

PAOLA BALLA

Class grouping:

whole class, pairs and four groups

Time:

60–90 minutes

Purpose:

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce students to the context of Indigenous/Italian artist Paola Balla's works. Paola is an artist, curator, speaker, educator and cultural producer. The lesson is also designed to expose students to the impact of colonisation on Indigenous Australians. Paola's work confronts these impacts from a social justice perspective. She responds to and comments on experiences by Indigenous peoples of dispossession, racism, violence and of being part of the Stolen Generations. Students will be encouraged to empathetically identify with a range of social justice issues and to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, political, social and personal contexts that continue to inspire Paola's works.

Important Note: Some of the materials in this resource focus on Indigenous peoples' experiences of physical and sexual violence. This content may be triggering for some students. Please ensure that students are aware of this content prior to using the resource, and provide alternative activities where necessary.

The activities in this resource work well if you are able to access YouTube in the classroom. After watching the initial video (encouraged but not necessary), the class should be divided into four groups with either laptops or exercise books to take notes.

Activities:

- **Watch Paola Balla YouTube clip**
- **Group reading and discussion:**
Bringing Them Home
- **Group viewing: watch *Our Generation* YouTube clip**
- **Class Action Plan: design an educational event for your school**

Preparation and Materials:

- Print copies of the four readings – one set of readings per group
- Internet access: YouTube
- For the final activity, you may like the students to use computers

Activity 1

Whole class

Watch the following video as a class. Read the accompanying article. Have a short discussion about Paola Balla.

- *Paola Balla:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k40cWYFql3k&feature=youtu.be>
- *Melbourne-based Artist Paola Balla Exhibits her Aboriginal-Italian Heritage with Pride:*
<http://ilglobo.com.au/news/32871/melbourne-based-artist-paola-balla-exhibits-her-aboriginal-italian-heritage-with-pride/>

Activity 2

Groups of four

Divide the class into four equal groups. You might like to sit them around tables, or push the tables aside and have them make circles on the floor or with their chairs.

Each group is allocated an excerpt from the 'Bringing Them Home...' handout below. Students take turns reading their excerpt aloud to their group. Together they consider the following questions. As a class, students read their excerpts and discuss the questions:

1. How did the stories make you feel?
2. Why did these people choose to talk about what happened to them?
3. Why did you think these experiences impacted their education, health and ability to establish bonds with people?
4. How do you think these experiences might have impacted the next generation of Indigenous peoples?
5. Why do you think these experiences continue to impact Indigenous peoples today?

Activity 3

Whole class activity: remain in groups

Watch *Our Generation* trailer on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIW6M0hU7jo>

With reference to the video, discuss the following:

- The lack of stability Indigenous people faced, and still continue to face
- The impact of social and cultural separation
- Reference to standards of living
- The impact of physical and cultural separation
- The ongoing impacts of abuse
- The impact of the absence and presence of meaningful bonds
- The importance of education

Activity 4

Whole class activity: remain in groups

Group Action Plan: In your group, design an event for your school that draws attention to both the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous peoples. Make sure your event includes references to equality and social justice. Make sure your event is both educational and engaging. Make sure it addresses:

- The lack of stability Indigenous people faced, and still continue to face
- The impact of social and cultural separation
- Reference to standards of living
- The impact of physical and cultural separation
- The ongoing impacts of abuse
- The impact of the absence and presence of meaningful bonds
- The importance of education

Share each group's plan with the class. Groups may like to stand up to present. As a teacher, you may like to make this an ongoing class project. Choose the most appropriate plan, as a class, and discuss how you can make this event a reality for your school.

