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We pay respect to the peoples of the Darug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations where our campuses are located.

We acknowledge that the teaching, learning and research undertaken across our campuses continues the teaching, learning and research that has occurred on these lands for tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge and pay our respect to the Elders past and present.



Master of Art Therapy

Integrating Arts & Therapy | Exhibition Archive 2024



Jasmine Anderson



Eugenia Argiopoulos



Larissa Barretto Costa



Melinda Berliner



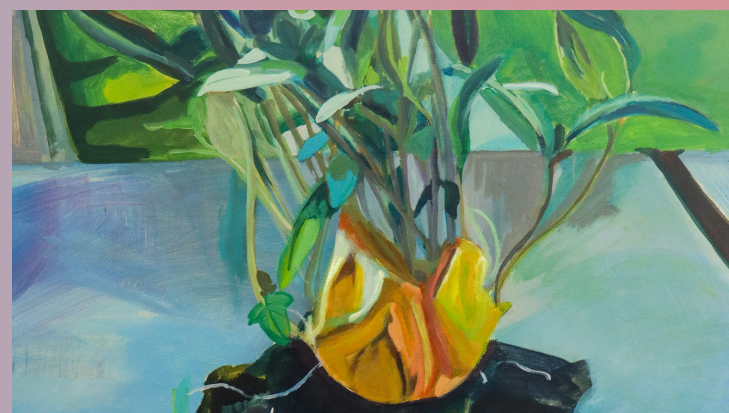
Georgie Bitmead



Alissa Bradford



Zea Chesworth



Debora Cho



Shan Shan Chow



Master of Art Therapy

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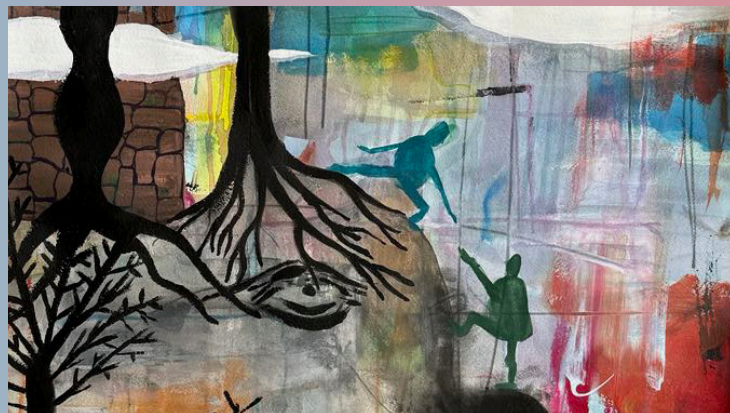
Lauz Condren



Xanga Connelley



Jo Copping



Hannah Sophia Corbett



Stefanie Corrente



Rhodian Deetlefs



Alesha Elbourne



Renée Felsch



Petra Fonteyn

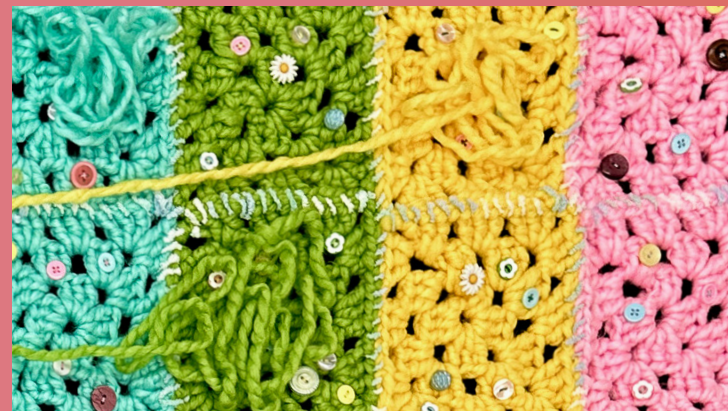


Master of Art Therapy

Integrating Arts & Therapy | Exhibition Archive 2024



Helen Frank



Sarah Geerin



Olivia Ghobrial



Emma Gibbons



Gala Grahovac



Anita Grassy



Camille Green



Alexa Halim

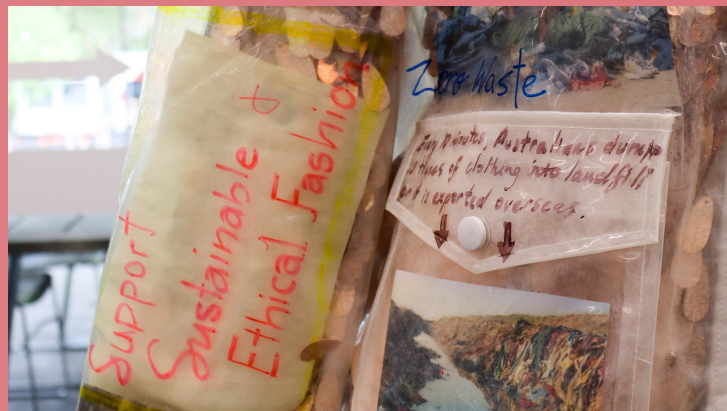


Yi-Chen Huang



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Olivia Iezzi



Sophie Iliadis



Czerny Ip



Heather Jenkins



Garry Jones



Maddie Kalde



Julie Kang



Jashandeep Kaur

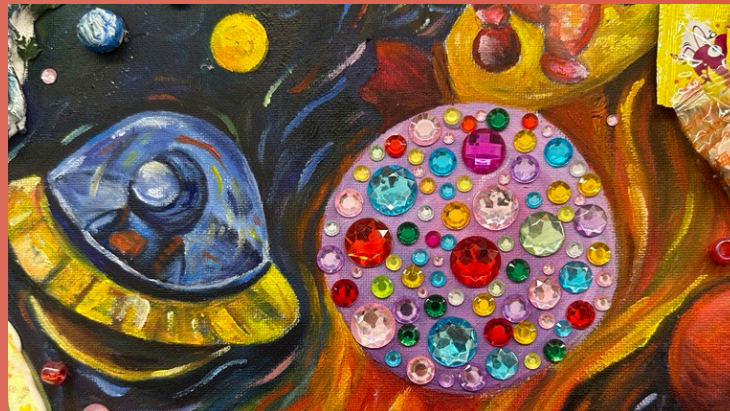


Esther Kim



Master of Art Therapy

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Pei-Tzu Lee



Lucy Lee



Yoyo Lee



Pui Yan Lo



Fiona Loeb



Maddie Moss



Karen Munce



Sarah Nassereddin



Shana O'Brien



Master of Art Therapy

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Hayley Oniku1



Karen Orr



Ally Pennings



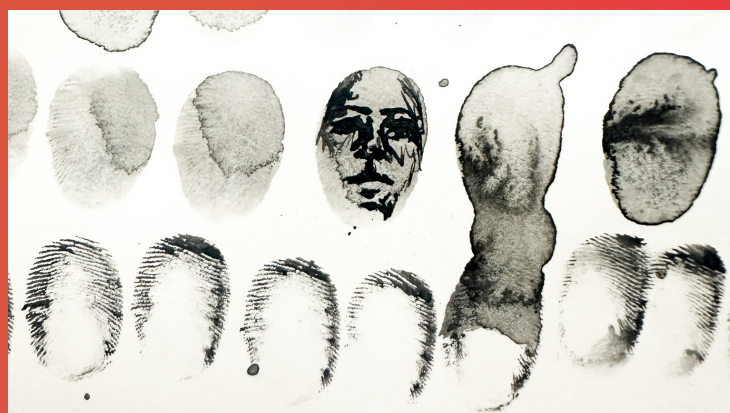
Jasmine Perini



Anisha Pradhan



Dot Przybylski



Cathryn Scarano



Mihika Girish Kumar Shrinivas



Jane Stadermann



Master of Art Therapy

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Maurine Venus



Suddhasri Wallace



Julia Wang



Elisa May Ware



Conor West



Julia Westwood



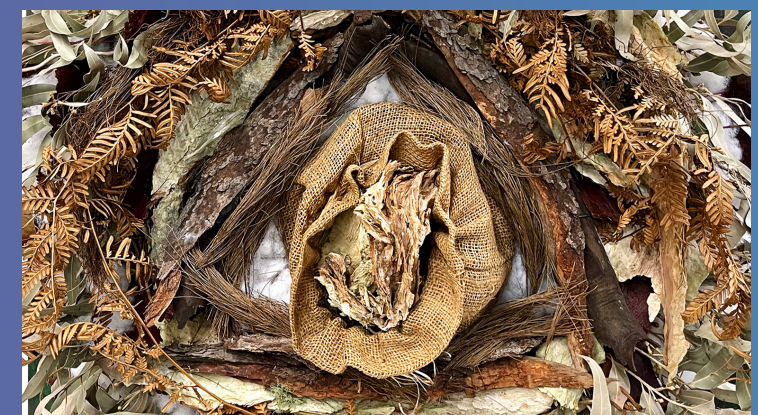
Karina Wikamto



Sylvia Winiarski



Vero Zheng



Faye Zhuang



Jasmine Anderson
The Earth tells its stories, to wings above the sky, 2023
 White raku clay, underglaze, glaze, and acrylic paint
 30 x 25 cm (each)



Jasmine Anderson
The Earth tells its stories, to wings above the sky, 2024
 White raku clay, underglaze, glaze, and acrylic paint
 30 x 25 cm (each)

This body of work investigates working with children in art therapy. I made this in response to my work teaching art to primary school-aged child.

My sculptures incorporate both abstract and figurative elements. I sought to capture the magical realism of surrealism. There are three pieces in this installation.

I drew inspiration from the stylistic conventions and motifs seen in the artworks made by the students. Other overarching artistic references also include Jenny Watson, Leonora Carrington, Louise Bourgeois, and the abstract forms I made at art school in 2022 which explored the concept of the emotional body.

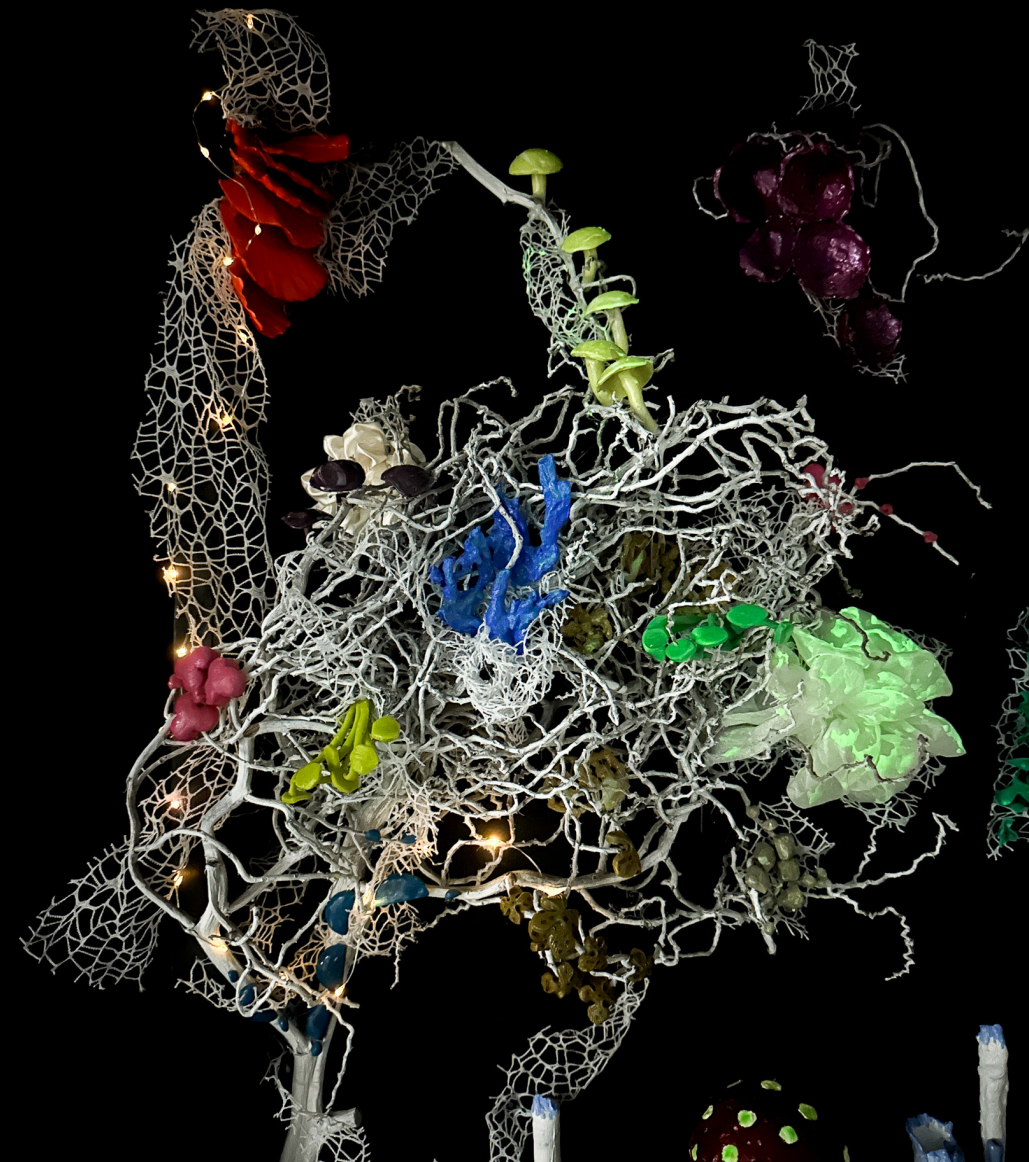
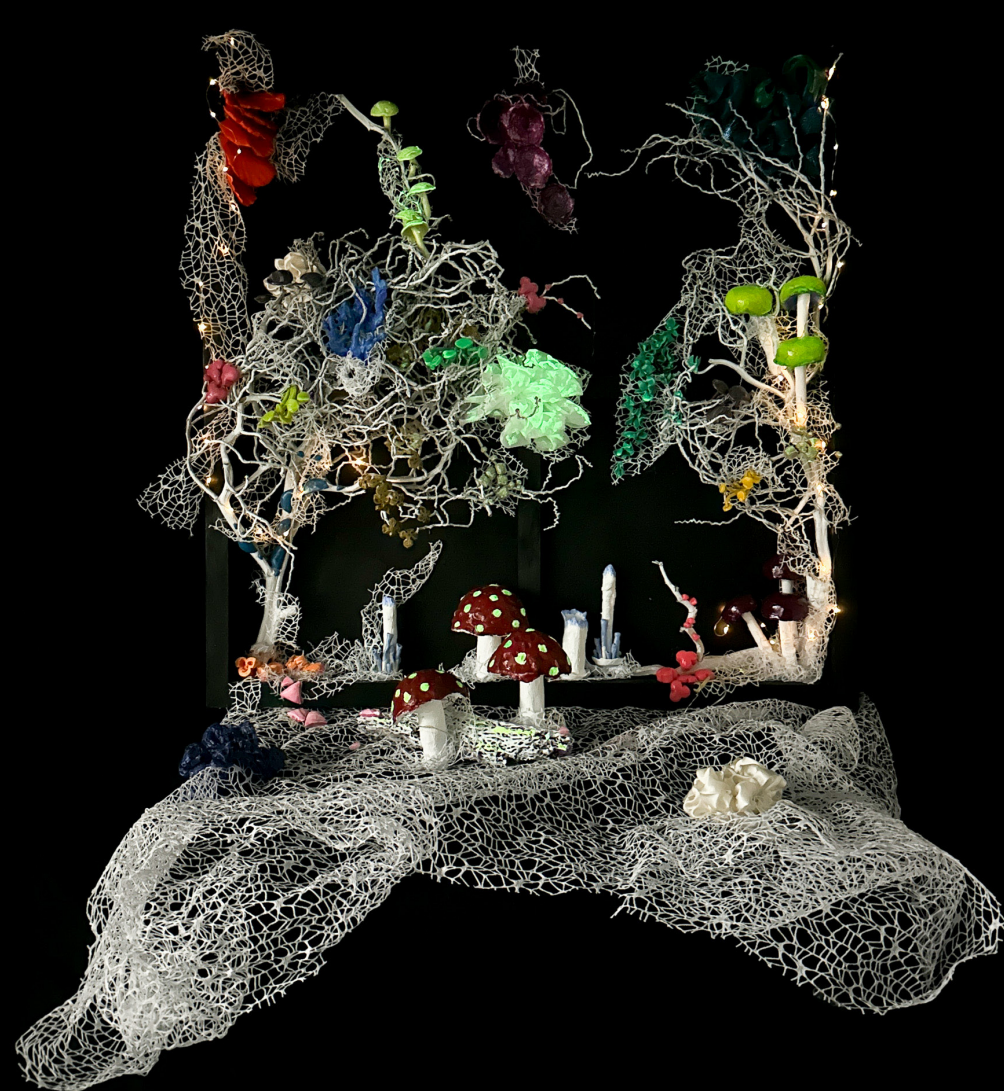
The art-making process was used as a form of critical investigation of developmental theories. I considered how using clay with children can support their development for self-expression, emotional regulation, and improvement of fine motor skills. Additionally, I have explored attachment theory and the concept of art as play.

'The world' is comprised of two surreal landscapes that allude to a toy play set. One piece has a separate small cow sculpture, making the work interactive and playable. Thus, speaking to the interchangeability of art and play therapy. The title of the 'the World' reference's the tarot card of the same name. I found relevance in the World card, as it represents the integration of a journey, which is a common goal of therapy.

Due to a mistake in my construction, the first attempt of 'the World' came out of the kiln broken in pieces. After the initial disappointment, I considered the Hyland Moon's understanding regarding the uncertainty of clay and its relevance to art therapy. I found beauty in the imperfection and unfinished product, as some things are out of our control. The incident was a learning experience leading me to consider possible circumstances where a child's artwork may not work out as they had hoped or expected. The importance of process over product is commonly discussed in art therapy, where a perfect finished artwork is not the goal. Ultimately, integration as a concept expanded through reconciling both the positive and negative possibilities of ceramics, both for me and the client.

The second sculpture 'Guardian' is a made-up creature perched above an abstract base. The figure incorporates features of an angel and a bird. I have observed similar sketches of winged figures in the class I teach. The form of the base is informed by the loose mark making of children and artistic representations of abstract forms such as the paintings by Joan Miro. 'Guardian' simultaneously responds attachment theory and concept of being a secure attachment figure to clients. These theories have been symbolically depicted through the angel, who is watching over 'The World'. The symbolism emerged organically through making. The process was akin to the poetic and often intuitive nature of children's imaginative artmaking. Hence my title of this project which emerged from a poetic contemplation of the finished product.

Overall, the project prompted the consideration of the similarities and differences between being a teacher and an art therapist. Whilst providing insight into understanding the demographic I am working with. Additionally, clay's potentials to be both therapeutic and disappointing.



Eugenia Argiropoulos
Mycelium Heroes, 2024
Mixed Media - Fibre, Ceramic, Polymer Clay, wood, Acrylic
Paint, Resin, glow paint and Resin, Acrylic ink
50 x 55 x 30 cm

Mycelium Heroes

Mycelium searches and grows under our feet,
popping out mushrooms to challenge and defeat,
helping to break it all down for the soil to absorb,
so calm and healing will return to the earth once more.

As Trauma and hurt need healing too,
Art therapy will support the challenge through,
helping and guiding this hurt inside,
to overcome and challenge the experience defined,
as Mycelium heroes strive to heal,
so do art therapists in their field.



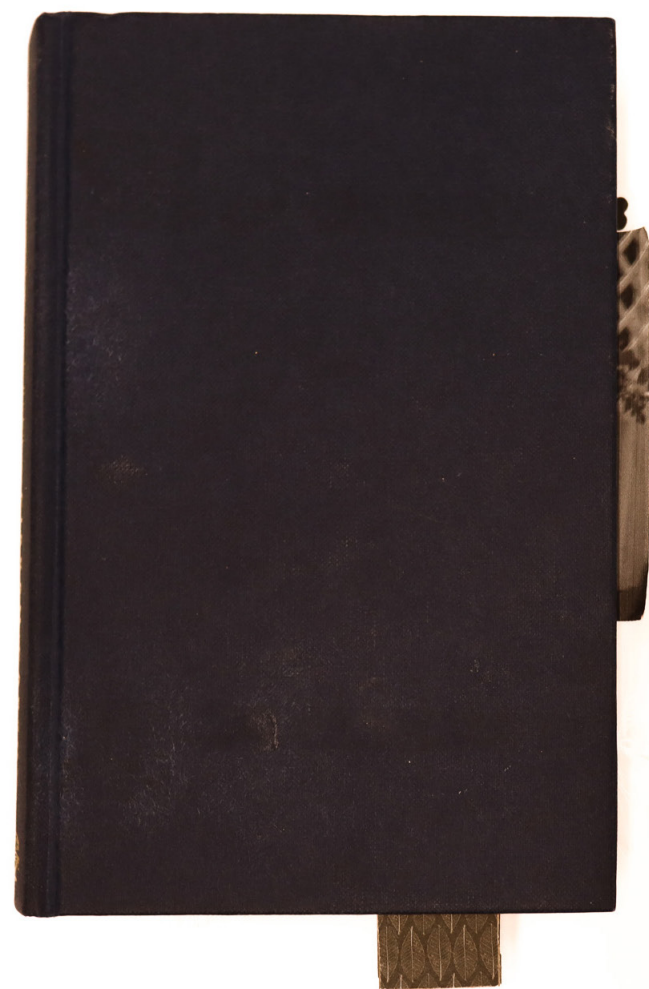
Eugenia Argiropoulos
Mycelium Heroes, 2024
Mixed Media - Fibre, Ceramic, Polymer Clay, wood, Acrylic
Paint, Resin, glow paint and Resin, Acrylic ink
50 x 55 x 30 cm

Our earth is being polluted from waste and rubbish produced daily, even though we recycle not everything is captured, but scientists have found that an interesting organism called mycelium grows underground and produces flowers called mushrooms. These help to breakdown the branches, dead plants, barriers and other matter in nature, to clean its waste, and heal the environment.

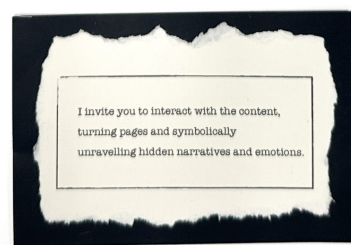
My sculpture is about domestic violence, and the trauma that comes from it. Art therapy is a way that can help people find an avenue to heal through creating art and receiving the support and guidance to discover ways to cope and heal from the emotional trauma. They can create and find solutions to break down barriers and fears of what they have experienced and through art therapy help discover ways to heal.

My artwork is a metaphorical representation, using mycelium and its mushrooms to represent domestic violence and the healing through art therapy. The sculpture is created by connection through materiality. I wanted to keep with an environmental theme in my artwork and used "found objects" an important step of keeping with nature. Andy Goldsworthy an artist who creates in the landscape by using found objects, was an inspiration to my artwork, as my theme is about recycling matter in the environment. I felt using discarded branches fit with the whole theme of mushrooms. Catherine Hyland Moon says that natural materials and the environment "allows us to be present through sensory experiences". Not only present but immersed in the experience of finding, manipulating and changing to portray the imagined.

I also wanted to use a frame like box as to contain the elements of my environment while the transformation of healing begins metaphorically, I use the teachings of Kaufman who says, "boxes can connect us with symbolism;" and my interpretation is a place of contained healing, through art therapy.



Larissa Barretto Costa
Narrativas Desvendadas, 2024
 Altered book
 15 x 30 cm



Larissa Barretto Costa
Narrativas Desvendadas, 2024
 Altered book
 15 x 30 cm

Narrativas Desvendadas is a personal exploration of intertwined themes of motherhood and divorce using an altered book as a metaphor for rewriting my personal story and also an invitation for reflection of the role of women in raising a child. I use the altered book as a vessel to revise identity through the sensory and physical manipulation of materials. I invite the public to interact with the content, turning pages and symbolically unravelling hidden narratives and emotions.

My choice of media is an integral part of the conceptualisation of this artwork. With the minimal colour palette and using black and white personal photographs and found images, I am aiming to evoke a sense of timelessness and emotional depth. The photographs include pivotal moments, such as holding a wedding anniversary rose bouquet, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. With the selected black and white found images, I aim to offer a reflection of the significant aspect of the role of women in caring for a child. Fabric is incorporated to explore the tactile and comforting aspects of motherhood, also referring to the fabric of life that can be torn and mended. Gesso and black ink is utilised to create layers, texture, and to conceal content, alluding to the complexities and scars of emotional experiences. Typography, acrylic paint, collage, paper engineering, and ephemera invite and guide the viewer through the narrative, emphasising key elements and personal content. I have also shared with the viewers transfer images of pages of my personal diary from that period of my life, and as I looked back at the pages of my old diaries and reflected on that very painful moment of my life, I felt compassion for my old self and admiration for how far I have come. This whole process made me feel more alive and certain of my artist identity and the art therapist I want to become.

Key Influences:

I draw inspiration from different artists, such as Frida Kahlo's personal diary, the way Kahlo's uses her art and personal diary to process her losses and pain, and Kiki Smith's works and the use of the female body through different lenses. The use of diverse materials and focus on themes of vulnerability and strength have influenced how I processed materiality and the intersection with the internal and external body and the object in my work. In terms of psychotherapeutic concepts, Julia Kristeva's theory of the abjected body and Donald Winnicott's notion of transitional objects inform how I use the altered book as a vessel to revision identity through the sensory and physical manipulation of materials. The abject body relates to the feelings of repulsion and desire that arise from the dissolution of intimate relationships. Winnicott's transitional objects theory influenced my choice of materials, with the altered book and fabric being used as transitional objects, holding an emotional message and assisting in processing feelings. Furthermore, Hyland Moon's discussions on the materiality and media in art therapy have influenced my choice of using a book as a place where different contents could be addressed and be used as a symbolic vessel to contain images, memories, histories, and process feelings.



Melinda Berliner
Containment Juxtaposed with Flow, 2024
Installation: mixed media, found objects
Total 2D: 210 x 120 cm | Total 3D: 21 x 40 x 21cm



Melinda Berliner
Containment Juxtaposed with Flow, 2024
 Installation: mixed media, found objects
 Total 2D: 210 x 120 cm
 Total 3D: 21 x 40 x 21cm

Looking through the therapeutic lens, I am dedicated to ‘containment’ and ‘holding’ a safe space. Providing a framework of unconditional support with empathy in a creative environment is paramount to my ethos. Aligned with the Systems Theory model of materiality (Lusebrink, 1990): when I am fully invested in my artmaking, my choice of materials are characterised by intuitive openness, spontaneity, ‘happenstance’, and holding honesty to internal and external stimuli. The result is a union between the media and the message.

