

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Knowing Pamela***

Jasmine Slater

'Knowing Pamela' is a triptych artwork which explores the multi-faceted identity of my grandmother, reflecting on the continuity of a person's life through individually-themed panels, each with the intention of expressing a different form of 'revival'.

As my grandmother, Pamela Gay, passed away when I was two, my understanding of her is entirely reliant on the memories of other people. Her complicated divorce from my grandfather and evident struggle with depression meant she was rarely mentioned throughout my childhood, and despite sharing her keen appreciation of literature, music and social justice, I have a very limited knowledge of who she was: prompting me to choose her life as my work's focus.

I originally considered depicting Pamela through the exclusive illustration of things I associated with her, inspired by Doris Salcedo's pairing of everyday objects with heavy conceptual content to signify loss or trauma, often also using unexpected materials to convey abstract ideas. However, the more I researched Pamela's life, the more necessary I felt it was to portray her continual influence on the lives of others. I subsequently resolved to create a layered, transparent work of three panels which incorporated both the intricate details of her life and her family's.

A circular accumulation of illustrations lies in the centre of each panel: the circle a symbolic representation of the continuity of life. The drawings are reminiscent of Ida Rentoul Outhwaite's illustrated works, which combine realistic figures with delicate patterns, making use of negative space to convey shape. Each panel explores a different theme of human continuation. The first is focused on photographic 'evidence' of Pamela's life, justifying her physical existence as a human being whose life can be recorded, measured and conventionally recounted as a series of events and experiences: a somewhat facile perspective which gives little indication of her exceptionality. The second panel is more abstract in its purpose, depicting my own interpretation of Pamela through the illustration of things I associate with her: extracts from stories and anecdotes which, when objectively viewed, appear to have little relevance to her. The third essentially represents her legacy: the generational transferal of her values, interests and physical characteristics to her family. The illustrations in this final panel curve along the circumference as to imply the ceaseless nature of life.

The captivating nature of the piece lies in its unconventional appeal. Pen on glass is easily removable, and this concept of impermanence signifies the evanescent beauty of a human life in its spiralling depths of experience, love and emotion. When viewed from a frontward perspective, the illustrations on each panel appear indistinguishable, and it is only when the artwork is viewed from alternate angles that each image on the panel becomes clear. This is an allusion to the difficulty I experienced as a child when attempting to develop a profile of a woman I had little understanding of: often overwhelmed by the vague, disparate details I extracted from conversations with my parents.

'Knowing Pamela' effectively provides viewers with a conceptual insight into my grandmother's life and legacy.