

REFLECTIVE REPORT

Emma Landek

During semester one, I engaged fully with the ideas of ephemerality and the state of temporality. These terms had originally stemmed from the programme's first module the 'thought experiment'. The experiment required us to select a random piece of text which would form the initial starting point of an experimental body of work. The title I chose at random was 'Fix the ephemeral'.

Ephemeral has connotations such as transience, unpredictability, and movement. The research I carried out informed a creative and deeper level of conceptual understanding to my work. Through capturing my own 'fleeting moments' I found myself naturally drawn to the in-between state of presence and absence. This experiment enabled a wider trajectory of research, sourcing inspiration from a broader scope of practitioners unrelated specifically to surface pattern.

Beginning the semester with such an unrestricted module emphasised the need to acquire a greater level of reading and research to inform and support outcomes at level 7. I felt the module allowed me to direct and navigate the flow of work independently without any restriction. The work formed on the continuation of experiments, enforcing a consistency and commitment from start to finish. Developing a consistent work ethic early in the semester gave an insight to the standard required for level 7 and for future employment. Initially, I did find the module difficult to grasp as there was no structure or instruction in how to complete it, however it taught me to trust my own judgement and ideas with less hesitation.

The Thought experiment provided a foundation of work that I continued to evolve through Research and innovation. I engaged with the concept of traces by Jacques Derrida. Traces being left behind to indicate an absence of presence, or presence of absence, to further explore the interim of being (Mambrol, 2016). Research and innovation offered a more succinct exploration into the ideas I initiated in the thought experiment. Using the ephemerality of the natural world as a starting point, I investigated ways of articulating the narrative of time being a continuum through creative process.

Through research, I was able to make connections with practitioners such as Linda McCartney and her use of natural sun prints.



Figure 1- '*Hastings pier*' by Linda McCartney (McCartney, 2001)

McCartneys use of brush strokes in the application of the cyanotype solution injects movement into her imagery. Her work heavily influenced my own image making to portray unpredictability and movement.

In addition to Linda McCartney, I was able to make connections with other practitioners.

including Catherine Bertola.



Figure 2- Catherine Bertola 'Anatomy' 2006-8

By redacting into the medium of paper, through pin pricking, Bertola created a series of 20 drawings based on ladies' underwear. Creating image by subjecting absence into a physical form has a distinct connection to the concept of traces I explored by Jacques Derrida, an interplay of presence and absence is the foundation of most of her work. The methodology of her work elevated my understanding into the concepts and meaning of the work I was producing and exploring.

I felt my ability to translate ideas through materiality was successful throughout my research and innovation module. I adopted a much more conscientious approach to process and material properties. Opting for processes such as devore, laser engrave and cyanotype, to create image through redaction, playing on the concept of complete absence or complete presence. I was able to critically analyse my work effectively which allowed me to portray the narrative through visual language.

Areas I feel could have been improved include my level of research, I didn't expand thoroughly enough to allow new innovative ideas. Despite this, the research I did carry out had a significant impact on my practice and thought process although could have been expanded further. I am happy with the work I produced however, addressing the brief in hindsight, I should have narrowed my focus into a specific technique/process and experimented fully to develop new ways of approaching to achieve innovative outcomes.

During semester one, as part of contemporary creative practice I undertook 3 live projects. The first project was a collaborative project between myself, Ellie Jones and Dulani Don Tennakoon. We were tasked to design a street piano based on the Jazz Heritage Wales Archive based in Swansea. The archive was founded by Professor Jen Wilson in 1989. This

project catalysed the first semester. With a tight 2-week time frame, we had to view the archive, develop a response, and execute the design onto the piano.

As a collective we navigated through decision making, communication and time restrictions to fulfil the brief to a high standard, creating a piano design that empowers femininity and encourages the inclusion and diversity of female musicians in the jazz community.



Figure 3

In terms of my professional practice, this project was the first opportunity on the course to work as a collective, which gave an insight into the working environment of industry. Transitioning from working independently to within a team did feel challenging as each of us would have opposing opinions on certain ideas etc. However, fortunately as a team we were able to communicate effectively and reach decisions that ultimately led to a beautifully executed street piano.