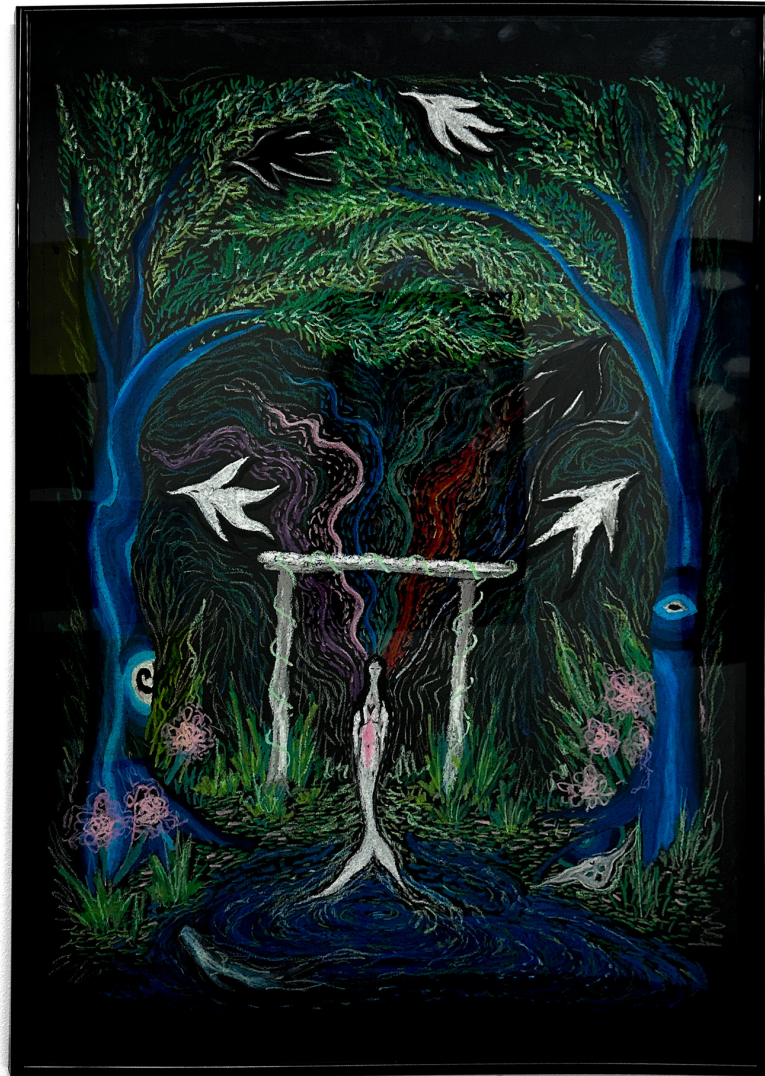
Fascinated by plumbing within urban environments, my brass bath tap became a catalyst for my artwork. Embedded in familial history, hot water has provided comfort to three generations over four decades. Replaced by the ‘new,’ the brass tap, symbolic of a ‘container’ and a ‘sentinel,’ now stands bolted to a box. Reminiscent of Duchamp’s (1916) and von Freytag-Loringhoven’s (1917) prefabricated objects of the Readymade Art Movement, this heirloom has been raised to the accolade of ‘art.’

Materials really matter. In *Containment Juxtaposed with Flow* (2024) the handmade malleable copper wire tap is, metaphorically, the brain’s plasticity. Through therapeutic change the brain can form new synaptic connections, resulting in behavioural transformations. The unfired clay tap symbolises strength and fragility of the human condition. This teeters on a box filled with human hair. Boxes reinforce the therapeutic assertion: ‘containers’ are small enough to hold struggles, and large enough to carry complex difficulties.

Through introspection, I sought artists for spontaneity, fluidity, emotion, and materiality. Mike Parr works across artforms, examining self in contrast with codes and structures. Jim Dine passes a mirror and cannot look away. The mixed media of Brett Whiteley aligns with the ink and brush works of Frances Lymburner and William Kentridge. Jody Graham combines traditional media (pencils, brush, ink, and charcoal) with contemporary tools (bones, sticks, berries, and drills). As in a therapeutic modality, I lay trust in the process.

Being fully involved in a challenging, skilled, and creative endeavour, I enabled a ‘state of flow,’ a construct introduced by psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi (2004). Knowledge of time dissipates, degrees of self-consciousness shift, a sense of new existence, creativity and feelings of wellbeing emerge. My works on paper evolved. The pivotal mixed media image ‘flows’ to a ‘sea’ of faces. Within binary structures, the tap (a repeated motif) is both the therapist and the client. As a ‘container,’ the therapist ‘holds’ a safe space. With autonomy the client guides the process by turning the cog. Transformations may occur and healing may transpire. Creating discourse, the faces reflect the diversity of the client population, materiality, and therapeutic practice. *Containment Juxtaposed with Flow* (2024) is installed in a small room, a secure safe environment, reflecting a dialogue between all parts.

A space for attaining well-being.



Georgie Bitmead
Little Mermaid Untangling, 2024
 Oil pastel, white pencil, led pencil on
 black stonehenge paper
 42 x 59 cm

In my artwork *Little Mermaid Untangling* I explore how narrative therapy influences my personal artmaking and how it can be applied within art therapy. When reflecting upon my personal experiences with art therapy I always practiced through the lens of narrative form. I found this useful in processing traumatic events from my past and the process of restructuring memories through symbolic visual medium to be empowering and cathartic. Sheridan Linnell discusses how narrative therapy can be useful for a variety of patients who have experienced trauma, exploring this in depth with her case study of her young client Leticia. My narrative art therapy practice began in my childhood, and I strongly believe in its ability to aid children in processing trauma through an imaginative, creative, and autonomous medium.

My artwork explores resolved trauma from my childhood, using reoccurring symbols, from my art practice and memories, to construct an empowering reflection of a difficult period. The construction of my piece was influenced by the simple domestic compositions and reinterpreted childhood memories of the folk artist Maud Lewis. I depicted myself as a spirit mermaid, a nod to a favourite childhood doll, conducting magic from the safety of the portal of my childhood swing that still exists in my parents' home. The golden elm and oak tree on either side symbolise my parents, creating a safe but limited alcove in which I dwell. The pool of water from which I emerge represents the depths of depression and anxiety from which I surfaced, simultaneously watering the growth of the garden in my hollow.

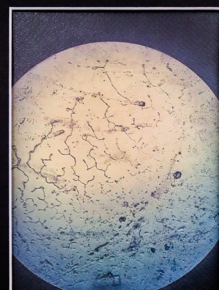
The symbolism present within this work was inspired by Linnell's writings of symbolism in narrative therapy and the artwork of Russian-French Modernist Marc Chagall. He used symbols relating to archetypes of human life to explore interior realities of consciousness, incorporating religious themes to process life experiences. This led to the fluid, ethereal stylistic choices within my work and incorporation of the black and white spirit birds. The birds reoccur in my personal artwork, and through the creation of this piece I connected their relationship with my childhood experiences with religion. The incorporation of these birds within the setting and retelling of my reprocessing of childhood trauma was enlightening and affirming.

I chose to use oil pastels as these were a common medium in my childhood art. I felt my inner child was channelled as I drew from the safety of my adult vessel. The buttery, smooth sensation of the pastels and bright hue on the black paper felt satisfying, and the closest I could get to materialising my imagination. I chose the black paper to symbolise the subconscious backdrop of the controlled processed narrative memories I created in colour.

Susan Hogan discusses the idea of our identities being continuously shaped by our relationships throughout our lives. This knowledge of continuous reshaping and rewriting of our individual stories is incredibly comforting and has played an important role in my journey of both narrative and art therapy. Through my art practice I have found personal strength and trust in my ability to process experiences and developed a stronger sense of my own identity.



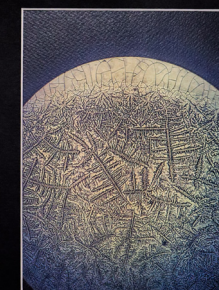
Alissa Bradford
They come in Three's, 2024
 Photography on watercolour paper
 110 x 120 cm



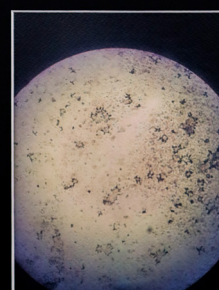
Dry Eye



CO₂



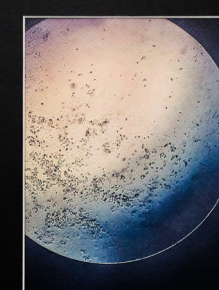
Joy



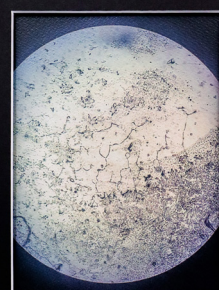
Morning Dew



Onioned



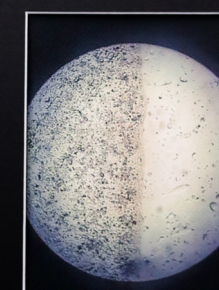
Anger



Terra Nova
 (new earth)



Dendrites



Overwhelmed



Alissa Bradford
They come in Three's, 2024
Photography on watercolour paper
110 x 120 cm

"Tears are the medium of our most primal language in moments as unrelenting as death, as basic as hunger, and as complex as a rite of passage" – Rose Lynn Fisher.

'They come Three's' explores my powerful journey of studying tears under a microscope and their majestic presentations. After experiencing some deep personal losses, I was curious to explore this concept, alongside my desire to let this project become the interface for where art and therapy meet. Considering the abundance of tears I had to work with, I wanted to exemplify their hidden beauty and the expressive stories they shared. As I began to study the biochemistry of this concept, I learnt about the unique qualities of the three different types of tears we shed.

Basal Tears are released to lubricate, protect and provide nutrients to the ocular surface of the eye. Reflex Tears are produced to provide relief from irritants, that can be from chemicals or environmental factors. Psychic Tears are expressed when we feel emotion, including those that are connected to joy or sadness. This study became the framework for how I developed my concept. Inspired by the work of Rose-Lynn Fisher, my journey looked at viewing tears through a microscope. Breaking from traditional materials, I used a 400x magnification lens and squares of thin glass that acted as a container for holding this lachrymal fluid. The construct of embodiment gave myself permission to use my tears as part of this process, as they touch me, I touched them. Shirley Riley, a known art therapist, advocates for using bodily functions in art as it allows activation of the brain in ways that words and images cannot express.

The process itself was challenging when I needed to scrape the glass against my cheek to catch a single tear. By using the glass squares, I was able to place them onto transferable sliders to view under the microscope. To capture the images, I used my Google Pixel phone to photograph each tear in its pure form – unedited. As recognised by artist Judith Rubin, I discovered how different materials, including a microscope, thin glass and a camera can be used to find our authentic selves.

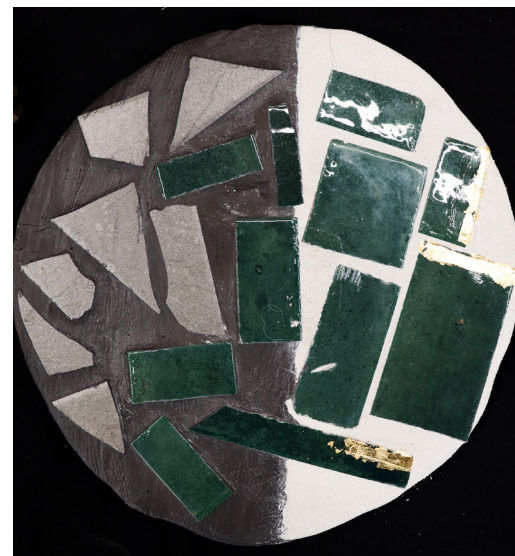
I decided to distinguish my photographs by placing them into three separate columns. My choice for this arrangement was to communicate the purpose behind different sets of tears and their distinct therapeutic quality. The first column represents basal tears, the middle shows reflex tears, while the far right presents my psychic tears. I found it interesting to learn that each type of tear is made up of different proteins and lipids but only psychic (emotional) tears contain compounds that act as a natural pain killer, helping the body to self-regulate.

By printing the photographs onto watercolour paper, I was determined to reflect the nature of tears and how they are made up of elements of water. By exploring the therapeutic possibilities of this material, it allowed me to showcase the evidence of tears as expressions of our inner life spilling like water and flowing out into our consciousness.

Through this project, my work aims to reflect the delicate nature of the collective human experience, the gateway to our inner self revealing the beauty and majesty within.



Zea Chesworth
The Gift of Suffering, 2024
 Mixed media – Sculpture – wood, tiles, wire, gold leaf, cardboard, spray paint, found organic objects – feathers, seed pods, leaves & bark.
 120 x 40 cm





Zea Chesworth
The Gift of Suffering, 2024
 Mixed media – Sculpture – wood, tiles, wire, gold leaf, cardboard, spray paint, found organic objects – feathers, seed pods, leaves & bark.
 120 x 40 cm

My Art therapy project, “Suffering is a Gift”, was inspired by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pottery with urushi lacquer. The broken pieces, reassembled with gold highlighting the cracks, are transformed into something new and more. I see this as relating to post-traumatic growth and healing with repair, as opposed to discarding, showing a journey of growth and transformation.

I have created a range of pieces as a metaphor for how people can become trapped in their own suffering, but with help and understanding (via art therapy) can grow by approaching their trauma from a different perspective.

The broken pieces highlight my journey through artmaking, creating change and resilience in something that was once broken. Throughout the semester, experimenting with different materials such as woodwork, tools (sanders, jig saw), tiling, gold leaf, and finding and molding natural materials to create sculptures aided in my understanding of the steps of the journey to transformation. The final work symbolises a journey of change and growth after trauma (suffering).

Kintsugi – treating damage and repair as part of the history of an object, rather than something to disguise – suggests Carl Jung and his essay “The Gift of Suffering”. I aimed to link that to people’s trauma then healing through artmaking. Jung explains two types of suffering that are unavoidable parts of the human condition – meaningless and meaningful suffering – and that to be able to pay attention and understand the suffering can teach people about themselves. Working through the pain can lead to growth and transformation.

The 3D tree was initially the main symbol, but ideas kept sprouting from there. The black burnt tree being a symbol for growth from the barren gray land (tiles) the gold leaf and flowers blooming symbolising transformation after adversity. During artmaking I experienced how gold leaf can transform, despite its fragility. It made me realise how being vulnerable can lead to growth. The artwork’s meaning didn’t change over time but the way it was symbolised did i.e. the change from broken pottery to the tiles showing a journey. The grey small, shattered pieces slowly grow bigger each steppingstone and become green symbolizing growth; the final tile is covered in gold leaf to show the beauty in the journey of “shattered” to “new and resurrected”.

I want my art therapy practice to illustrate that it is not what a person or thing was/has been, but what they can become through understanding their suffering.

“Great suffering can be borne if it is experienced as meaningful, but much less can be experienced as intolerable if it seems meaningless” (Learmonth, 1994, p.19)
 Hence, the gateway to our inner self revealing the beauty and majesty within.



Debora Cho
Lessons from an amateur gardener, 2024
 Acrylic on canvas, watercolour, clay, found objects and plant matter
 101 x 76cm; 108 x 38cm; 33 x 24cm; 45L x 65H x 45cmW; 29L x 22H x 14cmW; 13L
 x 19H x 4cmW; 7Lx 9H x 7cmW



Debra Cho
Lessons from an amateur gardener, 2024
 Acrylic on canvas, watercolour, clay, found objects
 and plant matter
 101 x 76cm; 108 x 38cm; 33 x 24cm; 45L x 65H x 45cmW;
 29L x 22H x 14cmW; 13L x 19H x 4cmW; 7Lx 9H x 7cmW

Including elements of nature in art offers unique opportunities to capture and examine the connection between nature and creativity. Nature not only inspires creativity but it's processes with its aliveness and diversity can be seen in relation to human nature. Pamela Whitaker, the director of a nature based art therapy program called Groundswell, in Ireland, suggests that perhaps human nature and ecology are connected in some way in the bio-fabric of the universe.

This selection was inspired by artist Janet Laurence's interest in the integration of art, science and creativity. The array of artworks and collected items aims to capture how we can relate to and learn from the processes of nature and its processes of growth, decay and resilience. The brightness of the acrylic paint allowed for capturing the excitement of new growth. The succulent cuttings portrayed by the watercolours capture the dreamlike quality of opportunities yet to come to fruition. They are like specimens awaiting an experiment much like the cuttings in the test tubes that remind us not to despair if more than several fail to propagate. The moth eaten aloe vera in re-purposed watering can represents the possibility for something, once thought to be a man's rubbish, to make a comeback as a statement and symbol of hope. The money tree adds an interactive element representing the utilisation, perhaps even exploitation of nature.

All elements come together, in sending a message of hope, mindfulness and resilience.



Chow Shan Shan
Budding Into Fruition, 2024
Yarn, old T-shirts, broken vase, pipe cleaners, and wire
30 x 30 x 38 cm (approx)



Chow Shan Shan
Budding Into Fruition, 2024
 Yarn, old T-shirts, broken vase,
 pipe cleaners, and wire
 30 x 30 x 38 cm (approx)

Budding Into Fruition illustrates the progression of my identity as an artist and an upcoming art therapist. Viewed from left to right, I used the development stages of sunflowers as a metaphor for my growth from childhood to today.

The budding flower outside the vase is in her inflorescence emergence stage when her yellow ray florets are visible but still closed. This represents my childhood when I struggled with feelings of abandonment and belonging. The green leaves, receptacle, and stem are made with a found object – my old T-shirt cut into yarn – to signify repurposing my “unwanted” self for a new work of art. The flower is positioned in a fetal posture for self-protection, yet there is a sense of openness as her head is lifted slightly, her stem is loosely linked to the vase, and her growing ray florets are made with new yarn. The past hurts from my childhood motivate me to strive towards working with traumatised children in my art therapist practice.

The young sunflower is in her flowering stage with all her ray florets extended. This represents my youth as a new creation, excited about life and blooming with naivety. The flower’s receptacle is still green and without seeds, like her lack of life experiences. She is created with store-bought yarn where there is barely any trace of her old self. The youthful vigour allowed for the experimentation of different interests before discovering the power of art in healing.

The third sunflower is in the stage of fruit development when all the disc florets are grown. This represents my time as a young adult, entering the workforce and going on extended travels to learn the fine arts and immerse in various cultures. The colours on this flower are bolder as she gains confidence and starts to contribute to society through her work. The boldness during this stage contributed to the change in my life’s direction towards a pathway in the arts where I presented my artworks as an artist in exhibitions and worked in an art museum as a programmer.

The dying sunflower is in her stage of ripening when the seeds darken and harden, and her ray florets start to wither. This represents my current self who quit my stable job to study art therapy so that I could follow my passion and learn to use art as healing for others and myself. Unlike the second and third flower, I used found objects once again to create the yarn for the creation of this sunflower; this is to signify the acceptance of my whole self – the favourable and unwanted parts of me. The seeds dropping from the sunflower hints to the fruits of my efforts that are to come after becoming a certified art therapist.

The vase used is also a found object that was repaired in a way that mimicked the Japanese art of treating brokenness with gold. Using a repaired vase to hold the flowers together sums up the theme of this artwork – rebirth, rejoice, repurpose, and reward.



Lauz Condren
Those who live in glass Houses, 2024
Acrylic paint, texture paste, pva glue,
charcoal, soil, sand, leaf litter, twigs,
ash, raw foraged clay, gesso on stretched
canvas. Pine frame and nails
123 x 90 cm

Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

This piece is my ode to Michael Heizer's Negative Megalith #5 boulder sculpture (1998), created in the same year I was born. It feels like a lonely love letter to the times that words feel too weighty for their worth. Sometimes we feel like we are bursting at the seams, stubborn, heavy, too big for our boots or as if we are lugging a giant boulder around.

Or in my case, like a giant boulder stuck in a vast white wall.

It was a pivotal moment in my budding art career as well as personal life when I stumbled across her (Heizer's Megalith). She quite literally brought me to my knees. It was as if she could crush me and swallow me up as she towered above me in all her solemn glory.
If I could have hugged her I wish I could have.

I wondered how lonely she was in the gallery as streams of crowds would come to stare in awe. I've never been moved by an artwork the same way as she did for me. It was like staring into a mirror as she stared back at me.
How could I feel so seen, so held at the same time?

There is something to be said for the incredibly vast and humbling experience of working within nature. That something as grand yet as plain and simple as a pebble, boulder or stone can say it all. We don't need fancy brushes and canvases, a well-ordered studio space and fine artist quality materials to create. We don't need thousands of dollars in debt, or a certificate to validate our human need to create and express.

Sometimes a reminder of just how small we are is just as humbling and healing as a reminder of how big and beautiful we are. A container and confinement can both be a prison and a safe space.

Creating this work has reminded me time and time again about the power of perspective.



Xanga Connelley
Physicality of water - metaphors and materiality, 2024
Mixed Media
Total artwork 120 x 100 cm comprised of seven individual works



Xanga Connelley
Physicality of water - metaphors and materiality, 2024
 Mixed Media
 Total artwork 120 x 100 cm comprised of seven individual works

Water has been recognised for its healing abilities dating back to ancient cultures, and today neuroscientists suggest spending time in or around water is hugely beneficial. In this way, the intention of these artworks is to capture the essence of the physicality of water and analyse different materials and methodologies for their therapeutic benefits. I draw from childhood memories of swimming underwater, holding my breath and diving under, to experience a sense of calm and peacefulness, as if time stands still, and it is these joyous feelings associated with water that marine scientist Wallace Nichols coined the Blue Mind. As inspiration, I draw from the photography works of Narelle Autio who encapsulates the primordial quality of being underwater, with its ability to defy gravity, and its special properties to hold us. Notwithstanding, at the other end of the spectrum water can be dangerous and our relationship to water can be a complex one.

Each piece of work analyses different materiality and its potential to replicate the healing abilities of water as possible references for my work in art therapy. Firstly, when painting with watercolour I found it a visceral experience, when colours and forms move and change, similarly our psyches can experience corresponding effects. Additionally, through the fluidity of acrylic paints it was possible to emulate the holding sensation of water and highlight human connections, reminiscent of a psychodynamic relationship, where transference or counter-transference can be curative in art therapy.

Moreover, Donald Winnicott highlights the value of play in therapy and whilst I played with acrylic paint, I connected to my inner child and the three children jumping in the water emerged. This felt liberating and similarly, it is thought when we swim and frolic in the sea neurotransmitters course through our blood and can have a profoundly beneficial effect on us both physiologically and emotionally.

Correspondingly, the underwater video works of artist Bill Viola inspired me with his accounts of the beauty and harmony of underwater vision, lights and colours. My response was a drawing in pastels of a girl floating along, the way pastels are malleable created an empathic relationship with the ethereal nature of water and a dreamlike quality.

In addition, the silver chocolate wrappers I incorporated into the re-contextualisation of Hokusai's 'Wave off Kanagawa', painted and stitched on polyester satin, could be regarded as a metaphor for illumination, as John and Julia McLeod argue, metaphors can be a powerful healing technique in therapy. Plus, the action of sewing thread in and out of the stitching brought me into the here-and-now as a calming and peaceful action.

Overall, these artworks create a body of work to foreground the way different materials and art-making can be a healing mechanism within the realm of art therapy.



Jo Copping
Suspended, 2024
 Mixed Media, fabric, paper, ink, yarn, cotton thread, shell,
 glass, leaves, seaweed, stone, driftwood
 200 x 70 x 60 cm (approx)



Jo Copping
Suspended, 2024
 Mixed Media, fabric, paper, ink,
 yarn, cotton thread, shell, glass,
 leaves, seaweed, stone, driftwood
 200 x 70 x 60 cm (approx)

salt~water~gum

The beauty and power of words – these words kept recurring in my consciousness throughout my process, evoking images and feelings of calm. I have included all these elements in my work, paying tribute to their healing properties. The multiple hanging strands are reminiscent of the tall trunks of majestic eucalypts and the soft sounds and movement of the bush. Below is the blue/green ocean, gently washing over toes or immersing wholly into the healing embrace of saltwater. These are the places that heal me, and I let them speak to me and guide me in this process.

My work explores the therapeutic relationship between therapist, client and artwork that is created in art therapy and, within this, the multiple interwoven and intersecting connections and interactions. The work embodies the idea of a space where life, outside the art therapy session, is suspended. Within that space the client is held, the therapist sitting alongside, witnessing their creative process in the here and now. This triangular relationship is represented in the upper frame and in the base sitting below. Multiple strands are suspended from the upper frame holding a collection of items made from natural materials or found objects from nature. Inspired initially by the work of Megan Cope and Kasane Low, both creating works involving multiple suspended items, I realised through my process that ‘suspended’ is how I felt about the experience of art therapy.

The crocheted cotton chain interwoven into a net like piece embodies the myriad of connections in a supportive whole. Along with the stitching done on hanging objects, this is also a tribute to what is often seen as ‘women’s work’, elevating its status, acknowledging our cultural and societal contexts.

My use of mostly natural materials or found objects from nature is influenced by the work of Andy Goldsworthy and Shona Wilson and the concept of nature-based art therapy. Through my process I spent time in quiet natural environments, consciously heightening my awareness of looking through ‘artist eyes’ at the natural world around me, creating ephemeral artworks and collecting the objects I have used in this work. Emily Kame Kngwarreye’s dyed silk hanging works inspired my experimentation of using natural materials, like rose petals, to dye pieces of silk organza, that make up some of the suspended items.

The changing effects from interactions with the surrounding environment was something I wanted to capture. The work will move and sway, affected by those elements around it, such as airflow from viewers moving past.

During the process of creating the suspended items I let myself be led by the materials and let their story unfold, resembling what happens within that suspended space of art therapy. Precious insights into our inner thoughts and feelings reveal themselves through the processes and products of our artmaking, allowing for acknowledgment, acceptance and healing.



Hannah Sophia Corbett
Crossing the Threshold, 2024
Acrylic and watercolour on paper
70 x 100 cm

Storytelling is an inherently human and therapeutic act. Sharing stories brings us together and connects us across ages, cultures and time. Stories can remind us that the things we are facing have been encountered by others before, and can help us to reframe traumatic events and challenges. This artwork is a representation of the mystical world of fairytales and myths; a world where one encounters vast oceans, dark, forbidden forests, and friendly giants that invite you on an adventure. Much like the characters in fairytales and myths, each one of us encounters trials and tribulations that take different shapes throughout the course of our lives. I believe that each person who views this artwork might have a different idea as to where these characters have come from, where they are going, and what kinds of friends and foe they might encounter along the way.

When thinking about the timeless structure of the Hero's Journey, this artwork to me represents the characters 'crossing the threshold'. They have now accepted the call to adventure and are about to leave their Ordinary World behind. Once they enter the Special World of magic and mystery, there is no turning back. I take joy in fantasising about where these protagonists might end up, how their relationship with this friendly ocean giant might develop, and what they might face deeper in the forest and the castle. These symbols and archetypes can mean so many different things to each person who sees them, and I encourage you as the viewer to take a moment and allow your imagination to explore the image and what it represents to you.

Creating this artwork was a daunting, slow, yet rewarding journey. From the excitement of collecting ideas and inspiration, to the fear of having to start, problems I faced during painting and the mentors and friends who helped me with ideas and practical tips along the way. At some point in this journey, the image emerged on the paper and I was guided by the story that it told me. The idea of having to exhibit this artwork to strangers felt very vulnerable, echoing the vulnerability felt at the start of the Hero's Journey or by people seeking help when going to see a therapist. They share their life stories and experiences with somebody who starts off as a stranger, hoping to be held, understood and seen in all that they are.



