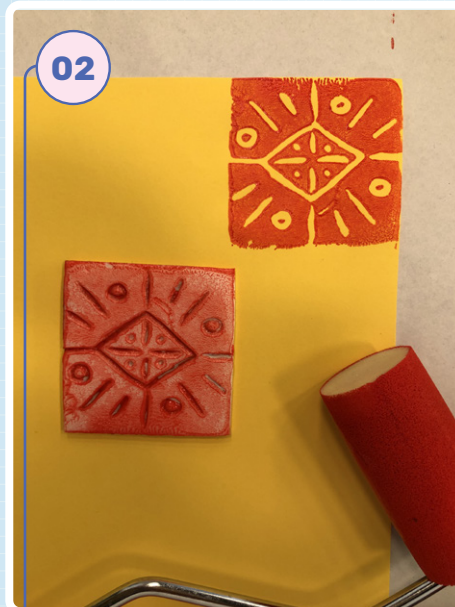
INSPIRED BY MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER COLOURFUL PATTERNS AND SHAPES!

Notice the patterns that can be seen throughout *Dopamine Days* on the glaze finishes. Create your own series of patterned papers using foam block prints.

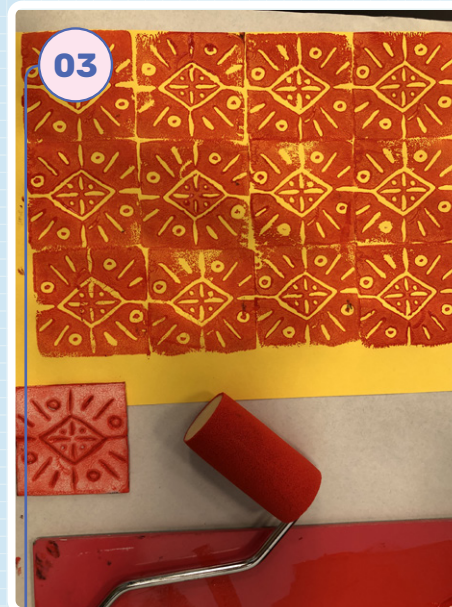
FOLLOW THESE STEPS:



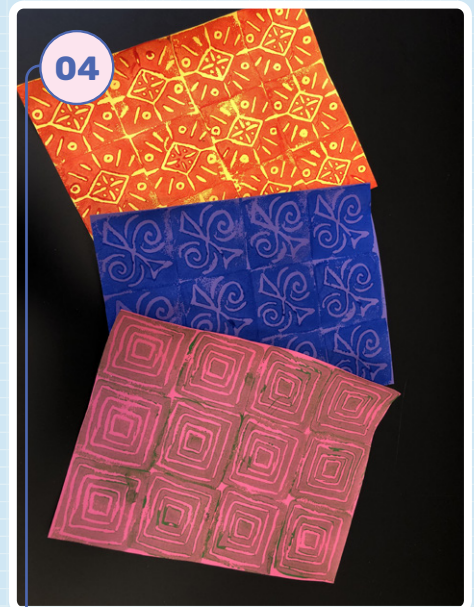
01 Indent a piece of foam with a pattern using a sharp pencil.



02 Roll the piece of foam with ink or paint using a sponge roller.



03 Turn the foam over and print onto coloured paper. Repeat pattern over and over to fill the whole page.



04 You can use your patterned paper for the sculpture activity on the next page





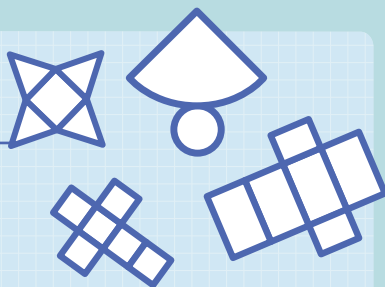
INSPIRED BY MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER 3D LANDSCAPES! & COLOURFUL SKYLINES!

Create a Marquette for a sculpture that will communicate your own view of the Gold Coast. What buildings or landmarks would you like to feature? In what style will you approach your sculpture? Playful like Le Plastrier or more realist? Or something completely different?

