

## SECTION 2

# SYLLABUS FOCUS: DA VINCI PROJECT

## Starting with Art

### OVERVIEW

The *Looking and Making* Activities in this section are specifically designed for students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities and include discussion, art-making, role-play and the use of sensory materials.

The *Pre-visit* and *Post-visit* activities, aim to provide students with pre-exhibition familiarity and post-exhibition reinforcement to support understandings of, and engagements with the artworks. In the exhibition activities aim to link classroom investigations to the original art objects within the exhibition.

This concrete and sensory approach to the looking at and the making of artworks, can offer something to students of all ages and abilities and as such teachers of all students may find relevant ideas in these activities.

## Hot Art (Higher order thinking skills)

### OVERVIEW

The *Investigation and Discussion* Activities are specifically designed for Stage 3 and Stage 4 gifted and talented students to encourage them to investigate the exhibition, to discuss its content and to produce their own responses based on their explorations.

Three artworks from the exhibition have been focussed on to highlight key themes and ideas and are also linked to artworks from the Gallery's Asian permanent collection to further long term study.

The *Pre-visit* activities aim to provide students with a familiarity and understanding of the art works, which will also enhance their exhibition experience. Post-visit activities will enable students to synthesise their knowledge, as well as reinforce the experience of the exhibition and their understandings of it. *In the exhibition* activities aim to link classroom investigations to the original objects of art within the exhibition.

# Da Vinci Project



**Vajravarahi** 1400s  
TIBET  
gilt bronze, 35 cm  
The Berti Aschmann Foundation of  
Tibetan Art at the Museum Rietberg Zurich  
BUDDHIST  
[A larger version of this art work is available  
in the Stage 3-5 Visual Arts Section](#)



**Supplementary Image**  
Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection  
**Narodakini** 1900s  
TIBET  
parcel gilt and inlaid silver bronze;  
86.2 x 66.8 x 26.2 cm  
Gift of J A and H D Sperling 2000  
140.2000  
BUDDHIST  
[Included in the exhibition](#)

# Starting with Art

## Looking and making activities

### PRE-VISIT

- **Look** closely at the sculpture of *Vajravarahi*. Describe what you see. **Notice** her bells, jewellery, anklets and so forth. What sounds would she make as she dances? What kind of music do you think she is dancing to? **Listen** to different kinds of music and move in ways which suit each kind. **Use** paint in vibrant colours such as pink, orange, gold and red to **create** a visual response to the music.

- *Vajravarahi* is a *dancing goddess* and wears many long, flowing scarves which whirl around her as she dances. Try **standing** on one leg and moving your body in the way you think she is moving. **Collect** long flowing scarves and make your own jingly anklets and bracelets using soft wire to string small bells and beads together. **Invent** your own dance and move in a way which makes the scarves flow around you and the bells jingle.

- **Look** at *Narodakini*, another Buddhist goddess who represents selfless wisdom. What is she standing on? These small figures symbolise selfishness. How do you think they are feeling? The word *dakini* means she who travels in the sky, sky dancer or sky walker. Can you **imagine** *Narodakini* travelling in the sky? **Draw** a picture of yourself as a *sky walker* or *sky dancer*.

- **Collect** textural samples and sound making objects to use when you visit the exhibition. Include such things as rocks, fur, knobbly jewellery and bells.

### EXHIBITION VISIT

- **Look** closely at the sculpture of *Vajravarahi*. **Find** her necklace of faces, her large earrings, the small person with a big tummy and the boar's head emerging from the side of her head. Imagine what the surface of this sculpture might feel like. Use your fingers to **explore** samples of different surfaces such as tin, rock, fur etc. Which one is closest to the way this sculpture might feel?

- **Find** the sculpture of *Narodakini*. Describe the similarities and differences between *Narodakini* and *Vajravarahi*. Consider their posture, colour, decorations and what they are standing on.

