

Art conclusive essay

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“ All the best stories are but one story in reality - the story of escape. It is the only thing which interests us all and at all times, how to escape. ” - AC

Benson The concept of escape is central to the development of the theme in my work, We escape the mundane reality and boring routine of our daily lives through our dreams and ambitions. We dream to be different. We dream to be truly alive, in such a way that we can look back at our lives on day and think that we have truly reached our full potential and made the most out of each opportunity.

However, often it is people's and sometimes even our own perceptions of ourselves that keep us in “ the box” and that “ clip our wings” and thus prevent us from reaching our goals. We often live up to the stereotypes placed upon us because of our race, gender, financial standing, culture, nationality etc. To achieve our full potential, we must try to fly above these false perceptions and escape from that which prevents us from chasing our dreams - the banality of reality.

ESCAPING THE BANALITY OF REALITY THROUGH NON-TRADITIONAL ART MEDIUMS Brian Dettmer, an American artist¹, is an expert at transforming what is perceived and giving it new, true meaning. He is best known for his detailed and innovative sculptures with books and in recent years has established himself as one of the leading contemporary artists working with books today. His work deals with the concept of how information, material and history of our age is being lost, eroded and slipping away from us because it is no longer ‘ real’ - it is virtual, digital information.

He said, “ In the tangible world we are left with a frozen material but in the intangible world we may be left with nothing. ” ² Books, according to society

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have lost their relevance in their physical form and yet it's richness and depth is universally respected but the book's intended function has decreased. Dettmer thus alters the physical form and physical function as well as shifting the preconceived functions to allow new and unexpected roles to emerge. Much like my theme, he is taking away the frame that contains the ideas of the book and changing it to allow it's true form to be revealed.

He meticulously excavates or concisely alters the book so as to dissect communicative objects or systems and allows for its content to be recontextualised and new meanings and interpretations to emerge. The book, in essence thus breaks free and escapes from it's bindings - its reality. From Dettmer, I investigated the idea of using paper as a medium. However, like Dettmer I wanted to portray the concept of "escape" through my medium. Naturally, "escape" makes me think of birds flying from a cage - but how to represent the birds and how represent the cage according to my theme?

According to my theme it is perceptions that are trapping us and our dreams and ambitions that are freeing us, and perceptions are all in the mind. I thus decided to make a white head from Plaster of Paris with my own face on, to make my work more personal. The white represents the dry, yeastless factuality that is reality and from the cranium I attached a wire spiral. In the dream world, nothing is realistic and as it seems - much like the way Dettmer represents the content of his books, and thus the birds shouldn't be realistic. Wanting to make the unrealistic birds from paper, I opted to make origami cranes from bright optimistic colours.

The colours represented the hope, joy and how vivid are dreams are, but mostly how full of life. To add further to the idea that the birds are escaping with our memories, I decided to use photographs from my Lomography film photographs to make the cranes at the top of the spiral and have them unfolding out into one photograph with a drawing of a bird flying into the distance. The work contributes to the theme of reality being “ripped apart” and the dreams coming together to reach new heights for the individual - perceptions being shed along the way.

THE SYMBOLIC BALANCE BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE “PRE-FABRICATED” EXPRESSED THROUGH METAPHORICAL VECTORS Sandrine Pelletier³, an artist I was drawn to because she borrows her creative and production processes from folk arts, from arts and crafts, ranging from their most worthy to their most trivial forms, as well as from DIY in order to conceive a body of free-standing works, all of which are underpinned by the notion of subversion and experimentation with the limits of materials. I loved how she made simple arts and crafts into exquisite works of art.

I had always wanted to thread a form of tapestry - in the traditional way my grandmother did it, but wanted to incorporate my themes of perceptions, dreams and reality. I thus decided on the image of a ballerina - always perceived to be graceful, gentle, quiet women who were not outspoken or loud, but just polite. I could resonate with this concept on a personal level as when I was little people called me “Nina pretty ballerina” (from the ABBA song) and I despised it and to break away from the name I did karate. The ballerina is a wonderful symbol of being stereotyped and placed “in the box”.

