

Phones

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This series started with the idea of using found materials. After reaching a dead end with experiments with toilet rolls, I happened upon an entire box full of discarded cord-phones. I had already intended to explore the theme of connection and the link between the two seemed almost fateful. I decided to create a series of phone sculptures, exploring many potential designs, from painted depictions of mundane conversation to absurd phones fitted with mouths and ears instead of microphones and speakers. I began experimenting with materials, subject matter and symbolism, trying to create what I felt was an authentic representation of modernized human connection. Eventually, I settled on five distinctly different sculptures which together form this representation, incorporating elements both beautiful and grotesque, comedic and tragic.

Eye Phone explores the value of connection. The ability to connect and feel connected to each other is crucial to human existence. This is conveyed through the opulence of the phone's golden gilt surface and the elaborately sculpted shining plates that cover its surface. The recurring image of the eye, set within the ornate fittings like jewel, represents a simple yet crucial element to human connection: eye contact. We are drawn to the eye within conversation and it is these organic, natural elements that make connections authentic.

Speech Phone introduces absurd humour into the series. Humour is another prominent feature in the way we relate to each other. The quote: "Ohio is the only U.S state that does not contain any of the letters in the word mackerel" has been my conversation starter, with debatable success, for the past five years. It's an absurd thing to hear, but rarely fails to create a bemused smile. The reference to Lichtenstein's Pop Art through the comic rendering of my face upon the phone is a nod to the Pop Art movement's ability to boldly parody popular depictions of life, as I am engaging in a parody of my own social behaviour.

Destructive Conversations and Heart to Heart explore the more darker, grittier side of connection. Cruelty, emotional vulnerability, discomfort and conflict are all part of connection. In order maintain authenticity in this representation, I needed to incorporate darker and more uncomfortable elements. Destructive Conversations depicts the act of emotional conflict, an event now possible over great distances due to the rise of technology. The symbol of the solid stone hand bursting through the dock and holding the limp, lifeless phone seeks to evoke an emotional response within the viewer, reminding them of "one of those conversations", of a betrayal, of an act of emotional cruelty. Heart to Heart is intended to be both a dark-humoured take on what it feels like to "open up" to others and a shockingly grisly element to the series, reminiscent of the confronting elements of connection.

The Tale of Saint George depicts the overtaking, or slaying, of the cord-phone by the newer smart phone. This combination of an old folktale with a new occurrence creates a humorous take on the evolution of technology. Its presence within the series addresses the role of technology in modern connection.

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