- **Watch** a performance of Indian dance at the Gallery during the *Goddess: divine energy* exhibition. Details of performance dates are on the website at [artgallery.nsw.gov.au/events/cal/indian\\_dance](http://artgallery.nsw.gov.au/events/cal/indian_dance)

### POST VISIT

- **Make** a colourful swirling dancing costume such as a skirt or cape. Use strips of colourful, shiny fabric and sew them together. **Swirl, twirl** and **spin** around while wearing them. **Film or photograph** each other spinning and dancing

- Many of the goddesses in this exhibition dance to music. **Find out** about the kinds of instruments which are used in India and Tibet such as the sitar, drums, bells, flutes, sarangi and sarod. **Make** your own drum or simple stringed instrument.

- There are many festivals held in India in honour of the goddess. **Host** your own class festival wearing your magnificent *Durga* crowns and jewellery, play music, dance and eat Indian food. **Thread** flowers together to **make** garlands, **cook** Indian sweets to make offerings to the goddess. **Wear** jewellery and **play** musical instruments and eat, dance and celebrate!

# Hot Art

## Investigation and discussion activities

### PRE-VISIT

Paradox – n. statement that seems absurd or self-contradictory, but may be true.

(Collins English gem dictionary.)

- **Create** a cartoon strip goddess. **Draw** the figures of the two Buddha goddesses Vajravarahi and Narodakini. **Look** very carefully at the symbols that adorn the sculptures and **discuss** them with a partner before adding them to your drawing. **Research** the Vajravarahi and Narodakini goddesses and **“write”** the meaning of the symbols onto your drawing.
- **Choose** one of the two goddesses that you have drawn. **Develop** a characterisation for your goddess by giving her a name and writing her a history. What are some of her powers? Where does she live? Who are her friends? **Draw** a new version of your goddess and include contemporary symbols of her powers. **Draw** her home and her friends and photocopy them. Try to **create** a story board showing a sequence of images just like in a comic strip. **Cut out** the photocopies to help you save time. **Colour** in the comic strip and add speech bubbles to tell the story.

### EXHIBITION VISIT

- **Walk** around the exhibition and look at the paintings of the goddesses. **Locate** the work entitled *Five protector goddesses*. The five protectors offer blessings and protection against disease and misfortune offering safety from things such as insects, fire, snakes, storms, demons etc. **Draw** some of the 56 deities that you can see in the painting.
- **Draw** ten different poses of goddesses in the exhibition. Take note of the positions of the arms and legs. **Draw** ten different forms of decorations, colours and patterns from the paintings and sculptures. **Work** in pairs and strike poses that resemble

the positions of the goddesses. Take turns to imitate the goddesses and ask your partner to move you into the correct position. How do you feel? Where is the head positioned? How are the fingers and palms of the hands held? Take turns at being the choreographer or the model.

### POST-VISIT

- The Chinese and Tibetan terms for *dakini* literally mean “she who travels in the sky”; this is sometimes rendered poetically as “sky dancer” or “sky walker”. Their bodies are depicted curved in sinuous dance poses”. From: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darkin>
- **Find** the definitions of the words ‘narrative’ and ‘tableau’. **Write** a description of the definitions. How do these words relate to the images of goddesses in this exhibition?
- **Imagine** that you are a Dakini. **Research** her attributes and choose the red, black, blue or emerald as your persona. **Create** a costume for your goddess and include ornamentation by making some jewellery or using some costume jewellery to adorn yourself.
- In the exhibition you made drawings of the goddesses’ dance poses, use these to choreograph a performance to music. **Tell** a story through gesture, poses and dance moves. **Ask** some students to hold some coloured fabric as a backdrop and take it in turns to perform your dance piece. **Take** photos of each other performing. **Create** an exhibition of the photos by displaying them in a sequence telling a story.

