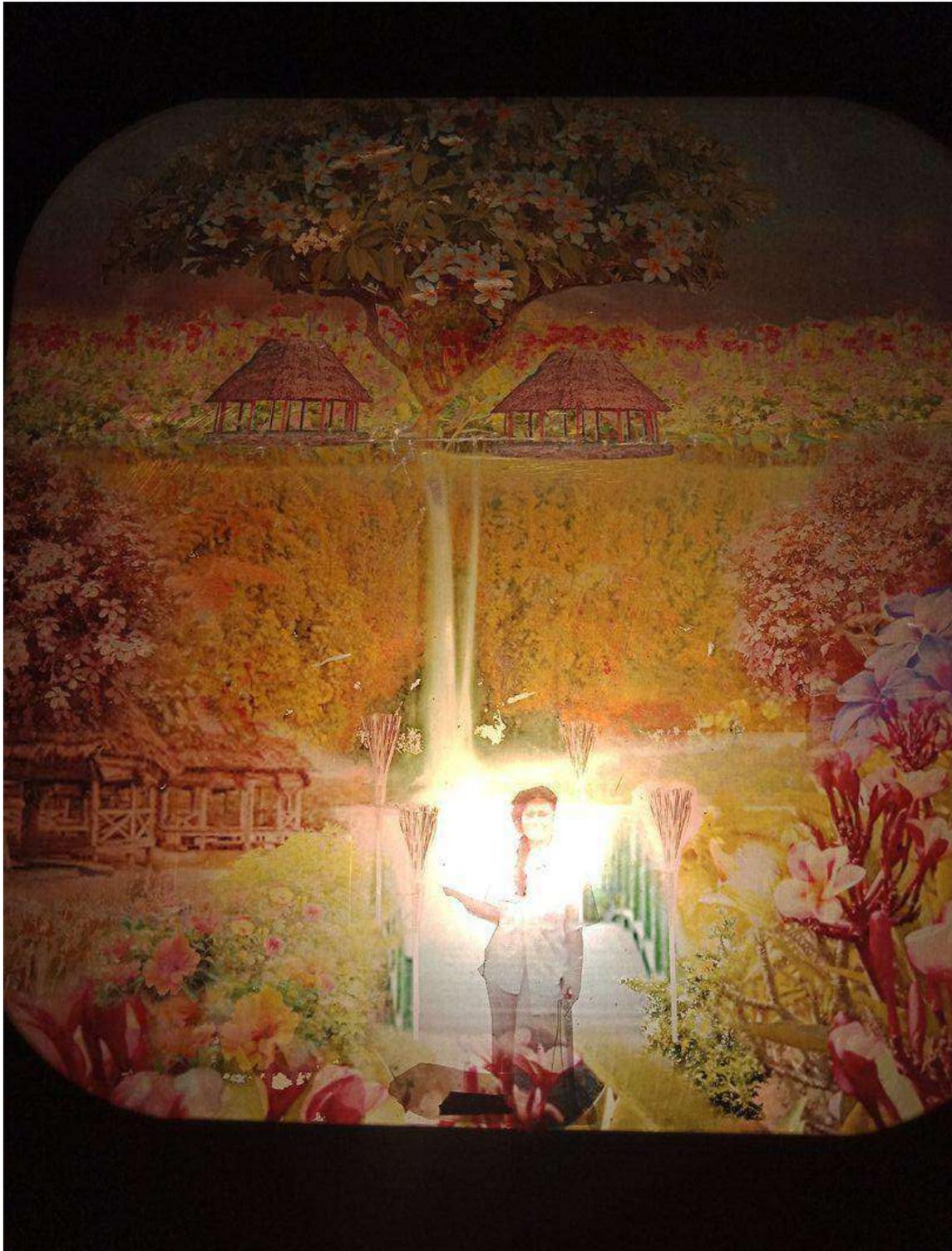


State of Reimagining:
Reconnection and Belonging through Mark Making.



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School of Art and Design,

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Abstract

This autoethnographic research project seeks to explore mark-making within my drawing practice, as a tool of reconnection and belonging, in the wake of the loss of my mother. My project draws upon family archival photographic material that gathers my curiosities of the stories, landscapes and agriculture behind it. This material sets the narratives for each drawing wherein I express my wonder's through the tool of mark-making. The exploration of mark-making in this project creates a sense of belonging and reconnection through drawing, allowing me to reconnect through loss and restore belonging to my homeland.



Fig 1.2: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photo of Young Piilua. 2020

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Attestation to Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Date: 7 May 2021

Signature:

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Mark Adams, 'Su'a Suluape Petelo, Tufuga Ta Tattu sharpening the "Au" tattooing implements..' Auckland: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 13 February 1982. Purchased 1993 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Funds. Source: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/242096>

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Dedication



Falepunaoa Piilua Mapusua

To my Mum
Thank you for all you have done for me.
You supported and encouraged me to continue my postgraduate study until your last days.
I miss you so much.

I Love You.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to acknowledge my Heavenly Father
Thank you for restoring me. Giving me strength and peace during this time.
I Give You All the Glory.

To my Family

My brother Piula, my sisters Ta'a and Joyce and my Dad "Sam da Man". Thank you for the love, support and wisdom that you all have given me.

To my Supervisor

Nooroa Tapuni, thank you for being incredibly patient, supportive and understanding.
You created a comfortable space for us to express all means of life.

To my Best Friend

Carol Sao, thank you for constantly being the light in my journey.
Uplifting me and motivating me to pursue. You have been patient and supportive all these years.

To Sharon Semi Tugia

I thank you immensely for everything. Your support and encouragement.
Thankful to have studied and shared many memories and laughs with you.
Hope we continue our 'sabbatical'.

Thank You



Mums Home
Afega Apia, Samoa

Fig 1.4: Mapusua, Julia. Mum old home in Afega Apia Samoa. 2020

Introduction

During my postgraduate journey, my family and I sadly found out our mother was sick. It was later confirmed to be lung and liver cancer. Five months later, my mother passed away. It was the most unexpected and heart-breaking encounter I have ever experienced. Losing a loved one is not easy to comprehend, let alone express openly like this. However, I found the strength to share a significant part of my life through this thesis.

My mother passing left me with many memories of her. I had old photographs – taken of her in Samoa. These photographs were captured before I was born in a place unknown to me, Samoa. I was left with a wandering mind, wondering what the stories behind these photographs were? What living in the environment was like, the landscapes, agriculture, homes and life beyond the frame of the photograph. This curiosity has led me to reimagine these photographs through mark-making in my drawing practice. Struthers and Peden-McAlpine state “Indigenous people live through narratives and stories. Storytelling gives a unique process into developing expression to our experiences.” Mark-making is a surface medium of storytelling that allows me to express my wonders from these photographs into drawings - displaying my reimagining. As a form of communication, it will establish a way of storytelling for myself that enables me to experience reconnection and belonging to these photographs and my curiosity about the place of Samoa.

This project explores mark-making as a tool of reconnection and belonging within my drawing practice. It draws upon family archival photographic material to gather sequential stories, even if the imagery taken is at a different time or place. Using this imagery will allow me to reimagine these photographs through scenic and landscape drawings expressing my wonders.

Chapter One introduces the contextual review of the research project. It sets out to explore mark-making as a tool of reconnection, belonging and storytelling through mark and pattern making. The act of reconnecting to heritage material through drawing enables one to understand how mark and pattern are relational to cultural heritage, bringing one to a sense of belonging. Chapter Two will outline my methodology approach. It highlights autoethnography as a qualitative research method connecting to the broader cultural meaning and understandings. The methods used are autoethnographic qualitative processes of personal reflection and experience unfolding the drawing process in detail. Chapter Three carries the outcome of practice. Here I discuss the drawing process development and its use of layers and repetition to develop a drawing language, bringing a sense of reconnection and belonging to the place of Samoa. It concludes my exploration of marking making as a tool of reconnection and belonging.

Through exploration of my drawing practice, I unravel a drawing process that brings reconnection in the wake of the loss of my mum through photographs and belonging to the place of Samoa. I hope this enables me to express all parts of life through drawings.



Fig 2.1: Mapusua, Julia. Experiment Light with Photographs.2020



Fig 2.2: Mapusua, Julia. Experiment Light with Photographs. 2020

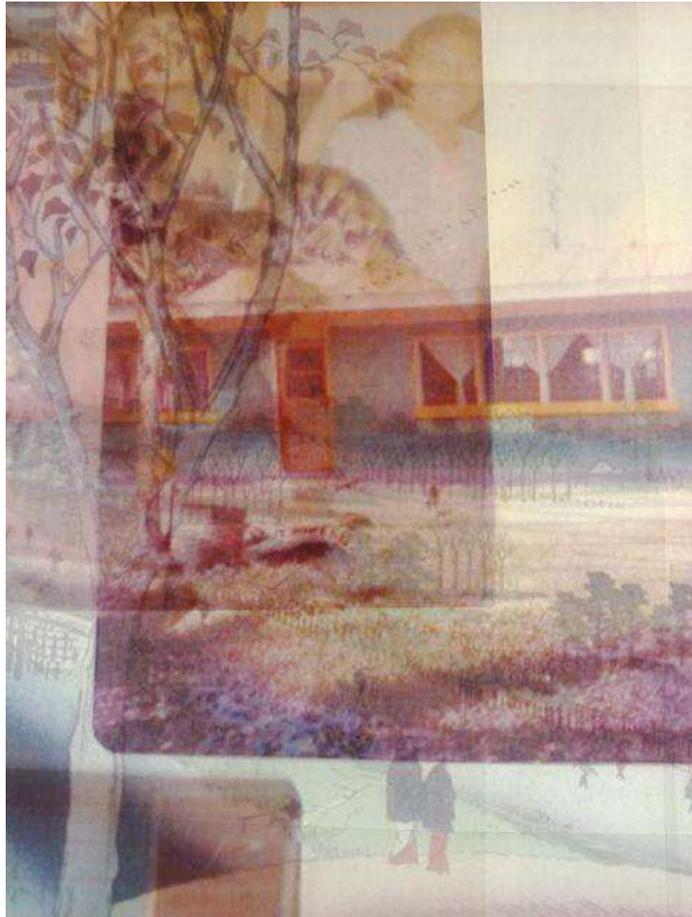


Fig 2.3: Mapusua, Julia. Experiment Light with Photographs. 2020



Fig 2.4: Mapusua, Julia. Experiment Light with Photographs. 2020

Introduction to Context

This story I know: Making Tapa

In the wake of the loss of my mother, gathering old photographs of my mum in memory of her was something myself and my family began to prepare to do. Although it was not an easy process, this moment of reminiscing through the photographs enabled us to get through it. For academic Metter Sandbye “ Family photos represent something emotional for the individual owner, no matter what the images show, staged ritual events or snapshots of every day.” While collecting photos, I came across an old photo album that we had at home. The photos captured the timeline of events of myself, my family, and the house we lived in at the time. As I went through the photo album, I discovered the only series of photographs taken of my younger self, making tapa and patterns. These photographs are a memory that my mum created for me. I had an emotional connection to it, as it captures an experience I had, during a time that I remember, in a place I grew up in and documented by my mum.

This collection of photographs holds meaning that I vividly remember as a child. The story behind these photographs is an activity that my mum created for me to do. I remember my mum setting me up at the table with the equipment of brown paper, pencil and a black marker in front of me. She prepared me first before positioning herself at the other side of the table to guide me. My mother stood next to my cousin, who took the photos of me and began to direct me by instructing me to use a pencil to draw my grids onto the brown paper for the motif design to be aligned symmetrically. From there, I had to draw curvature lines to form my shape - guided by the grid lines (Fig 1). Using a black marker, I outlined my pencil drawings and filled in the design (Fig 2&3) and, when completed - scrunching up the paper with the pattern on was to mimic the material of barkcloth used for Tapa (Fig 4). The design pattern in the photograph references a bird called a Fa’atuli (Fig 5) or the Sandpiper, which is seen commonly on Siapo. A Tuli is the motif symbol outlined by the shape of birds feathers described as flower-like in the tapa cloth. The outer lines of the design are the footprints of a Tuli, which they make when they take flight. As seen in the photographs, the outcomes are not exact to actual tapa, including the making processes. However, this introduction to making through my mother brought forward an engagement with mark and pattern.



Fig 3.1: Mapusua, Julia. Young Julia Making Tapa with Pencil. 2005
Fig 3.2: Mapusua, Julia. Young Julia Making Tapa with Marker. 2005



Fig 3.3: Mapusua, Julia. Young Julia Making Tapa using marker to fill pattern.2005
Fig 3.4: Mapusua, Julia. Young Julia Making Tapa scrunching Paper. 2005
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Introduction to Marking Making

I was reintroduced to mark and pattern through a University Undergraduate Contemporary Pacific course by my lecturer Dr Albert Refiti shared. The task outlined was to use mark-making to form a cosmogram that interprets a pacific myth, legend, or origin story. Within that mark-making process, limitations were set by only drawing from a specific ruler with different curvature shapes and lines whilst using various grades of pencil types. These constraints enabled me to engage and read into the origin story I chose while thinking about different ways to draw lines and shapes that interpret the origin story. My cosmogram drawing interpreted an origin story connected to my Samoan heritage. I did not know about an origin story but then became familiar as I created my set of mark makings. Limiting the freedom of marking techniques became more meaningful and symbolic. In the process, it focussed more on the story and how to communicate it through markings. From this assignment, I saw how mark-making connected me to an origin story linked to my Samoan lineage that I did not know. Mark and pattern enabled me to recall my interpretation of the origin symbolically. It shows that mark and pattern are relational connecting one back to ancestry.

Tatau: Origin to Mark and Pattern and Cultural Lineage

Connecting one back to ancestry within my Samoan cultural heritage through mark and pattern are seen in Samoan Tatau (tattooing). This form of art is integrated into ritual and ceremonial aspects of Samoan tradition and connects one to heritage. The origin of the Samoan tatau explained by Albert Wendt, in his essay *The Tatauing of the Post-colonial Body* explains the following origin “ The Samoan tatau began in Fiji and with a chant that went wrong. The cycle of legends centres on two female atua, Taema and Tilafaiga, originally Siamese twins, who went to Fiji and learned the art of tatauing. They left Fiji with an atoau, a basket of tatauing implements, and the belief/practice that the tatau was for women, not men. However, as they were swimming past Falealupo at the westernmost tip of Savaii, they sighted a giant clam in the ocean bed. They dived for it, and when they surfaced, their song changed to, ‘Faimai e tata o tane, ae le tata o fafine’(To say men were tattooed and not women).” Following this origin, it stated that no one wanted to participate in their art and skill. It was hard to persuade people. Until a Samoan chief decided to volunteer and offer himself to the art of tatauing by getting one. From this, the art of tatau became a tradition embedded within the Samoan culture, and its art skills were passed down to generations, connecting marks and patterns to cultural lineage.

Tatau is a mark on the skin with motifs and patterns. Although the markings are beautiful and adornment to the skin, it goes beyond skin deep. The markings on our most prominent and sacred tatau are the Pe’a worn by the men and Malu worn by the women. Mallon and Fecteau state “ The motifs and design of the Pe’a reflect objects and elements of the natural environment, but in their interpretation, they generally refer to the family history, accomplishments and responsibilities of the person who wears them.” A Taulima (wristband or armband) is another Samoan tatau that marks motifs and patterns around the wrist. Compared to the Pe’a and Malu, a Taulima does not carry such cultural commitments or responsibility of service to its markings. It may claim its popularity in young Polynesians, for its diverse design and patterns can reflect many meanings and connections.



