

FINE ART

Graduate Exhibitions

RHODES UNIVERSITY



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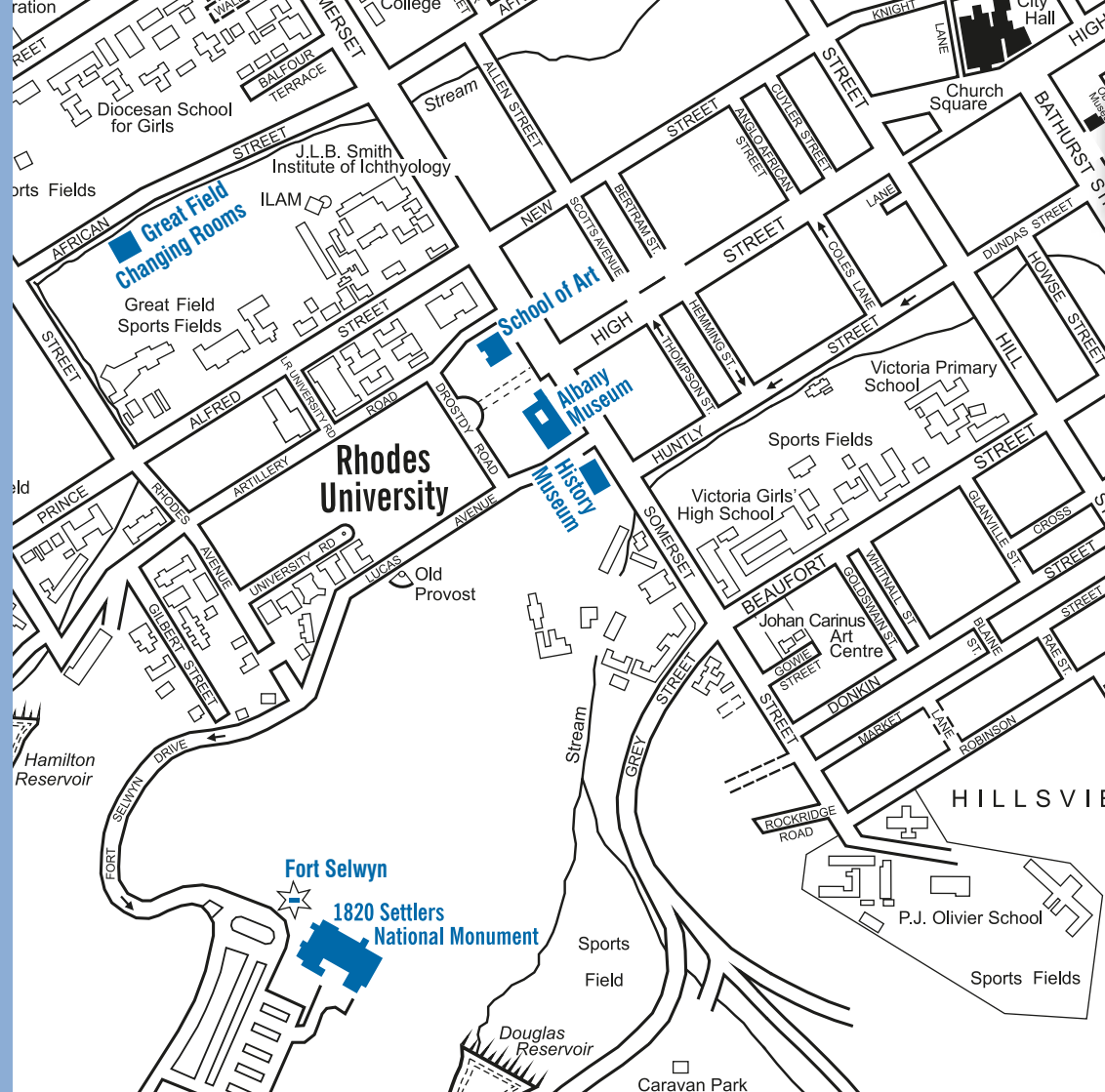
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Foreword

The graduate exhibition of 2016 represents the culmination of four years of work and dedication to the Fine Arts. If our time at the university currently known as Rhodes has taught us anything, it is to question our world and not to take the constructions of our society for granted. Art gives voice to our inner thoughts and feelings and is able to challenge our ideas for what we believe to be true. Through creation, we deconstruct, reevaluate, intervene, reaffirm, self-actualise and most importantly assert ourselves as individuals who have something worth saying.