# Da Vinci Project



**Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata** 1500s  
CENTRAL TIBET  
distemper on cloth, 83 x 75.5 cm  
Musée National des Arts Asiatiques Guimet  
BUDDHIST  
[A larger version of this art work is available in the Stage 3-5 Visual Arts Section](#)



**Supplementary Image**

Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection  
**Kalachakra and Vishvamatha** c1300s  
TIBET  
gilt bronze with inset gems, 29.8 cm height  
Purchased with the assistance of the  
Asian Collection Benefactors and VisAsia 2005  
7.2005  
BUDDHIST  
[Included in the exhibition](#)

# Starting with Art

## Looking and making activities

### PRE-VISIT

- The sculpture *Kalachakra and Vishramata* and the *Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata* both come from Tibet. **Find** Tibet on a map of the world. What countries is it close to? Is it close to Australia? **Learn about** the landscape, plants and animals from this area. **Find** pictures of the clothes people wear.
- **Look** at *Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata*. A mandala is a map of the universe according to Buddhist philosophy. **Locate** images of other mandalas and notice their common elements. **Find** the gateways which lead from one level to another on this mandala. **Look closely** at the circles in the corners of each square. **Notice** the patterns. **Use** a compass to draw a circle onto coloured paper. **Make** potato stamp of different shapes. **Print** the shapes within the circle to create patterns. When the paint is dry draw patterns onto each shape.
- A mandala is very symmetrical. **Notice** the way one side of the *Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata* is like a mirror image of the other. Try positioning a flat edged mirror along the central axis of symmetry to demonstrate this.
- **Experiment** with creating some other symmetrical designs. **Fold** a piece of square paper in half, then half again and then into a triangle. Using scissors **cut** out small shapes along the folded edges. Open the paper out and look at the design you have created. **Trace** the edges with your fingers. **Use** this design as a stencil and **print** the pattern onto paper using a sponge or roller to apply paint.
- **Look** at the sculpture *Kalachakra and Vishramata*. How many people can you see? What are they wearing? What do you see that is unusual about them? How do you think they feel about each other?

### EXHIBITION VISIT

- **Look** at *Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata*. Squint your eyes. What do you notice? Find the lines of symmetry. Name the different shapes you can see. Count the circles. Are they all the same size? Find the largest and smallest circles.
- **Look** around the exhibition. Can you see any other mandalas near this one? **Describe** the ways they are similar or different.
- **Find** the sculpture of *Kalachakra and Vishvamata* and look at it from different angles. Try to count the arms and faces you can see. **Describe** the colour, surface and size of this work. **Look** again at *Mandala of Kalachakra and Vishvamata* and **find** pictures of *Kalachakra and Vishramata* or people who look like them in the different circles.

### POST VISIT

- **Go** to the website at <http://www.kempa.com/blog/archives/001051.html> and watch the sequence of photos showing the way a sand mandala is created. Do you think it looks difficult to make? Why do you think the monks wipe away the mandala when they are finished?
- The Tibetan sand mandala was created on the floor by several people working together. **Create** a floor mandala with your class. Using chalk or masking tape, mark a large cross surrounded by a circle onto the floor. **Collect** or **make** coloured cardboard tiles shaped as circles or squares; these may be plain or highly detailed. Take turns to position them along the cross to **create** a symmetrical pattern. Each person can **make** a self portrait on a coloured cardboard square. **Position** these around the edges as a border. **Look** at your mandala and discuss the results with the class.

# Hot Art

## Investigation and discussion activities

### PRE-VISIT

• **Look** carefully at the Mandala and the sculpture of *Kalachakra and Vishvamata*.

• **Read** about Heruka Buddha couples [on page 243 ] in the catalogue. **Write** about the difference between the peaceful Buddha form and the Heruka Buddha couple's attributes.

**Discuss** in small groups and take notes.

• **Write** a poem using your notes about the energetic male/female couple. What words would you use to describe the movement and energy that you can see in the sculpture?

**Try** to capture the essence of the sculpture and describe its golden jewel like qualities.

### EXHIBITION VISIT

• **Work** in groups of three. **Locate** three different mandalas in the *Goddess: divine energy* exhibition. **Look** carefully at the detail in the mandalas and discuss the colours, patterns and symbols that you see. **Draw** a small section of each mandala and write down the colours that are in each part of the section. When you return to school colour them in accordingly. Keep this as a resource for the post visit activity.

