

Advanced Practice Reflective Report ADDA7002

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Surface Pattern & Textiles

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This report outlines how challenges that I faced within my semester 1 studies has allowed me to reflect and develop my practice within the Advanced Practice module. My Advanced Practice collection, *The Water's Edge* is separated into two design outcomes targeted towards two different markets. I chose to do this as my interests are divided into varying pathways and I owe it to myself to showcase both sets of skills. The home interiors collection consists of wallpapers and fabrics, specifically designed for British country living. Whereas, my three-dimensional mural is targeted towards maximalist public spaces such as The Ivy which explores immersion.

Review of Semester 1 Modules

The Research and Innovation module gave me an opportunity to discover and explore new methods of working that previously did not come naturally to me as a designer. I like to stay within my comfort zone of painting and designing but it has opened my eyes to a new area of research, three-dimensional and immersive artwork and as a result, I now want to take this forward into my future practice. The project forced me out of my comfort zone but it was rewarding as I am now invested in the new techniques I have learnt such as laser cutting and paper stitching. Throughout my three years of the course, I avoided the lasercutter because it intimidated and confused me. But, I knew this had to change because I set myself the challenge of discovering new ways of drawing through cutting in various ways and I could not rely on a scalpel anymore. I taught myself how to make the appropriate files on Illustrator, something that I was also afraid of using, and how to work the laser cutter and its' software. It took many attempts but by the end of the module I was extremely confident using it. Now, I can quickly make the files that I need and cut these confidently. The time spent learning and testing these methods has made me work efficiently as I can cut multiples of what I need as opposed to hand cutting things like I previously did. This experience has taught me that avoiding things will not lead to growth, I would not be where I am within my practice today if I did not take that step to learn to laser cut. This has lead to a change of outlook for the future in regards to personal growth and trying new things. During this module, I logged my experiments in a technical book. This is valuable for my future self as I can refer back to the different samples that I created, identifying the paper qualities, materials and the settings I used to laser cut and stitch with. Research and Innovation was a chance to test and log these experiments and realise what I want to take forward into semester 2.

One of the gaps within the body of work was the lack of thought about application and context. Yes, I was aiming for all of the samples to be wallcoverings but I didn't think about practicality, location or the audience. Who and where was I pitching these to? I also didn't consider professionalism. I intend to take these ideas forward into my future practice but I didn't consider how I would fix the elements in place to ensure security and longevity. This was a major gap within the trialing and testing and I should have committed to refining the samples. I need to ensure quality over quantity within my work going forward.

The Hacer Live Brief within the Contemporary Creative Practice module allowed me to put my research and testing from Research and Innovation into a full-scale application for a client. It was exciting to retain the ideas that I had, but apply them to a new project with a new narrative. Initially, I stayed within my comfort zone working within a 53x53cm sample. This held me back because I suggested a large-scale immersive installation, but I wasn't representing that within the outcome. I submitted a sample that was not fully stitched and that is not the standard I strive for but semester 1 turned out to be challenging time where I lacked time management and motivation, but it provided me with mistakes and lessons that I am keen to overcome within my current Advanced Practice module. When I recreated this sample for the exhibition it was my

first attempt at a large-scale three-dimensional piece and it has given me the confidence to go from sampling to 'real life'.

Due to not exploring the correct fixtures in Research and Innovation, the process of making the Hacer wallpaper was not as professional or quick as it could have been. I made it difficult for myself by hand stitching each fish onto the wallpaper with a singular stitch on either end of the fish, meaning that they were loose and could be damaged. If I were to make this again, I would use my knowledge from Advanced Practice and use the industrial sewing machine to stitch through the centre of the fish, resulting in a secure, neat and professional fixture. I lacked an industry focussed mindset but throughout the Research and Innovation resit I learned professional methods and techniques suitable for industry application. This was a needed lesson for myself as one of my aims during completing the MDes is to prepare myself for industry and to make my work, methods and techniques suitable for industry application.

Advanced Practice Module

The narrative informing my Advanced Project *The Water's Edge* aims to celebrate the importance and the beauty of British Wetlands. According to Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT), wetlands are one of the most biodiverse habitats in the world that act as vital homes to a wide array of flora and fauna. Some wetland areas connect and work together as part of a complex ecosystem. The plants within them play an essential role for supporting surrounding wildlife, providing shelter and food for numerous species and as a result creates a thriving ecosystem. Particular plants attract bees, butterflies, dragonflies and birds, one example being the nectar-rich Hemp-Agrimony flower that the pollinators are drawn to. As they visit, they help in the reproduction of nearby plants, keeping the cycle of life continuing. My collections aim to celebrate the abundance of life within these wetland habitats. Particularly, the hidden life that is not so obvious as you walk by. My aim is to entice the viewer to look closely within the designs, as you would within areas of nature to discover more.