Stefanie Corrente

Branches of the Here and Now, 2024

Mixed media and found objects (Watercolours paper, hahnemuele paper, branches, wire, clips, pipe cleaners, screen printing ink, collage, drawing paper, pencils, ink blocks, oil pastels, soft pastels, fabric, tissue paper, gouache)

120 x 100 cm



Stefanie Corrente
Branches of the Here and Now, 2024
 Mixed media
 120 x 100 cm

'Branches of the Here and Now' is a participatory artwork in which the audience are invited to art-making using the here and now process. Through the here and now they are to create an artwork based on only their thoughts and/or feelings within the here and now; a way to ground and keep an individual in the present. This work explores the perspective of a client within an art therapy setting and can also allow an individual to appreciate the art-making process as it is without feeling the need to be artistic, allowing the individual to play with the art-making process keeping within the here and now.

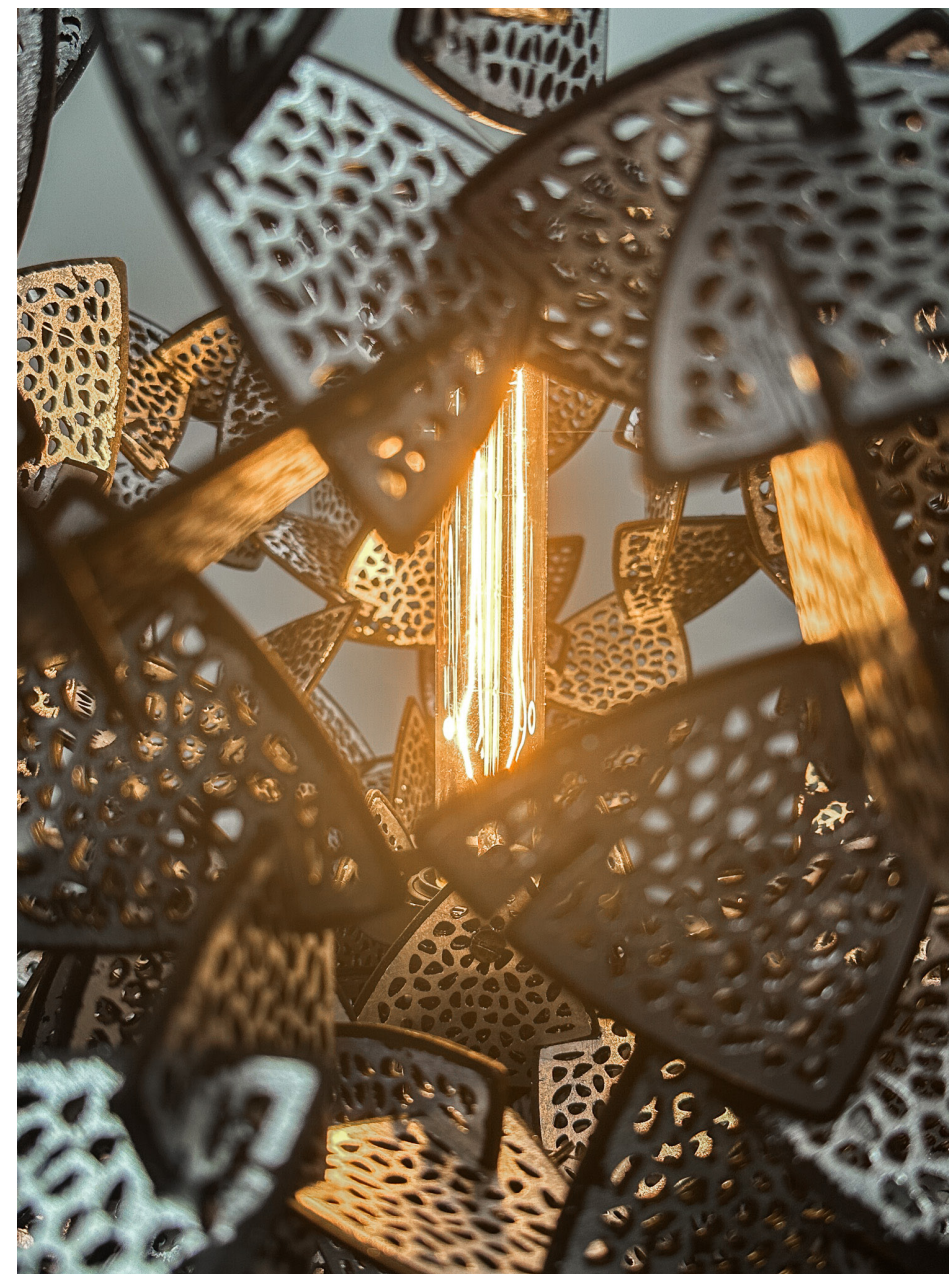
The intention within this work was an experiment with myself, as well as the audience, to explore where my art-making process will take me when focusing on the here and now during this process. Solely focusing on the here and now allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of my artistic process as well as understanding the meaning behind many symbols used within my art-making. I often wasn't thinking of an outcome of the artwork and simply creating using materials that intrigued me during the process. Ultimately in the end, allowing myself to enjoy the process in its entirety from start to finish.

Using found objects and other art materials already at my disposal, I was able to challenge this idea of creating with limits. Using found objects and materials that an individual already has access to can evoke all kinds of creativity, particularly sentimental items. The art materials I have chosen for the audience to use resemble similar materials I used within my art-making however ensuring the individual doesn't need to clean up too much at the end of their art-making, ensuring they are able to play without worrying about making a lot of mess.

I chose many found objects as often these can evoke more creativity than only art materials themselves. Ensuring that there is a lot of scope for the imagination and allow the participant to fully immerse themselves within the art-making process.

I was inspired by many artists using found objects within their artworks such as Andy Goldsworthy and his use of creating an artwork using the natural materials found in his environment, Fiona Hall's 'Paradisus Terrestris' and Rox De Luca's works using found plastic objects collected in the area she lives in. Theoretical influences include J. Rubin's writings on understanding art materials, Bayles and Orland's book *Art & Fear*, understanding the fear of art-making for individuals and artists, as well as Hyland Moon's theoretical writings on materials and media within art therapy as well as understanding the artist's identity.

I invite you to work with within the space of this artwork and create an artwork that places yourself into the here and now, grounding you into the present.



Rhodian M. Deetlefs
EMERGENCE: Trust the Process, 2024
Mixed media including paper, papercrete,
aluminium gilding foil, acrylic paint,
technical lamp components
45 x 45 x 75 cm



Rhodian M. Deetlefs
EMERGENCE: Trust the Process, 2024
 Mixed media including paper, papercrete,
 aluminium gilding foil, acrylic paint,
 technical lamp components
 45 x 45 x 75 cm

Emergence: Trust the Process signifies a shift in perspective from the artist's role as an industrial jewellery designer to that of an artist. Intrigued by the conceptual freedom and expansive scope that artmaking represents relative to the confined boundaries of a commercial jewellery designer. The artist uses this opportunity to experiment with new ways of looking and expressing himself creatively. It allows him to break free from the constraints of his controlled, precise, designerly discipline by allowing the materials and imagination to evolve the creative process intuitively.

This change in perspective from a designerly approach to an artistic mode of engagement with the media, the space, and the process became a metaphor for his journey of letting go of control as both a creative practitioner and an art therapist. He is curiously learning to surrender to the creative process as an artist. Equally important, as an art therapist, he must trust the therapeutic process by allowing clients to find their paths and discover their stories. It's not about leading the way but providing the space and opportunity for them to develop their perspectives.

This evolution in creative practice reflects the transition from his earlier role as a mental health peer support worker, where he walked alongside clients as an equal, sharing the journey of recovery, to his emerging role as an art therapist, where he now focuses on creating a safe space for clients to explore their vulnerability and trust the therapeutic process. This artwork captures this pivotal, emerging phase in his creative and support practice.

He is passionate about embracing a more open and expressive approach to his creative practice, recognising how it can enhance his work as an art therapist. By embracing new ways of engaging with materials and adopting a more organic and freely expressive creative process, he not only grows as a practitioner but also inspires growth in those he supports. His choice of paper as a medium, along with the use of waste offcuts transformed into papercrete for the lamp's base, serves as a metaphor for his journey, transforming the challenges of living with a mental health disability into a strength that drives, shapes, and enriches his support and therapeutic practice.

Rhodian finds artmaking a more accessible and expressive approach to creative practice. He struggles to relinquish control of the process. He foregoes much of the planning associated with design thinking, like being challenged to trust the therapeutic process as an art therapist. However, in this struggle, he is discovering creative freedom that is forgiving, accommodating, and generally a much kinder mode of creative practice. By pairing artmaking with empathy as the art therapist's tool, he now appreciates not just an expanding creative vocabulary but a methodology of permission to associate freely with and through the creative process.



Alesha Elbourne
No place like home, 2024
 Repurposed materials
 Wall hanging 80cm x 100cm.
 Tower and house 150cm x 35cm



Alesha Elbourne
No place like home, 2024
 Repurposed materials
 Wall hanging 80 x 100 cm
 Tower and house 150 x 35 cm

My artwork entitled *No Place Like Home* was inspired by *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum written in 1900 and made from repurposed materials from the textile artworks of the late Edna Mangold. The significance of the art project and process is a therapeutic exploration of the themes home, loss (my own and Edna's family) and my disconnection from my place of birth and biological identity.

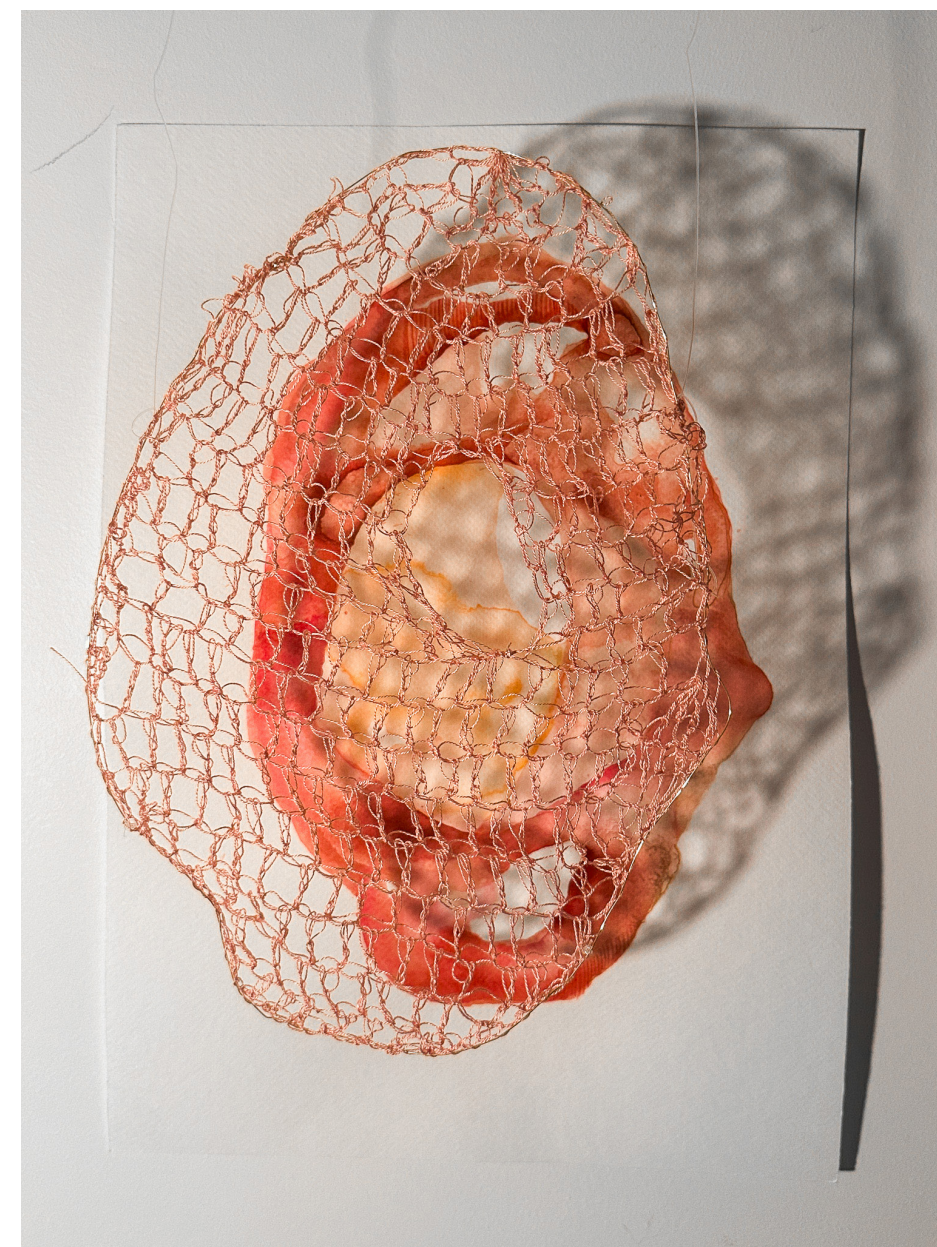
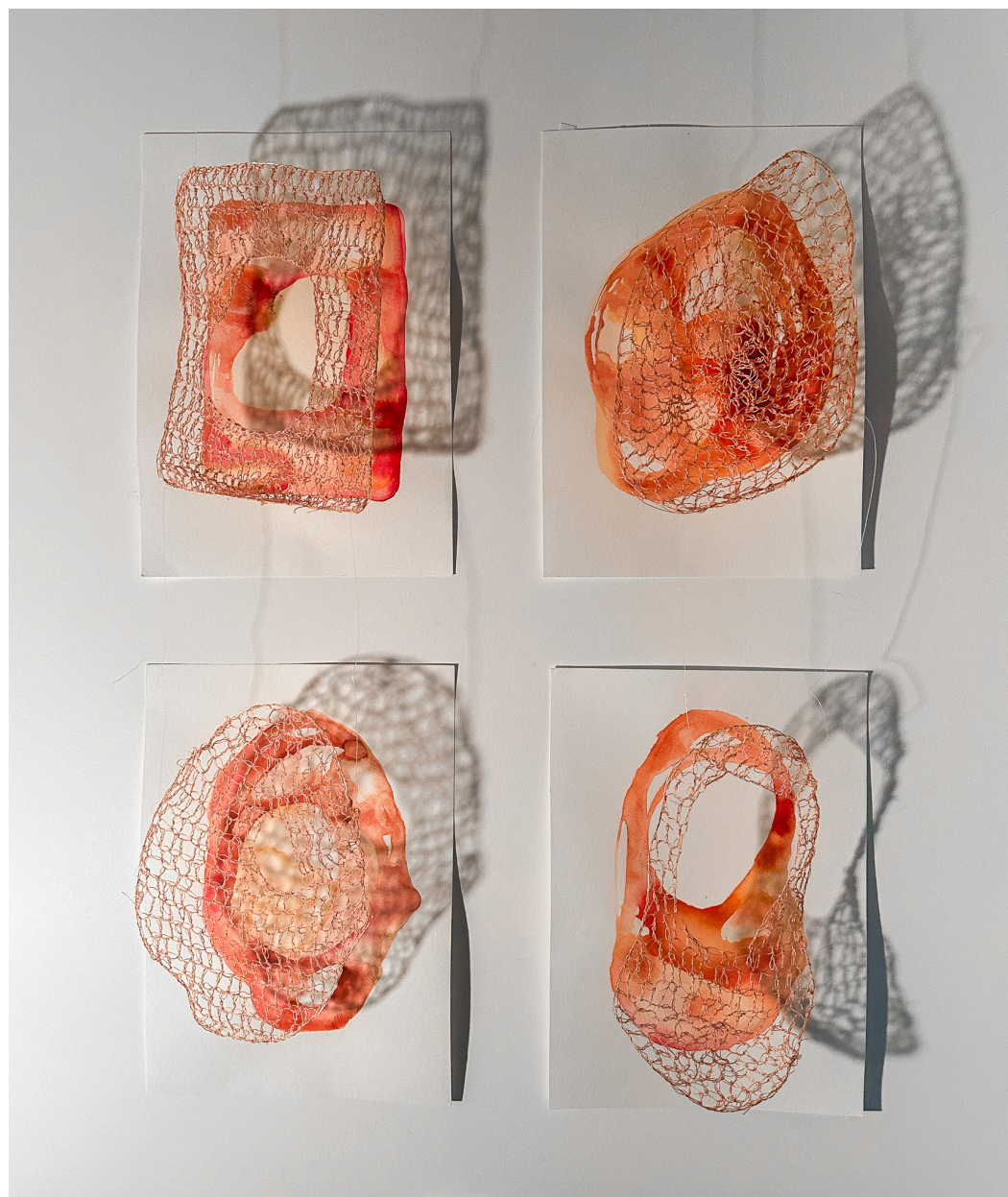
The pillar of green materials representing the Emerald City is inspired by Brooker's (2010) writings on found objects. Using donated artworks to unpick, deconstruct and give materials new life, I built a connection with their creator Edna, a beautiful stranger. The pillar is also an opportunity for our cohort of emerging art therapists to support each other and collaborate as presented by Moon (2001). The Emerald City tower stands as an offer of artistic comradeship as we move forward into our art therapy studies in 2025. I invite students and facilitators to create a green Waste 2 Art piece for my community sing-along production of M-G-M's 1939 movie *The Wizard of Oz* in 2025 with Melting Pot Theatre Bundanoon.

The yellow brick road design was influenced by 'kintsugi' and the beauty in imperfection and the broken becoming unique. Recovering the materials from unwanted, dusty, aged and odoured artworks, allowed me to connect to the difficult, gritty and subconscious feelings I was exploring.

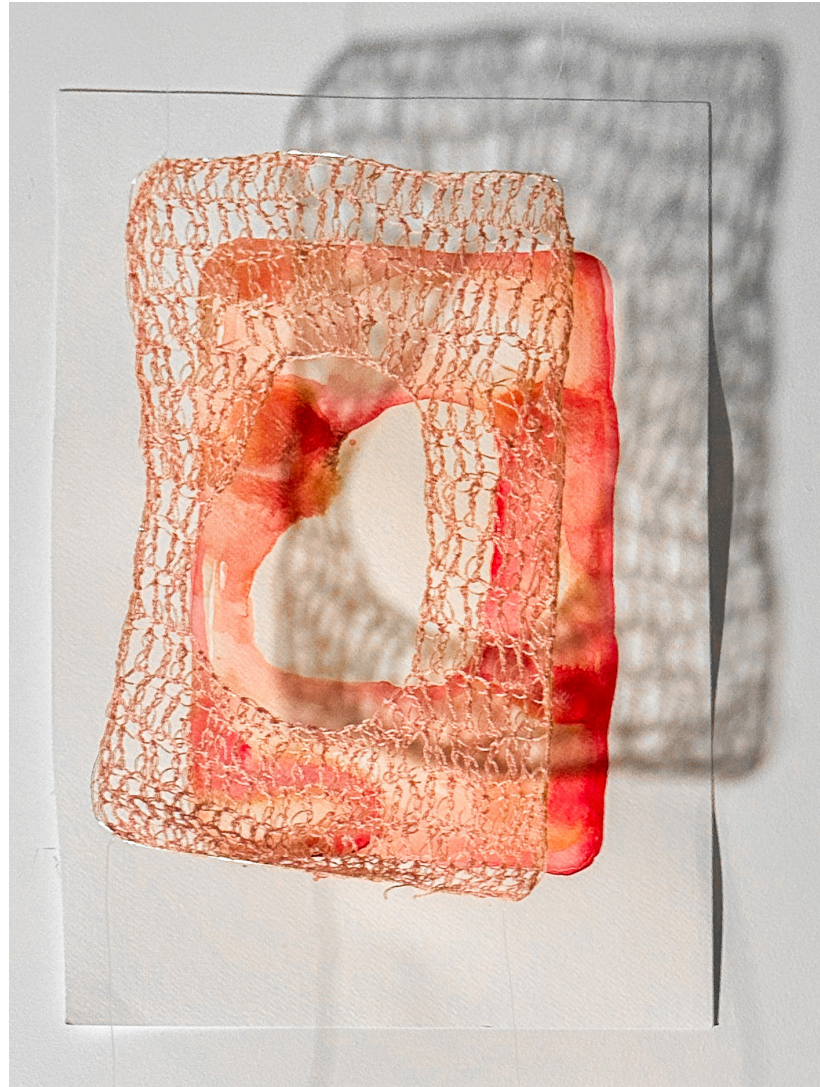
The little black and white house reminiscent of Dorothy's cyclone blown dull and grey house came into three-dimensional form through the sessions in the work in progress group. Exploring Dorothy's character, my concepts of home, and the 'cyclone' pressures on my life surfacing during our tetrad session – including buying our new house 'Kejuna'. Discoveries also came through a scribble drawing with my non-dominant hand. This free process, with messy, left-handed charcoal scribbles allowed me to enter the subconscious whirlwind of emotions. As Malchiodi (2013) explains, using my non dominant hand allowed me to let go of control. The exploration took me deeply into the grey storm of my lost connection with my first home and birth parents; and concluded with the colourful home I had recreated with my adoptive mother and father.

Having deconstructed and washed over thirty unwanted artworks, I was rescuing the resources from landfill and turning them into something new. This reflected my own rescue, change, self-help and growth. Throughout the process I explored materials and approaches including button sorting, unpicking, scribble drawings, found objects, and poetry which had a therapeutic transfer. Helping me process, recharge and sort through simultaneous life experiences of; buying our first home, undertaking kinship care, performing and directing in a local production, working, volunteering and fulltime study.

Through the slow art processes of hand making and undoing I experienced a "social constructivist perspective" interplay as presented by Moon (2010); domestic processes of hand washing, hanging materials on the line and ironing; and building a connection to Edna, from an earlier generation. I was guided by the materials and process on a journey of discovery, revealing, uncovering, and connecting with the unknown. The act of delicately undoing stitches held tight and collecting the threads, a future reminder of the delicacy required nurturing my art making, with clients and in self-care.



Renée Felsch
Threads of Relection, 2024
 Paintings - ink, watercolour, and watercolour
 pencil on paper | Crochet - thread and craft wire
 100 x 75 x 30cm



Renée Felsch
Threads of Reflection, 2024
 Paintings – ink, watercolour, and water-
 colour pencil on paper Crochet – thread
 and craft wire
 100 x 75 x 30cm

My artwork, *Threads of Reflection*, aims to explore a person-centred therapeutic relationship. Person-centred practice is grounded in the belief that individuals are the experts in their own lives, and therefore therapists should centre their practice around each individual client. Carl Rogers suggests that clients possess the innate capacity to facilitate their own growth and development, therefore, the therapist should meet clients with congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. In doing so, a strong therapeutic relationship should emerge.

By layering the paintings and crochet, my work becomes a metaphor for the therapeutic relationship. The paintings become a representation of the client, whereas the crochet embodies the role of the therapist. From the side, one may observe client and therapist in conversation. The client freely expresses themselves, containing their thoughts and feelings within the painting. Whereas, the therapist works with the client, relating and responding to them, reflecting, witnessing, and supporting their verbal and non-verbal expressions.

When viewing the pieces layered, we see client and therapist aligned. The delicate form and openness of the crochet leaves space for the painting to be witnessed by the viewer, whilst the stitches of the crochet shape and contain the paintings – they work together and create new meaning.

In addition, as I created the work, I embodied the roles of client and therapist. The painting process was incredibly grounding and provided space for expression, whilst crocheting required problem solving, flexibility and constant reflection on the paintings and my own process. I had to be patient, follow the guide of the paintings and be creative with my crochet skills until it aligned with the paintings. Through the creation and observation of this artwork I am embodying and observing all sides of the therapeutic relationship.

The works of Beverly Ayling-Smith are particularly inspiring to me, as her crafts and fibre-based practices are often rooted in the social constructivist theory of materiality, and rich with metaphor.

My own work also draws upon the social constructivist theory of materiality, as I chose crochet for its socially constructed associations. Historically, crochet is perceived as a feminine, crafts practice, exempt from the art world. Whilst often used as a self-care hobby, it is not seen as a traditional art therapy material. It was important for me to challenge this, by integrating my crochet practice with my art-making practice. Crochet is soft, open, flexible, and buildable. It can wrap around like a blanket or create a net for catching and containing. It fosters problem solving skills, productivity, and a sense of control. Additionally, the repetitive motion can produce a meditative state. Through involving crochet in my art-making, I hope to highlight the value and potential of crochet within the art therapy space.



Petra Fonteyn
Icarus Reimagined, 2024
Acrylic and mixed media on canvas
51 x 62 cm

Icarus Reimagined is a symbolic representation of humans to change their identity and rewrite their narrative from a strengths-based perspective. This work explores how art therapy facilitates identity change and personal growth, through the creative cultivation of human potential. Traditionally Icarus is depicted at his nadir, however, I have him looking upward with a reflective gaze contemplating growth and balance, representing the duality of ambition and restraint, vulnerability and strength. Rather than focusing solely on Icarus's fall which is a symbolic representation of the discarding of human potential, this piece explores Icarus's growth and integration.

The work is tied to the therapeutic possibilities of art making and art therapy. The kinaesthetic movement of ripping tissue and layering it mirrors the healing process. Each piece is torn and glued ensuring transparency between layers, reflecting the multidimensional aspects of identity. The transparency of the tissue allows images to coexist, symbolising the complexity of identity formation as seen through Donald Winnicott's attachment theory. This layering also reflects how intergenerational trauma, can coexist with resilience and strength.

The repetitive, cathartic process of printmaking with found objects is another key element. With each print, I engaged in a form of emotional release and kinaesthetic connection. Utilising found objects was influenced by the work of Julie Brooker, who discusses the dialogue that occurs between person and object. I would pick up items, assess their meaning, and decide whether to keep or discard them based on the feelings they evoked. Selecting tissue for its transparency was motivated by Judith Rubin and materiality theory that attributes symbolic qualities to materials, in *Icarus Reimagined* the tissue's light, ghostly texture captured a spiritual presence.

The choice of complementary colours—blue and orange—represents opposing of the self, like the internal struggles in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT). These colours symbolise the balance between acceptance and change, grounding and striving parts of identity. This colour contrast mirrors the broader theme of duality present throughout the work.

Artistically, this piece is inspired by the ethereal figures in Marc Chagall's works and Vincent Van Gogh's use of complementary opposites to convey conflicting emotions. Influences from Sigmund Freud, Greek mythology, and psychotherapeutic theories—such as Donald Winnicott's attachment theory, Jungian Analytical theory, and Judith Rubin's focus on the translation of theory into materials and technique—shape its conceptual foundation. Julie Brooker's analysis on integration of found objects highlights symbolic memory and legacy as core aspects of identity. The glue binding the delicate tissue layers symbolises both the careful holding of oneself and the therapeutic relationship's essential holding space.

