

PROPOSAL FORM

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ADAA6001

About my Project

Name: Nia Jane

Proposed Name of Project: *The Innate Stellate*

Key Words in Relation to Project:

- Childhood
- Idiosyncrasies
- Metamorphosis
- Creativity
- Stars

Summary of Project:

I will produce a series of images related to my areas of interest, through the use of mixed media such as drawing, painting and collage in addition to their photographic bases. These will be representative of my chosen focus upon themes of childhood idiosyncrasies, growth through creativity and the redefining of loss. I aim to reconnect with my own 'creative roots' throughout the development of this project, through the use of basic art supplies associated with childhood and the value that these elements may have lost as we grow up. My main objective is to remain spontaneous with my creativity.

Description of Project:

My project *The Innate Stellate* is based upon themes of childhood spontaneity, the uninhibited creativity that young children naturally achieve, and the way these traits change both naturally and through intervention and intentional reshaping as they enter adulthood. Within this body of work, I will discuss our understanding of the term "loss" and how through its redefinition, we may gain an insight into why we tend to perceive our "growing up" as the loss of touch with our childhood selves. My aim is to amend this perception within my own mind, and as a result reflect this within the "stellate" work I produce; that being, a series of photographs that include physical editorial work, such as collage and photomontage work. I anticipate my use of multiple different mediums throughout the development of this project, as it is my intention to utilise a much more experimental and potentially "unserious" approach to this work, as a method of accessing those early-stage creative instincts. Whilst the means of this production process may delve into whim, the motive will remain a firmer investigation into why the connection of these gradual stages of our lives are integral to our creative development, and how we may reconnect with this former version of ourselves and bring out the 'stars' of our past. As a starting point I will be locating some of the earliest accessible points of my own creativity, as Frauline Maria said "Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start".

Timeline:

September '24

- Identify area of interest and chosen project area

October '24

- Continue research into topic area and collect relevant books and writings on area of interest
- Experiment with ideas that represent chosen theme/study area, and record results/findings

November '24

- Try to narrow down area of interest, and redefine my goals through this new specificity
- Explore features of my own childhood that may have steered me towards this study in the first place (visiting locations, talking to relatives, revisiting childhood 'favourites', etc.)

December '24

- Once again step back and evaluate progress of research, realign goal again if necessary
- Familiarise myself with project related items (maybe for shoots) that will allow me to progress with project
- Turn in Advanced Creative Enquiry and thoroughly evaluate progress and direction of project

January '25

- Acquire items/objects/locations that relate to my project area (stars)
- Shoot initial ideas of this fresh vision, further experiment and assess results
- Study further into the topic of 'Stars' and the 'stellate' and how this can be reflected through visual representation on photographic responses

Timeline:

February '25

- Continue to shoot and assess progress and improvements
- Spend time acknowledging how this work will translate to an exhibition environment

March '25

- Select work I will be exhibiting
- Consider methods of exhibiting work and comprise a list of viable options

April '25

- (7th-25th) Easter break – use these weeks to finalise details and tend to any last-minute decisions I am yet to make

May '25

- (5th-8th) Installation for Swansea MURMUR exhibition

Potential Project Expenses

Whilst I generally expect this project to naturally steer itself away from large scale productions due to its overall light-hearted nature, there are also some smaller production and experimentation costs that I expect to encounter across my aforementioned timeline. The following estimates are based upon costs accumulated across the four-month span of this initial project development stage.

Description	Cost
Holga Camera	£35
120 Film (10 x rolls)	£100
Stickers (or various sizes, shapes and materials)	£15
Stamps/hole punches/various glues (stationary items)	£30
Gel-plate Printing Kit	£30
Canvases (price allows for fewer larger sizes or numerous smaller sizes)	£55
Travel costs (to relevant shoot locations)	£100
Other collage materials (including paper)	£70
2 x Canon Rechargeable Li-ion Battery NB-13L (to fit current camera)	£120
264gb SD Card	£30
Lenovo Ideapad Flex 5 Laptop (for editorial and cataloguing purposes)	£500
Canon PIXMA G3571 Inkjet Printer (mid-range and reasonably priced)	£180
TOTAL COST	£1265

Describe the developmental opportunities, experiments and processes you have undertaken, what did you get out of them, and how will you use them to support your proposed project.

From the various methods of research and experimentation I have carried out throughout these beginning stages of my project, I have developed upon my initially proposed themes such as the building upon childhood memories, growth through creativity and spontaneous whim. Whilst I have also discussed ideas such as perceived loss of the *creative spark*, the development of this project has led me towards the probable redirection away from this particular theme, as I feel I am now more connected to alternative aspects of the project topics.

