

Amore for my Armour (Handmade paper dress)

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Wearing my armour, I am protected from the world outside, but what am I hiding inside?

My artwork explores my personal struggle with stress and my habit of disguising it from the world outside. Combining my love of art and passion for the fashion industry I created a garment which was more like art than clothing. Using the unique shapes and elements of medieval armour to create a fashionable version of a protective suit. I wanted to achieve a sense of contradictory through the material which appears strong and heavy but, is the opposite light and fragile, to explore the sense of feeling secretly fragile, like you could be effortlessly torn apart.

My inspiration came from Lia Griffith, a paper couture artist who uses tissue paper, and magazines to create textile looking artworks.

I crafted handmade paper out of pieces that have previously caused me stress like homework, notes, planners, to do lists, assessments, tests and blended with the addition of black acrylic paint for colour and adding white dried hydrangea petals. Creating the paper was therapeutic, letting loose and ripping apart past assessments which had caused me an extensive amount of stress. Reminding me that these documents were just paper, and that I put too much value into such insignificant things, blending away my stress and mashing it into pulp. Letting go of the past and the chains that bonded me.

For my construction of the garment, I made delicate chains out of the handmade paper and enjoyed the process of, working on all the intricate details. The chains which accessorise the garment also have a double meaning to me. Chains can either hold something back and be restrictive or guard something and be protective.

I want the audience to see my unique garment, appreciate its beauty but then explore how it was made. Inspiring them to think deeper about how they feel within and how they express their feelings to society. Breaking through the chains that bind them and letting go of what holds them back. Stand in their own beauty from within. Be raw, be vulnerable and protect yourself and each other from any of the negative emotions that arise like stress. Love your amour. Create your amour from your stress.

I hope what the audience takes away from this piece is the importance of using negative emotions and channelling them to do something amazing or using them as motivation. I turned pulp into passion creating a garment which allowed me to showcase my interest in the fashion industry. Everyone feels stress and most people hide it within themselves and project the image of wearing heavy armour. We need to learn to appreciate and love this armour and how fragile it really is. Loving ourselves from within and expressing how you feel, letting go of the stress. I love my armour as its my comfort zone reassuring me that I have something to protect myself.