

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Untitled***

Gemma Burvill

Social, cultural and traditional expectations often discourage individualism. After travelling to developing countries such as Cambodia, it became evident to me that women specifically had a demanding role to play in society. It was through these personal, life-changing events that it was decided to explore a cultural aspect within the artwork, depicting the forced expectations and cultural stereotypical restraints put on women in other cultures. I researched a range of various cultures including, Geisha (culture), African, Indian and other Asian traditions regarding how a woman is expected to present herself. I decided to initially explore the African culture and discover the physical 'beauty extremes' that women were expected to undertake, this led to my discovery of 'Neck Rings' which were tight rings worn around the neck which displayed social status and empowerment. After prolonged wear these rings actually stretched a woman's neck, elongating it to extremes and forcing a woman to wear them for the rest of her life as her neck can no-longer support her head. These rings are often made out of metal and/or bright coloured beads. I feel that women would be in a way forced to wear the rings by their male counter-part as females have very little say in a relationship.

The initial influence was that of **Alison Kunath** and her use of fragmentation, **Joe Cruz** and his use of black and white photographs juxtaposed with bright pastels and the humorous collage displays of **Peggy Wolf**. However I was unsure of how these could of enhanced the emotion and message I wanted to convey. After a visit to the SACE Art Show, I discovered the realistic artwork of **Brittany Aldenhoven** who had a major influence of my artwork as to the media she used and how realistic the artwork she created was. I later re-considered my simplistic approach and decided to experiment with the same media as Aldenhoven, which proved to be successful. This was then the chosen path for the portrait aspect of the pieces. After reanalysing the initial imagery of African women, the beading in particular, I further recognised that the dots created by the beads were similar to the dot paintings of Indigenous Australians. This discovery then allowed an additional media to be incorporated, with the addition of a textural aspect to the pieces. **Colleen Wallace Nungari** a traditional Indigenous painter was explored to learn technique of traditional dot painting. There is evident use of synthesis between Aldenhoven and Nungari in the resolved pieces.

Through the successful combination of styles and media from artists Aldenhoven (charcoal) and Nungari (Dot Painting), the resolved pieces create a culturally motivated piece. I believe it shows realism and portrays a meaningful message when looked at closely. The meaningful message was that the charcoal depicts the frailty of the women who have very little stance in traditional African cultures, and how women could be blown to dust while the rings endure under the control of the men. The rings represent the men, the necks of females can not be supported without the 'men'.

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