

Stars

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 perched on a horse surrounded by stars and trees.



William ROBINSON, *Equestrian self portrait* 2004, colour lithograph, printer: Franck Bordas. QUT Art Collection. Gift of the artist under the Cultural Gifts Program, 2008.

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.

Bill's thoughts on our place in the universe

"Everything is constantly moving... You begin to realise that you are in a landscape that is really the crust of the earth. It is air and ground. We're all just spinning through space."¹

1. William Robinson: *The transfigured landscape* [Exhibition catalogue]. (2011). Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology in association with Piper Press, p. 33.

Let's look at **ART!**

In this artwork, the starry night sky seems to merge with land. Are we looking up through a gap in the trees, or is this a reflection in a stream of water? Distorting the perspective so that we are looking up and down at the same time helps show the vastness of the landscape and the sky. Distorting means to twist, warp or change the original shape. What else does this unconventional viewpoint of the landscape make you think about?

Bill is fascinated by the shimmering night sky and you will find stars in many of his artworks. Do you like to look up at the stars? Bill has also drawn himself and Shirley in this artwork along with their cows – can you find them all?



William ROBINSON, *Beechmont landscape, early evening* 1985, coloured pastels.
QUT Art Collection. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by William Robinson, 2009.



CREATE

Create your own starry night sky!

Make a star stamp. Using a pen, draw the shape of a star on a piece of kitchen sponge and cut it out. Use a piece of paper, cardboard or even fabric as your night sky. Dip your sponge into water-based paint (you don't need much!). Find the perfect place for your stars and then – stamp!

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



LOOK

Look up at the night sky, what do you notice? What does the moon look like tonight? Can you see any constellations?



REMEMBER

Do you have any memories of something special you saw in the night sky? Perhaps a shooting star? Looking at the moon through a telescope? Or photos from a space probe of distant planets?



IMAGINE

Bill likes to create a feeling of movement and time passing in many of his artworks. He says “Time isn't something that is just measured on a clock. Time can also be a mind thing – you can be a time traveller with your mind in a painting.”² If you could time travel and explore the stars, where would you go and what would you do?

2. *William Robinson: The transfigured landscape* [Exhibition catalogue]. (2011). Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology in association with Piper Press, p. 33.

EXTRA IDEAS!

- Make a few stars in different shapes and sizes
- Use an old toothbrush and dip it into some slightly watered-down paint, then flick the bristles to create a spray of paint to look like distant stars and clouds
- Make star stamps out of different materials, like cardboard, foam, or a potato, or glue materials like string onto a hard surface
- Create multi-coloured stars by dipping different parts of the stamp into different coloured paint or sprinkle glitter
- Create an entire galaxy by adding other details like planets, suns, moons, comets and shooting stars – what else can you add? Can you tell a story through your starry night scene?

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QUT William Robinson
Gallery

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