

Model 1 – Student guided inquiry

Students are guided in completing a short investigation that includes artmaking and art historical/ critical activities.

Stage 5, Photographic and Digital Media

Students are able to engage with teacher via online platform such as google classroom or teams and seek further clarification or ask advice.

Stage 5

Guiding question: How does contemporary Australian photographer Tamara Dean comment on the world?	
What are your students going to learn? (Objectives)	Describes, identifies, investigates and accounts for the contemporary practice of artist Tamara Dean.
How are they going to learn it? (Resources and Strategies)	<p>Resources:</p> <p>Tamara Dean- http://www.tamaradean.com.au/</p> <p>SMH article- https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/tamara-dean-uses-beauty-to-explore-the-deep-waters-of-climate-change-20190715-p527bv.html</p> <p>Interview- https://thepланthunter.com.au/artdesign/coming-home-art-tamara-dean/</p> <p>Video Interview- https://www.uapcompany.com/news/artist-interview-tamara-dean</p> <p>Strategies</p> <p>In critical and historical studies students will account for the ways that Tamara Dean creates artworks</p>

Guiding question:**How does contemporary Australian photographer Tamara Dean comment on the world?**

that comment on the world, nature and human relationships.

Students will locate and share digital articles and interviews with the artist and add them to an online collaborative resource list about Tamara Dean.

Students will then work in teams to collaboratively create a slideshow outlining the practice of Tamara Dean (using Google slides) or any other suitable online platform. Each student in the group will create a slide using an agency of the artworld- the Conceptual Framework- as the organising structure.

Students respond to conceptual framework questions:

ARTIST	ARTWORK
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where was she born? When? Where does she live and work now?What do her works tell us about her values, experiences, interests, time and place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Describe how materials, techniques, props, location, lighting and composition have been used in one artwork. Refer to specific examples in the artwork.How has Dean explored nature and the human form in this work?
WORLD	AUDIENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has the artist been influenced by events, issues and/or ideas in the world? How are these conveyed in the artwork?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Where can audiences see this artwork? Has it been shown in an exhibition or gallery? Which?How have her works been received by audiences and critics? Has she won any prizes or awards? Which? When?

Target date for completion

When do you plan to complete each task?

How are you going to know that they learned it? (Success

Students are to work both individually and as a group through online-based activities throughout this

Guiding question: How does contemporary Australian photographer Tamara Dean comment on the world?	
criteria)	<p>unit. They will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate in online discussions, collection of responses via the digital platform and in contribution to group research. • Contribute to a shared slideshow or online platform to account for the material and conceptual choices and actions of the artist.
Collecting evidence of student learning (Verification)	Digital documents, slideshows etc. are to submitted using your classroom management online tool such as, Google classroom, Edmodo or Class OneNote.
Differentiation	<p>Students could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate another Australian contemporary photographic artist whose work explores human connections with the natural world such as Leila Jeffries or Christian Thompson. • Make a list of descriptive words to describe the photographic practice of Tamara Dean and use these to inform an extended response to one of her artworks. • Use a conceptual framework scaffold to assist with the analysis of one artwork by Tamara Dean.
Extension/HPGE	<p>Students could:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate a range of contemporary photographic artists whose works make a social and/or political comment. Artists might include Christian Thompson and Anne Zahalka. • Investigate the plants in their own home and/ or garden/ nature strip and document these using any photographic device trying to show a connection between nature and our everyday lives.

Resources:

Tamara Dean- <http://www.tamaradean.com.au/>

SMH article- <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/tamara-dean-uses-beauty-to-explore-the-deep-waters-of-climate-change-20190715-p527bv.html>

Interview- <https://theplanthunter.com.au/artdesign/coming-home-art-tamara-dean/>

Tamara Dean uses beauty to explore the deep waters of climate change

By Jacqui Taffel

July 19, 2019 — 1.14pm

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Tamara Dean was not having a good day. In cold, windy, choppy conditions, she was on a dive boat in the middle of Jervis Bay, trying to direct 21 naked women five metres below her to swim in an intricate formation, while looking at a screen connected to an underwater camera.

Endangered 11B (2019) from the new Endangered exhibition at Martin Browne Contemporary.*CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN*

One of Australia's most acclaimed art photographers, Dean had chosen these usually clear waters for her latest shoot, but today visibility wasn't good. It had taken months to organise, including paying for scuba lessons for her husband, filmmaker Jonnie Leahy, so he could run the camera while she directed from above.

The vision in her head was a powerful shoal of women spiralling upwards, based on a photo she had seen with multitudes of fish swimming in circles, creating a tornado effect.

