

Practitioner's Statement

Rotten

Grace Beer

The apple shown in my final piece, *Rotten*, is a metaphor for the impermanent nature of friendships. The subject matter begins as a sweet and idealistic object and the subtle decay between the consecutive images isn't discernible, which is parallel to the slow and often unnoticeable deterioration of friendships.

I began developing my concept by exploring ephemeral artworks and mediums, with the intention of using such mediums to symbolise temporary life circumstances I have encountered this year.

Conceptually, I was inspired by Tim Silver. In particular, his degenerative sculptures *Rory* (2010) and *Untitled* (2011). Both of these pieces are isolated in a gallery setting, which evoke a sense of loneliness and unease. This, along with the gradually deteriorating figures, engages the viewer through a sense of mystery and unanswered questions. In addition the audience witnesses the changes in the artwork, which ideally is what I have achieved in *Rotten*. *Rory* and *Untitled* reinforced my desire to create an installation that changes over a period of time, and also prompted my decision to maintain a minimalist aesthetic.

Aesthetically, I was influenced by Duy Anh Nhan Duc's *Pomme Marquées* and *Pois Plume* series'. This tableaux series includes carved fruit which he has photographed using low key light to create drama. These techniques employed by Duc are strategies I have applied to capture the ephemeral nature of the decaying apple.

Anna Horne's *Peculiar Familiar* (2015) and her visit to my school sparked my interest in making casts of flowers using alginate and plaster. The casts of the photographed apple create a third dimension to my work and enable the viewer to see the details and the texture that are obscured in the photographs alone. This physical aspect of *Rotten* is my attempt to hold on and preserve the friendships that are falling apart. This notion of preservation was inspired largely by a visit to the Museum of Economic Botany, in which the displays enhance the encased artefacts and create an immersive experience. I applied a similar display technique with the use of subtle light to emphasise the apple casts, creating a make-shift shrine that pays homage to the friendships which are no longer.

Exploring notions of the ephemeral was challenging initially as essentially the notion implies something which is not permanent. I experimented with sand, flowers, ice, bananas, paper, seeds and leaves but came to the conclusion I needed a material and an object that metaphorically linked to friendships. After contemplating how these friendships began I was reminded of how sweet they once were and arrived at the decision to use the apple as a symbol of my love and affection for these friends.