

Practitioner's Statement

Together, Entwined

Cadell Canute

Together, Entwined is a mixed media, contemporary sculptural installation which symbolises the delicate, detailed and damaged connection we have with the environment in our present society. The piece can also be seen as a warning for human kind to realise the impacts of our actions and what they could mean for our future.

The journey began with the desire to create my formal dress and for it to be a statement about the exploitation of people in factories and the abuse of the environment because of the fashion industry. This led me to explore costume art, which gave me freedom to be expressive and not be limited by the original function of the dress. Through my experimentation with non-traditional materials, after looking at the work of Rachel Hall and India Flint, I discovered the importance of texture for evoking aesthetic and emotional responses in the viewer.

I used naturally dyed recycled cotton fabrics to begin experimenting with dress making and costume art. The dress was dyed five times, with flowers, mulberries, rust and yarrow leaves with inspiration from artists such as Noelle Lyon, Michelle Jahn and Sue Ann. The dyeing took over a month to complete and is incredibly textural to resemble both the earth and a mystical sky. Detail has been put into the waist of the dress where I have created a rib like texture through sewing, to resemble a human torso and to symbolise that humans are part of nature.

India Flint inspired the decision to create a sculptural piece, as it encourages the viewer to study the piece at a closer, intimate and more tangible level. I learnt through Fiona Hall to consider contemporary materials and effectiveness of translating their original meaning to invest the audience in an artwork. I was inspired by nature to incorporate vine branches into my piece, so I began by creating a vine hanger for the dress. I then cut out leaves with fabric I had dyed using the Hapa Zome technique which I intricately sewed onto the ends of vine branches. In love with the organic movement this created, I decided to spread this across my whole dress and attach another vine ring to the bottom of the dress with thread. The dress then 'grew' into a tree, symbolically connecting earth, sky and humans to portray our inevitable but often ignored dependency on the earth.

Multiple viewpoints are encouraged to be used to observe the finished piece which hangs from the ceiling, higher than the viewer, so that they must look up to study it. This conveys the idea that nature will always be more powerful than man, however the eyes of the viewer are also brought down by the movement of the vine branches, symbolising my belief that we need to consider our roots- the earth, to re-learn how to care for the environment. As an artist, I have a postmodern approach to art, and have used a contrast of textures to entice the viewer to touch it, in order for them to establish a strong personal and physical connection with the piece and to encourage a similar connection with the environment.