

Practitioner's statement – *Immigration* # |

I have always had an interest in my Nonno's story. Nonno left school when he was eight to help work for his family on their farm in the south of Italy. He and his family, desperate for work, migrated to Australia, the land of opportunities, to start their new lives in 1961, in Mount Gambier, Australia. Growing up, I have always been curious of the cultural differences in Italy and in Australia. A southern Italian heritage has been imprinted to my personality and being for a lifetime, something of which I am incredibly proud.

The idea of migrating to a new country and culture always astounded me, especially when there is difference in language and lifestyle. Nonno's personal story allowed for access to a variety of information and stories that were essential to my research. I discovered photographs of Nonno on his farms in Italy, as well as photographs from the boat in which he travelled to Australia on. I also learned substantially about my Nonno's family history, particularly in his collection of kept letters he used to communicate with his family in Italy that dated back from the early 80's. This collection of letters was an aspect of Nonno's story that I wanted to include in my final practical, hence the clear acrylic cover, with the personalised Italian postal stamp and the blue and red airmail stripes. The postage stamp and configured panels are deeply inspired by the works of Imants Tillers, who, after his own parents immigrated, often explores the idea of being intercultural, and questions in which ethnicity he considers home.

To incorporate both countries, I decided to create a panorama consisting of three panels (triptych); the first panel to the right is Nonno with his parents in Italy. Here, I created a sparse background inspired by the works of Peter Booth to create the sense of why Nonno had to leave, isolation and scarcity. Having Nonno's parents in the painting, however, enhances the feeling of family and home. I was also inspired by the minimal stylised landscapes of Colin McCahon, and whose own story of immigration related intensely with the paintings. The middle panel is his journey to Australia, as he sits on a chair on the deck of the boat. Once again, interested in the stylised aesthetic of portraits, I further implied the figures of E.S Lowry, to create a somewhat realistic depiction of my grandfather's portrait, with a sense of illusory. The final panel on the left is Nonno home in Australia. Inspired by the works of William Robinson, I created a transfigured landscape, symbolic of the absolute cultural differences between Australia and Italy, which must have been incredibly bewildering. Nonno is surrounded by the farm he bought and raised cattle on, and stands with an aura of pride, as if to say "I have worked hard to create and provide for my family, and now it is here that I feel home."

Words: 495