

Drawn From the City (Master post)

Working with Found Objects

In working with found objects, I worked with the spiderwebs in my room when I moved into my accommodation in Edinburgh. It interested me how although I was moving into an unlived space there was already a resident in it. I started associating my initial doubts regarding university with the growing spiderweb. An invasive presence in my room, a piece of decoration that wasn't mine, infesting my space. It was too good of a metaphor for my increasing doubt and anxiety to not utilise for this project.



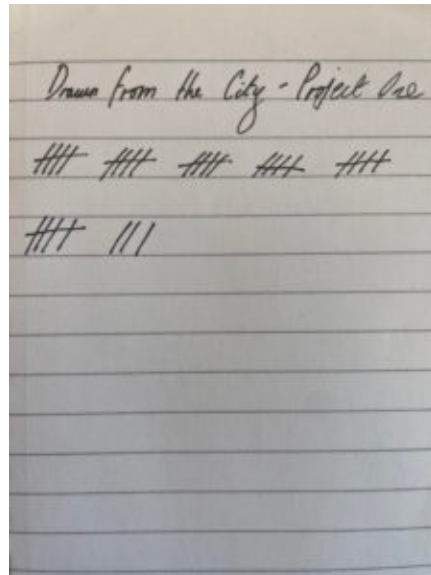
A photo of the spiderweb in my room when I first moved in



First visual response
— I started
experimenting with
how I would approach
building this
installation by
cutting up pieces of
tights and building a
small structure by my
window underneath the
actual spider web.

I tracked my anxious thoughts throughout the week in a tally

system in my notebook that I carry with me around Edinburgh. If they occurred in my room, I would immediately add a strand to the growing structure in my room. If they occurred whilst I was out, I used the tally system to keep track of how many I've had.



A page from my notebook showing the tally system I used to track my anxious thoughts



The starting point of the installation

Artist inspirations –

Karla Black –



Karla Black's exhibit at the Fruitmarket. Source – <https://www.fruitmarket.co.uk/karla-black/>



Karla Black's tight piece at the exhibit that inspired the way I construct this structure

Tracy Emin –



Tracy Emin's "My Bed" , 1998

Final Outcome, "Neurosis" –

In the final stages of this piece, I let light play a part in how I would display this piece. How light is casted manipulated the size of the web. This added to the narrative because how much certain thoughts affect us is dependent on purely how much important we give to them.





How I would display this piece would be as an installation with the pages from my notebook. Invoking both the performance, as well as the installation aspect.

Making and Breaking Narrative –

For Making and Breaking Narratives, I focused on the fetishization of Asian women. As a girl from a Chinese family, born and raised in Beijing but was exposed to the western society from the age of 8 to now. I am perhaps one of the people most equipped with the right and wrong experiences to explore this topic.

My mother was the research part of this project as she moved from China to England briefly in 2001 as a woman in her mid-20s. I interviewed her about her experiences during that period of her life –

https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/s2204816_drawn-from-the-city-2021-2022sem1/2021/12/03/making-and-break...herproject-2-pt1/

I also read upon the history of Asian fetishization and the fact that the preference for Asian women was deemed Yellow Fever, is already disgusting, as to like an Asian women to a white men, is like having an illness.

Artist Inspiration –



Comfort Girls by Eugene Lee Yang, 2015. In this short film Asian women are portrayed as commodity to be consumed by white men, literally.