Mark Adams. '7.10.78. *Triangle Road, Massey, west Auckland. Tattooing Tom Ah Fook, Arona and Leo Maelino (solo). Tufuga tatatau: Su'a Sulu'ape Paulo II*'. Auckland: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 7 October 1978. Purchased 1988 with Ellen Eames Collection Funds. Source: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/42838>

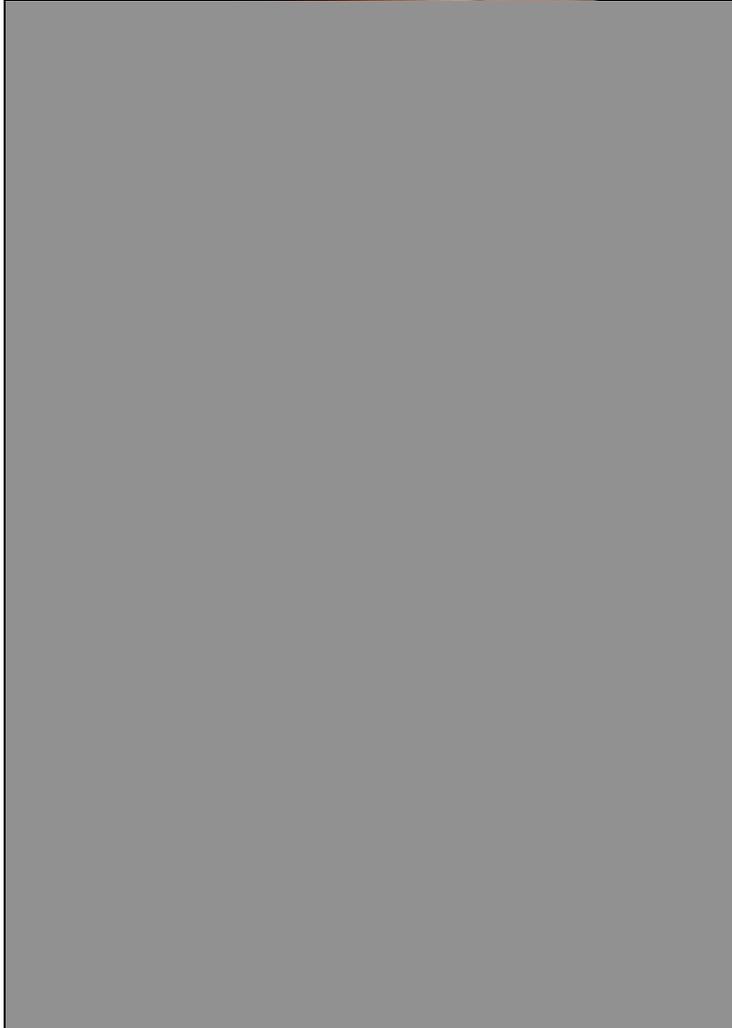


Mark Adams, *'Su'a Suluape Petelo, Tufuga Ta Tattu sharpening the "Au" tattooing implements..'* Auckland: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 13 February 1982. Purchased 1993 with New Zealand Lottery Grants Board Funds. Source: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/242096>

Taulima

Alexa Masina, an individual who received a Taulima, reflects upon her Tatau as a means of connecting to her heritage and Samoan identity. Mallon and Fecteau state “ It is the notion of blood ties, personal origins and identity that has inspired many others to seek the Taulima ”. It is creative and for Polynesians to express. Alexa Masina cultural heritage is of Maori and Samoan descent. From these two different worlds that she belonged to, Alexa felt that her Samoan identity was left out. Many would ask about her ethnicity. Her Maori descent would be asked, following questions if she belonged to any other ethnicities Alexa expressed, “..everything but a Samoan..” Her Taulima became a way for people to identify her Samoan culture, and she was proud of it. In the beginning stages of designing her pattern for the Taulima, Alexa had discussions with her aunty about the meanings of the Samoan patterns and motifs. Discussing with a family member about the processes of a Taulima allowed her to understand patterns of a Taulima design. Alexa decided to use the existing patterns and their meaning to reflect her two cultures, including her interpretation of life. It reflected who she is, what she had endured and those who had gone before her.

Although my practice is led towards a figurative style of markings, rather than the traditional abstract forms of markings that have been discussed, it does acknowledge the origin of markings in my heritage, a lineage that has a connection with myself. We see this embraced through an activity that my mum created for me when I was younger through tapa making and a classroom assignment of mark-making of cosmograms. My encounters of mark and pattern are by the Samoan traditional art forms used in ways where I engage in the art form practice. It shows how this art form is representative of the Samoan life and for the individuals themselves. For Alexa Masina, it was to mark her identity and what she had gone through. For myself, it is to reconnect in the wake of the loss of my mother through family archival photographs and bring a sense of belonging to my curiosity about Samoa.



Moana Markings, 'Taulima by tatau artists Tyla Vaeau' New Zealand Fashion Museum. October 2019. Supported by Foundation North. Source: <http://nzfashionmuseum.org.nz/moana-markings/>

Reconnection: Exploration of heritage material & mark-making as storytelling

Introduction: Family archival photographs

Samoa is a place that I have never been to but a place that I am descended from. In the process of gathering old photographs of my mum in the wake of loss. I intended to find photos that captured moments of her lifetime, in an attempt to reconnect through photographed memories. When I found the photographs and examined them, I noticed that they were all taken in Samoa before I was born and of a place I had never been. Being born in New Zealand left a gap between my descended place of origin and my home. Indigenous scholars Ai'ono(1986), Kanahale(2011), Kavaliku(1994) and Ravuvu(1983) state “..the sense of belonging that comes with collective memories and engagements with particular places.” Through this thought process, my curiosity and imagination began to unravel. I became inquisitive about these photographs, wondering what the stories behind these photographs are? The living environment was like landscapes, agriculture, homes, and life beyond the photo frame. My imaginative side of my mind was picturing how these curiosities in the photos looked in place. I began to form and create in my head, assembling a drawing that symbolically depicted my interest in the photographs. I was captivated by my imagining that I wanted to display or bring these out to life to form as souvenirs for myself to keep. In the midst of this, I realised that I was seeking reconnection through memories and found a sense of belonging that needed to be restored from these photographs. I am reminded of Alexa Masina, an individual discussed earlier. Who sought to restore her sense of belonging and embraced it through her cultural tradition of a Taulima. Through mark and pattern, she carefully designed and expressed patterns that represented her belonging. By this, I am led to explore heritage material and uncover storytelling from cultural traditions and mark-making practices to help inspire my methods of expressing my reimagining of the photographs.



Fig 3.1: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Grandma in Samoa. 2020



Fig 3.2: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Mum and Dad during wedding. 2020



Fig 3.3: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Mum and Dad eating during wedding. 2020



Fig 3.4: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Mum in red singlet. 2020



Fig 3.4: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Mum and Siblings. 2020



Fig 3.5: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Mum. 2020

Siapo

Siapo, also known as Tapa cloth is a Samoan traditional art form that is said to be the oldest cultural art form in Samoa. Like Tatau, Siapo is known for its mark and pattern but on the material. It is printed onto the beaten and flattened bark of the Paper Mulberry tree. Natural dyes are extracted from a range of trees, plants and clays and used to stain the Siapo. To draw motifs and patterns onto material is to depict the surrounding environment of Samoa. For example, Fa'a 'ali'ao (Trochus Shell), which is a shell belonging to a sea snail, outlines as a form of triangular shape. In the making into a design pattern, it can be transformed or developed into many pattern forms and Fa'a sigago (Male Pandanus) symbolises the beautiful pandanus bloom. It captures the flower hanging down from its tree. Outlining the flower petals and their narrow-angle. Creating these designs and patterns consists of two methods: Siapo Elei (The Rubbing Method) and Siapo Mamanu (The Freehand Methods). Siapo Elei is a method of imprinting onto bark utilising a design board known as a Upeti. Siapo Mamanu is a creative free-hand drawing process using a paogo which is a dried pandanus brush. The designs of Siapo Mamanu are created freely, allowing the artist's imagination to lead. As I am taking upon a non-traditional approach to my project, I am inspired by the method techniques used for Siapo. Siapo Mamanu, which is a freehand drawing process, allows the artist to create freely. Developing the pattern design and motifs with creative flair, creating decorative pieces. Through my drawing process, I intend to use a mark-making tool that will draw together my curiosities of the place of Samoa, from the photographs onto canvas. This allows for my curiosities to form and shape the design of my drawings. How line and shape are used to form motifs that reflect the Samoan environment in Siapo, is the same approach in which I aim to utilise my mark-making tool to create and reflect my curiosity of Samoa from my collection of family archival photographs. Taking symbolic elements from the photograph itself with creative flair will help to draw out motifs that will represent a piece from the photo and the place of Samoa. A common factor in these family photographs, they are taken in the surroundings and environment of my mum's home in Samoa. They capture everyday life. Showing snapshots symbols of flowers, leaves, clothing and colour. They represent the island life of Samoa and the setting of my mum's home. Drawing on the richness of these images as symbolic motifs that characterise the island of Samoa will bring in connection and belonging to my heritage. Taking these symbolic elements of the photographs nature will help curate the narratives and design language towards my drawings. Constructing a whole image that depicts my curiosity about Samoa, forming a way of storytelling through mark-making.

Siapo, which is not only seen as decorative, is also a symbol of the Samoan culture. We see this symbol worn as clothing, used as burial shrouds, bed covers, ceremonial garments, curtains to divide, space of large open guesthouses, mosquito nets and much more, from its many ways of usage. The opportunity to display my mark-making onto material will become a souvenir to keep, acknowledge and reflect upon will be a symbol of my journey to finding reconnection and belonging to Samoa in the wake of the loss of my mum.

Grandma Fale



Fig. 4.1: Mapusua, Julia. Testing flowers onto photograph. 2021

Mum & Dad Wedding Table



Fig 4.2: Mapusua, Julia. Testing palm tree onto photograph. 2021

Mum Back House



Fig 4.3: Mapusua, Julia. Testing flowers on Mum's clothes onto photograph. 2021

Fatu Feu'u

Contemporary artist Fatu Feu'u, primarily a painter, explores the diverse range of art forms such as bronze, sculpture, pottery design, lithographs, woodcuts and glasswork. Through these mediums, he drew onto the pattern and design of Siapo and Tatau as a visual language in his works, expressing his Samoan culture and heritage. Using motifs depicted in Siapo and Tatau, such as the frangipani flower, gogo (the tern) and anufe (the caterpillar), Fatu Feu'u began to develop personalised symbols and meanings. In the work of Salamasina(1987), we see this visual language. The artwork titled Salamasina is said to reflect a significant figure in Samoan history. Fatu Feu'u interprets and retells this historical story by using repeating motifs and patterns. The well-known frangipani seen in his work is symbolic of the strong female presence commonly seen on Siapo(tapa cloth) paired alongside a mask-like form that represents spiritual ancestors. Throughout his artwork of Salamasina, frigatebirds are seen, which are a male symbol representing the journey and continuous connection to the spiritual realm. These birds are also used as a navigational device to steer one to the right course. In Fatu Feu'u work, we see a visual language developed through marks and patterns. Similar to Alexa Masina story of finding belonging through her Taulima. Both Fatu and Alexa developed their symbols and meanings of mark and pattern, that expresses their culture and heritage. From this, we see how mark and pattern are embedded into their cultural heritage and become a tool of expression for individuals. For Fatu Feu'u, mark and pattern became a way of storytelling through his artwork Salamasina. Not only of the motifs themselves but through their composition, repetition and meaning. It positioned the work altogether to retell the historic story and form his visual language. This encourages my process of how I might take symbolic elements from the photographs and position them in a way that develops a visual language that expresses my reimagining.

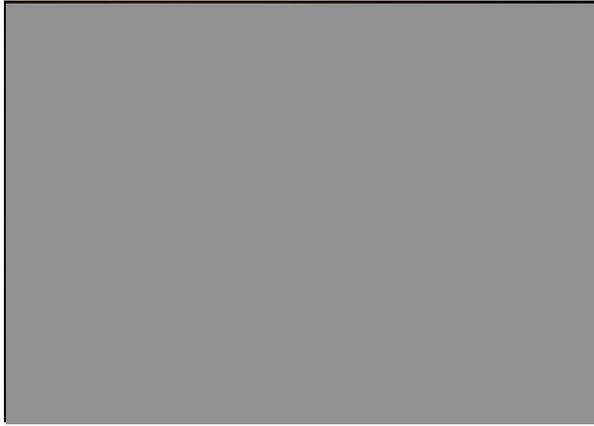


Feu'u, Fatu. 'Salamasina' Auckland Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. 1987. Purchase 1989 with New Zealand Lottery Board Funds. Sourced: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/37089>

Shigeyuki Kihara

The colonial administration of Samoa by New Zealand occurred between 1912 till 1962. The contemporary artist Shigeyuki Kihara expresses this time through performance. In the work 'Tauluga: The Last Dance' (2006) Kihara is performing a Samoan dance called the Tauluga. The movements or hand gestures associated with a Tauluga are used to express this distressing time for the people of Samoa. This form is a way of storytelling. The Tauluga being a traditional art form is said to symbolize the conclusion of a monumental task and embellishing the final touches involved. Performed at the end of events or social functions, it celebrates an evening or brings entertainment. In Kihara performance, using the same principles of the traditional dance and its traditional format became a way to celebrate but to also dedicate to the leaders and the many people of Samoa who sustained resilience in their struggle for independence acknowledging the changes and losses for the Samoan culture through the process of colonisation. Watching the performance begin with graceful hand movements and then becoming ungraceful as time went by. Symbolically this represents the struggle and loss of Samoan culture through the process of colonisation. Analysing and engaging in the performance evoked emotions that I feel Kihara successfully executed through movement.

The sense of loss and struggle to retain power for the Samoan people, in Kihara performance was expressed in 'Tauluga: The Last Dance'. Performance is an art form that creates a sense of immediacy for the artist, allowing Kihara to respond to a historical photograph taken during the colonial administration and recreating it through the traditional Samoan dance to form a way of storytelling. Wearing a restrictive Victorian mourning dress was a symbolic symbol to express the sense of loss and power to retain for this time while performing gracefully associated with the Tauluga dance. Kihara used movement as a way of storytelling. She saw opportunities in performance that she had claimed that visual arts could not do. This claim made me think about how I might bring movement into a photograph or bring out of a photograph that uniquely expresses a time captured.



Shigeyuki, Kihara. 'Taaluga: The Last Dance' Auckland Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. 2006. Credit line: gift of the artists. 2011. Source: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/object/1172508>

Shigeyuki, Kihara. 'Taaluga: The Last Dance'. Screenshot retrieved from video source: <https://vimeo.com/13811424>

To explore movement in photographs, I went through a series of experiments. I created moving images using a photograph of my dad that I also found while collecting photos of my mum. I decided to test the idea of recreating a historical picture using Photoshop to create my moving image. From Photoshop, I used the puppet warp tool to create movement in the image of my dad. While examining the photograph, I started to look at my dad's posture that was captured and what was around him. I decided to manipulate the photo to reflect my dad and to imagine what this specific moment could have been like. In the photograph, it looked like my dad was dancing and showing a particular move to whoever was around him. I began to imitate my observations by creating movement in my dad's figure the way I had imagined the space to have been like. From there, my moving image of my dad was developed into him dancing.

I began to question how this might look if I were to cut out my dad's figure from the photo and mimic how Kihara's performance was set out, from the light source of the background and her silhouette displaying her movements. Shadow play, an ancient art form of storytelling in South East Asia, reminded me of Kihara's visual performance from her silhouette and light source background. So I decided to mimic shadow play by putting a cloth over my laptop and playing my animated video of my dad dancing. The video became a layer, textured over with a highlighted detail of the cloth's linens stitching. The fabric blurred out the figure of my dad, but it created a moving silhouette. Its outline of the silhouette became a mark that symbolises my dad. It became a print to the cloth and a souvenir I wanted to keep. Through this moving image, I was able to capture my dad's humorous side. I was able to depict my dad's quirkiness through the movement of the photograph, which enabled the photo to trigger emotion. This work brought forward enlivenment in the wake of the loss of my mother.

