TOOLS OF THE CULL







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INTRODUCTION

Meat in the modern world can be brought trimmed, coloured and packaged in clean plastic from a supermarket, an image far from its original animal. This distance allows the consumer to remove the meat from the animal making the process of being a meat eater much less thoughtful or considered. I think people need to reconsider meat, this project will help contemplate the way we source our food and what we deem to be edible. As well as promoting the need to reconnect with the animal's life we take to allow for a deeper understanding and meaning to our consumption of meat. I have demonstrated the process of the cull along with an understanding of the mortality of an animal through the creation of wearable instructional jewellry.



RETHINKING MEAT

Last summer I returned to my home in rural Cumbria. I found that I started to rethink meat in relation to the animal that provided it. Finding myself re-immersed in a rural community and being surrounded by agricultural land and a farmed landscape I realised that when I lived in a city environment I had become less aware of the connection between the meat I ate and the source animal. I completely forgot about the relationship between meat and animal. I became concerned with my own unintentional, unconsidered, approach to being a carnivore. I would buy meat from a supermarket where it would be trimmed, coloured and cut to suit the modern carnivore with no reference to the animal that generated it hence causing a loss in thought and understanding behind the loss of animal life.

Returning to Cumbria made me reconsider my approach to being a carnivore. The local farmingcommunity is populated by families who raise, tend and eventually slaughter their own animals and also hunt and cull in order to protect the land for the process. It was the process of the cull that made me re-evaluate not only the source of meat but also the means in which we procure it.

Culling is a necessary task in an agricultural environment in order to keep populations of other species under control and to ensure the health and productive output of the land. As a consequence of my experience of a local rabbit cull I developed the notion behind this years' project. Rabbits are a non-indigenous species to Britain. They can reproduce quickly on a large scale and the increased population causes problems with the destruction of crops and cross contamination of soil where the rabbits have been digging. Consequently regular culls are carried out to maintain numbers at an acceptable level. During the cull a number of rabbits are killed to reduce the overall population. However, even these small numbers are too many for the local farmers involved to utilise for meat and a large percentage are wasted.

The two factors of the loss of consideration towards the mortality of animals for meat eaters as well as the waste of life resulting from culls led me to develop an idea of eating what we cull in Britain. The notion of a deeper understanding of the process of the cull and the loss of animal life associated, could lead to a more considered approach for the everyday carnivore as well as more respect for the animals we cull in Britain.







CAST RINGS

In order to rethink the notion behind the animal I wanted to demonstrate the new image that an animal that is commonly culled in Britain could have in a society which is more accepting about the type of meat it eats.

Picking three animals that are culled in Britain I produced some designs which provide an illustrative image of animals and the food it could become on the same level as chicken could be Sunday roast.

I considered rings as the main product behind this idea as the culling process is based on hand skills such as shooting as well as stripping and butchering. I wanted the rings to have no defined beginning or end as I feel this allows for rabbit to be seen as an animal in its own right and also as a source of food in its incorporation into rabbit pie. Hence I have made a ring to flow from rabbit to pie to pie to rabbit in a continuous fashion.

















This collection of images from the Hunting Museum in Munich was a huge influence on the aesthetics of my cast rings. It allowed me to develop the hunting scenes found on my rings.

MUNICH

The trip to Munich was significant and influential in the development of my project. During the trip we undertook an excursion to The Hunting Museum. Upstairs in the hunting gallery I found many carved items such as belts, water skins and buckles with hunting scenes depicted on them. I took this illustrative style and incorporated elements of it into my own work, demonstrated by the carvings of the wax rings. I think that this way of carving the animals and food really allowed for an interesting and relevant design.

Reflection

The rings are effective in trying to change the anthropomorphised state of animals to the new image I want associated with them as animals suitable for food. However, I think maybe with some more practice and work I could create a much better style. The colouring process needs more work as the rings have a bluer tinge then I wanted which interrupts the aged look that was inspired by the Hunting Museum in Munich.

















Hand carved blue wax rings, the masters before being cast in silver featuring a rabbit pie, a roast pigeon, a deer burger and finally a running rabbit.









