



Deborah
Klein



Deborah Klein

- Born 1951, Melbourne
- Grew up in St Kilda.
- 1973 – she moved to London changed Klein's life.
- Over seven and a half years, Klein travelled widely and saw a great deal of extraordinary contemporary and historical art in the flesh.
- Soon after arriving in London she visited Paris for the first time – it was during this trip and the artwork she saw there that spurred her into becoming a fully committed artist.



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- After being back in Melbourne for a year (1982) Klein felt the need for a more formal education.
- Attended the following Universities as a mature age student:
 - Bachelor of Fine Art (Printmaking) at Chisholm Institute of Technology, Melbourne (1982-1984)
 - Graduate Diploma at Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education (1987-1988)
 - Master of Arts (Research) at Monash University, Gippsland Campus (1995-1997)



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- Before becoming an artist Klein worked in offices and gradually drifted to retail.
- “The benefit of both livelihoods was that I didn’t have to take the work home with me. In my own time, I was free to make my artwork.”



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- Immediately after graduating from art school Klein casually worked for several months at David Jones which she referred to as a “mindless job”.
- Rescue came when she was offered a six-month long position at the Print Council of Australia.
- After her six months she was offered a permanent part-time administrative assistant, where she worked for 2 years.
- In contrast Klein referred to the job at PCA as “demanding but also very stimulating.”



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- In the early-mid 1990s she ran occasional linocut classes for beginners at the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne.
- Between 1999-2008 Klein worked as a part-time lecturer in the Printmaking and Drawing Departments at RMIT University.
- Klein loved teaching but left to work as a full-time artist.

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- In 1992 Klein's application for a three-month studio residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris was approved.





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- Klein's family was always encouraging with her passions for art.
- Her mother would take her to the National Gallery of Art, the State Library of Victoria and the Melbourne Museum.
- *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1891) by John Waterhouse was the first artwork she saw.





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- “I must have carried the memory of that work with me from then on because decades later I began the *Myth-entomology* series, which included a flock of winged women.
- “Although my linocuts and paintings were drawn from personal, rather than classical mythology, I’m certain the series had its origin in the Waterhouse painting.”





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- Klein grew up in 1950s and 60s St. Kilda which was as she described “a lonely and isolating experience”.
- St. Kilda was a very different place back then, run down and very seedy.
- St. Kilda related iconography has appeared in Klein's work throughout her working life. Such as the fun fair, beach, pier and art deco buildings.



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- A key turning point was in 1997 when Klein's linocut *The Lair of the Lyrebird* was awarded the Grand Prize, Silk Cut Award for Linocut Printmaking.
- The prize was an all-expenses-paid stay in Amsterdam.
- Klein is a long time admirer of Flemish art, dating back to her high-school years.
- Which is also the home of Rembrandt, one of Klein's first artistic heroes.





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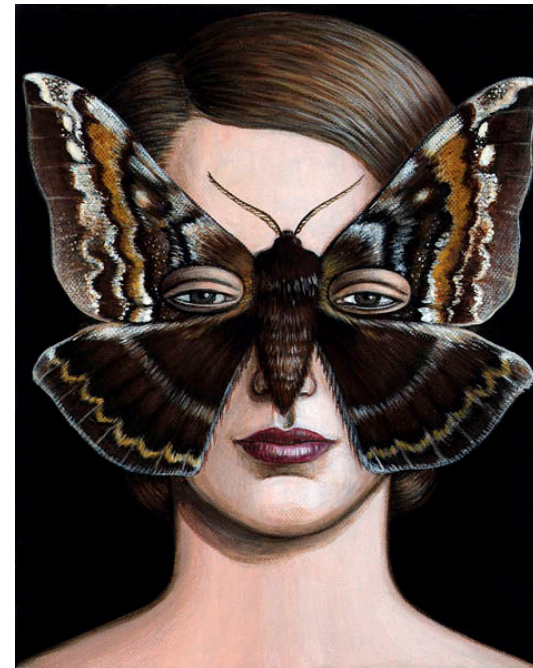
- Throughout her work, Klein references:
 - historical representation of women,
 - social customs/traditions and manners,
 - the science of taxonomy.
- Klein has developed a distinctive personal iconography with which to investigate and challenge representations of femineity.





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The Enchanted Forest





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- “Depicting women as anonymous specimen like creatures, Klein seems to be inviting us to view the decorated heads as a collector might study the outer wings of a pinned butterfly, with little regard for the inner being” – Katherine McDonald 2000
- To extend the metaphor, moths and butterflies are often seen as symbolic of the ephemeral nature of life – beautiful and fragile, fleeting...





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- Swarm and Moth masks, Klein's body of works for *The Enchanted Forest: new gothic storytellers*, draw inspiration from the insect world.
- Klein's artmaking practice is equally divided between drawings, printmaking and painting. "Of these, drawing is by far the most important and essential, as I believe that it underpins all areas of art practice."



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- On top of a small collection of books on moths and butterflies, Klein also visited the Melbourne Museum in order to examine examples of moths and butterflies firsthand.
- The majority of butterflies and moths are from the Indo-Australasian region (with a couple of exceptions).
- Each moth and butterfly has been selected purely on aesthetic reasons – any symbolic meaning comes from the work itself.





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- “I find moths much more fascinating than butterflies, perhaps because we tend to think of them as creatures of the night, which more me add further to their mystique.”
- The classic John Fowls novel, *The Collector*, was not a direct influence, it reinforces some of the ideas in the work, as does *Angels and Insects*, which I re-read in the early stages of the moth mask paintings.





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- The notion of ‘looking over the overlooked’ has always been central to my practice.
- Moths are a perfect metaphor for this. Unfairly considered to be drab in comparison to butterflies, they can be every bit as bright and beautiful.





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- “Despite of their masks – maybe even because of them – I have aimed to portray each of the women as a distinct individual.”
- “I deliberately chose individual moths to match each of the subjects – not as fashion accessories, but as extensions of themselves.”





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- Have a look at Klein's website:
 - <http://www.deborahklein.net/index.htm>
- Have a look at her blog:
 - <http://deborahklein.blogspot.com.au/>

Using the PowerPoint and your own research complete the worksheet provided using the Formal and Personal Frameworks.