Figure 4

In addition to the street piano project, I also worked on a live brief with the UK based brand Mini Moderns. The project was briefed by both Mark and Keith, to create a collection of designs that could be used for wallcoverings and a range of lifestyle and homeware products. The Mini Moderns brand identity epitomizes on the mid-century era with strong connections into graphic design. Their designs are largely inspired by their childhood growing up in the 70s, with strong reference into culture, colour, and stories from that era.



Figure 5- Mark and Keith from Mini Moderns

The greatest challenge to me within this live project was adapting to the brands handwriting. Most of my work to date has been tonal, painterly and hand drawn. I found it very difficult trying to adapt my way of working into a graphic form to suit their brand and fulfil the brief. As a designer, with each live brief I have undertaken during the length of the course, I always aim to embody the brand. I think it's a vital skill to be able to channel my skills and work to different styles, to have a wide range of work within my portfolio.

After feeling very confused and discouraged from the work I was producing, I narrowed my research into relevant practitioners and designers which I felt connected with Mini-Moderns. I explored the work of Lucienne Day and Sidney Gordon.



Figure 6 & 7-
Lucienne Day and
Sidney Gordon



Figure 8

Re-purposing the project and gaining new inspiration re-energised my work. I assessed what was working and what wasn't and was able to streamline the work in the right direction.

My emergent learning outcomes from doing this live brief include a new analytical approach when conducting research, delving deeper into the brands identity through use of colour and story, exploring what inspires them, and being more confident in my ability to work towards challenging briefs. I also learnt more about co-ordinate designs and how useful they are within a collection. I felt I delivered a succinct project with a versatile scope to be used across a range of products, which is something I hadn't previously thought about as I consider my work to be more suited to interiors in comparison to lifestyle products.

The effort I put into this project felt rewarded when I was selected as the winner of the fourth year by Mark and Keith. In addition to being named the winner of the fourth year, Swansea Museum also selected my wallpaper to be used within their exhibition 'Twentieth century Swansea', which is also an amazing opportunity.



Figure 9

The third live project I completed for contemporary creative practice was with the Glynn Vivian art gallery based in Swansea. The aim of the brief was to create 4-6 designs that could be used across a product range within the galleries gift shop. I focused on the ceramic collection within the gallery which was collected over the length of Richard Glynn Vivian's life (1835-1910) (GlynnVivian.co.uk, 2023), before his passing, Vivian donated his collections for the '*the enjoyment of the people of Swansea*' (GlynnVivian.co.uk, 2023).

I have always been fascinated by the beautiful designs glazed over the ceramics within the gallery. Including works by William Billingsley and Thomas Pardoe, pieces from the Glamorgan Pottery and the Cambrian warehouse amongst many others.

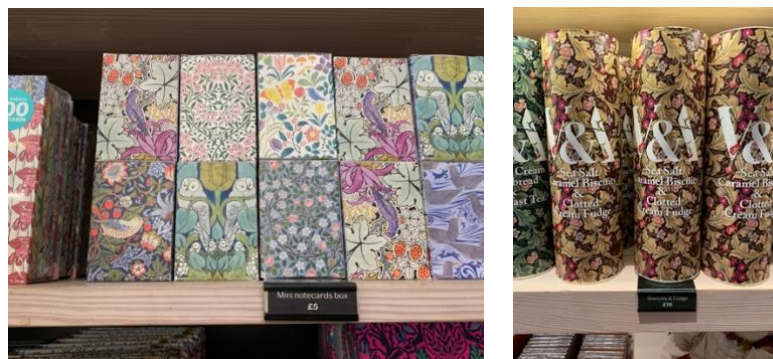


Figures –
10,11 & 12

After visiting the V&A at the beginning of this project, I explored the gift shop to scope potential ideas that could also work within the Glynn Vivian. The V&A gift shop included a range of products including tote bags, dinner trays, tea towels, note books, magnets and much more. I was mostly interested by the modernisation of traditional designs by William Morris, C.F.A Voysey, William Kilburn, William De Morgan, and many others.



Figure 13 & 14- Umbrella with J.H Dearle design for Morris & co, and Dinner tray with C.F.A Voysey design (V&A, 2023).



Figures 15 & 16

The designs felt decorative and contemporary whilst also retaining its connection to the famous works they are based on. Similarly, I aimed to mirror the ceramic collection within the designs in the gift shop, allowing customers to take home a souvenir that reflects the beautiful pottery collected by Richard Glynn Vivian.

