

## *Grasping*

### **Giselle Draper**

The starting point for my artwork was exploring the themes of how movement is depicted in art and photography. I took this theme and looked at how other artists have interpreted it, focusing on techniques used and developments over time. I also focused on how Photography capturing movement can incorporate other mediums. I was influenced by Gjon Mili's innovative photographs, which inspired my final piece. I took a particular interest in his technique of creating a photo overlay look of frozen frames in time, by changing the shutter speed. To develop this technique within my own work I practiced overlaying using my camera and editing software. Gjon Mili additionally used the technique of changing the shutter speed to create a long exposure effect, appearing translucent, liquid, and blurry. After further researching the works of Gjon Mili, and applying his techniques of overlay and long exposure, I knew I wanted to take it further and make it the medium of my first main piece.

I was, however, initially drawn to long exposure style of photography when playing with settings on my phone camera, and I discovered through practice that high movement topics delivered the best results. The initial photographs I took were in natural settings; beaches testing what effect it would have on wave patterns, waterfalls again with water movement, trees and grass swaying in wind. Then I shifted to human movement; hair blowing in wind, foot traffic in busy and crowded areas of the city, chosen friends moving arms and legs in distorted patterns. Consequently, practicing with human movement led me to taking many photographs of my own hands, and exploring hand movement, which guided me to using hands as the topic of all my photographs. I found that hands were very useful in exhibiting emotion and telling a story, from the way they are positioned and interlinking with other hands. As humans we naturally learn to talk with our hands and read body language, and I wanted to use this to my advantage with my photographs to share the deeper meaning of my work.

With my photographs I wanted to make the viewers think beyond the images they are seeing. My photographs tell my story of learning to deal with anxiety, rejecting others help, and eventually getting the courage to reach out. This "story board" way of positioning the prints starts at the top left and follows right, then jumping down again to the next row from left to right, until the end in the bottom right. I developed my final photographs by first writing the story as a series of events, and then sectioning this into 16 "story board" frames. Then hand positioning was practiced for each frame, and the positions which I thought best communicated what I wanted to share were chosen. I used a simple black backdrop and my phone to photograph my own hands, and depending on the photo I changed the settings to long exposure or capturing multiple frames individually in one take. This allowed me to then edit certain photos to have the long exposure faded look, or an overlay look. I used Adobe to edit all of my photos, touching up the brightness, contrast, highlights, shadows, colours, and transparency, and finally my photographs were professionally printed.

## Reaching

### Giselle Draper

The starting point for my artwork was exploring the themes of how hands display emotion in art. I started exploring this theme after my first practical *Grasping*. I took this theme and looked at how artists over time have used hands, focusing on different mediums. Initially I was not sure on what artists to explore as I hadn't thought about what medium I wanted to focus on. I started by analyzing famous paintings that included hands such as "The Creation of Adam" by Michelangelo, "Praying Hands" by Albrecht Durer, and "The Death of Socrates" by Jacques-Louis David. I was really amazed by how these artists captured so much expression in hands, and the way they positioned hands. To develop the skills of expressing emotions with hands, I practiced positioning my hands and photographed them. Then I sketched and my hands from the reference photos, and referring to them in real life. This enabled me to also examine the intricate movements of hands, and what body language shows such as anger, exhaustion, desperation, peace, and sadness. I also researched and was influenced by the sketches and sculptures of Henry Moore, which inspired the medium of my final piece. I took a particular interest in his use of sculpture of human connection to evoke emotion. Although Henry Moore's sculptures do not particularly focus on hands, his sketches do, which is what led me to picture hand sculptures. To further explore his hand sketches I attempted to make my own hand sketches using his techniques of shading, using brown paper, and hand positioning. I discovered after my experiments that I didn't want to pursue sketching as my final piece medium, and I was more intrigued in a medium, like sculpture, that was 3 dimensional, and would contrast my previous photography. This led me to find the medium casting/molding. The process was to create an alginate liquid, insert the object into the liquid until solid to create a mold, then remove the object, fill the space with plaster, and then carefully remove the dried alginate from the molded plaster. I decided to practice this using my hands, as I wanted to use my hands for my final piece.

The purpose of my second piece was to further tell the story of learning to reach out and receive help from others, as displayed in my photographs from my first piece. I wanted the hands to look as though they are physically reaching out to another. This, like my first piece, follows a timeline of four stages starting from the left, and following to the right. The first stage is fingers reaching above the surface, the second a hand above, the third two hands reaching towards the other, and the final stage two hands holding. One of the hands used to make the fourth plaster mold is particularly significant, as it is one of my closest friends who I can thank for being one of my biggest helps when learning to deal with anxiety and opening up.