But it wasn't working. She couldn't see properly. Down below, swimmers were getting kicked in the head. Some had been seasick on the boat. Sharks were lurking - not the dangerous sort, but still. Even worse, a random boat had pulled up to watch and refused to move on. And the camera kept going out of focus.

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Logistically, it was the most challenging and frustrating day of Dean's 20 years working behind a camera. As the boats headed back, she had no idea whether she had captured anything worthwhile. Certainly her tornado vision had been shot out of the water, but she couldn't show her disappointment.

Tamara Dean, pictured with her dog Rosie, at home in Cambewarra. *CREDIT: WOLTER PEETERS*

"I had a very strong feeling I needed to make everyone there feel I was confident because they'd all really worked hard for me that day and put themselves in really uncomfortable, cold, rough seas," she says. "So it's hard to separate whether I was confident or whether I was bluffing confident." She laughs. "I think probably halfway between."

Three months later, she is standing with Warren Macris, who has been producing her exhibition prints for 10 years, in his dimly lit photo lab in Mascot. Together they gaze at a wall of A4 proofs - today is the catalogue deadline for Dean's next show, *Endangered*, at Martin Browne Contemporary in Paddington.

The horrible day on the bay yielded an unexpected bounty.

"Usually I can pinpoint the five best images from each shoot almost immediately, but there were an overwhelming number of striking shots from this one. I had to print out 100 images and lay them out and look at combinations before I could make a decision," Dean says.

It's been a big year for the former *Sydney Morning Herald* photojournalist, who shifted into art photography after having her two children, now aged 12 and 13. This is her 10th solo show in 10 years, and in the past 12 months she has won three major awards: the Meroogal Women's Art Prize, the Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Prize and this year's Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize, as well as appearing in the 2018 Adelaide Biennial, where *Sydney Morning Herald* critic John McDonald said her photos "had never looked better".

New work *Endangered 8* (2019). The photographer is driven by intuition, idealism and tenacity. *CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN/MARTIN BROWNE CONTEMPORARY*

Last month she delivered her first key note address, at the Aperture Australia Photography Conference in Sydney. It was a daunting task but her mother's advice helped her find a starting point: figure out the three words that drive you. She decided they were intuition, idealism and tenacity.

"It took me a whole lot of soul-searching to come up with them, then she tried to change them on me!" Dean says. One word should be intimacy, her mum insisted, but her tenacious daughter stood firm.

Dean's talk mapped her personal journey, including the dispiriting times trudging around galleries seeking representation, the strong forces of her mother and two sisters in her life, and the importance of female mentors.

"Every one of those phone calls which opened up career-changing opportunities for me were from women," she says.

Ebenezer Rock Drop, The Edge (2013).*CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN/MARTIN BROWNE CONTEMPORARY*

Erica Green, 2018 Adelaide Biennial curator and director of the Samstag Museum of Art, was one. She saw how Dean's images resonated with Biennial visitors - young and old, male and female, arty types and people who had never stepped into a gallery before. "That's one of her unique skills. She's got a huge following on Instagram because her images communicate so widely."

The Biennial's support to create a new photographic series, *In Our Nature*, and an experiential installation, was invaluable for Dean.

"It gave me confidence and conviction in the work I was making," she says. "I'd had conviction in the work but I hadn't had confidence and it helped me articulate my practice."

For the *Endangered* show, Dean has grouped her final image choices into diptychs and triptychs to convey the mass of bodies. Some appear up close, luminous and glimmering, others are dimly visible, like ghosts in fog. The familiar - humans in the sea - becomes unfamiliar, mythical creatures suspended in a space that looks at times like a far-off galaxy. Yet they are still unmistakably people like us.

It's hard to believe the creator of this beatific submerged world has an abiding fear of the ocean.

Embrace from the exhibition Instinctual at the Martin Browne Contemporary in 2017.*CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN*

The *Endangered* series began during a weekend on Heron Island last year, where a group of artists, scientists, environmentalists, philanthropists, performers and business people gathered to talk about the state of the Great Barrier Reef and climate change. It was a transformative trip for Dean, filling her with a sense of personal responsibility and purpose. She also had one of the most terrifying experiences of her life. Pushing past her dread of swimming in the sea, she joined a snorkelling group only to

find herself at the back of the pack being dragged out by the tide. When they finally struggled to shore an hour later, she was exhausted and covered in coral cuts. "The weird thing was, I was the only one who found it traumatising, everyone else took it in their stride."

On the last morning on the island, she forced herself back into the water as 16 willing volunteers stripped off for her - she only had half an hour for the underwater shoot before everyone had to catch the boat back.

Her aim was to distil all she had learnt on the island into an image, to capture the joyous freedom felt by humans in nature, as well as our vulnerability, like other creatures on earth, to climate change. With one big difference: "That power and responsibility lie with us."