Through my own handwriting, I created a series of drawings from the designs featured on the ceramics. Articulating some of the exquisite details within the gallery.



Figure 17- Mixture of ink and fine liner drawings.



PARDOE



PORCELAIN



CAMBRIA



HERITAGE



ARTISTOCRACY



BLUE CHINA

Figure 18- Final collection of designs.

I was able to create a body of drawings that sit beautifully within my portfolio, and develop a collection of designs that echo the craftsmanship of the ceramicware within the Glynn Vivian. This opportunity provided a new avenue within my portfolio, demonstrating my ability to work with archival material and re-work designs and placements into repeats that could be suitable for commercial use.

In hindsight, I feel that contemporary creative practice does deserve a slightly larger contribution within the mark scheme than 20 credits. I recognise the benefits of each project from semester one, thought experiment and research and innovation have catalysed

my thought process and has excelled my use of language and literature engagement, however in terms of life after graduation, I feel CCP holds the greatest value to an employer as it demonstrates my ability to work to briefs and showcase my versatility. Self-promotion is also a vital module that could potentially be drawn across the whole academic year to ensure a consistency on social media platforms. After submitting my work for self-promotion, my activity did slow down as I felt less need to post as frequently as I wasn't being marked on it any longer, although this is something I must take responsibility in doing personally.

I am pleased with the marks I received within the first semester; the step up from third year to fourth year felt very overwhelming especially as 4 modules ran simultaneously from the beginning. Having varying modules with different requirements run alongside each other did give an insight into the pace expected within employment. Looking back, I felt very overwhelmed by the workload, which led to a lack of efficient time management. If I had to complete semester 1 again, I would organise my time better, which in turn would potentially help alleviate the stress and pressure I was feeling at the time.

I see myself as an interior print designer, focusing on wallcoverings and fabrics intended for bed linens, curtains, upholstery, and cushions. Although semester 1 offered a versatile range of briefs to work on, advanced creative practice provided a platform for me to fully engage and understand where I hope to see myself in future, which industry, which market etc.

Despite the step up from third year to fourth year, the envelope I selected within the thought experiment held the answers for the trajectory of the year. 'Fix the ephemeral' has been an idea I have retorted back to within each module since. I want to continue the discussions I initiated in the thought experiment and research and innovation into advanced creative practice.

I am largely inspired by the natural world. The organic rhythms and silhouettes have always been a source of inspiration for me and suit my handwriting. For this final body of work, I wanted to combine my adoration for the natural world with a considered narrative of ephemerality. Aiming to create a collection that is an embodiment of nature through transition, highlighting the continuation of time.

My ability to articulate the story of my work through its aesthetic has developed significantly since the first semester. I am more conscious of design decisions that allow the story and work to be cohesive.

