

Practitioner's Statement

Skateboards

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For my practical I was inspired by tribal, historical and native artworks to create a body of work that involved patterning and symbolism. I researched a variety of unique cultures and some of the mythology related to them. The final pieces are influenced by a range of cultures and art styles from the Japanese to the Mayan Incan and Hawaiian culture. The artworks of the 20th century works of Post-Impressionist Vincent Van Gogh and 21st Century Australian artist Brett Whiteley both influenced and inspired me. The techniques and individual characteristics of their pen and ink line work in particular inspired me and it was these elements that I incorporated into my own work.

This was originally a part of a body of work that was based on the cycle of earth's life and how humans treat the earth. This idea was extended and developed through a range of media and techniques from the traditional techniques such as pyrography to newer technology like solar plate etchings. The body of work was named "Gratitude". This concept was influenced by a range of ideas and cultures from European to Asian countries with the key element representation of the "Tree of life". The idea of this tree is interpreted in many cultures, with their own mythology behind it, here I adapted and developed my own personal take on it, employing symbolism through the use of line and imagery. There are three main sections to this work; the branches and roots of the tree, the face of earth and hell. In the lower section, hell is there burning the evil and is shown with the fiery devils of hell. Hell is burning with red blazing flames and has waves of souls surfacing the layer above. However in this piece it shows only the lower sections and not the top section.

The waves are informed by Brett Whitley's ink drawings and painting entitled "The divided Unity". The wave form and his use of fluid organic lines link to his own influence of Japanese art. The lower roots are descriptive with their use of contour line work seen both in Whiteley's and Van Gogh's ink and charcoal drawings. The image of hell is influenced by the Japanese painting in the "Zigoku zoshi" or translated to English "the scroll of hell". I based the fiery demons of hell from the Japanese mythological entity the "Hinotama", the floating fire representing the evil dead souls. The centre pillar of the tree is seen as the main nutrients of earth sucking the souls out of hell and keeping the earth running while undertaking stress. The tree has limbs poking out and facial figures faded into the tree showing how they are getting sent up back to earth. The patterning or technique used to give tone to the tree is influenced by Van Gogh with his use of complex mark making. I also used the Post-Impressionist technique of pointillism to create subtle depth and tone in all parts of this body of work.

The idea of pyrography on the skate boards blanks with this image was to first create an obvious link between the tree of life and the wood of the board. It was also to further encourage and interest a different range of younger people to consider my message. Pyrography also represents my developing appreciation and understanding of traditional cultures such as indigenous Aboriginal culture and their practise with burning symbols and images on wooden artefacts. The use of line is also employed to describe the tree of life image showing the influence of Whiteley and Van Gogh's works. In its essence the key message of how the earth as an entity is angry about how we treat the nature and resources that it provides for us. The message of this piece is to encourage our society to appreciate and treat our environment more respectfully. This is a global message that is reinforced by the variety of cultural influences that lead me to the creation of this body of work.

I feel that I have been successful in communicating this idea whilst creating works that also have strong visual appeal that a wide variety of people can relate to. My own appreciation of a broad range of cultures, artistic styles and techniques certainly has been enhanced from this study.