CREATIVE VENTURE
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EVALUATIVE REPORT

CAPTURING A MOMENT

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Executive Summary

Throughout my Mdes studies I have grown into a confident designer maker, every decision I have made has been for/about me. Reflecting on my Mission Gallery collection and The British Medal Society has allowed me to further refine my skills and allowed me to explore new materials and processes, which will stay with me in my future practice. This report will show my own unique way of working, deconstructing/reconstructing mundane objects that are often overlooked and discarded by society. I am interested in the inner working and key components from within the objects; this is where I gather my inspiration from. My aim is to change people's perception to revaluate pieces based on personal connections and nostalgia.

Through researching other artist /designers I have pushed my skill set further and began changing 2D designs into 3D paper maquettes. This evolved into exploration of materials with similar properties to paper. This combined with the juxtaposition of mixing precious and non-precious materials, whilst challenging the notions of value. Throughout my journey I developed my ideas through both drawing and play and have created a collection wearable art forms/contemporary jewellery to be worn on the body. My pieces have been created, mostly by hand but with the addition of digital technologies where speed and accuracy for multiples was needed.

My Creative Venture has created a direction for my future as a self-employed maker. I have realised upon reflection that I am drawn to working on the body and see my work developing further into wearable art forms/performance-based pieces. I want to show my work internationally, in galleries and at the World of WearableArt (WOW) 2022.

Introduction

This report is my reflection on past work and the journey I have been on while producing my final outcome. My work titled “Capturing a moment” has pushed my development and understanding of working with mundane objects. These objects are often overlooked or discarded by society, but I find myself drawn to the inner working and key components within their make-up. Furthermore, I have underpinned my own unique way of working and have made connections with other artist/practitioners who work in a similar manner. While also pushing the limits of working with mundane materials, my final pieces are sculptural wearable pieces that play with scale against the body.

REFLECTION ON PAST WORK

As part of a live brief opportunity, connecting to my Creative Enterprise and Practice, I had the opportunity to present my collection of brooches to Rhian Wyn Stone – Exhibition and Retail Coordinator to the Mission Gallery (See fig. 1). Due to the covid restrictions in place, my presentation had to take place via teams. It was really important to me that I came across professionally and I was confident showing my work, I wanted to make a great first impression. During last summer I took part in a Summer start up school and a main focus of that was to have an elevator pitch ready, since then I have been practicing talking about my work at every opportunity to gain more confidence. I also really needed my PowerPoint to sing. I am constantly developing my digital skill as this will be important for when I graduate, as I will presenting my work to other galleries/businesses. In order to keep my pages clean and succinct, so they are visually pleasing to digest, I limited the number of images on the page and made sure that they are the best quality. These images will act like silent salespersons, they need to draw someone in as if they were touching and feeling the work, I want people to feel that connection. Furthermore, I put an image of myself on the front of my presentation, so that the connection between myself and my work is coherent. This is something I will continue doing in the future as current research and feedback show people like a connection between the maker and the work.

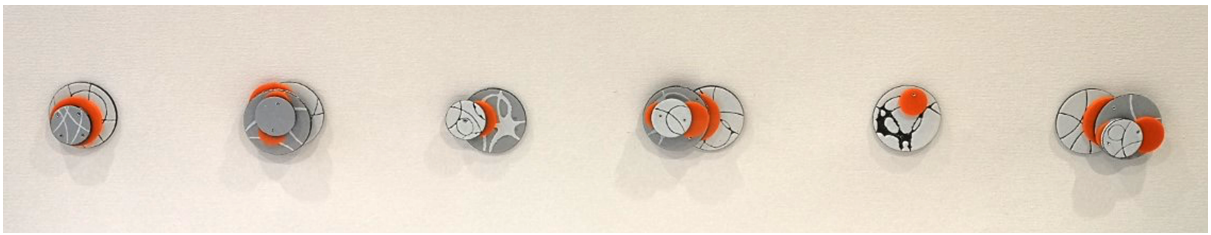


Fig. 1*: Brooch collection*

This was my first contact with a gallery, I wanted to make sure I could take advantage of the situation. I orchestrated my surroundings on the day so that my best work could be clearly

seen in the background, just in case there would be any time to discuss other work or to see if anything caught her eye. I wore a statement necklace from a collection that I had been working on and believed visually it would really pack a punch (See fig. 2). Rhian loved my work and was very keen to see more. Seizing this moment and having gained extra confidence from receiving recognition from Rhian, I went on show my collection of statement necklaces one of which I was wearing. I wore the largest one, but I also showed her a range of sizes that I had ready. I have always pushed the scale within my work as I prefer to make larger statement pieces. Rhian preferred the larger ones, stating they create more of an impact, this is what I wanted to hear, I believe scale will make my work stand out. To have her knowledge and feedback was invaluable.



