

Kathy Temin

Education Kit

Heide
Museum of
Modern Art
Heide



Kathy Temin Education Kit

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COVER IMAGE:

Kathy Temin

My Monument (White Forest) 2008

Queensland Art Gallery

The Queensland Government's Gallery of Modern Art

Acquisitions Fund Collection, purchased 2009

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

INTRODUCTION

Kathy Temin examines the conceptual and material evolution of this Australian artist's work over the past twenty years. The exhibition brings together a range of works including sculptures, installations, wall-drawings, glass and felt pictures, films, and videos of performance. Throughout her work, Temin engages with ideas of identity, adolescence, memory and displacement, revealing a consistent interest in psychological spaces, situations and phenomena where private and collective memories coincide. Her highly idiosyncratic sculptures embrace a hand-made, do-it-yourself aesthetic, while her seemingly haphazard constructions of MDF and fake fur confront the art-historical legacies of modernism in a sometimes anarchic creative synthesis.

The survey ranges from Temin's influential early works including remakes in synthetic fur of well-known paintings by modernist masters, through to various 'problem' sculptures of the 1990s that draw on the emotional resonance of soft toys; to the 'hard' and 'soft' 'monument' works evoking personal associations and Temin's Jewish heritage; to more recent installation and sculptural works that re-imagine plants and gardens combined with references to interior design. Early works including the anthropomorphic *Problem* (1991) and *Black and Yellow Corner Problem* (1992), will be brought together for this survey, alongside the acclaimed *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991), in which Wittgenstein's celebrated either/or image of a duck/rabbit confronts our perceptual inability to entertain dual concepts and images simultaneously.

Many of Temin's sculpture actively entertain duality, forging an unlikely union of oppositional tendencies. The blurring of human and animal characteristics, for example, is explored in a range of sculptures based on human and/or animal habitats, which also echo the aesthetics (or anti-aesthetics) of museum display or utopian modernist architecture. Temin's interest in architecture and design is furthered in *My House* (2005), a dolls-house scaled sculpture of her 1970s style home in which miniaturised versions of her works are displayed, making her model house also like a museum. The exhibition culminates in the major installation *My Monument (White Forest)* (2009), a white, maze-like garden against a sky blue backdrop, which is also a space for reflection and regeneration inspired by memorial sites visited by Temin in Eastern Europe.

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KEY TERMS

Aesthetics: This term is commonly used to refer to conceptions of what is artistically valid or beautiful, as well as judgments of sentiment and taste. Aesthetics is also a branch of philosophy, which reflects critically on art, culture and nature.

Postmodernism: Art style of the late twentieth century that reacted against modernism. Postmodern art challenges modernist concepts such as originality, history and progress. Humour, irony and appropriation are common features of postmodernist art.

Minimalism: Minimal art or Minimalism is a form of abstract art that developed in the USA in the second half of the 1960s. Minimal artists typically made works using serial arrangements of geometric shapes such as the square and the rectangle. Minimal art was mainly three-dimensional and often large-scale and industrially produced, though the painter Frank Stella was an important minimalist. The other principal artists were Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Sol Le Witt and Richard Serra.

Post-minimalism: Post 1960s art which retains minimalist qualities, but which introduces content, emotion and human elements into the stripped-down, repetitive aesthetic of minimalism. This may be through materials (such as Kathy Temin's fur), colours, textures, shapes, or a visible process of making. Post-Minimal artists use minimalism as a starting point, but declare their difference from its 'pure' approach to form. Examples of artists who work in the post-minimalist style include Rachel Whiteread, Eva Hesse, Kathy Temin and Anish Kapoor.

Anthropomorphism: Attributing human qualities attributed to forms that are not human. Some artworks encourage us to do this. For example, the fur Kathy Temin uses — because of its associations with comfort, childhood or clothing — makes us imagine that her sculptural forms are alive, warm or feeling beings.

Appropriation: To appropriate is to borrow. Appropriation in art is the practice of creating a new work by taking a pre-existing image from another context. This could be from art history, advertising, or a well-known artwork by someone else may be represented as the appropriator's own.

