

## *Visions of Subconsciousness*

### **Jesse Thomson**

My body of work, *"Visions of Subconsciousness"*, is inspired by illogical fantasies the mind subconsciously creates while dreaming, expressing the endless possibilities of vivid storylines, additional emotions and nonsensical lines, dividing the minds thoughts from dreams to nightmares.

Initially wanting to establish my main media, as I have always been confident with a range of art materials and techniques, I found lino artist Rachel Hibbs, who carves items of nature and surrealist images, with finely lined details and shadows. Hibbs's works heavily inspired my choice to create linoprints as the main component of my body of work. A challenge I faced with this technique was my ability to form extremely fine lines similar to Hibbs's. Because of this, I decided to create larger linoprints, allowing for such detail on a bigger scale. The common depiction of faces and eyes throughout the works represent the physicality of being in a dream; how you are viewing the visions of unconsciousness within yet having little to no control over the outcome. The layering and ribbon like illustrations flowing through the works represents fluency, linking them together, as dreams are commonly disconnected. Finally the array of inanimate objects including; candles, animals, flowers, fruit and shells play a further role in representing this subconsciousness and randomness; individually the items could be specific to a story line, but together, the story can alter, furthermore visualising the incomprehensible outcomes of a dream. I wanted exactly five linoprints in the centre of the body of work, to pose as a statement and main aspect to represent my concept. These prints are in a scattered arrangement, to represent the idea that storylines in dreams can start and end within a matter of seconds, yet within a person's irrational state, they manage to line and connect, despite the unpredictability of each.

Wanting to further experiment with the concept of Surrealism, I was searching to steer away from the monotone black and white and incorporate colour. After visiting the Art Gallery of SA exhibition, *"Surrealist at Sea"*, I was inspired by Dusan Marek. Studying his abstract and surreal approaches to oil painting, I developed my next idea, with more detail and colour in comparison to my prints, aiming to represent the differing clarity and blurriness within a dream. The paintings depict, similar to the lino prints, an array of eerie silhouettes, figures and faces alongside inanimate objects including teapots, koi fish, and satellite dishes, representing how the unconscious mind can form realities and make sense of such things. To a person in a conscious state, it may seem impossible to form links, however the power of a dream continues a story for every individual, no matter how surreal. The colour within the paintings contrasts the black and white prints, establishing how some dreams can affect and be more real for some, while other dreams are less vivid and more surreal. I wanted to ensure a sense of unity within the various aspects of my works, settling on a neutral colour pallet of beige, brown, white, black, and khaki, which contrasted enough to separate these paintings from the prints, however, did not create a distraction.

Wanting to further encapsulate the feelings and emotions as a result of dreams, I investigated how I could visually represent a dream as opposed to a nightmare and how fear can take over these stories within a person's mind.

Pablo Picasso and his abstract, morphed style of portraits inspired me to create a set of facial sculptures, each representing a different stage of response from a dream. Using white paper clay, I sculpted a face of fear, a face of excitement, and a neutral face, to display hanging over the visual dreams. Originally only using white paper clay, I found that from a distance, the emotions the face represented, were hard to distinguish. Returning to Picasso for inspiration, I found that within his abstracted portraits, he used thick lines to border facial features to enhance and show emotion. I used a black marker to outline and border the shapes of the face, accentuating the emotions and enhancing the overall effect I intended.

Inspired by the technique of sculpting, I wanted to create a 3D element to my body of work, to visually represent the shapes and forms, often seen within dreams. Sara Wilson's naturally shaped organic ceramic forms influenced me to explore terracotta clay. Initially I created random shapes on the pottery wheel, using my hands to mould, rounded elongated forms. This technique, however, did not deliver the organic shapes I was after. I then decided to hand sculpt, curved organic shapes, created subconsciously. These sculptures represented the inner workings of the mind, the brain and the body as it dreams. During sleep, a state of unconsciousness is present; despite this, the brain continues to grow, think and create. These sculptures are a representation of how the mind creates organic and random stories, experiences and sights. Although the natural colour of the terracotta, suited my collection of works, I wanted the forms to be more fluid visually. I glazed these sculptures with a metallic glaze, so they almost look like molten forms, caught in movement, similar to our thoughts.

My body of work, with its array of objects, symbols and forms, has been arranged so that each resolved piece created, can be viewed and valued, aesthetically. Although individually, each piece does not have a dedicated meaning or representation, collectively they are juxtaposed to represent the idea of surrealist dreams and how they can be very meaningless and incomprehensible. The visual depiction of a dream, as well as the mind and emotions during a dream, all work together. Not only do the works complement one another with a balance of art elements, but they also create an overall representation of all aspects of dreaming.

My work is a collection where the audience can create their own interpretation of each dream, while having an overall feeling of connection and relatability with the ranging feelings of subconsciousness.