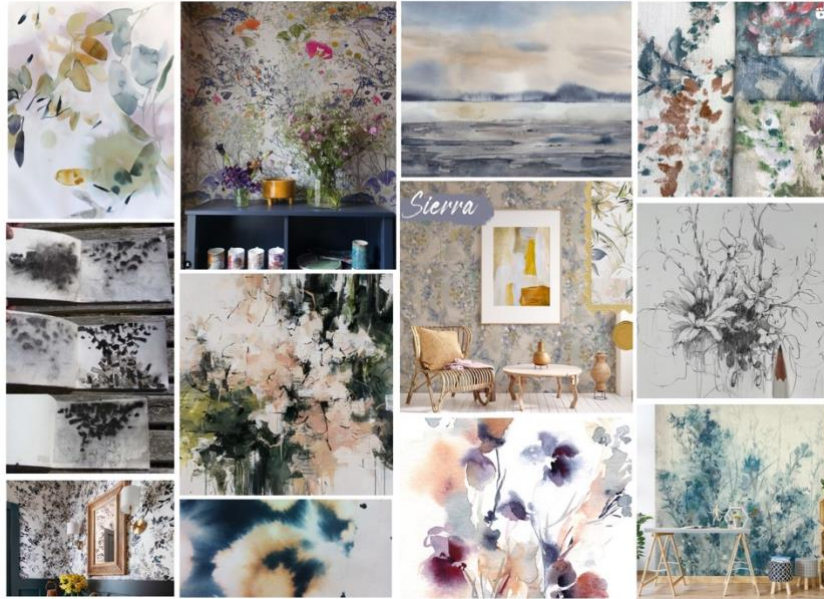


Figure- 19

Communicating ideas of ephemerality and movement through my work, I created this initial mood board as starting point of inspiration to envisage some of the textures, softness, mark-making, and bleeds of colour that allow the story to unfold. Pairing the qualities of some of the artistic mediums such as paint, charcoal, and inks with my key words felt vital in achieving an accurate interpretation of the ephemeral.

Continuing with some of the philosophy and deeper concepts I explored within research and innovation, an interplay between absence and presence forms the idea of traces as suggested by Jacques Derrida. "Traces being the absent part of a signs presence" (Mambrol, 2016). Considering the constant change of nature from one season to the next, the ephemeral moments lay in-between the transitions from complete presence to complete absence.

Embodying the traces of nature, and the in-between state of change, I experimented with printmaking using found foliage.



Figure 20 – Printed foliage.

Using the actual object to create a print, highlights the story of an absent presence, something that once was. The textural marks created by the indentations led me to the work of Mairi Helena.

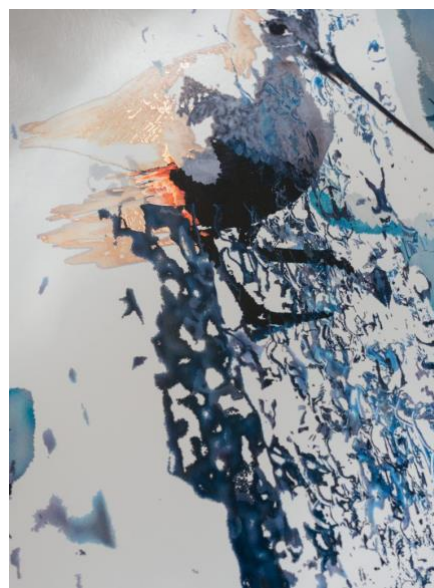
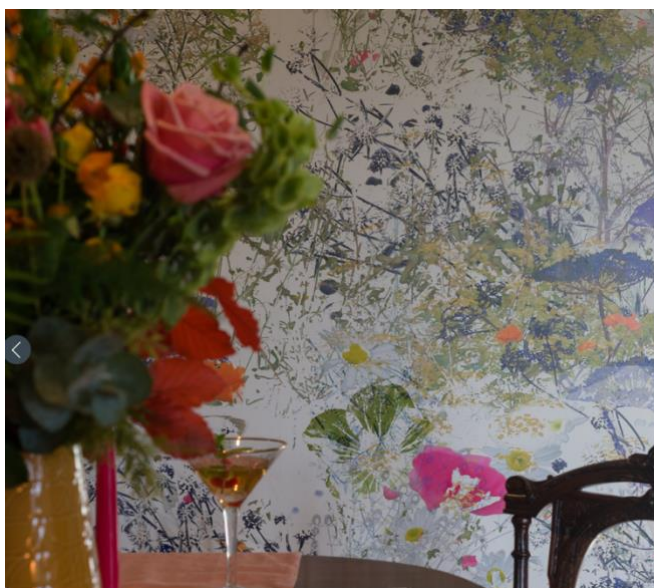


Figure 21– Mairi Helena wallcoverings.

Helena's work is a celebration of her locality within the Scottish countryside (Style&co, 2023), capitalising on escapism through expressive marks and large-scale designs. I admired the richness of colour combined with her abstracted print marks. Using the indentations I created of foliage, I strived towards designs that embodied the conversations of motion and transience. Depicting the true unorganised and scattered behaviour of nature.



Figure 22- design 'Evanescence'

Further exploring the ideas of traces, I created textured cyanotypes inspired by Linda McCartney. Allowing the brush strokes to invade on the imagery, I was able to inject fluidity and movement into the backgrounds of some designs.



Figures 23 & 24-

My aims for semester 2 was to create a collection I would be proud of and would show off my drawing ability. Although the designs I initially created portrayed the conceptual thinking, I felt my drawing ability wasn't being utilised enough.