Installation: A three-dimensional artwork in any media, often including the features of the space in which it is shown, which is especially created for a particular gallery, architectural space or outdoor site.

Process Art: Art in which the process of its making is not hidden but remains a prominent aspect of the completed work, so that a part or even the whole of its subject is the making of the work. Process became a widespread preoccupation of artist in the late 1960s and 1970s.

PRE-VISIT DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

- Research Kathy Temin and her work. Choose two artworks created by Temin and discuss and compare each work in terms of their themes, materials and composition.
- Explain the difference between installation art, conceptual art and a sculpture.
- Temin is influenced by modernism. Research and define modernism and postmodernism.
- Temin is inspired by artists Joseph Beuys, Richard Serra and Eve Hesse – all whom employ a style referred to as Process art. Choose two artists and discuss their artworks considering influences from the Process art movement.
- Define and discuss the term popular culture.
- Research Claes Oldenburg's sculptures. Choose a work by Temin and one by Oldenburg and discuss and compare the two.
- Research Pop Art. Choose two Pop Art works and define Pop Art using these works as examples.

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EXPLORING AND RESPONDING

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Kathy Temin
Sideboard Garden 2007
Collection of Lisa and Egil Paulsen
Photograph: Mark Ashkanasy

Artwork analysis: Kathy Temin, *Sideboard Garden* 2007

Shade the Art Elements bar graph relative to Kathy Temin's *Sideboard Garden* 2007

Show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition (1 = Low importance, 10 = High importance).

Art Elements:

1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
	Line	Form	Shape	Colour	Pattern	Scale	Texture	Space

What does the title *Sideboard Garden* (2007) suggest about the artwork?

What materials is this sculpture made from and why do you think Temin has selected these materials?

Kathy Temin's artwork is occasionally referred to as *anthropomorphic*. Define what *anthropomorphic* means referencing *Sideboard Garden* (2007).

Temin has used the colour white in this sculpture. What does white symbolise? Give reasons why she may not have used colour in this sculpture.

Write a detailed description of *Sideboard Garden* (2007) focusing on the subject matter, form and materials.

Describe the method Temin may have used to create this sculpture.

Is this artwork appealing to you? Why? Why not?



Kathy Temin
The Duck-Rabbit Problem 1991
 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased through the Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1998

Artwork analysis: Kathy Temin *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* 1991

Shade the Art Elements bar graph relative to *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991). Show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork’s overall composition (1 = Low importance, 10 = High importance).

Art Elements:

1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
	Line	Form	Shape	Colour	Pattern	Scale	Texture	Space

Artists often choose to focus on one or two art elements in the development of their artworks, what are the two most important elements used by Temin in *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991). Why do you think Temin chose to focus on these.

The Duck-Rabbit Problem (1991) is a soft sculptural piece that resembles a fluffy animal, a duck or a rabbit depending on how you look at it. Notice that we cannot see the two animals at the same time. What do you think the artist wants the audience to experience or associate with through this artwork?