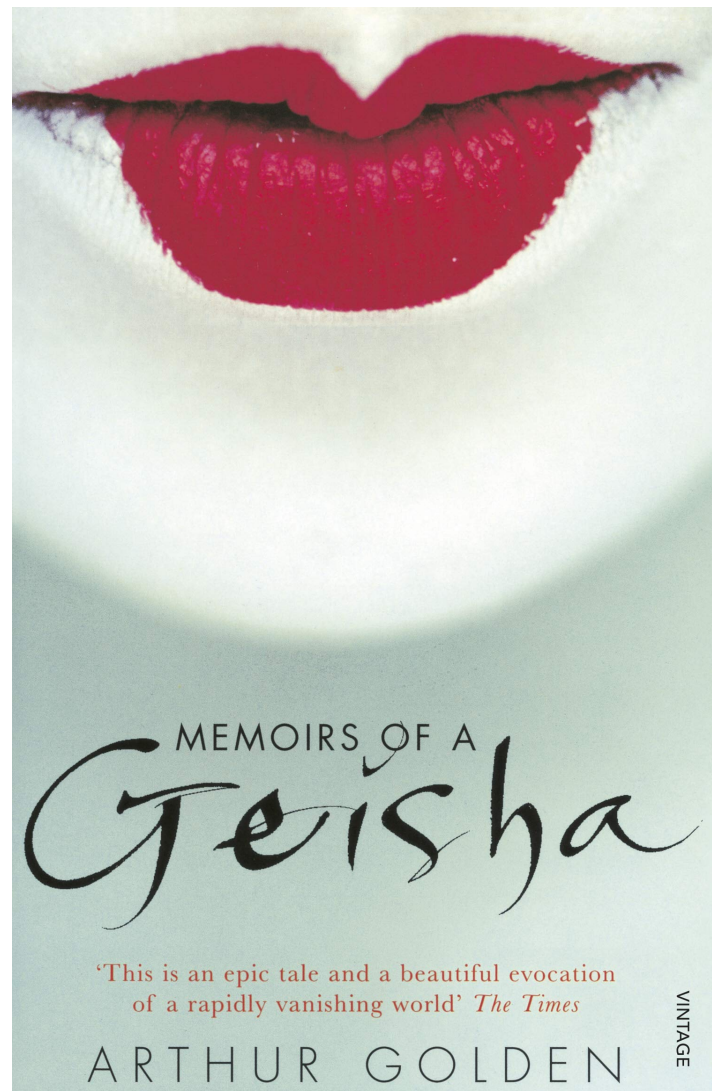
Into The Fray by Andres Barrioquinto, an artist that inspired me visually, source – <https://theartling.com/en/artzine/famous-surrealist-artists-asia/>

Articles used –

<https://www.vox.com/22338807/asian-fetish-racism-atlanta-shooting>

<https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/the-madame-butterfly-effect-asian-fetish-history-pop-culture>

Books –



I used this book as a part of my research in this project because of its inaccuracies and fetishization and fabrication of the interviewed Geisha's life story

Inaccuracies in the books can be seen in the link here

Final Outcome – “I am not a piece of meat”

In my visual responses I looked at the Geisha Mineko Iwasaki.



I chose to replace certain parts of the her with salmon when the chopsticks are picking her apart, showing that to the “consumers”, she is literally a piece of meat to be consumed.



initial sketch to give
direction for the collage



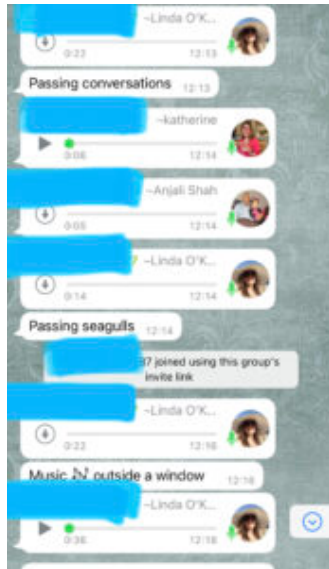
The final collage was originally just going to be this, however I decided to add more decorative elements in the form of origami flowers but in the same way a chef would add flowers to a dish



I would display this outcome as just an A3 canvas by itself.

Mapping a soundscape –

To start this project, I attended a sound walk along with my peers around the meadow in Edinburgh where we send sound recording of peculiar noises to inspire us along this project. However, my attention quickly moved away from nature sounds, but instead in the more intimate moments happening around the city.



Whatsapp
groupchat for
the sound walk

That was the soundscape I wanted to focus on. I went to cafes where each table of people had their own little sound bubble and just listened. I wanted to transfer that feeling of that intimate moment visually.

Artist inspiration –

Agnes Martin –



Agnes Martin came to mind
for this particular project

as work captures micro-expressions and the subtlety of our emotions, Martin believed that “Art is the most concrete representation of our most subtle feelings”



(Far Above) Untitled Canvas,
(Below) On A Clear Day by
Agnes Martin

I chose to use continuous line drawings as the continuous lines shows the sound and words that connects the individuals together

The core of this project for me is focusing on the soundscapes birthed from our connections with people, the sounds we make to be perceived.



Pencil Continuous line drawing first done in an Edinburgh café



Digitally finished continuous line drawing with red colour blocking

I decided to change directions with my work after this piece, the red colour blocking did not capture the feel of the sounds in the coffee shop.

Artist Inspiration –



A section of 10am is when he comes to me by Louise Bourgeois, a piece that inspired me to present emotional connections in a visual way



Nanette written and performed by Hannah Gadsby, where she talks about our connections with people we love and that's what leads to good art

Final Outcome – “The Calmer Moments”





How I would display those pieces would be just as the way I laid them out above, 10 paintings in two rows of 5.

