

Family Dinner

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My body of work 'Family Dinner' is a personal appreciation of my family, and a representation of their importance and effect on my life. One component of the work is the six ceramic plates and vase made of white clay and painted with ceramic glaze (24x24cm). Each plate represents a member of my family through faceless portraiture, while the vase symbolises our family as a whole. The second component of the work is a tablecloth featuring an abstract map of South Australia, made from clothing patches on a beige cotton fabric (200cmx136cm). Significant influences of South Australian artists, Gerry Wedd and Sera Waters are evident in the technical and stylistic approach of my work, which ultimately unify the different mediums in a homemade style.

I am constantly drawn to ceramics in my artistic endeavours, so I began my body of work by investigating existing ceramic artists and their stylistic features. South Australian artist, Gerry Wedd, American artist Molly Hatch, and Norwegian artist Kari Ytterdal were all heavy influences on my idea generation where Hatch developed the unified placement of the plates, Ytterdal identified the natural forms and Wedd developed my individual style from his unique and personal designs. I appreciated the portraiture style of Joseph Cornell who represented ideas and memories with simple objects limited by the confines of a box. This made me think of human representations or portraiture through symbolic forms, where I diverged this idea to relate to the natural world around us; flora and fauna. Each plate incorporates an influence of these artists, majoritively Gerry Wedd, however the entirety of this collection is influenced by Molly Hatch, Kari Ytterdal and Joseph Cornell.

As my ceramic style progressed, I realised my appreciation lay in the handmade uniqueness of each plate and endeavoured to continue this theme through the second component of my work. Sewing is the sovereignty of handmade objects and with the simultaneous thought of practicality, I was reminded of family dinners and the importance our family upholds in a good meal together. Whether through celebration, grief, excitement or simply placidity, we all come together over a meal. Every night our immediate family shares dinner together and reflect on our day – something of a lost art in today's modern individualistic society. When preparing for these gatherings, we use a tablecloth to subconsciously signify the importance of the people present at the table. This led me to create a tablecloth as the second component for my work. Although painters, Emily Kngwarreye and William Robinson were the original inspiration for my work and their symbolic approach in representing the relations between nature, life and us humans. I was initially inspired to paint on a blank canvas, which could be draped over a table, but after analysing Sera Water's work, was drawn to the handmade qualities and craftsmanship of her patchwork and stitching. Her work incorporates themes of colonialism and First Nations Displacement which directed my focus to the geographical origins of my family in South Australia, which consequently became the subtheme of this component.

Each plate is a faceless portrait of a family member, reflecting their connection to our family, interests and who they are through inanimate and natural components. Mum's plate features a whale and sail boats, symbolising our shared love of sailing and her

protective yet gentle personality. Finally, the nautilus shells around the border are a symbol of order amidst chaos. Dad's plate incorporates a whale shark and the peepal tree (tree of wisdom) to encapsulate his risk-taking personality, gentleness like Mum and openness to learn. The abalone shells along the border are a direct representation of Dad and how he loves abalone diving. My grandfather, Pappi's plate displays a blue wren, signifying his love for birds and how they perch on his knee, as well as his house in Robe and a hammer, representing his impressive craftsmanship and efforts to teach Maddy, Lulu and me. Maddy's plate features a dragonfly as symbol of self that comes with maturity, two pacific gulls as they are often found in pairs somewhat like Maddy and I, and finally flowers and pine trees, representing her appreciation of delicacy and beauty. Lulu's plate encompasses her innocence and love of animals through a depiction of her petting a chicken, as well as her extreme love of horses. The starfish around the border are a reminder of our younger years when we analyse and collect starfish at the beach, only to put them back again. My own plate depicts a sealion as my most treasured moment was swimming with them at Baird Bay in the wild, and an obelisk as a representation of Robe which has a special place in my heart. The sunflowers symbolise my positive outlook and pure joy for life.

To bring together the individuality of the plates, I created a vase as a single piece to represent our family as a whole. At our family home, we have an abundance of lavender, so as a symbol of home, I pressed lavender flowers into the wet clay of the vase, then painted depictions into the divots. Symbols from each of the plates were also painted onto the vase as representations of each member. Similarly, the tablecloth is based around the theme of home, but displays the homeward journey from various locations around South Australia. Each patch is a piece of clothing from someone in the family and its placement represents an importance between that person and the corresponding location. It represents home as an idea rather than a place where more than one person is present at each location, shown through a variety of fabrics.

I am very pleased with the outcome of my work as it reflects the importance and ideology of my family and helped develop my own individual artistic style which is evident through the uniqueness and delicate elements in each piece. There is evidence of Gerry Wedd and Sera Waters as influences in this piece who ultimately shaped this style and aided in the development of the theme. I believe that I have achieved the desired effect and accurately represented each individual member as well as our holistic family.