Fig. 2: *Spiral*

The experience of presenting to the Mission Gallery allowed me to be able to show a part of me that I have not shown before, I was stripped back to reveal myself and my work. I was in my home studio, with all my work surrounding me and I was also wearing it. I have shied away from social media in the past, but by revealing myself and showing this insight into who I am as a designer maker to Rhian (receiving such positive feedback) has given me the

confidence to share more work in the future. I aim to show work on platforms like Instagram and LinkedIn. I have to address this now; I am the face of my brand and I need to form a connection with people.

My second brief was with The British Medal Society, I had to design a medal which would be cast into bronze that represents the theme Black Art Matters/Black Lives Matter. I had not approached a brief with such a sensitive topic before, but I believed with extensive research I could create something with meaning. Throughout the process my learning and conceptual development grew whilst listening to talks from Tamasyn Gambell, Manu Maunganidze as well as my peers. It gave me an insight and better understanding of the issues that different race and cultures experience, which I believed helped me create an amazing outcome.

Being a maker, I am always keen to explore and engage with new materials and processes, so it was such an exciting prospect. When I work with a new material I really try and push the boundaries of what I can achieve with it. I knew my final design would push my capabilities, but I believed it would also give me a greater understanding on what can be achieved by the process/material. I overcame challenges along the way but upon reflection I managed to adapt the process, to better my outcome. This whole project showed my resilience and determination to complete my work within the global pandemic, with limited access to materials and university equipment. My design was very complex and probably over ambitious for a first attempt of this process, but I do think it looks spectacular (See fig. 3/4). It might not be as refined as I want it, but it was a first attempt. The knowledge and experienced I gained from creating this medal are invaluable, without this attempt I would not be able to develop my practice further. Even though I created my form for my medal through wax modelling, I also learnt about what can be achieved by the different consistency in wax (Its pliability by adding Vaseline), undercuts, mould making and casting, these are skill I could further expand upon in future projects.



Fig. 3: *Polished Medal*



Fig. 4: *Antique Artefact Finish*

Overall, I am ecstatic with my finished medal, I had some amazing feedback from Marcy Leavitt Bourn who is one of the secretaries of The British Medal Society and is director to the competition. Marcy commented: “Excellent research and quite an amazing medal; it is complex and interesting to hold and to look at. Nice reference to the idea of waste material. The issue of diversity and conversation is also well thought out” (Bourn, 2021), it was so good to have recognition for my work. It was an incredible opportunity, it showed me that even when I learn new techniques, I do not have to do everything myself. To collaborate with other artist/designers who specialise in their field, opens up so many materials and ideas, which makes the future so exciting.

CREATIVE VENTURE

My creative venture has been solely inspired by my father's camera. I began this journey by drawing/recording as much information as I could, like Lee John Philips who drew a record of his grandfathers shed. I love the way he meticulously recorded each piece; it is like an obsession for him. My process involves extracting then drawing components from the camera before I deconstruct it. I am drawn to the mundane object that is often discarded by society, to reveal their inner workings and key components. "Taking objects apart, including old electronics, product packaging and living plants" (Ashbrook, 2016, p22) gives me a greater understanding how things work, it is this that I am really interested in. Documenting the deconstruction of an object firstly gets me to "consider the entire object, then the parts, and finally, the purpose of the parts" (Ashbrook, 2016, p22), I am really interested in how things work. Derrida further backs this up by stating "to deconstruct something suggests that the act of taking something apart can be the first step toward understanding something anew" (Richards, 2008, p.12). It is a way of me learning, understanding how things were built, you get to see the skill/craftsmanship within older objects or the juxtaposition of mass production in another piece. Whatever I am taking apart I am always in awe of the object you never know what you will uncover. I look at these objects for inspiration on how I can change them and create something new, giving it a new lease of life that can be passed on from generation to generation (Braungart and McDonough, 2009). I love the challenge of taking something that was destined for landfill and creating something that somebody wants in their life, a future heirloom.



