

Practitioner's Statement

Girl Sap

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The human figure has always been my most prominent area of interest within Art, however after completing my first practical work, I learnt that I prefer to create art that contains personal meaning or reflects my passions, surroundings and personal experiences. As a strong advocate for feminism, I have noticed that a predominant concern within Western society includes the censorship of the female form and toxic expectations of appearance that have been embedded into our socio-culture. *Girl Sap* aims to challenge these ideals and portray the female form in the most raw and honest way possible, free of any censorship that appears in the media.

Sap runs through the veins of plants just as blood does through humans, and will bleed out if torn. The title, *Girl Sap*, resonates with the authenticity of women and all their experiences; women who are humans that belong to this earth as equally as all life forms, regardless of appearance. Inspired by the intricate and highly refined realistic works of contemporary figurative artists, Evie Cahir and Daniel Maidman, my series of small graphite sketches aim to portray the female figure as realistically as possible, similarly, using both close up details of female anatomy and various poses based on images of myself. These initial images were inspired by Dutch photographer, Daantje Bons, who also explores the finer details of the female body and the often confidential experiences of women.

The realistic approach to these graphite drawings was intended to portray a genuine representation of my figure and experiences as a young woman, while also connecting this more personally to viewers. The empty lines and faded tonal value that extend from the figure represents the absence of honesty within the exposed female form in our society. The splashes of colour added elements of abstraction to relate with the concepts of the works while also resonating with the vibrancy and uniqueness of women.

The Western feminist ideals of challenging beauty norms by growing out body hair, specifically areas within the armpits and crotch, are productive to an extent but often exclude women of colour due to sparse representation or acknowledgement of the struggles with hair and appearance they face. As a woman of colour, myself, I have had my own experiences of harassment about body hair in other unglamourised areas. Thus, I felt it was vital to include this within my works with the depiction of hair on the face and stomach as well. Women's bodies are mostly represented in the most flattering forms and often unrealistically, therefore, the remaining pieces within this series conceptually confront natural positions of the female figure. These include hunching over to reveal rolls of fat juxtaposed by an elongated torso to show bones which demonstrate that the body can be manipulated to appear a certain way, as in the media. Moreover, makeup depicted on the teeth of the subject aims to portray the tedious effects of the pressure put on women to present themselves in the most desirable way possible.