

DUCK OR RABBIT?

NGVA



Kathy Temin
Duck-rabbit problem, 1991
synthetic fur on composition board, cotton, dacron, polystyrene, wire and enamel paint, (a-c) 52.5 × 187.8 × 124.0 cm (installation) (variable), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of the Rudy Komon Fund, Governor, 1998 © Kathy Temin

About the artwork

This fluffy sculpture is based on an eye trick that interested the psychologist Joseph Jastrow in the late 1800s. Joseph was born in Poland. His father, a Jewish scholar, moved Joseph and his family to America when he was young.

Joseph was interested in the mind and studied the connections between what we see and how we think. He used the duck-rabbit activity to understand the brain. Do you see a rabbit or a duck?

Duck-rabbit problem is located in Gallery 11 and 12 on Level 2 of NGVA.

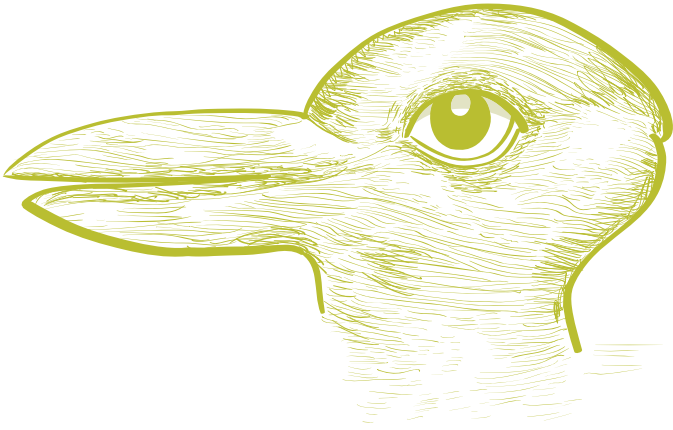
About the artist

Kathy Temin is an artist living and working in Melbourne. She is interested in identity, how we think of ourselves as individuals and what it means to belong to a group. Her Jewish heritage has influenced many of her works. For example, Kathy explores the theme of displacement, a feeling that can occur when people are forced to leave their home or country and start a new life elsewhere. Her art works are often made of acrylic fur and require different skills and materials to produce them. Kathy likes using craft materials to make art. This work celebrates Joseph Jastrow and is from Kathy's 'Problem' series. But what is the 'Problem'? When we look at the artwork could it be that we are facing the problem of how we see the world and how we think? What do you see and what do you think?

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Look closely at these eye tricks and optical illusions and put your mind and eye to the test!



1 Duck or rabbit?



2 Old woman or young woman?



3 Faces or a vase?



4 Is this triangle possible?

- 1 Both: the duck's beak is also the rabbit's ears.
- 2 She is both: the older woman looks down while the younger woman looks away.
- 3 The dark section creates the shape of a vase while the two white spaces appear to be two faces.
- 4 This is the Penrose triangle, which can only exist as a drawing. It is impossible to create as a three-dimensional object.