THE LEWIS FAMILY

This is an image of the Lewis family, a farming family in the North West of England: Katie, Gordon, and Barbra (from right to left). It was the influence of growing up among the farming community, which led me to look at culling as a means to provide meat.

The cull I took part in this summer in order to learn about the culling of rabbits and the process of stripping and butchering the rabbit was by invitation of the Lewis family. They were an integral part to learning the methods of the cull and also developing an understanding behind their views on culling. It was interesting to hear the Lewis's impression of peoples' opinions from a non-farming background and gave me an insight into the way different environments influence peoples' opinions and the way each side views animals and their appearance in our lives.

While out on the cull I did a collection of drawings as a means to record the process.I also conducted an interview with the Lewis family as we sat at their kitchen table.



FOR THE POT NECKLACES

After my discussions with the Lewis' family I thought about the useful resources that had resulted from the cull and how to utilise these resources to their fullest extent and consequently reduce the waste. An ethos started to emerge that the cull itself would not be disrespectful to the animal if the carcass can be used to its fullest extent and not just wasted. It is after all meat and can be consumed. This respectful use of a slaughtered animal goes some way to justify the taking of another animal's life.

I saw a section of layered preserved fish skins in Munich in the Hunting Museum which were laid out in a colour selection along with some attachments and toggles. The fish skins reminded me of my rabbit skins I had persevered and how I should be using it within my own work as a way to demonstrate how the rabbit's image and its end uses should be rethought.

Cows are eaten and the leather used for shoes yet there seems to be a bigger issue with the use of rabbit as a meat source and also as a material. By using it within my pieces I hope to demonstrate the side of the project concentrating on using all the rabbit and not wasting any of the animal.

The work of Tone Vigeland an exhibition I saw earlier in the year had a huge influence on the design of my necklaces. Her work allows for a fineness to be applied to her work showcasing beautiful pieces. Despite their fineness, however, none of the pieces are un-wearable or unusable and they would definitely be suitable for use as every-day pieces. I want to reflect this simplicity in my own necklaces but hopefully to incorporate some more impact visually.

















As you can see the necklace designs coincide with my cast rings each one following on from the previous images. I thought that this would lead to continuity within my project demonstrating a developed understanding in each piece.

NECKLACE DESIGN

The designing of my necklaces brought me back to my previous research on the culling of animals in Britain and the three animals that we cull in Britain, which I featured on my cast rings. The pigeon, the deer and the rabbit, I wanted to incorporate all these features in my necklaces (feather, fur and antler) all with the phrase 'For the pot' written in chain. I hope the combination of these two features would help to reconnect the animals back to their use in cooking.

I decided that the words for the pot should mirror the animals in each necklace to demonstrate the new outlook on the animals. As well as incorporating hand woven red cord necklace in order to mimic the pinks and red of the flesh of an animal. The hand wound necklaces are wound using red embroidery thread.

I have created three rounded bars to contain each animal product. I made a tubular riveted opening for the antler that I had drilled into with individually made loops. The feather is pinned through the tube with pins through a silver bar with drilled holes. These designs I hope will send a message as well as demonstrate the use of the animal within my pieces.

Reflection

My necklaces do demonstrate the link between the animal and the pot and I think do reflect the notion I am trying to demonstrate. However I think that I may be attracting a negative reflection on my work in my use of the animal parts. The utilisation of body parts to fulfil function should be as acceptable the re-use of a cows body parts i.e. cow hide as leather and the use of leather cords in necklaces. The practice of harvesting and utilising cow hide should allow the same practice to be adopted in relation to the use of a rabbit carcass. However, the anthropomorphism of animals has resulted in the primary image of a rabbit as a cute and lovable companion and not as a source of meat or material.