Icarus Reimagined invites viewers to reflect on their dualities and their tendency to discard those who have fallen from grace and the importance of strength-based art therapy. The work explores the coexistence of strength and vulnerability, ambition and restraint. Through the layered process of acrylic paint, tissue paper and printmaking, this artwork embodies the therapeutic journey of self-integration, where every layer contributes to the evolving sense of identity. Icarus, in this reimagining, is not defined by his fall but by his ability to hold these dualities in balance, much like the work itself, which reflects the continuous, layered process of being an artist and trainee art therapist.



Helen Frank
Before & After, 2024
 Dried flowers, broken pieces of cut glass,
 copper wire
 150 x 50 cm, 60 x 60cm

This artwork explores the experience of trauma within the parameters of 'before and after'.

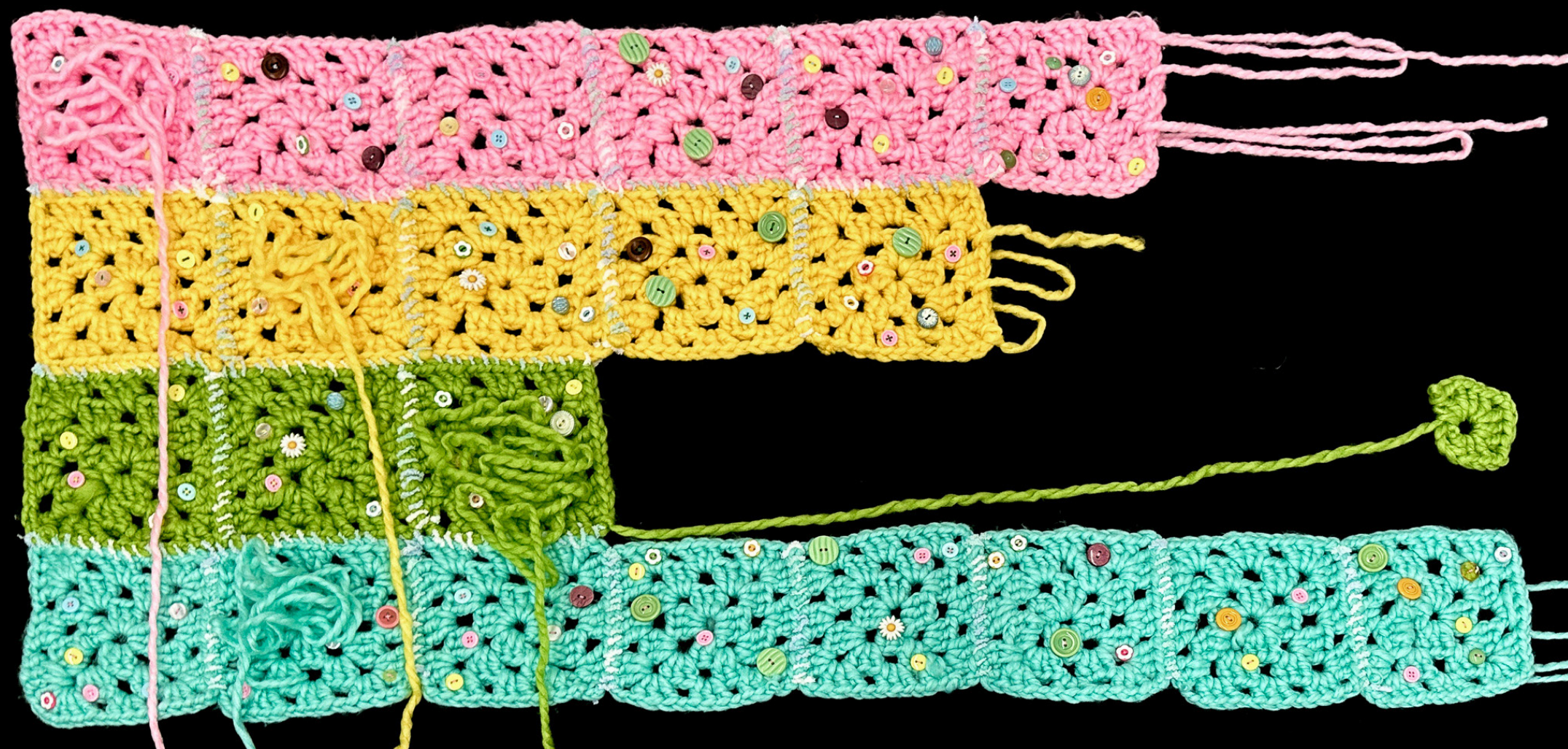
When a traumatic event occurs, one's life is usually defined as before 'what happened', and after. How does repair and healing begin, and what does it look like? Are you ever able to reconcile the 'before and after'?

I began this work by constructing an elaborate vase made of large, found cut – glass pieces. A precious object, imbued with personal meaning and attachment. Filling it with water, paper daisies and roses, I filmed myself smashing it on the studio floor, initiating a 'trauma'. The vase was once whole, now it is not. While the flowers hung in a dark corner to dry, I began to construct a glass curtain. The vase still exists but in a fractured form. Do you carry it with you or do you let it go? Or can it be perceived in another way?

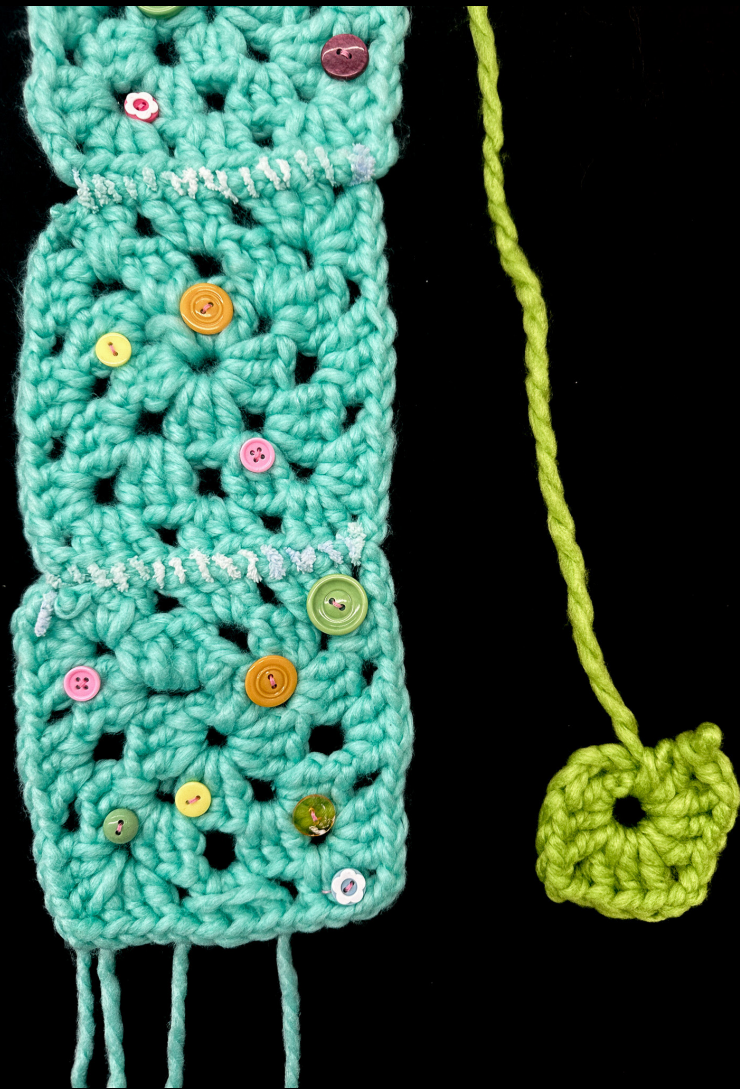
A traditional symbol of growth and beauty, flowers can also embody transience and decay. Broken fragments of glass are transparent, fragile. There is a relatable vulnerability. However they still cut, and hands still bleed. The hard inflexibility juxtaposes against the soft, malleable qualities of flowers, however they too have brittle. Viewed together, the flowers and the curtain sit apart, allowing for space. Time and distance for reflection.

As I worked on this project I was reminded of Hyland Moon's statement highlighting the intertwined relationship between operating as therapist, client and material. I arrived at the realisation that completion of the work required me to authentically oscillate between being both art therapist and client whilst simultaneously tethered to my chosen materials.

This artwork has included construction, performance, destruction and assemblage, what you see here is only one of its manifestations. As a narrative of self – transcendence, the work has moved beyond its original limits. We have not abandoned our trauma, nor have we tried to repair what we once had. However it serves a parallel for what healing might be. Piecing together how to best live with your experience.



Sarah Geerin
The Blanket, 2024
Acrylic Chunky Yarn, Polyester Eyelash Yarn,
Buttons, Thread
50 x 107cm

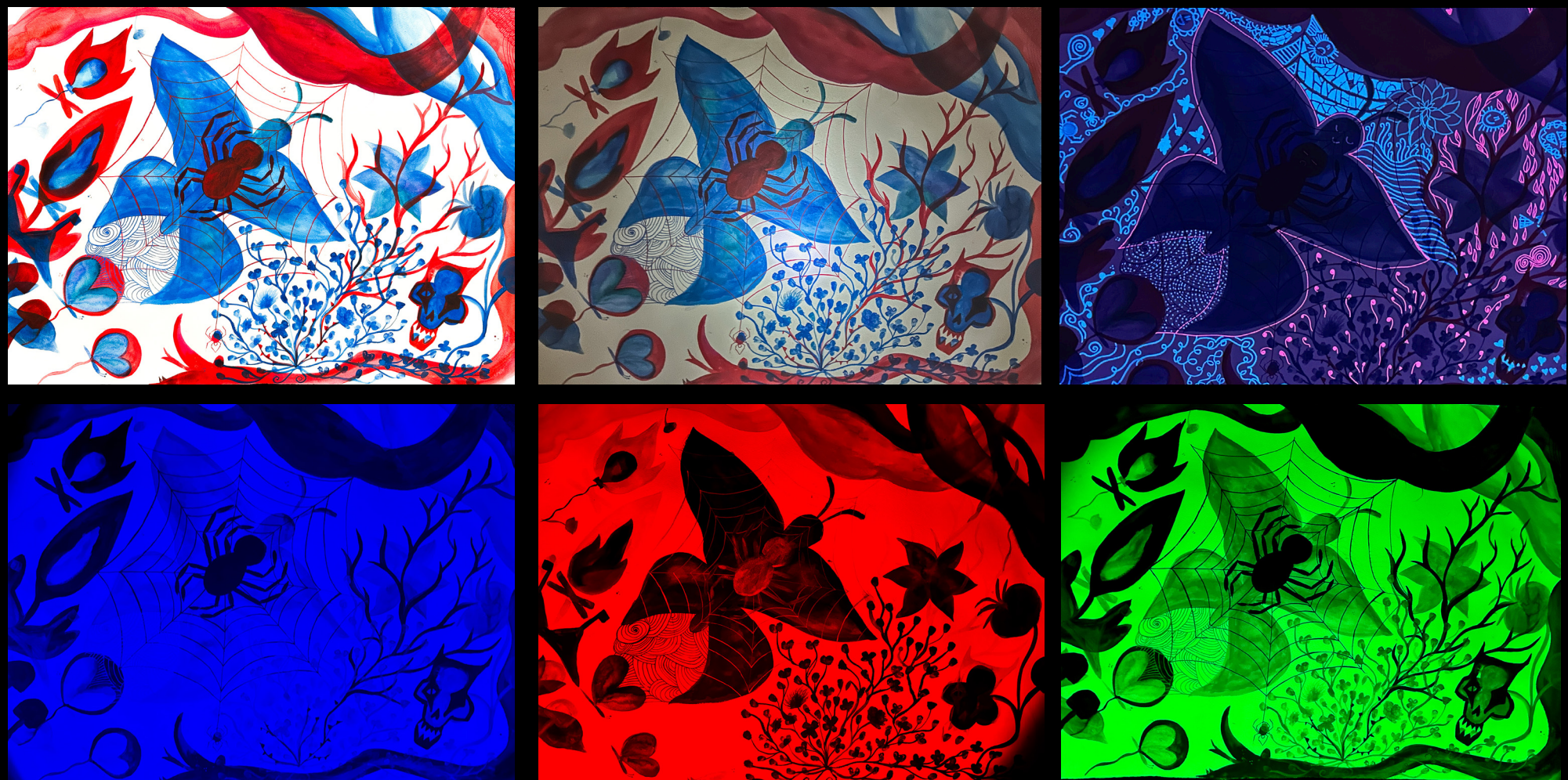


Sarah Geerin
The Blanket, 2024
Acrylic Chunky Yarn, Polyester Eyelash
Yarn, Buttons, Thread
50 x 107cm

Blankets may hold more than just the warmth of our bodies; they provide sanctuary, safety, protection from the bitterness of cold weather, memories and secrets. When I reminisce on my personal experiences of being a client in therapy and reflecting on theoretical influences such as Susan Hogan, Catherine Moon and Judith Rubin regarding group art therapy; I am met with the perception that what makes this therapeutic context profoundly effective for some clients, are the same qualities that a blanket may impart on the subject wrapped within it. The signature dance of art therapy begins before the clients enter the room, the music of this production orchestrated by how the environment has been set up, prior to their first steps into the room. It is from here where the maestro may lift their baton, helping the musicians find their rhythm; until they may play together to the tune of their own score, relying little on the conductor's tempo.

In representing many of the critical, impactful, eureka moments that transpire in the group art therapy context; 'The Blanket' is a visualisation of what may take place within group art therapy processes transpiring over the course of several sessions, how each of the four 'group members' represented by columns contribute to and influence the dynamic; with particular focus on the rich, ever changing processes clients may discover when they venture in community. Working with acrylic and polyester yarn, each of the squares were crocheted within different contexts in their making. I would spend my time crocheting during quiet nights in bed, sitting in a circle with my friends at Comic Con, on the train heading for university and while watching television with my family; each square in the final artwork was carefully constructed and holds now dear memories for me. In the materiality, metaphors of being able to hold and follow alongside people where they are at, came to fruition. Not only was crochet a rich way for me to explore my perspectives of theoretical discussion; it has dawned on me that crochet was a gateway into newer, more accessible artistic expression for myself given personal life circumstances.

Each of the buttons sewed into the blanket represents moments of clarity, resonance, transfer-ences and counter-transferences, conflict, departure, grief, breakthroughs and new beginnings; art acts as the bridge that connects us to further understandings and new perspectives in not only how we undergo art-making processes together, but how the eyes of others lets us see through our blind spots to reach new heights in personal healing ventures. When the blanket is pulled over the human body it traps the warmth inside, with that comes containment, the out-side world is no longer a witness to its skin kept enclosed. It will however, come to witness the triumphs of the clients whose ventures together radiate from the gaps of the blanket's stitches, reminiscent of their exchanges between one another; what a privilege it will be to witness their empowerment and see them for who they become.



Olivia Ghobrial
Switch Out Your Lens, 2024
Watercolour paint, invisible ink, and acrylic
paint pens, on watercolour paper.
76 x 50 cm



Olivia Ghobrial
Switch Out Your Lens, 2024
Watercolour paint, invisible ink, and acrylic
paint pens, on watercolour paper.
76 x 50 cm

Inspired by my personal experience in group art therapy sessions throughout this masters degree.

My mind, and my self, a mysterious place,
One I have decided I must face.
But as I look within, how do I know my view is not askew?
Should I be doing something to see it all anew?
Who I am is not simple, straightforward, or trite
If I let myself look from other perspectives, I'll see me hiding in plain sight.

Here I take a look into the ability to let ourselves be vulnerable throughout art therapy, to even allow ourselves to think in particular ways, to let ourselves view things from a perspective we might usually deride or reject. There are so many facets of our self, of our identity, personality, habits and actions, so many ways we can view things, so many things that can be revealed to us about ourselves; if we let ourselves see them. In our desire to understand ourselves and our actions, we try to shine light on something previously unseen or unknown or misunderstood. The way we do this, I believe, as well as the limits we consciously and unconsciously set while we do this, will impact our understanding. Strijbos & Jongepier speak to this exploration of self-knowledge.

As you look at this seemingly unfinished, flat, artwork, do not do it the injustice of simply viewing it in the dark. Inspired anaglyph art by Rugi and Quintanilla, this work needs your active involvement to be truly seen. Pick up a torch and shine it on the work to see it through that 'lens', or pick up the binoculars and have a look through there. Each lens will either reveal a previously unclear aspect of the artwork, or it will show you an entirely unhelpful way of looking at the artwork. This speaks to the mindsets and perspectives we ourselves take on when looking at our own selves; whether this be defensiveness, biases, insecurity, relentless positivity, hopefulness, sappiness, strength, guardedness, openness, bleakness, compassion, whimsy, or from a perspective of others' we've never consciously allowed ourselves to adopt. Whatever the lens may be, the point here is that it is worth taking at least a temporary look.

To give you an example, there were times throughout the group art therapy process that I thought to myself "Surely this is too sensitive. If my friends could hear me now, they'd think I was ridiculous." If I had let this stop me, I would not have gained the insights into myself that I did. It takes vulnerability to let ourselves think differently, but the effort is worth it. Green speaks to this value, of vulnerability with purpose.

We are not simple, straight forward, or trite. In order to do ourselves justice, in our efforts to understand and better ourselves when we participate in art therapy, we must let ourselves peer through different outlooks and mindsets; some might be helpful, some might not, but we must take that brave look in order to know.



Emma Gibbons
Canaries, 2024
 Acrylic paint on Canvas
 dimensions variable

I decided to create these artworks depicting canaries for a few reasons. First of all canaries are a very sentimental bird in my family. My grandmother had a large aviary filled with canaries in the middle of the outdoor living area at their family home. As a child I loved to sit and look at the canaries flying and jumping around in the cage and listening to their songs. Canaries remind me of a simpler time of my life in childhood. A time of innocence and purity. They remind me of family, love, hope and positivity.

The second reason I chose to paint canaries is to represent the way mental illness has impacted my family. My younger brother was diagnosed a few years ago with schizophrenia and so life drastically changed for him and the family since then. I chose to paint in bright yellows to represent the happiness and purity of canaries. I also chose to paint in black to represent the introduction of mental illness and the darkness it brought. The black represents the loss of innocence that comes with growing up and the challenges that we then face in adulthood.

The first painting is the canary who is just living its life, not a care in the world. Its life is so far unchanged. Its in nature surrounded by trees and flowers. Its ready to explore. There's hope and possibility for this canary and it is completely unaware of the turns life can take. It is just an innocent, simple canary.

The second painting is a canary on a coat hanger on a black background. It looks somewhat out of place. That's not its natural habitat. This painting represents the introduction of mental illness, the confusion it brings, the uncertainty. The sadness and grief of losing the life you were expecting to have. Both the person experiencing mental illness and their families experience this grief. There is a lot of unknowns about the journey ahead, how to adapt, what is possible in terms of functioning, how do you go on? How do you manage? This canary seems lost in space and unsure.

The third canary represents "recovery". The liberation that occurs not with "healing", but not the traditional way we think of healing. Schizophrenia is something that may never be cured. So what does that mean for the person going forward? It means living life to the fullest of their potential. It means adaptation and managing symptoms as best you can. It means receiving support in order to function which is ok. Everyone needs support at some point in their lives. It means families receiving support and education about diagnosis of mental illness. And it means a community adapting their expectations of how those with mental illness should be living. A person with mental illness deserves freedom and joy. They deserve understanding and to be given the chance to be unconditionally accepted. Their lives may be unconventional and outside of the norms of the wider community. But they are just as valid.



Gala Grahovac
Untitled, 2024
Mixed Media
dimensions variable

My work explores the intertwining of play and art, inspired by my experiences working as a babysitter for an 18 month old girl. Our days are often spent drawing together, learning the sounds of words and fine motor skills. In hindsight, I see the parallels between her scribbles and the abstracted ceramic sculptures I usually make but, for this work I decided to explore an unfamiliar medium of wire and paper mache while exploring the same themes and formula.

The intertwining and fusing together of different lines illustrate attachment theory, reflected in the playfulness and complexity of the relationships that manifest in children and their caregivers. The round, curving shapes evoke a sense of movement and fluidity, capturing the essence of childhood joy and exploration. While children often express themselves using vibrant, bold colours with crayons and markers, I intentionally strip my work of colour. This choice reflects the transition into adulthood, evoking a sense of nostalgia while embracing the transparency of paper mache and the tactile quality of the flour binding the newspaper together. The meticulous nature of my process is meditative and calm offering a contrast to the carefree spontaneity of childlike creation.



Anita Grassy
Stitches, 2024
Assemblage
56 x 74 x 4 cm

Stitches evolved from an exploration of materials. Assembled from layers of found materials, both organic and manmade, it presents insights into my artist identity. The work allowed me to explore new materials and processes in developing my practice as an artist. In this process, I was also able to repurpose previously unusable materials which was inspired by Moon.

I aimed to represent deconstruction of ideas through breaking art down into smaller parts, and reconstruction through re-painting, and re-assembling a new narrative. The portrait's dynamic colouring was inspired by the outdoor world and Riso Chan's emotional works. The work was made in an outdoor environment, subject to weather conditions and the world walking by.

As I completed the piece, the final touches were a few words around the frame. These words represent ideas that have been integral to my artist identity over the past few weeks as I invest in the art of handicrafts.

Each time I look, I find and ascribe new meaning. Another stitch; forming my self.



Camille Green
The Midwife, 2024
 Mixed Media (watercolour on paper, clay, wood and linen)
 210 x 120 cm





Camille Green
The Midwife, 2024
 Mixed Media (watercolour on paper, clay,
 wood and linen)
 210 x 120 cm

I am personally drawn towards a feminine and ethereal aesthetic which lends itself to Hogan's concept of the midwife and its representation of the therapist role.

Following a series of paper illustrations, the bare woman with child is layered onto raw and un-fired clay tiles to emphasise hidden fragility, strength and transformative qualities while also being grounded by the frameless wooden canvas. The story of the woman is flexible, as healing does not follow a linear approach, but rather accentuates the rich complexity of ongoing change. I also hope to convey the vulnerability and nakedness felt by the client as they enter into therapeutic care and the midwife gently supporting them with minimal interference.

Empowering the client in their journey towards healing and equilibrium, I want to also mirror this notion through the considered construction and hanging balance of the curtain drape and artwork pieces (Rogers). An emphasis on the importance of playfulness and movement (Moon) is accentuated by the way the sheer drape falls and the addition of working pockets. It allows for light to filter through and imitate the client's reveal of imperfection and authenticity through protective, dignified care. The material choice is influenced by the conviction of artist Ayling-Smith and her nod towards the hospital space in her personal work. The curtain and stitching resonated with my personal interest in art therapy for both paediatric and post-natal clients and its presentation of the intricacy of life and its seasons.

Setting the stage for the client is also a pivotal part of therapeutic care as the client navigates doubt, fear and growth. I wanted to showcase this concept through light and calming qualities, a serene space, to evoke a feeling of safety and trust during discomfort and transition. As Learmonth suggests, the therapist acts as witness, emulating the safe gaze of the midwife, while remaining as a trusted active support.

By choosing the frameless wooden square canvases to represent the boundaries and constraints that an art therapist may practice within, especially in the hospital space, this also represents a foundation for the client to find expressive freedom without the restriction of a frame. Exploring Rogers' person-centred approach, the additional importance of the conditions to nurture a client into growth and change is demonstrated by the fabric pockets that can 'hold space for the client' at varying degrees while still allowing liberation towards balance. As the client sits within discomfort and surrenders, there is safety provided within the therapeutic relationship.

Bringing organic, warm and grounding materials was important in this artwork to draw the viewer into a space of nurture, to experience light, and holding space while also feeling like they are being held.



Alexandria Halim
Duckie, 2024
Oil on canvas
100 x 90 cm



Alexandria Halim
Duckie, 2024
Oil on canvas
100 x 90 cm

"Duckie" is a surrealistic exploration of repression, introspection, and the interplay between the conscious and unconscious mind. My artwork explores the materiality of oil paints and its aid in adaptive regression in service of the ego: a concept developed by Ernst Kris. Through this therapeutic process, I examine how oil paints, with their unique qualities, facilitate a reflective process where deeper, repressed emotions can emerge, allowing for an exploration of unconscious layers over time.

Oil paints, while a traditional medium, are not typically used in art therapy studios due to their resistive nature and impracticality. However, this challenges dominant assumptions and aligns with social constructivist theory, where my personal history with oils transforms the medium into something more than just paint—it is my sacred tool of expression. Though slow to dry and resistive, these very properties offer opportunities for increased reflective distance and the ability to rework the surface over time, mirroring the process of revisiting and gradually revealing repressed thoughts and emotions.

Throughout the process of creating "Duckie," I experimented with the drying times of various oils and spirits that can be mixed with oil paints. In the earlier, more regressive stages, I deliberately used slower-drying oils, which allowed me to spend extended time with each layer, reflecting deeply on the symbolic nature of the imagery. As I moved forward, towards the more conscious stages, I shifted to using spirits that accelerated the drying process, mirroring the gradual emergence and control of repressed material. This interplay of slow and fast drying times became a metaphor for the evolving balance between regression and control.

The painting itself features a white duck, a central symbol drawn from a recurring dream where the duck remains out of reach—the duck representing something both innocent and elusive, akin to repressed desires or unspoken thoughts that hover just beyond reach—perhaps even symbolizing the inner child or parts of the self that remain unconsciously restrained. The shadow figure stretching across the bed and onto the curtains represents these unconscious forces. The open room setting as well as the landscape curtains symbolizes the fluid boundary between the conscious and unconscious mind: the contrast between the enclosed bed and the open space highlights the tension between containment and openness, inviting introspection and the gradual emergence of hidden thoughts.

The materiality of oil paint allowed me to transform the dream into an artistic exploration, where the process and final product are deeply intertwined. The slow-drying layers became essential to the work's emotional and psychological depth, with the process of layering and reworking mirroring the unfolding of introspective thought. In the creation of "Duckie," the process informed the outcome, and the product in turn influenced further reflection. As the painting evolved, it became clear that the process and product are not separate, but in constant dialogue, each enriching the other—culminating in a work that invites viewers to engage in a similar act of reflection and discovery.



Olivia Lezzi
RE LIV - BEFORE & AFTER WEAR, 2024
 Mixed Media & Found Objects
 170 x 100 cm

My artwork confronts the detrimental impact of the fashion industry on the environment. It explores how art therapy can be used to process and express concerns about the environment, and how sustainability can be integrated together with therapeutic practice.

The artwork is comprised of three key elements:

(1) The upcycling of a new pair of jeans into a skirt.

Each step of the upcycling process enabled me to step outside of my comfort zone, and gradually build my confidence. The most notable stage was taking the jeans completely apart (the slow process of unstitching the seams and then cutting the legs off). This involved taking a significant risk with the potential to permanently ruin the garment. It was at this point, I started to have doubts and experience thoughts of “What have I done?”.

I persevered through these moments and as the garment transformed from a pair of jeans into a skirt, I too experienced personal growth and transformation through mindfulness (unpicking and hand stitching), connection (to fabric and materials) and exploration. As the skirt neared completion, I felt more confident to experiment with my imaginativeness, by dismantling old pieces clothing (intended for waste) and adding patches and embellishments to the skirt’s exterior. This process of layering and adding depth allowed me to further discover and express my creativeness. It also enabled me to recognise the potential in so much of what I already have at home, and trust my capabilities with regards to re-purposing, reusing, re-designing and recycling.

