

2019: A SYNOPSIS

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Throughout the year, I have watched and listened as many of my peers have expressed their desperation and frustration towards year 12. The stringent and at times suffocating nature of the education system caused many of those around me to vent their exasperations and stresses with frequency and fervour. I, myself, was not immune to these experiences. However, what truly vexed me was how those around me responded to the expressions of anguish by myself and my classmates. Instead of expressing a sense of compassion, many would deflect such remarks with comments like 'that's just year 12.' It forced me to consider the disregard and sense of normality which has developed towards the significant stress and negative impact year 12 has on many individuals. Rather than recognising and thereafter addressing the negative influence of year 12, the education systems and those a part of it have seemingly become complacent towards it. This is what inspired and motivated my practical. I decided that I wanted to reflect and portray my own experiences in my final year of high school. To achieve this, I resolved to do a series of artworks which frankly depicted how I felt throughout the year.

Within this process, I discovered the works of the Prussian artist, Käthe Kollwitz, whose work explored the mourning and suffering of the working class through war and turmoil. Her woodblock prints comprising of only black and white were emotionally charged and naturalistic. She also employed line and positive space in a deliberate and delicate manner which clearly communicated an atmosphere of distress. These significantly moulded my own practical as I wanted to emulate such facets. It also initiated my experimentation with print media, such as woodblock printing, linocut, and etching. Promptly, I resolved to do achromatic woodblock prints for my practical as it allowed for a controlled, smooth use of line.

When developing the designs of my three prints, I recognised the importance of imitating Kollwitz' use of naturalism. Hence, each image illustrates a very candid, intimate moment between the subject and the audience. They are vulnerable in that moment, staring at the viewer in desperation.

Still, I wanted the series of prints to symbolise the raw emotion and transience of each instant. Thus, the composition of each print is not designed to feel closed, but the figure gradates out. And, I reduced the figures in order to use line and space in an organic manner. This supports the intended raw, candid atmosphere which I wanted to convey. Finally, the imperfections due to the volatile nature of printmaking provide a character and visual variation within the practical. It subsequently develops an unintentional but advantageous sense of movement.

Overall, the three prints effectively communicate the themes of anguish, stress and desperation. The use of a contrasting black and white colour scheme prevented the artworks from appearing disorganised. The akin style of composition and use of artistic elements connect the prints to develop a cohesive series.

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