

Foundation Degree Fine Art

Final year site-specific project

in partnership with Maidstone Museum

Introduction

Alison Doherty

James Abbott

Louise Draper

Michael Ashby

Daniel Huckfield

Maryanne Bakker

Siana Kohler

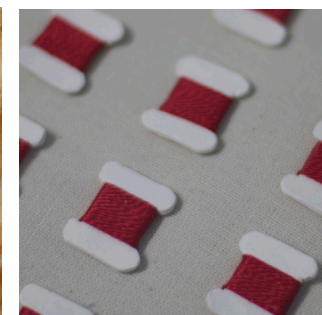
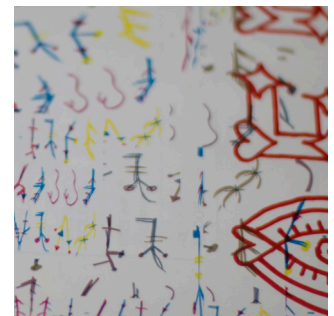
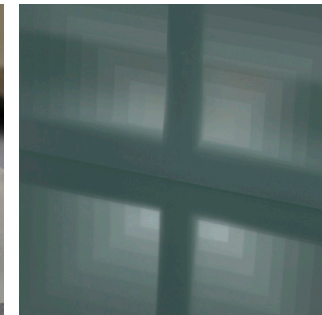
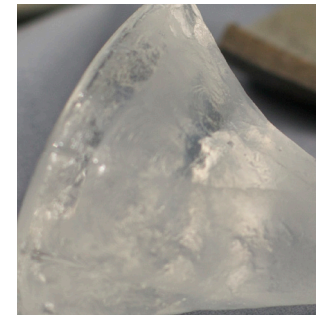
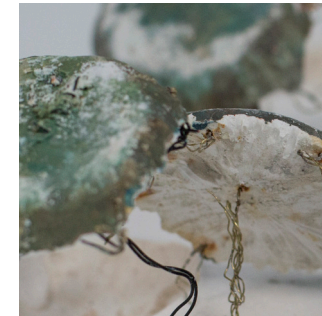
Deborah Clark

Nathan Selvendran

Alanna Coppard

Alison Sweiden

www.westkent.ac.uk/maidstonemuseum



Photography by Nadia Needham

Introduction

The Foundation Degree students of West Kent College have been teaming up with Maidstone Museum since 2008, as part of their vocational and professional Fine Art Practice studies. The aim is to give students a work based learning opportunity of collaborating with the Museum and its staff. Working to the specifications of the Museum staff, the students are required to produce artworks influenced by the myriad of ideas generated by the collections, history and even the fabric of the buildings themselves.

This year, the students have created individual pieces of work that are a direct response to the Museum's brief, whilst also incorporating their own art practice. These are to be exhibited within the larger exhibition of Maidstone Museum's colour themed "Cabinets of Curiosity".

The students and myself would like to thank the Museum staff for all their support and enthusiasm, and to Nadia Needham for design and photography, enabling us to produce this on-line catalogue.

Jane Hamilton
Course Tutor

For further information on all courses offered at the College, visit: www.westkent.ac.uk

To go directly to our Art & Design university courses, please go to:

www.westkent.ac.uk/university-courses-in-kent/he-art-and-design

To contact a course tutor, please email:

samuelherbert@westkent.ac.uk or janehamilton@westkent.ac.uk

For Maidstone Museum, go to: www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk



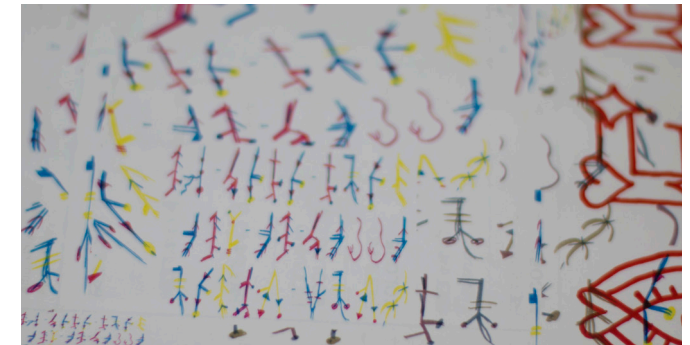
James Abbott

Mrs. Fryer's Menagerie

My artwork is inspired by Maidstone Museum's toy collections and especially toy theatres and the Victorian pastime of story telling.

I used a tale from my father's youth regarding an eccentric neighbour who kept various caged animals as pets. I have depicted these animals in the boxes and cages that they would have been kept in; which relates to the idea of theatre sets.

I wanted to create a piece of work, which would embody a 'cacophony of sound' which confronted my father every time he visited Mrs Fryer.



Michael Ashby

Dark Arcs

Inspired by the Museum's cross-stitch samplers.