The processes that I felt most drawn to throughout my experimentation have been physical reproduction and interaction with photographs – such as collaging and the manipulation of printed imagery – and the photographing of flat ‘mini-game inspired’ images. Following on from these experimental creation methods, I would like to progress my project further into these areas, through methods such as gel-plate printing, various different printing techniques, and further experimentation through the use of film photography such as use of the Holga Camera (a self-acclaimed toy camera).

What are the main risks and challenges to your project meeting its aims? What will you do to manage these risks?

The current trajectory of my project will require me to revisit aspects of my childhood and potentially the childhoods of others. A main concern of mine for the progression of this project lies within my being objective with the selection of relevant materials and memories for their use within my production of work. This is because my interest in this area of study came about due to my affection towards memories and the rediscovery of the joys of child-like spontaneity within art, which alongside the potential issue of time management, leaves me vulnerable to the threat of non-objectivity preventing progression.

Re-introduction

In order to begin this investigation into the growth through human creativity, I decided to return to the foundational elements that one may find the most important during childhood. Amongst the obvious and most common answers such as family, friends and places, I also found myself returning to a more nostalgic, emotive corner of my memories; my childhood teddy.

As a common part of many children's lives, especially in the younger years, having a teddy-bear, toy or stuffed animal plays a large role in the first steps into imaginative play and creative thinking that they might encounter. Alongside this, a cuddly companion is also the main source of comfort and companionship that a young child will heavily rely on for solace and a sense of safety. For this reason, I felt that the childhood teddy would be the ideal starting point for this project, as for many people, this is a significant and often sentimental aspect of their formative years.



Within this shoot, I made sure to not allow the idea of "perception" - a key concept within this project - take too much control of how each of the images turned out. This came from the acknowledgement that a child will perceive an object much differently to their adult self, an aspect that I wanted to make sure didn't take over the true value of the contents of these photographs. Importantly, I aimed to portray the appearance of these images, from a more neutral viewer, perhaps the teddy itself, as more of an 'ode-to-time. We grow and change, leave and return, yet they remain the same - if a little worn - watching us and remaining exactly who we imagined them to be when we were younger.



After completing this shoot, I found myself intrigued by the nature of the fabric of this teddy over time. The quality of the photograph brought out the detail of individual stitches across the fabric, and I was able to observe the result of years of love and hugs upon this bear's body.



Children's Stories

I wanted to investigate the idea of expressing my favourite picture books from childhood through imagery, particularly in a way that isolated this element of my younger mind from my current self. My plan going into this shoot was to review the box of books from my childhood and remind myself of the characteristics, illustrations and morals that still resonate with my emotions as an adult just as they did when I was a child.

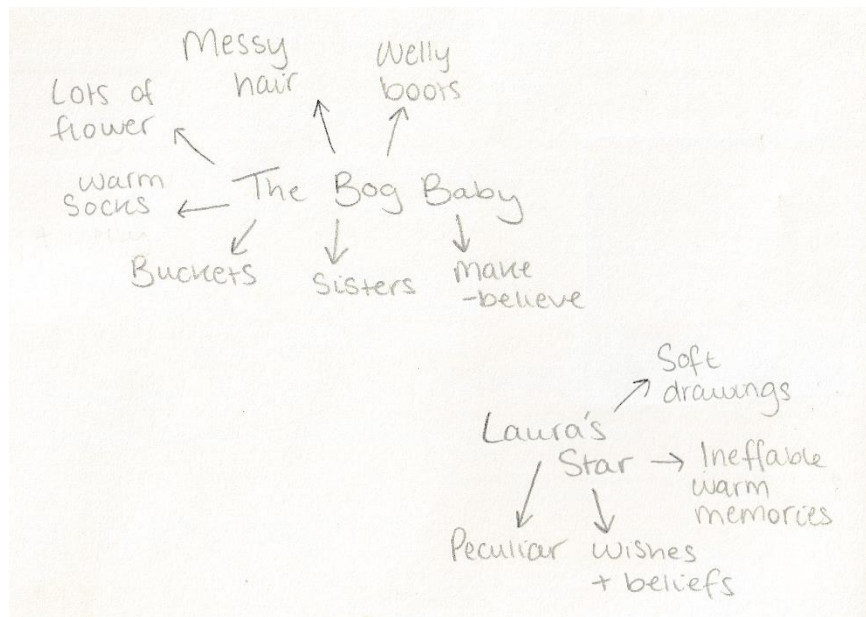
A couple of books that stood out for me were *Laura's Star*, written by Jeanne Willis and illustrated by Gwen Millward, and *The Bog Baby*, written by Klaus Baumgart. Flipping through the pages of these books brought back a sense of comfort and a daydream-like feeling I recognised as imagination. The stories read to me before bed during childhood were always accompanied by a deep dive into my imagination and were often shortly followed by sweet dreams in these newly constructed imaginary worlds.

