Continuing a tradition that developed during the First World War, the Australian War Memorial has, in the last decade, commissioned many official artists to explore and record the Australian experience of war and peacekeeping around the world.

Perspectives presents the unique insights of two contemporary artists interpreting the same subject: peacekeeping. As official artists commissioned by the Australian War Memorial, Jon Cattapan travelled to Timor-Leste in July 2008 and eX de Medici went to the Solomon Islands in March 2009. Working alongside the Australian Defence Force (ADF), both artists gained insight into the daily activities of Australian peacekeepers. From these experiences, Cattapan and de Medici each created a series of works that reveal a personal vision and artistic style.

Cattapan’s paintings deal with universal themes concerning how people interact and communicate with each other, and challenge our conceptions of space and time. But the artist also makes his works specific to his deployment, interspersing them with depictions of Australian peacekeepers and Timorese people, topographical and night-time landscapes, and the daily activities of the ADF.

De Medici’s series highlights the complexity of peacekeeping operations. She is concerned with showing the day-to-day work of the ADF in the Solomon Islands. However, she has also placed the ADF within the broader context of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). Her works of art are designed to tell the stories of the historical and current events informing RAMSI.
GENERAL FOCUS QUESTION:
Tetanus is a serious disease contracted when specific micro-organisms, hiding on metal or in dirt, enter the body through wounds. Tetanus is infectious and can be fatal. Why has the artist named this painting Tetanus?

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:
Investigate tetanus. What is it? How do you contract this disease? How can you guard against this disease? How has technology helped people not to get tetanus? Can you get access to this technology in all countries? Present your findings to the class.

MATHS: The artist has used a combination of 2D and 3D shapes. Can you identify and outline five shapes? Name and draw these five shapes.

HSIE: Investigate the Solomon Islands. Where are they? What happened in the Solomon Islands during the Second World War? What is the role of Australian peacekeepers in the Solomon Islands today? Are any other countries involved in this mission? Who are they? Design a new camouflage uniform for this mission.

ENGLISH: In the middle of this painting is a young child sitting on the wing of an old Second World War aircraft. Imagine you are this child living in the Solomon Islands. Consider why you are sitting on this wing. What can you see around you? What are you doing playing in this area? What do you enjoy most from playing in this area? Why might this area be dangerous? Why are the Australian peacekeepers in your country? What is their job? Draft a story or poem in response to these questions. Edit your work. Draw an object from this painting; for example, a large tree or an aircraft. Then around, or in the object, draw or write how you feel about it.

VISUAL ART: The artist took ideas and images from approximately 25 photographs to paint this artwork.
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Investigate night vision goggles and how they operate. Design your own goggles using things like green cellophane, cardboard, egg cartons – make sure you limit your peripheral vision with the addition of side barriers. Put your goggles on and describe how your vision has changed. Present your findings to the class.

MATHS: A contour map contains lines drawn by linking up points of equal elevation. In the painting the artist has overlaid his work with contour lines. Select one of the paintings and draw a line through the centre of a set of contour lines to get a cross-section. Draw a grid and mark out vertically in 50-metre intervals: for example, 50 metres, 100 metres, 150 metres, and so on. Plot the changes in elevation on your grid and then join up the dots. Compare elevations with your classmates.

VISUAL ARTS: These three paintings together are called a “triptych” – a set of three similar paintings sitting side by side. Wearing your night vision goggles, investigate three separate scenes in your classroom or home, and draw these scenes. Colour or paint your three artworks, presenting them together, either on cardboard or paper. Give your painting a title.

ENGLISH: Imagine you are an Australian peacekeeper in Timor-Leste. Your mission is to check for people in possession of weapons or acting suspiciously, and to uphold law and order. It is also very important for you to build a friendly relationship with the local people. Timor-Leste people are often shorter than the average Australian soldier, so the Australians may look like giants to the local people. As a peacekeeper, what would you say and do to assure the locals that you are friendly? Express your thoughts by writing a short play which shows you talking to the locals in a friendly and helpful manner.

HSIE: Investigate peacekeeping. What is peacekeeping? How is peacekeeping organised and by whom? Timor-Leste is our closest neighbouring country. Where is it exactly? Why did the ADF send peacekeepers to Timor-Leste? If you were an Australian peacekeeper, what would it be like living in a different country? Present your research to the class.