At a one-night preview late last year at Martin Browne, the images had an electric effect. Some editions ended up selling out and Dean and Browne donated 10 per cent of the proceeds, more than \$10,000, to the Climate Council.

Dean began planning her next shoot for the series in Jervis Bay; this time she was staying out of the water.

Elephant ear (*Alocasia odora*) in autumn from *In Our Nature* (2017)CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN

As a young child, Dean's family had a holiday house on the coast near Jervis Bay at Culburra Beach. One strong memory is her dad pushing her out into the surf in a small boat.

"I was terrified, I was screaming and crying," she says. "And I hated getting dumped. So maybe having that relationship with a rough beach as a little kid made me go, hmm, I don't really like going in the water much."

Growing up on Sydney's North Shore, she was determined to be an artist after leaving school. "My mother was saying, 'She wants to be an artist, what am I going to do?!' And my godmother was saying, 'You just have to support her!'"

Simone Douglas was Dean's first photography teacher at art school. Now associate professor at New York's Parsons School of Design, she recalls her young student's "acute ability to perceive the human psyche through the photographic form" and her innate understanding of landscape and light. "And I always felt she had enormous capacity as a story teller."

I feel like my work enables conversation about serious environmental issues but from a place of beauty, not destruction.

But art school didn't agree with Dean, so she switched to visual communications then spent a transient time living off the beaten track and travelling overseas. She started as a *Sydney Morning Herald* news photographer in 2001. For a shy young woman with next-to-no technical knowledge (she still doesn't know how to use a hand-held light meter, she confesses), each new assignment was a huge test. "I'd go in almost free-falling," she says.

As her abilities increased, she also learnt how to relate to her subjects. "When you have a camera it sets up an inherent power dynamic, so I spent a lot of my time trying to make myself smaller in that dynamic. I think that really helped me to learn to use my sensitivity to make people feel comfortable."

Dean's artistic practice - delving into modern human rituals, urban decay and spiritual connections to nature - has always teetered on a knife's edge between beauty and darkness. Compared to her previous work, the *Endangered* series is lighter and more sensually beautiful, though darkness weighs in the themes behind it.

She is conscious that in the contemporary art world beauty tends to be unfashionable. "But I can't help it, that's what I see in the world and that's what I want to show," she says. "It's funny because my thoughts are actually quite dark. When I talk to my husband, he encourages me to look for the light, so my work is not just a process of bringing beauty in but looking for the light to try and tell the darker stories."

Endangered 10B (2019). *CREDIT: TAMARA DEAN*

Some might question the power of art to affect change, particularly around an issue like climate change, but on Heron Island Dean once more gained confidence in her convictions. One group exercise showed rather than trying to change those with extreme views, it's more useful to focus on people you know.

"Even if you turn them half a dial and then they speak to someone else, it's the power of shifting people just a little bit," she says. "I feel like my work enables conversation about serious environmental issues but from a place of beauty, not destruction."

True to her tenacity, she still hasn't given up on her tornado of fish-women. "I've put it out there, it's something I'd still really like to do," she says. "That vision is still in my head."

***Endangered* will show at Martin Browne Contemporary, Paddington, from July 25 to August 18.**

Coming Home: The art of Tamara Dean

<https://theplanthunter.com.au/artdesign/coming-home-art-tamara-dean/>



15.08.2019

Words by

[Georgina Reid](#)

Images by

[Tamara Dean](#)

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GALLERY

“If I can continue making works that fulfil the idea of being beautiful ways of saying painful things, that’s what I want to keep doing.” Artist [Tamara Dean](#) and I are chatting on the phone about her art practice. I’m at my kitchen table and Tamara is at home in Cambewarra, south of Sydney, with a dog at the door and black cockatoos calling nearby. Beautiful ways of saying painful things. In a way, she tells me, this resolution, this vision, is about coming home to who she’s always been.



Tamara Dean by Daniel Shipp

She started as an unofficial environmental activist, spending her 20s attending protests and dreaming of becoming a photographer for Greenpeace or National Geographic. A decade working as a photographer at the Sydney Morning Herald took her in a different direction, and the “insular focus” of motherhood started her off on her long, increasingly critically successful, walk toward where she’s always been.

“Each series I’ve done has brought me closer to my environmental roots. It took the *Endangered* series last year, going to Heron Island with the Climate Council, for me to remember where I started.” The series speaks directly of her love of the natural world and her deep concern for our planet. “Climate Change is the most pressing issue for humanity and the planet today. I wanted to show the beauty of nature and humanity, in order to show how much we have to lose.”