Bringing joy into our homes is a key motive behind my practice. I feel strongly about brightening up our spaces through design features such as wallpaper, art prints, colours or house plants. The way I choose to bring happiness into the home is through nature inspired designs, due to my personal opinions and experiences when feeling immersed within nature. My mood is lifted and I am in awe of the patterns, textures and colours that occur naturally and I like to translate these feeling into designs to share with others. The Biophilia hypothesis proposes that humans have an innate desire to connect with nature and other living things. The term translates to "love of life" (Grinde & Patil, 2009). So, there is no surprise that nature-inspired print and pattern are continuous trends. It is not only within their homes that people seek nature, within the workplace people are increasingly seeking restorative environments due to rising levels of stress and demands. According to (Sona et al., 2019), people in the Western world spend 80-90% of their time in buildings with little opportunity to leave for a significant amount of time during their breaks. Therefore, seeking contact with nature during the time spent at work is a high concern for both employees and organizations. Enhancing restoration can be achieved through bringing nature indoors by mimicking it in areas without natural access to fulfil the human need for nature. This can be achieved through sounds, textures and print and pattern to replicate it as accurately as possible.

There is an abundance of research being carried out on the relationship between wetlands and mental health. Research conducted by WWT shows that as little as 10 minutes within a wetland area can lead to increased positive feelings, and there is increasing research investigating 'blue' spaces in addition to 'green' spaces which may be more heard of (WWT, 2024). As a result of this, my hand painted motifs and patterns aim to bring the outdoors, in by celebrating the

natural beauty of these wetland areas and enjoying the benefits from inside our spaces as well. Ingrid Fetell Lee is a designer and author who founded *The Aesthetics of Joy*, that is the idea that joy is all around us. Her *Where Joy Hides and How to Find It* Ted Talk proposes many points that support why design should be incorporated into our spaces. The word 'aesthetics' originates from the Greek word *aisthánomai* which means "I feel, I sense, I perceive". She states that the feeling of joy begins with our senses, then continues to show the audience images of offices, schools and hospitals that are plain and dull. The question raised is why are they this way if joy comes from our senses? Artist Arakawa and Poet Madeline Gins believe that these kinds of environment are slowly killing us, but it makes so much sense. There is no surprise that people who spend much of their day in buildings that lack visual stimuli or simply colour, lack motivation and have an increase in negative emotions. As a result of this discovery, they created an apartment building called the Reversible Destiny Lofts in Tokyo with the intention that it would reverse aging. The duo believed that "architecture is an extension of the body" and could consequently revive the immune system and promote wellbeing (Lee, 2016). As seen in *Figure. 1*, the interior of the building is covered in blocks of vibrant colour. They have taken a very extreme approach in comparison to the grey buildings that they are trying to combat, this may not be realistic for day-to-day spaces and some people may not want this extreme aesthetic within their homes. But, it doesn't deny the fact that there is truth behind this project. A literature review investigating the effects of colour in the work environment concluded that there is strong evidence that colour plays an important role in our behaviour, specifically wellbeing, mood and performance. It was discovered that green promotes the most positive emotional responses and can be linked to happiness and relaxation (Savavibool et al., 2018).