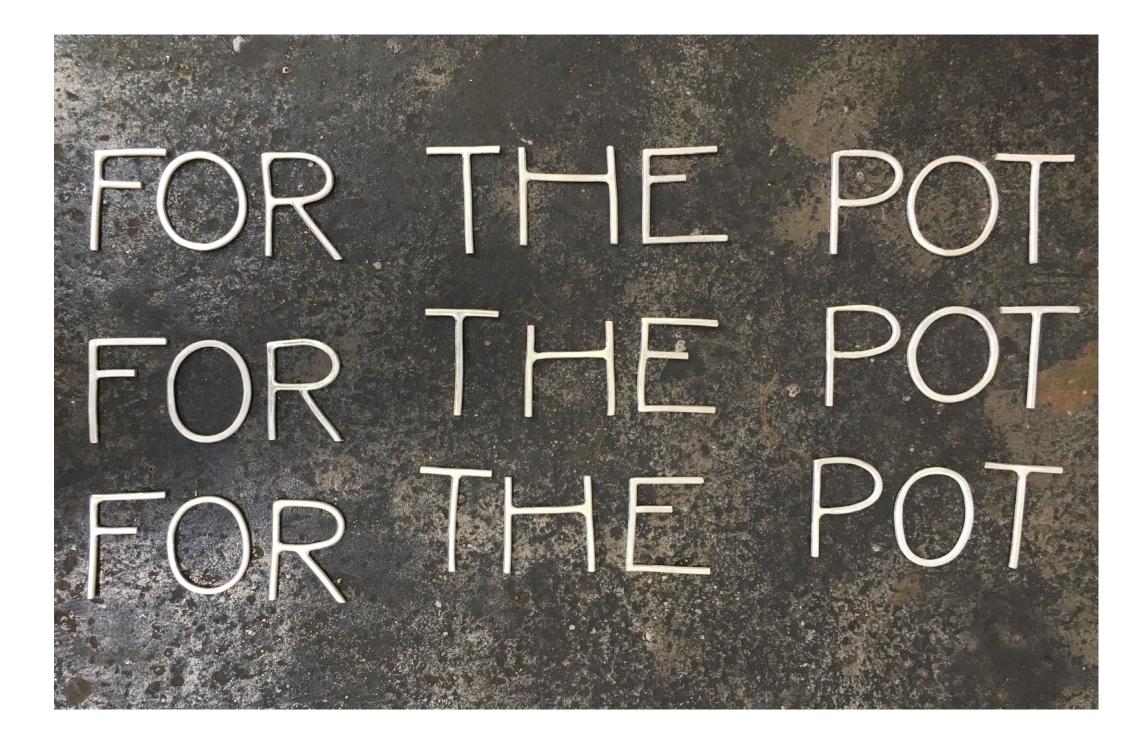








The necklaces had to be assembled separately and in specific orders in order for the metal in the pieces to be polished and clean without damaging the natural materials. The chain letters with spelling "for the pot" had to be soldered individually and then flattened as well as chain loops soldered onto them to connect each word.









TOOLS OF THE CULL

I wanted to create a teachable and educational project on culling and in doing so found myself looking at some of the attire in hunting fashion, for instance pewter animal brooches of ducks and dogs. This led me to see brooches as a way of showing actions or support.

In researching into the notion of brooches and the society's behind the brooches and how their designs represent the actions and the symbolisms of each group I found a metal cast hammer brooch worn but suf-fragettes shown in the Museum of London

The silver hammer brooch is imprinted with the words "votes for women". These were brooches custommade for the women who had been part of the "window smashing campaign". The suffragettes had used "toffee hammers" to smash windows of shops and workspaces to bring attention to their cause and in doing so they were awarded, by their movement, these pins to demonstrate their involvement.

The idea of the involvement and also the demonstration of skill through the image of the tools used now became important in the development of my pieces.



WOODLAND TRIP

The images shown opposite are photos taken from my trip to a private hunting woodland. It was interesting to see the old signs of humans within the woodland with the old barbed wire and fencing which is now disappearing and rotting into the landscape.

It was a different to see woodland made for hunting and specially constructed to provide for birds, which are destined for hunting. This woodland contrasted with the open environment where the cull was carried out.

I decided to use some of the materials within the woodland to produce some tools which you could hunt with. It allowed for an interesting development of the natural and manmade material within a natural but man made environment.