Fig. 5: *Todd McLellan*

Photographer Todd McLellan created a series images called “Things Come Apart” which really gives you a feel for the objects (See fig. 5). We surround ourselves with so many commodities we do not really understand the build or materials used in these products. His work involves, “Disassembling and laying out the pieces of each object and then releasing them from the confines of structure to visualise both the complexity and simplicity of modern and classic pieces” (McLellan, 2021). I can engage with his diversity of using old and new objects; they are just so fascinating to compare, the design that goes into each piece is incredible and so precise. I document my deconstruction in a similar way to Todd, but I like to keep things in order as they come apart piece by piece, I am very particular with this. I always believe that if I take apart an item, and I document the order of the pieces, I could reconstruct the item in the future if I wanted to. Furthermore, I have an inner drive for everything to be ordered/precise and I feel I would not achieve the outcomes I do if I did not work like this. This process is the start of every project, it is part of my methodology throughout my design process. I have almost unconsciously been forming this rhythm within my practice which I can now identify upon reflection.



Fig. 6: *Deconstructed Lens*

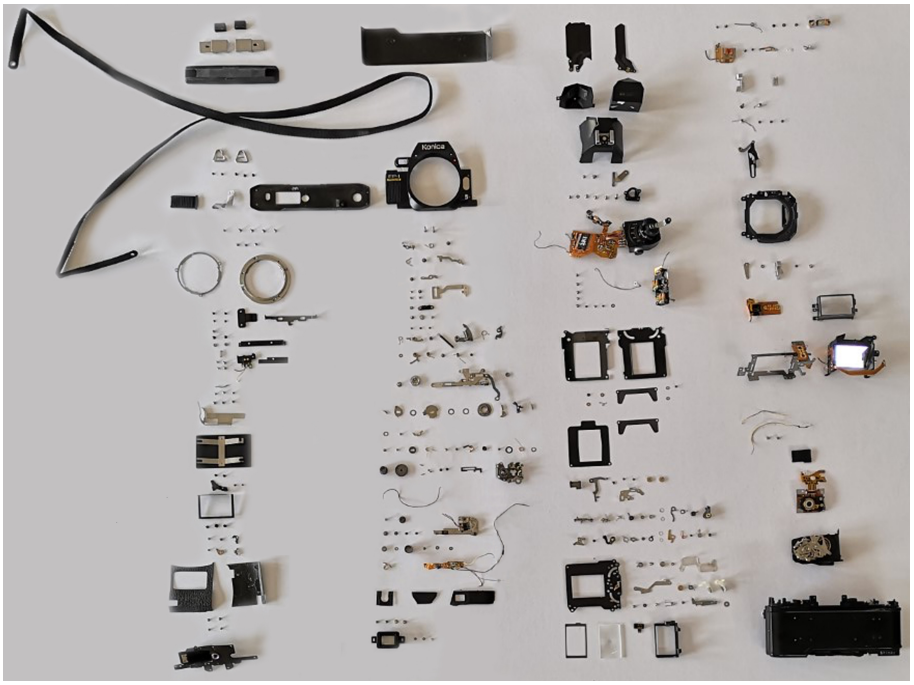


Fig. 7: *Deconstructed Camera*

Todd MacLellan takes objects apart for curiosity to reveal their inner workings and photographs them. Whereas artist/designer Thomas Thwaites deconstructed an electric toaster to find out how to recreate one (See fig. 8). “This is an exercise in reverse engineering, the dark art practiced by military engineers trying to learn enemy secrets and

copyright lawyers attempting to track down patent infringements" (Thwaites, 2011, p.10). Taking apart an object, can just tell you so much about the product and it really is such an incredible process. I would normally catalogue my components based on size, shape, and material it is a more aesthetic approach. Thwaites wanted to address was how can you purchase a toaster for £3.94, when you consider the materials, wages, transportation, and the environmental impact that is caused in producing these items in mass. We all have our own reasons for deconstructing.

