

Futility

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The initial concept for my body of work; *Futility* was to use juxtaposition of concepts such as the passing of time and staying still, life and death, and feeling trapped or free, to convey the complexity of feelings and emotions about the experience of being in my final year of high school and the period of change that comes with this. Conceptually I was influenced by Rosa de Jong's use of glass domes to create contained inner worlds that reflect inner landscapes.

I was also inspired by how Suzanne Breakwell uses printed paper to create intricate sculptures also inspired me to experiment with paper as medium.

I decided to create three pieces that all expressed contrasting concepts. The first piece, *Pause*, represents staying still and the passing of time, the second piece, *Vivre aut Mori*, represents the inevitability of death, and the third piece, *Contained*, represents feeling trapped and free. I have found in the past few years that change is frequent and life often feels like it's moving quickly, and at times it's felt difficult to keep up. The intention behind *Futility* is to represent how trying to prevent change and the passing of time is a futile effort. Being in year 12 is very overwhelming and throughout the year I have felt as though everything, and everyone, was moving quickly around me while I stayed still. I often find myself unwilling to accept change and trying to find ways to avoid or postpone it, including often procrastinating with my schoolwork as that can make things feel slower and like it'll take longer to get to a time of change. I incorporated this concept in my body of work through the use of immortalised objects such as my friend's hand cast in plaster and painted realistically, and flowers I dried at home. By transforming these once living forms into objects I connecting to my personal need to hold on to moments in time and my reluctance to give up objects that I feel hold sentimental value. *Futility* is a reminder to myself that it's okay for things and people to change, as change is life's only true constant.

Breakwell's delicate paper sculptures connect technically with the way I have used paper within my body of work. The way that the visible text within her sculptures helps to capture a story was an artistic feature that I wanted to replicate within *Futility* as text can add layered meaning to an artwork. For my pieces I decided to use old music paper as I feel that music is a universal language and artform and helps to connect my three art pieces together. I also looked into Rosa de Jong's use of glass domes within her collection "Micro Matter". The idea of containing a work of art within a vessel is one that I find endlessly fascinating. I wanted to create small pieces of worlds within vessels such as boxes and glass domes to represent the human need for control and my own desire to contain and control change in my own life. My piece *Contained* features a red umbrella within a glass dome which functions as a snow globe and portrays the concept of controlled change as the internal environment of the globe is in flux but has not impact on the outside environment. I also looked into the 17th century concepts of Vanitas, an art period featuring imagery of music, flowers, and themes of death. Some artists known for their Vanitas works are David Bailly, Pieter Potter, and Willem Claesz Heda. Vanitas was designed to remind people of their mortality and the worthlessness of vanity. Vanitas artworks are typically realistic still life compositions featuring detailed brushwork. I was more interested in the meanings and concepts seen within this art style than the techniques. I incorporated the common vanitas themes of flowers, music, and the

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inevitability of death in *Vivre aut Mori* (to live or to die) to help emphasise the meaning behind the piece. *Vivre aut Mori* place life and death against each other, a gentle reminder that holding onto life does not prevent death. The Latin phrase 'Memento Mori' translates to "remember you must die" and is a popular concept in art. While researching this phrase I came across it's lesser-known counterpart 'Memento Vivere', or "remember you must live". While less common in art I felt that memento vivre resonated with my work more as it discusses the inevitability of change throughout life.

Throughout the creation of this body of work I aimed to find my own person style and story to put out into the world. Before this year I often centred my art around fantasy and myth but hadn't entirely created an aesthetic of my own. Over the year I have developed from being someone who allowed themselves to be overly influenced by other artists to now having a more developed personal aesthetic that better displays my individuality. Because of this I now have a much clearer understanding of what I want to say in my artworks. *Futility* has helped me to learn more about myself and how I feel about the world. I have learned that change becomes more easily manageable when I take time to look at it as a series of steps rather than viewing all change as a big deal.