

Practitioner's Statement

My Safe Haven

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My artwork explores joyous moments that occurred during my formative years playing in my backyard. This subject matter was a deliberate choice as my first portfolio focused on the impact of living in a housing trust area where the increasing number of generational poverty families brought criminal aspects which I became aware of as a young adolescent. My formative years, however, by contrast present me with many happy, cherished and unblemished memories. My backyard provided me and my siblings with a safe and secure environment which invited us every day to explore, notice, wonder and play; the significant elements of childhood innocence.

The photographs of my siblings and I were the main source of inspiration. The photographs of my brother and his friend from next door as well as the photograph of myself looking over the cubby house fence embodied the idea of imagination and wonder. The notion of childhood imagination and innocence resonated with David Bromley's art practice. This is emphasised through his effective, personalised artistic language to depict a journey travelling down the memory lane of time long lost and gone. The choice for my art practice is driven by sentiment unlike the focus of Generational Poverty which is an analysis of this particular clientele.

Bromley's paintings of childhood memories are achieved through his use of bright yet distinctive colours, figurative expressionism and his symbolic Roy Lichtenstein's inspired Pop Art technique. His nostalgic aesthetic allowed me to become less rigid in my attention to detail, developing looseness and fluidity.

I looked at various artists including Elizabeth Blaylock and Debbie Miller. Both artists focused on children engaged in sensory play with natural elements. Their illustrative aesthetic reminded me of the bright memories I shared with my sister which included jumping in puddles and getting ourselves dirty creating mud delicacies. My outdoor sensory experiences were essential in my cognitive and emotional development as it enabled me to connect with nature and develop a sense of wellbeing to cope with day to day stresses and challenges. However, their illustrative aesthetic lacked conviction in developing nostalgia regarding the innocence of childhood play in my backyard.

My practical consists of two panels with three years olds (myself, my brother and his friend) captured at a moment in play. With the panel of me looking out standing on the cubby porch, the intention was to show a moment of solitude, enjoyed with the thoughts of the old saying in my mind "taking the time to smell the roses" but in this case, the ranunculi. The ranunculi has become very symbolic for me over the years due to their intense colour and soft petals. However, the other panel depicts the close connection between the two boys developed through role playing their interests of superheroes. This too, holds a soft spot in my brother's heart and essentially gives voice to various childhood memories.

These two practical outcomes (the first painting and the second diptych) summarised my artistic development and captured both the innocence and sometimes the grim reality of my childhood.