

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Childhood Imagination***

Mykaela Dearinger

Inspired by my youth, and observing the growth of my younger siblings, my first Folio and Practical explores the theme of childhood imagination. Originally inspired by the inquisitive and observational nature of my siblings, who enjoy pretending to be animals and fairy-tale characters, I desired to explore the creativity and engagement of children involved in imaginative play.

Initially, I experimented with the technique of David Bromley, whose illustrative acrylic works whimsically reflect themes of childhood innocence and creativity. However, I was uninspired by his technique, and next experimented with representing imagination using Chris Aerfeldt's concept of enlarged human figures within a miniature setting. This concept allowed me to explore portraying the confidence and empowerment which children gain from expressing themselves through role play. To further this idea, I was inspired by Hong Kong artist, Peony Yip's employment of graphite and colour pencil to superimpose human and animal figures; which I used to depict a physical connection between imagination and reality. I then combined both Yip and Aerfeldt's ideas to further represent imagination, while retaining ties to reality.

I was inspired by Cesar Santo's mixed media works, which simultaneously portray imagination and reality by combining hyper-realist oil painted adult figures with childish crayon drawings, implicitly portraying a child's interpretation of adult life. Upon visiting the Adelaide Biennale "Magic Object" exhibition, Tom Moore's creatively hand blown glass sculptures, as well as Tim Noble and Sue Webster's inventive installation crafted from leaves, twigs, and deceased animals inspired me to use every day, open-ended objects as a device to explore additional avenues of creative play. Combining Jasmine Ann Dixon's realist technique and inspiration from the Magic Object exhibition, I experimented with photographing and painting hand shadows to explore the idea of imaginative interpretation.

The idea of figuratively employing open-ended objects is additionally explored by (Magic Object) hyper-realist artist, Michael Zavros, who strategically arranges inanimate objects to represent animate objects. By using mediums such as charcoal and oil paint combined with inanimate objects, shells and feathers, I was able to portray how ordinary objects can be interpreted to suit different contexts. Experimenting with illustrator Maurice Sendak's idea of retaining reality within an imagined setting in '*Where the Wild Things Are*' enabled me to begin considering composition ideas which effectively combined imagination and realism.

My final compositional studies combined elements from each of the artists I researched and I was able to effectively refine my compositions encompassing original ideas of childhood imaginative play, role play and creativity.

My final piece features my sister seated on a rocking horse, dressed in borrowed, oversized clothing; reflecting the whimsical and inventive qualities of imaginative play. Features such as the shadow projections, the poster, and the book are designed to further reinforce the setting of the child's imagining. Throughout the artistic process, I have experimented with many different kinds of wet and dry media as well as artistic devices and techniques. My own visual aesthetic has developed an appreciation for installation art, as well as a continued painting preference for tonal realism.