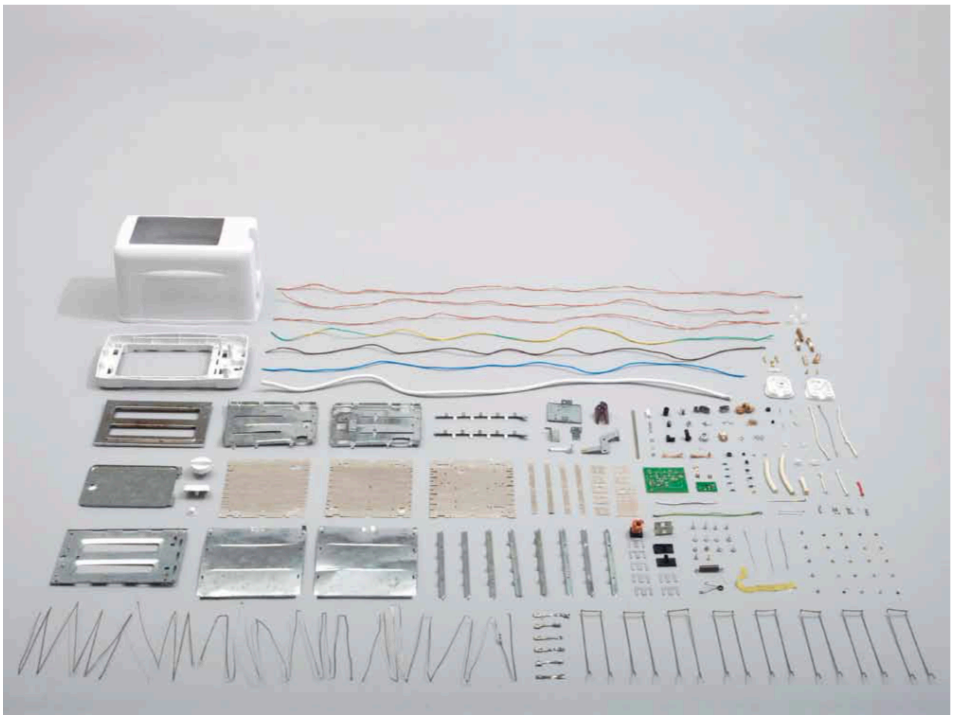


Fig. 8: *The Toaster Project by Thomas Thwaites*

Whilst researching other artist/practitioners that deconstruct objects, it really makes me think as a maker, do I want to make from newly sourced materials, or do I make from existing materials? Yes, I have many ideas for making out of many different materials, but for me and my practice, I now mostly look to recyclable materials and creating from waste. I am creating a new lease of life from objects and materials destined for landfill. Allowing the customer to create an emotional feeling/connection to the piece, "one of the reasons underlaying today's high consumption levels is the weaking of emotional link between people and products" (Chapman, 2005, p.317). Many items are mass produced but I feel the story I build within a piece, from the inspiration of an object to the materials choices then

revealing my own unique take on a design, creates an “Aura” within my work (Tate, 2021). Looking back, you can see this is inherent throughout my practice, and it has become a natural process that I follow and as I recognise this, I can further develop my practice.

The reason I like using objects is that I have that emotional connection with it, there is always a story behind them. I collect objects from family members it is like an obsession, I have often been called a hoarder. I see it as creating a physical record of our family history, they are just like photo albums to me. The camera I am using now to deconstruct, captured my childhood, from every special occasion to holidays aboard. It belonged to my father, and ironically, I was not allowed to touch it, it was his prized possession which was always kept in its case. As time passed and advances in technology developed the camera became obsolete and was destined for landfill. There is always a story within my work and unlike Todd and Thomas work which is very graphic and easily read, there are two designers who run Arrange Whatever Pieces Come Your Way which I can connect my work to. This business is run by Sheelagh Boyce and Annabelle Harty who Hand sew quilts which “have been put together using their personal collection of clothing from friends and family, who have loved each piece for a reason” (Boyce and Hartly, 2021). They will deconstruct the clothing stripping them back to their collar, cuffs, pockets etc, they have this sympathy towards the materials on how they rearrange and reconstruct, “each quilt is a unique object that tells its own layered story” (Boyce and Hartly, 2021). This is something I am working on with my camera, even though I am creating my own unique motifs from my drawings to work into a design, I am looking for pieces to form nostalgia with the customer as well as myself. The material possession we hold close and surround ourselves with “are used as symbols of what we are, what we have been, and what we are attempting to be” (Chapman, 2005, p.118), they are all about our past, present and future. I want the camera to be a starting point for engagement, looking for something that was, igniting a memory, while creating new ones.

As I have mentioned previously, I like to work with mundane objects, and I have realised upon reflection that I favour using everyday/overlooked non-precious materials as well. It is the challenge of creating something from nothing, adding value through my time and skill. For my Creative Venture I began by using paper as a way of bringing my ideas to life by making maquettes. It was the one material I had in abundance throughout lockdown. I know

there are many different papers available, but it is important in my practice that I am using materials around me (waste or leftovers), so I am not buying large quantities of new materials. I believe that my choices in materiality add another story to my end product. Throughout my development even thought I have worked predominately in paper I have explored other materials which I believe to have similar qualities, the way they fold and hold a shape. I have begun to question paper as a final material choice. Paper is probably the most overlooked material around, we "are continually holding it, reading the words upon it, crinkling it up into tight balls and throwing it into plastic bins, putting it in piles and putting it away for safe keeping, but its importance is lost" (Miller, 2003, p.105). The everyday paper holds no monetary value to most of us, it is easily disposed of without thought. As we move towards a paperless society people's perception, myself included are beginning to respect paper as a material. Even "Traditional collectors are seeing it in a new light, while new collectors, who value sustainability, and the process of creating the works, are investing in new-age paper art" (Ray, 2021, p.52), paper could become a luxury commodity in thirty years.