Mapping a Soundscape – Final Post (Project 3, pt3)

For the conclusion of Mapping a Soundscape, I have finished my series of continuous line drawings. I started the project by doing sketches with pencil then developing them further digitally, however, my first visual responses to this idea lacked the warmth and gentleness of the micro-soundscapes I had wanted to achieve. The hard lines of the digital pen did not fit the nature of a café nor did the drops of red as colour blocking as an emphasis to the soundscape. So I changed

directions with the aesthetic nature of this piece and decided to use watercolours in a soft brown to construct those continuous line drawings.



In doing this I had achieved the look and feel of the final piece I wanted. I believe these drawings captured the intimacy and gentleness of those interactions.



How I would display those pieces would be the same way Louise Bourgeois displayed her hand paintings, five paintings in a line, in two rows.



final display.

Making a Soundscape – The Connections We Make (Project 3, pt 2)

To further this project, I also looked at more artists. One artist I felt particularly drawn to was Louise Bougeouis and her series of red paintings depicting hands. The work itself is about the artist and her assistant who remedied her feelings of isolation and loneliness. The hands are reaching towards each other. The artist once said that her assistant is the person who pulls out of “the well”, this is a work about connections we hold with the people we love. The strong but gentle emotions captured in this piece are just what I wanted to capture in my series of continuous line drawings, as the continuous lines shows the sound and words that connects the individuals together.



I also rewatched Hannah Gadsby's *Nanette*, a piece of media I've always carried very close to my heart. She touches upon the stereotype of Vincent Van Gogh's tortured artist myth and rebuttals that with the statement –

“Do you know why we have the sun flowers? It's not because Vincent Van Gogh suffered. It's because Vincent Van Gogh had a brother who loved him. Through all the pain, he had a tether,

a connection to the world.”

The core of this project for me is focusing on the soundscapes birthed from our connections with people, the sounds we make to be perceived.

