

## *Blanket of Home*

### **Hannah Smailes**

Home, for many, begins at the places they live. These places come in many shapes and sizes, from vehicles, to tents, to traditional houses, and everything in between. They are uniquely special to their inhabitants, not simply because of their physical structure, but because of the memories that have been made within the walls, the feelings of security, comfort and peace that is contained within.

In *Blanket of Home*, I explored the relationship we have with the concept of 'home', developing a tapestry of my life made up of simple ink paintings of my current and past homes. Black ink illustrations present these places in a void of ambiguity, whilst the linen as a ground instigates feelings of domesticity, warmth, and gentleness. The patchwork style of sewn together tea towels alludes to the ever-growing fabric that forms my past, present and future sense of home, reflecting the changing periods of life. The imperfection of this quilt evokes feelings of homeliness, individuality and safety. The quilt further mimics the nature of home, developing a personal relationship that is only of value to the owner; mirroring the way that houses are often homes to those alone who have lived within their walls.

My use of ink on linen was inspired by the textile works of Lillian Martinez, and the way she embellished her pieces with simple, randomised motifs that instigated the deeply personal meaning of home in her life. Sophie Ramos's concept of beautifying banal domestic objects heavily shaped my decision to challenge my use of mediums. Her approach of utilising familiar objects and adding vibrance to them inspired me to reflect on the emotional connection developed within a physical home and how I can present this in my work. I was further inspired by the way Ramos kept her works personable through utilising relatable objects to enhance the universality of connection to home in its physical sense, and therefore I produced a makeshift blanket as it similarly resonates with the viewer and conjures the feelings of comfort and security achieved through home. Through exploration of Barbara Lwein's ambitious project of photographing and cataloguing every object in her home in their simplest sense, I was inspired to keep my depictions of each 'home' as accurate and realistic as I could. I was able to acknowledge the places for what they truly are, not the embellished homes we often try to make them to be, paying respect to the imperfect nature that makes home.

Home is deeply personal and transient: it is ubiquitous for some, while merely a house to others. Home is perpetually evolving, it can be without borders, be long lasting, or constantly transforming. Others need the physical permanence of a house to return to each day. Regardless of its format, the foundational feelings of home remain the same: offering comfort, security, and identity.