Following this, I wanted to experiment with how this connection to images and illustrations from my childhood would translate into the portrayal of these feeling within my own images.

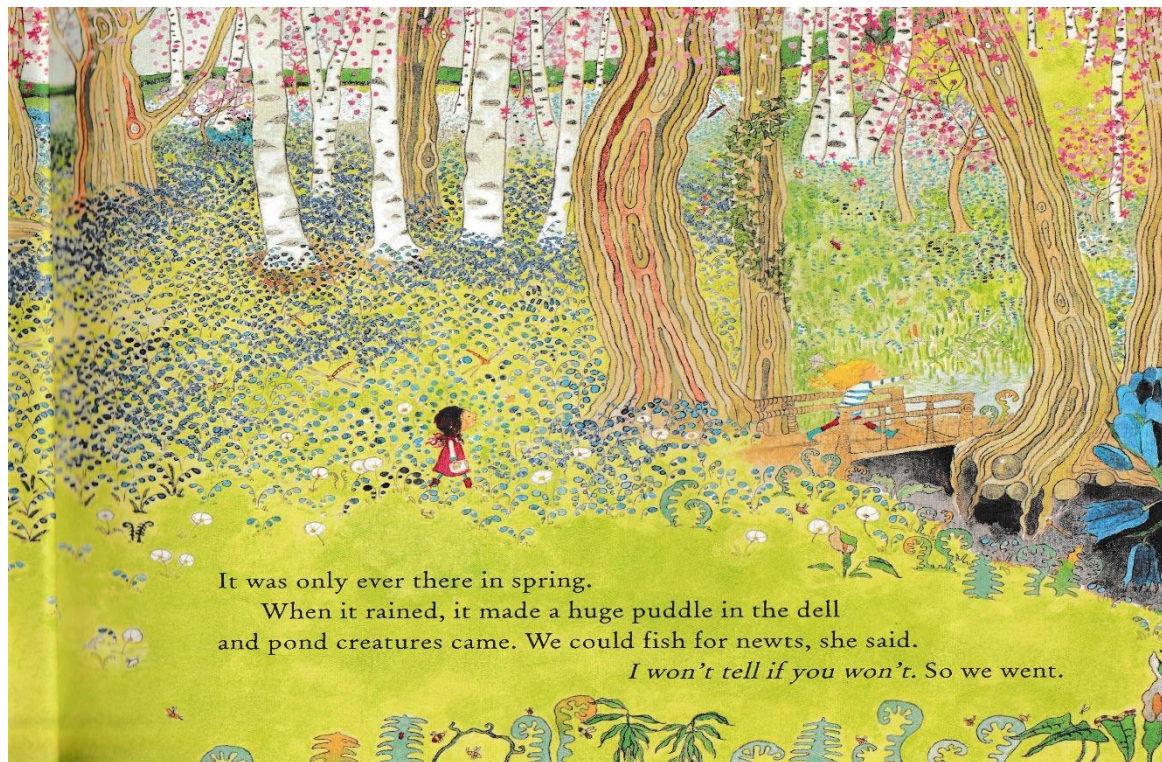
Firstly, the book *The Bog Baby*, was always one of my favourite representations of emersion in nature and a childlike love of the natural world. I was completely in awe of the full double-spread pages of bluebell carpets and woodland scenes, and this only furthered my love for the wildlife I encountered whilst out and about. I would regularly create bouquets of leaves, grasses and flowers (not including bluebells or other protected plants), and imagine I was living out the story in my own imaginary world.

I have never been able to keep the illustration of the jelly in *Laura's Star* out of my mind, first and foremost because it stuck with me as the most appetising-looking jelly my childhood-self had ever seen, and also due to the fact that my now-adult-self is still just as big a fan of jelly today.

Notably, I wanted to ensure that – as previously stated – these inspiration points would be linked to an element within my current adult life, and I had to be careful to reflect this within my work. In this regard, I paired each revisited story with an aspect of my 'new' environment, an environment that my childhood did not reach, and explored different juxtaposing areas within this environment that I felt held their inspirations well.