Dad Dancing



Fig 5.1: Mapusua, Julia. Old Photograph of Dad Dancing. 2020



Fig 5.2: Mapusua, Julia. Experimentation of Puppet Warp. 2020



Fig 5.3: Mapusua, Julia. Experimentation of Puppet Warp. 2020



Fig 5.4: Mapusua, Julia. Experimentation of Puppet Warp. 2020

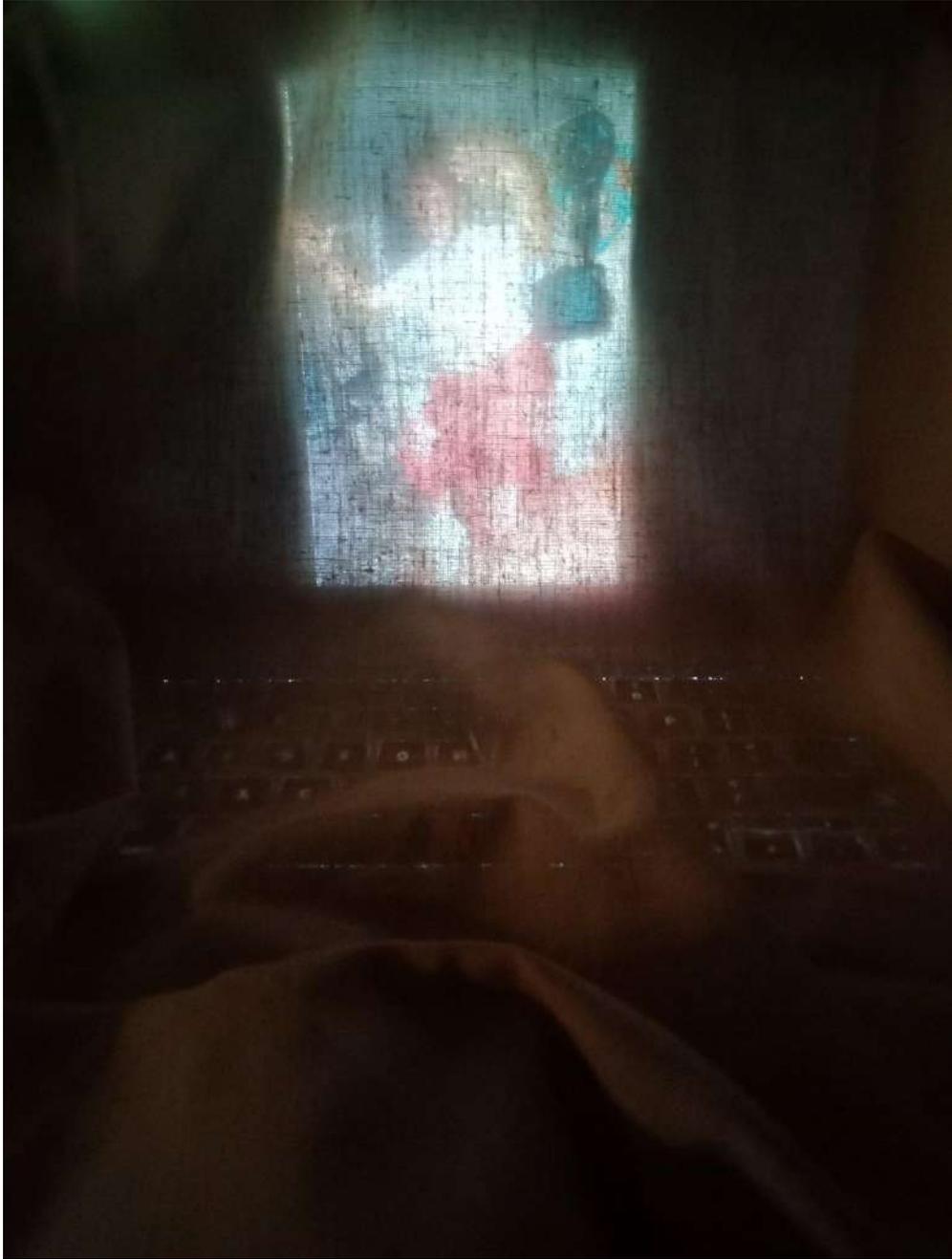


Fig 5.5: Mapusua, Julia. Cloth over laptop captures puppet warp moving. 2020

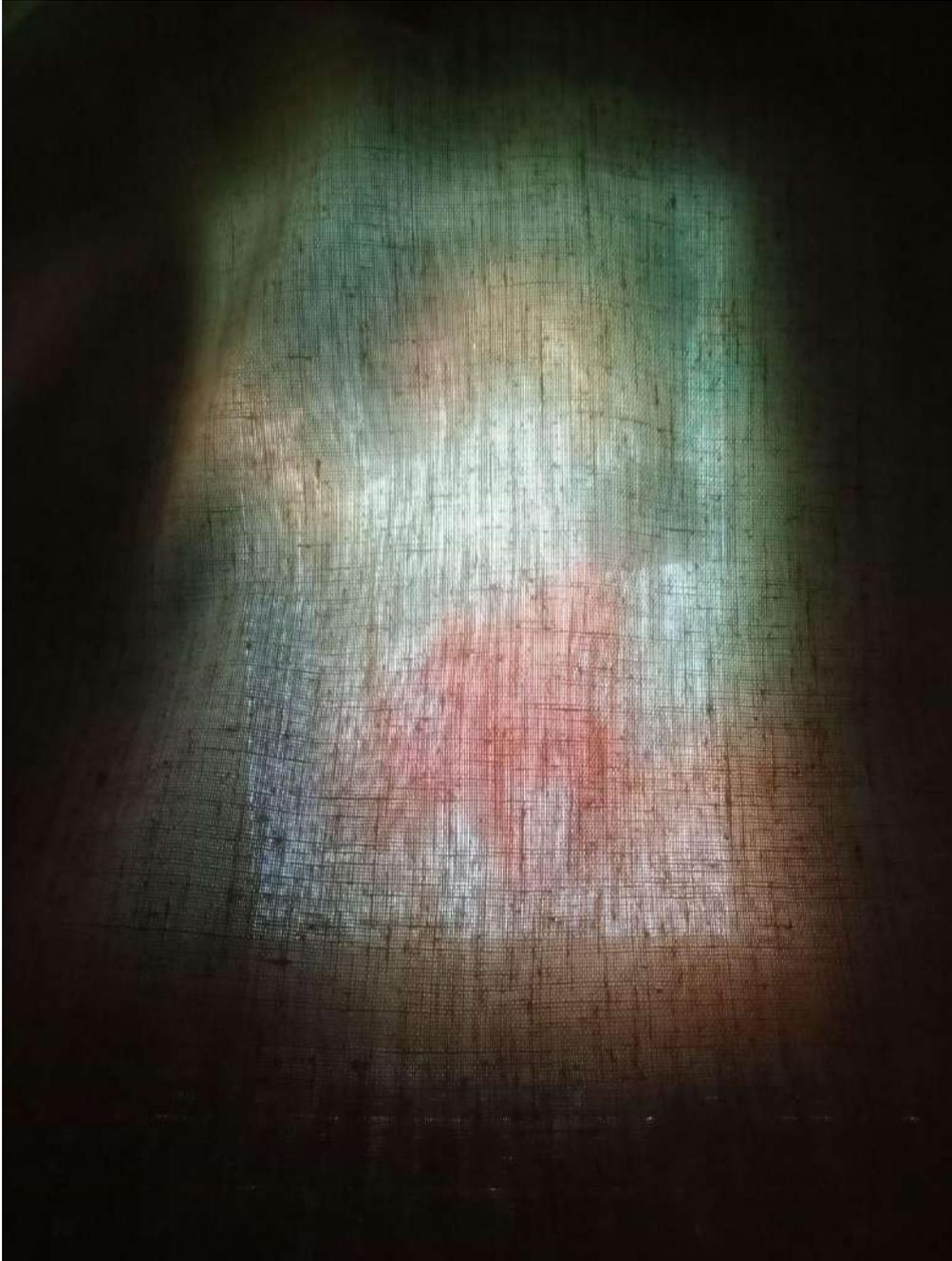


Fig 5.6: Mapusua, Julia. Cloth over laptop: light showing detailed texture of cloth. 2020

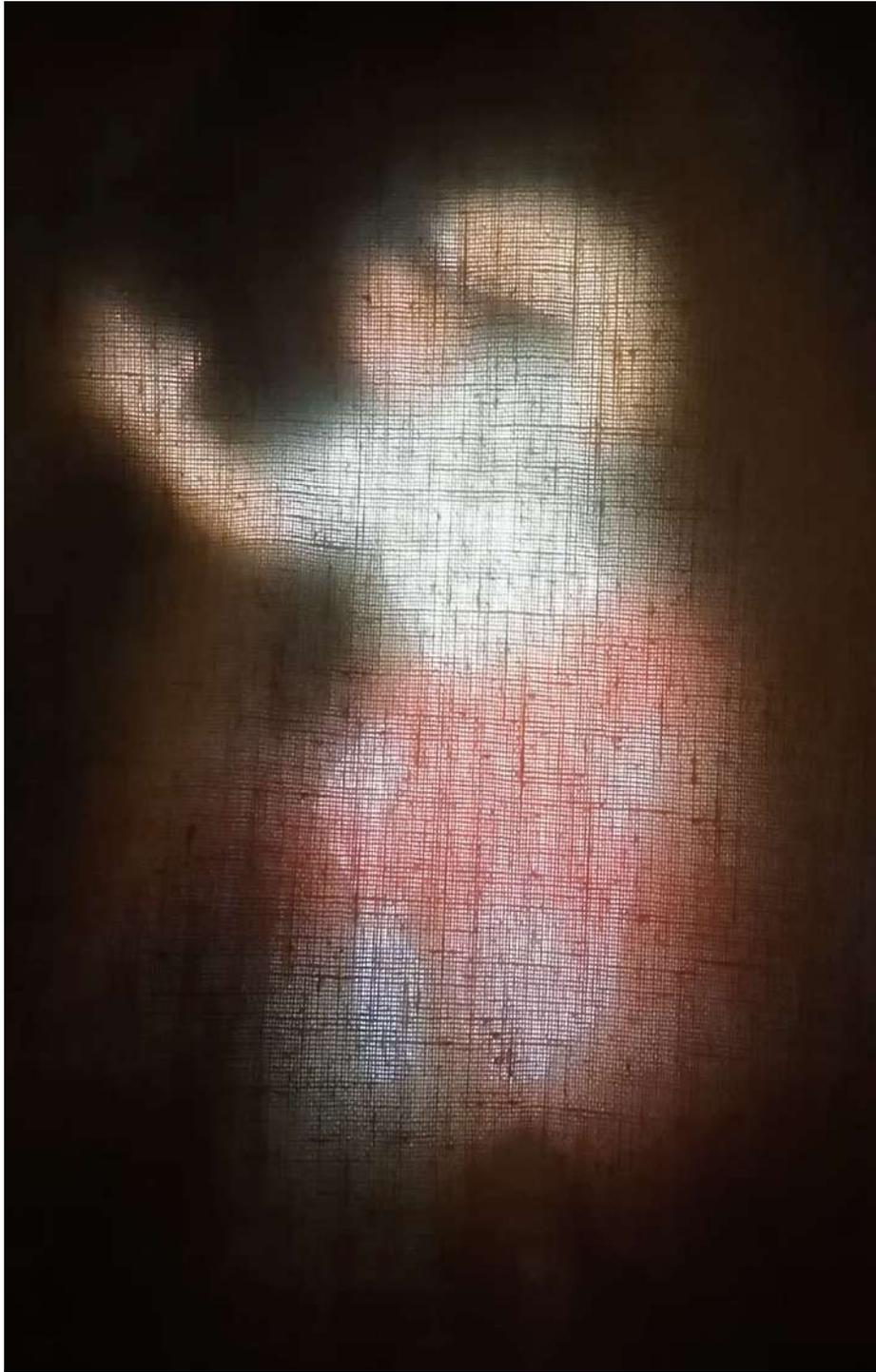


Fig 5.7: Mapusua, Julia. Cloth over laptop: Dads silhouette. 2020

Methodology statement

My autoethnographic project explores mark-making as a tool of reconnection and belonging within my drawing practice in the wake of the loss of my mother. Autoethnography Carolyn Ellis defines autoethnographic research as “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political.” Through these, qualitative research methods will help guide and express in-depth complexities of my drawing methods and thought processes through personal reflections. I intend to uncover three methods of my drawing practice that explores reconnection and belonging through mark-making. The first method is Family Archival Photographs which draws upon the context of the family photographic archives. The second method is Collage, the mark-making tool that gathers symbolic elements from photographs. Highlighting the process of software use, composition, layer, overlapping and repetition. The third method is Gel medium transfer which highlights the process of image transfer and its intricate techniques needed to develop a successful image transfer. These methods form my drawing practice revealing a drawing process that brings reconnection and belonging through loss.



Fig 23:7 Making work station 2020

Methods

Family Archival Photographs, Collage and Gel medium Transfer.

Searching and gathering old photographs was a journey that myself and my siblings embarked on together. We reminisced and shared memories we had of mum. We sought to find photographs to reconnect to mum through memories. To find these photographs we went to visit the homes of other family members in the hope to gather a collection of archives of my mum. We found a variety of photos that captured many moments of my mum's lifetime. While analysing the photos, I examined a similarity between the photographs, showing a consistent capture of the same place, taken at a different time and of a different activity. These photos taken were in Samoa, a place that I have never been to. Unravelling this made me curious about many things about the photographs and the location itself. Although asking a family member about these photos would be the most common decision. I have chosen to take this as a journey for myself to discover through drawings.



Fig 6.1: Mapusua, Julia. Photograph of Dad holding my siblings. 2020

Family Archival Photographs

From the collection of family photographic archives that I gathered, I was captivated by one specific photograph of my mum. The picture shown was of my mum when she was young, but the context of the photo itself is also an exact visual representation of my mum as a person. By analysing the photograph, it shows a captured moment of my mum when she was younger. It is my mum in her family garden, maybe in front or somewhere around her home in Samoa. She is holding a machete while posed next to a tree-like plant that has a few pink flowers. At this particular moment, I wonder what life was like for my mum in her family home in Samoa. What did her garden look like? How long and wide did her garden extend too? How tall were the trees? How green was the grass? And what kind of flowers are planted on the land beyond the frame of the photo. I began to move and create things that pictured or symbolically represented my curiosities from the photograph in my head. Building a drawing or visual representation of the place started to unravel in my head and became an urge to figure out a way to express or display this reimagining of the photograph.



Fig 6.2: Mapusua, Julia. Photograph of Mum in her garden in Samoa. 2020

Collage

Through the creative art medium of Collage, I used this art form to express and display my reimagining of the photograph of my mum. Collage is a piece of art that consists of sticking diverse materials such as photographs and pieces of paper or fabric onto a flat surface of the material. I took this art as an opportunity to use my curiosity as material to use and display onto canvas. This is my mark-making tool. To form my collage I used photoshop and its digital techniques to create my image as it is a software that I am most confident with. Photoshop can develop the same process of making a collage by hand by cutting out material and sticking the material onto canvas. But photoshop has more diverse tools that I intend to use and enhance the features of my Collage.

Using Photoshop, I created a new A3 page to begin my Collage, as a base that I would build into. Having my mother's photograph next to me was a guide for me to create these drawings. By analyzing the photo and looking at it as a picture alone, the photograph's context is of my mum in the garden. Establishing this idea enabled me to think about the kind of material to express this concept of my mum's garden and incorporate my curiosity. So I used symbolic material from the photograph, such as the flowers, the grass and the colours used and began to cut out pieces using the trim and move tool on photoshop. By layering and overlapping each piece to form my reimagining. Because of the limit of material in the photograph, I used other materials from other sourced places to help enhance and bring more material to the Collage. As a result, it brought more detailed features and bright colours, bringing an eagerness to exaggerate my Collage. The process of Collage, which is simply cut, paste and layer formed my digital drawing. Using the symbolic material of the photograph and the material of my curiosities helped to gather pieces to form my Collage shown. This symbolically represents my mum's garden but also my curiosity about the place of Samoa.