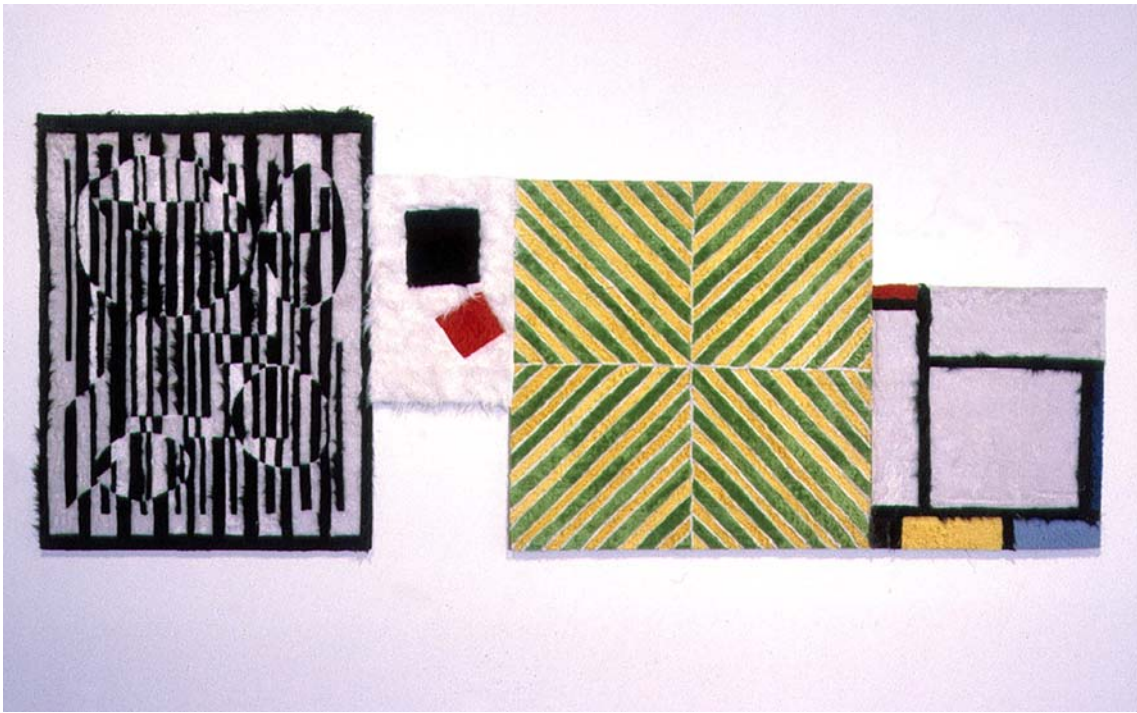
What defines a soft sculpture?

In the boxes provided use adjectives to describe *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991).

Use your list of adjectives to assist you in writing a description of what you see, think and feel when you observe this work.

Fake fur is a material often used by Temin in her artworks to suggest or reference other things, situations or emotions. Write a description of what it means to you in her work titled *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991). You may also like to refer to other furry artworks created by Temin.

Research the origins of the *Duck Rabbit Problem*, referencing E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, Princeton University Press, 1960. Why do you think Kathy Temin was interested in this image? What original image does the title refer to?



Kathy Temin
Repenting for my Sins 1990
 Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Artwork analysis: Kathy Temin *Repenting for my Sins* 1990

What formal elements does Temin concentrate on in *Repenting for my Sins* (1990)? (Colour, line, shape, tone, form, texture, scale)

List the shapes, colours and materials used in Kathy Temin, *Repenting for my Sins* (1990)

Shapes	Colours	Materials

Write a description of the artwork *Repenting for my sins* (1990) based on your words written in the table above.

Describe the materials and techniques Temin would have used to create *Repenting for my sins* (1990). Think about the steps she would have taken to create this artwork. Does this differ to the method used to create her sculpture *Sideboard Garden* (2007). If so, how?

What is the focal point of *Repenting for my sins* (1990)? How does Temin direct your attention to different parts of the composition of this artwork? Do the shapes and compositions remind you of anything you have seen before?

In the creation of the artwork *Repenting for my sins* (1990). Kathy Temin recreates four abstract paintings by Victor Vasarely, Kasimir Malevich, Frank Stella and Piet Mondrian. Why do you think she has used fake fur in her version of these artist's paintings? Choose two of these artists and write about the art movements they were associated with.

Temin uses non-traditional materials to construct her two-dimensional artwork *Repenting for my sins* (1990). This work hangs on the wall, but would you describe it as a painting? Is there a limit to the media that can be classified as painting materials? Give reasons for your answers.



Kathy Temin
Bill Problem 1994
Ararat Art Gallery
Courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Artwork analysis: Kathy Temin, *Bill Problem* (1994)

Shade the Art Elements bar graph relative to Kathy Temin, *Bill Problem* (1994).

Show the individual importance of each of the art elements in the artwork's overall composition (1 = Low importance, 10 = High importance).

Art Elements:

1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
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8								
9								
10								
	Line	Form	Shape	Colour	Pattern	Scale	Texture	Space

Describe the materials Temin has used to create this work. How do they differ from the ones used to create *Sideboard Garden* (2007).

Do you think this title is appropriate for this sculpture? Why? Why not?