I re-evaluated some of the research I conducted and streamlined my inspiration to target high-end brands such as Designers Guild, Romo, Villa Nova, Sanderson, and 1838 wallcoverings.



Figure 25

I gathered imagery from each brand focusing on composition, scale, quality of drawing and painting to elevate the standard I was working towards, and hit the sophistication and elegance required for higher end brands.

Initially the imagery of this project was centred around natural foliage and silhouette forms. After conducting more extensive research into the higher end market, I wanted to ensure the designs I created held the same level of exclusivity. I was in particularly drawn to

the work of designers guild, through their large scale florals accompanied with textural and expressive marks.



Figure 26- Aubriet by Designers guild

Keeping the elegance and sophistication of designers guild in mind, I painted large scale roses and peonies using thick layers of paint to achieve a sumptuous painterly quality, to emphasise the grandeur aspect of the collection.



Figures 27 & 28-

I considered the symbolisms of both florals when incorporating them into my work. Both flowers begin to bloom in early spring, representing the re-awakening of our surroundings post winter (Petal Talk, 2023). A time of transition and change.

The methodology of Idris Khan's work relates to the conceptual thinking of transitional time. Khan adopts a multi-layering style to evoke a palimpsest of time. Through layering and erasure Khan plays between the boundaries of absence and presence similarly to Catherine Bertola. Creating pieces that feel fleeting, subjecting the viewer to non-definitive reading (Darbyshire, 2015).

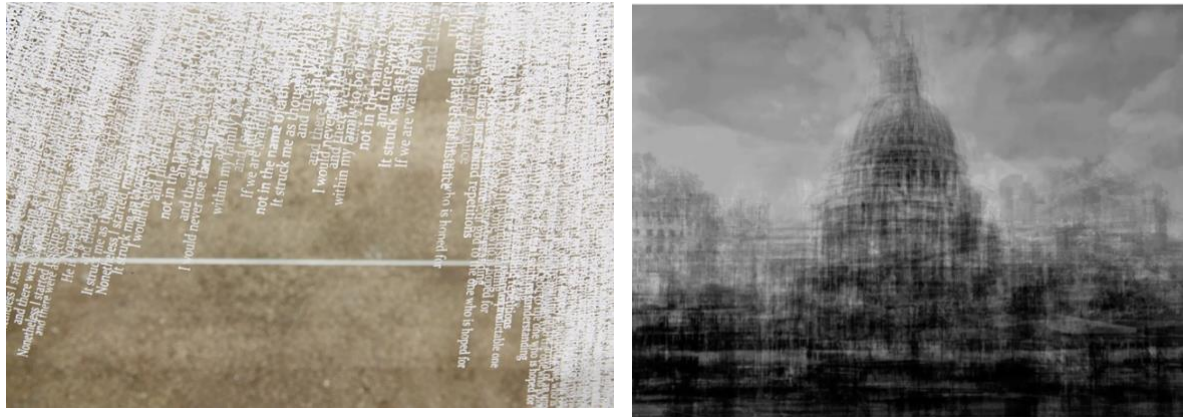


Figure 29 & 30- Idris Khan *ST Pauls London 2012* & *Overture 2015*

Adopting the ideas of erasure and layering, I explored the effect through some of my design work.