This Collage which I call 'Mum's Garden' brings a sense of reconnection in the wake of the loss of my mum. It represents her and the way she adored her garden at home. Her attention to detail of placing her plants, the choice of flowers to be planted, and the maintenance she did around the house to keep her garden clean and tidy. Were symbolic moments of every day for me at home. Having these memories of my mum resurface while gazing at this Collage made me emotional. It shows the identity that is held within the drawing which symbolises my mum. This reminds me of the Samoan individual Alexa Masina, who I have discussed earlier in the contextual review. She received a taulima as a way to publicly identify her Samoan culture but on the skin, a marking that she will carry forever. Siapo being marked on material and is used in many forms inspired me to keep these drawings as souvenirs to keep. They draw personal reflections and representations of the family archival photographs.

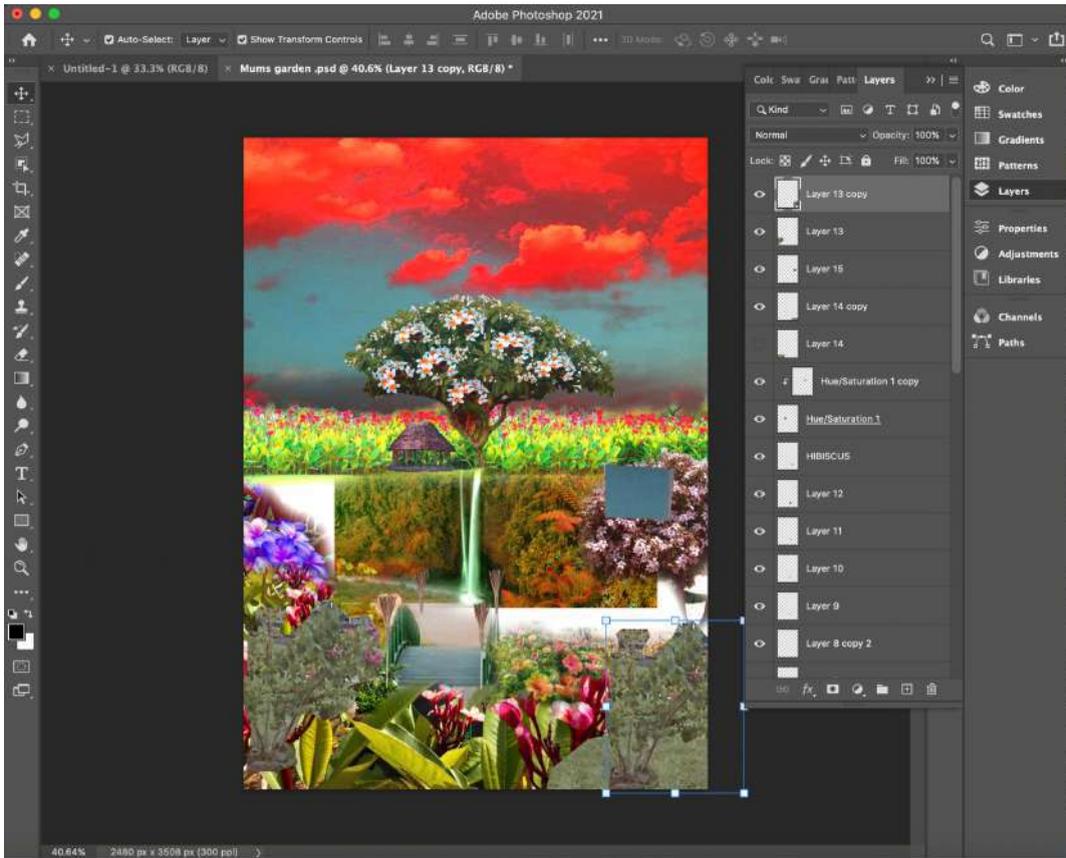
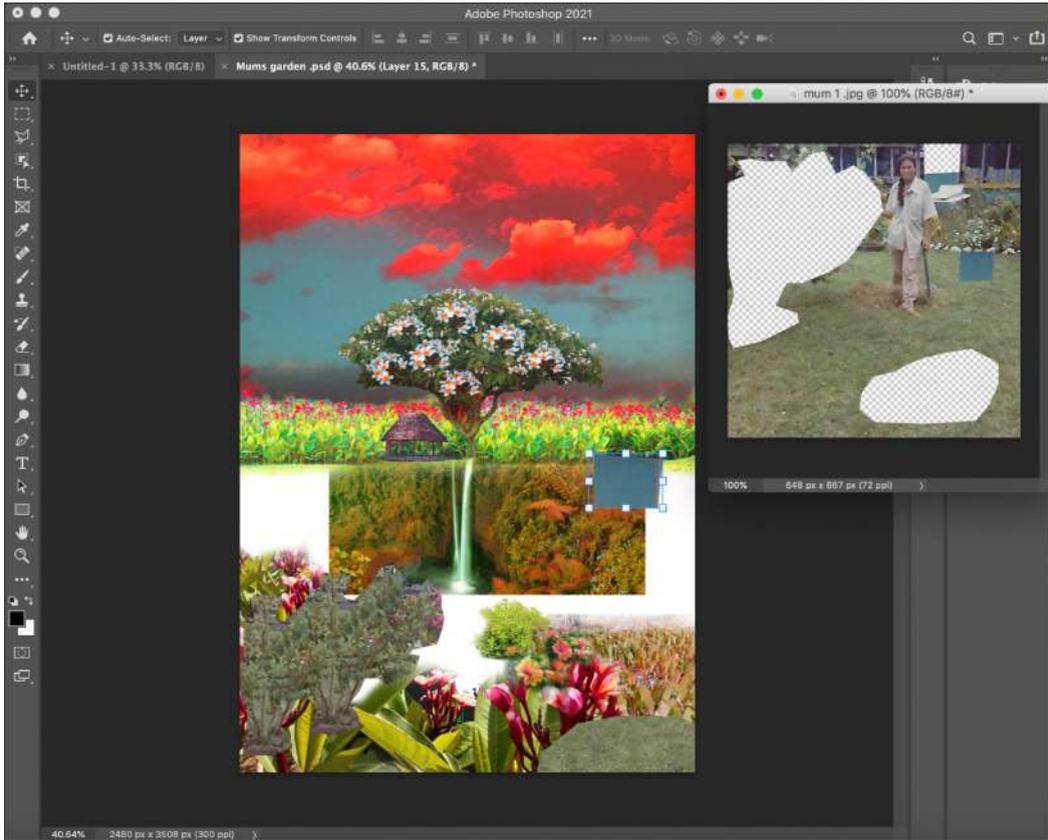


Fig 7.1: Mapusua, Julia. Photoshop: collage making. 2020
 Fig 7.2: Mapusua, Julia. Photoshop: collage making. 2020

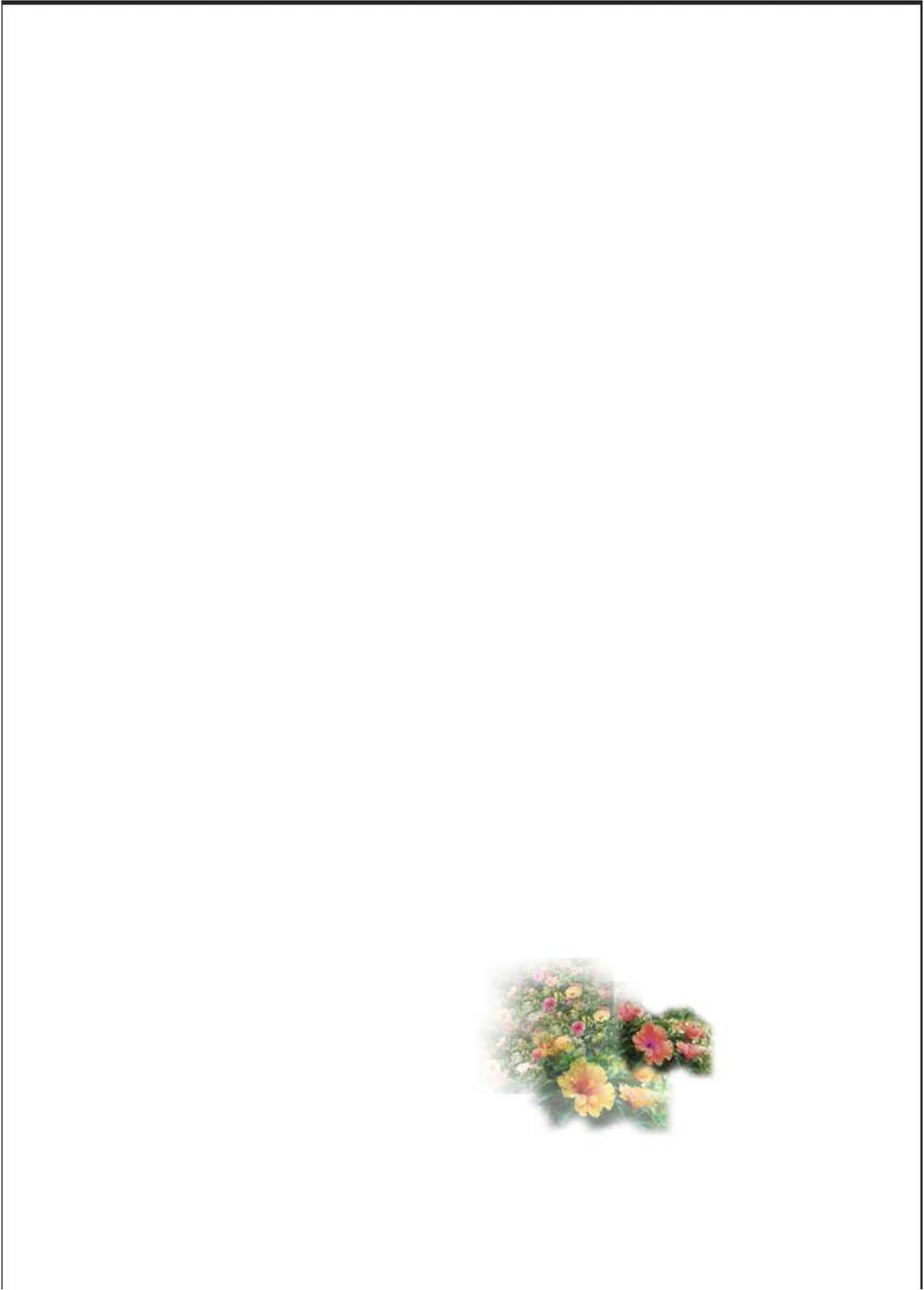


Fig 8.1: Mapusua, Julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden



Fig 8.2: Mapusua, Julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden with brooms. 2020



Fig 8.3: Mapusua, julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden with brooms and leaves. 2020



Fig 8.4: Mapusua, Julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden adding water. 2020



Fig 8.5: Mapusua. Julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden with colour. 2020



Fig 8.6: Mapusua, Julia. Collage Making: Mums Garden with almost full garden. 2020



Fig 8.7: Mapusua, Julia Collage Making: Mums Garden with waterfall. 2020



Fig 8.9: Mapusua, Julia Collage Making: Mums Garden with hill flower. 2020



Fig 8.10: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Garden. 2020

Gel medium transfer.

Gel medium transfer is a type of gel that lifts an image onto any form of surface. It became a way to transfer my digital drawings onto fabric. My first introduction to gel medium was by a high school teacher of a mixed design class. She showed me how to use gel medium and the way to use it. I intend to apply the teachings she taught me of this art medium in my drawing process. This art medium is like Collage but printed onto a surface. It consists of gathering material of different imagery or text, from books, magazines, photocopies of photographs and other forms of imagery that can be printed—then laying out the selected carefully. Gel medium is a permanent application onto material that takes time to process images, and also, the process itself consists of time that is needed to develop these prints.



Fig 9.1: Mapusua, Julia. Testing with Gel medium Transfer. 2020

Through the process of my image transfer using gel medium, I used my collage drawing called 'Mums Garden' (2020) to transfer onto material. Gel medium transfer comes in a variety of products that pertain to specific uses. I use matte gel and gloss for image transfer, which successfully lifts an image and prints it onto a surface. I began the process by setting the equipment needed into wet and dry making stations. Doing this was to create an accessible working space to travel between stations without any interference. I laid out my fabric next to my A3 printout of the drawing. Facing my picture upwards, exposing the image and where the gel medium placement will be applied to, I used a brush to help lay an even spread. Adding a good amount of gel for image transfer was vital because the drawing's detail and colour will not transfer if there is not enough gel spread throughout. The amount of gel used for my picture was the size of my palm. It was enough to cover the image leaving more gel to double the layers, making sure it was thoroughly soaked and coated in hopes of transferring an effective print.