Temin uses the word 'problem' in the titles of many of her artworks: *Black and Yellow Corner Problem* (1992), *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991), *Bill Problem* (1994), *White Problem* (1992). Why do you think she uses this word? Does it mean the same or different things in each of the sculptures?

Consider the shapes and forms used in the sculpture *Bill Problem* (1994). What do they remind you of? What feelings or ideas do you think the artist is trying to evoke through this work?

What is the most striking or interesting aspect of the artwork titled *Bill Problem* (1994). Why?

Compare and contrast *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991) and *Bill Problem* (1994) in terms of their use of media, subject matter, shapes, colour, meaning and placement within a gallery space. State their similarities and differences.

Media:

Subject Matter:

Shape:

Colour:

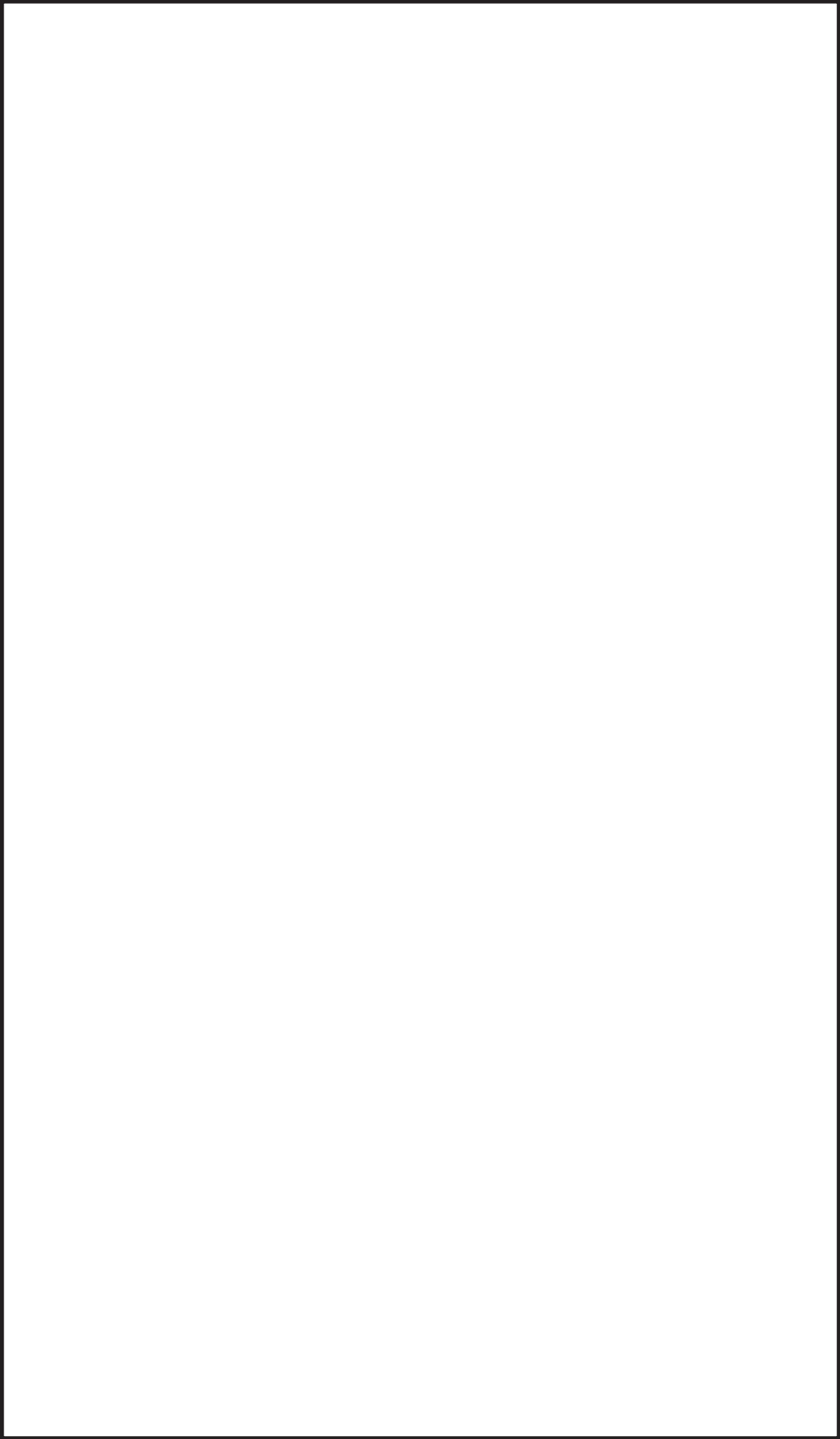
Placement:

Composition:

Meaning:

Use your list to assist you in writing a description of what you see, think and feel when you observe these works.

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GALLERY VISIT ACTIVITIES

Choose an artwork from the exhibition and make a sketch of it in the box opposite.

Fill in the following details:

Artist: _____

Title: _____ Date: _____

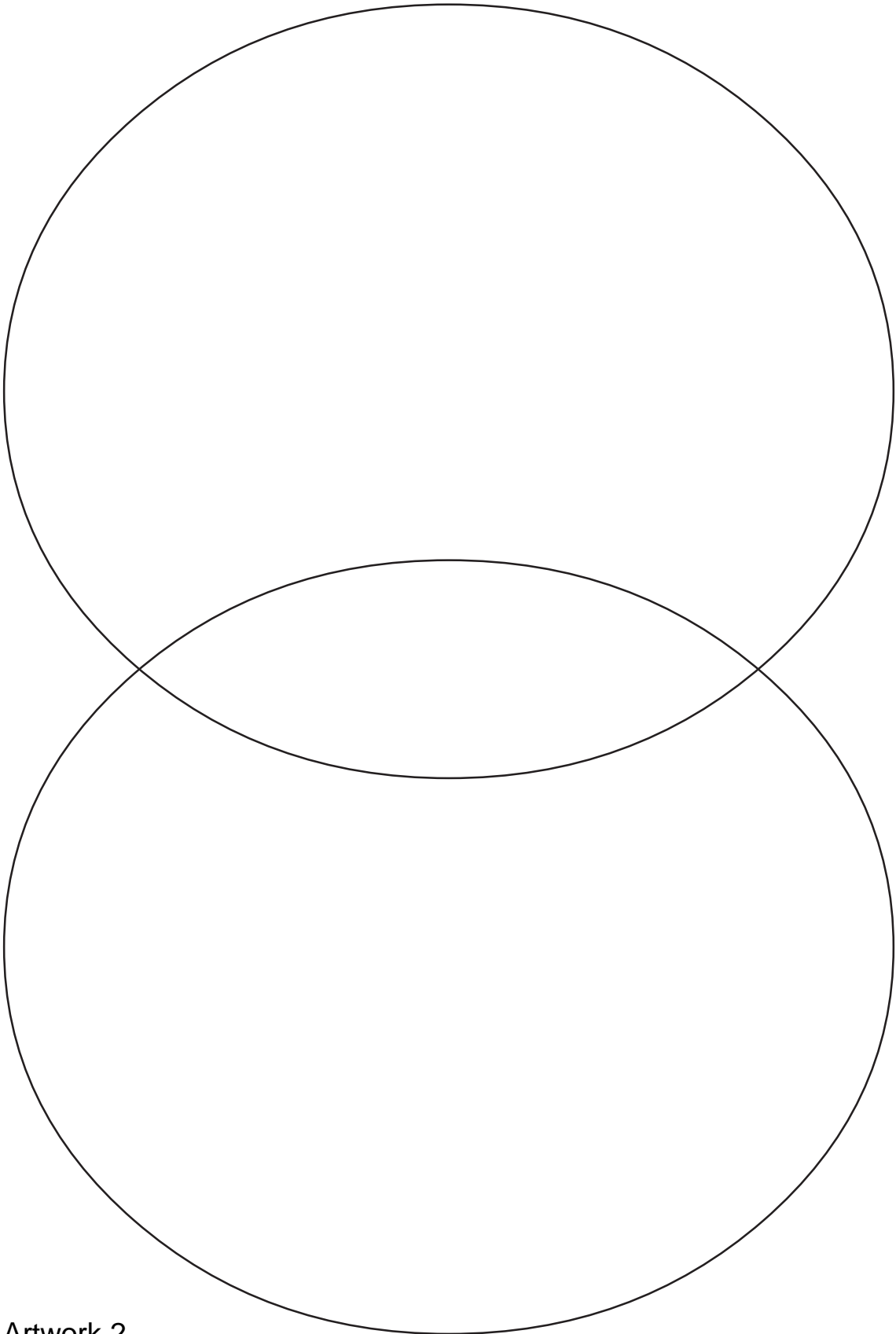
Medium: (List all the materials the artist has used to create the work)