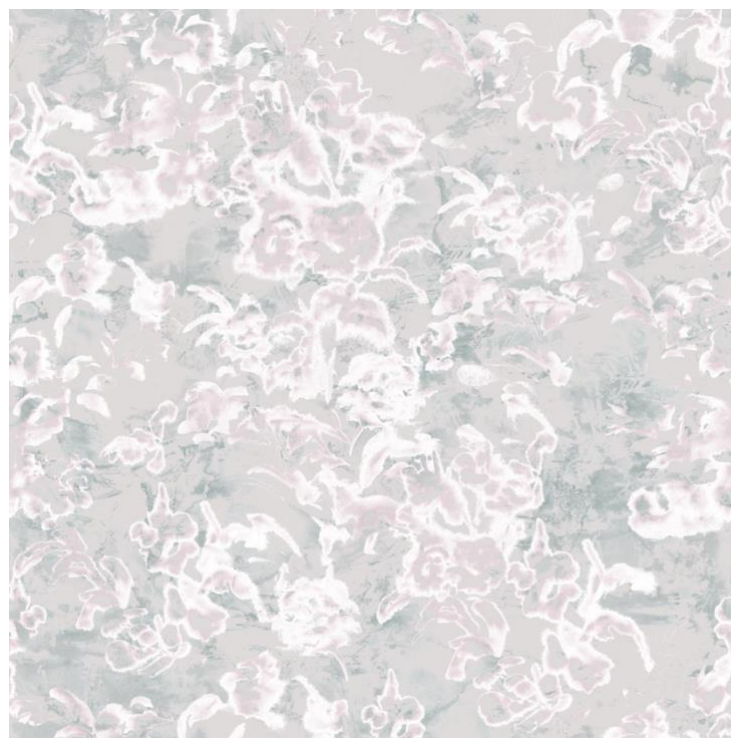


Figure- 31

Combining some of my paintings with textural cyanotype backgrounds, I worked on creating a bleaching effect to implement the ideas of traces, experimenting between negative and positive space whilst retaining a level of sophistication.

I entitled this design 'Tabula' referencing the term Tabula Rasa, which is the notion developed by empiricists to understand the theory that the mind is born as a 'blank slate' and our knowledge is built only through phenomenology and the reaction of the senses

(Britannica, 2023). Highlighting the continuum of time and our own unique phenomenology of ephemeral moments.

Re-evaluating my portfolio from last year, I felt I offered a lot of experimentation of different techniques within the print room e.g., devore, monoprinting, discharge and cross-dyeing. Although I experimented with different processes last year, I found that the breadth of designs were very limited and felt repetitive within my portfolio. This led me to thinking more critically and valuably about what I already have within my portfolio and what I feel is missing that could be fulfilled with this body of work.

After thinking strategically about my portfolio, I wanted to use this opportunity to develop a breadth of designs to showcase my drawing abilities, whilst demonstrating my ability to encapsulate a strong narrative, and work within a high-end market. I found myself more drawn to the design process in comparison to experimenting within workshops such as the print room. Which in turn, played a role when deciding the display for my degree show.

During this time, I was pleased to be invited for an interview for a junior design role with Sanderson Design Group. Since completing the self-promotion module, I have been continually seeking job opportunities through linkedin and applying for a wide range of roles to gain experience applying and to understand the process more.

I used this opportunity to tune and refine some of my work for this project to fit within the Sanderson signature style. Creating simpler co-ordinate designs, using sophisticated visualisations where I could pair different patterns together to demonstrate how the designs could work as a collective, similarly to how they do. I also finessed the language of the design names to demonstrate an awareness of the high-end market.