It's March 1992, at the entrance to a derelict railway tunnel. One by one, an excited group of West London youths dare each other to run into the darkness, emerging at the tunnel's exit, into adulthood.

The folk storyteller of this poem, Twiggy, is a mysterious woodland hermit. Twiggy resides in the edgelands of the poem's setting. By casting his rune-like twigs into the air, and allowing them to take shape on the ground below, he carefully interprets these symbols.

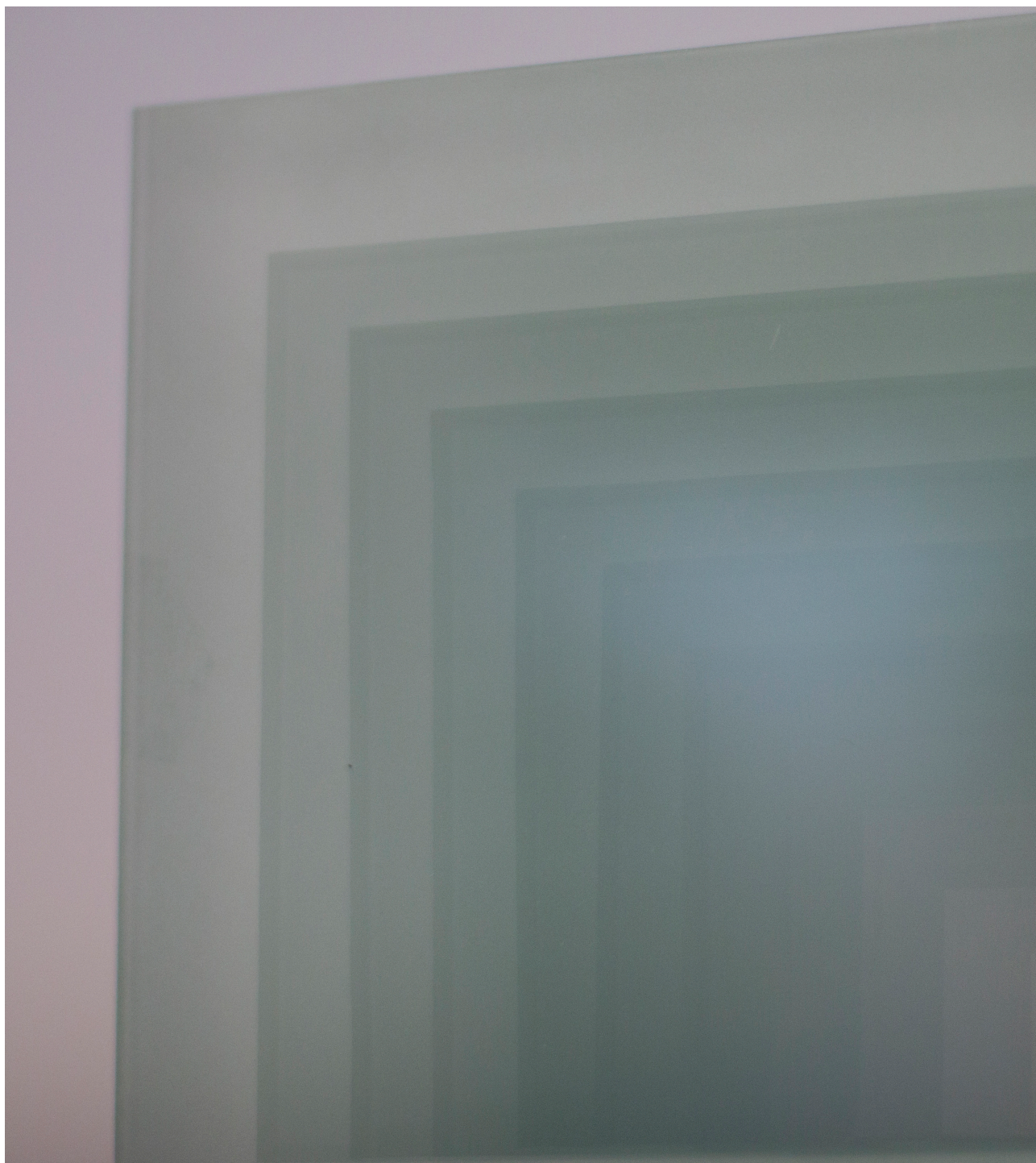
Twiggy's poem explores consciousness from multiple perspectives.



Maryanne Bakker *The Crystal Bag*

Inspired by Victorian floral decorative accessories, games and superstition, The Crystal Bag is a game of chance and prediction. The owner of the bag wears it close to her body, as the bag needs to hold the energy of the owner in order for an accurate message/prediction to be received. The individual blindly picks a crystal out of the “magical” bag and the printed word found within the crystal is a prediction of the day, which will be experienced by wearer of the bag.