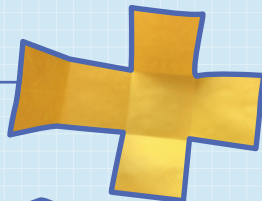
Using the patterned paper previously created, have a go at creating your skyline using 3D paper forms.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

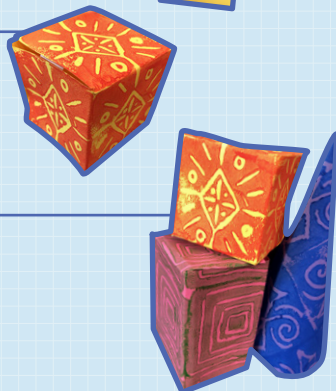
01 Draw the outline of 3D forms such as cube, cuboid, triangular prism and cones, onto your patterned paper using the templates below.



02 Cut out the shapes using scissors.



03 Fold your 2D shapes into a 3D form and clear sticky tape into place.



04 Arrange 3D forms into a skyline composition like Michelle Le Plastrier.

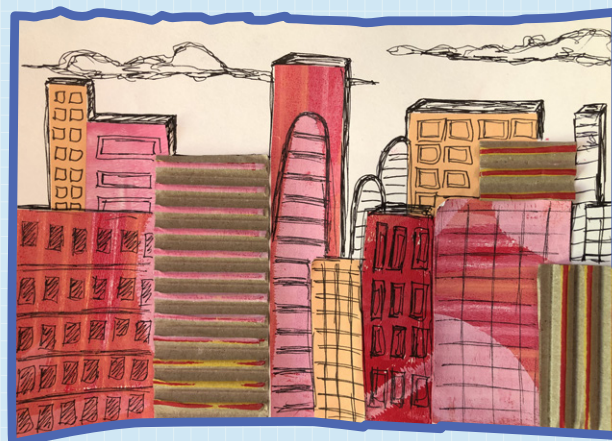
Have a go at creating a fun colourful skyline with textures, prints and patterns.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:

01 Using a variety of recycled papers (newspaper, food packaging, corrugated card), rip paper into rectangular shapes to represent different sized buildings found in a city.

02 Make sure your buildings are overlapping each other to fill the space of the backing paper before you glue down into place.

03 Illustrate this scene with pen and pencil drawings. Like Michelle Le Plastrier, could you include any surprises in the cityscape for an audience to discover?



ARIST INFORMATION MEET MICHELLE LE PLASTRIER

What inspired you to create *Dopamine Days*?