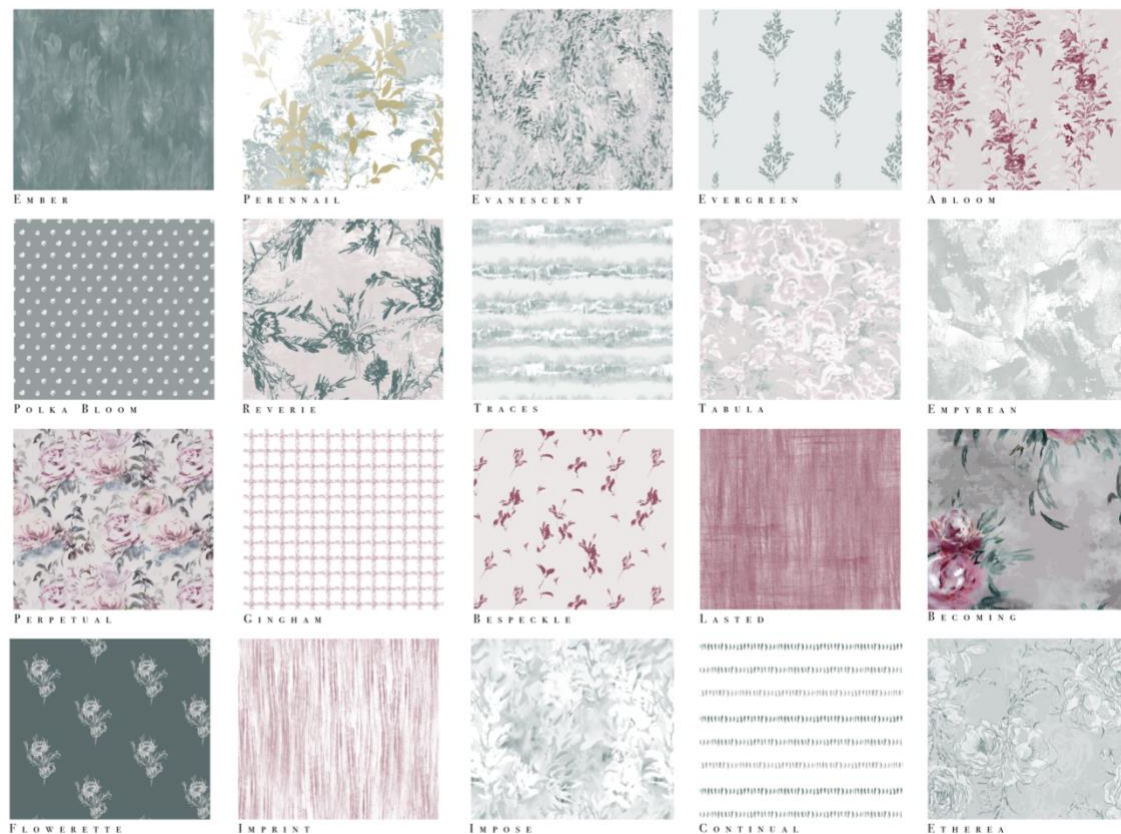


Figure 32-

I think one of my strengths over the course has been my ability to channel the vision of the brands I have been working with. I attempted to target some of their qualities and implement them within my work to demonstrate my awareness of the brand.

Having an opportunity to show and present my work to a high-end brand felt very rewarding and re-stored confidence within myself that I am a contender for these roles. I always thought working with such high-end brands was unattainable for me and having some recognition from a company such as Sanderson, even just an invite to an interview felt very rewarding.

The interview itself went very well. I was interviewed by 2 women who work across a few of the labels within the Sanderson portfolio. They were both complementary of my portfolio and said my CAD renders were very good. They also said my presentation was clean and slick and is something they expect the candidate to be able to do. I am currently awaiting to hear back. If I am not successful within this role, I won't feel too disappointed as It's the first interview I have had and has already given me a great experience in terms of what to expect going forward.

I think the timing of this interview catalysed my motivation and encouraged me to work even harder within my advanced practice and create a portfolio that echoed the high end interior design.

I wanted to reflect this through my degree show too and devised a layout that extruded exclusivity and luxury.



Figure 33-

To demonstrate the breadth of designs I created, I opted for a wallcovering collection only to be displayed. I visualised the wallcoverings to be layered over one another to create a maximalist space that radiates the underlying concepts and my drawing abilities.



Figure 34

This was the final display of my collection within the degree show. The layout slightly changed when playing with the arrangements in person to complement the colour balance and display the work at its best potential. I took the advice of one of the lecturers to include a plinth, to allow the wallpapers to roll from the wall to the floor. I think the plinth worked exceptionally well in adding a heightened sense of splendour and polished finish.

Despite opting for a wallcovering collection only, I did create sample packs of mainly digitally printed fabrics to rest next to my work.



Figure 35-

The samples included potential placement print ideas, varying from linens to velvets which could be used within an interior context, I also included some monoprinted devore samples I worked on and some of the simpler co-ordinate designs. I think these were lovely additions to my show, and proved to be a lovely asset in my interview with Sanderson.

My aims for my advanced practice were to be confident with the work I produced, develop concept and research boards, create a sophisticated body of work, showcase my strengths, and find my place within the industry, where I see myself. Having handing in this body of work and having our degree show, I feel that I have exceeded my expectations.

I am very happy with the work I produced; I have developed much more confidence within my ability. I appreciate the uniqueness of my handwriting and I understand now how important it is as a tool to gain employment, I think it's a skill I have always undervalued.

Looking back, I thoroughly enjoyed the conceptual and philosophical ideas and theories from research and innovation. Although I took the ideas of ephemerality forward into my advanced practice, I feel I lost sight of some of the more advanced and academic readings within my final work which I enjoyed in semester one.