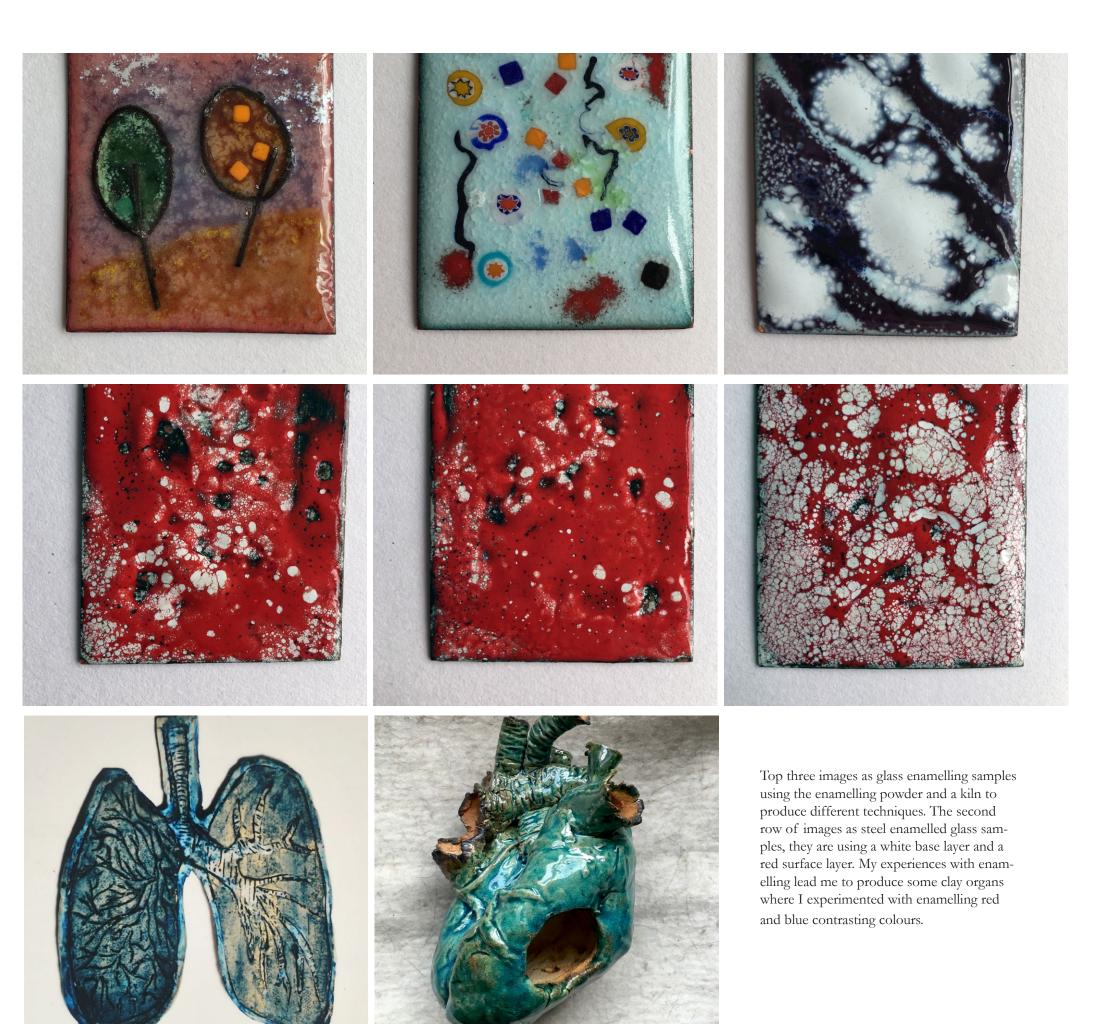
videos from the woodland trip of the sound of shooting : https://vimeo.com/218458021



TOOL PINS

I wanted to introduce the idea of the demonstration of involvement into the pieces I was creating I wanted to show not only the tools used within the cull to educate but also how each member of the cull is involved through the tools they use.

