

MAXIMUM MADNESS

PROTOTYPES

Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan

LEARNING RESOURCE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

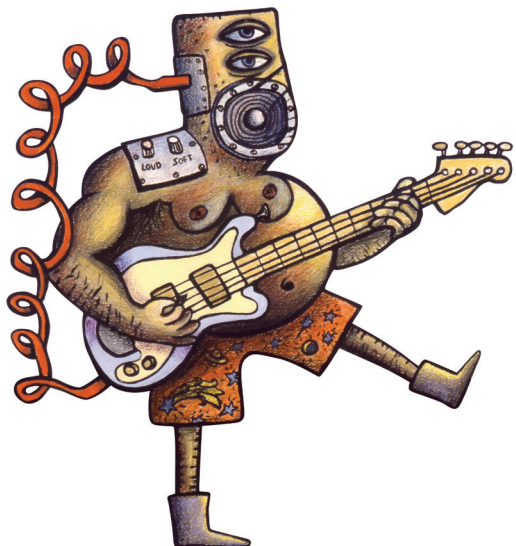
Rockhampton Museum of Art acknowledges the lands of the Darumbal people on which it stands. We recognise their Ancestors, Elders and their ongoing custodianship of Darumbal Country. Their contribution to Rockhampton Museum of Art is invaluable.

CREDIT

This resource was developed by Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, Jonathan McBurnie, Amy Johnston, Easton Dunne and Jacky Chan.

INTRODUCTION

This resource was created for educators, learners and visitors to *MAXIMUM MADNESS: Art Inspired by Mad Max*, a touring exhibition curated by Jonathan McBurnie, Director of Rockhampton Museum of Art. It focuses specifically on the work of Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, *Protopyes* (2024), and can be used before, during or after a visit to the exhibition. The making and responding activities within are intended to be broad and flexible in scope to allow educators to tailor them for use with learners of all ages and levels of experience with contemporary art.



CONTENT WARNING FOR EDUCATORS

The film, *Mad Max*, was released in 1979 and is rated 18+. Educator discretion is advised when discussing the film with learners and accessing related resources.

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

George Miller's genre-defining *Mad Max* film series has grown from a tense, low budget Ozsploitation cult hit into a sprawling post apocalypse action opera, redefining science fiction along the way. A complex and compelling mashup of biker, S/M, gearhead, Queer and beefcake cultures and their associated aesthetics, *Mad Max* has become a cosplay favourite, and has become massively influential in cultural terms, being ripped off, satirised and idolised by sources as varied as *The Simpsons*, Phil Collins, video games and pro wrestling.

With its grab bag aesthetics, subversive politics and lustful, irreverent approach to Australian hoon culture, *Mad Max* has remained a cultural touchstone, and a highly influential convergence of tropes, images and iconoclasm, ideal inspiration for visual artists. Bringing together a range of artists paying homage to their favourite post-apocalyptic (anti)hero, it's time for *Maximum Madness*.

Featuring Isabel & Alfredo Aquilizan, Karike Ashworth, Cigdem Aydemir, Martin Bell, Penny Byrne, Patrick Connor, Rod Coverdale, Alex Cowley, Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, Robert Fielding, Emma Gardner, Shaun Gladwell, Franck Gohier, David Griggs, Rosemary Lee, Reg Mombassa, Adam Norton, Phoebe Paradise, Brian Robinson, David Sawtell, Ian Smith, Karen Stephens, Brendon Tohill and Paul White.

Curated by Jonathan McBurnie.

Cover and next page photo: Bryce Millar, Mad Dog Productions 2024



List of Illustrations

Reg Mombassa b. 1951, Auckland,
Aotearoa New Zealand

Amphead with guitar 1989
acrylic paint on paper (page 2)

A solar powered Phantom Jesus bottle
2016
charcoal and pencil on paper (page 4)

*Robot and muscle horse (both of them
vomiting, with a bird eating some of the
vomit)* 2021
pen and ink wash on paper (page 6)

Australian Jesus with golden motorbike
1995
house enamel and oil paint on canvas
(page 8)

*Artificial General Intelligence - Robot
Smalltalk* 2019
charcoal and coloured pencil on paper
(page 10)

Intoxicated vomiting robot II 2019
charcoal and coloured pencil on paper
(page 12)

Mad Max Overview

This exhibition is inspired by *Mad Max*, an Australian film released in 1979. It is set in a post-apocalyptic dystopian future marked by violence, where people compete for scarce resources to survive amidst societal collapse due to war and environmental destruction. *Mad Max* is named after the main character, Max Rockatansky, an antihero and loner who contends with violent gangs on a quest to avenge the death of his wife and child. The film made waves at the time of its release and has become a cult classic that continues to be a major influence on popular culture.

Artist Biography

Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan are a Filipino-Australian artist couple currently based in Meanjin/Brisbane. Their practice spans over 20 years, across 100 exhibitions in numerous countries around the world. Their artworks are collaborative and collective in nature, often inviting public engagement in contributing to their own pieces, culminating in large-scale sculptural works.

