

## Exploration proposal - Holly Atkins

It is the effects of light that I am interested in exploring and the way in which it can be obstructed, leaving shadows. This idea arose due to my love for candles and lights, the entire theory of light has always been an interest of mine. Light travels continuously in beams at a measured speed of 299.792, 458 metres per second, and these beams travel ahead in a straight line until something obstructs their path, changing the beams direction. It is these properties of light that I would love to explore. When a light beam's path has been intersected it leaves a non-lit or shadowed area remaining. This absence of light may contrast with the illuminated area, making the design stand out when placed in front of a screen or wall if I choose to use opaque materials. It is my intention to focus on the effects of shadow casting whilst incorporating paper cut outs as my preferred art making method. As I have worked with paper cutting in the past and it is an excellent way to highlight the effects of light and the shadows it creates; this is due to being one of the only methods that remove components of the material. I am curious to see the effect that the shadows shall have due to visual quality of the cut out.

It is crucial that I remove parts of the artwork as it would be the only way to depict the absences of light, and its effects. The cut outs also may allow for harsh contrast to be formed between the light and shadows. I intend on experimenting with ways of incorporating colour through use of materials and light, however if black and white are the most effective colour choices I shall remain with those. My inspiration has come from traditional Malaysian shadow puppets. It is not the subject matter that piques my fancy, but the way in which the puppets are created. Each puppet or prop has been cut out and shaped to represent an image that can then be projected onto the screen by an artificial light source. The light placed behind illuminates the entire screen, except where the shadows are cast, this absence of light creates contrast with the illuminated screen. I would like to explore the effects of shadow casting throughout my folio which will need to be captured photographically. By making cut outs from a range of materials I may achieve different subtleties of light, this will need to be investigated, as well as different screen options. Obviously the more transparent the screen the less light that will be captured; as I assume the light would pass straight through. I will need to test how having an opaque, or semi-opaque screen captures the light. I will need to explore which will work as I want to produce a clear shadow as I would like to work with contrast as one of my key aesthetics in my artworks. I am not sure as to how symmetrical I want to make the actual design. The balance of positive and negative spaces will have to be tested with both symmetry and asymmetry options being investigated.

Having visited Retrospect gallery in New South Wales over the summer, I was inspired by the ways in which the artist Perran Costi uses artificial light to illuminate his artwork. The exhibition I visited focused on his creation of light boxes which illuminate his photography. From my observation and research Costi takes three images that are printed onto individual glass pieces, which are then placed together in the box to make a three dimensional scene. I really enjoy the effect it gives, as it makes the artwork stand out due to the illumination. However I wish to expand on his ideas and alter it in my own way. Instead of having illuminated photograph(s), I would like to explore the effects of having the light shine through paper cut outs, exploring the possibility of projecting or casting shadows onto the surrounding area or screen. No longer making the cut out strictly two dimensional; as it will have expanded the artwork onto the surrounding walls like a projection. I am unsure as to how I wish to display this, and will have to experiment ways that will produce the

most effective shadows. I shall be focusing on the effects of combining the idea of cut outs with light, testing my ability to create dramatic contrast between the light and shadow.

I have to discover a way to piece all components of my ideas together. I am keen to explore the idea of constructing a light box made of glass/plastic for projections but will have to resolve a way to fix the cut out to the screen or glass. If the effects of the light box are successful I am going to explore different materials that can be used to construct the box, and ways to present the artwork that shall not obstruct the out casting shadows in anyway. A range of materials could be explored to construct the box such as wood, chipboard, acetate and glass but the selected materials will need to be stable enough to house some sort of lamp or light which will set the minimal dimensions for the box. I want the final result of the shadows to be as noticeable as possible for this the light and shadows must be clear and obvious. An alternative idea is to turn the cut out into a screen/shower curtain like cut out with light shining through. This would be suspended in the air, allowing for light to come through. This would require a larger scale, which I like the idea of. Both ideas will require exploration.

Multiple materials could be used as the base for the cut-out; I have experimented and practised with mainly paper so far, but thin forms of acetate might be more durable especially if I choose to work on a larger scale. Experimentation with different materials will be critical in determining what the best option would be for the cutting out/light box idea if I choose to pursue it. I will have to test and determine if the projection of shadows will still work as I have imagined. There is also the option of investigating materials that are different in transparency levels and exploring the ways overlapping can be used to create more opaque areas. I need to trial and see which I prefer. This should hopefully result in a range of light strengths coming through giving a different quality to the surface. This should make some areas in the artwork more dominant than the rest, which shall draw the viewer's attention, which I am keen to explore. Having one or multiple focal points will make the artwork more visually appealing as it helps move the viewer's eye around the work. While conventional materials such as traditional papers could be used due to different transparencies, I am curious to investigate other materials that may work more effectively than paper. When I have previously done paper cutting, I have used both stanley knives and scalpels. The latter being my favourite as it produces a finer cut. This year I would like to look into the possibility of laser cutting, having researched it, it appears that the outcome of the cuts come out next to perfect, and the clean cuts are what I try and create myself, the use of this may be beneficial on a larger scale also.

Screen options may entail material, tracing paper, frosted glass, frosted acetate or a wall, all require an opaque quality to capture the effects of both the light and shadows. Other wise if transparent the light will not be captured taking away the contrast I wish to create. The size of the artworks will have to be explored, as something as tedious and time consuming as paper cutting can appear more impressive when it small and intricate, however I want the artworks to be dominant and larger scale artworks tend to stand out more to viewers. I will have to explore both and possibly create my artworks on entirely different scales. This could make one artwork greater than the other, but I will have to determine if this is true through my own testing and discover which is most effective. I want both artworks to be of equal skill and to both link together through use of materials and technique.

