

By the Water

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.

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.

Why Bill paints the sea

“In the sea paintings I am always trying to give a feeling of relentless and powerful movement clothed in great beauty.”¹

1. Robinson, W., & Klepac, L. (2001). *William Robinson: paintings 1987-2000*. Roseville, N.S.W: Beagle Press. p.114

This is a self portrait of the artist **William (Bill) Robinson in the water holding two fish.**



Let's look at ART!

For many years, Bill and Shirley lived by the water at Kingscliff and the bayside in Brisbane, where the artist was inspired by the changing moods of the sea and the sky. Water often features in Bill's artworks, whether it is the ocean, a lake, waterfall or puddle! In this vibrant artwork,

we see the edge of the sea and a violet line separating the sand from the Australian bushland. An artwork featuring the sea is called a 'seascape'.

There are lots of details and different colours in this painting – in both the bushland and the ocean. What colours can you see?



William ROBINSON *Evening landscape with pandanus* 2006, oil on canvas.
Private collection, Brisbane.

Look closely at the sea in this artwork and at the different textures and shapes. How would you describe the movement?
Is the water calm or choppy? _____



CREATE

Create an embossing inspired by the sea!

An embossing is an imprint on a surface, which creates raised shapes and lines. Use kitchen aluminium foil. Fold it over so it doesn't rip as easily and draw with a blunt pencil or other object to create your embossing.

What part of the sea inspires you? There are many different textures and shapes found at the seaside, from the ripples on the sand left by the tide, to the splashing against rocks and the crashing of waves. In Bill's artwork there is only a small section of the sea featured, but we can see the movement, power and beauty of the ocean in this work. What feeling do you want to create?

Create what you see, what you remember, and what you imagine!



LOOK

Look at images and videos of the ocean and describe what you see. What details do you notice? Where is it? What is the weather like? Is it day or night? How is the water moving?



REMEMBER

When was the last time you visited the sea? Do you have a favourite beach? Where is it and what do you like about it?



IMAGINE

Imagine that you are standing in the sea shallows, like Bill is in his brown raincoat. What does it feel like? What can you smell, hear, taste and see?

EXTRA IDEAS!

- Try doing your drawing in reverse (back to front), and then flip your drawing over to see it the right way and your embossed image!
- Press a textured object like a shell into your aluminium foil. Put something soft between your table and foil to help create a clearer indent
- Create your seascape by gluing down string or other craft objects. Once it is dry, press the aluminium foil over the textures you have created, and glue it down
- Feel the textures you have created with your fingertips; can you 'see' your artwork through touch?
- Add colour to your artwork through painting. Create your paint by mixing 2 or 3 drops of food colouring with 1 tablespoon of PVA glue and 1 drop of dishwashing liquid to help stop the paint from flaking off. Or use acrylic paint mixed with dishwashing liquid