

Practitioner's Statement

Untitled

Nicole Winkles

I initially investigated sculptures created with recycled materials, including aluminium cans, cassette tapes, vinyl records and wood. I was attracted to vinyl records in particular, due to their mouldable ability when heated. I discovered I could create recognisable facial features by applying a heat gun to a record when placed over a clay face model. Other sculpture mediums were trialled, nonetheless results weren't as satisfying and I decided to pursue my concept of identity with records as a starting point.

I researched words and quotes which best communicated 'identity'. My chosen quote was by Steve Moore, from *V for Vendetta*, which portrayed the sense of the unfamiliar, and the connotation of a mask to cover the face, hiding a person's identity. "There is a face beneath this mask, but it isn't me. I'm no more that face than I am the muscles beneath it, or the bones beneath that."

The concept of not knowing or fully understanding someone is seen in Antony Gormley's sculptures which explores the relationship of the human body to space. His instillation works of wire figures suspended in space, allows the viewer to search for the human figure, as it comes in and out of focus where the wire overlaps. Instead of using Gormley's positive space to create figures I utilised the negative space of the human body to communicate the struggle with or loss of identity.

Ron Mueck's hyper realistic sculptures featuring ordinary humans, some clothed, some naked, causes the viewer to experience a sense of upfront awkwardness. Scale is important to his work, with some sculptures many times the height of a human, others half the size which increases interest and fascination for the audience. Mueck's sense of realism was incorporated as I needed the viewer to connect with the work and see themselves in it through the creation of realistic faces and life-like scale.

I decided on instillation artwork based on the human figure. The head symbolised by a suspended record mobile featuring various mask-like facial expressions, one sad, one happy and two neutral. The audience could interact by turning the mobile to connect the record label text to spell identity. Behind was a screen featuring the blurred repeating quote in generic, universally recognised typewriter font creating the negative space of a person. Certain words are recurrent, the text extending outside the set rectangular format, as if the figure's identity is breaking away. This reinforces the message that you can't know everything about a person and parts of them don't 'fit the box' of our understanding about them.

The cavity of the person is blank, allowing the viewer to see the empty life-size space and fill it with themselves physically, then make the connection with the quote metaphorically by thinking about their own identity and how they view themselves and whether they put on masks to hide who they truly are. I hope viewers connect with the idea that there is more to a person than what's on the outside through my work.