

Practitioner's Statement

Shearer

Olivia Cecil

The themes I explored in my artwork were agriculture, farming and farm equipment. My family has a strong farming background. I explored this by visiting and taking photos on family and friend's farms. The old, rusted seeder seen in my artwork comes from a photo I took on a friend's farm near Robe, South Australia. The heads of wheat reflect my parent's agricultural background and my father's work in wheat research. The use of stitching to create the heads reflects my enjoyment of sewing which I learnt from my mother.

An artist that stood out for me was Hua Tunan who worked with ink. I enjoyed how he created movement and energy with ink splatters so I experimented with this and added elements of it to my major. I expanded on this technique by adding different textures to the ink. I was also inspired by Charles Sheeler and his use of water colour to create a realistic artwork. As my access to water colours was limited, I experimented with acrylic and found that watered-down acrylic gave a similar effect. I used this method to paint the seeder.

I used a brown ink splatter background to symbolise the mud and to create movement. The addition of salt, lemon juice and potassium permanganate created a grainy texture reminiscent of earth. I continued the use of earthy colours in the seeder and heads of wheat. Using earthy colours helped to tie all the elements together and reflected the agricultural themes.

I wanted to add a tactile element to my work so I chose to stitch the heads of wheat in cotton embroidery thread.

While photographing the seeder I found the manufacturer's metal label interesting and intriguing. I wanted draw attention to the label and to incorporate it into my art using a similar method to how they made the metal sign. This led me to embossing using lino cuts and placing the sign directly beneath the focal point. I then added two more embossed panels, incorporating elements of the surrounds of the seeder. Initially when embossing I found that the print wasn't prominent enough. After experimentation I overcame this by adjusting the pressure applied and using thicker papers.

The elements of my artwork which I like the most are the textural ink splatter background and the stitched heads of wheat. I like the way the earthy tones work with the different elements. I believe this artwork expresses my family's agricultural background and my love of mixed media.