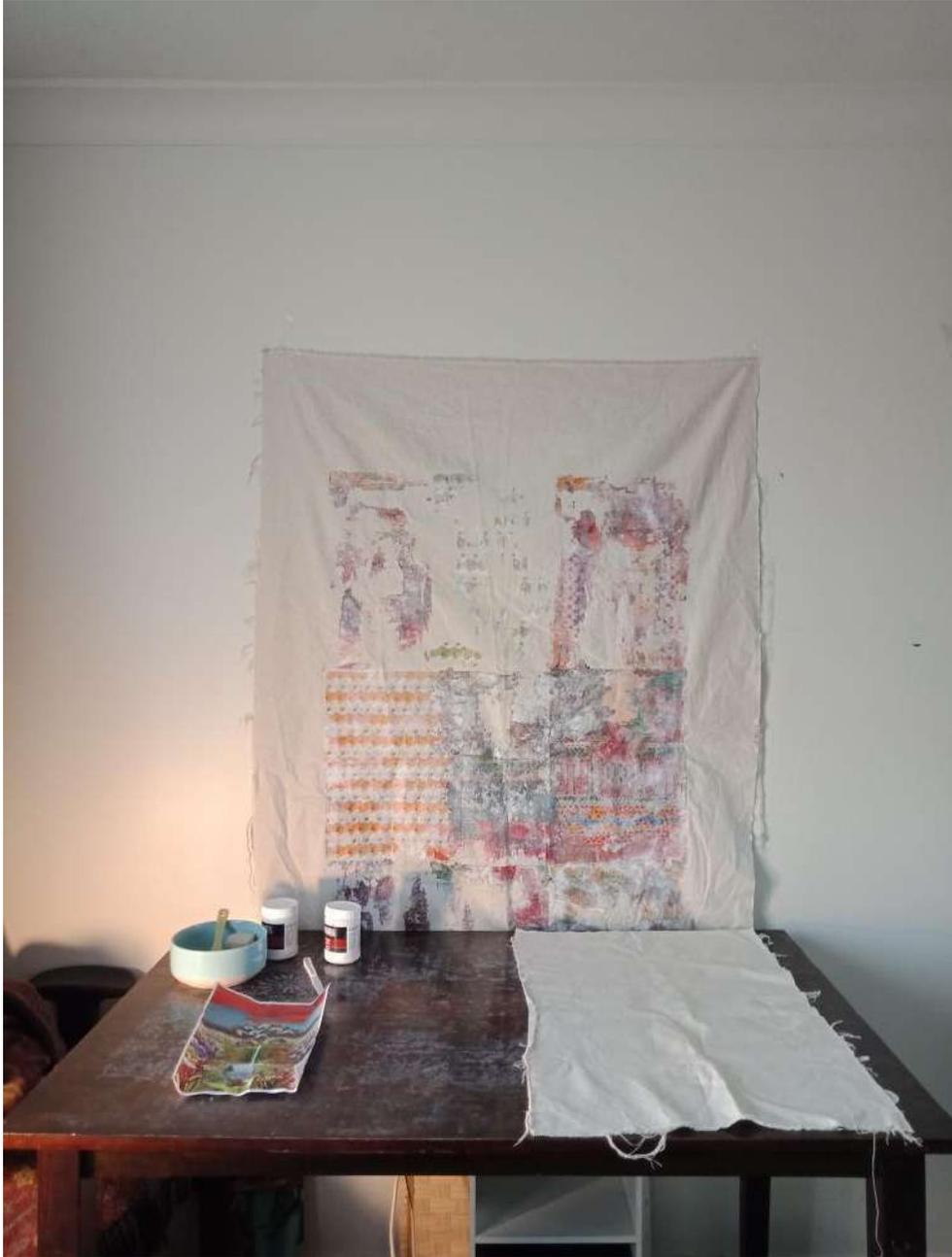


Fig 9.2: Mapusua, Julia. Making setup. 2021



Fig 9.3: Mapusua, Julia. Making setup. 2021

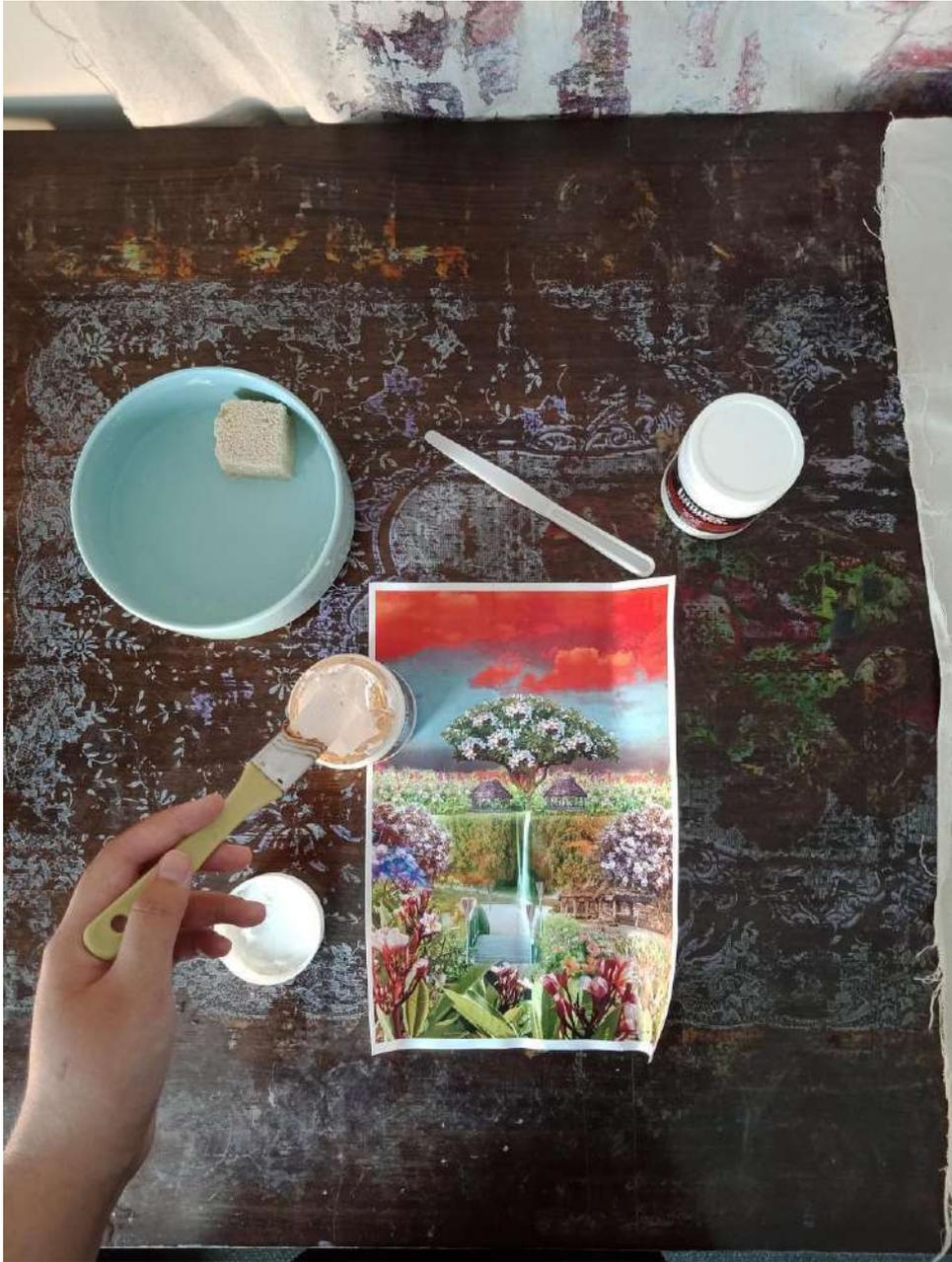


Fig 9.4: Mapusua, Julia. Gel medium applying gel liquid. 2021



Fig 9.5: Mapusua, Julia. Gel medium applying gel liquid. 2021



Fig 9.6: Mapusua, Julia. Gel medium applying gel liquid. 2021

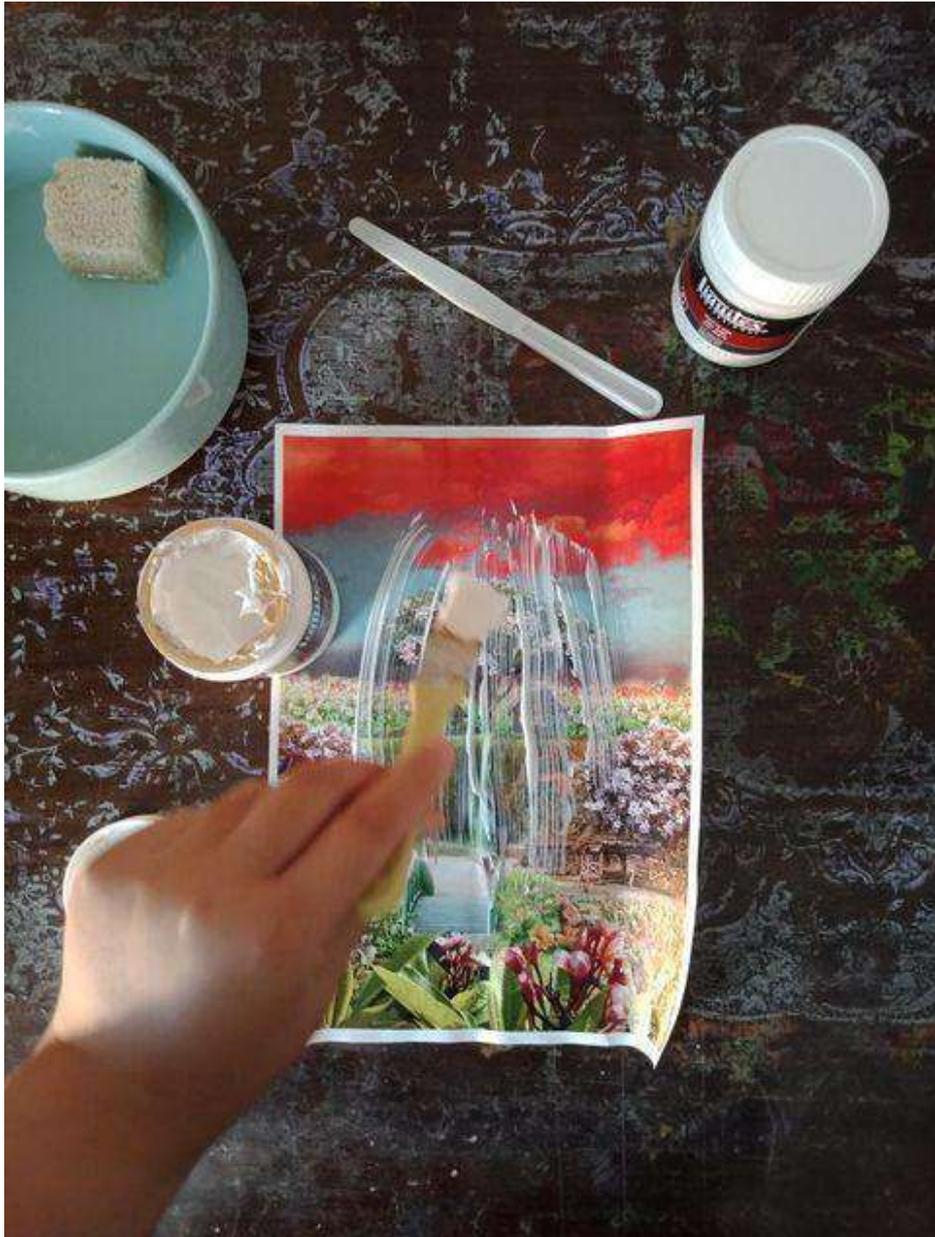


Fig 9.7: Mapusua, Julia. Gel medium applying gel liquid. 2021

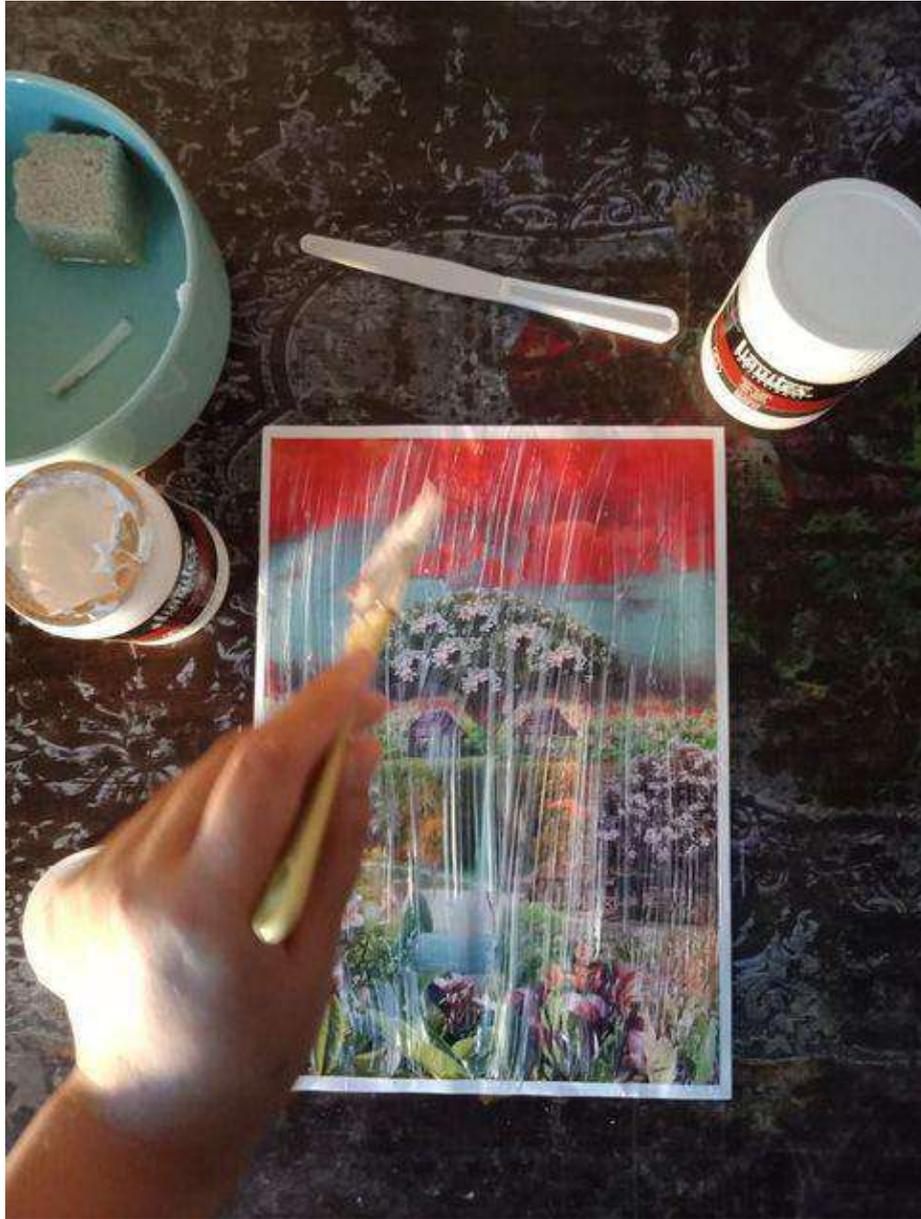


Fig 9.8: Mapusua, Julia. Gel medium applying gel liquid. 2021

When I finished applying the liquid evenly throughout the image, I moved the image onto the fabric, by facing the wet side of the image towards the material and the white backside of the print facing towards myself. From here, I began to flatten the image by pressing firmly all over the drawing and using a scraping tool to flatten any bumps or bubbles. Next, I left the picture to dry until the gel medium liquid is thoroughly soaked and pressed into the material. A faster process that I was taught was using a hairdryer over the work. I used a hairdryer to dry up my work but noticed how long and slow it was. I decided to use an iron at home to fasten the drying process. I placed another sheet of fabric over the work and began to iron on top of the sheet coverings of the work. The heat successfully travelled through into the work and was then ready for the next process.