The thing I have loved about using paper is the fact it is so easy to work with, you can do anything to it, and it stays in shape. Throughout my journey I have been looking at changing its form, creating pieces that move and flow around the body or in a space. Genevieve Howard who creates paper jewellery (See fig. 9) also comments "I love how the materials quality changes when it is transformed from a flat sheet to a three-dimensional object' (Ray, 2021, p.55), paper really does hold so many possibilities. When I read about her work and how it is transcribed from pieces of music is just fascinating. Music is important within my own making practice, once I connect to a song it stays with me until the piece is complete. Seeing other artists use paper, as medium for making has really inspired me to continue my journey and not be afraid to develop my ideas in paper.



Fig. 9: *River by Genevieve Howard*

During the Collect 2021 talks it was so inspirational to see many designers adding value through time and skill rather than using just precious materials. During the Art Jewellery and Precious Metalwork talk, three designers stood out to me. Mariko Kusumoto who is represented by Micheko Galerie Germany, created a coral necklace made from polyester fabric, this is not a precious material. It was made from one piece of fabric, folded by hand then heat pressed to hold it shape (See fig. 10). Anna Davern who is represented by ATTA'n'ATTA Art Space Thailand, taking the fact I like to use waste materials, her pieces were hand cut from biscuit tins. They are so fun to look at, I just loved the fact it was a mix of non-precious /precious materials (See fig. 11). Jonathan Boyd who is represented by Galerie Marzee, used a mixed of silver, printed aluminium and lacquer steel (See fig. 12). All of these artists have inspired me to reconsider how I mix materials, normally I use one material for one design and another material for another design. Mixing materials is a more playful approach and something I will develop in the future. As I like using non-

precious/overlooked materials the idea of juxtaposing them has given me endless possibilities. It also creates a deeper story behind the work which can cause a greater connection to the piece “emotions are powerful mechanisms for customers to connect and build relationships with products” (Shedroff, 2009, p.113). I have realised that something does not have to be made of a precious material to be precious to someone, it is the story within.