(2) The jacket

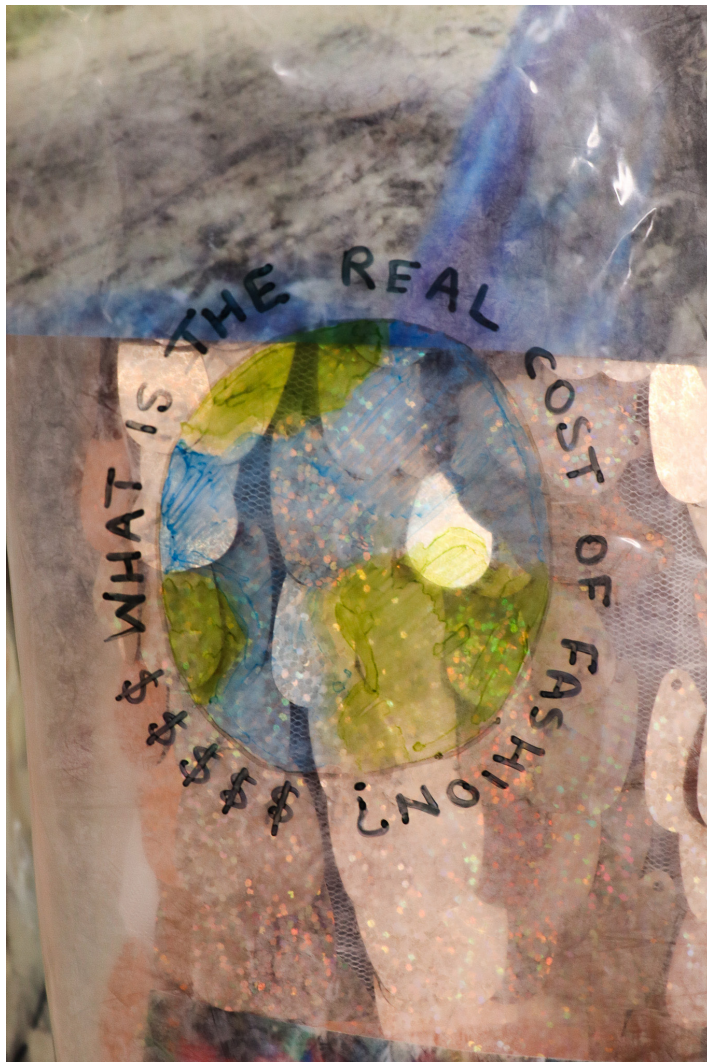
One of my initial goals of this project, was to gain insight into the lifecycle of the garment. A timely and significant event that occurred during my research and exploration into this topic, was the Blue Mountains Sustainability Festival and Fashion Show. I was fortunate to attend one of the festival forums with key speaker Nina Gbor who spoke about ‘The Fashion TREND Mill – Curating a stylish, sustainable wardrobe’. Nina spoke extensively about the detrimental impact of fast fashion on the environment. Her talk resonated with me deeply and immediately inspired me to work on my second garment – the Top Shop fashion jacket. As I researched into the devastating impact of the fast-fashion, I learnt that Topshop brand was considered a fast-fashion brand. With a transparent plastic exterior and glittery embellishments on the interior, I saw this as a perfect piece for me to highlight and express my concerns about this industry.

As I started to dig deeper in my research, I started to also realise the role I have played in contributing to fashion waste. The term craftivism, a gentle form of activism through which causes and issues can be quietly voiced, kept appearing in my readings and was the impetus for my artwork on the jacket. Using fabric paints and markers, I set about voicing my concerns. To add strength to my voice, I added images of the impact of fashion waste, pollution and overconsumption of clothing.

The integration of craftivism and art therapy in this artwork was empowering and transformational both during the process and the finished product. This deeply therapeutic process involved spending quiet time with these (environmental) issues and provided me the space and canvas to safely express my thoughts and emotions through my choice of colours, images and materials.

On completing this piece, I felt a sense of contentment that it will be displayed at the art therapy public exhibition and has the potential to inspire awareness and conversations amongst all those who see it.

(3) The third element of the artwork is the “landfill” which symbolises the end of life of so much of our textile waste. To give further impact and insight into this devastating environmental problem, images of excess clothing and waste are placed over the jacket and in the landfill.



Olivia Lezzi
RE LIV - BEFORE & AFTER WEAR, 2024
Mixed Media & Found Objects
170 x 100 cm



Sophie Iliadis
Altar, 2024
Clay
30 x 10 cm

In this artwork, I aimed to explore the connection between art therapy and spirituality. Engaging in creating art in a therapeutic space has many similarities to spiritual practice such as witnessing, listening and reflection. The concept of spiritual containers, such as shrines, embodies this connection as they can act as safe spaces where individuals can reflect and hold their emotions and experiences. Shrines often create a safe space for contemplation, much like the creation of artworks in art therapy becomes a vessel for holding one's experiences, offering a safe space for reflection, healing and transformation. In this way, art therapy involves the act of containing and expressing through a tangible medium that encourages introspection and growth, much like the spiritual significance found in shrines.

By using clay, I have created a decorative vessel which evokes religious symbolism reminiscent of structures such as tabernacles and icons found in orthodox religions. The design of my vessel draws inspiration from ancient talismans which often served as protective and reflective symbols embodying the connection between the material and the metaphysical. Merve Nur Çınar comments on the roots of using art for healing are as old as the symbolic rituals ancient cultures used in religious ceremonies. By constructing my vessel, I draw on the roots of ancient cultures and symbols, which have historically provided individuals and communities with a third object for reflection and healing. This artwork is a symbol to the interconnectedness of art therapy and spirituality, exploring the concept of vessels which invite space for reflection, experiences and healing.



Czerny Ip
Diversity, 2024
 Yarn, acrylic, gold foil and found
 objects on canvas
 1524 x 1016 cm

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept, and celebrate those differences.” – Audre Lorde.

Influenced by my profession and personal encounters, I have always been passionate about the concept of neurodiversity—recognising and celebrating the diverse ways in which human brains work, think, and perceive the world. My artwork seeks to challenge conventional norms, embracing the beauty of difference and inviting viewers to reconsider their own perceptions of what is “typical” or “normal.”

In *Diversity*, I encourage viewers to engage physically with the artwork, allowing the visual, tactile, and olfactory richness to evoke a deeper sensory experience. Through this interaction, I hope to facilitate a mindful exploration of neurodivergence, inviting viewers to reconsider how nature and nurture shape our understanding of individuals with diverse neurological experiences.

Informed by material theories, my work draws on the idea that materials themselves carry potent meanings and act as vehicles for personal, cultural, social, and political expression. From a social constructivist perspective, yarn is usually associated with craft activities, symbolising nurturance. At the same time, cotton yarn is a natural material made of raw fibres, which extends the art experience to sensory discovery and perception beyond the act of making art. The use of yarn creates a balance between nature and nurture, reflecting the importance of genetic and environmental influences on human beings.

In the context of neurodiversity, yarn embodies the genetically determined characteristics of neurodivergent individuals and the social environments that shape or reshape these traits. My work is heavily filled with yarn (in the form of pom poms and untrimmed lines) to challenge binary views of neurodivergence, encouraging a shift away from medicalised, deficit-based narratives toward a more strength-based, holistic understanding.

Diversity is greatly inspired by neurodivergent artists like Kai Syng Tan, whose work motivates me to use my art as a platform to elevate diverse life experiences. Tan’s work, *Magic Carpet*, invites tactile interaction, which creates moments of connection from a neurodivergent perspective, fostering empathy and shifting preconceived notions. Hence, I recreate this sensory experience in my artwork as both a celebration and a call for greater understanding of neurodiversity in all its forms.

Now please feel free to look, touch, and smell the glimpse of diversity!



Heather Jenkins
Dear little me – Getting out, Turning in, 2024
 Mixed Media
 Book: 17 x 12 cm | Box: 19 x 7 x 14 cm | Collage 29.7 x 21cm



Heather Jenkins
Dear little me - Getting out, Turning in, 2024
 Mixed Media
 Book: 17 x 12 cm | Box: 19 x 7 x 14 cm
 Collage 29.7 x 21cm

For this artwork I wanted to make a wordless picture book that would explore various themes that I have experienced personally and would like to develop further through art therapy. One of the first ideas in this book is centered around the benefits of ‘getting out, tuning in’ and paying attention to the little things that can spark connection to self and the world at large. We can find small moments that spark joy, hope, connection, inspiration, curiosity and wonder. I believe we all do this naturally as children and find wonder in so many seemingly insignificant things and we often lose that sense of curiosity as we grow up, but we can always get back to that childlike sense of wonder by making an effort to remain open, curious, and connect to that part of ourselves that remembers the magic of the world through a child’s eyes. There are various theories that can contribute to this such as nature therapy, found objects, somatic therapy, and mindfulness.

Another concept found in the book is externalization a practice developed by Michael White to objectify problems instead of objectifying people – “the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem”.

Two things can be true at the same time. This concept of coexisting opposite truths, referred to as dialectics in psychology, and the integration between the two can influence our mental health. This concept is explored through the book by showing how we can have both good and bad feelings/experiences shaping our mental health. As the child carries the negative feelings/experiences/traumas, they are still able to allow the good things to co-exist. The good things can’t erase the bad, but by integrating the two and adding more of the good, it can make it easier to carry the bad.

The box explored the ideas around containment, self-care, affirmations and inner-child work. The book was made to fit perfectly inside the box, almost as a gift and reminder for the inner child. The box also serves as an interactive tool to share with anyone viewing it to take a moment to connect with themselves, their inner child, and write or draw something they would need in that moment to add to the box as an affirmation or if they feel they need to, they can take it home instead. Affirmations can be a great tool to manage and change unhelpful patterns of thoughts or behaviours, and the added layer of imagining our younger selves, helps with reconnecting to passions and interests, feeling empowered, and an increased sense of compassion and kindness toward ourselves.

The photo collage are all the little moments that allowed me to put these theories and ideas into practice in my own life and part of the inspiration throughout this project that allowed me to have moments of connection and healing over the past couple of weeks in the face of a lot of stress and challenges. It serves as a reminder that no matter how small or silly, or seemingly random, we can connect with our inner child and experience pockets of magic.



Garry Jones
Good-me, bad-me, knot-me; my splitting headache, 2024
 Cotton rope, sisal rope, timber, metal screws, metal brackets, mirror, cardboard, paper
 200 x 50 cm



Garry Jones
*Good-me, bad-me, knot-me;
 my splitting headache*, 2024
 Cotton rope, sisal rope, timber, metal screws, metal brackets, mirror, cardboard, paper
 200 x 50 cm

Good-me, bad-me, knot-me: my splitting headache. This work responds to intertwining investigations into the materiality and metaphors of knots and knotting, and ideas concerning intersubjectivity, relationality, and attachment as understood within the psychoanalytic field of object relations.

I started the semester feeling untethered. Knots in my stomach and nerves frayed. I felt my world unravelling. Was I at the end of my rope? Had I reached the bitter end (a boating reference to being insecurely anchored)? Did I need someone to throw me a line?

The repetitive practice of winding, binding, and tying knots gave me the opportunity to be in the here-and-now. It also enabled a space of metaphorical being, where “knotting” (tying/untying, attaching/separating) came to represent a powerful symbolic association with how I felt, how I experienced my intersubjective world. It opened up the opportunity for me to move beyond my momentary sense of suffering, to explore on a deeper level, thoughts, feeling, and childhood associations, as they played out within what was a dramatic theatre of internal relations.

Note to mother: You were a good mother. You loved me and tried to protect me; I loved you and tried to protect you.

As the title of the artwork suggests, it is autobiographical in that it is fundamentally about me. In some ways it is a self-portrait, but more accurately a sort of abstract family-portrait, reconstructed from memories that are more than memories. In the context of object relations, the “self” portrayed here is the internal self – sometimes conscious, sometimes below the surface of consciousness, more often an uncanny manifestation from the unconscious (visual artist, Fiona Hall, was inspirational here).

Enmeshed not only in the elusiveness of memory and imagination but also hardwired into our biology, from neuronal pathways through to the nervous and endocrinal systems, it is a self profoundly in relation to others (referred to as “objects”), and especially our primary caregivers.

Hey mum, look at me now!

Within object relations our internal worlds are populated by representations of the self and others, formed from deep memories and experiences from our earliest days of infancy, continuing throughout our formative years of psycho-social development, going on to influence how we perceive, interpret, and respond to relationships in the “real” world thereafter. From the get-go, this interior world is populated by “good-objects” (good mother/breast) and “bad-objects” (bad mother/breast) (thanks to psychoanalyst, Melanie Klein). These are the same “object”, but necessarily split, as if different characters, into a binary (black-and-white) world without subtlety or nuance, effectively protecting the infant from the “insanity” of relational contradiction.

Another note to mother: you taught me it was okay to be me despite the way others made me feel. I now understand how you had carried around within you the experience of trauma across generations that came before.

“Good-me/bad-me”, represent internalised mirroring responses to the “good-mother/bad-mother” binary: e.g., “you were there/not there for me, you were good/bad to me, therefore I am worthy/unworthy, I am good/bad”. But when it becomes too much to bear, I am simply “not-me”.

Final note to mother: I remember you often saying softly you had a splitting headache. You would give me a handful of change and send me out to the ice cream truck, “get a choc top for yourself, and ask a for a few Bex for me”.



Madeline Kalde
Eye to Eye, 2024
Acrylic on canvas and thread
112 x 54 cm



Madeline Kalde
Eye to Eye, 2024
 Acrylic on canvas and thread
 112 x 54 cm

My artwork explores the concept of group resonance in art therapy through a dual-canvas composition. Group resonance refers to the shared emotion in therapy which fosters a sense of belonging and support, allowing participants to explore and process their feelings in a safe environment.

This artwork features two portraits of my friends braiding hair, capturing the emotional resonance that emerges as we share our experiences and connect through vulnerability. This work was inspired by a girls night where we share our life experiences and, like the two figures in the artwork, are helping each other navigate emotions. While resonance allows us to connect and understand ourselves, I placed the individuals on their own canvases to showcase that they are still unique.

The pink thread woven from the eyes through the hair indicates the emotional exchange between them. I had a realisation that using the thread was a subconscious connection to the figure in the background canvas– my friend Anna. This is due to the fact she does a lot of crochet and handmade crafts like weaving. The colour pink was also used as a way of emphasising warmth and feminine energy as the two figures connect.

The paint drip is not only a reflection of the material used to create the work but also emphasises the importance of creativity and art in encouraging individuals to influence and respond to each other's feelings, thoughts, and expressions. The drip indicates that our emotions leak through in our work and can be fluid enough to be influenced by others. Inspired by Del Kathryn Barton's works, the figures are staring directly at the viewer with expressionless faces. I have also made the figure in the foreground naked to show the vulnerability of baring it all with someone else. The black background was intentional in exaggerating the serious depth being shared between the friends.

Group resonance is vital in showing people that they are not alone in their experiences and feelings. It can feel validating and comforting especially when handling difficult emotions. The large scale of the works is to exaggerate the intensity of the emotion and connection between the individuals. The eyes are the window to the soul, and therefore, the thread link between the two figures shows that there is an intimate insight into the innermost feelings of each other.



Julie Yeeun Kang
When I (U) look in the Mirror, 2024
Mirror and mixed Media
90 x 53 cm

This artwork titled “when I(U) look in the Mirror” (2024) portrays the concepts of self-exploration, reflection, and the therapeutic process of art-making that is focused on self-care. This work deeply engages with the idea of self-care through the influence of my journey as a learning art therapist. I focused to seek growth and changes while developing an awareness of my own well-being in both personal and professional approaches.

Focusing on the materials, I selected to use a mirror as the main feature of the work for its reflective qualities. This mirror symbolises the expression of self-exploration and reflection, the essential practice of self-care. It also plays a significant role to invite in the audience to engage, not only physically to see themselves but also to further reflect on their own emotional well-being. Mirrors often reflect self-awareness which encourages people to encounter themselves. This becomes an important component of self-exploration and foster effective awareness of self-care.

Furthermore, I have also created a lot of coral-like forms with a range of materials that surround the mirror. Corals are fascinating animals; they adapt slowly, create complex structures and both protect and provide an important ecosystem. Within my work the coral-like forms symbolise the emotional growth and resilience. Inspired by Emily Williams’s glass sculptures of coral forms I experimented with using glue gun as a substitute of glass. This became one of my main use of materials to represent the tension between fragility and durability. I have also portrayed this through combining fragile and durable materials together like for example, used delicate fabrics intertwined with metal wire. This reflects the therapeutic journey between the intertwined fragile emotions and potential resilience.

The engagement of the experimental process was crucial to the development of this artwork as it provided me the chance to freely work with a range of materials. The constant exploration of experimenting with materials, colour and texture has often resulted to reflect my own emotional experiences which became visible in the final forms. As Rubin emphasised materials and art-making can facilitate emotional exploration and healing. This experience of art-making and the reflective practice has truly revealed its therapeutic potentials.

Moon stated our experience of brokenness allow to effectively nurture others. This emphasis of brokenness reflects to the idea of recognising our vulnerabilities and limitations is crucial. Aspects of self-care includes becoming honest with our emotional challenges, acknowledging the support or healing, and actively engage to promote well-being. As a learning art therapist in order to develop an authentic relationship with future clients, this process becomes more crucial as it fosters emotional resilience and empathy. With the courage of presenting my own exploration and reflection this work seeks to engage with the audience and fellow art therapists in reflecting their own awareness of self-care and well-being.



Jashandeep Kaur
The Space, 2024
Cardboard, Chicken wire, Magazine papers
Milk cartons, Hosiery, Clothes, Packaging
paper and acrylic paints
112 x 54 cm



Jashandeep Kaur
The Space, 2024
Cardboard, Chicken wire, Magazine papers Milk cartons, Hosiery, Clothes, Packaging paper and acrylic paints
112 x 54 cm

My artwork 'The Space' delves into the complex relationships between my artist self, my therapist self and even the art itself. It also explores the relationship that the client holds with the art materials while the therapist deeply listens by maintaining an artistic distance. My sculpture shows a person in deep thought, in their own 'space', emotionally distant from the art materials despite their physical proximity. The person represents all or any one of the roles I take on– an artist, a therapist or even a client who is deeply reflective and lost in their own internal space.

The choice of recycled material is intentional. It is my way of 'recycling' memories while engaging in the process of tearing, cutting, folding, layering and pasting them onto a sturdy yet hollow frame made of wire. The use of hosiery signifies the transparency that I aim to maintain in understanding my internal relationships, such as my identity as an artist, my future identity as an art therapist and the other relationships that I am yet to form.

I invite the audience to walk around my sculpture and engage with any emotions it evokes while observing the artistic process that went into its creation. The approach of working in layers is influenced by Gabriel Giunta, an Argentine artist who creates detailed sculptures out of recycled materials, while Cathy Malchiodi's work on expressive therapies provided me with a theoretical framework to support my art, particularly through the lens of Expressive Therapies Continuum (ETC), which uses Systems Theory to understand the dynamic relationship between client and art media discussed by Hyland Moon. By constructing the sculpture in layers, I deepened my understanding of the levels within the ETC modal. As an artist, I might naturally access certain levels or layers in the systems theory while in a therapeutic context, I found myself engaging with all the four levels more fully. For example, I am more attuned to sensory and kinaesthetic process of paper tearing and folding the cardboard while simultaneously reflecting on deeper cognitive connections while glueing all the layers together. Each step that I took to build my artwork resonated with the theoretical aspect.

Throughout the process of construction, I consciously maintained the necessary artistic distance which allowed me to step back, observe and understand my work from multiple perspectives. Through that distance, I gained clarity on how different roles within myself relate to one another. The sculpture allowed me to explore the emotional and psychological space between these roles, enlightening me on how they can cross each other or remain distinct.

This exploration extends beyond my internal relationships to the ones I will form with others. Through this piece, I have gained greater awareness of the 'space', that allow relationships, whether with one-self or the others, to be fully nurtured and understood.



Songha Esther Kim
You've Grown Up So Much, 2024
 Acrylic paint, beads, modelling paste, pen and
 stickers n canvas
 762 x 1016 cm



Songha Esther Kim
You've Grown Up So Much, 2024
 Acrylic paint, beads, modelling paste,
 pen and stickers n canvas
 762 x 1016 cm

The surroundings of a child play a big role in influencing emotional, cognitive, social and physical development that carries the effects into adulthood. The various influences a person is exposed to as a child impact the formation self-soothing habits and how a person experiences safety. I wanted to create an artwork that would make the “little me” happy and feel safe as I explore the various approaches of healing the inner child.

The most common method I have seen people use including myself was using our “adult money” to buy objects and experiences to fulfill what we wished as a child or to compensate what we missed out on during our childhood. The thing I wished the most as a child was a forever home, I never had to move away from that stemmed from moving to different countries. I always yearned for the stability people experienced from growing up in one area filled with familiar people and places. This wish transferred onto the video game Animal Crossing that allowed me to experience my wish of owning a house as I play until it becomes true in the future as I continue to work towards it.

Inspired by the aesthetics of the dream suite in the Animal Crossing, *You've Grown Up So Much* reflects my ongoing journey of healing my inner child through fulfilling childhood wishes. I selected colours I loved as a child and added dreamy and playful elements that symbolised my childhood memories and wishes. My childhood comfort objects became the model for the teddy bears and bunnies along with the strawberries and cream cake that was always present during celebration events growing up. The artwork allowed me to walk down memory lane which included the bad memories. Drawing the repetitive lines helped me anchor myself in the present rather than being lost in the dreamland as I self-soothe through the repetitive actions. Stickers were a big part of my childhood, however I struggled to use them as the nature of stickers being one time use and irreversible scared me. So, I made a sticker corner in the painting where I challenged myself to stick stickers no matter how long it takes to choose where it goes.

The wishes were represented using forms of stars influenced by Disney's *When you wish upon a star*, Peter Pan's *Second star to the right* going to neverland where you never grow up and star fragments you can collect after making a wish to a shooting star from Animal Crossing. The cat sitting above is my cat Jiojio who watched over me as I made this work and a reminder to little me that I got my wish of having a cat.

There are still lots of room in *You've Grown Up So Much* for new elements as I continue my journey in fulfilling my childhood wishes to heal my inner child.



Pei-Tzu Lee
Exploring, 2024
 Oil painting, Styrofoam balls, glitter shakers,
 gold foil, buttons, air-dry modelling clay, yarn,
 gemstone stickers, snack wrappers, Marbles, Beads
 76.2 x 101.6 cm



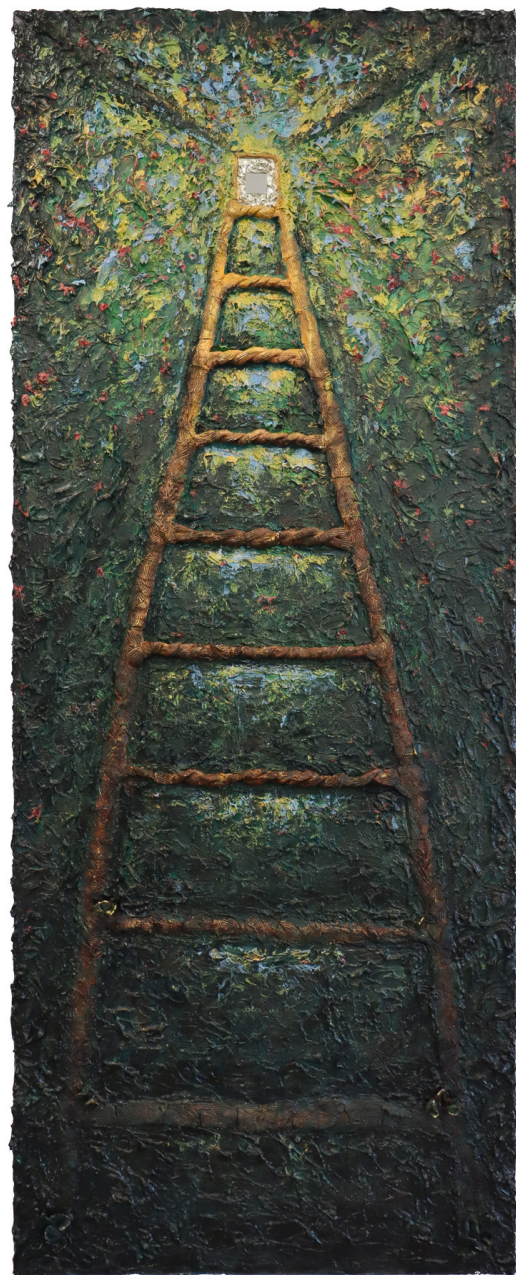


Pei-Tzu Lee
Exploring, 2024
 Oil painting, Styrofoam balls, glitter shakers, gold foil, buttons, air-dry modeling clay, yarn, gemstone stickers, snack wrappers, Marbles, Beads
 76.2 x 101.6 cm

Inspired by Catherine Hyland Moon introduced the theory of materiality. I found that materials are one of the crucial parts of art therapy because of its special attribute of using art as a medium to interact with clients. It helps clients express their feelings and stories indirectly through the artwork to reduce the discomfort or embarrassment that might come up when they have to verbalize their feelings and emotions. Therefore, the materials provided to clients in an art therapy session are significant because they influence how clients express their feelings, and using certain materials can also help clients evoke deeper feelings and connect to their emotions. The idea of the artwork comes from exploring the materials, which can help the therapist to understand different materials textures and performances, finding suitable materials for various clients regarding their personality or their healing goals. The purpose of this artwork is to play with the materials, and I just followed the materials, so I did not have a specific framework for the artwork.

As the word “exploring” makes me associate with the universe, I use it as my background to represent the idea. I tried to use many materials that bring different benefits for clients, symbolizing them as planets that the art therapist and clients like astronauts feel and experience the materials. For example, I consider the differences between fluid and resistant materials. I used oil paint, clay, and glitter as more fluid materials, and marbles, snack wrappers, and buttons as more resistant media to see what happened in my artwork and feel the different emotions when using those materials. Furthermore, as Catherine Hyland Moon points out, some materials can encourage more body movement and help clients to engage in physical activities, while others allow clients to focus on the cognitive and reflective aspects during the art-making process. Whether focused on physical or mental, they both bring benefits for different clients to meet their therapeutic goals.

Using the mirror as an astronaut face, which represents the idea I mentioned previously, is that art therapy is like the client using suitable materials to express their feeling and experience the different textures to gain healing and awareness of themselves. At the same time, it also evokes the thought that as an art therapist trainee, I need to understand different materials, and then I can know what materials can retrieve the session goal and assist the clients when they want some technical support.



