

## *'The road less travelled'*

Stage 2 Visual Art

Practitioners Statement

Practical 2

*"Travel does what good novelists also do to the life of everyday, placing it like a picture in a frame or a gem in its setting, so that the intrinsic qualities are made more clear. Travel does this with the very stuff that everyday life is made of, giving to it the sharp contour and meaning of art." – Freya Stark*

Travelling around 6000 kilometers, visiting seven European countries in just ten days, each and everyday was an amazing adventure full of experiences and scenery. A compilation of over 5000 photographs remained stored on the compact disk from our 2009 family holiday, our first overseas trip, containing innumerable memories.

Fascinated by Jeanette Barnes who uses the urban environment as her sketch subject, inspiration immediately came during my visual study to create a memoir of our European trip and capture the essence of our experiences.

I examined how other artists display their travels. David Hockney works with acrylic paints to create scenes that show his travel in one image. I decided I wanted to expand this to create a series of different images from each country I visited, incorporating my own style and more delicate detail. In contrast, I studied and experimented in the style of David Gentleman. With an interest in printmaking, I drew inspiration from Gentleman's fine pen drawings with subtle watercolour and further investigated how printmaking and dry point etching was used to achieve detail and texture.

Selecting images taken on our holiday for each of the countries we visited symbolised an experience, whether the breath-taking landscape, the incredible architecture or the experience of riding gondolas in Venice, each framed points of the journey. Our family home was significant to include "No one realizes how beautiful it is to travel until he comes home and rests his head on his old, familiar pillow" – Lin Yutang.

Through trial and error, I used varying techniques to achieve desired detail and texture in each piece. I then experimented layering watercolour to tie the pieces together but this didn't create the affect I was looking for. The monochromatic colour palate brought out the textural details of the pieces and I wanted to see the result if I combined geographical referencing with traditional, landscape printmaking techniques. I liked the idea of integrating a map into the presentation of my etchings, a dashed line reminding me of the route we drew on our own trip. Stitched lines were effective but drew too much attention away from the prints; instead I decided to notch holes in the mat of the frame, following the outline of Europe. This was an effective way of creating geographical reference of our adventure without taking away from the detail of the etchings.

The composition was important to not only reference the return journey home but also to create visual balance, harmony and context while allowing each image to remain the framed memoir.

The finished piece captures the incredible journey for our family, the extraordinary in everyday, as well as being symbolic as I complete my schooling of the 'the road less traveled' I now embark on.