

Remembrance

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I have always had a connection with the ocean, having grown up by the sea and spending many hours in and around the water. My increasing concern about the health of marine habitats inspired me to highlight the diminishing health of coral reef ecosystems and their existence in the future. I aimed to depict the beauty and fragility of coral reefs to raise awareness of the dire impacts of climate change on the environment and importantly, marine life.

The process of developing my ideas and creating my artwork involved exploring different artists, their styles and practicing techniques. The abstract impressionism of Claude Monet illustrated the beauty and innocence of nature and sense of harmony and tranquillity. Influenced by ceramic sculptor Courtney Mattison, I initially experimented with clay to create coral shapes and patterns but chose to explore other mediums.

The needlework embroideries and sculptures of Sera Waters introduced me to different materials and techniques to create my own work. I was inspired by her use of recycled yarns and intention to send a message through her art. Artist Vanessa Barragao also has a strong connection to the ocean, her works using craft techniques to create sculptural tapestries of replicated marine environments. Her unique use of crochet, latch hooking and interesting use of different yarns introduced me to different textile methods, and the distinctive visual effects they each created. Both Waters and Barragao aim to highlight the importance of traditional techniques like crochet and needlework being lost over time. This reflects a connection to the demise of the healthy ecology of coral reefs, a point noted by Barragao and Waters who reject the highly pollutive textile industry by using only recycled or unwanted materials.

Influenced by their strong ecological message, I used repurposed materials where possible, discovering and adapting different yarns using hook and tuft latch hooking, crochet and knitting- skills in which I had little or no experience, discovering some yarns easier to work with than others. I learned to create different textures and shapes in order to replicate the intricate details and colours of different coral clusters and species. The organic shape creates a realistic form. I chose white tones for a natural, subdued palette to symbolise coral bleaching and added complementary pastel colours to represent living reef organisms and some sense of hope that the climate impact can be reversed. As my work progressed, I altered my initial colour scheme, as some were too vibrant and artificial. I chose to add mirrors to emphasise the beauty of coral and to reflect light at different angles, aiming to provoke personal reflection and interaction with the audience asking what can one do about our dying reefs.

The visual impact of my work intends to express the beauty and complexity of a coral reef and raise awareness of the fragile state of our marine environments. The title of my artwork is 'Remembrance' referring to how we will one day remember the true beauty of coral reefs whose existence only consists of a framed artefact and no longer an environmental presence.

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