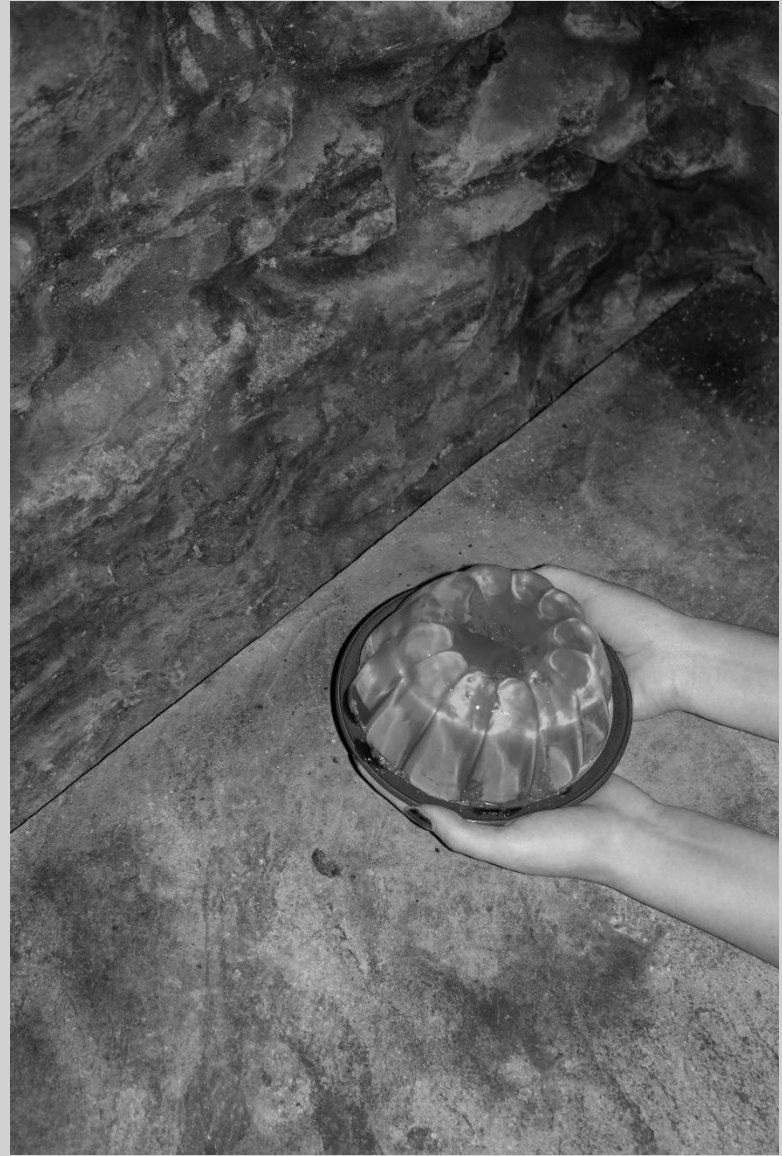


Page of interest from *Laura's Star*



Page of interest from *The Bog Baby*





When reviewing this shoot, I realised quite quickly, that the more 'posed' shots were not providing the correct 'feel', whereas the 'in-between' poses that were unplanned, I ended up much preferring.

When selecting the images for these shoots, I initially completely accidentally selected shots that, when transferred into black and white, became very flat images. Whilst this wasn't my intention going into this shoot, I really like the effect this has on the outcome. This led me to select similar style shots within the next shoot I carried out.



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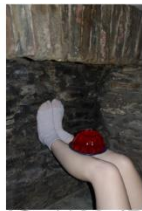
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Similarly, for this shoot, I found that the more simple, less planned shots turned out much better than their posed counterparts. The chair I set out to use, I had expected to support the 'natural' unserious nature of this shoot, however when shooting I realised that it seemed to have the opposite effect.

Setting out to create a visual that captured a natural-seeming, unposed occurrence of something so obviously unnatural and intentional, was definitely an interesting task. But I am overall quite pleased with the results.