Pelletier did a piece titled "Flash Dance" 4, I was greatly inspired by that represented two ballerina pumps worn on the tips with a trail of blood on material protruding from the back. This specific artwork made me think of the realities and difficulties of being a ballet dancer and all the physical and emotional strain they must take. This coincided with my theme in the way that it is not always easy to break away from the perceptions placed upon you and sometimes it takes blood, sweat and tears to achieve your goals and to make your dreams come true.

As I wanted to create a link between what was "real" and "living" and the materialistic nature that is the perceptions of people (my threaded material ballerina tapestry), I decided to place the ballerina within an old bird cage. Inspired by Pelletier's work, "The Goodbye Horses" 5, I decided to hang threads from the bottom of my work. From the cage, I suspended many old keys at the bottom of the cage to represent the concept of escape. I also sketched realistic birds on material which I hung inside and around the cage to represent the freedom of one's true inner self.

My piece is more an introspective one that calls upon the viewer to reflect on him/herself and about who they really are as opposed to the person people see on the outside - the person they are perceived to be. In this way my work is like Pelletier's in that her works free itself of all its tautology and escapes all systematic interpretation. It deconstructs conscious contexts and endows Pelletier to redefine her own work and to the answer the question of the function of art through logical means and to question the function if perceptions and stereotypes.

It also implements an intuitive and automatic writing, in an attempt to capsule her own perception of the world and it's relation to the real world, to memory, to emotion, to identity, to the invisible.? PROCESS AND HOW IT STITCHES IDEAS TOGETHER Briann Dettmer starts with an existing book and seal its edges, creating an enclosed vessel full of unearthed potential. He cuts into the surface of the book and dissect through it from the front. He works with knives, tweezers and surgical tools to carve one page at a time, exposing each layer while cutting around ideas and images of interest. Nothing inside the books is relocated or implanted, only removed. Images and ideas are revealed to expose alternate histories and memories. His work is a collaboration with the existing material and its past creators and the completed pieces expose new relationships of the book's internal elements exactly where they have been since their original conception.

In this way, his process is much like mine regarding the folding of the origami cranes - I started by folding from existing paper the origami cranes. Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding and is a form of sculpting paper without the use of cutting or gluing⁷ - like Dettmer, I added nothing but only worked with the unearthed potential. The folds must be extremely precise. I then made the Plaster of Paris head using my own face as a mould. The piece was extremely time consuming, but all the planning was complete, so I had a rough guideline to work from.

With my thematic piece, I had to develop my concepts a lot more as initially I wanted to suspend my threaded ballerina within a canvas. I however, developed my theme of escape more and thus came up with the old bird cage idea within which I suspended the ballerina along with the material

birds as well as hanging the antique keys. This piece was even more time consuming as I didn't realise how much work had to be put into my tapestry. Both my work required skills I had to learn - the threading of the tapestry and the folding of the origami cranes.

It took a lot of patience and practice to correct the techniques and make sure each individual aspect was as near perfect as could be. In the end I have created two art pieces that encouraged more personal growth than anything else, I hope however that the viewer will be able to my themes and be able to resonate with the message of my works. More than that, I hope the viewer will walk away feeling inspired to chase their dreams regardless of perceptions placed upon them and to break away from the weight of reality.

I hope they will take flight in heart and soul and feel lighter and happier after seeing my works and to take reach for and take hold of their dreams. " Anyone can escape into sleep, we are all geniuses when we dream, the butcher's the poet's equal there. " - Emile M Cioran Bibliography [http://www.maskara.ch/index.php? /projects/flash-dance/](http://www.maskara.ch/index.php?/projects/flash-dance/) [http://www.maskara.ch/index.php? /projects/goodbye-horses/](http://www.maskara.ch/index.php?/projects/goodbye-horses/) <http://briandettmer.com/> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origami>