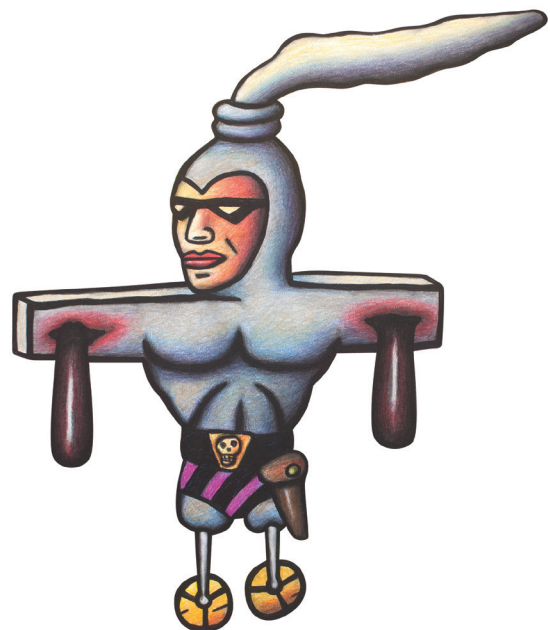
Living between the Philippines and Australia, their work explores themes inspired by their diasporic lifestyle, the meaning of 'home', and the sense of belonging that one often connects with one's own identity. These themes are reflected in their choice of materials associated with moving and travelling, including cardboard boxes, packing tape, and reclaimed materials, which also reference the resourcefulness that comes from living in a developing country.

FROM THE ARTISTS

...Our work is grounded on the idea of engagements. First is the engagement with the site, the community and materials within, and how these inform and create meaning in the work. Second is the engagement with the exhibition brief and how the concept is being generated within this framework. Third is the engagement with the space and how it dictates the form and context of the work, and lastly the engagement with audience, instigating participation in the creation and in the process, proliferating the meaning of the work...

- Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, 2024

Next page photo: Bryce Millar,
Mad Dog Productions 2024





Artist Statement

Isabel and Alfredo Aquilizan, b. 1965-, 1962-, Manila, The Philippines.

Prototypes 2024

cardboard assemblage, dimensions variable

Prototypes was designed in response to the exhibition brief for *MAXIMUM MADNESS: Art inspired by Mad Max*. It takes the form of a wall-mounted installation of assemblage artworks constructed from recycled cardboard. The artworks resemble weapons and devices based on ancient, present day and futuristic war implements.

Prototypes includes a making space where everyone is invited to contribute to an evolving communal display of cardboard weapons. Exhibition visitors imagine what makes a perfect weapon and then create it using recycled cardboard, working as individuals, friends, family, or perhaps strangers. Visitors go beyond just contemplating artworks and become active participants in the making and creation of art in a gallery space.

The installation highlights the idea of co-creation, a habit repeatedly employed in our collaborative art practice. By setting up situations that fuel a collective interaction, the project goes beyond its material form. Peoples' individual creations share the story of their maker, generating the narrative of their object through the creative process. The process of exchange becomes the primary foundation of the artwork.

When presented together, the objects in *Prototypes* connote real or imagined weapons and pieces of equipment that prompt reflection and contemplation.

- **Who and what do these objects serve?**
- **How do they affect our daily lives?**
- **How might they affect our daily lives in the future?**

Next page photo: Bryce Millar, Mad Dog Productions 2024

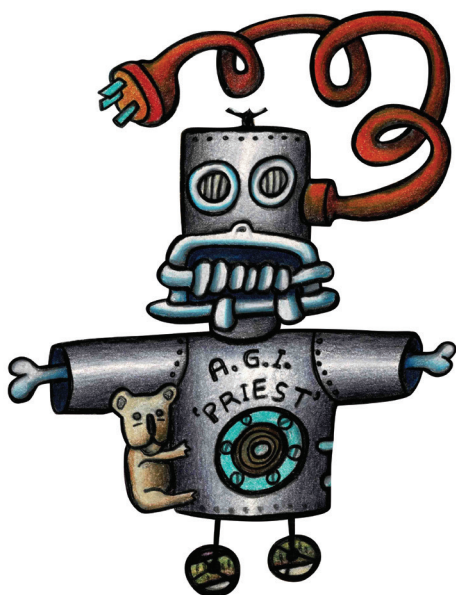




Responding

BEFORE YOUR VISIT

- Find definitions for:
 - weapon
 - prototype
 - post-apocalypse
 - dystopia
 - utopia
- List or draw as many different types of weapons as you can.
- Research how people have used weapons throughout different places, cultures and times, including First Nations weapons, especially for the Country you are on.
- Discuss:
 - why people use weapons
 - what makes a perfect weapon
 - how weapons affect your and other peoples' daily lives
 - whether weapons serve a purpose that is positive, negative or both
- Imagine your ideal world in the future. Are there weapons in it? If there are, what do they look like and what purpose do they serve? If not, why not?



