

Statement

“Will the Earth talk? It already has.” — Dolores Reyes, *Earthater*.

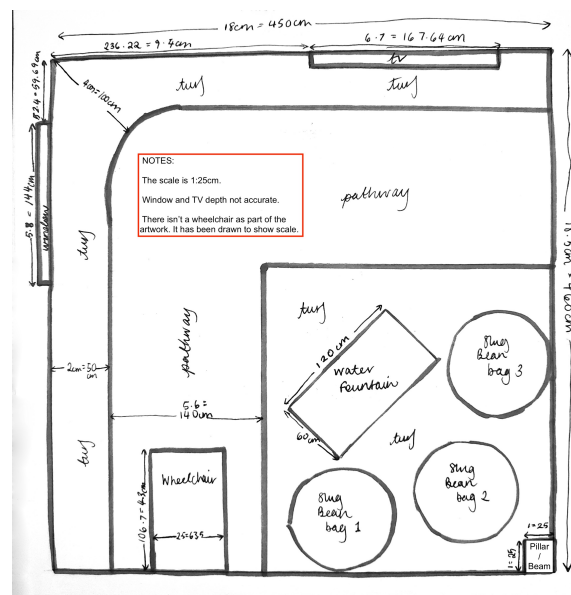
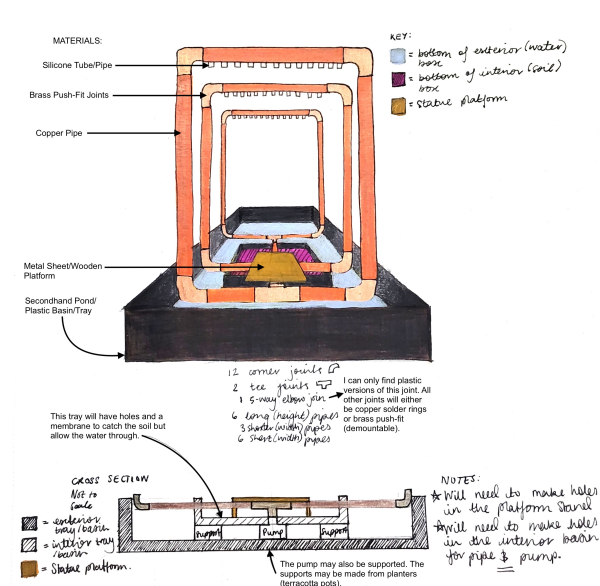
Last academic year, I dreamt of embodying a persona within my practice that was “part of this world and not”, someone “otherworldly, leaking and bleeding, taking up space...making a mess and not cleaning it up”. This body was “weighed down”, and so they waded through this world. I drew and still draw upon Hedva’s *Sick Woman Theory*, Kristeva’s theory of the Abject, Creed’s *Monstrous Feminine*, the films *Alien* (1979) and *Possession* (1981), and Hippocrates and Aristotle’s theories on gender differences. Whilst I have I decided to decentre my personal trauma in my work, it remains personal (and thus political) as it is informed by my feelings and opinions, both of which were shaped by my experiences under a brutal patriarchal, ableist and racist capitalist system. Whilst my work may not point to something through a direct reference, it is moulded by all that I love, hate and feel apathetic towards.

This year, the figure I had envisioned mutated when I saw and read Abi Palmer’s *Slime Mother* exhibition and *Slugs: A Manifesto*, and Monster Chetwynd’s 2018-19 Tate Commission, transforming and being actualised as Frank in *Feeling/Thinking/Being Sluggish*. When you search the word “slug” most of the results are about “getting rid of” or “controlling” them. Slugs get a lot of grief for their existence. I wonder whether they feel a sense of grief for what they taste, touch, smell and see underfoot. But even this thought concerns me: must we identify ourselves in others to feel empathy? A question that adopting a vegan lifestyle and reading Butler’s Parable of the Sower raised for me. Quietly confrontational, my work chews this cud.

I’ve been obsessed with vulnerability, boundaries and decay. I have always wallowed in and about wounds. Recently I’ve been mulling over our collective cravings, as our hunger hones in and locates our needs: rest, pleasure, love...

Slugs have also heavily influenced my practice theoretically and formally. I have slowed down production and focused on intuitive, feeling-focused making. I have chosen to work at a smaller, more storable scale refusing to work larger, acknowledging that an artwork can be interesting in more ways than scale, particularly when large work indicates class or gender related privilege as some artists do not have a problem obtaining large quantities of resources and/or taking up space. I applied a circular economy to my acquisition of materials — using up materials I already owned, reusing and repurposing objects people were getting rid of, and opting for materials that can be recycled when buying new. Lastly, I have chosen to mainly produce

My work this year has been situated in liminal spaces such as the gallery, polished performance spaces, or other depersonalised but intimate spaces such as the foyer, shower room and toilet. Locality is integral to my work, with spaces being chosen to enhance and further communicate concepts and themes of a piece.



Inspired by Somerset House's Soil exhibition, Hozier's Unreal Unearth: Unending album cover and Reyes *Earthater*, *Seductive Sludge* presents a

possession that occurs through the consumption of soil, providing the earth a means to speak and be heard.

The water feature nods towards nature's duality — water is tranquil and healing but also dangerous and degrades even stone — and how private water companies have reinforced the latter and made it dangerous for other reasons.² How quickly will this water dissolve a slug? Will they get to experience pleasure first?

Footnotes

1. When testing for phosphates and nitrates using an Earthwatch test, the sample test tube will go pink if there are high levels. High levels indicate that the water is polluted with agricultural and sewage waste.
2. Private water companies have been dumping raw sewage into our rivers and other waterways. This means that it is often not even safe to swim in these bodies of water.