Figure 1. Reversible Destiny Lofts by Arakawa and Madeline Gins

This next section surrounds the question ‘Why do I make?’. I have already covered that the Biophilia hypothesis plays a role in why I like to create nature-based designs and how that means that others will benefit from them as well. The idea around social connections is another reason behind why I make, sharing the joy that my work emits with an audience and creating conversation and connections. Even though I create as a solo, there is still a feeling of belonging and feeling close to other people when conversations arise about my work. I think I first found this feeling at my third year degree show, I hadn’t ever received that amount of praise from strangers before as I had on this day. But, it was the only time my work had been displayed to a large group of people outside of the university. It really affirmed that I was on the right path and it encouraged my development. Since then, I have been longing for the conversations about my work and why I create it, because there is a special meaning behind it and I want people to hear it. This is why I have explored three-dimensional work. The positive feedback last year mainly surrounded the mural and it was here that I realised that I love creating large-scale pieces that create impact and it was my first insight into the idea of immersion. I know that I wanted to build upon this during MDes and push my practice further. *The Water’s Edge* three-dimensional stitched mural surrounds the idea of immersion. Using the same narrative and motifs to the home interiors collection, this outcome uses full colour and is intended for public spaces where a maximalist style is more desired. Examples of these spaces are restaurants such as Giggling Squid and The Ivy that are covered head to toe in pattern and extreme decoration. Referring back to social connections, this project enables me to connect with people in different ways. When someone buys my designs to put into their home, we share that connection with each other on a daily basis even though I am not physically there. But, they can be reminded of me as the designer and the narrative behind the work. Also, within public spaces there is now a connection between everyone within that space surrounded by the work, as opposed to just between myself and the customer. The work catches the attention of hundreds of people within the day, reaching a larger audience and making a larger impact. This side to the collection is bespoke where a connection is built between myself and the customer, combining both of our ideas with their input on colour, scale and theme. It is simply their ideas and I am bringing it to life which is an exciting and special concept.

The ideas behind this body of work were a result of the Research and Innovation module, where I referenced Clare Celeste Börsch as being one of my main inspirations due to her three-dimensional, immersive scenes recreating nature. Further influence of my creative process is the work of Catherine Bertola. Captured in her *If Walls Could Talk* wallpaper, seen in *Figure 2*, leaves are lifting away from the surface in which she describes them as “coming to life”. This perfectly describes the idea behind why I want to create three-dimensional outcomes. As much as nature can be perceived through drawing and painting, the physical qualities which make nature so special is lacked. However, three-dimensionality can mimic the natural forms within nature so that it can be ‘experienced’ by the viewer and somehow feel that we are within it. Due to this, I feel that there is a larger impact compared to a flat image. This is why I have built upon what I have achieved previously, I stated that within my third year I discovered that creating high impact pieces such as murals was a path that I wanted to continue. But, I questioned how I can elevate this further and these discoveries lead me to my answer.



Figure 2. If Walls Could Talk by Catherine Bertola

Similarly, her installation *Everything and Nothing*, seen in *Figure 3*, features bending flowers and foliage that lift away from the wall's surface. The piece recreates William Morris' 'Marigold' wallpaper and decorates a wall inside the V&A as part of the 'Out of the Ordinary: Spectacular Craft' Exhibition. I appreciate the modern recreation of this historic wallpaper, she has preserved the elements that make Morris' wallpaper recognisable but adapted it in a way that elevates it for different uses, but we can still enjoy the original motifs. It reminds me of that way that I have used the same motifs for wallpaper suitable for the home and a wallpaper for public space but I have elevated it by building on top of the surface. It is that idea of keeping the original and then reinventing it for another purpose.



Figure 3. Everything and Nothing by Catherine Bertola

Claire Coles' work reflects similarities to the work above, instead she uses stitch as a fixture for collaged papers, fabrics and leathers. As seen in *Figure 4*, *Dancing Reeds* features cut leather that is machine stitched onto a wallpaper. My work, seen in *Figure 5* features layered laser cut elements stitched onto a printed wallpaper ground.



Figure 4. Dancing Reeds by Claire Coles



Figure 5. Stitched Mural

Continuing with the topic of why I make, I previously wrote about the connections that making brings but now I am going to discuss the journey. Earlier, I discussed the concept of joy and how I aim to bring that inside of others' homes through my designs. I now wish to speak about the process of creation and how it brings me joy just as much as the finished piece. Finding your 'why' is discussed as an important discovery within creativity. Burns (2021) mentions that it leads to a sense of purpose and people 'light up' when doing something connected to their 'why'. In agreement, within his article Jenkins (2024) states that finding meaning is a key principle to craftsmanship. I believe that discovering a deep understanding about my work and why I create it leaves me with motivation and a passion to create, where I can explain to people my 'why' which this piece of writing has discovered.