AFTER YOUR VISIT

- Find definitions for:
 - diaspora
 - balikbayan boxes
 - sustainability
 - assemblage artworks
 - installation artworks
- Research other artworks created by the Aquilizans. Notice how the artists use simple everyday materials, such as cardboard, to design installations that are created through audience participation and community collaboration.
- How do the Aquilizans use simple everyday items to communicate complex ideas and meanings in their work?
- List or draw examples of how you use cardboard in your life.
- How does using cardboard to create a weapon change the way we think about weapons?
- How does using cardboard from around our house or school to create a weapon contribute to the story that the weapon tells?
- How does the audience participation and collaboration that underpins the creation of *Prototypes* shape the overall meaning of the work?
- Think about the importance of play, creativity, collaboration, community engagement, and sustainability in *Prototypes*. After participating in *Prototypes*, what have you taken away from the experience about:
 - how you want to shape your future?
 - how we can make this world we live in a better place?

Next page photo: Bryce Millar,
Mad Dog Productions 2024



Making

If you can't visit *Prototypes in MAXIMUM MADNESS: Art Inspired by Mad Max*, you can try this activity at home or school using recycled cardboard that you collect.

Think and work with your hands!

Think about what makes a **perfect weapon**. Use **recycled cardboard** to create a **weapon, war device**, implement or apparatus that you could **protect and defend yourself with**. Work on your own or with others.

MATERIALS AND TOOLS

- recycled cardboard boxes and tubes
- tools for cutting cardboard such as scissors, Makedo Safe-Saw, safety box cutter or box cutter knife with aluminium safety ruler and cutting mat
- unwaxed kraft tape
- hot glue gun and glue sticks
- wooden sticks and skewers

TIPS FROM THE AQUILIZANS

- Build whatever you like - be creative!
- Play and create stories through the object.
- Start with simple shapes like squares, rectangles, triangles and circles to create a structure for your weapon.
- Use these processes to invent new forms: cut and deconstruct; combine and recombine; remake and rethink.
- Think about repeating shapes and forms to create pattern and variety.
- Add different textures to decorate and embellish: smooth, corrugated, add holes and indents, weave strips of cardboard.

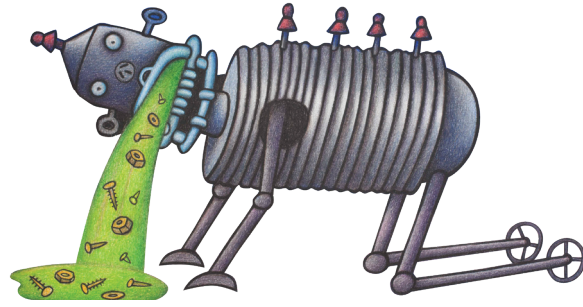
Classes could create a collaborative group installation using everyone's individual artworks and conclude the process by destroying the weapons and recycling them.

Safety first: educator discretion required when selecting tools that are appropriate for the age of learners. Adults might need to break down large boxes into smaller pieces first. Consider personal protective equipment like safety glasses.

Next page photo: Bryce Millar, Mad Dog Productions 2024







Related resources

Exhibition essays

<https://www.rmoa.com.au/Learn/Education-and-Learning/Exhibition-Essays>

Exhibition overview of *MAXIMUM MADNESS: Art Inspired by Mad Max*

<https://www.rmoa.com.au/Collection-Exhibitions/Upcoming/MAXIMUM-MADNESS-Art-Inspired-by-Mad-Max>

Creative Inquiry: Visual Art for Queensland Senior Secondary Students contains a case study on the Aquilizans in Chapter 8 relating to Unit 2: Art as Code

<https://www.cambridge.edu.au/education/titles/Creative-Inquiry-Visual-Art-for-Queensland-Senior-Secondary-Students-print-and-digital/>

Q & A with the Aquilizans (transcript and video), Museum of Brisbane <https://www.museumofbrisbane.com.au/qa-alfredo-isabel-aquilizan/>

Interview with the Aquilizans (video), Art Gallery of NSW <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/watch-listen-read/watch/interview-isabel-and-alfredo-aquilizan/>

Education kit for *In-Habit: A Collaboration of kids, community and cardboard*, Museums and Galleries NSW and Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation

https://mgns.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/In-Habit_Education_Kit.pdf

ABC i-View series, *First Weapons*, with teacher and student PDF resources

<https://www.abc.net.au/education/digibooks/first-weapons/102398250>

ACMI resources relating to *Mad Max* film series (educator discretion advised)

<https://www.acmi.net.au/works/107699--mad-max/>

Makedo Safe-Saw for cutting cardboard safely (ages 5+)

<https://myplayroom.com.au/products/safe-saw>

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