What is most notable about the class of 2016 is the variety of art produced and the diverse approaches to art-making. This institution has allowed us all, as individual artists, to harness the best of our artistic abilities which has manifested in this graduate show where the emotional meets the socio-political. It is within this space that we have been able to find our individual voices through the freedom of experimentation and the challenge to think differently.

We would like to say thanks not only to the immeasurable help and guidance offered by our Studio Practice lecturers, but also to our Art History and Visual Culture lecturers who taught us to be critical and changed the way we understood the world. Lastly, we would like to thank our family and friends who have given us undying support throughout this process.



No. 1 Ethel Ridge

KLARA CHRISTEN

The early 2000s were characterised by extreme political turbulence in Zimbabwe. During this time my father was an active member of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a political party opposing the oppressive regime of Robert Mugabe. Political opposition was, of course, not received well by the ruling party – my father's position as Chairman of the Mashonaland East constituency came with its fair share of threats and unwanted attention.

No. 1 Ethel Ridge is the address of my family home in Zimbabwe. A home that was disrupted and unsettled through much of my childhood, due to my father's involvement in politics. This exhibition deals with this threatened home-space, it chronicles the invasion and subversion of a space that is supposed to be stable and safe, into something that became quite hostile. The paintings speak of a merger between the inside and outside worlds, where the outside threatens to claw its way into the inside, tuning private space into a more public realm. The veranda seen from the windows becomes an in-between space – containing elements of both inside and outside, bridging the gap between the two spaces and indicating a permeability and fluidity of boundaries. The paintings in this exhibition become imagined, fantasy-type constructions in the mind of a child, who, confronted with a changing home environment, is yet not fully able to comprehend the situation, processes and pieces things together in an unrealistic, distorted way.



MAIN FINE ART GALLERY



Static

CARA MICHELLE
STIRTON

The closest relationships are most often found with a small circle of best friends, with your significant other, and with your family. These interpersonal relationships require the most effort to nurture and maintain.

Communication is a complex process that can be described in simplified terms by a 'Sender' and a 'Receiver' who exchange messages containing ideas and feelings. Each person receives information in different ways and therefore we each have our own realities, which are actually very divergent worlds due to our different perceptions. Ours would be a perfect world if communication could transfer from one mind to the other in a flawless process – free of errors, emotions and subjectivity. Unfortunately, in our world, we have to struggle with an imperfect system containing plentiful opportunities for breakdowns in communication. We are able to send and receive messages from outer space, yet sometimes we find it difficult to communicate effectively and relate to those we love.

We all experience these breakdowns in communication,

whether it be with an acquaintance or with someone you love. Oftentimes in the home there are periods where our response to a breakdown, is to block all communication as a coping mechanism. Though my parents have been happily married for 30 years, as in any relationship, there are times where there are breakdowns in communication. In my photographs and films, I have covered the heads of my parents, my best friend and my boyfriend in tinfoil. Tinfoil (used to preserve and protect food in the home) is here a metaphor for how we might block communication at the time of these breakdowns. The preservation of these relationships is extremely important to me, and is something that causes anxiety when they start to spoil.

Personally, the touch of tinfoil makes me shiver and feel physically uncomfortable, but through the medium of stop-motion I am able to manipulate the material and change it, showing the everchanging nature of these interpersonal relationships. Though it may cause me physical distress, I am willing to go through whatever it takes to preserve and safeguard my relationship with those I love and care for.