# Exploration Proposal

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In 2011, I attended the Spring Melbourne Cup Racing Carnival. Attending the event has inspired me to explore Melbourne Spring Racing Fashion throughout the design process. I was absolutely blown away by the amazing fashion at the carnival. I witnessed people of all ages dressed in a variety of unique and original styles. I came across outrageous, extravagant and some eccentric outfits, not to mention the amazing array of hats worn by the women. I had a real feeling of inspiration and admiration while I was at the races. In my observations, I couldn't help but notice the visual sensation at the carnival, created by the array of bright colors, patterns and textures. Color made the event so much more interesting and fun adding to the overall mood

and atmosphere of the carnival.

I'm fascinated and intrigued by all the creative elements involved in Melbourne's quite unique and often original style, especially evident during the spring racing carnival. Fashion is of particular interest to me generally, and my experience at the spring racing carnival has made me even more passionate about fashion. I want to investigate how a designer is able to communicate and express an idea through fashion and applying various processes and techniques. These days, contemporary fashion gives designers freedom to explore and develop their work. It is important to explore the context of fashion during the Spring Racing Carnival and the influence spring has on not only the fashions at the carnival but also the influence of spring on the atmosphere of the carnival, from the roses, to the bright lush green grass to the endless bouquets and canapés to the expensive champagne. When I think of these I am instantly reminded not only of the spring racing carnival but also spring.

Through careful research and observation I want to investigate what makes the spring racing fashion so attractive and unique in Melbourne. I would like to link this focus to the theme spring because I think it will be an important avenue to explore and has such an influence over the fashion scene during the carnival. During these investigations, I want to explore the history of the Melbourne spring racing carnival and the fashion element associated with this carnival.

In the design process, I want to use my investigation and research to develop my own individual approach and interpret the themes and ideas associated with Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival. It will be important to include the concept of spring in my artwork as it provides inspiration and has an influence in the fashion during the carnival. Obviously in my investigation and design process, I must clearly articulate how to represent communicate a sense of spring as well as capturing the mood and atmosphere of the carnival, in my work through trialing a range of art forms, processes and techniques. Looking at the past fashion trends is sure to inspire me with my own design process and might help me understand the common themes and key elements in the resolution of my themes, ideas and fascination with the spring racing carnival.



To begin the design process I want to investigate and explore a range of artistic influences that will provide me when necessary inspiration and help me to interpret and explore my own ideas. I will explore the work of Frida Kahlo. She extensively uses nature and flowers as part of her subject matter in her paintings, which I can use to help me interpret my themes associated with spring. As an artist, Kahlo liked to base her paintings on her reality. Although my work is not an autobiographical piece as such, Kahlo's inclusion of references to nature and the style of traditional dress she wears in some of her self portraits (corsets etc) will be used to inspire and influence my own artwork. In order to combine my theme of nature and spring and the Melbourne Spring Racing carnival, I will explore a variety of materials, processes and techniques which includes the investigation of the characteristics of various fabrics and their ability to combine with other non-organic materials such as wire and plaster and organic materials such as leaves, flowers and twigs or vines, similarly to the work of Kahlo. I would also like to incorporate the art form of painting in a similar style to Kahlo.

Using Kahlo as my inspiration, I will develop my design process through the exploration of garment design and construction which subtly draws on my inspiration and communicates my concepts and ideas. I will explore the characteristics of various fabrics as well as necessary processes and techniques required to create wearable garments.



The aesthetic qualities I'm aiming for is for my work to be visually pleasing to the eye. To achieve this I want to experiment with elements such as color, texture and shape. Last year I was introduced to Gustav Klimt's artwork during a visit to the National Gallery. I had an instant admiration for particular elements of his artwork. In particular, I really liked the application of pattern and geometric shapes displayed in the fabrics and clothing of many of the women he painted. Klimt's portrait of his fashion designer wife Emilie Flöge, painted in oil paint in 1902 demonstrates this use of geometric shapes (like squares and circles), which he used to create a pattern in her clothing. I wish to explore with the use of pattern when developing my designs and believe in the application of these aesthetic qualities will help to communicate my ideas. I can use these aspects of Klimt's work to help inform my own investigations of the theme of spring.

Painting is another method that I would like to explore during the design process. Like Kahlo and Klimt, I want to use painting as a technique to explore my themes relating spring and fashion like my inspiration artists. I would like to use photography as my starting point and find inspiration of things relating to my theme that I may paint. I want to explore with different types of paint and types of surface that I could adopt into my work, and also discover what style or technique I will be imposing into my work. I'll need to find more inspiration on paintings, and my favorite artist. I hope that my exploration of painting with help to inform my garment design, construction and exploration and hopefully the two art forms will work together to develop my ideas.

Through photography I can study nature and symbols of spring, which will help inform my research for painting and garment design and drawing. Photography can be used to help me study the light and natural beauty of symbols of spring.

I want try to work with shape, using organic shapes like flowers and leaves to help to create a symbolic representation of spring in my artwork. I would like to use principles such as contrast, balance and repetition. To achieve this contrast, I will explore the relationship between the dress and the head wear. I want to try using different texture or color to create contrast between the two pieces but have them related by themes and ideas of spring.