

Practitioner's Statement

The Diary

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"The diary" is a visual representation of my grandmother's diary. This diary is 30 pages long and entails her journey from Siatista, Greece to Adelaide, Australia (1948). It is very sentimental to me, as I never had the chance to hear my grandmother's stories. Unfortunately my grandmother suffered dementia and therefore her stories were never relayed verbally to me. I began by reading the diary and analyzing sections of it that were very poetic. The diary was written in Greek a far richer and descriptive language than English. Whilst reading the diary I was flooded with an abundance of visual imagery, which guided me in selecting the appropriate images to help illustrate her story.

Throughout my practical I have used symbols, which reflect and represent my grandmother's emotional journey. Analysis of Frida Kahlo's work helped me to understand the use of symbolism in painting, as it wasn't enough for me to "literally represent her story". "The Diary" is composed in 3 layers.

The background represents her leaving Greece behind; the glazed blue sky representing Greece's crystal clear oceans. The angel figure "looking over" my grandmother is a solemn looking John the Baptist. I represented kept the saint in a traditional Byzantine style, to emphasize our cultural/religious background. My grandmother also wrote:

"The atmosphere that embraced us was full of tears and I felt as though a spirit was hovering over our heads, as if it was my father's spirit and he knew I was leaving."

The mid-ground represents her transition from Greece to Australia. The iconic Parthenon with two female figures (my yiayia and her best-friend), a touristic photo taken when visiting Athens for the first time, before travelling to Australia. In front of the columns is my grandmother on the left and next to her, her best-friend and sister-in-law, who she travelled with. I kept this part of the image in a grey scale to remain authentic to and represent an exact episode of her journey.

The foreground is the most colourful and dramatic of all the layers. The use of texture helps to represent her new life in Australia. The family of her own and also the colourful and exotic unknown island of Australia that my grandmother perceived. The idea of incorporating water or the ocean first came from a section in my grandmother's diary where she wrote:

"As I walked up the ship's stairs I got the urge to fall into the ocean to drown in Greece's waters rather than to travel so far."

To represent Australia's ocean life was important, to help emphasize the opposite of my grandmothers thoughts. The now found beauty of the waters of Australia, as her thoughts changed from melancholy to happiness as time went by.

Oils were my chosen medium because of my ability to manipulate the medium and achieve layers and I wanted the vibrancy of colour to compliment the nature of her words. I used textures and aluminum foil to create the coral, aluminum foil was used for part of the coral, which represents where my grandmother first lived when she arrived in Adelaide, living in a corrugated iron home with my grandfather.

When people look at my piece I want it to convey an almost nostalgic but familiar memory. I want the viewer to feel a part of the painting but also feel the distance created through the sad emotion.

"I will never forget the day I left Siatista my mothers tears, as well as mine falling like rain drops."