MAIN FINE ART - SIDE GALLERY





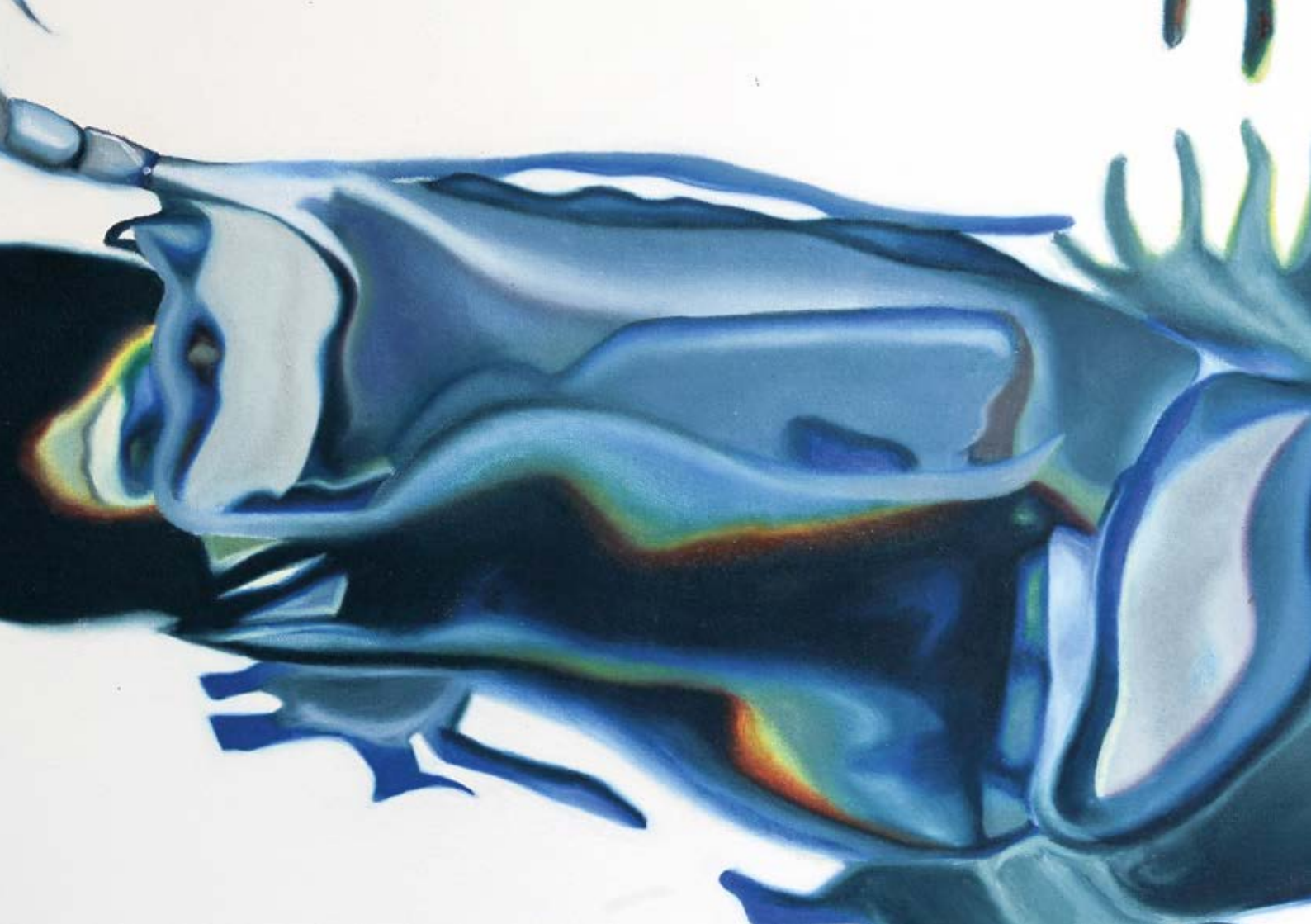
#This Flag

KERYN TATHAM

This exhibition was inspired by Zimbabwean Pastor Evan Mawarire's video *This Flag – A lament of Zimbabwe*. Posted on social media in April this year, Mawarire's words shared the feelings of many Zimbabweans who feel torn between a place of belonging and the pain of ongoing difficult economic and political circumstances in the country. In his video, Mawarire details the colour symbolism of the flag which is learned by all Zimbabwean school children. Instead of these symbols, he advocates a new colour symbolism to push past limitations, value the people of our land, represent the passionate will to survive, resolve to carry on and shine in the darkness so that a better Zimbabwe can emerge.

