

Practitioner's Statement

Untitled

Cie-ayn Wild

Inspiration for my practical piece was based on a trip home to South Africa, Zimbabwe and Lesotho. I took as many photos as I could, from the landscape to the people and the vibrant culture that defines Africa. I began by forming my research around different ways art was created and the gap between city and rural life in South Africa. I was amazed by the beauty of Africa, all its unique wildlife and stunning natural scenery in comparison to the polluted city centre of Durban. This is the basis of my personal aesthetic and connection to my piece, with most elements inspired by images I captured on my journey. It made me think about issues facing wildlife in Africa, regarding the impact of urbanization and the concrete jungle sprawling its way across the landscape.

I was inspired by my passion for conservation and how unsustainable human population growth is impacting the biodiversity of Africa. My piece was about giving these animals a voice. The biggest influence on my work in terms of the characters I created was Australian illustrator Graeme Base, where I used personification to get my characters to speak through their actions, waging war against humanity's crime against nature. Considering the heavy presence of African animals in Base's works (including *Animalia* and *The Watering Hole*) it was easy to draw inspiration from his characters to apply to my concepts. Spanish artist Mario Sanchez Nevado also influenced my work. Through digital manipulation, he creates works depicting similar issues. Another artist who influenced my outcome was German born Maria Sybilla Merian. I analysed her watercolours depicting scientific illustrations of flora and insects in watercolour. I have never been a fan of watercolour, but with the addition of coloured pencil and through testing, it became my final medium of choice.

My final is rich in detail despite being small. By using coloured pencil I created depth and detail, which provides an array of visual surprises. The panoramic progression of my piece provided a base for symbolism. Beginning in the cityscape, the far left of the image portrays the 'pristine' and structured part of civilization, the beauty in architecture and human creations, which is based on the Durban city skyline. As the eye moves towards the right, the city devolves into the industrial areas and backstreets, before progressing into chaos, with fire and the animals stampeding, waging war on civilization which took over their habitat. I used a surrealist aesthetic inspired by Spanish Salvador Dali by altering the size of my animals, making them larger than the buildings to portray dominance over the city. I used a theme of medieval weaponry throughout, from the armoured rhinoceros and beetles, axes held by the grasshopper and slingshots between the deer's horns, inspired by a Graeme Base image of warrior wasps.

In reflection, applying watercolour behind the buildings rather than just behind the fire, smoke and elephant would've added depth and opacity to the colour. The major positive of my work is that it is visually interesting through its detail, which makes the meaning of the piece clear whilst leaving room for interpretation.