Sun Min Lee (Lucy)
Tunnel vision & Revelation, 2024
 Acrylic paint, modelling paste, air-dry clay,
 glue, strings, mosaic mirror tiles and found ob-
 jects (organza fabric, embroidery hoop, fruit net
 and pinecones)
 61 x 152.4 cm; 30 x 30 cm





Sun Min Lee (Lucy)
Tunnel vision & Revelation, 2024
 Acrylic paint, modelling paste, air-dry clay, glue, strings, mosaic mirror tiles and found objects (organza fabric, embroidery hoop, fruit net and pinecones)
 61 x 152.4 cm; 30 x 30 cm

A letter to the viewer: I hope you heal from the unspoken moments of turmoils in life.

By taking a Rogerian person-centred approach to art therapy, I aimed to shed light on to the strengths and resources within ourselves. Perhaps there are cracks and things are falling apart. However, within the fractures of life there is a gap of hope to fill, and once filled, resilience is born. Thus, the safe therapeutic space cultivated by the art therapist can empower uncensored creative exploration of the self without the pressure to verbally articulate immediately. In fact, the clients are the experts of their lives, and our role is to help navigate through this process with unconditional positive regard and continuous empathy.

In Tunnel vision, the mirror tiles in the exit may trigger multiple perspectives. Influenced by Nancy Reyner's gold leaf collections, the golden touches in the exit highlight the glimmers of the way out. It may be conceived as ethereal, or it may appear heavenly. However, I aspired to prompt viewers to looking inwards. In the context of art therapy, this is witnessing the client's inner world reveal at their own pace. Hence, the purpose was to activate the observing eye to imagine what sparks internally when they notice parts of their reflection. I built up the textures with multiple layers of modelling paste and acrylic paint, with the intensity of colours ascending from dark to light. Thus, the collective imagery with the ladder, symbolise the journey of self-discovery.

Revelation desires to protect the fragile aspects of the self, which is a hybrid form of delicate found objects. The fragility of dry pinecones, wrapped in organza as the base was an imperative element for the trampoline to generate resilience to bounce back. The arrangement of found objects reinforced Hyland Moon's understanding of the unique qualities of found materials. Truly, the past lives in found objects are held together to transform into a new creation. I recognised the capabilities of found objects to evoke the concept of 'being saved' from perhaps destruction or disposal and becoming aware of innate possibilities. I was reminded of the therapeutic prospective of found mediums which hold the potential for clients to make meaning in a raw authentic manner and reshape their world views. Indeed, the manipulative nature of materials emphasised the critical importance of material knowledge as mentioned by Rubin. Familiarity with art mediums offer a flexible mode of interaction to guide adaptive solutions.

The tensions and eureka moments experienced during the art-making process strengthened my understanding of the power of art as living evidence and a testimony to the client's therapeutic growth.



Anna Yoyo Lee
The Journey from Recovery to Discovery, 2024
 Acrylic Yarn
 95 x 65 cm



Anna Yoyo Lee
The Journey from Recovery to Discovery, 2024
 Acrylic Yarn
 95 x 65 cm

Crocheting has become the substitute for my specialty in ceramic/glass after graduating from art school, I never considered it as a form of creative expression. The decision to use yarn as the material in this project was self-confrontational. It is my statement to stand from where I fell.

On a road trip when I was around 6, I saw a spider as big as my palm, so I named it Peter. I thought Peter had special power because he was moving in the air between two trees without wings. I examined closer, and then in faint I saw some lines, they were semi-transparent and shiny under the sunshine. I wondered what they were, so I picked a leaf and threw it between the two trees. Peter moved to where the leaf was stuck, and cut the lines around it, the leaf immediately fell onto the ground. Peter circulated that area a few times, and the lines were reconnected. I picked a second leaf, waited for it to be cut off, then a third leaf, the fourth and the fifth... later I learned it was a spider web.

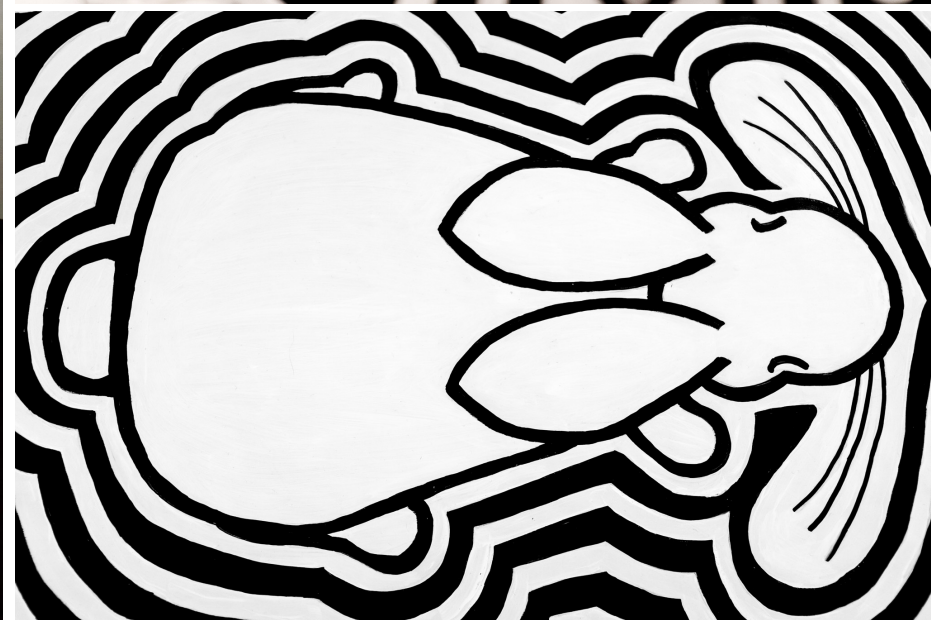
When I was 10, I planted my first fava-bean. I started by carefully wrapping the bean in water-soaked cotton. It spouted, so I moved it into a small pot with soil. It grew taller and taller, so I hand-built a bamboo stick trellis for it to climb. Its vine spiralled upwards for another meter. One day, little white flowers bloomed out of the green little pockets between the leaves. In a week, I was sad to see them wither. But another week passed, two shells began to emerge. I saw them grow bigger and bigger, and eventually, I harvested a dozen beans.

The knitting of a spider web and the spiralling of a vine that climbs upwards marked the diligence of working towards a vision – to survive. The Journey from Recovery to Discovery is my commitment to re-connect to artmaking – not only to recover artmaking as an artist but also to discover my artistry through knowing, believing and being “an artist as a therapist”.

Yarn is used as a container for memories. Forming loops and tying knots gradually force me to focus and fight my once-avoided fear of artmaking. While crocheting may seem feminine, the assertion of every stitch is almost aggressively firm. Stitches after stitches, they pierce through my heart. Through the diligence of precise stitches, the yarn weaves together dimensions of a lived experience. Incidents that physically happened, the emotions felt; memories of the incidents, the feeling of remembering the incidents; the imagination of an alternative in my ideal world... the real and the ideal were connected to construct new meaning.

While life passes in a linear sequence, the memories of life are stored fluidly. Experiences, big or small, stitches by stitches come together as an identity. The Journey from Recovery to Discovery is an ongoing and timely process that constitutes what stands in the here and now.

Through the emotional journey of artmaking, I reimagine my recovery from OCD as a teenager, my recovery from trauma as an adult, and many other recoveries from various incidents as a human being... beautiful things grow out of cracks as they break through hardships. Recovery from pain, the discovery of its meaning, perhaps is my vision – to survive.



Pui Yan LO
Rabbit, 2024
 Multi-media
 45 x 30 x 45 cm



Pui Yan LO
Rabbit, 2024
 Multi-media
 45 x 30 x 45 cm

Unflinching honest and sense of truthfulness are important for self study, as described by Hyland Moon in the process of cultivating artist identity. During my study of art therapy, I have practiced and experienced self-reflections thought art making, in which I discovered some struggles inside me when facing my weaknesses and an attempt to deceive my own feeling to protect my self-image. I noticed that I have created an ideal image to myself, and tried to manipulate other's perception on me by showing a fabricated image to others, but ironically, this 'ideal image' ended up deceived myself as well. In this artwork, I aimed to re-experience the process of self-reflection, visualize the distortion I have made, and invite viewers to honestly explore their inner self.

The image of rabbit is adorable, harmless and agile, and I personally like rabbits, so I use it to represent myself in this artwork. The 2D acrylic paintings on a flat wooden box's surfaces shows the ideal images of rabbit presenting to others. The 3D rabbit skeleton sculpture, which was made by iron wire and air dry clay, placed inside the box represents the weakness and darkness of my inner self. Different from the 3D sculpture, the 2D paintings implied one of the dimensions being hidden, just as I hide my dark side from others. The repetitive black and white stripes creating visual illusion confuses others and myself. Although there are mirrors in the inner walls for self inspection, the wavy pattern on the floor and the infinity mirror effects in my internal world made me puzzled about myself.

Inspired by the optical artwork of artist Bridget Riley and Victor Vasarely who are famous in using black and white pattern to create dynamic visual effect to audience, challenging people's perception of reality, I tried to use only black and white colour in this artwork, with repetitive stripes pattern to create illusion and tension. I used different kinds of art medium, with a lot of trial and error on what art materials to use and how my idea presented, fully experienced the art medium discernment process as described by Hyland Moon, ie, the process that requires self-understanding and sensitivity of one's own feeling. Upon looking at the art product, I noticed that the black and white colour also reflected my binary thinking, and my tendency to criticize myself and others, just as Rubin J.A said, the use of art material and process of art making unveil artist's unconscious thoughts and feeling.

What surprise me the most is that, through looking at my artwork, I discovered the solution of leaving my current confusing mental status: putting down the unnecessary judgement to myself and others, and colouring up my life by reaching out to people and trying new things.

I wholeheartedly invite my audience to bravely and honestly explore themselves in the journey of self-reflection.



Fiona Loeb
The Sum of Us, 2024
Paper and metallic thread
59.5 x 84.1 cm

This piece is about the beauty to be found in damage and healing. We all experience psychological pain and find ways to heal, or work with what we have. This piece reminds me that I am richer, stronger, wiser and more beautiful for all that I have experienced. I have always struggled with self-acceptance and this piece is about loving the whole, the sum of who I am.

I have used thick water colour paper and damaged it on purpose. I love the structural nature of the paper and liked the way the ripped paper looked. I was inspired by Kintsugi, the Japanese art of joining with gold. The philosophy of kintsugi embraces the idea of finding the beauty in imperfection. A piece is even more valuable after it has been mended because it has been transformed. To give my piece clear links with kintsugi, I used gold metallic thread to weave into the space left by the ripped paper.

While the ripping part of the process was relatively quick and fun, the weaving was quite laborious. Moon's discussion of fibre arts suggests that clients experience less apprehension and also a greater sense of satisfaction on completion of a fibre art project. This is possibly because it is associated with craft and less with creative artistic expression. I had hoped the weaving would be neater, but the gold thread frayed often and came loose here and there. I had a clear picture in my mind of how the work should look but I had to deal with the disappointment that it wasn't living up to my expectations. I noticed the irony in not accepting a piece that was all about accepting ourselves, flaws and all. The process of making this piece forced me to accept what is. This harks back to kintsugi, which is linked with the philosophy of wabi-sabi. In short, wabi-sabi is all about acceptance of the imperfect. Rubin talks about using our 'artist self' in our art therapy and the most important way we can do that is through empathising with our clients. If we are not creating, trying, overcoming or learning to accept, how can we understand our client's processes?

Bayles and Orland address my dilemma in their book "Art and Fear". They posit that the finished work matters to the viewer but for the artist, it is the process and what the artist learns from it, that is of primary concern. I am learning to accept and value myself.



Madalaine Moss & The Children of Braddock Public School
Sweet Dreams, 2024
Texta's and thread on fabric
350 x 100cm



Madaline Moss & The Children of Braddock Public School
Sweet Dreams, 2024
 Texta's and thread on fabric
 350 x 100cm

When beginning this project, I knew I wanted to create a work based around the imagination of a child. I didn't know exactly how but that's where I started from. I remember when I was little and how there were no limitations to my desires or aspirations. As an adult, I long to be as brave as I once was.

My final art-work is a quilt, made up from the drawings of children's dreams. I'm lucky enough to work as a school learning and support officer, at a primary school in Sydney's outer west. Working with children takes me back to imagination on a daily basis.

I had to attend a talk at the beginning of term three. It was there that I was lucky enough to listen to Australian Olympian Jana Pittman give an inspirational talk on how she has achieved everything in her life. The speech was inspiring, at first positively but after sitting with her words for a while, I became a bit sad.

Pittman believed and stated that if someone wants something bad enough, they can do it. For she wanted to be a mum, an Olympian and a doctor, and with some hard work she attained all that she ever wanted. But I couldn't help but think of the children I work with, not all their lives were that privileged. My school is based in a lower-socio economic demographic. Many of the children are from single parent homes, living in housing commission, has a parent in jail and/or aren't having their physiological needs met.

I've made this quilt as a response to Pittman's talk. In my opinion, Pittman seems to have an advantage over these children. She had a support network around her, to either inspire or support her and her dreams. I want the children that I work with to believe they can be or do anything they want, but I understand that that only wanting and wishing will only get someone so far. Children and families in lower socio-economic areas need more support, for right now I don't have any answers on what that support would look like. Hopefully in the future I will be able to work in areas like this and show that support through art therapy, but for right now I can only offer this blanket.

When creating this quilt, I stumbled upon a poem that felt extremely fitting;

“The Rose That Grew From Concrete – by Tupac Shakur

Did you hear about the rose that grew
 from a crack in the concrete?
 Proving nature's law is wrong it
 Learned to walk with out having feet.
 Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,
 It learned to breath fresh air.
 Long live the rose that grew from concrete
 When no one else ever cared.”

The poem suggests the resilience of the rose, I want the resilience of the children to be felt when viewing the quilt.



Karen Louise Munce

Earthsongs -

Messages of Resilience and Hope (pieces of me), 2024

Mixed Media - ceramic, glass, smalti, cinca, slate, sandstone, mooakite, anorthosite / labradorite, fluorite, mica, embroidered fabric, found objects, mirror, African trade beads

25 x 25 cm (each)



Karen Louise Munce
*Earthsongs – Messages of Resilience
 and Hope (pieces of me)*, 2024
 Mixed Media
 25 x 25 cm (each)

Art was my first love throughout my formative years. Art, for me, whether made by self or others, has always provided a sense of fulfillment that is hard to explain. I confess I perhaps took art for granted for a period in my life, pushing it from centre stage, thinking other things were more important, and believing art would be there for me, later. Fortunately, 'later' has arrived. Thank-you misfortune (and my loving friends and family who helped me survive you) for leading me to where I am today. Thank-you art, for having waited patiently for my return over so many years. Thank goodness, I have arrived at a better appreciation of the importance of art, and of creativity, for human life and well-being.

I have had the good fortune to have a garden, or perhaps it is more correct to say my garden has had me. My garden inspires me. I am in awe of the multiplicity of textures, shapes, patterns, colours, layers and configurations of nature. My garden has a will of its own, but is responsive to care and nurturing when responsive to its needs – vulnerable when neglected but otherwise resilient. My garden has supported me through my life's highs and lows. In my garden, memories of my life are embedded. My garden was the inspiration for my present artwork. Many possible therapy-related themes came to mind: seasons/cycles, patterns, care, connections, growth, decay, transformation, regrowth and beauty. I envisioned a multi-layered piece. Ultimately competing life priorities and time constraints helped contain the concept.

I had a clear intent to work with mosaic and include clay, with which I am comfortable. I began with the clay (I love its tactile, earthy, strength yet receptiveness to manipulation), making a series of randomly-shaped flat earthenware pieces. I embedded the imprints of garden foliage in these, and other items of personal significance. As grander schemes slipped away with each passing day, it was ultimately the clay pieces (with their muted earthy timeless quality) and the supplementary materials (with their contrasting bright colours and shiny surfaces) and an intuitive process of art-making, that directed the final piece, introducing a playful element. The clay impressions and the tesserae materials all have personal meaning, referring people and places in my life. With respect to the colours, the blues and purples reflect my garden; the greens and teals for myself represent life and growth; whilst the terracotta, ochres, reds represent the earth. The fact that there are seven pieces is random, but I may now suggest they relate to the days of the weeks, alluding to the passage of time, cycles, seasons and continuity. The title *Earthsongs* references the earth, which contains us all, including all those who have gone before since the dawn of time. The earth produces the bounty that sustains us, and will continue to do so if we look after and respect it – requiring change on our global parts.

I feel there are many resonances with aspects of art therapy in my piece. Amongst other, there is the material aspect, for example, the therapeutic potential of working with clay (the pushing rolling pressing stretching shaping) and tesserae (chopping, hammering, cutting, smashing glass and stone), with their somatic sensory rhythmic dimensions. There is the art-making 'process' aspect – the potential of art-making to enable one to enter a state of flow, as I do when I am engaging with materials, colours and textures I enjoy. There is also the meaning-making aspect, providing scope to reflect on the process and product and gain further insights into self. On art-making there is the need for us art therapists to pursue our personal art practice. I end on the following note:

*(Let's) Make as much art as we can,
 in as many ways as we can, using any materials we can,
 having as much fun as we can, involving as many people as we can,
 whenever and wherever we can; for as long as we possibly can.*



Sarah Nassereddin
Bambi, 2024
 Acrylic, Vinyl
 60 x 60 cm

Exploring how artmaking can be intrinsically healing through various literature and experiences within the course, my understanding of the therapeutic value art can offer to creators has deepened exponentially.

Art making can be a subversive counteraction to our reality, or we can choose to submerge ourselves deeper into our stories by exploring and expressing thoughts, feelings, questions, and symbols through any medium. Art can be anything and everywhere, restricted only by the limit of our imagination. Within the context of art therapy, the impetus moves from what is perceived from the outside world and gifts us space to explore and express our own inner worlds.

The choice of iridescent, transparent, and reflective mediums used in my artwork allows for the play of light and colour to shift depending on perspective. This effect inherently invites the viewer to reflect on their own experience whilst the artwork mirrors, adapts and reflects back to them. The interdimensional play of light, colour, and shape touch on a sense of ephemeral otherworldliness. The ever-changing palette of colours are at once gentle and soft, but with striking effect, conveying warmth and endless possibilities. The ethereal essence of the artwork removes a barrier to what is considered possible or tangible in the 'real world'.

This rendition of Bambi originally began as an acrylic painting during an experiential training exercise where I participated in an art therapy group as both client and trainee art therapist. This reworked, refined version of the artwork was an homage to my personal stories and experiences leading to my growth as a therapist. The original story expressed by the symbolism of Bambi, was now re-visited, reconstructed and reborn into something more etheric through the use of iridescent mediums and light.

When creating art, we become concentrated on the present moment; alleviated of difficult memories or anxious thoughts. We are gifted the power of choice regarding its content, composition, and allowed control over our materials and self-expression. My reverence for art making has deepened as I have grown to recognise its significant role in gifting us space to indulge in our own hopes, questions and desires.

The unintentional backdrop of a carefully curated cabinet of academic material, provided a beautiful synchronous layer of context to my originally intended placement of the work. My own personal journey, depicted by the symbolism of our protagonist Bambi, has been supported and enhanced through my academic pursuits, lending to deeply influential and unimaginable growth.

My artwork is an expression of my own evolution as an artist and therapist. It is an exploration of my desire to explore and conceptualise the real and imaginal worlds, conveying complex ideas and concepts, often depicting underlying juxtaposition of meaning.



Shana O'Brien
Working with Limitations, 2024
thread, watercolour, ink, acrylic paint,
pencil, pen, and marker on paper
59.4 x 84.1cm



Shana O'Brien
Working with Limitations, 2024
 thread, watercolour, ink, acrylic paint,
 pencil, pen, and marker on paper
 59.4 x 84.1cm

Through the process of making this work I had three main aims. I wanted to explore a wide range of mediums, work from a place of slight discomfort and tap into the unconscious through finding a sense of free association. To do this, I included many different materials, I took away the use of colour (which I usually rely on heavily in my personal practice), and I went in with no clear compositional or structural plan. Through the use of new materials and combinations of materials I was able to find new techniques I had never tried before. I particularly loved using pencil to shade watercolour patterns. Although I didn't have a specific plan I did have some organic shapes, memories of place and cultural symbols I wanted to be influenced by. I was thinking vaguely of growing up by the Dyarubbin (Hawksbury) and Gunanday (McDonald) rivers. Once I finished the work and sat and reflected on it, I was overcome with specific memories of the place. I had not during the process thought of or intended them to be there, but I could see them all when I took time to step back from the work. Burnt leaves that I had seen falling from the sky during a bad bushfire season, wombat holes along the river, the deep parts we knew were best for swimming, the ways it would split as we would kayaked along it. The security I felt being there with my mum and community. I felt laughter and happiness, as well as fear and anxiety but mostly when I look at this work I feel a deep longing and nostalgia for that place. Through this process of flow and the meditative process of the detailed pattern making I was really able to tap into deep memories associated with this place and time in my life. I hope that this process, and continued process of maintaining my personal practice and finding places of discomfort to work through will help inform my art therapy practice. Deepening my empathy for people I may work with in the future as they explore their own creative and emotional journeys. The process of making this work has also reinforced to me the power of letting creativity take over, an area I hope to delve deeper into in the future, both in theory and practice. From a cultural lens I also see the potential for this process to tap into blood and ancestral memory. A very powerful tool for people like myself who have displacement in their lineage.



Hayley Oniku
The Delicate Nature of Conception, 2024
 Variety of Pressed Flowers in Perspex/Medium Density Fibre-board (MDF) Frame, Passionfruit Vines, Ivy Vines, Dandelion and Wire on Spanish Moss
 Awaiting Pollination - 53cm x 43 cm
 Womb Orb - 25 x 20 cm





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 Variety of Pressed Flowers in Perspex/
 Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) Frame,
 Passionfruit Vines, Ivy Vines, Dandelion
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 Awaiting Pollination - 53cm x 43 cm
 Womb Orb - 25 x 20 cm

The concept I have been working with for this installation is environmental found objects in Art Therapy: using natural plant material to explore the themes of grief and loss in Motherhood. Drawing inspiration from artists like Andy Goldsworthy and Angela Carroll-Wallace, working with environmental found materials has led to a new understanding of how the natural world offers profound metaphors for our life experiences.

I have created two works, 'Womb Orb', which is crafted from passionfruit vines from my backyard and ivy vines found on my morning walks along Toongabbie creek. The womb cradles a dandelion inside representing an embryo – a symbol of the fragility of new life. The accompanying pressed flower artwork, 'Awaiting Pollination' depicts an empty womb surrounded by a blossoming garden.

Together, these works are titled 'The Delicate Nature of Conception'.

Pressing flowers is an artform that teaches patience and resilience. I have been collecting and pressing flowers for over four years; the flowers in this piece were grown in my own garden, my family's gardens, found on neighbourhood walks or gifted to me. As such, each flower holds a unique history, enhancing the emotional significance in the work.

The 'womb' seen here is the second created. The first, made out of ivy vines alone, deteriorated within days. As I made a new stronger womb, the parallels between self and nature gave me a new perspective on the circle of life – growth, decay and renewal.

Being able to connect with Mother Earth and engage with the healing powers of nature is something that could not have been possible using traditional art materials. As explored by Hyland Moon, using environmental found objects in art can nurture an appreciation and respect for the natural world; and offer artists a greater perspective of life.



Karen Orr
It Started with a Stick, 2024
 Mixed Media
 120 x 80 cm



Karen Orr
It Started with a Stick, 2024
 Mixed Media
 120 x 80 cm

“Every child is an artist; the problem is staying an artist when you grow up.” Pablo Picasso

My first ever creative memory as a child was one of punishment! I got held back after school for staying behind in the toilet queue, transfixed by an iridescent rainbow made in a puddle of water by an oil slick.

I was that kid who put on shows for the neighbourhood, making sets, costumes, and popcorn and charging the street to come and see my productions. From five years onwards, I have been making and creating magical worlds.

From those early formative years till now, my work, ‘It Started with a Slick,’ explores the formation of my artist identity and what has led me to my latest journey of becoming an art therapist,

I used the therapy technique of the self-box to explore this identity. Boxes within boxes, some exposed and some hidden. A blend of darkness and light. Exterior world versus interior. What do we reveal and hold tight to our chests, and what can this tell us about ourselves? Knowing our edges as art therapists is going to be an essential component to bumping up against others.

I used the therapeutic exercise of free writing to express my innermost dark thoughts and secrets. I then shredded them up and made nests out of them. Nests are a way of containing emotions, and my nests are symbolic of the binaries of the young and older self and the empty versus full nest.

I have always been attracted to bright, shiny things, so I channelled my inner Bower Bird and worked with found objects. Even when transformed into something new, found objects possess previous lives, evoking memories and narratives.

My work is a homage to Frida Kahlo, whose bold use of colour, symbolism and fierce feminine energy I admire. I was also inspired by the work of American artist Joseph Cornell, whose shadowbox work celebrated the beauty and magic in the ordinary.

I celebrate my diversity by showcasing my ADHD medication in its disco-mirrored-lined box, a nod to the theory that contemporary art can celebrate diversity and transcend the binary notion of normal versus abnormal (Paton & Linnell, 2018).

The self-box exercise allowed me to create a 3D symbol of myself, identifying my inner and outer self and gave me a sense of unification of all parts of myself (Farrell-Kirk, 2001). The freedom to explore my edges, my dark places and my light. The colourful chaos of my creative life.

May I always maintain a wondrous curiosity for oil slicks, find beauty in the mundane, and live an artist’s life of glorious, chaotic colour.



Ally Pennings
The Dragon Within, 2024
 Inks and printer's paper
 280 x 100 cm





Ally Pennings
The Dragon Within, 2024
Inks and printer's paper
280 x 100 cm

My artwork is entitled 'The Dragon Within'. This work is about facing my fears, for many years I have been afraid to face my inner calling, I have been playing it safe repressing my emotions and thoughts about my goals and hopes for the future. I aim to face my inner dragon and step into my power, Jung discussed how 'individuation' involves integrating the unconscious parts of ourselves into conscious awareness, leading to harmony and authenticity.

I have felt blocked and stuck, holding myself back, stuck in old patterns, resisting change. This artwork represents the radical shift I am taking on, my actions will challenge the cultural norms for a woman of my age and season in life. Creating a paradigm shift. Khun explained when we challenge these norms, the shifts and changes that occur are important for advancement, not just personally but for our community. According to Thomas Khun this action is an act of revolution.

For the artwork I decided to use inks, I started using inks at the commencement of the course and found this medium had an ability to flow across the paper easily. The vibrancy of the colours and the texture of the medium allowed me to apply layers, often when I applied water it would reveal tones and colours I was not expecting. By using this medium I was able to express myself in a way that resonated with me. I also chose this medium for practical reasons, I needed to cover a vast amount of space, my painting needed to be large to capture the strength, power, and wisdom of the dragon.

I explored how inks are created using pigments and gum Arabic. The pigments used in this artwork are a mixture of natural forming pigments and a combination of man-made pigments, and I have added some metallic pigments to these inks to create added texture to the image. Specifically, the chest of the dragon, to represent the fish-like scales. Hyland Moon discusses how paint can be layered and reworked, allowing the client an opportunity to process emotions and thoughts. Using printmaking paper, the thickness and quality of the paper allowed me to work and rework my image. Throughout this process of layering, I gained a deeper and more embodied connection to the image I was creating.