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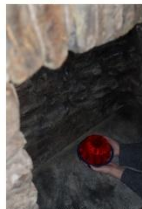
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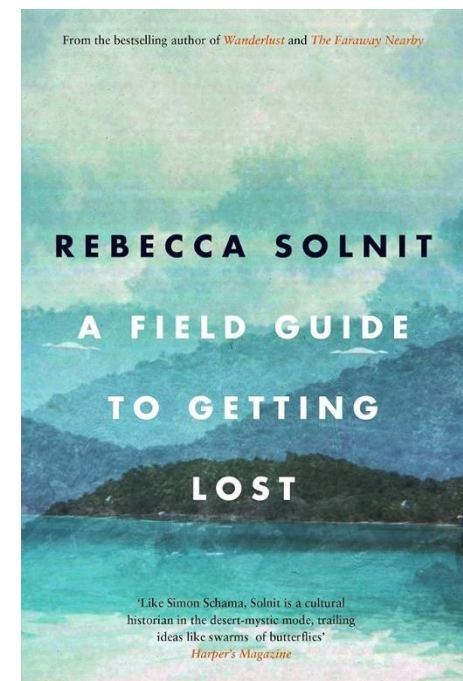
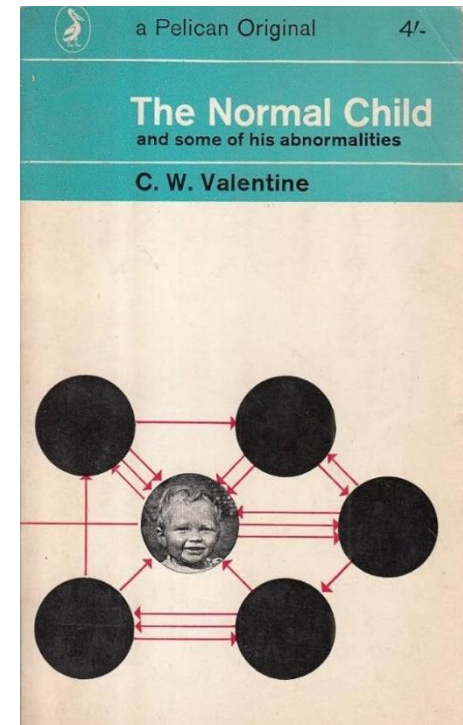
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The Creative Spark

In order to acknowledge one of my key words that I hoped to integrate into this project, I consulted the work of British Educationalist and Psychologist, C.W. Valentine, which provided me with an insight into the way in which children utilise play within their creativity, “the essence of play is that it is an activity carried out entirely for its own sake – for the mere enjoyment of the activity”. This concept, paired with the studies of Stephen Nachmanovitch that focus upon the importance of play within the development of children and adults, prompted me to lean towards the consideration of what it might look like to lose touch with this vital sense of play.

I considered the words of Rebecca Solnit, who speaks of the concept of loss and growth by means of a poignant metaphor focussing on the metamorphosis from caterpillar to butterfly, “the process of transformation consists mostly of decay and then of this crisis when emergence from what came before must be total and abrupt”. My interpretation of this is that if there is a ‘loss of touch’ with this *creative spark* then the journey of reconnection or rekindling that one must go through may at first be a struggle, and then eventually becomes a rebirth of-sorts.

Drawing from these concepts, I constructed a new view of how childhood and play carry a vital importance when considering the creative outcome. Does my own creativity grow from this origin of uninhibited play and spontaneity within my childhood? What might a loss of touch look like and how could I go about representing the possible reconnection through visual creation?