Fig 10.1: Mapusua, Julia. Transferring Image with gel onto cloth. 2021

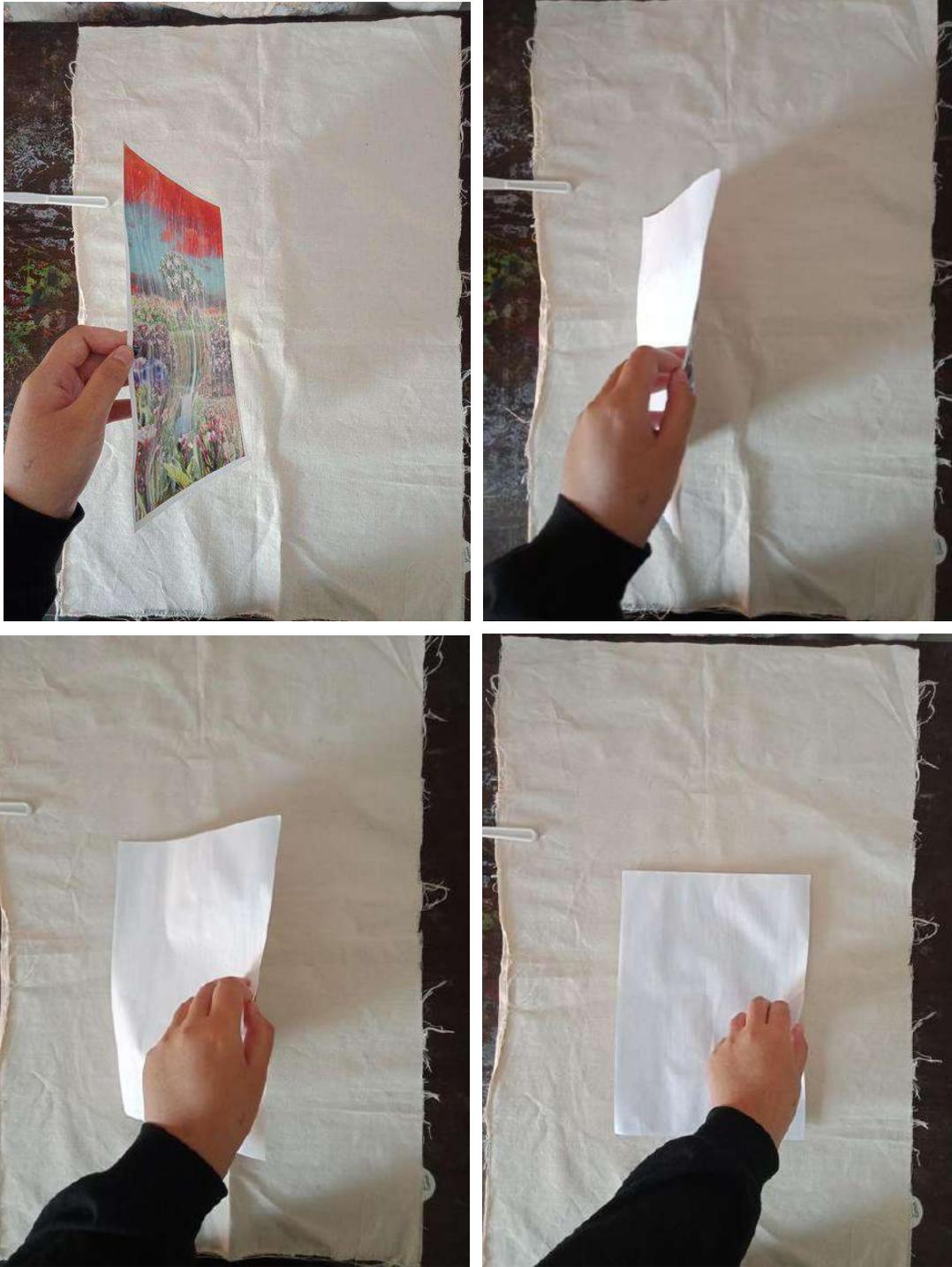


Fig 10.2-4: Mapusua, Julia. Transferring Image with gel onto cloth. 2021



Fig 10.6: Mapusua, Julia. Pressing Image with gel onto cloth. 2021

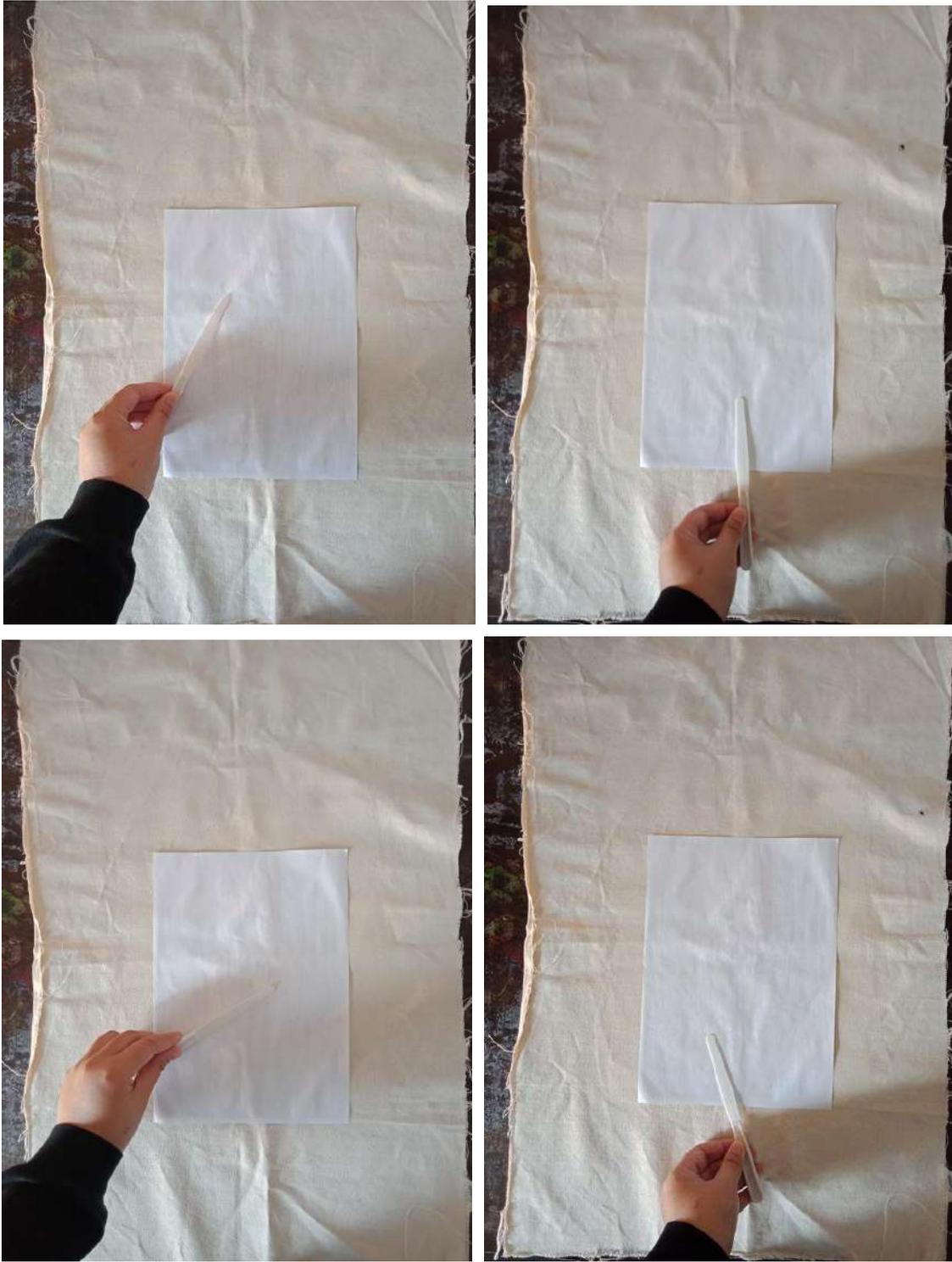


Fig 11.1-4: Mapusua, Julia. Using a scrape tool to flatten bubbles. 2021

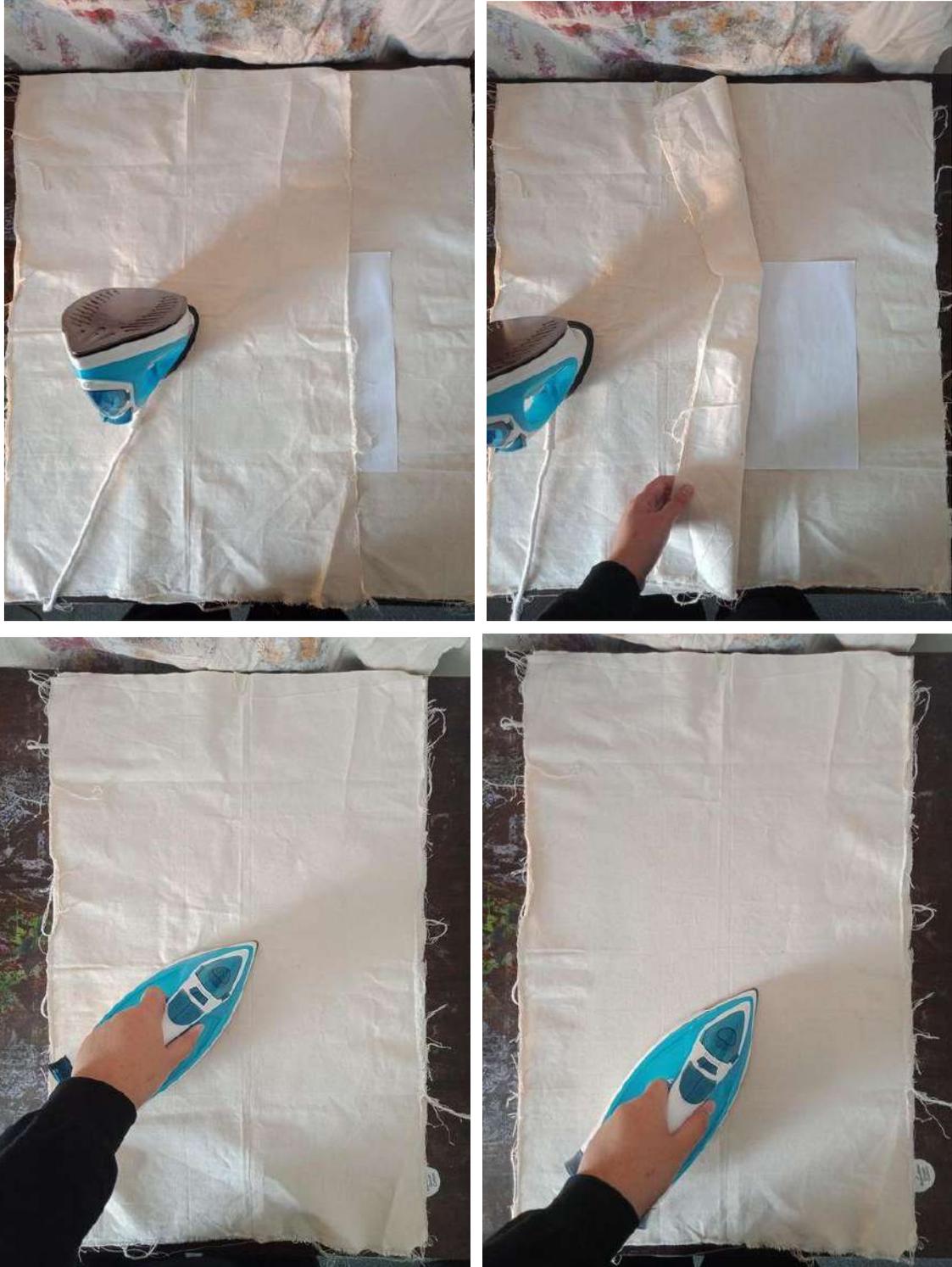


Fig 12.1-4: Mapusua, Julia. Iron to fasten the drying process. 2021

The next process is the final step to the image transfer, the rubbing process. It reveals the print of the drawing through a process of rubbing or peeling off the white layer. To do this, I set up my equipment first, which was a bowl of water, a small cloth and a sponge. This is the same equipment my high school teacher had when showing the process of rubbing through gel medium. Using the sponge, I dipped it into the bowl of water and began dabbing onto the drawing very lightly, focussing on the central part of the work. Adding a slight amount of water was to avoid soaking the image, which causes a rip and tears the work. Through dabbing using a watered sponge, I began to show the print. Seeing this happen was a signal for me to grab my cloth and rub off the white layer. Rubbing in a circular motion very gently, lifted off the white layer by collecting the white rubbings and slowly revealing the print of 'Mums Garden'. I continued to repeat the process of dabbing and rubbing until all the white layers were removed. During these stages, there were a couple of rubbings that tore off some of the image itself. It was not drastic, but this process revealed the brush strokes. It was creating scratches and tiny empty spaces, reminding me of the background screening of an old film tape or strip and adding a slight vintage aesthetic.



Fig 13.1: Mapusua, Julia. Rubbing process setup.2021



Fig 13.2: Mapusua, Julia. Dabbing with water process onto image.2021

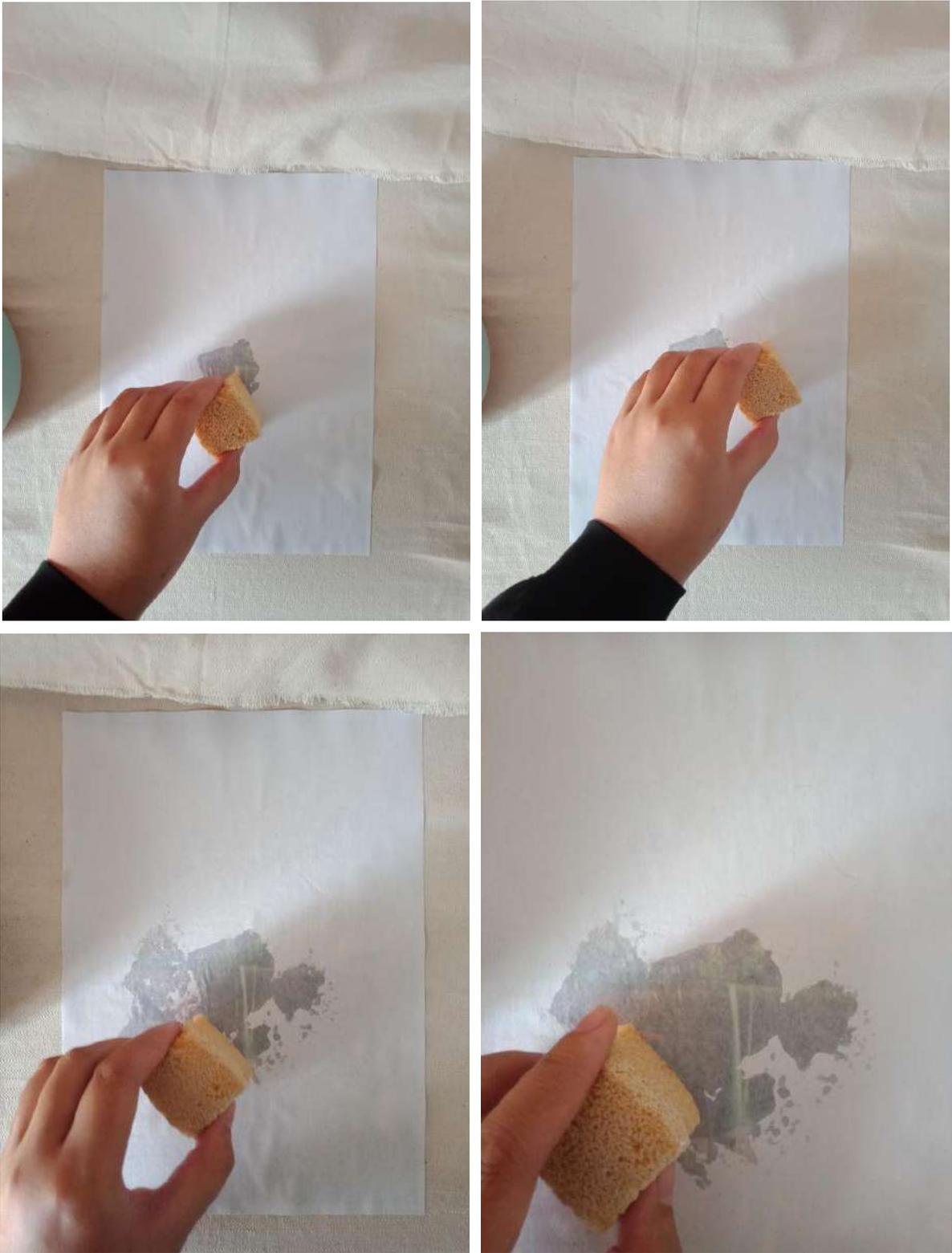


Fig 13.4-4: Mapusua, Julia. Dabbing with water process onto image revealing collage .2021



Fig 13.8: Mapusua, Julia. Dabbing with water process onto image revealing collage .2021



Fig 14.1-5: Mapusua, Julia. Rubbing process: using cloth to remove water layer, with circular motion. 2021

