

Self Portrait

Meet the artist

William Robinson is an Australian artist. He was born in Brisbane in 1936. He creates artwork about his life including the places he has lived, his wife Shirley and their children and animals.

Before he became a full-time artist in 1989, he was an art teacher at university and a farmer, with goats, cows, chickens and lots of other animals.

He has won major art prizes and his artworks are shown by galleries all around the world. There is a gallery named in his honour, the William Robinson Gallery, at QUT Gardens Point Campus, which is dedicated to exhibiting his artwork.

This is a self portrait of the artist William (Bill) Robinson with a goose.



William ROBINSON. *Self portrait with goose feathers* 1991, hand-coloured etching. QUT Art Collection. Gift of the Artist under the Cultural Gifts Program, 2002.

HOW BILL MAKES ART

Artists all have different ways of working.

For Bill, he often starts with a sketch that is based on what he observes around him, what he remembers, and what he imagines! A sketch is a rough drawing often done quickly to capture important information or an idea.

He then uses his sketches to create artworks through drawing, painting, sculpting or printmaking.

He wants to create artworks that express not just what something looks like but how it makes him feel.

What this self portrait means to Bill

"It is about escape from the world and just flying with your mind."¹

1. *William Robinson: The transfigured landscape* [Exhibition catalogue]. (2011). Queensland University of Technology in association with Piper Press, p. 32.

Let's look at **ART!**

A self portrait is an artwork that an artist makes of or about themselves. In this artwork, Bill is wearing a bright yellow raincoat and gumboots, and is holding two goose feathers. On his head is a hat made of an animal feed bag. It is a funny looking outfit, made using everyday items he had around him. Why do you think the artist has portrayed himself in this way? Compare this artwork to the self portrait on Page 1. What are the similarities and differences?



William ROBINSON, *Self portrait with goose feathers* 1989, oil on linen.
QUT Art Collection, Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by William Robinson, 2011.

What object in your home could you use as a hat?

Let's make ART!



DRAW

Create your own self portrait! Dress up in an outfit and put an object from your home on your head as your hat. Position yourself in front of a mirror with drawing or painting materials and capture your reflection.

No printer? Not enough space? No worries! You can use any piece of blank paper or a page in your notebook to do this activity.



LOOK

You can draw what you see, what you remember, and what you imagine!

Look at yourself in the mirror. What is your expression? Are you smiling, frowning, pulling a funny face...?



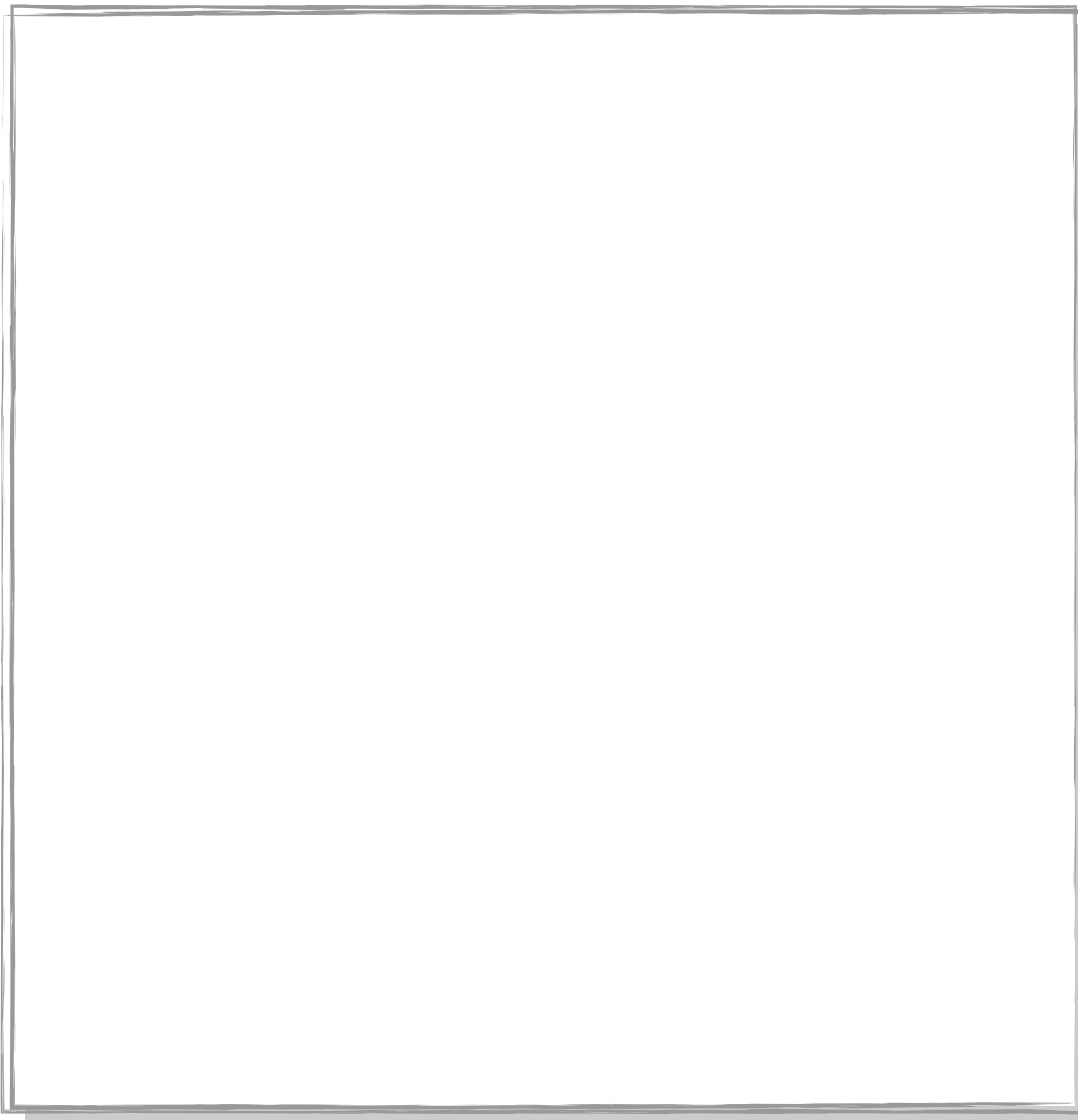
REMEMBER

Where did your hat come from and why did you choose it?



IMAGINE

Imagine where you could be. Bill has created an imaginary background for his artwork to tell a story. Fill in the background – it can be anywhere!



EXTRA IDEAS!

Here are some more self portrait ideas to try:

- Draw your face without taking the pencil off the paper
- Exaggerate one of your features (like your eyes or ears)
- Replace one of your features with something else (e.g. use animal features)
- Use other materials to create a 2D or 3D image of your face (e.g. clay, playdough, old magazines, cardboard, aluminum foil etc.)
- Work in pairs – cover up half the sheet of paper and draw one side of your face only, then cover that up and ask someone else to draw the other side of your face.

#QUTArtAnywhere