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Level 3 Visual Arts 2025

91459 Produce a systematic body of work that integrates conventions and regenerates ideas within sculpture practice

EXEMPLAR

Excellence

TOTAL E



Plaster, foundation/makeup - 80mmx130mmx30mm



Plasticine, cardboard, wooden skewer armature - 50mmx200mmx80mm

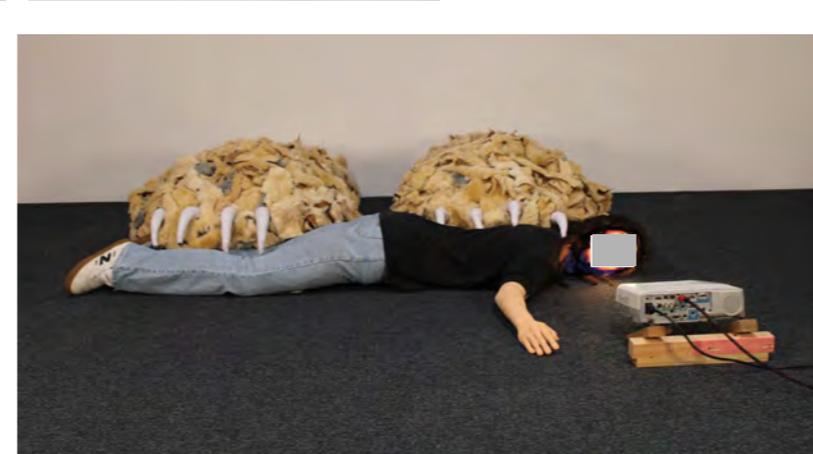
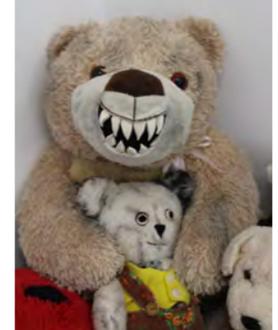


Plaster cast gummy bear, air dry clay - 100mmx150mmx70mm

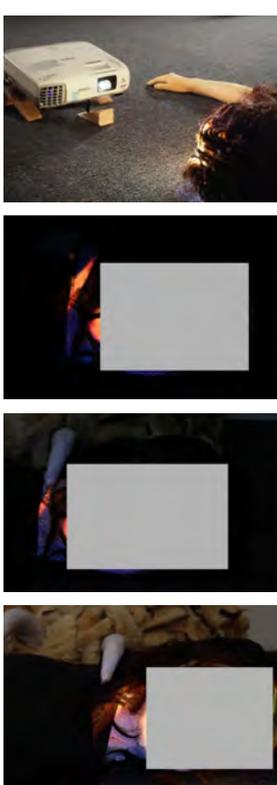
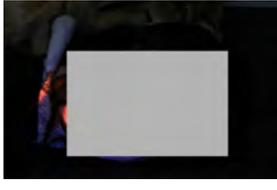
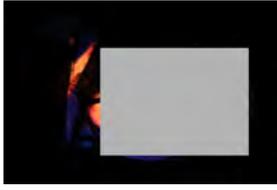
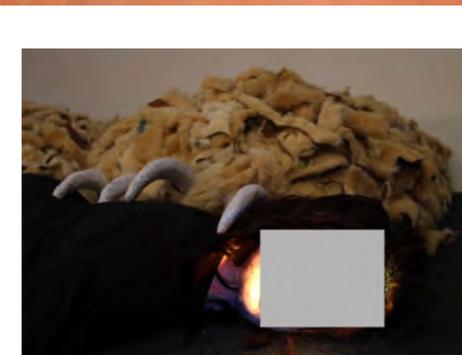
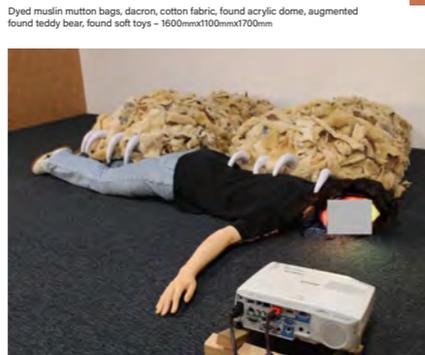