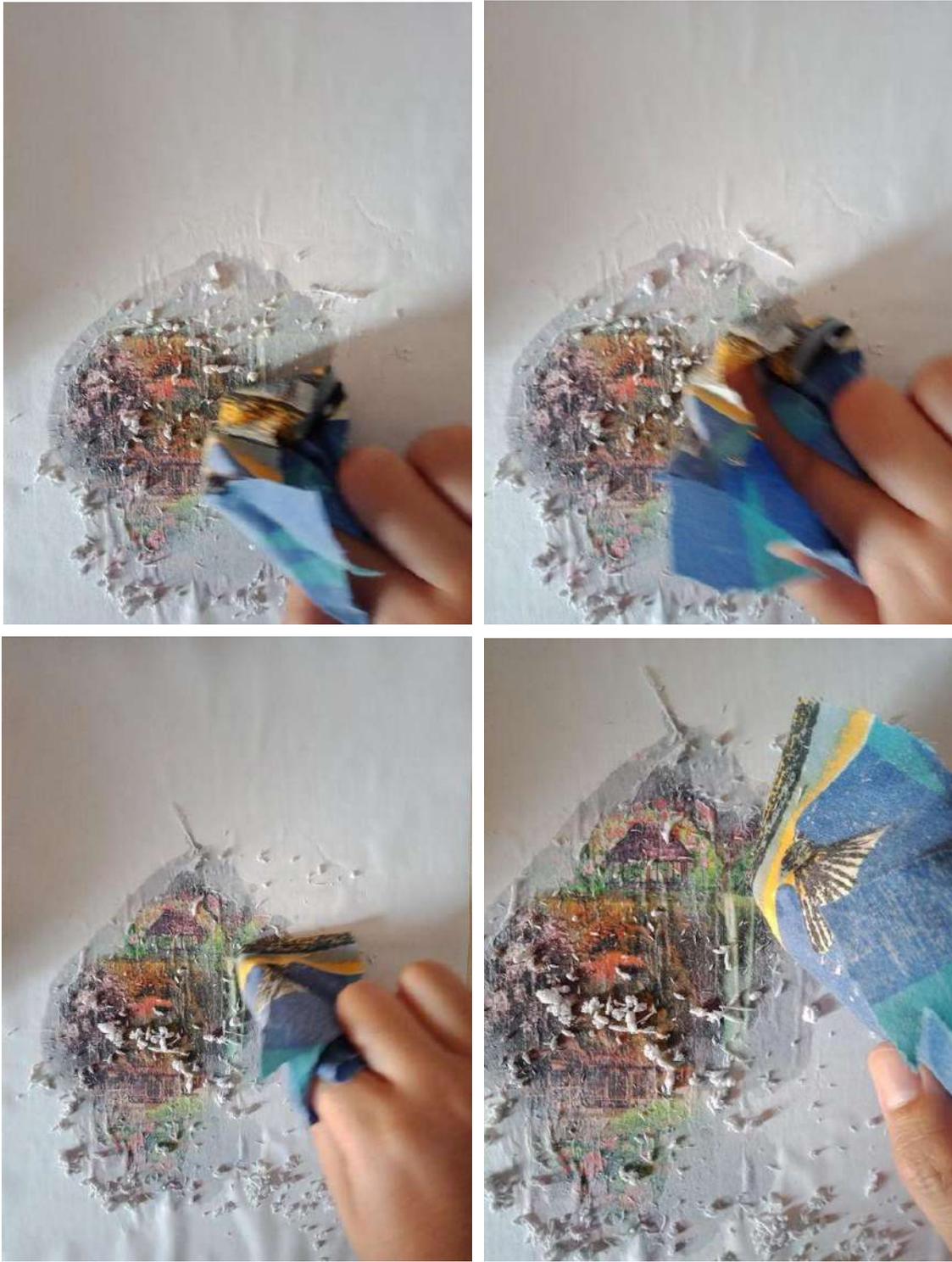


Fig 14.6-4: Mapusua, Julia. Rubbing process: revealing collage.2021



Fig 14.9-3:Mapusua, Julia. Rubbing process: revealing collage.2021

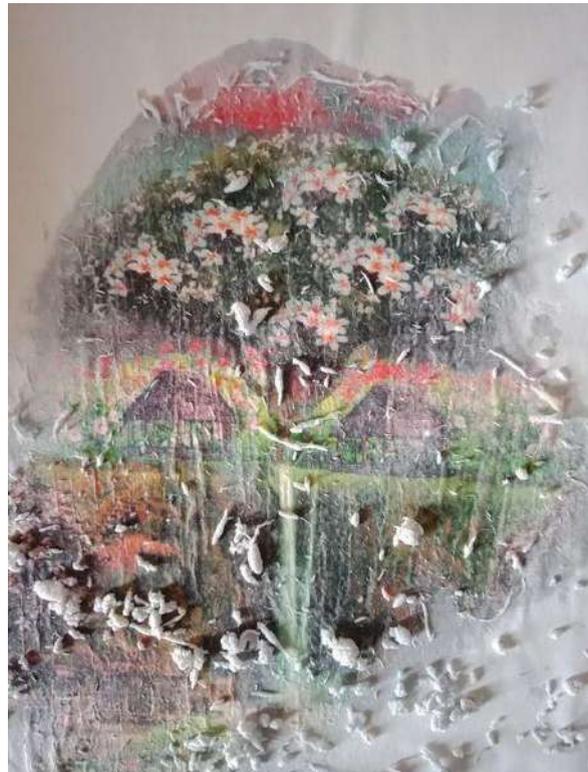


Fig 14.12: Mapusua, Julia. Rubbing process: revealing collage. 2021

The result of the image transfer using gel medium. I successfully printed my digital Collage onto the material. Through the rubbing process, it unravelled my reimaging of my mum's photograph, peeling away the white layer and revealing its printed transfer onto the surface of the material and becoming a souvenir to keep. This souvenir symbolises my mum's garden in Samoa. It recreates a family archival photograph of my mum through Collage - my mark-making tool. The Collage is created beyond the context of the photograph using my imagination to form my curiosity of the picture and the place of Samoa. Gathering these and using the context in the photograph helped to develop the narrative and establish symbolic representation. Taking elements from the picture that reflect Samoa and the image itself, forming a drawing that brings reconnection and belonging to the place of Samoa in the wake of loss.



Fig 15. 1: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Garden as Souvenir.2021



Fig 15. 1: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Garden as Souvenir.2021



Fig 15. 2: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Garden with photograph. 2021

Analysis of practice

My project seeks to explore a collection of family archival material, in the wake of the loss of my mum. These archives which are seen of my mum's lifetime are all commonly captured in Samoa. Taken before I was born and a place that I have never been. Using my curiosity about the place and symbolic elements from the photo itself as material, I develop a reimaging of the photographs through drawing. Collage being my mark-making tool and a form of storytelling I gather different materials that collectively reflect Samoa and the context of the pictures—forming a collage consisting of these reflections and drawing onto reconnection and belonging. Gel medium transfer, my printing process of applying my Collage drawing onto a material, will form a souvenir for myself to keep. Through this project, I aim to create drawings from these collections of family archival material to have a collection of souvenirs to keep as memories and to gift to family members.



Fig 16: Mapusua, Julia. Collection of my family archival photographs.2021



Fig 17: Mapusua, Julia. Large cloth of gel medium transfer prints. 2020

As I began my drawing practice, I went through the collection of family archives and chose a photograph to create a collage from. I picked a photo of my mum, posed next to three other young women. Analysing the picture in detail helps me to examine and establish the narrative of my mark-making drawing and its symbolic material to use. In the photograph, my mum is wearing an orange hair towel on her head, with a pattern design shirt of brown and blue colour. My mum is standing beside a woman, with two other women sitting in front of her. They are positioned outside the front door that gives entry into the home. The colour of Mum's house was turquoise and the image reveals a little detail of the home's material. My interest in this photograph is in the house itself. Analysing the photo we see that it only shows a feature of the house, leaving curiosities about what the rest of the house looks like. Wondering what materials are used to build the house? What type of stylised gardens are around the house, What types of windows are used for the house and many other features of Mum's home. From these curiosities, I began to imagine home. More specifically, the front of the house forms a pathway in the middle that leads into the entry door of the home. Showing what is ahead of the two young women sitting down and the context behind my mum and the other woman next to her.



Fig 18:Mapusua, Julia. Photograph of Mum wearing an orange towel. 2020

To start my Collage I opened Photoshop, creating a new canvas to build onto. I had a physical copy of the photograph I stuck it onto my computer screen, with my digital file of collage work called 'Mums Garden' opened as a guide and inspiration to help me create my drawing. Looking at the photograph, I was drawn to make the door first. It was the only clear symbolic element to the setting of the picture. The photograph showed clear detailing of the material to work with. The door's materials were wood with diagonal panels as a design and glass for the windows. Gathering this analysis helped me collect material from online sources that reflect the door captured in the photo. Through searching, I found materials that would help construct my door. But as I layered my materials onto the canvas, I found it challenging to design or build my door, in a way that reflects the photograph and the place of Samoa. What was difficult was trying to manipulate these new materials of wood and glass into my drawings. My last drawing consisted of all-natural surroundings such as flowers and plants, with bright, exaggerated colours and life. I was trying to develop these materials in the same way by changing the door's colour, using the bucket tool on photoshop and adjusting its colour tones to match the earthly tones of the land in Samoa, which are shown in some family photographic archives.

I realised through this difficulty that the drawing process of making 'Mums Garden' is a different narrative and set of symbolic elements compared to this drawing of "Mums Home". For the work of Mums Garden, it was essentially gathering material such as flowers, trees, grass, water, fields and everything that a garden could have into my Collage. Assembling it was easy because I used the style of overlapping to form, structure and bring all materials together, resulting in the outcome of the work. On the other hand, making the collage work of 'Mums Home' is a process of building the home in detail by using a single symbolic element derived from the photograph to build, shape and join the house with details that show each material of the construction of the house.

As a solution to build my 'Mums Home' I decided to bring forward flowers into the construction of the door. The work of 'Mums Garden' influenced the use of flowers as materiality. The way it represented my mum but also symbolised aspects of the place of Samoa. I started to gather flowers from online sources. Using Photoshop, I placed all flower material onto the canvas. I began cutting out the flowers individually to form individual motifs that would create detail in the door's construction. Through this process, I started to think about ways of incorporating these flowers as a detail or fixture to the door. I began rearranging, erasing, placing them below and above the door. It became frustrating. I reflected on the previous Collage and thought about the processes of making 'Mum's Garden' to help and bring inspiration. I realised at that moment, overlapping the materials brought the formation and structure to the drawing. Realising this allowed me to test my flowers on the door by overlapping them. By overlapping, it brought forward repetition. I began to duplicate my flower motifs repeatedly around the shape of the door.

This reminded me of a flower lei that is placed around a frame of a photograph. Which honours and celebrates someone within a photo, displayed in a Pacific family living room. The construction of a flower lei more specifically, is what reminded me of the overlapping I began to do and the gathering of symbolic elements from photographs centred around my mothers lifetime in Samoa. How a flower lei is made, consists of a string and artificial flowers. A String holds the flowers together by inserting a thread through the centre of a flower. Continually adding flowers through the string, until it reaches the end of the thread and tied by a knot to keep it together, forms the flower lei. This process enabled me to use the repetition of flowers or any symbolic elements derived from the photographs as a drawing language to honour and celebrate my mothers lifetime. Just as a flower lei gathers flowers together repetitively, I intended to use this method to gather all symbolic elements and flowers

together to shape my drawings and reimaginings. Reconnecting myself to my mum through the wake of loss.



Fig 19.1: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door. 2020



Fig 19.2: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with flowers. 2020



Fig 19.3: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with details. 2020



Fig 19.4: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with details. 2020



Fig 19.5: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with details. 2020



Fig 19.6: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with details. 2020

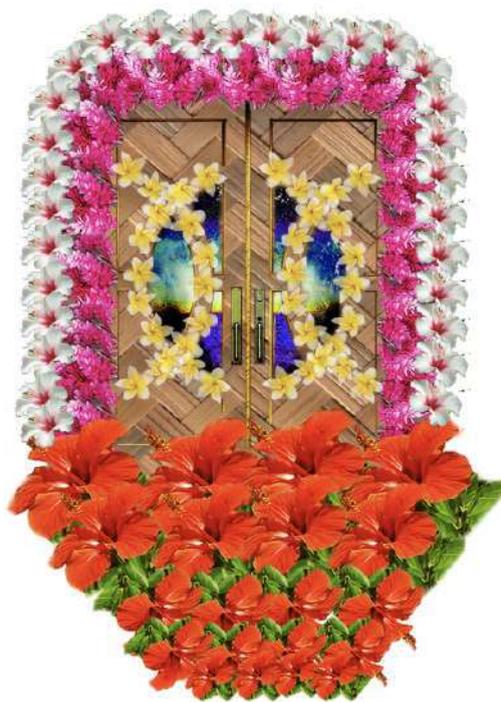


Fig 19.7: Mapusua, Julia, Collage making of Mums Home front door with flower doosteps. 2020

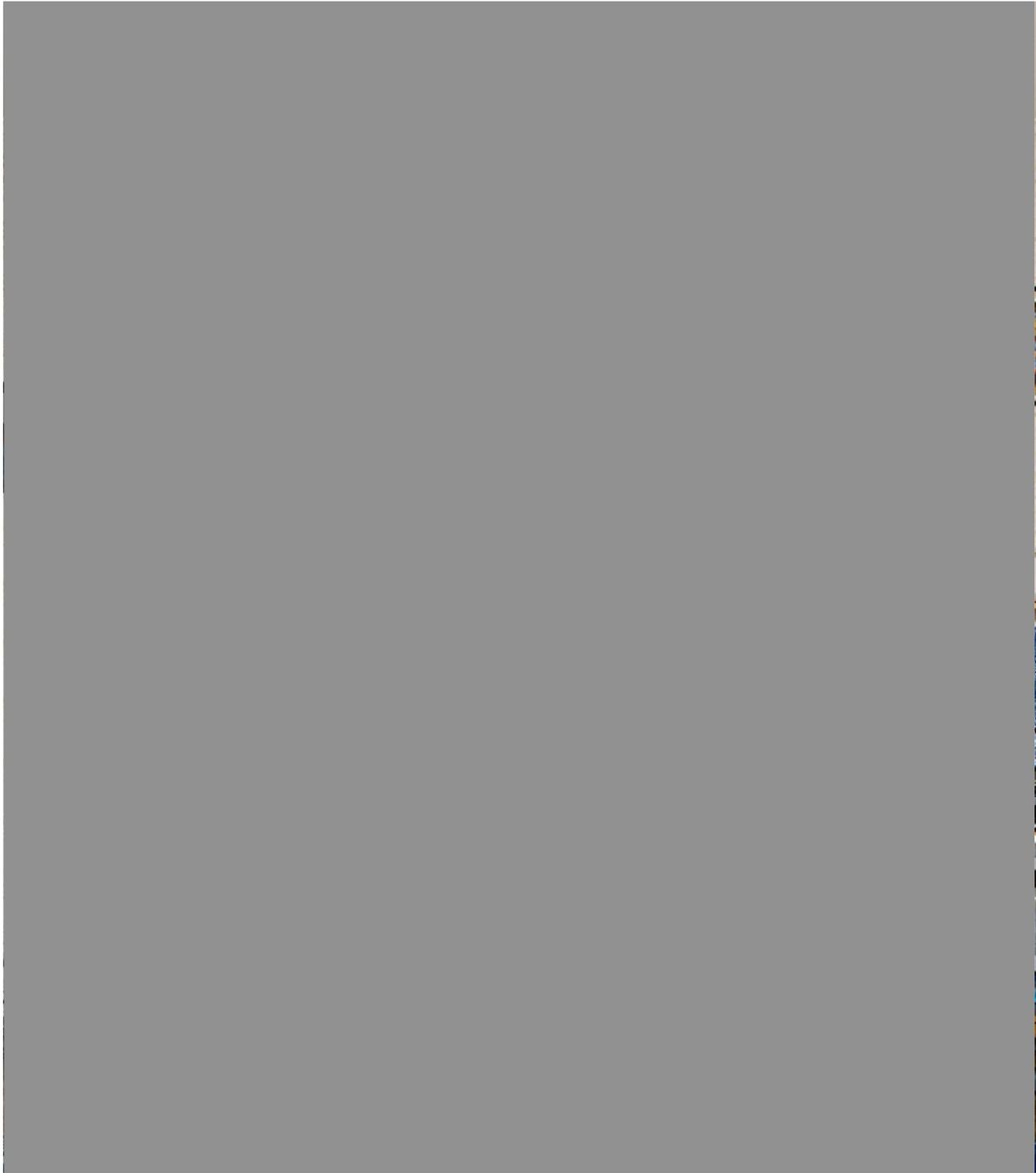
Within Pacific homes, especially the living rooms, are full of symbolic elements of the island life within the house. We sometimes see multiple layered sheets of flower prints as coverings for the walls and ceilings, flower leis around every photo frame, Chinese mats as flooring, multiple plants ranging in size, trophies stacked or scattered around every corner of the house, couches being covered with flower-patterned sheets, vibrant flowers surrounding the tv unit, traditional island tools or items displayed and many more. Everything that represents the island place is displayed in the living room. This aesthetic is usually referenced as Fob which is an acronym called 'fresh out the boat'. In context, fob is described as an immigrant who has arrived in a foreign country and is yet to settle or assimilate to the culture, instead of continuing to live in their cultural or ethnic way. I call this aesthetic of a Polynesian home fresh interiors based upon the context of the acronym. Seeing a home in New Zealand with a 'fresh interior' is bringing the island home to home, keeping the connection. Through this revelation, I began to construct my door and other features of 'Mums Home' based upon the aesthetic style of fresh interiors and the construction and the meaning of a flower lei. As a continuation from duplicating the flower motifs around the door. Layering and repetition of motifs were inspired by the flower lei placed around the photograph, it became the process to what creates the fob aesthetic. This style has brought a sense of belonging through layering and repetition, forming a drawing language that expresses my reimaginings.