Fig. 10: *Coral necklace by Mariko Kusumoto*



Fig. 11: *Trevor by Anna Davern*

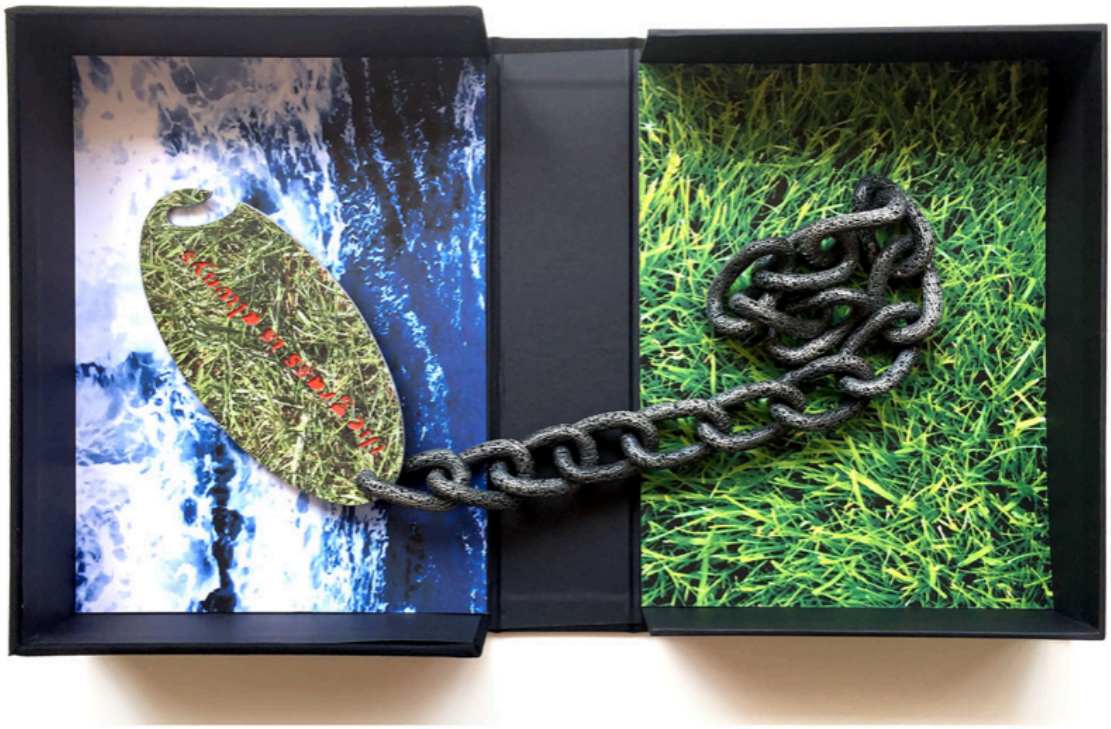


Fig. 12: *Grass is Greener by Johnathan Boyd*

Combining the hand and digital are going to be key within my practice going forward. My work nearly always involves working with multiples and now having learnt skills in photoshop and illustrator I am able to create files which means I am able to produce work so much faster. Also, I am not able to compete with the “accuracy with which machinery executes its work is, perhaps, one of its most important advantages” (Adamson, 2010, p.51). Even though I like the imperfection of the hand, the machine offers speed/accuracy to create multiples which I could not compete with. These machines alongside tools have naturally become “an extension and specialisation of the hand that alters the hands natural powers and capacities” (Pallasmaa, 2009, p47), it just would not be possible to carry out some tasks without them. My final designs involved cutting out large numbers of multiples with each design being a different size. With restrictions in place due to COVID19, I had to carefully work out the amount I needed in each size. I allowed time to work this out, but I massively undercounted on one design. As I am always doubling checking/triple checking I picked this up before it was too late, and I was able to rectify the issue. Going forward I will

get someone else to check my numbers as a mistake would not only be costly but could cause delays within my work and it could come across as unprofessional.

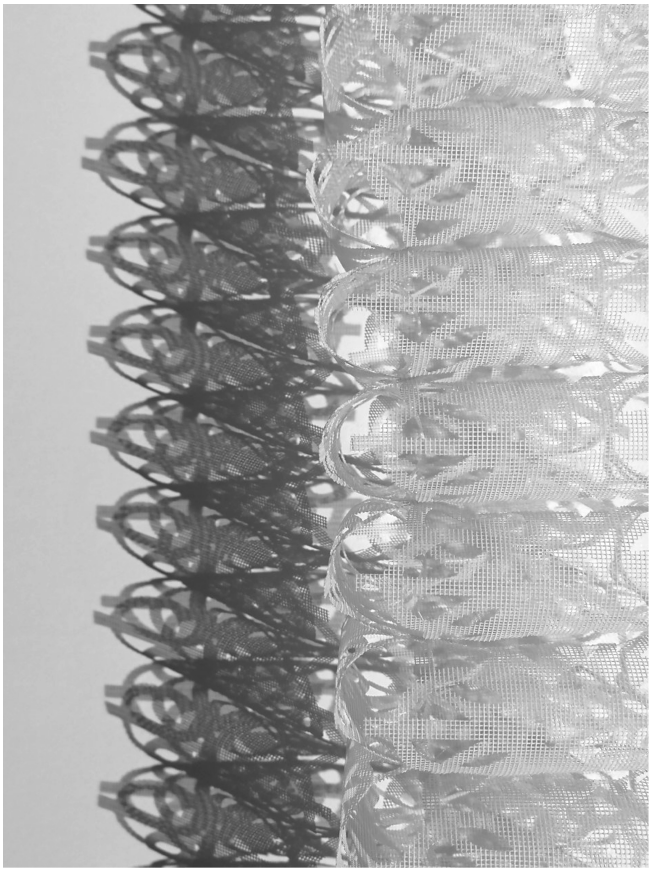


Fig. 13: *Nylon Mesh*

Even though I have predominantly been using paper throughout this project I have explored, many fabrics that I believe have similar properties to paper, having taken inspiration from Mariko Kusumoto necklace. Caroline Broadhead states that contemporary jewellery is an “investigation into material, form, value, colour and movement” (Asfalck et al. 2005, p.25). Nylon Mesh is a fabric which I have grown to love, I love how it can hold its shape, it laser cut with precision and allows the light to pass through it. I know I could have worked with tracing paper which has a translucent value, but the nylon mesh offers so much more. When you layer up the fabric you get different qualities of white which you can still sort of see through, it is just so interesting to view (See fig. 13). Also, it offers beautiful shadows which cascade onto any surface. Shadow playing, with my forms opened my design development into exploring light ideas for an interior setting (See fig. 14). I am drawn to designing pieces for the body, but this idea of lighting is something I would further explore

int the near future. It has made me realise that with my creatively and dexterity I could work across many design disciplines and possible collaborative ventures.