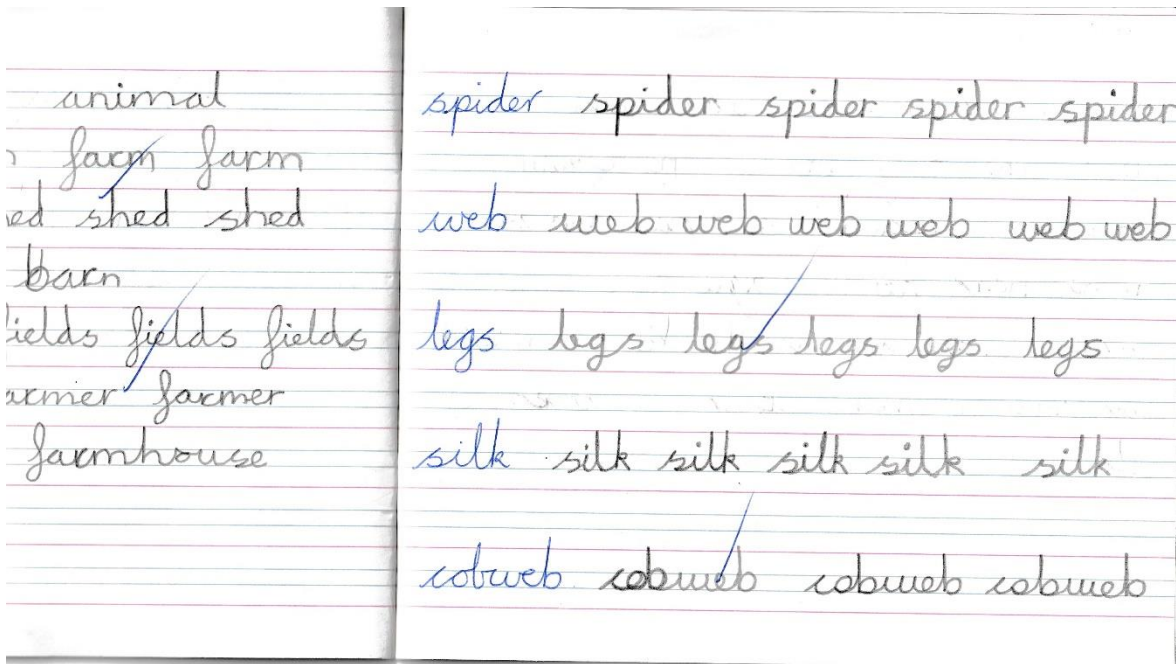


Childhood memories

Following my revision of books from my childhood and books discussing the lost memories and the *creative spark*, I also decided to take a look through some of my childhood possessions including notebooks, drawings and schoolbooks. I found pages of handwriting practice, stories I had made-up, shapes and pictures cut-out of magazines and most interestingly, lots of stars. There were stars in many forms; doodles, stickers, photos I had collected and shapes I had added to art projects.

I also came across some old photo albums that my parents had put together when I was little. Flipping through these, I had the idea to utilise the photographs within as a base layer of sorts for the work I would later produce.

Having all this physical material, I wanted to try and create some collage/montage work, which I felt would also link back to the spontaneous creativity that a child experiences through cutting and sticking.



Thursday 9th September 2010

light sources

A light source is something
that gives out light.



n

Our favourite

colours

cream



gold



red



blue



turquoise



purple

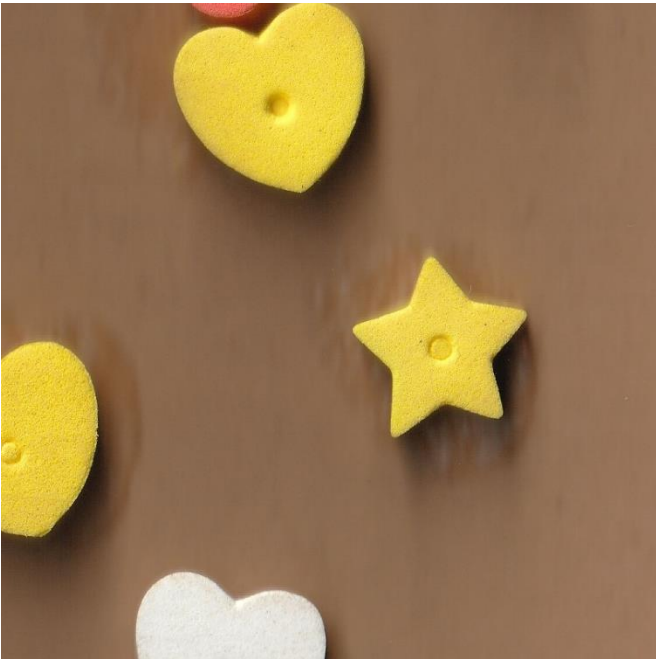


Jasmine



our favourite colours
are Jasmine and
red. ✓









Stars

After thinking about this sudden rediscovery of stars, I realised the importance that stars must hold in a child's life. Considering the fact that most children grow up with the same selection of familiar shapes, – squares, circles, triangles, hearts and stars – this must directly influence the way in which we perceive these shapes as we grow up. For example, as children we receive the image of stars as stickers of positive reinforcement in our workbooks, stickers that we get for doing a good job that we stick to our jumpers, glow in the dark stars that might help a child with their fear of the dark, or (if one was enrolled in a primary school similar to my own) learning of the star as 'the great guide' in the Christmas story. All of these appearances meant that for me, the image of the star was associated with positivity and excitement. I'd like to investigate this association further, and potentially incorporate this as a theme within my project.





Stars and Collecting

Ana Morill is an artist whose journey I have been following for a while. Using stars as her main focus point, Morill collects materials, images and items relating to this theme and also paints individuals and characters as humanoid figures with stars for heads. Using this last technique to affectionately represent the people in her life as stars themselves, Morill also often overlays semi-transparent yellow stars over the photographs she takes with friends and family to achieve this effect.



I very much like the idea of the representation of people as stars, which I coincidentally achieved within the two images on the previous few pages (the photographs from my childhood with collage-style star images). I would like to continue to investigate this style of casual 'semiotic'/metaphorical use of stars within my work, potentially using Morill's work as inspiration along the way.



I will continue to develop my research into stars and their uses as metaphorical representation within artwork and media, whilst also investigating the importance that stars hold within my own life and methods in which I can convey this through my work.



