

## Sophie Rosser

### *Poison*

**White clay, polymer clay, tissue paper, acrylic paint, glass cloche and insulin pump wire**

#### *Practitioner's Statement*

This work draws a connection between fairytale, childhood and medical references to depict my Type 1 diabetes and the feeling of confinement it causes.

Initially, I began exploring the meaning of hands in artworks, finding a link between the subtlety and detail of Albrecht Dürer's charcoal sketches and several drawings of hands I made between the ages of thirteen and fifteen. I continued to consider the use of hands in portraying specific messages, and came to largely appreciate the contrast between Michelangelo's use of hands to portray strength and Deborah Paauwe's use of hands in photographs to represent sensitivity and vulnerability. However, while I enjoyed the senses of depth and realism evident in these artists' works, I found their two-dimensionality did not satisfy the physical and tangible appearance that I intended to portray in my final work. Thus, I was led to sculpture artists such as August Rodin, Julia Robinson and Kate MacDowell. I found my style of modelling clay closely reflected the raw and textural appearance of Rodin's sculptures, and thus I was inspired by his methods of using photographs and sketches as references to resolve my artwork.

As I continued to develop a conceptual focus for my work, I was drawn to Julia Robinson's "Eat Wolf" series and Ah Xian's "Metaphysica" series. Both incorporate elements of symbolism to represent fairytales and cultural identity respectively, and thus they influenced me to incorporate an apple in my work, characteristic of the poison apple in *Snow White* and, thus, of my childhood. During my experimentation, I became inspired by Lyn Wood's technique of delicately layering stained paper to produce three-dimensional objects. Consequently, I layered bright red tissue-paper to create the apple, the colour of which drew a direct juxtaposition to the paleness of the white clay of the hand.

My final artwork depicts my own hand atop an arrow, wrapped in wire and holding an apple. The striking whiteness of the hand highlights the pale and translucent appearance I have been told my skin takes on when I experience hypoglycaemia. In comparison, the synthetic, lolly-red of the apple, which replicates the sugary sweets I must consume to elevate my blood-sugar, implies elements of irony as apples are known to be good blood-sugar regulators. Also inspired by Paauwe and Robinson's use of fabrics to conceal the women's hands in their works, I used wire from my insulin pump and a glass cloche—similar to the cloche in *Beauty and the Beast* used to encapsulate the enchanted rose—to "trap" my own hand. However, the harshness of this "encapsulated" theme is softened by the inclusion of the wire arrow; a replication of the Escape Button on my insulin pump, which points towards the viewer to imply the possibility of escape due to technological advancements. Throughout my experimentation, I came to appreciate the malleable and versatile nature of clay and the technical delicacy of paper, which allowed me to produce a final artwork that combined elements of my childhood, and my present, to effectively communicate my Type 1 diabetes.