The dragon symbolically represents the mother archetype, a time of chaos, pessimism and repressed feelings. We can ultimately bring order out of chaos through the tools of reason, language, and truth. By aligning with our anima, the animal within, we become conscious and able to face our fears through self-reflection, introspection, and personal growth.



Jasmine Perini
Tribute, 2024
 Mixed media installation
 48 x 75 x 190 cm





Jasmine Perini
Tribute, 2024
 Mixed media installation
 48 x 75 x 190 cm

This artwork is a personal exploration of how it feels to pay tribute to the parts of us that have held trauma and pain. By allowing materials to symbolically take the role of holding and containing, I was able to experience the healing benefits of where art and therapy meet.

The lessons learnt through this creation align with psychodynamic approaches. Lyddiatt's (1970) book based on the use of spontaneous painting in art therapy, gave language to a deep driving force I experienced making this work. I was compelled to make specific creative choices, such as using the life size image of my sister and I as children and reworking it with materials associated with childhood.

The tension between needing to create authentically and the reality of making something appropriate for viewers was an issue I had to overcome. Rappaport's (2009) focus orientated art therapy techniques, assisted me to listen to my inner leadings, to visually represent them and to lean into learning from the process.

I resonated with Schwartz's (2019) Internal Family Systems framework, and this influenced my decision to make a creative tribute to honour the parts of a person that take the role of protection during traumas. I was drawn to artist's tributes such as Cavaliere's 'Nest', Dongs 'Waste Not' and Stronza's nature-based shrines for deceased animals. These works confirmed a desire to explore how making creative tributes can assist in processing trauma and loss. The sign above the work translates to 'In honour of your service' and salutes to the use of shrines in Mexican culture.

I experimented with placing found objects together (Brooker 2010) and noticed the symbolic meanings that arose. The rock on the ground is holding the fragile nest and when I placed these unrelated items together it communicated a visceral feeling of what it is like to be held in vulnerability. The cupboard holds a collage, and a heart made of a sea sponge. This is a symbolic representation of the inner child, working beneath the surface to protect and contain trauma. The red wool represents connections between the head and heart, linking and binding objects.

The work is covered with small, sealed jars. The jars have had a range of emotions spoken into them to externalise internal burdens. Some have messages handwritten by a loved one that died this year. The toy soldiers are attached to the jars as guardians for the burdens that are embodied within. Attention was paid to the poses of each soldier and how different stances lent towards holding particular feelings.

My friends and family asked to add their whispers into this artwork and commented that they felt lighter after speaking into the jars. At the top of the cupboard there is a tray of empty jars, and you the viewer are invited to speak your burdens into a jar, and leave it behind. Take a moment to notice how this feels for you emotionally and physically.



Anisha Pradhan
Threads of My Country, 2024
Alpana: rice paste on floor
60 x 60 cm



Anisha Pradhan
Threads of My Country, 2024
Alpana: rice paste on floor
60 x 60 cm

"Threads of My Country" is a dialogue between two distinct cultural expressions: the Alpana art of my homeland India and the evocative poem Dorothea Mackellar's "My Country" describing my new home, Australia. The threads of my Indian heritage weave intricate patterns and intertwine with the landscape of Australia. I explore themes of belonging, identity, and connection with the culture and the land through this performance art piece while using the process of Alpana making as a means of art therapy. I attach myself to Skaife's Intersubjective theory in art therapy: when I bring my background into this new environment, my new sense of self is defined by the past and the present and how people respond to me.

The essence of Alpana lies in the accessibility of the natural materials, and the relatability of the aesthetic designs depicting visuals understood by the 'people'. These designs made using rice paste on the floor are believed to invite good fortune and positive energy into the home during festivals. In my performance, Alpana is also a metaphor for the impermanence of life and fluidity of identity. My identity isn't fixed, it evolves with the "share and exchange" with the surroundings and redefines who I am. This transience echoes in the ever-changing landscapes of "My Country" of sweeping plains and ragged mountains and wide brown land, droughts and floods, and open horizons. The creation of the Alpana during performance is intrinsic to the work's message. Every stroke reflects mindfulness. Every shape reflects meditative engagement with the space. Every visual an invitation to the audience to connect with the art unfolding. The flanks of the Alpana each depict a scene from the poem's iconic stanza. In a way, the cyclical patterns of the Alpana design speak of the cycles and spirals of nature. Just as Mackellar noted the cyclical beauty and harshness of the landscape, so too do the patterns of the Alpana embody both stability and change. My own journey as an art therapist in a different cultural landscape influences this work, cradling the familiar and the new.

Art therapy is central to this work. The tactile sensation of the rice paste between my fingers is a grounding experience, in line with Moon's observation. Bending down to make the art, touching the floor reminds me of the connection between art and earth. It is meditative and immersive and this tactile connection was something I wanted to convey during the performance. Art can be a tool for healing, and reconnection; there is this beautiful connection between this idea and the belief that making Alpana in our homes invites positivity and prosperity. The very act of creating Alpana provides for a meditative focus wherein the repetitive movement and use of natural materials bring about a restorative experience— one that is soothing and calming. It's a dialogue, really, between the land, culture, and personal identity. A response to Mackellar's love for Australia's great, rugged beauty through the delicate, flowing lines of Alpana. In merging these two worlds, I aim to create an experience where the audience will not only be witness to the art but also feel the therapeutic value of process-driven creation.



Dot Przybylski
Dear diary, today I saw something strange, 2024
Video art, mixed media
Duration: 3:51 mins



Dot Przybylski
Dear diary, today I saw something strange, 2024
 Video art, mixed media
 Duration: 3:51 mins

This video artwork explores witnessing, documenting, and my personal experience of the world around me. To me, life can feel strange and surreal, and my artwork's aim is to reflect my strange feelings towards life. I created this artwork to be a kind of 'video-collage', using elements of animation, video and sound recordings, as a means to express my own way of seeing events.

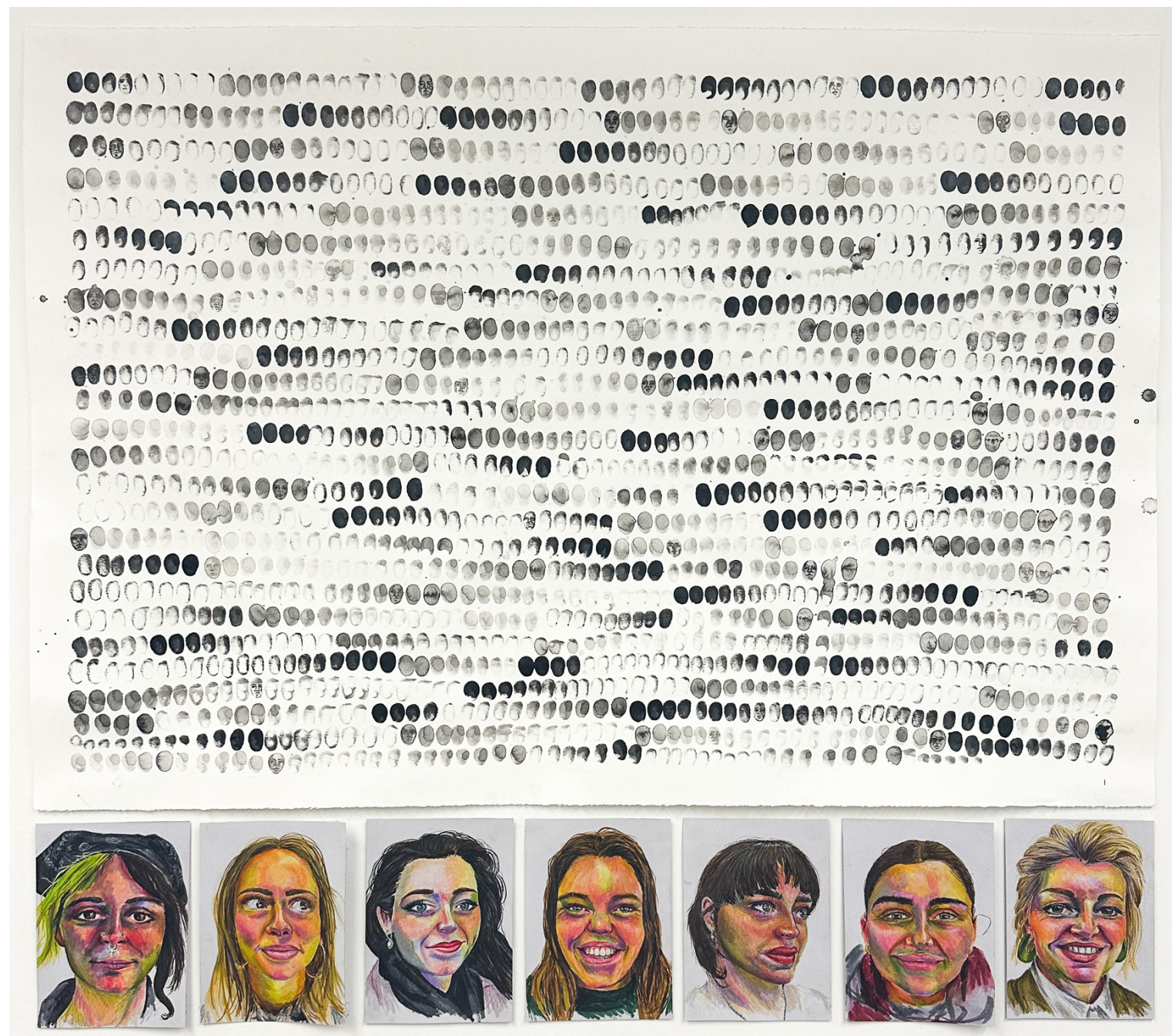
This collage is a compilation of snippets: footage of my POV walks to uni, found objects, personal arts and crafts, and sound recordings of bird calls, sewing machines, waves, frogs croaking, planes flying, and even the ambiance of my bedroom. The work has examples of stop-motion animation I made using clay, and I rotoscoped footage of myself moving. There is a timelapse of selfies from my digital diary that I have been using to record my life over the past few years. The timelapse illustrates the flow of time and reflects my everyday experience. I was interested in seeing how much my hair grew over these years.

I reversed my voice recordings to make my dialogue intelligible and made subtitles using magazine clippings of green text. This text and speech make sense to only me which is to represent my personal experience, the difficulty of communicating it to others, and to illustrate the strangeness of life.

My phone is always with me, so I was able to spontaneously record the world around me. This process made me an active observer of my environment. It felt therapeutic to me because I was present and aware of the sights and sounds around me, as well as my inner thoughts and feelings. I had a sense of acceptance within myself through documenting the un-noticeable parts of me and my life. I found comfort in my own presence and by witnessing beauty in life's strangeness.

The stop-motion elements were inspired by Jan Švankmajer, the Czech film director and animator, who created surreal and experimental video art. He had a mixed-media approach and combined stop-motion with live-action. His technique and style inspired me to create an artwork using weird and unusual imagery. He has fairy-tale themes in his work, which resonates with my way of seeing life.

I was also inspired by the concept of witnessing in art therapy as explained by Learmonth (1994). Witnessing is a process that honours the subject without judgment, and allowing it's narrative to unfold organically. This is how I approached my process, by documenting and accepting mundane moments, and seeing its beauty.



Cathryn Scarano
The Therapist and the Client, 2024
 ink, markers and coloured pencils on watercolour paper
 The Therapist - 84.1 x 118.8 cm
 Clients - 20 x 14.8 cm



Cathryn Scarano
The Therapist and the Client, 2024
 ink, markers and coloured pencils on watercolour paper
 The Therapist - 84.1 x 118.8 cm
 Clients - 20 x 14.8 cm

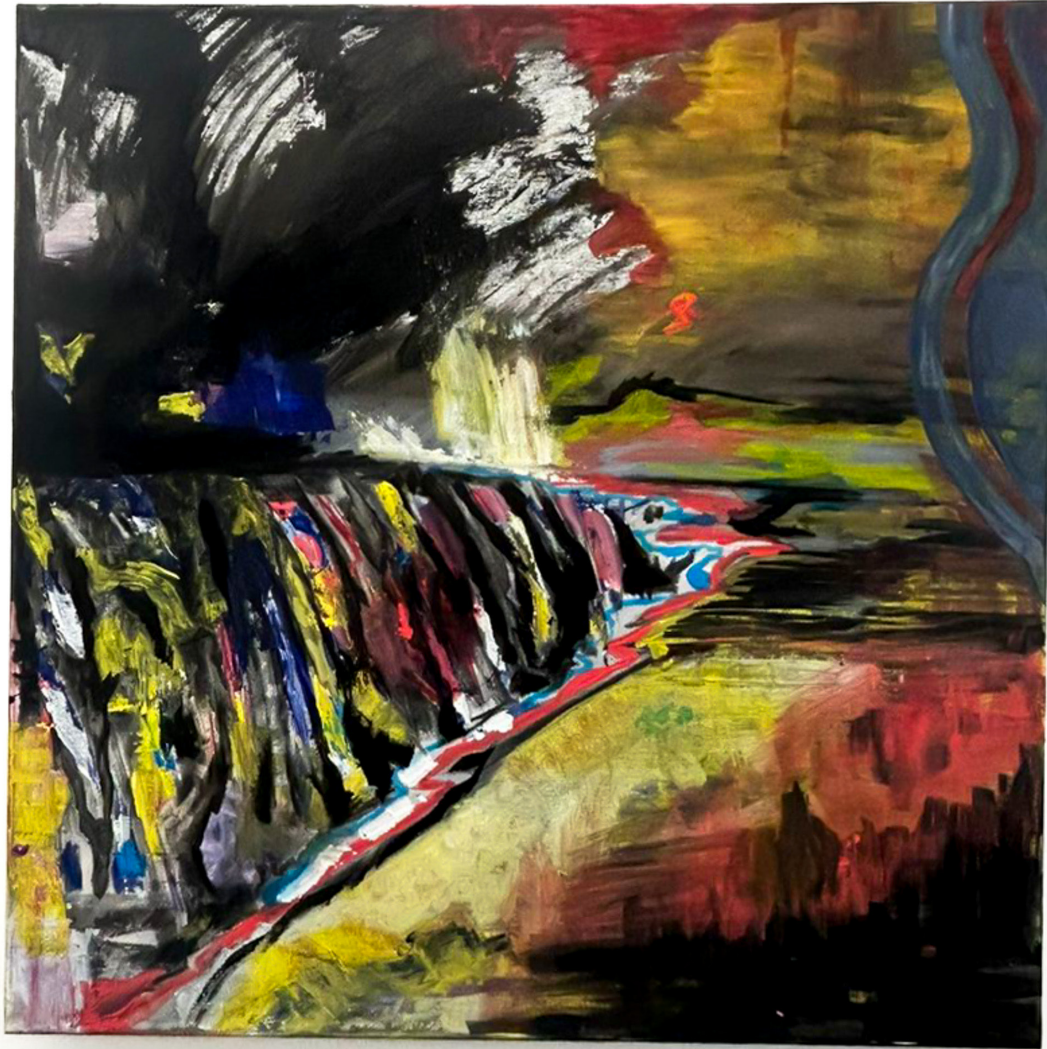
The need for self-reflection during my art therapy studies has repeatedly surprised me. Following Freud's psychodynamic theory, as therapists we must avoid projecting our own psyche and meanings onto our client's artwork. This process is unavoidable, so it is important therapists know what they are bringing to the session. As art therapists we are privileged to use artmaking as a limitless medium for our insights.

I explore the juxtaposition of therapist's hyperawareness and client's autonomy through portraits. As therapists we must self-analyse and reflect constantly while our clients are allowed freedom. I was inspired by Marina Abramovic's *The Artist is Present* as a metaphor for being a therapist. Abramovic must ensure she is attentive, holding strong eye contact, sitting perfectly still and staying silent. The audience member does not need the same concentration as the therapist does.

I depicted myself, the therapist, in tiny self-portraits within monochromatic fingerprints. The tiny faces represent the many faces of the therapist during a session: how much of myself am I showing, how much is mirroring, what is intuitively me, what is regurgitated learning, what will I self-disclose, what will I hide, and most importantly who does the client need me to be. They are also hidden and hard to notice as the therapist is never the focus of the session, they are merely guiding the light of the client.

My 'clients' sit underneath the therapist in colourful portraits, my classmates posing as my clients. Similar to person centred humanistic art therapy, I ensured each portrait uniquely represented the person, choosing the colours slowly and carefully and making sure the proportions are perfect. The process resembled client work: needing the security of the easel or the space for maximum results, getting to know them with the initial sketch before finishing and understanding their therapeutic goals, laying down the colour and doing the hard work of therapy, and finally exit planning with the final pencil layer. I had a team of 'second eyes' who would offer supervision and check my proportions. Drawing when I didn't particularly feel like it also resembled client work and reinforced the idea of the controlled therapist and the free client.

Perspective became an insight throughout the works conception. I perceived the drawing in front of me differently through the lens of a camera. Additionally, the image of the person in my mind's eye often did not align with their actual appearance. In the portraits I portray them subjectively and with bias. I am saying "this is how I see you" not "this is who you are"; and sure, it resembles them closely enough to recognise them, however it is most likely not how they see themselves.



Mihikaa Girish K
Shadow work, 2024
Mixed Media - Acrylic paints, oil pastels,
charcoal, alcohol ink
61 x 61 cm

In my work, I explore the intricate dance between the shadow, persona, self, the three interconnected aspects of the human psyche. I have embraced the concepts of Carl Jung's shadow work which focuses on the unconscious parts of ourselves we often deny or suppress.

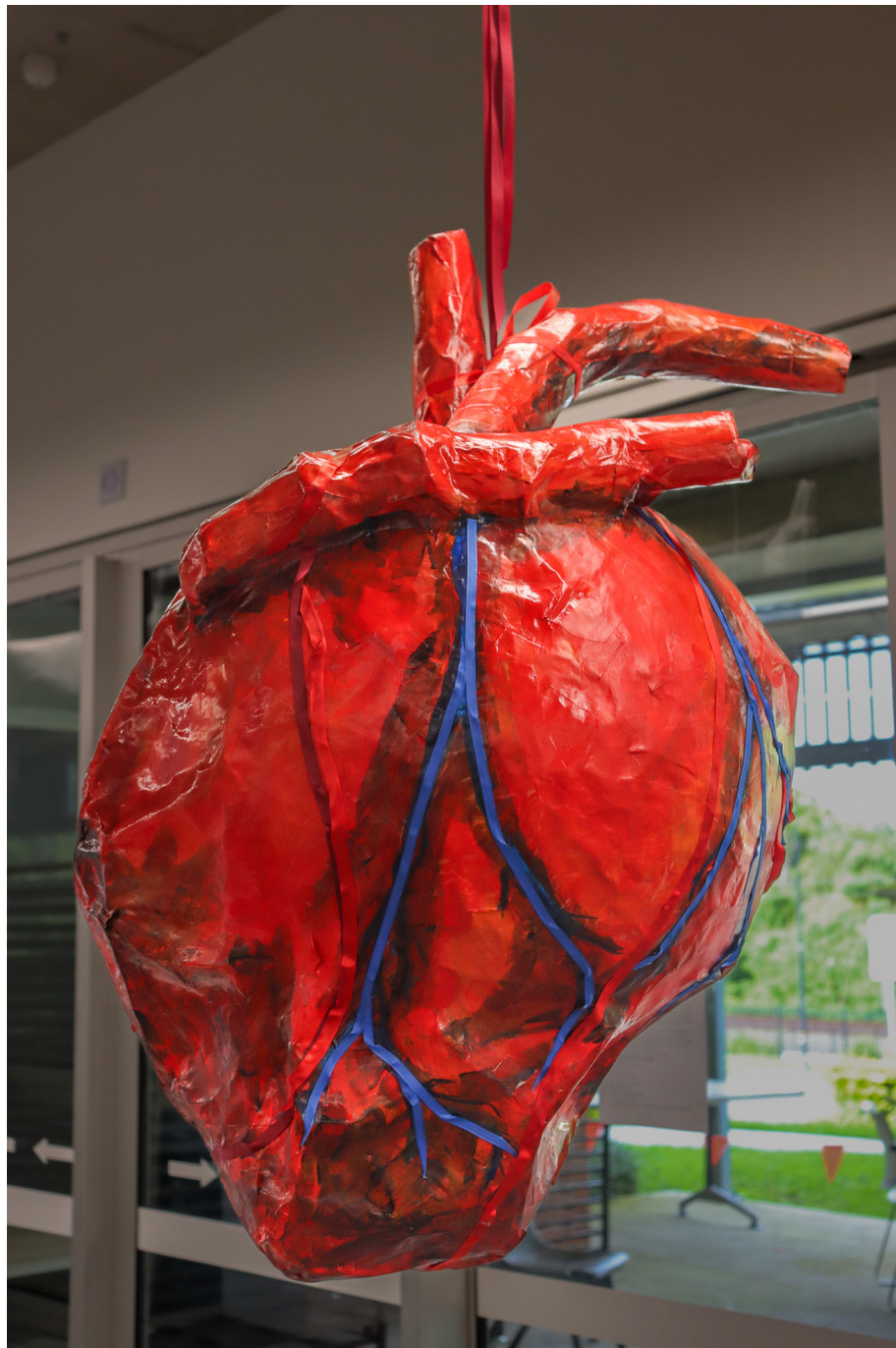
This personal journey has significantly shaped both my creative process. My aim was to explore the tension between these three aspects and find a visual language that illustrates the process of inner conflict, fears, reconciliation, and integration. The artwork serves as both an exploration and a dialogue with the unconscious, helping to bring these deeper aspects of identity to the surface for reflection and understanding.

The shadow represents the parts of myself I once repressed like emotions of vulnerability and a need for perfectionism. These suppressed aspects come to life in my chaotic abstract painting using materials charcoal, acrylic painting, alcohol inks and oil pastels. Each medium brings a unique expressive quality, mirroring the facets of my inner exploration. Charcoal is raw, undefined and intensively expressive. Acrylic paints allow versatility and bold expression which enables me to build layers rapidly. Acrylics also symbolize transformation and resilience as I paint over mistakes or previous layers much reworking aspects of myself. Bold colors and strong contrast possible with acrylics mirror the intensity of facing difficult truths about oneself. Alcohol Inks bring an unpredictable, flowing quality to the painting. These inks represent the fluidity of emotions, thoughts especially those that surface during deep exploration, evoking the merging and dissolution of boundaries. Using a combination of these mediums allows for control and spontaneity through the chaos where I find clarity.

The self emerges as I engage with these darker elements with a growing sense of self compassion and empathy. Through the process of creation I embrace the complexity of who I am. In shadow work, Hogan echo's Jungs' idea of confronting the shadow is essential in developing an authentic self, breaking away from rigid personas that conform to societal norms.

The persona, the mask, I once crafted, becomes a point of reflection in my practice. The disconnect between this outward mask and inner truth was a source of conflict, but through my art, I now explore the harmonious co-existence of these aspects. The persona no longer stands in opposition to the shadow as it becomes a conscious expression of a more authentic self.

Through this journey of shadow work, my art is not just an expression of my personal evolution but also an invitation for others to reflect on their own inner landscapes. It is a visual dialogue about the human experience, vulnerability and the courage it takes to embrace all of the facets of the self which is light and shadow like.



Jane Stadermann
Heart, 2024
Mixed Media
80 x 55 x 55 cm





Jane Stadermann
Heart, 2024
 Mixed Media
 80 x 55 x 55 cm

My artwork started as a simple visual symbol which moved with me throughout the semester by absorbing my thought processes and expanding beyond a pre-determined concept. It began as a piece which was to be about me explaining my art therapy journey, to others, with the aim of an exhibition. However, it ended up being a piece that worked on me and explained to me that sometimes art runs away from you in order to run with you.

The choice of paper mâché was a deliberate move away from my usual 2-D (fast) painting to try something new, to slow the physical process down. The ripping of small pieces of paper and the repetitive glueing was a little monotonous. Yet the physical time deterrents of the making process, and waiting for drying times over many days, allowed opportunities for initial thoughts to be impacted by my studies and life in general and to change and deepen the artwork. My aim changed too. No longer was the exhibition and my 'showing' my work to others the prime motivator. In short, an aim per se became secondary.

As I was doing a lot of research on art in prisons and detention centres, my thoughts of this and my artmaking began to merge. There seemed to be a huge hole in the justice system with regards to art therapy. Therein, when I thought to include the words of artmaking prisoners in my work, the social activism element in my thoughts synchronised with and acted upon my propensity to hide my personal feelings. The symbols of the heart, the idea of containment, of locking, of giving voice, all came together through realising my thoughts and feelings are not isolated, that they are always in flux, that there is always influence from beyond oneself (acknowledgement of Rubin's discussion of the interface).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, I think my piece tells of my drive to want to share art as a communication medium with, especially disadvantaged, others because, simply put, I can see how art works on me. The words inside the heart are there for exhibition viewers to take out and read, to absorb into their thoughts and perhaps their hearts. I see it as collaborative viewing: my heart as a container, their/prisoner heart as words, your heart taking part as viewer, all bound as a gift, hence the ribbons (acknowledgement of Robyne Latham's CART7004 workshop impact).

The quotes within the heart's door are designed to be taken out and read by exhibition viewers. The key to these quote origins:

Example: (Q6. P9.2013) =
 (in answer to question 6 on an art survey by person 9, who is incarcerated. This person has a work in the 2013 exhibition)
 P103 JR PhD =
 (page 103 of Jeremy Ryder's 2018 dissertation, *Escape Artists: Prison Art, De-stigmatisation and the Promise of Redemption*)
 I am very aware that the prisoners are unnamed and are identified by number only, not through their choice.
 Signing off from student 22159855, privileged, my choice.



Maurine Venus
Wall of Lives, 2024
 digital illustration, installation, video
 1920 x 1080 pixels

Inspired by cities at night, the atmosphere, and how our hearts freely express themselves when the sun goes down, I created *Walls of Lives*, a digital illustration filmed. Along the recorded drawing there is a poem that strengthens the final result. Through this piece, I explore the concept of witnessing in art therapy through the metaphor of windows and walls. My artwork captures the essence of urban nightscapes, inspired by years of observing city lights at night. This image depicts an urban scene where we can glimpse inside people's apartments, symbolizing the therapeutic process of observing without judgment and with curiosity and compassion. I sought to explore the delicate balance between what is private and what is public. Fascinated by the fineness of this boundary, I make it a subject where intimacy and connection intertwine.

The digital medium serves as a metaphor for the therapeutic process itself. On one hand, it offers a multitude of possibilities, mirroring the potential for growth, exploration, and transformation in therapy. On the other hand, the inherent uncertainty in digital creation echoes with the unpredictable nature of the therapeutic journey. By using a digital textured pencil and a melancholic color palette, I create an atmosphere that evokes complex emotions, reflecting the interplay between the conscious and the unconscious. Furthermore, working on digital media requires working with different layers which refers to the multifaceted aspects of the psyche explored in therapy's setting. The poem I wrote alongside the recorded illustration serves as a verbal counterpart to the visual piece, further exploring the theme of witnessing and self-reflection. Together, they represent the concept of art therapy as a space for processing emotions.