Endangered depicts humans as mammals in a sensitive ecosystem, vulnerable to the same forces of climate change as every other living creature.”

“All I’m really doing is distilling down the idea that I’ve been working on for a while – trying to make the connection that we humans are a part of nature. And doing that over and over again in different ways,” she says of her work. “There’s nothing more important to me. Unless there’s some crazy, radical shift, and the world suddenly says ‘yes, we’re going to make this all better’, I don’t really know how I can move away from this.” I find myself harbouring a similar sentiment. I do what I do, I write what I write, because I care. And because, perhaps like Tamara, I don’t know that there’s anything else more important for me, or her, to do.



Endangered 3. By Tamara Dean

Wormwood (*Artemesia absinthium*) in spring, 2017. Image by Tamara Dean

I first [interviewed](#) Tamara in 2015. Since then, I’ve watched her work and voice evolve and grow. I’m endlessly impressed by how clearly she articulates the conceptual, environmental and personal underpinnings of her work. She is telling a story, an important one, and it seems people are listening; In the last year alone she’s won three important Australian art prizes – the Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize, the Meroogal Women’s Art Prize, and the Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Prize.

Last year her work, *In Our Nature*, appeared in the 2018 Adelaide Biennial of art. “*In Our Nature* is a symbolic reminder that we are neither separate nor superior to nature,” she told Vogue Italia. “Instead, it acknowledges, we are a part of nature, and that to wreak destruction upon nature is to ultimately wreak destruction upon ourselves.” A site responsive series set in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, Tamara photographed the images over a year, linking the seasonal changes in the gardens with the lives of the people in the photographs. It’s a strikingly beautiful series of work – it’s richness drawing in a broad spectrum of fans – seeding Tamara’s important message in hearts and minds within Australia and abroad.

“I don’t think it’s necessarily fashionable to make beautiful images, but I can’t escape it”, she tells me as we speak about the evolution of her work. “It’s how I look at the world. It’s what I choose to see. It’s also important to me to tap into people’s curiosity. To show an image that is beautiful but that also requires people to look a bit harder to work out what it is about it that makes it so compelling.”



Dusty Miller (*Senecio viravira*), western wild garden, winter, 2017. Image by Tamara Dean



Endangered 8. By Tamara Dean

As the afternoon leans towards dusk, our conversation shuffles towards gardening. A few years back Tamara and her family moved from Turella to a six-acre property at Cambewarra, in the Shoalhaven region of NSW. It was covered in lantana (a noxious weed) when they first moved in and Tamara has been removing it ever since. In the process, she's discovered a dam that was entirely engulfed by the plant and cleared space for native plants to sprout from the soil seedbank – helping the land breathe freely after being smothered for so long. “It’s just like unwrapping a birthday present, but for years.”

Whilst her gardening/bush regeneration endeavours haven’t necessarily changed the course of Tamara’s creative output, they have certainly provided nourishment “I feel like it’s the perfect antidote to the photographic experience. Most of the work I make is out somewhere, it’s not at home. Getting home and clearing a bunch of lantana is insanely therapeutic and immediate.”

Home. It is both near and far. It is Tamara Dean’s lantana covered six acres at the bottom of a mountain, it is my patch next to a river, it is our cities, our countries our planet. Home is a place. Home is a hope. Home is sacred. Tamara’s work reminds us that we *are* home. It’s a truth worth remembering.

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Join The Planthunter editor Georgina Reid in conversation with Tamara Dean on September 8, 2019, as part of the Art and the Garden Sunday morning event series at the Domain Theatre at the Art Gallery of NSW. The Art and the Garden series is presented by our friends at [Garden Life](#).

[TICKETS AND MORE INFO HERE](#)

[Tamara Dean](#) is represented by [Martin Browne Contemporary](#).

Endangered is on exhibition at Martin Browne Contemporary until August 18.



Juniper Glade (Juniperus) in winter. Image by Tamara Dean

AUTHOR

Georgina Reid is a writer and designer, and the founding editor of *The Planthunter*. In addition to editing *The Planthunter*, Georgina contributes to a range of design and culture publications and speaks regularly about her work. Georgina's first book, *The Planthunter: Truth, Beauty, Chaos, and Plants* was released in Australia by Thames and Hudson in 2018, and in the USA by Timber Press in 2019.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Tamara Dean is a photographic and installation artist. She has received numerous awards including the *Olive Cotton Award* and *Sydney Life: Art & About* and has exhibited nationally and internationally. Dean is represented by *Jayne H Baum Gallery* NYC, *Olsen Irwin Gallery*, Sydney (Headshot by Anna Kucera). VIEW TAMARA'S [WEBSITE](#) & [INSTAGRAM](#)