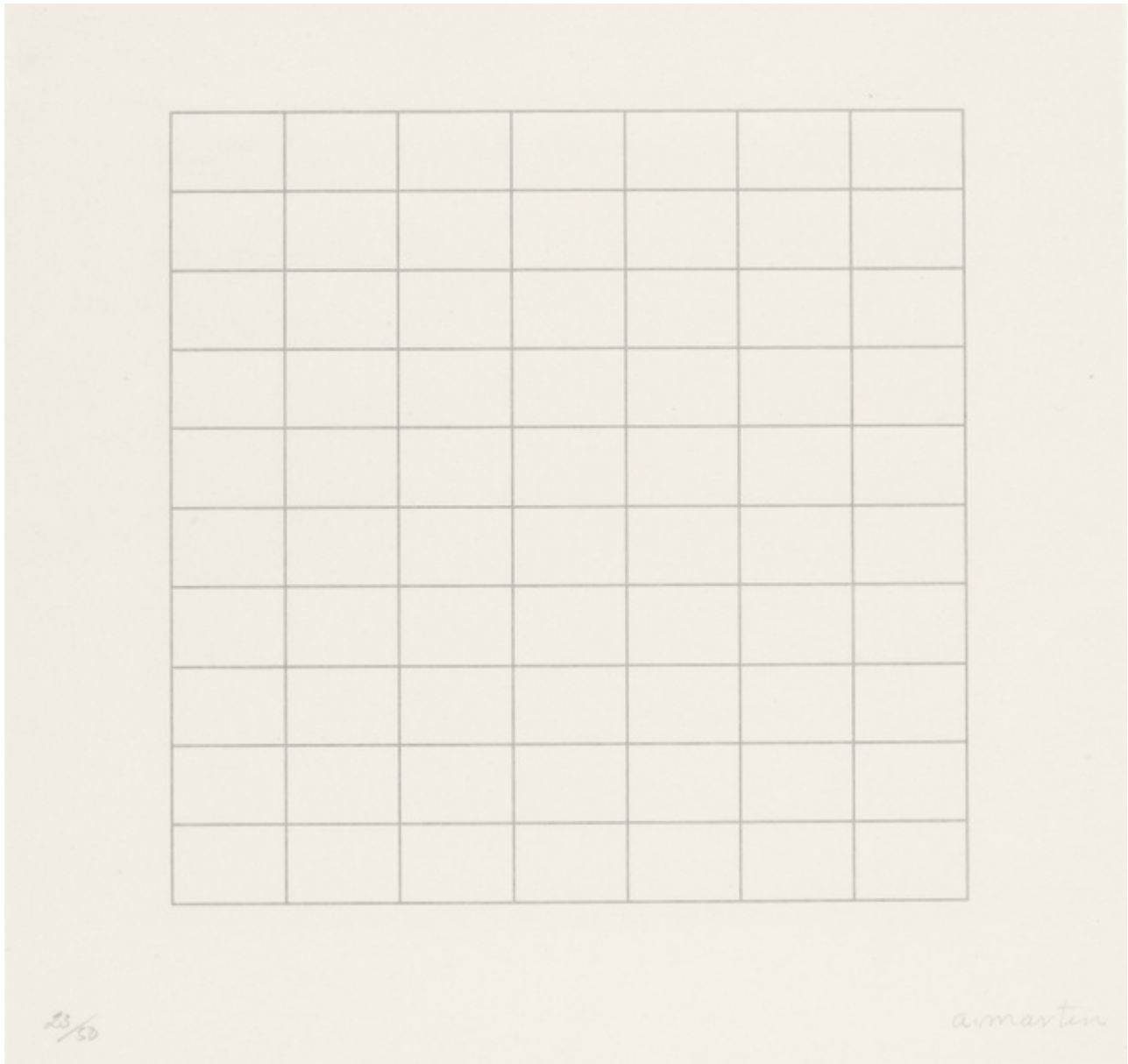


Making a Soundscape – Sound Walks and Cafés (Project 3, pt1)

To start this project, I attended a sound walk along with my peers around the meadow in Edinburgh where we send sound recording of peculiar noises to inspire us along this project. However, my attention quickly moved away from sounds from nature, but instead my interest was in the more intimate moments happening around the city. On the way back from the sound walk I noticed a pair of girls laughing and chatting whilst walking down the streets, a mother and son (assumed) talking in a parking lot. I didn't eavesdrop on their conversations but I focused on the sound of their conversations, the blurry words exchanged between two individuals or more.

That was the soundscape I wanted to focus on so I went to cafes where each table of people had their own little sound bubble and just listened. I wanted to transfer that feeling of that intimate moment into a visual experience.





(Far Above) Untitled Canvas, (Below) On A Clear Day by Agnes Martin

An artist that came to mind is Agnes Martin, whose work captures micro-expressions and the subtlety of our emotions. Martin believed that "Art is the most concrete representation of our most subtle feelings". In her pastel striped square canvases and intricate grids, I can't help but be enchanted by them the same way I was enchanted by the feeling the outlines of the conversations I have been listening to around Edinburgh. That's when I decided to use pastel colours and a continuous but simple line drawing to craft the visual responses to this piece.



Making and Breaking Narratives – Final Post

In my visual responses I looked at the most famous geisha Mineko Iwasaki. The reason to look at this Geisha in particular was because she was the main source of inspiration for the novel and the movie – *Memoirs of a Geisha* –

Perhaps one of the most famous pieces of media depicting Geishas and the piece of media that cemented the Geisha in international pop-culture. Although the work itself heavily sexualised the role of the Geishas, and give the Geisha certain roles that only applied to courtesans, which are actual high class prostitutes in Japan. Iwasaki actually fought against the story's inaccuracies after it was published but by then, the damage has already been done.



To construct this piece I used traditional Japanese origami

paper as my background. I want this piece in the simplest sense, to look pretty and decorative, the same ways Geishas turns themselves into human ornaments as the way that they entertain. I then followed with the inspiration from Eugene Lee Yang's short film; Comfort Women. In depicting the geisha as something to be consumed. I chose to replace certain parts of the Geisha with salmon when the chopsticks are picking her apart, showing that to the "consumers", she is literally a piece of meat to be eaten.



I then covered her eyes with



Making and Breaking Narratives – My Own Experiences (Project 2, pt2)

I also used my own experiences as a form of research. In attending a prominently white secondary school, I was with a group of girls who were giving me the social media of certain boys but when I asked why they were being so selective with the boys they wanted to introduce me to, they responded with the statement “Because they always go for Asian girls”. Another friend of mine expressed surprise sometimes at my personality or mannerism as she thought “Asia girls don’t act like that” saying I should behave innocently and shy, and not the way I actually was. Those statement stuck with me for a very long time, believing it myself that the only way I could ever be perceived as beautiful or desirable is through a fetish and nothing else.

Now no longer 14, I am beginning to recognise the despicable nature of these statements, the people who said those things aren’t malicious, but ignorant.

One thing that really inspired me in the visual response in this piece is a short film by the internet personality produced and directed by Eugene Lee Yang called “Comfort Girls” where he portrayed Asian women as a commodity to be consumed by white men. I believe this to be a great way to visualise this experience and this narrative, the idea of Asian women to only be seen and generalised in a certain way and breaking the narrative by depicting the actual demeaning and dangerous nature of this narrative.