Peter Korn's *Why We Make Things and Why it Matters* expresses his insight on the process of creation, his perspective emphasises the significance of creativity and craftsmanship within our lives. The act of making allows for creative expression, he explains that crafting enables us to access our creative side where we can create physical outcomes that encapsulate our thoughts and feelings (Korn, 2017). Laser cut and stitch are the two most prominent processes during the creation of the three-dimensional wallpaper. This creative process has required a lot of trialing and testing which meant I could refine by methods. Jenkins (2024) says that mastering your skill means investing time into perfecting the process, and it ensures that each creation showcases your expertise and enthusiasm. Along the journey, things didn't turn out as easy as I thought they would be. To ensure that the laser cutter cut my motifs in the correct place I needed to cut a plain piece of paper first to then use as a stencil for my final motifs, you can see how I have placed my motifs underneath the stencil in *Figure. 6*. There are general alignment issues when laser cutting which left my cut motifs with harsh white edges. I overcame this by adding a colour bleed around the motif before printing so that any shift when cutting isn't seen.



Figure 6. Laser cutting Process

A Critical Reflection of The Process and Design Outcomes

When I was creating samples I realised that the three-dimensional motifs needed to be printed on the back because the white layers were very harsh to the eye. To overcome this, I UV printed a solid colour on the back of the motifs, resulting in flow within the mural without being interrupted by harsh white spaces. An option was double-sided printing the painting which is more realistic, but after trialling this and realising that the printer has alignment issues I knew this wouldn't work.

For my future development, I would add extra free space each side of the design so that I can overlap each panel. I realised that this may be an issue when I had printed them all out, and during the degree show set up it was difficult to overlap because the motifs were close to the edge. Due to hand cutting each panel and the nature of the paper thickness a white line is visible between each panel, I will need to refine this. It was not an option to print a larger scale of paper as I would not have been able to stitch it. This process was a learning curve and has been an essential lesson for my future progress.

Acknowledging the timescale of the project allowed me to stay on track with each process, I wrote a timetable at the beginning to follow, see *Figure 7*. Painting is time-consuming and it is one of the first things I needed to do to begin designing. I purposefully set aside the first couple of weeks to paint and I timed myself for each, knowing that it took approximately a full day or two for each painting I aimed to get every painting finished by week 5. This target allowed me to prioritise finishing the motifs as if I was working to a deadline, because I knew I would have kept painting until a later stage when I needed to spend this time developing outcomes and designs. Ideally, the project would have consisted of more motifs and paintings so that the hero design was busier and I could have even had multiple. I wish that I could have represented more of the range of flora and fauna within wetlands, the collection could have had more breadth. Despite that, something I feel that I did well within this project was creating a successful hero design. I have always been familiar with this concept but somehow didn't achieve it previously. The design includes all components so as a result, my coords are recognisable to the collection and the collection is clear and cohesive. My influence was Kit Miles and the way his designs have flow and movement, I altered my way of painting for this reason to be compositional rather than separate motifs that appear blocky.

TIME MANAGEMENT			
Week 1- 5 FEB to 9 FEB	- Paintings - Trend researching on WGSN - Seeking inspiration from designers and brands	Week 6- 11 MARCH to 15 MARCH	- Test printing colours on digital fabric printer - Print final patterns on fabric printer (to size and a4 for sample book) - Begin changes/updates to website, LinkedIn and CV - Record in a research journal
Week 2- 12 FEB to 16 FEB	- Paintings - Research visits - Colour research and begin to compose a colour palette	Week 7- 18 MARCH to 22 MARCH	- Test print wallpapers for correct colours - Print any final wallpapers - Begin promotional material (Lookbook)
Week 3- 19 FEB to 23 FEB	- Scan in existing paintings - Trial 3D outcomes with these images - Test laser files, ways of printing and laser cutting, and stitch methods - Create a wallpaper screen image with multiple separations - Test print this - Decide on fabric choices - Fabric dye tests- seeking correct colours	EASTER Week 8- 25 MARCH to 29 MARCH	Pulling together portfolio boards to be printed after Easter
Week 4- 26 FEB to 1 MARCH	- Continue paintings - Redoing wallpaper prints to correct colours - Begin pattern making- heroes and coords	EASTER Week 9- 1 APRIL to 5 APRIL	- Finalise any remaining patterns and designs so that they are ready to print - Work on finalising CV and promotional materials (Lookbook) - Test print lookbook
Week 5- 4 MARCH to 8 MARCH	- All motifs to be completed by this date - Begin working on hero patterns and outcomes - Testing compositions of hero outcome (laser cutting and stitch included) - Begin making coords	EASTER Week 10- 8 APRIL to 12 APRIL	- Send off lookbook to be printed professionally (multiple copies?) - Touching up sketchbooks
		Week 11- 15 APRIL to 19 APRIL	- Printing final remaining wallpapers and fabrics - Aim to finish hero 3D piece
		Week 12- 22 APRIL to 26 APRIL	Finish portfolio boards
		Week 13- 29 APRIL to 3 MAY	Presentation prep
		Week 14- 6 MAY to 10 MAY	- Time for last minute changes - Time left to focus on essay - Presentation prep