• **Find** the sculpture of *Kalachakra and Vishvamata* in the exhibition. **Sketch** this sculpture and show the attributes held by the many hands. **Find** other examples of Kalachakra and Vishvamata in the exhibition. **Choose** a favourite and make a drawing of the work, include yourself in the picture with speech bubbles. If you were the figure in the artwork what would you be saying?

### POST-VISIT

• **Look** carefully at the *Mandala of Chemchok Heruka*. **Find** Kalachakra and Vishvamata the Heruka Buddha couple in the centre of the image. **Research** the term mandala and its symbolism. **Consider** why the couple may appear in the centre of this work. Why do you think humans are in the centre of abstract shapes? Why is there repetition of forms? How is time represented in this work?

• **Look** at the following website to see an animation of a sand mandala being made by Buddhist monks. <http://www.kempa.com/blog/archives/001051.html>

• **Create** your own mandala using a set of symbols that represent elements in your own personal world or concepts of the universe using one of the following methods. What symbols would include? **Design** an original set of unique symbols. Use technology and visual language to create one of the following:

- animated mandala

- montage using photoshop

- Powerpoint without text

- **Make** a mandala using grains and powders such as coffee, spices, flour, sugar

- **Make** a small paper funnel with a tiny nozzle to direct the ingredients into patterns on a table or piece of cardboard. To symbolise impermanence (a central teaching of Buddhism) monks, after spending days or weeks creating the intricate pattern of the mandala, usually place the sand in a body of running water to spread the blessing.

- After completing your food mandala, **design** your own special ritual. You may like to dig a hole in a part of the playground and bury the ingredients which will then dissolve into the earth.

**Record** your experience of making a mandala from initial development to dissolving the work.

# Da Vinci Project



**Durga** c1990s  
INDIA  
poster print, 27.3 x 21 cm  
Portvale Collection  
HINDU  
[A larger version of this art work is available in the Stage 3-5 Visual Arts Section](#)



**Supplementary Image**  
Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection  
Rajasthan/India  
**Durga slaying the buffalo demon (Mahishasuramardini)** early 900s  
sculpture, red sandstone  
140 x 63.5 x 25 cm  
Purchased with funds provided by the  
Art Gallery Society of New South Wales 1999  
163.1999  
HINDU  
[Included in the exhibition](#)

# Starting with Art

## Looking and making activities

### PRE-VISIT

- The exhibition *Goddess: divine energy* is about Buddhist and Hindu Goddesses. A goddess is a powerful female being. **Find out** about different goddesses such as Kali, Parvati, Venus and so on. Do they have animal companions? **Collect** pictures of these goddesses and their animal companions and arrange them in a collage to **display** in class.
- **Look** at *Durga* and read the text *Durga, slayer of the buffalo demon* about this goddess in Section 1 of this education kit. **Retell** this story in your own words. **Observe** the beautiful and ferocious goddess called Durga. How many arms does she have? **Count** them. How many arms do you have? Why do you think she has more arms than you?
- Durga carries an object in each of her hands which tells us something about her. **Look** closely and describe the different objects in her hands. She carries a conch shell, a *chakram* (discus), a *bow and arrow*, a *trident*, a *sword*, a *lotus flower* and a *mace*. **Find out** more about these objects and what they are used for.
- **Make** your own collection of *symbolic* objects. **Think** of an object which represents you and the things you like to do. It could be a paintbrush, a CD, a pencil, a football, a book, a favourite food, a flower etc. **Present** your objects to the class and explain why you chose them. **Make** a self portrait in which you have many arms. **Show** each hand holding a different symbolic object or *attribute* relating to your own qualities.

### EXHIBITION VISIT

- **Find** the stone sculpture *Durga Slaying the Titan Mahisha (Durga Mahishasuramardini)*. How can we tell that it is an image of Durga? Notice the way she is dressed, what she is doing and the expression on her face. **Find** the lion that is attacking

the buffalo's back legs. Why do you think some parts of this sculpture are missing? How is viewing this sculpture in the Gallery different from looking at the picture in your classroom? Does it look different in real life? Explain.