Fig. 14: *Light Concept*

I have been influenced by the 'World of WearableArt' (WOW) where their ethos of "embracing the worlds art, design and fashion and bringing them together into a theatrical performance" (WOW, 2021) really resonates with me and the direction I want to pursue (See fig. 15). Designers are "taking the art off the wall and displaying it on a moving body" (WOW, 2021), with epic proportions/ideas and a vast array of materials. Throughout my project I have been playing between bodily and interiors, as I see my work in either setting. My work plays with the concept of wearable art and contemporary jewellery and due to my expansive explorative work, I can create multiple forms/designs. In the past I have made many refined pieces of jewellery, but for my creative venture I have explored creating large sculptural pieces and how they form a relationship with the wearer. Caroline Broadhead who plays with these connotations within her work states, an object/jewellery "worn is a source of constant fascination and curiosity, demonstrating the continual two-way process of expression by one person and the impression it makes upon other" (Astfalck, et al 2005, p.25). It is interesting to see how others react and wear the piece, everyone has a different personal response to things. I have been wrapping and draping my pieces around the body, but in the future after Covid19 restrictions have lifted, I am very keen to have dancers/performers move and connect to my work. This journey has propelled my way of working and thinking and I cannot wait to start my own journey in the design world.



Fig. 15: *Tinker by Jeff Thomson*

Future Trajectory

I am elated with my final collection; I believe I have widened my portfolio as I have not created anything like this before. Furthermore, it has taught me to see my design and how they could fit into other contexts such as lighting, tables, room dividers and as collection pieces. My Creative Venture has really opened up many opportunities to me to help start my own career. I entered my work into New Designers 2021, where I showed a concept of one of my lighting ideas to the Conran Shop (See fig. 15). This has also given me the confidence to enter Lamp 2021 international lighting competition, where I will develop and show one of my concepts from my Creative Venture. I have also been fortunate to be able to get a portfolio crit with jeweller Susan Macleod from Cockpit arts. I prepared a PowerPoint to show three projects. I believe the projects shows off my skills and ability to work with different materials. To get an opportunity to show my work to a professional in the field is amazing, I will be able to get invaluable feedback at the start of my own career. I have also entered an online competition with Precious Collective - Emerging Talent, which will have an online show in September. I feel my final designs will appeal to them and their following (See fig. 16/17). I am also planning on entering The World of Wearable Art New Zealand 2022. Furthermore, because of Collect 2021 being online I have been introduced to potential galleries I would like to have my work on show. This has got me thinking about revaluating my press packs from last year. When I approach these galleries, I would like to send them a small, scaled version of my work, for example, a stack of rings like my statement bracelet (See fig.18). I believe it is important to create a sensory experience, everyone loves to open a gift. This will engage the client from the start, and they have something to remember me by.

