

## *Attend to the Unnecessary Beats*

### **Tasman Dixon**

This piece began with the idea of exploring calligraphy, a technique I have experience in but wanted to take further and push myself to explore new levels. My initial strong influence was a book that my grandparents gave me a book on modern calligraphy by Denise Lach, which focussed on the use of Calligraphy to create abstract shapes and give impressions of form and texture rather than being a legible piece of text. While I didn't end up taking much inspiration from Lach's work in the final piece, several techniques such as using watercolours instead of ink for calligraphy were inspired by her book. I chose two pieces of text to build my prac around that were meaningful to me, and captured my love of animals and nature:

*Then God blessed the humans and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the Earth and govern it. Reign over the fish of the sea, and over the birds in the sky, and over every living thing on the ground"*

*- Genesis 1:32*

*Take in the whipped cat and the blinded owl*

*Take up the man-trapped squirrel upon your shoulder*

*Attend to the unnecessary beasts.*

*From growing mercy and a moderate love,*

*Great love for the human animal occurs*

*- Excerpt from 'Caring for Animals' by John Silkin*

I didn't initially intend for the prac to have an environmentalist theme but it is something that I'm passionate about and I felt that calligraphy was a good way to clearly communicate that. My key influence in deciding to make the layered paper diorama was the artist couple Hari & Deepti, who create beautiful paper dioramas that they illuminate with a lightbox, diffusing light through the different paper layers. I opted to combine their method of paper construction with calligraphy to create a layered calligraphic piece that also embodied some of Denise Lach's techniques of using calligraphy to enhance texture.

The message that I want to convey through this piece is that we as humans have a responsibility to look after our planet, the creatures we share it with, and each other. I believe that the most important part of the creation story in the Bible is God's instruction to humanity that our purpose is to care for the Earth that we've been put in charge of. The key element of my composition that conveys the message is transposition, with the scripture on the tangram squares being reformed into shapes that represent nature and our relationship with it, displaying a modern interpretation of our calling as guardians of the earth in the form of John Silkin's poetry. I used colour and pattern to tie the tangram figures into the paper diorama, with the Bible verse written in natural green and brown tones across the entire piece. The repeating pattern across each layer of paper ties all the layers together, emphasising the importance of caring for all living things, even those we might consider to be "unnecessary" as stated in the poem. I think my use of transposition, colour and pattern in this prac is effective at conveying the message that it is the duty of humanity to care for and protect the earth.