**How do texts create distinctive images?**

**Using the poem by Douglas Stewart ‘*The Snow-Gum’* and the image *‘The Falling Man’* by Richard Drew, September 11, 2001**

Texts create distinctive images by capturing the responders’ by surprise and allowing them to experience a sense of unexpectedness in the image or images that have been created by the text. In Douglas Stewart’s poem *‘The Snow-Gum’* the first stanza creates an image for the responder of the actual tree in its cold and snowy environment as well as the reflection which is cast upon the snow by the tree. This in itself is probably a common occurrence but the imagery used to place the tree and its reflection in its environment is quite unexpected

*In noon’s blue and the silvery*

*Flowering of light upon snow*

The use of the word blue to create colour imagery is quite evocative but when considering that it is used to describe the ‘noon’, that is the middle of the day, the responder is confronted with an image that forces them to abandon their automatic perceptions of noon as the brightest and hottest part of the day; the unexpectedness of the image reinforces the cold environment and foregrounds the setting that makes the reflection so perfect. The use of the verb ‘flowering’ also draws attention to the snapshot Stewart is capturing. The subtle comparison of the two is unexpected as the reader would not normally connect light and the biological process of blooming. This unexpectedness introduces the reader to the idea of the reflection being a natural miracle and this idea is explored in the rest of the poem. Without the unexpectedness of these visual images the poem would not have attained the sense of distinctiveness that is apparent throughout.

It is the same unexpectedness contained within the photo ‘*The Falling Man’* by Richard Drew taken on September 11, 2001 that makes it distinctive for the responder. This images uses the elements of visual language rather than written language to create its distinctiveness but, like the poem, it still captures a snapshot of a moment in time and allows the responder to be surprised by the unexpectedness of the visual elements used. This photo depicts a man who jumped from the Twin Towers during the September 11 terrorist attacks and it shows him free-falling, upside down with only the uniform architecture of the massive skyscraper behind him. The horrific context of the photo is actually left out of the image and the responder does not see any of the destruction, fire or death that so characterises our historical and cultural understanding of this event. The man himself becomes the focus of the photo as he is centrally placed within the frame, in perfect alignment with the vertical lines of the building and the composition is visually balanced and almost appealing. This is unexpected because the details of the photo tell the responder that it is a snapshot of a moment of destruction and death. This image is distinctive because the sense of peace and harmony creates such a surprising slant or perspective on what is usually depicted as horrific.