- **Look** at *Durga* and describe the people and animals you can see. **Count** and name the different objects. **Find** the bow, arrow, incense and fruit. **Name** the colours and shapes you can see. **Describe** Durga's face. Is it beautiful? How do you think she is feeling? Does she look calm or angry? Is this strange for someone who has just been fighting a demon? **Make** the sort of face you would have when demon fighting.

### POST-VISIT

- **Talk** about the exhibition *Goddess: divine energy*. What artwork did you like the most? Why? Do a **drawing** from memory of your favourite artwork.
- **Look** again at *Durga*. **Make** a detailed drawing of the goddess Durga concentrating especially on her face and crown or headdress. **Notice** the patterning and jewels. **Make** your own dazzling crown using cardboard cut to size and shape. **Use** gold paint and glue sequins, glitter and samples of richly coloured fabric to the cardboard to decorate your headpiece. **Wrap** the cardboard shape around your head, adjust it to fit and staple the ends together.

# Hot Art

## Investigation and discussion activities

### PRE-VISIT

- **Look** carefully at the two images of the goddess Durga. Identify 5 similarities and differences. How do they reflect the time in which they were made? **Discuss** the change that has occurred in the materials and interpretation of the goddess over the past thousand years. **Write** down a list of the changes.

- **Consider** creating a contemporary Durga. What symbols would you use that could reflect the new millennium? What materials and techniques would successfully represent the 21st century?

- **Read** the text *Durga, slayer of the buffalo demon* in Section 1 of this education kit, describing the energies and attributes of Durga. **Reflect** on this story and consider the modern Poster Image no 45. Is this image a narrative? Does the image tell a story in the same way that this written text does? **Rewrite** this story as if you were an eyewitness. **Write** in one or more of the following writing styles.

1. Newspaper article
2. Gossip magazine
3. Romantic novel
4. Forensic report
5. Letter to a friend
6. Exhibition panel

### EXHIBITION VISIT

- **Work** in pairs and locate other images of Durga in the *Goddess: divine energy* exhibition. **Find** the artwork *Ambika (Durga) slaying the buffalo demon Mahisha (Mahisasuramardini)* in the exhibition. With a partner, compare to the modern poster image. **Consider** the aesthetic similarities such as colour, form, technique, composition, patterning and motifs, special elements, narrative and dramatic qualities.

- **Choose** a sculpture of the goddess Durga. **Sketch** the image and note the attributes and details that make her unique. **Choose** a different viewpoint and create another drawing. How does creating drawings from different perspectives enhance your understanding of this goddess?

### POST-VISIT

- Using a variety of media and approaches **create** the goddess Durga in a 21st century guise. What challenges would the new millennium goddess face? What would be her attributes? How would she be depicted? Who would be her enemies? What would she wear? What is her musical theme? What transport would she use? **Role-play** her different facial expressions. **Discuss** as a group and incorporate your collective ideas into a powerpoint presentation, dramatic performance or dance piece. **Find** your inspiration from Bollywood movies, animated female heroines and the exhibition itself.

- **Research** the attributes of Durga. How are they depicted in each artwork? Are they common symbols in Hindu art? **Design** a pictogram or chart of the objects and their meanings.

# Messages from the Goddesses

**Dakini**  
goddess of wisdom

“Wisdom of the heart extinguishes ignorance and gives rise to knowledge”

**Durga**  
goddess of strength and protection

“The strength to overcome your concerns lies within you”

**Kali**  
goddess of creation and power

“It is the darkness in life that makes the light so utterly precious”

**Lakshmi**  
goddess of wealth and prosperity

“May success and prosperity be abundant in your life’s journey”

**Rahda**  
goddess of love and devotion

“When we let love in our mind, body and spirit are filled with endless possibilities”

**Tara**  
goddess of universal compassion

“Focus on the love and light that is within everyone”

Produced by Public Programs Department  
© 2006 Art Gallery of New South Wales  
Art Gallery Road, The Domain, Sydney, NSW, Australia  
pp@ag.nsw.gov.au    www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/education