Contemporary materials and methods were used to bring Victorian tradition, superstition, fashion, and fun into the 21st century.



Debbie Clark
Les Carrés Décroissants
(Decreasing Squares)

I love looking for patterns. The starting place for this sculpture was the pattern formed by the stacked columns of card used to display dead beetles, found in a drawer in a specimen cabinet in the Museum archive. The square patterns in the wooden wall panels of the Museum were also influential in the final design.

This glass sculpture creates an illusion of depth. Of the four squares only two are real, the others are mirror images. What you see changes depending on where you look. It's all real but are some parts more real than others?



Alanna Coppard

A Moment in Time

My inspiration for this piece has come from the natural history section of the museum and the work is based around the preservation and celebration of fungi in the mushroom form.

I decided to create the artwork with plaster, wire and water colour. I used plaster to recreate the mushrooms and to preserve them, because it picked up the shapes and patterns so perfectly. Whilst creating I realised it needed something more to become a world of its own, and began to make small mushroom sculptures to be added to this strange world that was beginning to erupt out of the plaster.



Alison Doherty ***Our Children***

This artwork has been made in response to the Museum's very moving First World War Exhibition inspired by two paintings in their collection by Frank Hyde. The images represent vintage pictures of mothers and their sons from babyhood to manhood and the love and nurturing of them. The horror that these young men experienced and the grief that their families endured is incomprehensible, so too that wars still rage around the world and sons and daughters still lose their lives.



Louise Draper *Social Butterflies*

The collector becomes the collected. Tiny creatures are trapped, killed then pinned. Why do humans find it acceptable to take advantage of the imbalance of power between themselves and the insect world? Because we can.

What if the collector becomes the collected? Would an incredibly advanced race delight not in sublime physical examples of humanity but in the everyday lives of their specimens, what is worn, daily activities, jobs, hobbies? The things that make each human different from each other, but ultimately part of larger collectives.



Daniel Huckfield

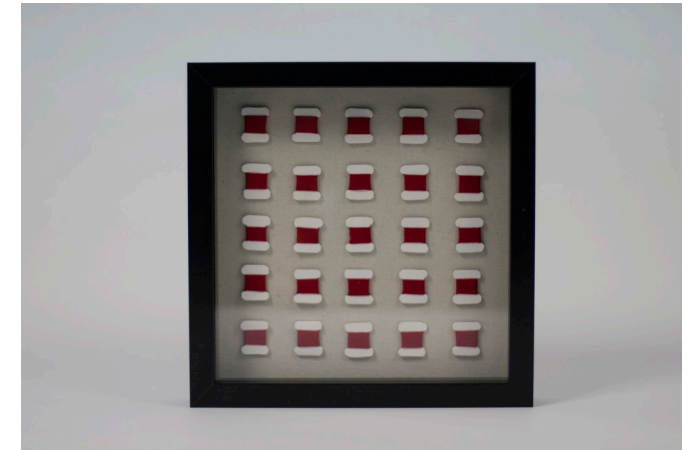
#preservedecaypreserve

This piece was made in response to the museum's key goal of preservation.

By allowing a food item to decay within the cabinet I hope to bring to attention the museum's use as a 'preserver' of items.

The piece also serves the function of preservation. You, the viewer, are encouraged by the artist to take a photograph and upload it to social media using **#preservedecaypreserve**.

By collecting a photographic record of the decay of the object over time, the museum's brief to preserve objects will be realised.



Siana Kohler

Women's Work: Stitched Up

Inspired by the 'Pea Jacket', embroidery and the museum's specimen collections, both on display and in storage, this work is a celebration of the undervalued skill and creativity of countless unknown women working with embroidery through history.

The porcelain bobbins wound with red cotton thread represent those unknown women and their creative efforts. The presentation echoes the way prized collections were confined and displayed in the cabinets of curiosities of the past. Together they suggest the inherent contradiction in women's experience of embroidery, both as an expression of subservient feminine virtue and as a source of creative outlet.



Nathan Selvendran
The Anxious Queen Median

Inspiration for my piece came from the discarded, once functioning wasp nest on display. An insect nest can seem to be frightening to people, therefore I wanted to utilize this reaction as a way to show living with anxiety and fear. I want to conjure a wonder of the nest made by nature as found in cabinets of curiosities.

I wish not to replicate what is found in nature, but to rather reinterpret the wasp nest to allow us to reflect on our own battles with anxieties and fears.



Alison Sweidan *make.believe*

Fairy tales are a shared part of childhood. We become familiar with them as bedtime stories, then we pass them on to our children. They mix the unlikely with the familiar, the gruesome with the innocent. They play with our fears and dreams.

The artefacts in *make.believe* have been collected over the years on numerous trips to Germany. Dug from the ground or bought from dealers, they are here now in the museum with other precious objects, so we know they must be real.