MAIN FINE ART - STUDIO GALLERY





The Persistence of Memory

NICOLE BOUWER

Although I loved water as a child, I was convinced that anything artificial which looked remotely alive under water was a threat. The pool at my mother's house had a blue mosaic octopus image centred at the bottom. The ripples of the water would make the image of this octopus move independently and therefore seem alive. This fear grew with me into young adulthood and developed into an irrational fear of the *Kreepy Krawly* – the pool-cleaning device. My fourth year body of work started off as a series of direct representations of this irrational fear. However, I initially did not think to link this fear to the death of my parent. I was an infant when my father passed away from a heart attack whilst swimming.

Using my own photography, photographs from my childhood taken by my mother in the 90s, and sound pieces recalling summer evenings in the Eastern Cape, I attempt to evoke the environment of that warm night in February 1995.

ALBANY SCIENCE MUSEUM - CUBE GALLERY





Beauty amongst the Chaos

KIRSTEN
ANDERSON

2010 was one of the biggest and most challenging years of my life, I fell pregnant at 16 and had to make one of the biggest decisions which lead to me giving it up. It was a very difficult time, I felt alone and scared, like I had no reason to carry on. The "what-if's" and "should-have-been's" ruled my life while depression and anger consumed me. I blamed everyone around me, especially myself. I felt something was missing in my life, a form of absence. It took me until now to realize that that 'world' I was living in was not the life intended for me, but made me into the person I am today.

Thus this collection of work is not an expression of grief or sadness but acceptance and self-forgiveness. How one needs to go through the bad to see and appreciate the good in life. To see the beauty amongst the chaos and destruction. This experience will always be a part of me, not as something that defines me but as something that empowers me and drives me to be better.

ALBANY HISTORY MUSEUM - GRAHAMSTOWN GALLERY





Ubuzwe

SIKHUMBUZO
MAKANDULA

My artistic practice is concerned with an intersection of the arts, politics, and public space in a post-apartheid South Africa. This body of work seeks to deconstruct a *Diktat*, echoing an order or decree that must be followed and this is aided through use of symbolic gestures and apparel. The *Diktat* is constructed as 'I is another', a quote by Arthur Rimbaud, portraying multiple identities. The exhibition *Ubuzwe* is produced in a time when I am grappling with the question: what is the foundation of the South African nation? Through installation, video and photography the "foundation myth" is critiqued and represented through institutionalized forms of remembrance, including commemorative monuments and public statuary. This is in light of how South African people came to be defined and produced through the politics and culture of nationalist struggle. In conceptualizing *Ubuzwe*, I approached facts not in their crude facticity but through the contemplation of which facts acquire immediacy and how. This exhibition is a psychological, historical and ideological meditation on the facts and myths of nationhood.

ALBANY HISTORY MUSEUM - ALUMNI GALLERY





Tjank

MICHAL KRUGER

TJANK is a body of work explores my relationship to the constructed figure of the iconic white Afrikaner male through the subversion of the exclusionary masculinised practice of rugby.

The exhibition is situated in a site specific location of a sports field bathroom in order to evoke the exclusive spaces in which traditional constructed masculinities exist. Through the process of dissecting the space and critiquing the associations that are attached with it, my work shifts the expected narrative that permeates through the confines of the bathroom by forcibly situating myself into a masculinity to which I have not been able to gain access.

The space is divided into three sections. The first depicts the ridged structure of masculinity through the visual framework of rugby, and serves to illustrate the search for myself as a missing and excluded member of the team. The second section which serves to represent my relationship with my late grandfather whose resistance to my own brand of masculine performance resulted in me becoming his only grandson to be excluded from his will. Finally, the third section is dedicated to a deconstruction of the relationship I have with my own masculinity and the pressures I feel to conform to the aforementioned structures that define society's definition of what it means to be a man.