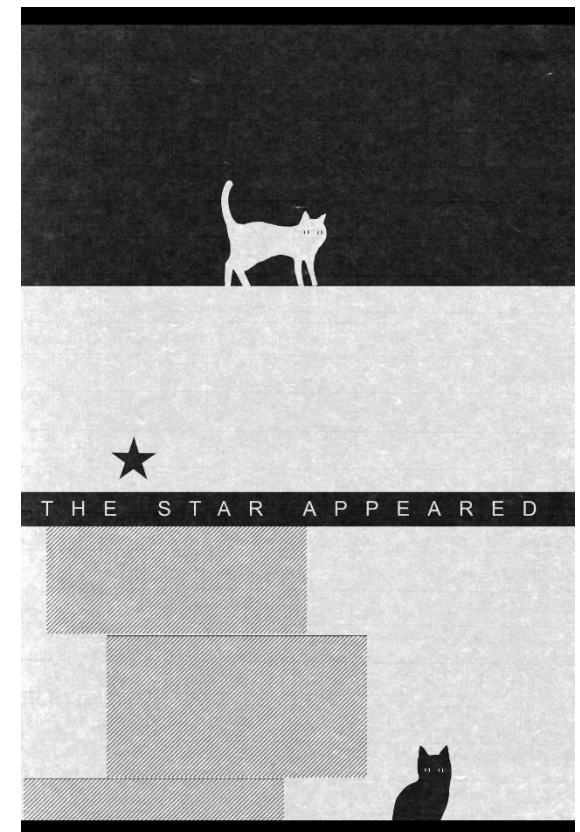
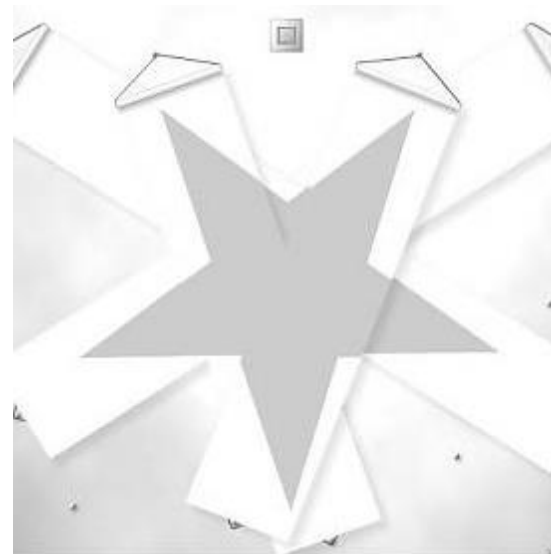
Stars (continued)

Following my re-introduction to stars I decided to follow this up with an investigation into the role of stars within my own childhood. The realisation that stars can be a powerful semiotic in a child's life without them or the adults surrounding them noticing.

Discussing with a childhood friend the topic of stars and their representation, she reminded me of a game we used to obsess over as children. *Hoshi Saga*, consists of a series of similar objective mini-games, within which, the player is required to locate, reveal or create the star.

Having revisited the game following this conversation (and completed all of the levels successfully, for research purposes of course), I decided to carry out a shoot in relation to one of the levels. I was unable to find the level I wanted to reference within this shoot, as I believe it is a part of one of the later remakes. However, from memory the level I hoped to reference consists of lifting various paper light shades to reveal the character holding a star.

Therefore, my next step was to acquire a paper lampshade. Much like my shoots following my research into childhood story books, I wanted to go into this shoot with no specific vision, as I felt like this could potentially take away from the 'whim of the moment' that I might experience.



With a brief idea of the direction in which I wanted to take this shoot, I acquired a paper lampshade and went from there.

As with the previous couple of shoots, I decided not to give myself too many guidelines, therefore also not giving the model much direction apart from sharing with her the inspiration and my vague vision for the outcome.

Through this method of production, I felt I was more likely to access a feeling of child-like whim and spontaneity.

I am quite pleased with the results of this shoot, as I feel I have achieved an accurate reflection of the way I perceived my inspiration in my childhood memories.

The results are as followed.



