

Practitioner's Statement

Untitled

William Sexton

The inspiration for my second major came from the desire and experience of the first major, forging.

The need to hone my skills and use existing elements such as tools and scrap metal for an artwork, was an interesting concept that was first discovered through the research of Andy Warhol. Warhol's visual signature is described as Pop Art, stemming from Dadaism, which is the idea of taking an object and placing it out of context. Warhol's artwork "Soup Cans" disregards the cans' purpose and focuses on their own aesthetics, and through this, I was able to come up with my own context-shifting experiment using a fire-poker.

The next artist I researched was Roy Lichtenstein, again he is a pop-artist, however, he uses comic strips to take out of context to make an artwork. My experiment was a headline of a newspaper.

Through Lichtenstein and Warhol, I was able to better understand the concept of taking an object out of its original place and setting it in an unfamiliar, unusual way.

My focus then shifted to blacksmithing again and I was able to come up with some ideas involving tools and making them an artwork rather than using them for their original practical use. To aid me with sculpting these tools, I researched two junk sculpture artists; Peter Brooks and Chris Hartshorn. Brooks' work consists of animals crafted from a combination of kitchen utensils and old machinery parts. Hartshorn's art also consists of animals but his work is less refined than that of Brooks'. Where Brooks has connected his junk pieces together deliberately to create flowing lines and aesthetically pleasing forms, Hartshorn's work seems as if it has been joined together roughly and as if pieces of junk were placed where they would fit.

Using the knowledge from this junk sculpture research I experimented with different plant designs and compositions for my final artwork.

After completing these sketches and discovering new tools and junk to use in the final, I decided that I needed a little something extra to go with the sculptures. The idea of having insects on the plants was conceptualised and using the knowledge that I acquired through the junk sculptors, I decided on dragonflies.

A long research and experimentation process begun in deciding what composition looked best. In the end, a combination of hammer heads, spanners and drill bits were used to make sure that the criteria of tools was met. After these were created, I put together the plants, stems and bases and added the dragonflies to finalise the composition.

The most difficult part of the entire project was designing a composition and building upon it so that the focus remained on the plant forms and did not include anything but tools for the final product.