Complete a PMI chart for your chosen artwork:

Plus (Positive aspects of the artwork)	Minus (Negative aspects of the artwork)	Interesting (What makes the object likeable)

Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the artworks you have chosen.

Artwork1



Artwork 2

ARTWORK	
	Title: Date: Medium: Dimensions:
Visual Analysis	
Style	
Technique	
Meanings and Messages	

FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS

- Interpret Kathy Temin's sculptural work *My Monument: White Forest* 2008 using the framework of either Psychoanalysis or Symbolism.
- Write an analysis of a Kathy Temin work using the formal interpretation framework.
- Temin and Pop artist Claes Oldenburg both explore the effects of 'inverting the scale or materiality of ordinary objects, for example by making a small object big or a hard object soft.' Research the work of Kathy Temin and choose two or three artworks to compare with those of Pop artist Claes Oldenburg.
- By referencing Temin's artwork *Repenting for my sins* (1990), explore the significance of abstract and minimal art and artists Malevich, Mondrian, Vasarely and Stella as an influence in her work.
- Process artist Eve Hesse is significant to Temin for the way in which she used her materials to create artworks. Research the Process art movement and then compare and contrast an artwork of Temin and Hesse and examine their use of technique and materials.
- Choose one of the following artworks and write a formal interpretation of it. Plan your response by completing the table opposite.
 - Kathy Temin, *Sideboard Garden* (2007)
 - Kathy Temin, *The Duck-Rabbit Problem* (1991)
 - Kathy Temin, *Bill Problem* (1994)

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CREATING AND MAKING

Practical art activities based on Kathy Temin

- Observe the art work of Kathy Temin in the exhibition. Study her artistic style through sketching her installations and sculptures. Use these as preliminary sketches to design one final drawing, which you use as the basis to create a sculpture or installation piece.
- Based on a drawing or sketch of a three-dimensional artwork by Kathy Temin created while visiting her exhibition at Heide, construct a sculpture using foam, cardboard, paint and fur, referencing her style.
- Temin explores themes of identity, adolescence, situations, memory and displacement. Explore a social or personal issue that you feel strongly about and create a painting or a series of small paintings either on canvas or on found objects inspired by the questions and emotions it raises.
- Temin is influenced by the art movement Minimalism, particularly artist Donald Judd and Frank Stella. Using a series of geometric shapes, dissect and rearrange the shapes, to create a series of interesting compositions to be used as the basis of a sculptural piece or painting referencing artworks from the Minimalist movement.
- Temin's interest in architecture and design is reflected in her work *My House* (2005), a dolls-house scaled sculpture of her home designed in the 1970's. Create a series of interior or architectural sketches and then compose these drawings as two dimensional works, using non traditional materials such as textured fabrics.
- Temin draws on the emotional element of soft toys. Create a sculpture based on an object that has a hard and smooth surface and recreate this object using opposing materials that are textured and soft.
- Kathy Temin's *My Monument: White Forest* (2008) is a large-scale sculpture environment. Working in a group, collect throwaway objects and rearrange these using paint, glue, scissors and string etc. to create an installation piece for a dedicated space in your school.
- Temin creates sculptures using non-traditional materials and 'a hand-made, do-it-yourself aesthetic'. Collect a margarine container and create a trinket box using fur, fabric, paint, beads.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Compiled by Anna Caione with exhibition introduction by Sue Cramer.

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Kathy Temin

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