Amituanai, Edith. 'ATALANI' 2008, from the series Millenial C-type photograph.. Sourced: <https://edithamituanai.com/INTERIORS-Anchorage-Apia-AKL>



Amituanai, Edith. 'ATALANI' 2008, from the series Millenial C-type photograph.. Sourced: <https://edithamituanai.com/INTERIORS-Anchorage-Apia-AKI>



Amituanai, Edith. 'ATALANI' 2008, from the series Millenial C-type photograph.. Sourced:
<https://edithamituanai.com/INTERIORS-Anchorage-Apia-AKI>

As a result, I continued to use the process form of layer and repetition of flowers around the house by shaping and outlining. This formed the roofing and material of my 'Mum's Home', the windows, the door, the pathway garden and the doorsteps as shown. Continuing to use flowers is a symbolic reference to a flower lei which honours and celebrates my mum's lifetime seen in the works of 'Mums Garden' and 'Mums Home'. Layer and repetition create my drawing language. It is based on fresh interiors. Fresh interior in my drawing language brings a sense of belonging to my drawing practice, the island interior within a Polynesian home. I use this aesthetic to reconnect and bring a sense of belonging to the place of Samoa. Fresh interiors within an island home display symbolic elements that bring the island home to home, sustaining connection.



Fig 19.8: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home pathway.2021



Fig 19.9: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home windows. .2021



Fig 19.9: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home material leaves. .2021



Fig 19.11: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home material flower outlines .2021



Fig 19.12: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home material flower roof .2021



Fig 19.13: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home material flower filled roof .2021



Fig 19.14: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home .2021



Fig 19.14: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home .2021



Fig 19.16: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home with sky .2021



Fig 19.17: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home with green sky .2021



Fig 19.19: Mapusua, Julia. Collage making of Mums Home 2020



Fig 20.1: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Home on cloth with photograph.2021



Fig 20.2: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Home with photographs. 2021

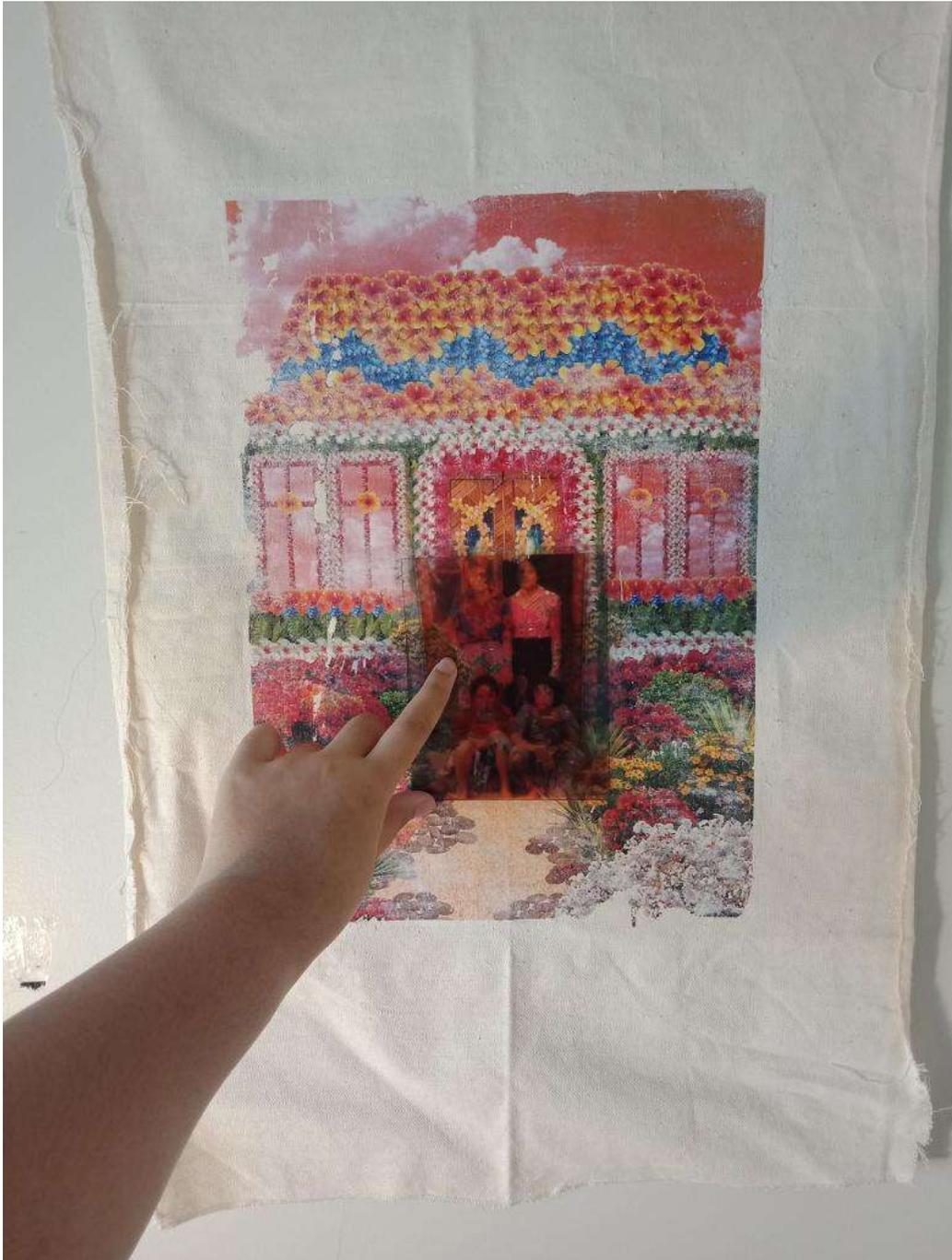


Fig 20.3: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Home with photographs. 2021



Fig 20.4: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Home with photographs. 2021

Third Drawing:
Mums Backyard (2020)



Fig 21.1: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Backyard drawing. 2020.



Fig 21.2: Mapusua, Julia. Mums Backyard onto cloth with photographs.. 2020.



Fig 21.3: Mapusua, Julia. Mums backyard with photographs.2021

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to find reconnection and a sense of belonging through family archival photographs that captured moments of my mum's lifetime and, my descended place of home, Samoa. Through autoethnographic research, I use personal reflection and experience to express my project and drawing practice. I have unpacked a detailed description of my drawing practice and ideas about my project. Mark making is a form of storytelling. It is an art form that consists of drawing lines, shapes and designs, to symbolise the cultural origins and representation of culture and lineage. We see this explored in the Samoan Tatau, Taulima and Siapo. These traditional art forms became a way to display cultural identity on the skin and material, bringing a sense of reconnection and belonging to Polynesian individuals and communities.

The exploration of mark-making in this project is a form of art that brings a sense of belonging and reconnection through drawing. Using family archival photographs and my curiosities as narratives, Collage is a mark-making tool that brings all materials to form a picture and the Gel medium transfer process to transfer my digital drawing to the material. It became a souvenir to keep. Through these methods, I expressed personal reflection. I drew together drawings that brought representation and reconnection to the photograph and a sense of belonging using the aesthetic style.

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Appendix

Collection of Drawing Reimaginings:
Drawings made from family photographic archives.

Mums Photo Wall 2020



Fig 22:1 Mums Photo Wall 2020

Mums Front Door



Fig 22:2 Mums Front Door 2020

Dads Unit



Figure 22:3 Dads Unit 2020

Living Room



Fig 22:4 Mums Living Room 2020

Food Storage



Fig 22:5 Mums Food Storage 2020

Mum's Fale



Fig 22:6 Mums Fale Samoa 2020

Mums Village



Fig 22:7 Mums Village Afega 2020

Family Feast



Fig 22:8 Mums Family Feast 2020

Wedding Dress



Fig 22-9 Mums Wedding Dress 2020

Mum and Dad

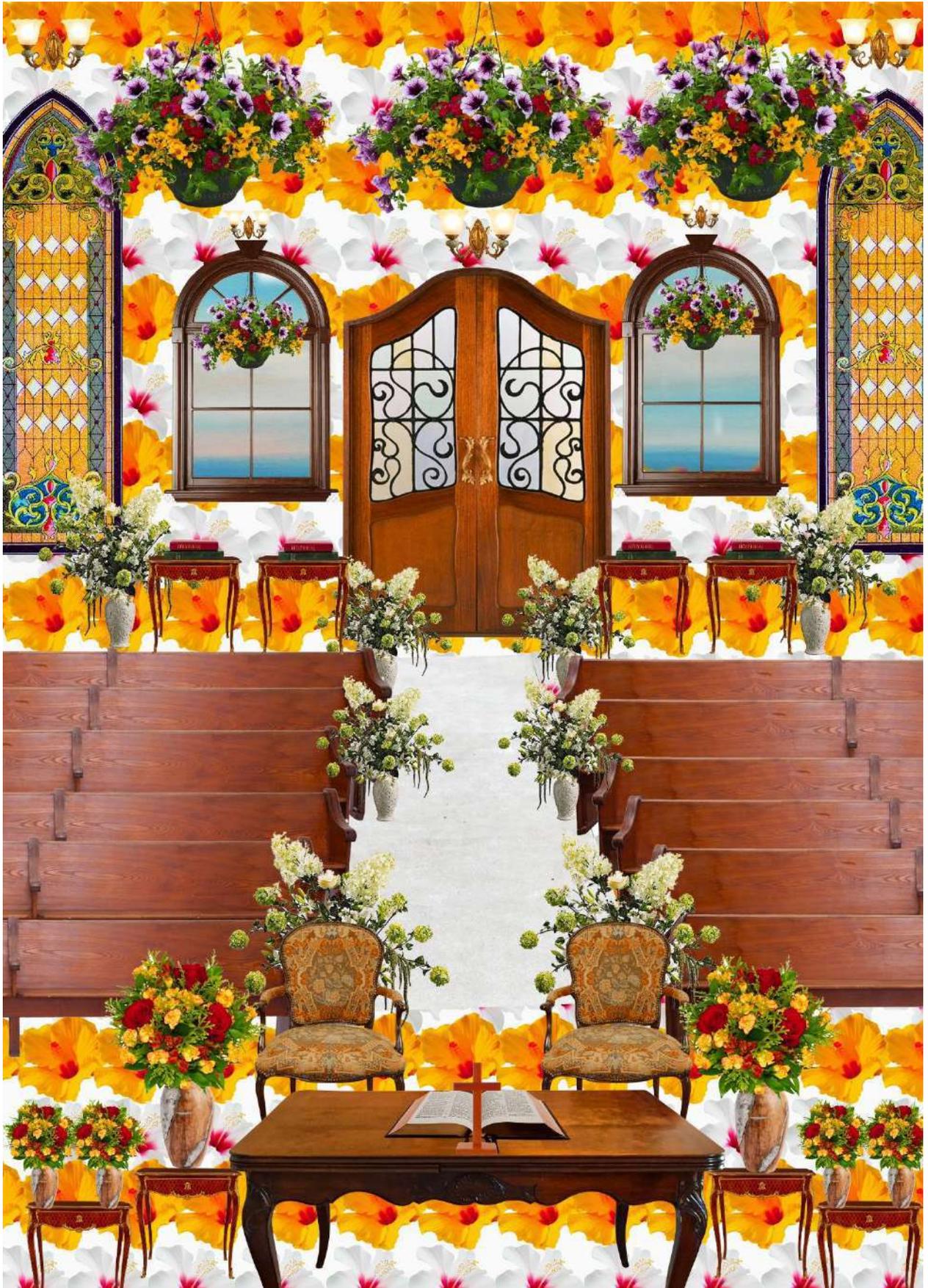


Fig 22:10 Mum and Dad 2020

Wedding Day

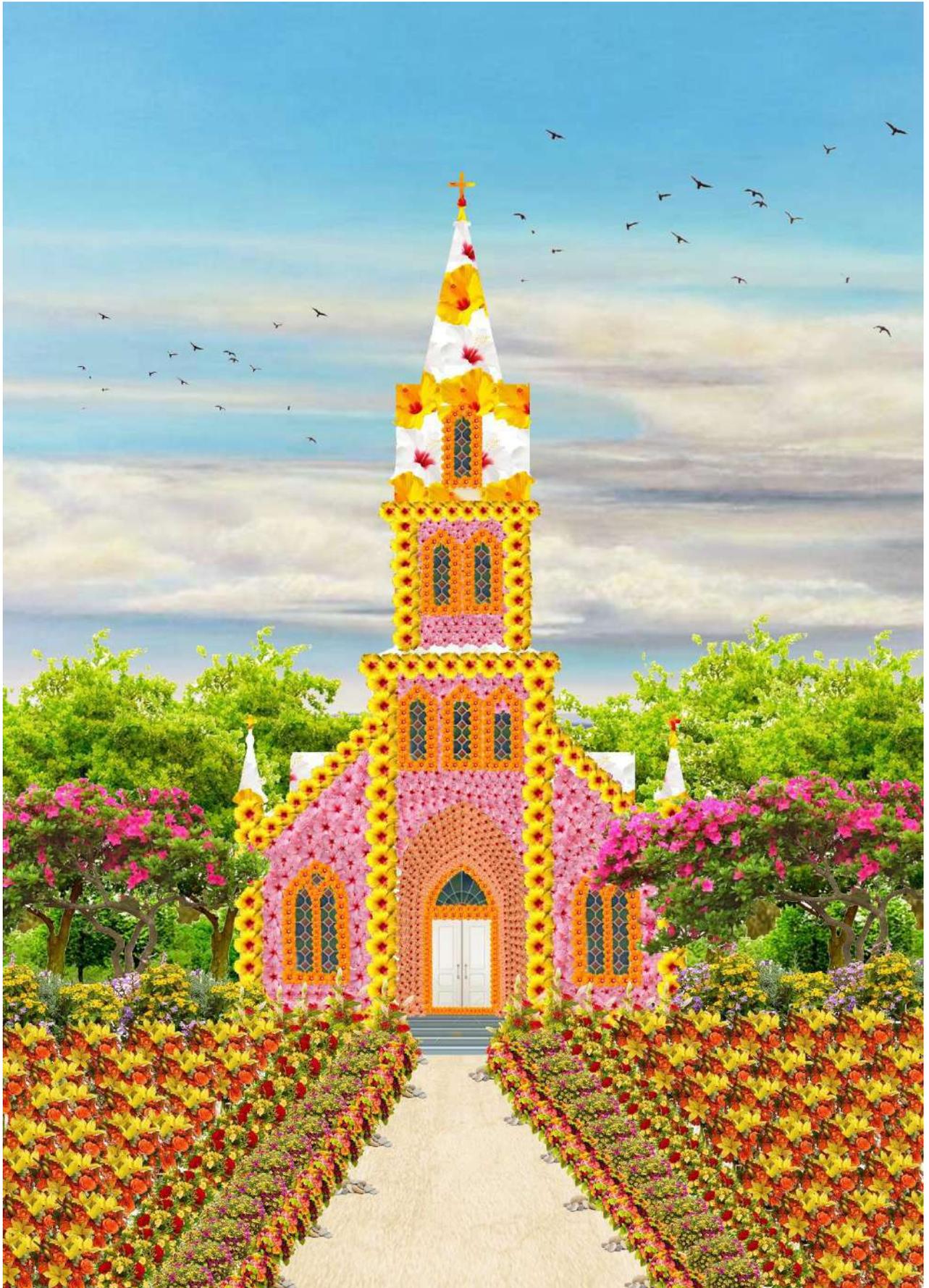


Fig 22:11 Mums Wedding Day 2020

Wedding Cake and Garden



Fig 22:12 Wedding Cake and Garden 2020

Gallery Exhibition



Fig 23:1 Reimaginings of Mums Garden and Photo wall 2020
Fig 23:2 Reimaginings of photo collection



Fig 23:3 Reimaginings of photo collection



Fig 23:4 Dad Unit on material



Fig 23:5 Reiamginings of photo collection
Fig 23:6 Reiamginings of photo collection



Fig 23:6 Reamainings of photo collection