My work is influenced by the concept of "flâneur" introduced by Charles Baudelaire and practiced by photographers such as Eugène Atget and Brassai. Nowadays, I am very inspired by the work of Elsa Breda and her atmospheric urban photography. She captures the paradoxical feeling between dream and reality in nocturnal urban landscapes. In painting, it is the magnificent work of Edward Hopper, in particular, "Nighthawks", for his masterful use of light and shadow to create psychological tension and narrative ambiguity. On the illustration side, Vincent Mahé catches my attention with "From Voyeur to Friends" made for the New York Times in 2020, which explores the themes of loneliness and connection in urban environments.

On the psychotherapeutic side, it is Judith Rubin's concept of art therapy that guided my project. The emphasis is on the importance of creative approaches to intervention and the role of the therapist as an observer and facilitator. This is followed with Malcolm Learmonth's ideas on witnessing in art therapy that highlight the importance of respectful and compassionate observation in the therapeutic process. Completing with Catherine Moon's theories on materiality in art therapy which inform the choice of digital media as a way to explore the tangible and intangible aspects of the therapeutic experience.

Through *Walls of Lives* and its accompanying recorded poem, I invite viewers to reflect on their own roles as witnesses in both, personal and professional contexts, exploring the profound potential of art therapy for facilitating healing and growth.



Suddhasri Wallace

Being with the mystery, 2024

Recycled materials/mixed media/found objects from all the artworks made in the Masters of Art therapy course.

120 x 200 x 50 cm

All paths– religious, spiritual or without name – intersect in the place of darkness, darkness is the place where you mind is forced to detach itself from whatever it has grabbed onto in life. And in the nothingness, in that dark place, in dark times we awaken (Zenju Earthlyn Manuel, 2023).

I become aware of the fearful part of myself like a wounded bird. I stand on a cliff face with the wind pounding and pushing against me with all its force, I struggle against it, I struggle to stay upright. I let go and in the letting go I begin to fly. I become a flock of birds, the wounded bird, the fearful part is gently lifted up by the other birds, protected and guided by the flock. I feel the wholeness. I look on either side of me and see other peoples flocks of birds moving through the open sky. (A Focusing session)

My creative adventure explores the theme of FOAT, Focusing Orientated Art Therapy. A body-based approach that invites us to be an open, accepting and compassionate presence to all the parts of our experience. Inherent in this humanistic approach is the understanding that the body naturally moves towards healing and wisdom and speaks to us through the felt sense of the body in its own time and how creative responses support and deepen this process.

To honour the focusing flock I upcycled all the materials I have used throughout the Art Therapy masters to date to create a flock of Mysterious Winged Beings (MWB). These are made intuitively, playfully and reverentially, with no idea of what they will look like until they are formed. Similar to the approach artist Kikki Smith takes “celebrating being here in this form, now” and “just do it and see what happens”

Meaning comes from the materials themselves and the memory they hold of past creations, and their historical use. Layers of meaning also come from where they are made, including times on meditation retreats, solitaires, time in nature with friends. All MWB are created on Gadigal, Dharawal, Arrente and Gunditjmarra country.

Chiharu’s Shiota’s art is deeply informed by the emotionality or experience of memory, life, death and relationships a “presence in the absence”, this echoes through my artwork. As meaning is also ongoingly expressed through what was happening in the body, mind and spirit in the moment of creating; from the incubated baby, grieving teenage, spiritual friendships, motherhood, Buddhist ordination and everything inbetween.

As Hyland Moon suggests the more MWB I make the more I experientially understand that my ability to be with all the parts of my experience with compassion, empathy and non-judgement the more this supports me to bring these qualities to the therapeutic relationship as an art therapist.

It’s the exploration of holding, a random conversation, combined with Artist Janet Lawrence’s emphasis on interconnection that literally and symbolically create the branches of support for the MWB, that are sung into being with this ditty...

Winged beings flying through the boundless blue
 Seeing the suffering of everyone
 Seeing the joy of everyone
 Seeing the detail of everything
 Seeing the vastness of everything
 Seeing the impermanence of everything
 Seeing the love in everything.

After exhibition, most MWB will be given away.



Julia Wang
Threading the past, present and future into one, 2024
 Photo collage and mixed media
 Collage 50 x 70 x 3 cm | Tiger block: 42 x 70 x 4 cm





Julia Wang
Threading the past, present and future into one, 2024
 Photo collage and mixed media
 Collage 50 x 70 x 3 cm
 Tiger block: 42 x 70 x 4 cm

This artwork explores the interrelated concepts of attunement and containment in relation to cultural identity in art therapy. The visual concept stems from a recent trip overseas where I re-connected with my country of birth in Taiwan. I visited the island of Penghu and the city of Taichung in Taiwan, as well as Chiang Mai in Thailand. I retraced the footsteps of my grandma, through my sister's memories and stories of her, and in doing so, became aware of another layer of me through my family history.

The idea of creating a time capsule to solidify my memories from this trip was inspired by the Wanderlust collection of visual artist and filmmaker Joseph Cornell, and the inclusion of the tigers was inspired by the playful illustrations of artist and toy designer Justin Worsley.

I gravitate towards the Jungian school of art therapy, tapping into our inner world for unconscious materials to surface, and bringing the elusive and implicit into tangible forms. It was in the spontaneous collage-making process, and being guided by the materials, that the theme of past, present, and future emerged organically.

The tree represents growth, and the three-toned image visually suggests the past, present, and future of my identity. The red thread in some Asian cultures symbolises the invisible line that connects us to our loved ones, and this red thread was used to stitch together three sheets of brown paper as the background – threading the past, present, and future into one. Overall, the walnut frame was selected as a container to hold the emotional memories in these photographic snapshots from the trip.

The three tigers represent unique layers of the self, and I reflect on the three aspects of my cultural identity blending with my self-identity, my artist identity integrating from past experiences, and my evolving art therapist identity. The tigers are also transitional objects that bring past memories to the present here and now, and in the art-making process, I found comfort in securing them on wooden blocks which draws on my past identity as an interior design student. The tigers have dirty feet from roaming the world to discover the future.

In terms of materiality, I decided to create a collage as it is considered a restrictive media that promotes autonomy and a sense of control through the selection and arrangement of images – which is my way of containing and holding the affective experiencing. The tigers on the other hand, are grounded with the wooden element, yet not framed nor restricted. Their textured fur made from plaster cloth is coloured with a combination of gauche sticks and fluid watercolour that promotes expression and evokes emotions.

Cultural identity is deeply connected to a person's sense of self and belonging, and in attuning to this experience, whilst still keeping a safe container, I have gained further appreciation of the intricacies of cultural dimensions in art therapy. Self-awareness facilitates the ability to attune to another in the here and now, and the ability to attune to the self is also crucial in art-making.

The art you can experience may have originated a thousand miles away or a thousand years ago, but the art you can make is irrevocably bound to the times and the places of your life. (Bayles & Orland, 2023, p.52)



Elisa May Ware
Systems of the Self: Inviting healing, 2024
 Canvas Board and medium-density fibreboard with paint and
 pencil, audio recordable buttons.
 62 x 62 cm



Elisa May Ware
Systems of the Self: Inviting healing, 2024
 Canvas Board and medium-density fibreboard with paint
 and pencil, audio recordable buttons.
 62 x 62 cm

You may be predisposed to think there is only one way, swimming
 against the waves.

But, my dear, just as the moon transforms its faces;

As the tides flow in and out across this earth;

And nature changes her face every season;

So too, must we.

If you stop to listen, life might whisper to you...

Let go of that which no longer serves you,

Leave that space open to some new possibility.

My art work is an exploration of the "Self", how it is constructed and the systems that influence our personal growth. I paid particular attention to attachment theory and ecological systems theory as I investigated these concepts.

Unexpectedly, I also ended up exploring my own reaction to different styles of attachment and what that might mean during therapy sessions. During the portions where I was able to be mindful during designing and pattern making I was also able to really deeply process Winnicott's concept of being "Good Enough" (The Good Enough Mother). I developed a sense of peace about my own inadequacies.

I explored other mediums early in the creative process, but ultimately decided on paint as it is one of the mediums I am most familiar with. It was important to me that I could communicate clearly the symbols in my work.

It was also really important my work had a sense of movement and interaction to it. Adding the audio buttons to the work allowed me to process what different attachment styles might be asking for in the therapeutic relationship and having the wheels be able to pivot became a representation of the changes that may occur in that relationship, hopefully leaving room for new introspection and growth.



Conor West
Borrowed Nest, 2024
Mixed Media Assemblage
80 x 40 x 40 cm



Conor West
Borrowed Nest, 2024
 Mixed Media Assemblage
 80 x 40 x 40 cm

*Too weary for a nest
 Built on your own
 Yet anxious to find
 A place to rest*

*A nest of mine
 Built from all I am
 Can hold you safe
 Rain, hail or shine*

*Spirits grow strong
 Because all can heal
 For your return to sky
 Where we all belong*

This poem and associated artwork examine the elements of a successful therapeutic relationship between client and art therapist. It includes three client-birds, each holding a varying degree of distorted self-perception and in need of rest. They come and go from a borrowed nest; one I have built for them from my genetics, lived experiences and training. To rest and rejuvenation, they express their human impulse to create using the art materials within. In this nest, they do not need to heal all their broken pieces to be ready to fly. Healing is not achieved by making a perfect self-image, but by clearly seeing the pieces as a whole.

This artwork was borne from significant reflection of my year as a trainee art therapist. Drawn to person-centred, relational models in my studies to-date, I reflected upon my own positionality to uncover the genetic, sociocultural and experiential factors that shape my art therapist identity. As posited by constructivist theorists such as Vygotsky, Bandura and Bronfenbrenner, I identified factors such as my creative childhood home, early experiences with therapeutic settings and training as an educator as directing my emerging art therapist identity. These factors have shaped certain value positions on the therapeutic process, such as my belief in clients' epistemological right to their own story, the power of dignity of risk and the healing capacity of unconditional positive regard advocated for by Rogers. Most importantly, I appreciate the healing capacity of art in this therapeutic process, as it enables a triadic interface between client, therapist and artwork that deepens communication and relational attunement as described by Rubin. I action these values using dialectical approaches that avoid enforcing a deficit lens to mental illness. These ruminations represent the shape of my art therapist self.

Extending upon this, I used the work of Bowlby to reflect upon what my clients' positionality and psychological needs may mean for the therapeutic relationship. From this lens, I work with the understanding that the client-therapist relationship emulates early secure attachments via unconditional positive regard, where the power of witnessing and holding clients' authentic selves enables them to express, process and change toward self-actualisation. Ultimately, this sees a successful therapeutic relationship marked by its eventual redundancy, much like a mother bird watching her chicks fly the nest.

As discussed by Hyland Moon, as an artist, I use Mother Nature as studio, material and therapist where I can. My nest is therefore made from materials from my home – home-grown passionfruit vine, rosemary, lavender, my hair and fur to represent the congruent self I must bring as an art therapist. The unfired clay birds are shaped into swallows, representing the human birthright of freedom, happiness and creative expression. The fragility this material imbues is a poignant reminder of the need for empathetic tenderness, with the viewers' distorted reflections in the bird-clients' mirrored surfaces literally placing them in their shoes – or rather, wings.

This artwork represents my fledgling conceptualisations of what art therapy is, and the art therapist I wish to be.



Julia Westwood

Altar, 2024

Thread, fabric, sticks, flowers fabric/fresh, canvas, acrylic paint, incense, fairy lights, wooden shelf, clay, wooden snake, plastic idols, orange, kiwi fruit, amethyst, bamboo plant, stick.

Altar 50 x 50 cm | Painting 80 x 100 cm



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As Rubin (2011) explores, to show real artistry as an art therapist, we must understand and use art for pleasure and self care, comfortable in our own artist identity. The 'artist as therapist'. The positive regard we share to clients, must also be given to ourselves. I am interested in these quiet, contemplative, spiritual places that an art therapist may find themselves outside of a therapy session. I am particularly interested in the practice of self-care, reflection, compassion and kindness. This is a safe place, a sacred space where one can come back to themselves and be renewed.

My artwork represents my safe-place, or some variation of this.

I have chosen my materials, as Hyland Moon (2010) writes, as they would 'best say what needed to be said, at that time and place'. I also agree that the meanings that came through were not only 'left in the materials' but 'among and between us'.

My safe-space takes the shape of a small altar with offerings to nature, higher powers and the universe and is created with clay forms, small items, flowers and fruit arranged underneath a painted image on the wall.

In the way that I experience art making, so I experience the reverence of prayer and faith that present themselves in our lives. The respect, dedication and commitment to a daily or more frequent offering of praise to a higher power (nature or god), reminds me of the peace and stillness my mind presents when I make art. This quiet contemplation, waiting, watching and listening of Dadirri is a constant source of inspiration for my life, my art making and my future in art therapy. We cannot hurry the river – Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann says, we sit and take time to go in deep, unthreatened by silence, taking advantage of this ancient healing knowledge available to us.

Vibrantly coloured flowers and fruit are used in the work to represent our very real presence in this world, eating, sleeping – and giving these back to god/universe/nature showing our gratitude for the gift of life. I believe that using the power of prayer, contemplation, and offering gratitude in this way is our healing, and can be transferred in the way that I use art to create and find quiet stillness, peace and freedom to be myself. In this way, we may present art as a form of self care in itself for those suffering with trauma, addiction and poor mental health, using art in this way for clarity of the mind. These threats to our peace inevitably come and we can deal with them by waiting and listening and learning, the contemplative way of Dadirri spreading over our whole life, renewing us, bringing us peace and making us whole again.



Karina Wikamto
Ixora Introspection, 2024
Photographic print on canvas, paper
Print - 50 x 70 cm | Sculptures 20 x 20 cm

This artwork is inspired by my personal connection to the Ixora flower and my journey of mental health recovery. The Ixora is a reminder of my childhood spent in tropical Far North Queensland and the cherished memories I have with my father, who taught me about this flower and the sweet nectar it produces. For me, the Ixora has always symbolised the beginning of my fascination with flowers. I also associate the Ixora with a different memory — one that occurred during an episode of mania, a symptom of bipolar disorder that I frequently experienced in my late twenties. I recall a particular day when I felt as though I was about to collapse from overexertion and lack of sleep. As I walked, I spotted an Ixora shrub and instinctively grabbed two large bunches. I proceeded to drink the nectar all at once, without a second thought, as though my body needed it to survive. I often reflect on that point in time and how it might have appeared to outside observers, even though I cannot recall anyone else being present. This self-portrait is informed by my memory of that moment and how vividly it remains in my mind.

Reflecting on my experiences of mania during the creation of this artwork has added deeper significance to the Ixora flower and sparked insights that inspire me to creatively explore the connections between mania, psychosis, and memory, particularly how these experiences can evoke memories from childhood. Drawing from insights by Hyland Moon, I realise that my art-making is an ongoing process of self-education that deepens my understanding of both my art and myself. This piece also represents a significant shift in my practice, as it is the first time I have integrated my own image into my art. The Ixora sculpture, protruding from my mouth invokes feelings of silence and shame that have stemmed from my bipolar diagnosis. In exploring these feelings, I recognised my shadow — the parts of myself that I have pushed aside in fear. This creative engagement has allowed me to confront these aspects and facilitate a dialogue with my hidden self.

Frida Kahlo's self-portraits, which examine personal identity and emotional truths, are also an inspiration to my art. Like Kahlo, who used her image for self-expression, I have utilised my self-portrait to confront my struggles with mental health and my shadow self. Her ability to transform her poignant experiences into powerful visual narratives motivated me to embrace vulnerability and authenticity in my sculptural and portrait work. For me, art-making has been crucial to my recovery and self-exploration. As Willa Cather noted, "Artistic growth is, more than anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness." Through my art, I celebrate resilience and vulnerability, inviting viewers to embrace their truths and the transformative power of creativity in turning personal experiences into shared narratives of healing.



Slyvia Winiarski
The Dark night of the soul, 2024
Acrylic on board
100 x 100 cm



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 Acrylic on board
 100 x 100 cm

The Dark night of the soul refers to a period of deep spiritual crisis, inner turmoil that a person may experience during the quest for meaning. A metaphor for profound psychological and spiritual suffering, the 'dark night of the soul' was inspired by the mystic and poet St. John of the cross, who wrote a poem with the same title. In psychological terms, 'The dark night of the soul' can be compared to a major depressive episode. A period seen as an intense time for self-reflection and existential questioning and learning, as my time has been this year in the MAT program.

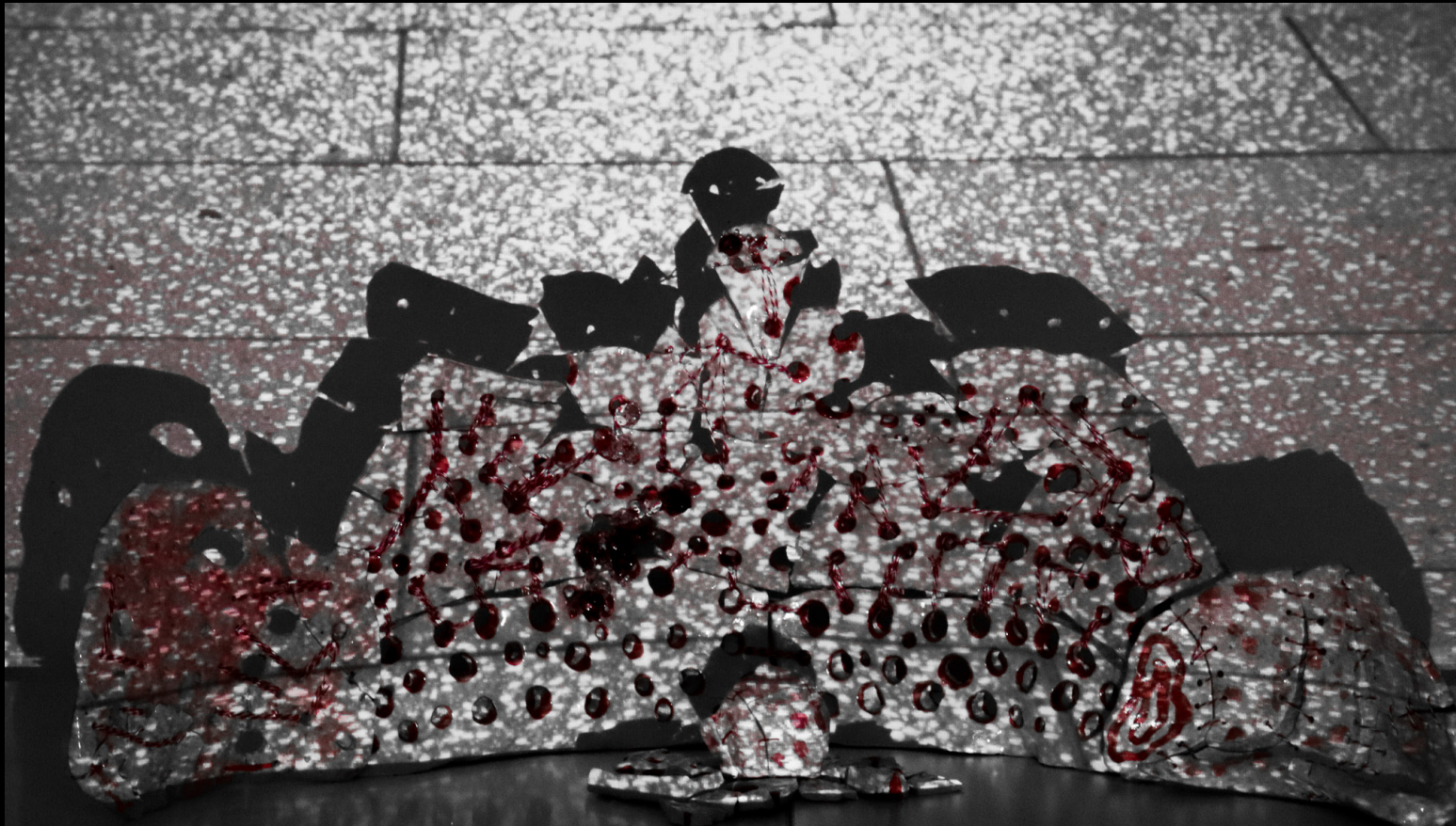
The concepts of spiritual sufferings, death of ego and transformation has not only been a focus of religious figure such as St John of the Cross but also seen throughout modern psychology. Carl Jung, best known for his contributions to psychology, intersects theories of spirituality and mysticism, as he explored similar experiences to St. John of the cross, as described in 'The Dark night of the soul'. Jung likened this transformative phase as part of 'the individuation process', which refers to the process by which a person integrates different parts of the psyche to achieve a balanced and whole self. The goal of individuation is to bring the person into harmony with the Self, leading to a sense of completeness and purpose.

The dark hues in the painting symbolise the soul's feelings of abandonment and its gradual movement toward severe spiritual depression. The Raven depicted in this painting is rich in spiritual symbolism across various cultures and traditions. The mysterious birds represent change and transformation, particularly on a spiritual and psychological level. The associations with the rich darkness of its appearance is symbolic with the shadow work and the transformative aspects that occur through inner exploration when facing difficult truths.

I chose a circular canvas, a universal symbol of wholeness and fulfilment, whose centre is everywhere, and circumference is nowhere. A representation of harmony between psyche (soul) and soma (body).

There is also reference to the 'Heart' and 'Head' connection referring to the relationship between our emotional (heart) and intellectual (head) faculties. Those two aspects of ourselves which need to work in union for overall well-being. As disconnection or imbalance between the heart and the head can cause many mental illnesses varying from, stress, anxiety, disassociation and depression.

Art therapy integrates creative expression with psychotherapeutic modalities. This painting represents my emotional processing, the symbolic representations of the raven, head and heart offer an abstract insight into my internal state and processing of the material learnt throughout the year. A deeply personal transformative state of self-awareness, psychological development and confrontation with the unconscious through mark making and colour.



Vero Zheng
Reformation, 2024
Ceramic sculpture with video projection
60 x 50 x 30 cm



Vero Zheng
Reformation, 2024
Ceramic sculpture with video projection
60 x 50 x 30 cm

Vero, a Chinese born multicultural artist, integrates contemporary arts and therapy in her interdisciplinary practice. Specializing in digital media installations, her work *Reformation* explores the therapeutic concept of holding and witnessing through porcelain and video projection.

Reformation is about breaking and healing the self. It is based on the narrative of the artist, who constantly feels that she is shattered into pieces by the darkest and brought back, reformed and bonded again by the brightest. Vero made porcelain slabs called “self”, developed through psychological concept of intersubjectivity, which embodies the self and its environment. Interacting with the outside world through shaping and firing, the clay slab turns into a fixed structure that cannot be easily altered. The self has been formed as a person has grown up and developed. Attachment theories have been introduced as an inflexible way to respond to the outside world. As in most Eastern Asian upbringings, the artist often senses that her individual identities, including sexuality and femininity, are smothered, compromising to collective and societal expectations. She was born as a “broken piece”, representing her vulnerability of growing up as a homosexual in Chinese culture, where her identity is hidden from my family and stigmatized by the social norm.

In order to overcome the constant anxiety and fear she inherited in social relationships, she shatters the fixed structure of porcelain slabs into smaller pieces, representing the brokenness of the interaction with the outer world: reacting, projecting, transferring and responding. The breaking of self is also the breaking of inherent behavioural and thinking patterns; only through the act of breaking can she be reborn in her mind into a whole new self. Afterwards, the bonds that keep this scattered self together are needed for change. Reforming and reuniting old pieces are ways to acknowledge the past while enabling growth and change in the future.

The projection of digital media represents the witnessing of change to happen. The artist carefully collects back the debris of her old self to hold them with more perspectives. She needs to witness the breaking to regain the power to heal from the brokenness. The standing piece with strings strengthens the bonding across support systems and intersubjectivity. The brokenness and vulnerability are frightening, but support and bonding are ways she reconnects with the world.

The reconstruction of shattering debris offers a unique perspective on trauma and change. They could both happen simultaneously. Also influenced by Dialectic behavioural therapy, with creative arts, polarities can exist. It contains the contracting truth and reveals itself to its audience through a transformational attitude.

Continuing her journey as a trainee art therapist, she felt that the self-healing art practice became a first step in enhancing her self-awareness as an artist and a therapist. The delivery of the piece broadly conceptualized her looking at the world and how she related trauma and loss with the practice to make ways for the healing process to happen.



Faye Zhuang
Outside, Yin-side, 2024
Mixed-media-acrylics, tree bark, branches,
leaves, and found objects on canvas
90 x 120 x 10 cm

In my youth, I was often drawn to questions about existence: “Who am I? How do I know I exist? If the sense of ‘self’ arises from memories, does it mean ‘I’ only exist in my mind, not in the present moment?” These contemplations led to my interest in Zen Buddhism and mindfulness, and I often found myself comparing different art therapy modalities with Zen and searching for their connections.

I aimed to juxtapose “doing”—the analytical mind—and “being”—the embodied experiences. My original plan was to use canvas art and a separate object to represent the different therapy approaches. On the canvas, I selected elements to symbolise interconnectedness, containing and holding, and sticks to represent the triangular relationship between the artist, the artwork, and the therapist. However, I struggled to express “being” through these symbols and felt disconnected from the concepts I wanted to capture.

Tracey Deep’s art and her use of natural materials helped me realise what was missing in my art—the connection with nature. I noticed that, despite the materials I selected being natural, they were all found inside the living space. It reminded me that I had not been to the front garden since I moved into this apartment. Living in a rental felt temporary and unsettled, and I may have been waiting for a future time to start embracing life. These thoughts shed light on my challenges in expressing my concepts—How could I capture the essence of “being” when I had trouble living in the present? The reflection inspired me to go to the garden and a local park, where I collected tree bark, leaves, and branches. The touching and shaping of these materials helped settle my overactive mind and enhance a sense of connection with the world. I realised it was not just the nature I had been disconnected from but also my life.

My artwork “Outside, Yin-side” came about in an unexpected way. The artmaking process juxtaposed the “doing” with “being”, making a separate object obsolete. The transformation demonstrated that art therapy is a way of being in life. The exhibition and presentation of this art will become part of this creation, a continuation of the Yin energy essential for me to step out of my world to connect with others.

Philosophically, my artwork was influenced by Zen Buddhism. During the artmaking process, Taoism’s concepts of “Yin” and “Yang” came to the fore, which echoed Sally Skaife’s notion of embodying the sensual/cerebral and materiality/idea in art therapy. The earlier challenges helped me reflect my Yang approach in my personal life and professional development. I realised I needed to apply more of the feminine approach—the Yin style. The title of the artwork encapsulates this understanding literally and metaphorically.

“Outside, Yin-side” reflects my philosophical interests and professional development. The art-making process served as a counterbalance to my intellectual self. It invites viewers to reflect on their balance between “doing” and “being”, and their approaches between “Yin” and “Yang”, both personally and professionally.