GREAT FIELD - CHANGING ROOMS



Dissolution

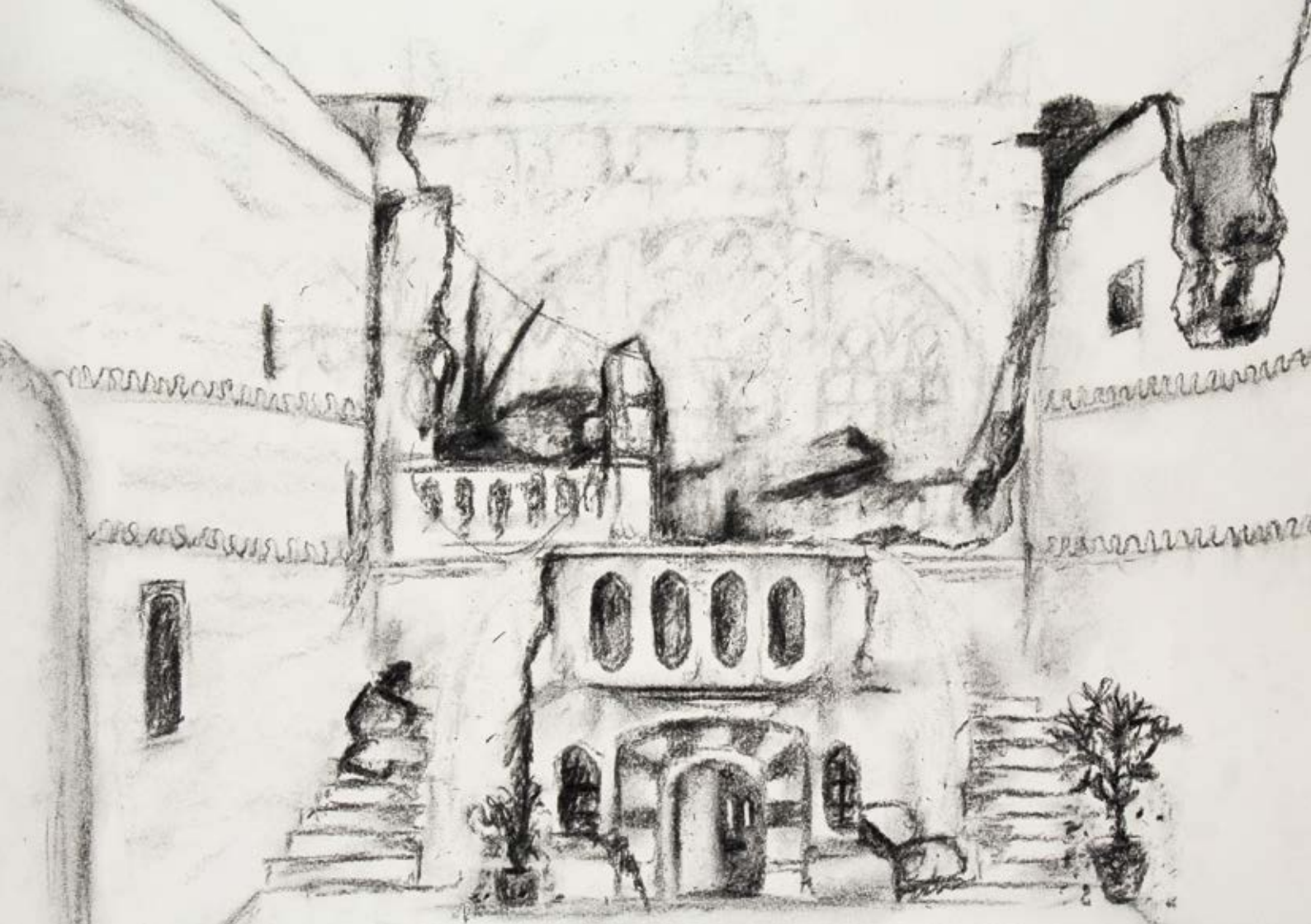
EMILY SWAN

Dissolution: A term defined in multiple compositions as an undoing or death of that which was previously bonded.

My work explores an understanding of those ideological constructs which everybody is moulded to from the moment they are born. There is not so much an escape from these 'masks' as an awakening towards their existence and a recognition of their role in defining our positions within society. The waxy composition of these masks speaks to the concept of preservation in the sense that these layers are perpetuated by humanity every day. The discomfort which is evident on my own face in wearing such a 'mask' shows how we are made to conform to such issues. This, along with the fact that I am not dead despite the evident relation to the death mask, exposes this inability to escape such constructs and how, in conforming to them, we die to some degree.



FORT SELWYN



Death Blossom

MEGAN THOMSON

Images of urban desolation and ruin are customarily present when documenting war and terrorism. They are present in the media so often that one almost becomes numb to them. Susan Sontag, when referring to imagery of devastation and war states (2003):

[These images] show how war evacuates, shatters, breaks apart, levels the built world... To be sure, a cityscape is not made of flesh. Still, sheared-off buildings are almost as eloquent as bodies in the street... War tears, rends.

