

Practitioner's Statement

Yanek

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Yanek is a series of representational screen prints that celebrate the life of my brother, Yanek. Yanek lives with Joubert Syndrome as well as other associated chronic diseases, having caused significant challenges throughout his life. Celebrating Yanek's 21st birthday earlier this year inspired me to reflect, celebrate and document an incredible journey conquered by not only my brother, but by my entire family. Yanek conveys the strength of love and family, illustrating through fun and fantastical, atmospheric elements the significance of life, yet not forgetting the power to challenge our destiny.

Capturing specific expressions and emotions of Yanek that conveyed his personality was crucial to developing my personal aesthetic associated with defined representational line illustrations and continuous line drawings that reflected Yanek's personality and malleable nature, as well as identifying the purpose for portraiture and how it can be altered to represent the subject indefinitely. Quick illustrations of Yanek's features led to more abstract experiments with inspiration from Sidney Nolan and Francis Bacon in regards to Nolan's *On the Beach* (1942) and Bacon's *Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne* (1966), which captured and conveyed emotional situations for the audience. Yanek's face was simplified to basic linear elements during the deconstruction of photographs of Yanek, where the deconstruction of the photos were inspired by Bacon yet led to thorough investigation and experimentation into collages. Artists Hannah Hoch and Mariano Peccinetti whose use of colour, and exaggerated scale and facial features suggest a sense of fun and celebration. Implementing bright colours and exaggerated facial features created new surreal-like atmospheres that represent joyous elements of Yanek's life.

Screen printing Yanek as a series of portraits was inspired by Andy Warhol, whose works were recently displayed at the National Gallery of Victoria in April as part of the *Andy Warhol I Ai Weiwei* exhibition, which documented Warhol's personal aesthetic for political art and media, but also his use of strong colour among his screen prints. Repetition acted as a primary element in the exhibition, used by both Warhol and Weiwei these symbolic elements were repeated to gain a strong audience. This included scale, precision of visual representation, which acted as a recurring motif. Repetition was used throughout Yanek; the repeated figures or the repeated use of colour akin to Warhol's *Mao* (1972) and Weiwei's *With Flowers* (2013), encapsulates the importance of Yanek as the subject and encourages the audience to feel joy and celebrate the life of Yanek.

Deconstructing and reconstructing photographs of Yanek remained vital in enabling a more personal investigation into Yanek's true character, his achievements and his uniquely unforgettable moments. Yanek is a surreal-like representation of Yanek and his personality, where the design uptakes a futurist tone synonymous with Modernism, as the repeating shapes create a sense of movement. Futurism was the movement of optimism aiming to demonstrate the beauty of the modern world. Yanek encapsulates this optimism aiming to demonstrate the defiance of his destiny.