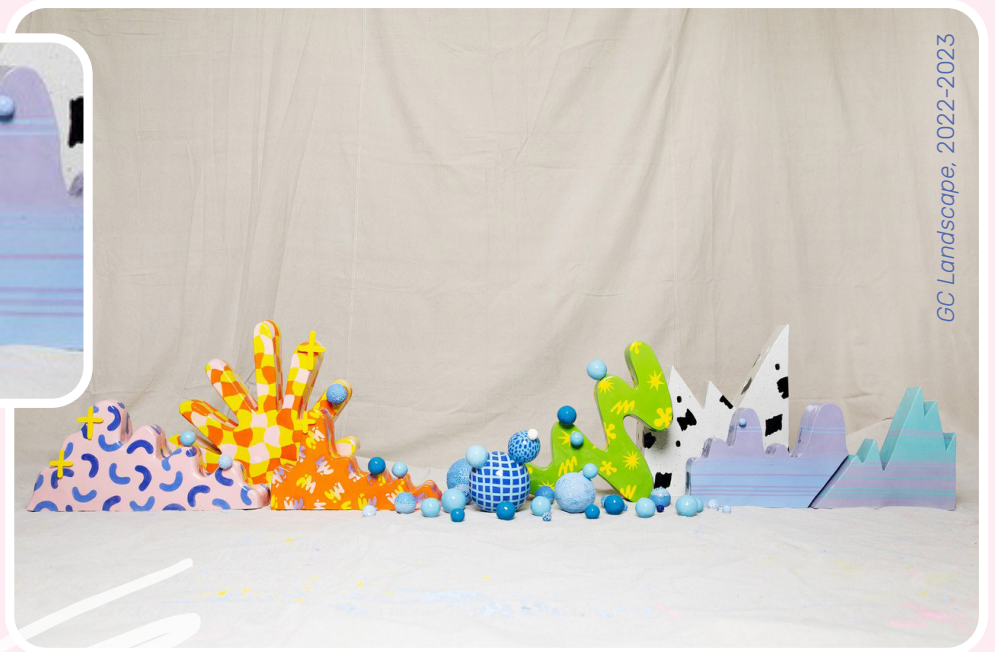
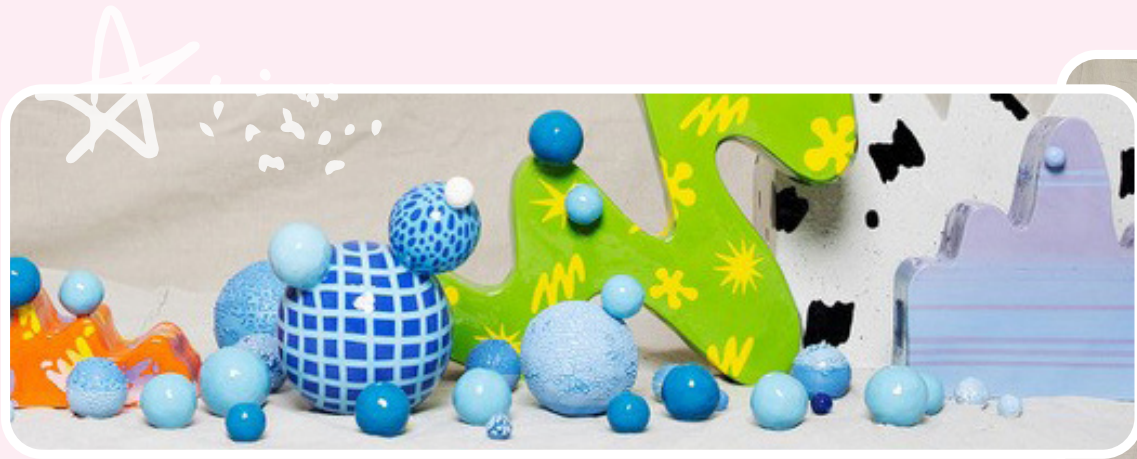
A few things! There's a lot of pieces in the exhibition that speak to my life on the Gold Coast and how I feel about this city since the arts scene really began to flourish and we've gathered a real community. The landscape that's a burst of flowing shapes and vibrant colours is very much so inspired by the burgeoning arts scene and the way it's influenced the cultural landscape of the Gold Coast. If I'd made this work years earlier it would have looked a lot different. I wanted this work to be joyous and accessible.

There's also works in there that are reflections of smaller more personal moments of life here on the GC, like the phone-gazing self portrait called '*I can't remember why I came to this room*' that references those relatable scrambled brain moments that spending too much time on your phone can create.

Lastly I was thinking about the medium of clay and the different states it goes through from creation to final work. I wanted to create pieces that expressed all of these states. The clay starts off fluid and malleable as a squishy clay body, then it then becomes fragile and delicate once it's left to dry before it's fired and then once it's fired it becomes strong and rigid. There's work that spills from shelf to shelf, characterising that fluidity, there's pieces that are stacked and balanced precariously embodying the fragility of unfired clay and finally all the works in their final form are inflexible and strong.



Michelle Le Plastrier



GC Landscape, 2022-2023

Can you walk us through your creative process for bringing these pieces to fruition?

The concepts start out as 2D sketches and I play around with colours and patterns. I really enjoy 80's inspired patterns and it's also a little nod to the decade I was born. For some of the pieces I can go straight from finished sketches straight into making the ceramic version but for others I need to make a small maquette first.

By making a smaller version I can problem solve the assembly of the works a little easier and with a little less risk than going straight to the larger piece. Once the maquette is finished I'll then measure it and decide how much I want to increase the size of the final form and work out what percentage to scale up from there. Some of the works change a little as they're being built. You realise quickly when you've drawn something that defies physics and can't be replicated in a 3D form. The works are all then put through their first firing and then underglazed in all their bright colours and patterns and then I add the last coats of clear glaze and the pieces go in for their final glaze firing.



Cutie, 2023



I can't remember why I came to this room, 2023