

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Fight or Flight?***

Uyen Le Nguyen

'The fight or flight response refers to a specific biochemical reaction that both humans and animals experience during intense stress or fear.'

Three dimensional works have always been inspirational and I was influenced by a series of installation artworks such as Teagan Robert's 2011 "She Flies With Her Own Wings", Beili Liu's 2011 "The Mending Project", and Gilles Barbier's 2012 "The Drunk". Roberts suspended a cloud of blue origami butterflies while Liu sat at a desk hand sewing fabric pieces under a swarm of suspended scissors. Barbier, on the other hand displayed a vast variety of objects that depicted a seemingly unending stream or confusion of thoughts, images and emotions, representing a drunkard's rumination. I also considered Alexander Calder's hanging abstract mobiles from last century to assist in the balance and proportion of my installation.

My initial interest was purely in the notion of installation and it was the influence of these artists which assisted me in forming both a mental and physical framework. While my initial ideas were quite feminine and floral, acknowledging my Asian culture and Robert's use of origami, I soon referenced Barbier's idea of the artwork's meaning being within the artist himself, so I decided the meaning of my artwork would reflect myself as a year 12 student. My decision was to create a physical mind-map of my journey through my studies, particularly the effect of Chemistry as the core of my stress. Liu's scissors provided a symbolic reference point for me, but ultimately I came across an untitled artwork, consisting of paper cranes flying from a table, by an unknown artist which motivated me to modify my ideas. Instead of having an abundance of objects being suspended, I made my installation more minimalistic. . An idea I extracted from the crane installation is the usage of a table, chair and stacked books. They clearly represent 'school' and are frequently used objects of a high school student. Utilising the simplicity of the paper crane installation, I chose to wrap the table, chair and stack of books in torn chemistry related papers. The act of ripping the chemistry paper is a form of stress relief, indicating the intention of breaking free from the suffocation and restriction the subject provides me. Suspended below the table is my representation of fighting Chemistry and above is my notion of flight. The paper planes portray a student who is bored with the subject and folds paper planes to pass the time. They also symbolise my desires to fly away from the stress and confinement of the subject.

"Fight or Flight" is intended to be an engaging and universal piece of artwork to which many students, especially year 12 students can relate. I feel the artwork assists in communicating how much stress a year 12 student undergoes and is a free expression in which messages can be effectively portrayed, both physically and visually. The message I am conveying through my installation is my stress and my desire for freedom.