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Visual arts Exhibition Student B (SL)

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Curatorial Rationale

My work was largely influenced by a recent school service trip to Tanzania, Africa. The IB Diploma Visual Arts course has afforded me an opportunity to reflect upon and explore cathartically my personal experiences in Tanzania. My work draws upon my own preconceptions of the African continent and the contrast brought into focus through my own first-hand experience – albeit as an outsider looking in.

Throughout my body of work I have explored issues of commercialisation and exploitation through the use of sculptures which have been informed by my investigation into artists Anne Lemanski (American), Fiona Hall (Australian), Jim Noble and Sue Webster (British) and Naum Gabo (Russian). I have also explored the life experience of the orphans with whom we worked through a series of candid and posed portraits influenced by photographer Annie Leibovitz.

My sculptural pieces began as an interpretation of three of the “big five” of the African savannah: the African elephant, the rhinoceros and the lion, represented through the form of hunting trophies, but realised through using some of the building materials I observed in the shanties of Tanzania. I have used Coca Cola™ cans, hessian coffee bags and sheet metal.

In these works, the use of the hunting trophy/animal motifs reflects a Western preconception of the African continent and images of safaris. By using unconventional materials to construct the sculptures, I have attempted to draw attention to the first world – third world injustices that affect Africa. The materials used essentially are the refuse of the developed world. I find the hessian particularly poignant, as I sourced it through my employer who imports coffee beans from Africa to resell to Australians as fine quality coffees and chocolates. Much of this industry is infamous for the exploitation of workers and the use of child labour.

In my exhibition, I have chosen to hang these on a large expanse of wall from the gallery hanging system. Given that I had conceived the works to be reminiscent of hunting trophies, I had decided very early on in their construction that I would hang them from a wall and had to incorporate appropriate anchors in the strawboard forms that give shape to the outer surface. Due to the scale of my sculptural pieces, I elected to display the selected images from my photographic folio on some temporary display panels.

(388 words)

Exhibition Photographs



1: View of Southern wall



2: View of Eastern corner of exhibition

1. Rifaru (front view)

Strawboard, aluminium shim

23 x 23 x 16 cm

In Rifaru (Rhinceros) , I have constructed a skeleton frame in strawboard employing similar construction techniques as Naum Gabo, but I have then used small sections of alumium shim to cover the surface of the form.





Additional supporting photograph 1

Rifaru (three quarter view)
Strawboard, aluminium shim
23 x 23 x 16 cm



2. *Tembo* (front view)

Strawboard, *Coca Cola*[™] aluminium cans, pot rivets
60 x 90 x 23 cm

In Tembo (Elephant), the surface has been covered with Coca Cola[™] cans which I have cut, pressed flat and riveted together and to the strawboard structure underneath. A number of the shanties I visited in Tanzania were constructed out of reclaimed Coca Cola[™] advertising. Coca Cola[™] presents a significant health issue in Tanzania as it is cheaper to purchase than clean water.

This image has been blurred to obscure the Coca Cola[™] trademarks



Additional supporting photograph 1

Tembo (three quarter view)

Strawboard, Coca Cola™ aluminium
cans, pot rivets

60 x 90 x 23 cm

*This image has been blurred to obscure the Coca Cola™
trademarks*



Additional supporting
photograph 2

Tembo (three quarter
view – detail))
Strawboard, *Coca Cola™*
aluminium cans, pot rivets
60 x 90 x 23 cm

*This image has been blurred to
obscure the Coca Cola™ trademarks*



3 *Simba* (front view)

Strawboard, hessian, linen
thread, teddy bear eyes
45 x 40 x 23 cm

In Simba (Lion) the surface has been covered with Hessian which I reclaimed from coffee bean bags my employer had imported for his coffee and chocolate business. This is a reference to the exploitation that exists in the chocolate and coffee industries.



4. Rosie (Series)

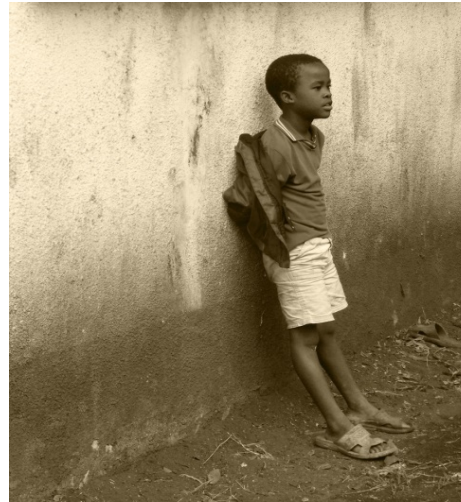
35mm Photographs on 20 x 25cm multigrade resin coated paper.

I had some preconceived notions of what the orphans would be like before we visited Tanzania. We had heard a number of the tragic and heartbreaking stories. Despite everything, the children found joy in the simplest of things.



5. Rosie, Eddie and Isaac (Series)

35mm Photographs on 20 x 20cm, 20 x 25cm and 20 x 25cm multigrade resin coated paper.



6. Ammu, Eddie and Wasichana (Series)

35mm Photographs on 20 x 25cm, 20 x 18cm and 20 x 25cm multigrade resin coated paper, sepia toned.



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