

What did I want to achieve?

When I set out with this project, I wanted to achieve an exorcism through craft. I aimed to explore my past and to aid the processing of traumatic memory through dealing with physical artefacts. I had, in my concept refinement project, explored a lot of ideas around replication and the individual; mass production vs hand crafted. The marks, ageing, and weathering of physical objects from production or from experience and how these are compounded through replication. e.g. taking moulds of items I had found in the garden and replicating them with their ageing marks. My first year essay equipped me to think about objects and their use and the part that plays in our history and memory of individuals. I wanted to apply that to my own artefacts and to explore my psychological history. That gave me a tool to look at my belongings, while they are still personal items, and assess them from a more objective viewpoint to deal with what they represent to a wider society.

What went well?

Gathering my personal items into a single space and working the collection went well. My reflective journal, spread throughout my sketch books, shows the thoughts and ideas triggered by different pieces. Rearranging a crowd of paper, ephemera and mementoes, cataloguing it, and organising the artefacts immersed me in the “texture of my reality.” Establishing my personal historic aesthetic in order to explore the overall impact of the represented events, I utilised mould making and casting skills that I had developed throughout the degree. Through tutorials I began to understand that the curation of the objects in my space may BE the actual finished project - how objects tell a story. Some of the making I had planned came to feel unnecessary. I did not need a central model, but the original elements from the initial plan are there.

I introduced literary interests into the scenes, including other people’s accounts of similar experiences and started to see my own letters as artefacts. Finding a new source of artefacts in my own written records and official forms developed from my growing interest formed in the first two years of the degree in establishing what can be considered an artefact, and what is ‘making’. The final film is a piece I am proud of and I’m very grateful to the help of Dave and Stuart for working on it.

What didn’t?

The events of 2020 threw a spanner in the works of our final year exhibition. I spent many weeks that I would have been working on the project looking after my daughter. However, having spent that time ruminating on how to move forward with it, I began to think that a film could be a good way of presenting my concept. While I didn’t have access to college studios to create pieces I had originally planned, I decided that I could get across my points/message better through a presentation of existing artefacts in a different way. When presenting these online, I have tried to caption them as if I was at the Private View answering questions viewers might have asked.

Clement Boland – Mowing the Lawn - Evaluation

What would I do differently?

With access to studios and materials, I could progress my piece in alternative ways.

In future I will begin dictating my notes rather than writing so many as other people struggle to read my handwriting, especially as thoughts become wilder.

In terms of the website, I would like to develop an interactive panorama of the exhibition where viewers could click on a segment they find interesting and get more information on that piece.

I would have liked to have included my concept refinement sketchbooks to show the genesis of the project but unfortunately they are missing.

Where am I going from here?

I hope to continue to use the skills I have developed on this degree to further process my memories and I am also interested in using access to art to help others with similar experiences. I have begun training with the local veterans hub and I will be facilitating a model making course for the group beginning this autumn.