Going forward, I aim to continue exploring practitioners that hold symbolic meanings within their work as I found myself very engaged with the work of Catherine Bertola and Idris Khan, they both sparked a curiosity within me which I failed to realise sooner.

I can also recognise my lack of time efficiency again this term, I feel this led to many things being rushed towards the end of the project including my sketchbook. Despite this, I do feel my time was better spent working on my portfolio due to the interview.

Unfortunately, when submitting CCP, I didn't submit any portfolio boards, which had its consequences when the opportunity for the interview arose as it meant I had to backfill each project within my portfolio. Although it was stressful and time consuming, it was worth it as now I will be finishing uni with an up-to-date portfolio of all the projects from this year and last.

Having distinguished the market and context I would love to work for, in terms of future trajectories I hope to gain opportunities with high end brands such as Romo, Designers guild, Villa Nova and 1838. I have demonstrated my ability to work to different styles, however I would love to have a role within a studio that allows my work to still feel original to my handwriting.

Currently I have 3 potential opportunities within reach such as the junior designer role with Sanderson, which I am awaiting a response for. The Possibility of completing a live brief with Rolls Royce for a chance to do a 13-month internship, and lastly the chance to exhibit at the New Designers 2023 show.

I would be fortunate to receive any one of these opportunities as each one is an extraordinary steppingstone to beginning a career within an industry that I love. I feel the transition from finishing university will feel very daunting and worrying, but ultimately, I need to be perseverant and continue working and applying for roles.

Bibliography

- Britannica. (2023). *Tabula rasa, Philosophy*. Retrieved from Britannica:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/tabula-rasa>
- Darbyshire. (2015). *Idris Khan- Overture- Fabrication* .
- GlynnVivian.co.uk. (2023). *Richard Glynn Vivian*. Retrieved from Glynnvivian.co.uk:
<https://www.glynnvivian.co.uk/collections/richard-glynn-vivian/>
- Mambrol, N. (2016). *Derrida: Trace and play*.
- McCartney, L. (2001). *Sun Prints*. Little, Brown and company.
- Petal Talk. (2023). *meaning of spring*. Retrieved from 1800flowers.com:
<https://www.1800flowers.com/blog/flower-facts/the-meaning-of-spring/#:~:text=Spring%20is%20all%20about%20new,bringing%20everything%20back%20to%20life.>
- Style&co. (2023). *Mairi helena* . Retrieved from Styleandco.co.uk:
<https://styleandco.co.uk/mairi-helena/>
- V&A. (2023). Retrieved from Vam.co.uk: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/shop/homeware/all-homeware/va-cherwell-green-umbrella-148505.html>

Figures

- Figure 1 - Figure 1- '*Hastings pier*' by Linda McCartney (McCartney, 2001)
- Figure 2- Catherine Bertola '*Anatomy*' 2006-8
- Figure 3- Piano design ideas
- Figure 4- Presentation of piano within the jazz conference
- Figure 5- Mark and Keith from Mini Moderns
<https://artandhue.com/mini-moderns-mid-century-modern-living-book/>
- figure 6 & 7 Figure 6 & 7- Lucienne Day and Sidney Gordon
- figure 8- '*In Swansea*' project submission
- figure 9- Mini Moderns Award ceremony
- figures 10,11 &12- ceramic collection within Glynn Vivian
- Figure 13 & 14- Umbrella with J.H Dearle design for Morris & co, and Dinner tray with C.F.A Voysey design (V&A, 2023).
- Figure 15 & 16- V& A gift shop images
- Figure 17- Glynn Vivian submission image.
- Figure 18- Final collection of Glynn Vivian deisgns.
- Figure 19- Advanced practice moodbaord
- Figure 20- Printed foliage
- Figure 21- Mairi Helena <https://www.mairihelena.co.uk>
- Figure 22- Design '*Evanescence*'
- Figure 23 & 24- Cyanotype and design '*perennial*'
- Figure 25- Research board
- Figure 26 – DG Aubriet
- Figure 27 & 28-Floral paintings
- Figure 29 & 30- Idris Khan *ST Pauls London 2012 & Overture 2015*

Figure 31- design 'Tabula'

Figure 32- Advanced practice final collection

Figure 33- degree show layout plan

Figure 34- degree show

Figure 35- sample books