Found teddy bear, air dry clay, wire armature - 300mmx100mmx80mm

Found teddy bear, air dry clay, wire armature, artist's childhood soft toys - 300mmx100mmx80mm



Dacron, drill cotton fabric, sheep's wool, electrical tape, tape cast body, plaster cast arm of the artist, artist's clothing, data projector, video projection, wig - 180mmx500mmx120mm
The video loop depicts the artist's face, looking around anxiously and saying "help, I'm being squished, it's too heavy"



Dyed muslin mutton bags, dacron, cotton fabric, found acrylic dome, augmented found teddy bear, found soft toys - 1600mmx1100mmx700mm

Wax leg cast of the artist, found and artist's own soft toys, plaster cast hand of the artist - 1600mmx1000mmx200mm

Excellence

Subject: Visual Arts – Sculpture

Standard: 91459

Marker commentary

This portfolio presents an uncanny surrealist sculptural work that employs elements of filmic and theatrical horror across object and installation to explore anxieties about transitioning into adulthood. Childhood toys are transformed into sinister, malevolent and at times violent presences in relation to the adolescent protagonist, as the candidate uses their body and video image as a subjugated persona seeking help. The presentation begins with small yet unsettling interventions into lifelike cast fingers, where the nails are carved with faces showing various distressed emotional states. This precedes a small-scale plasticine adolescent figure burdened by a black monstrous creature clinging to their back. The box of memorabilia is interfered with by the creature as the figure attempts to carry it away. This narrative introduces the notion of anxiety or fear as a monster that must be conquered for growth and adulthood to occur.

A key methodology of augmenting readymade soft toys is evident in the subsequent work, in which a found teddy bear is altered with sharp, exposed teeth to transform it into an object reminiscent of a children's nightmare. While this portfolio draws upon contemporary horror cinema, it also references the practice of Mike Kelley and, at times, Don Driver's reconfigurations of dolls. These found objects are reconstituted to create uncanny relationships between their original form and their new state, resulting in a subtly threatening narrative.

Object and installation practice is evidenced in the use of toys as reimagined constructed forms, with scale and pose controlled deliberately to guide the narrative. The candidate then constructs a free-standing bear with a blank face that acts as a projection screen for the artist's face. The contextual label notes that the video shows the artist looking around suspiciously and whispering "Pssst, yeah I'm real, can you hear me?" This work clearly references Tony Oursler and engages with verisimilitude, creating a suspension of disbelief that allows the sculpture to appear alive with movement and sound. This represents a turning point in the portfolio as the candidate advances the need for reality within the surrealism of the work to achieve the desired audience response. The momentary uncertainty, in which the audience questions whether the scene in front of them is real, echoes the suspension of disbelief associated with theatre or film. Research into surrealist and symbolist artists such as Robert Gober informs this phase of work, where the object is understood as not real, yet allowed to sit close to the possibility of coming to life and delivering a genuine jump scare.

The complex real-unreal interplay is achieved through high-level casting techniques using both wax and plaster body parts, then incorporated into installations on Panels 2 and 3. Emaciated wax legs protrude from a pile of smothering soft toys, suggesting a body trapped for days. Technical issues become strengths, accepted and exploited to enhance the narrative intention. The work at the top of Panel 3 presents fear or threat as a boa constrictor, showing the creature constricting its prey before swallowing it whole. A clear porthole window reveals the soft toys already consumed and the hapless bear inside with a sad or fearful expression. The candidate continues to test ideas related to scale and materiality as they progress toward the final installation.

The concluding work on Panel 3 draws on the success of the earlier video piece and the surrealist body parts seen on Panel 2 to synthesise a compelling final video installation in which the artist appears trapped beneath two giant bear paws. The lifelike hands, the movement, and the emotional expression of the face contribute to a powerful sense of distress. The emotive capacity of the video unsettles viewers even though they remain aware they are looking at sculpture. This portfolio would translate well to a

Marker commentary

moving image submission, as sound and movement could be fully realised for the assessment panel.

Some sculptural submissions work fastidiously through small iterations of objects or ideas, building toward a final large-scale installation or performance on Panel 3. This portfolio, however, is a strong example of ambitious, real-world installation practice, which has significant impact on its audience. Each phase of work builds meaningfully upon the previous, contributing to the complexity and depth of each work.