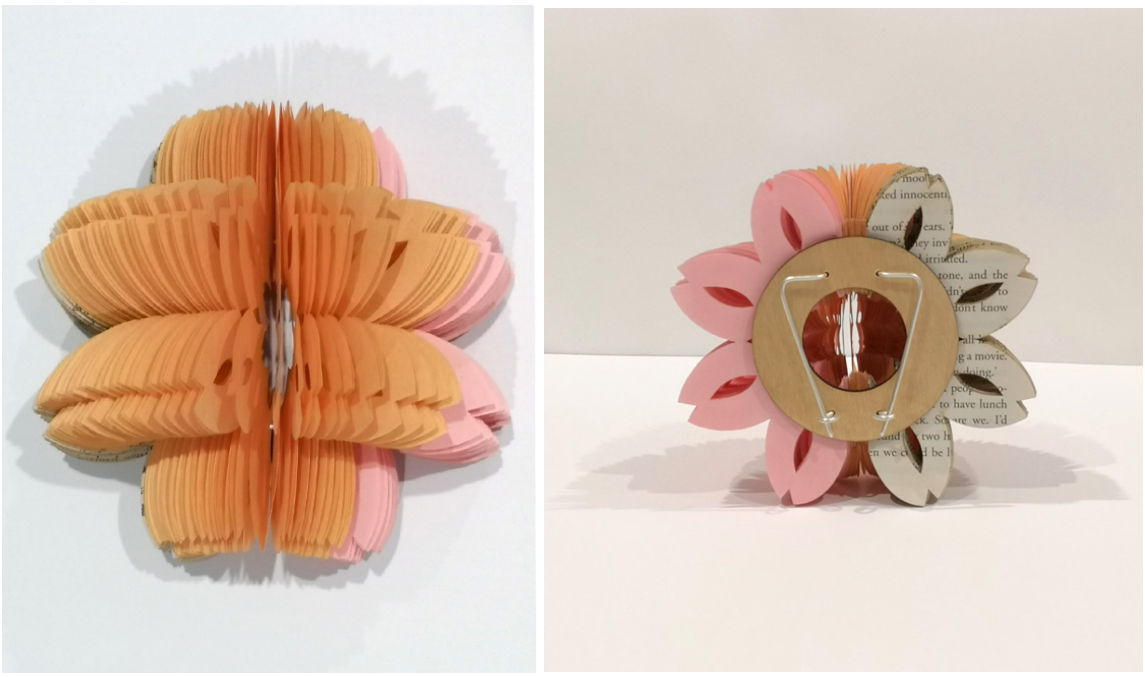


Fig. 16: *Brooch*



Fig. 17: *Ring*

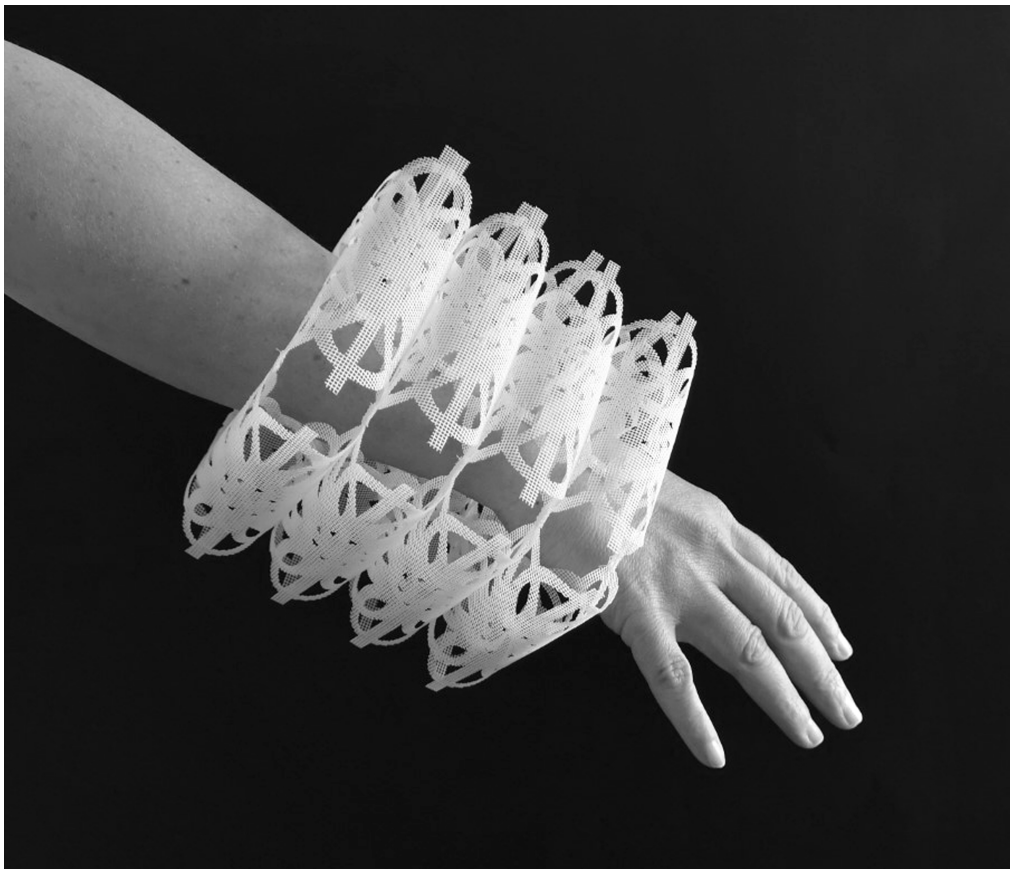


Fig. 18: *Statement Bracelet*

Due to potentially having my work shipped internationally, I have made inquiries at UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) for help with funding the cost. They “help businesses export and grow into global markets” and “help businesses acquire the skills, contacts and confidence to start exporting” (Gov. UK, 2021). This is something I am going to work towards in my future when I have set up my business, as I am very keen to show work internationally. Over this last year I have set up my own studio space and have made connections with suppliers and services which are going to be invaluable when I graduate. I feel everything has come together in this last year to start my career as a confident designer maker.

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