Figure 7. Time Management Timetable

Throughout this module, I have fulfilled the feedback that I received from Research and Innovation and Hacer. I have successfully refined my sample making, by confidently using the industrial sewing machine to secure my three-dimensional elements in a neat, secure way. Within these modules I made smaller samples, but now I have increased the scale in which I am working with and that is something am proud of. I have developed upon previous successful achievements, my two-dimensional third year mural and built upon this exploring three-dimensionality and immersion. The journey hasn't ended, I still intend to keep practising and refining this practice. I need to ensure that the work I produce is suitable to purchase, for example the wear and tear while stitching the lengths. The process and ground knowledge has been nailed down I just need to continue refining the professionalism but this is work that will continue into the future of my design career.

The body of work that I have achieved has added variation to my portfolio and I can now showcase that I can design for different styles and markets. I have achieved a home interiors collection consisting of wallpapers and fabrics aimed at a very specific market of English Country Living. I fulfilled this through keeping to a concise colour palette, consisting of earthy greens, greys and neutrals after researching into how relevant brands, such as Sanderson and Colefax and Fowler use colours. The colour palette is extremely important in telling the story, and this is something I discovered along the journey as initially I kept to my personal style of bright and bold patterns. I learnt that I needed to reel this in because I wasn't designing for a particular market at this point, I was simply designing what I liked. In addition to altering the colour palette, I went through a lot of editing processes to 'mute' my motifs so that they fit into the new style that I was working for. This module has taught me how to analyse collections, considering style and colour. Previously, specifically talking about my third year major project I didn't think about this at all and just went with what I liked. My decision print my wallpaper designs onto lining paper ensured that I achieved the soft heritage style that people would desire inside their homes. After testing my designs on doubleweight matte paper which comes with the printer I made the decision that this wasn't suited to my project. But, it was extremely suitable for the bespoke piece since I was aiming to achieve bold, detailed designs.

My Future Trajectories

Deciding to split my project into two pathways allows me to explore more options for my future. I am going to begin by applying for internships within print and pattern to gain experience. The Graduate Symposium sessions resulted in exciting opportunities that I have decided to take up, I have already sent applications to Matalan and J Rosenthal and have therefore become familiar with adapting my portfolio to different brands. I am in contact with the careers service within UWTSD who will teach interview skills, improving my applications and bursary support. I plan to contact Bay and Brown due to Tracey's passion and welcoming personality, I will need time after submission to adapt my portfolio towards fashion. New Designers allows for exposure to many companies who may be willing to offer internships, if not it is still valuable to be able to exhibit, talk about my work and network with like-minded designers. I want to visit more industry events such as London Design Week, Decorex and Surface Thinking to approach brand owners to engage in conversation, seek inspiration and to simply network. I have visited London Design Week and experienced a friendly, welcoming atmosphere from each of the brands' showrooms, who were eager to engage in conversation, asking what university we were from, what we studied and our future plans. I would take a supply of my look books and business cards to give to whoever displayed in interest in myself and I know that this would be encouraged due to the

supportive atmosphere I experienced last year. This is why I made the effort to get 20 look books professionally printed so that I was prepared to have one to hand for any occasion. Within my future trajectories notebook, I have listed the contacts and addresses of brands I want to approach. Some of these are located at Chelsea Harbour permanently so I know that I can go here to promote myself. For those that aren't accessible, I have their emails which I can send a letter of introduction pitching for opportunities or a look through my portfolio. I have been in contact with the founder of French Bedroom who offered mentorship and advice following an email I sent them. This has boosted my confidence and hope for future opportunities and connections.

I aim to seek exhibition spaces so that I can expand my audience and engage in conversations about my work, my only exhibitions so far have been held in university so I am excited to showcase to a new audience. I am going to apply for Glynn Vivian Open which is a celebratory exhibition of artists and makers across Swansea. I see my 3D wallpaper being a part of this, as opposed to my home collection because the gallery focusses more on art and craft instead of design. The Animal Earth Exhibition is located in Chester and seeks artwork from artists and makers who capture our wildlife. I discovered this exhibition last year after applications had closed so I am excited to apply for my 3D wallpaper to have a place at this exhibition.