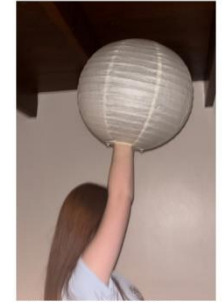
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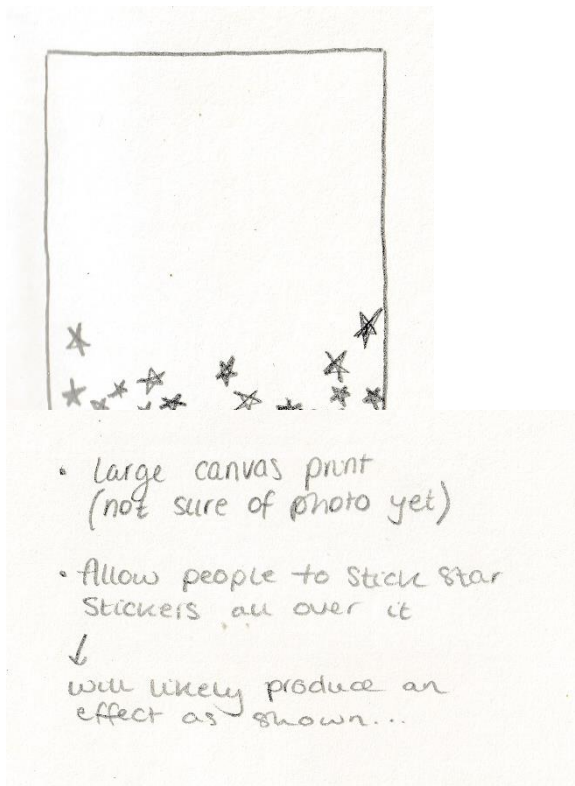


More Stars

Further delving into the study of stars and their symbolism in childhood, I decided to re-familiarise myself with one of the earliest forms that stars had within my own childhood; stickers. Used as a reinforcement for good work, good behaviour or a job well done, primary schools are absolutely piled high with sheets for star stickers. My favourites were always the little silver ones my nursery teacher would give out, mostly because I was able to peel it off my uniform at the end of the day and stick it into my craft book and save them all up.

I haven't been able to find that book, but I decided to order some star stickers of my own (this felt a bit like cheating the system), as I had had an idea for a way of potentially utilising them within my work.

It is important to note, that whilst this isn't a directly photographic idea, I would potentially be pairing this with a photograph printed onto a canvas, which is why I wanted to test the effect of this idea.



Stickers and Collage

Thomas Hirschhorn is known for the use of stickers and other collage-worthy materials within his work. Whilst presenting an overall different genre than I am aiming for throughout his work, his productions utilise an interesting method of layering and compilation of elements that I would like to attempt within my own making.

I especially like the magazine-feel that comes with the uneven surface finish of this piece entitled *Uncomfortable Truths*, (2007).



As this project develops, I would like to delve into this study and use of stickers (likely stars and their variations) some more, potentially alongside other collage materials such as vinyl, magazine clippings and small

Stars in Semiotics

I began to research the role that stars might take within semiotics; their representations, interpretations and their presence in the lives of children. I drew a simple spider diagram to note down some of my own impressions of how I feel the image of stars influences individuals.

I also began to familiarise myself with the use of my recently purchased star hole punch, and stuck them into my sketchbook to potentially utilise later on in my project. I very much like the uniformity that a set size hole punch brings to an otherwise fairly whimsical looking page.



Stars and Paper

One of my hobbies as a child was origami. Any spare paper that I could get my hands on was immediately repurposed into a folder ornament of some form – swans, flowers, foxes and boxes, I had a shape for every occasion. Even now I find myself folding the odd receipt or napkin when my mind drifts on a shift.

Following my rediscovery of my affection for stars, I had the idea to try and integrate the art of origami into my project somehow. The work of Alma Haser was a great inspiration towards this idea, as she also works with the concept of the evolution of the physical through origami and photographic representation

Rather than the typical and more recognisable style of origami, I was reminded recently of a creation I was quite fond of through childhood – lucky stars. Using strips of paper, folded into hexagons and then squeezed into star shapes, lucky stars are the result of a Japanese folk tale of a little girl named Hoshi (star), which produced the belief that the producing of these paper stars would bring good luck.

“Origami paper stars were then given the title “lucky stars,” as the children believed for each star that was folded, a falling star was saved.”
-Neumann University



Patient no.4, Alma Haser



Example of ‘Lucky Stars’



To test this idea, I decided to utilise some photographs from my childhood, that I would print out (on A4 paper), cut into strips and fold into the form of 'lucky stars'.

Lucky Stars

Whilst my skills surrounding the making of lucky stars was significantly rusty, I managed to make five reasonably well-formed stars out of the pictures I selected from an old photo album. I am pleased with the way these turned out, as I managed to clearly represent the vision I had going into this 'lucky-star idea'. However, it is also evident when observing these stars, that in order to create a much clearer and more effective result, I would need to produce these images much larger and in a much higher quality print, as the quality is currently slightly grainy.

This is an idea that I would like to develop further, acknowledging these improvements and also selecting a number of photos with more specificity so as to speak to the project theme more intentionally.