War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War dismembers. *War ruins.*

Through my work I hope to highlight the destruction and violence that can transpire by recreating actual images of buildings and cityscapes that have been obliterated or merely reduced to rubble due to bombings and terrorist acts. The images that I have quoted in my videos are taken from various locations and time periods, as I did not want to focus on recreating or commenting on a specific incident, but on the aftermath of bombings and terrorism in general.

This destruction and change is emphasized in the juxtaposition of the first and last frames of these videos, as they start off with the creation of an intricate and whole building or scene and progress to an image of destruction and ruin. The flickering form, a by-product of the use of charcoal and the stop frame animation, this further references the unpredictability and uneasiness of war and terrorism.

MONUMENT GALLERY





Dissonance

CHRISTINE SMITH

// The greatest art symbolises not those things that we have observed so much as those things that we have experienced" – W.B Yeats

My exhibition, a collection of short videos in an installation arrangement, questions how connected to the subconscious we are. This installation is an exploration of the viewer's psyche and each person will experience an array of different emotions subconsciously as no psychological frame of mind is the same. The videos carry undertones of anxiety and points of tension followed by calmness to create a sense of the uncanny. With moments of pending pressure juxtaposed against subtle, banal passages, emotion and moods are exposed.

Initially influenced by the work of Gregory Crewdson, Richard Tucshman and Edward Hopper, I found their exploration of the surreal in everyday life became a recurring theme in my visual research. Their images capture moments in which it isn't clear if something has just happened or is about to.

Taking this idea of an implied narrative further, I use found footage from pre-existing films that perhaps a viewer can recognise and twisted them together to create something different, showing how things can always change and be manipulated.

MONUMENT BASEMENT





Out of View: Flesh and Fabric

HANNAH BRAY

This exhibition explores the behind the scenes production of fashion, examining its self-indulgent excessiveness, using a variety of mediums that blur the boundary between fashion and art.

The progress leading up to the completed fashion product is usually out of sight. The executed object gets recognition, whereas the ideas and planning are kept unnoticed and invisible, but its importance is crucial to the meaning and production. The stitches reveal the backstage of the production, construction and creation.

The sewing elements give an impression of the artistic skill that goes into it. The zippers allow access into the dressing, and show how clothes can suffocate its wearer and speak for itself.

The artists'/designers' studio is reimagined in all its chaos, colours and intensity.

Out of View: Flesh and Fabric further examines the production of the set standards for specific types of bodies within fashion. The different poses within fashion photography expose the constant refiguring of the ideal: constraining, constricting and shaping the body.

"More is more and less is a bore" – Iris Apfel.

"The dress must follow the body of a woman, not the body following the shape of the dress"

– Hubert de Givenchy.

"A woman's dress should be a like a barbed-wire fence: serving its purpose without obstructing the view" – Sophia Loren.



MONUMENT - DRESSING ROOMS



Blood Flood

SAMANTHA
MATTHEWS

Family quarrels are bitter things. They don't go according to any rules. They're not like aches or wounds, they're more like splits in the skin that won't heal because there's not enough material.

– F. Scott Fitzgerald

My grandfather was a wildlife painter. He painted beautifully tranquil scenes of elephant herds roaming across the veld, hippos appearing out of the water, kudus standing in strength in front of the baobab tree. Growing up surrounded by his works, I was instilled with a deep appreciation of both art and nature. In my eyes, his works have always epitomised an idyllic view of the wild; peaceful, serene and in harmony. It is for this reason that I chose his imagery as a starting point for my venture into the nature of family conflict.

In innocence, one assumes the family unit to be much like my grandfather's wildlife observations: depictions of a space without hostility, without aggression, without loss. Yet, as is the reality of the natural world, there are moments of intensity, angst and fear that unsettle this perception. My paintings are intended to display these distressing moments of conflict, moments that seem to contradict our understanding of what a family should be.

That said, I encourage one not to forget the strength and beauty that both nature and family hold; the bravery that is ignited by fear, the protectiveness caused by threat, and the appreciation that comes from loss.

MONUMENT GALLERY IN THE ROUND



FINE ART

Graduate Exhibitions

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