I have made a mockup page on my website to promote my bespoke design, see *Figure 8*. Once I feel that I am prepared to continue creating large scale pieces outside of university I will publish the page. I have updated my 'about me' section that explains that I am a homeware designer who also creates bespoke work and that I am open to commissions. I will need to ensure that I can maintain my current methods of practice to continue creating after graduating. I will need to buy my wallpaper lengths from print companies like Contrado or more locally, I know that Print Partnership opposite the university can print lengths. I am confident when working with large files and knowing how to separate them to print. I will need to approach laser cutting services, some options are Lasers Are Us in Port Talbot and APSM Engineering in Fforestfach. I own a sewing machine at home which I can use initially, I will eventually need to invest in an industrial sewing machine that can fit lengths within it and will stitch a more secure stitch into the layers.

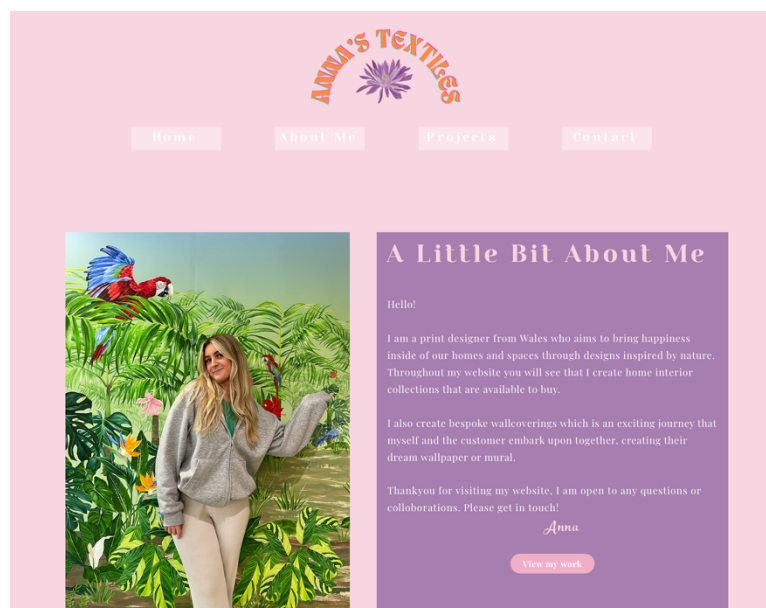




Figure 8. Bespoke Design Website Page

To conclude, the work of Catherine Bertola and Claire Coles has inspired my bespoke three-dimensional wallpaper through their stitching methods into paper, building onto the surface. I developed and refined my concepts from Research and Innovation to create a repeating three-dimensional mural aiming to reconnect our spaces with nature. That module taught me valuable lessons about professionalism that I knew I couldn't take forward into semester 2. I am proud of the development that I have achieved and it has been valuable for my future self when I continue my practice. Using the same narrative and motifs I have adapted them to create a home interiors collection pitched to brands such as Sanderson, Little Greene and Colefax and Fowler. These brands have a strong focus toward British flora and fauna within their designs and values, aiming to bring awareness to the importance and decline in species. I will be leaving university with an interior collection with well-considered colour and context so that I can approach these brands with my portfolio.

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Figures List

Figure 1. Arakawa and Gins, M. (2020) *Reversible Destiny Lofts*. [Image] Available at: <https://www.reversibledestiny.org/reversible-destiny-lofts-mitaka-in-memory-of-helen-keller/> (Accessed: 22 April 2024).

Figure 2. Bertola, C. (2002) *If Walls Could Talk*. [Image] Available at: <https://www.catherinebertola.co.uk/early-work/if-walls-could-talk/> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

Figure 3. Bertola, C. (2007) *Everything and Nothing*. [Image] Available at: <https://www.catherinebertola.co.uk/past-work/everything-and-nothing/> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

Figure 4. Coles, C. () *Dancing Reeds*. [Image] Available at: <https://www.clairecoles.co.uk/art-works#/dancing-reeds-1/> (Accessed: 6 May 2024).

Figure 5. Eynon, A. *Stitched Mural*. [Own Image]

Figure 6. Eynon, A. (2024) *Lasercutting Process*. [Own Image]

Figure 7. Eynon, A. (2024) *Time Management Timetable*. [Own Image]

Figure 8. Eynon, A. (2024) *Bespoke Design Website Page*. [Own Image]