

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Homme***

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Throughout history, the human figure has been used to reflect social issues. The raw and pure representations of the human form in the arts in general have allowed artists to express profound meanings relating to the depiction of the human form. Therefore, I was able to convey my inner turmoil relating to self-acceptance, self-identity, and the current social pressures relating to masculinity, in my own work.

On top of drawing influence from historic representations of the human figure, I was inspired by the figurative photography by Christoffer Relander; his depiction of emotions through a figures' positioning. Man Ray was a significant inspiration, specifically his 'Violin' photograph (see Figure 1), as he used nude figures and monochromatic tones to successfully convey a narrative. I demonstrated my skills in digital photography and photo-manipulation through my body of work. The resulting imagery is a vehicle that conveys my inner-most feelings and frustrations.

I began photographing a nude figure in various positions, lighting conditions, and environments. I chose to manipulate the figure in tense positions as the muscles/bones accentuated the contours of the body. Additionally, lighting was spotlighted against the figure, highlighting the curves of the muscles, to convey a powerful sense of masculinity. This process was repeated in a variety of positions against a monochromatic backdrop; this created negative space around the figure, establishing a focal point that intensified the mood of masculinity.

I was inspired by the works of installation artist, Pae White, through her use of thread to connect aspects of the room together (see Figure 3). I used the idea of connections in my piece titled *Homme* (French for *masculine/butch*). It's composition is 6 portraits of a masculine figure that I contorted to create harsh contours/highlights around bones/muscle. This was done as large figures and big muscles are associated with strength and masculinity. I took advantage of negative space to make the figure central and stronger. I then differed from the traditional use of wool to connect the points of the figures that highlighted masculinity — the strong shoulders, the calloused hands/fingers, the defined arms, and the mental/emotional strength that men are forced to have. This emphasized the manliness of the figure. The white box in the centre of all the portraits is used to represent the figure. The colour white, associated with purity, represented a pure man. The box is depicted as opening to represent the new personality coming forth – the figure is opening up/breaking free from the 'pure man' to become a unique individual. The box is still bright white on the inside as the development of accepting a true personality, the opening up to a new self, can still mean being pure within. By creating strong images of masculinity and connecting it to the symbolism of the white box, I was able to convey the strong theme of masculinity and self-identity. My composition is reflective of the hour-glass figure, allowing me to further accentuate the main themes relating to the body.

By exploring artists such as Pae White and Mana Morimoto, I learnt how to use other mediums (sewing) to compliment and strengthen my favoured medium of photography. Trialling different styles, patterns, and colours of wool, enabled me to connect the images

together - the consistency of thread through both pieces relates them together. The use of photography to capture the figure was successful as it allowed me to explore modern techniques of lighting/composition used by the pioneers of photography.

The strength and power of my images, the use of thread to create symbolism and connections, and the overall unified composition, results in a successful body of work.