(Above) Frames from the short film Comfort Girls, source – <https://vimeo.com/404799546>



Making and Breaking Narratives – Interviews with My Mother (Project 2, pt1)

For Making and Breaking Narratives, I decided to focus on the fetishization of Asian women in society. As a girl from a fully Chinese family, born and raised in Beijing but was exposed to the western society from the age of 8 to now. I am perhaps one of the people most equipped with the right and wrong experiences to explore this topic.

My mother was key in the research part of this project as she moved from China to England briefly in 2001 as a woman in her mid 20s. I interviewed her about her experiences during that period of her life where I was presented with some vile details.

For example, she talked about how men would pursue her purely due to her heritage, the certain times that it was just assumed she was a sex worker even though she was a successful accountant as well as the men that would straight up assume personality traits about her. Her friends that weren't Asian didn't understand when she expressed discomfort towards these attention as why would you complain about being "adored".

Not to quote Taylor Swift in a university project, but she couldn't have said it better than the line *"You don't feel pretty, you just feel used"*.

Working with Found Objects – Experimentation with Light and shadows (Project 1, Final post)

In the final stages of this piece, I also decided to let light play a key part in how I would display this piece. As how light is casted on this piece made the web look bigger or smaller. This added to the narrative element of this piece because how much certain thoughts affect us is dependant on purely how much important we give to them.

How I would display this piece would be as an installation with the pages from my notebook showing the tallies from every time I had an anxious thought. Invoking both the performance aspect, as well as the installation aspect.





(All Above) Photo depicting how I would depict the final piece



Working with Found Objects – Further development of idea (Project 1, pt2)

I started experimenting and testing how I would approach building this sculpture/installation by cutting up smaller pieces of tights and building a small structure by my window underneath the actual spider web. Cutting the tights horizontally into little loops then cutting them into a triangular shape and stretching them out. This worked nicely as you can stack them easily on top of each other to mimic a spiderweb.



(Above) Horizontally cutting the tights



(Above) Small experimental structure

After experimenting with the initial design. I carried out the actual project.



(Above) My tally system of tracking anxious thoughts

I tracked my anxious thoughts throughout the week in a tally system in my notebook that I carry with me around Edinburgh. If they occurred in my room, I would immediately add a strand to the growing structure in my room. If they occurred whilst I was out, I used the tally system to keep track of how many I've had so when I do get back to my room, I would be able to add the exact amount of strand to the installation.



Whilst going through this process I research the artist Tracy Emin and her installation piece – My Bed – a piece depicting a turbulent time in her life. The installation itself featured her unmade bed, condom wrappers, used drug containers. This piece represented the accumulation of her self destructive actions during that period in her life. Some mornings when I wake up and I glance over at the growing pieces of the “web”, I think to myself, what is it if not an accumulation of my failing faith in myself and the choices I make. In making that connection, I decided that this piece is not a sculpture, is an installation/performance piece, where the found object I’m working with is as much the socks as my anxious thoughts.



My Bed 1998 Tracey Emin
born 1963 Lent by The
Duerckheim Collection
2015
[http://www.tate.org.uk/
art/work/L03662](http://www.tate.org.uk/art/work/L03662)

Working with found objects – Initial Research and exploration (Project 1, pt1)

In the project, working with found objects, I opted to work with the spiderwebs in my room when I first moved into my accommodation in Edinburgh. I found it interesting how although I was moving into a space that I haven't seen before there was already a little resident in my space. I started associating my initial doubt and fears regarding university with the slowly growing spiderweb. An invasive presence in my room, a piece of decoration that I haven't placed myself, infesting my safe space. It was too good of a metaphor for my increasing doubt and anxiety to not utilise for this project.



I wanted to make a sculpture/installation for this first project, my own web, where I would actively add a new piece of strand every time I had an anxious thought in university.

To further this idea, I went to visit the Fruitmarket gallery where I witness the work of the Scottish artist Karla Black. An artist who worked exclusively with found objects and explore their material potential beyond their intended use.



(Above) Karla Black's exhibit at the Fruitmarket. Source – <https://www.fruitmarket.co.uk/karla-black/>

There was a piece there that had stood out to me more than any of the other experimental and beautiful work on display – a pair of outstretched tights, decorated with blobs of dried oil paint. That was my lightbulb moment, the outstretched tights, due to the synthetic nature of the material of them, it looked exactly like the way the spiderweb reflected light in the corner of my window. That's when I decided to create the installation/sculpture with tights as the building material. In seeing this piece, it inspired me to not only explore the narrative element of this piece but as well as experiment with the material of the found object, to, just like Karla Black and her quirky, beautiful pieces, explore the potential of my found objects.



(Above) The tight piece that inspired me to use tights as my found objects along with the spiderwebs