I started through producing a spade; a knife and some scissors and then produced more removed tools in the saw. The farmers and cullers could wear these pieces on the coats they repeatedly wear for the task in order to show how they are involved and raise awareness.



ENAMELLING

Over summer and at Christmas I did some enamelling to explore some of the colours achievable and learn new techniques which I hoped to use within my work. The enamelling allowed me to experiment in a new area of jewellery making and decorative techniques. I used a few techniques of glass enamelling bead setting, heat moving, and copper wire embedding, and sifting powder.

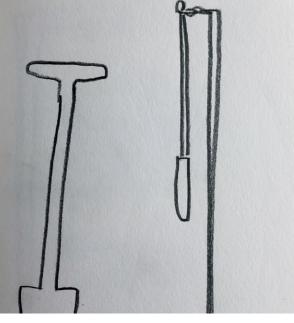
I really enjoyed this as a technique. However, it was a bit too neat to be useful for the malted effect I wanted to create. I was hoping for a more mottled effect to look life tissue or skin and consequently I decided to explore wet steel enamelling. This process produces a more sticky effect rather than the smooth glass finish and means that I get a more organic looking texture. This suited my work much better but was a bit of a messy and unclean look for the brooches.

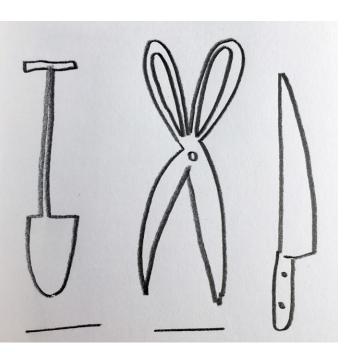
I then developed my reticulation on silver to try to create the same effect. It did work but with the heating and movement of the metal the surface became too thin and the brooches where unsuitable for use as well as the pin back being a few millimetres too wide

Reflection

The processes that I have been looking into were all viable options. However, I decided that even though they were appropriate I preferred a matt look for the tools as this is what the tools looked like in real life and then silver plated to match all the other work. The research wasn't wasted as the methods will help me later in making and also made me think about how to incorporate the red and pink colours into my work if not on the pieces surface.





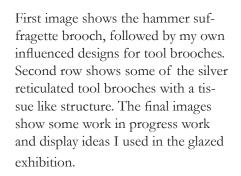
















HANDKERCHIEFS

As a way to record the process of the cull I used drawings on the day to show the organs of the rabbit in layered patterns as well as ink and watercolour line drawings of the processes involved in the cull.

I found that these methods of drawing where more appropriate then photographing the cull as it was a involved and intense practice, it seemed disruptive to stop to take pictures and also disrespectful to the farmers showing me the process and more importantly the animal itself.

Having produced the images I decided to look into ways to remake my drawings into an item connected to the cull. I noticed that many farmers carry a handkerchief and I decided that this would provide a suitable subject for my images. My use of the handkerchief would also connect to the sanitised product meat has become to the supermarket shopping generations.

An exhibition of the work of Gavin Fry and embroider made me realise how embroidery can express a lot in an intricate manner of making. It made me consider how I could use it to create a message through my own pieces. I started to make and embroider some plan cotton handkerchiefs I used bright attractive colours and created ten organ designs for the handkerchiefs giving the organs a bright attractive image much like the modern supermarket meat. It helped to express the reason for me to start the project.



LINO PRINTING

I then started recreating some of my drawings and sketches onto linocuts. I needed to recreate the line of each drawing into a clean-cut outline of each organ I had already drawn.

I then took these linocuts and used a bright red ink to print sheets of the images found on each linocut creating a repeat pattern. I then applied this pattern to handkerchiefs having them printed to create a bright red colour and blood like effect. This contrasted from the clean coloured prints found on the hand-embroidered handkerchiefs.

Reflection

The handkerchiefs do help to explain the concept of rethinking the clean and ordered meat that we are provided with in supermarkets and how we should remember the processes behind eating meat. However it may have been better to use a square-patterned prints which would have made it easier to transfer it to a square surface area.









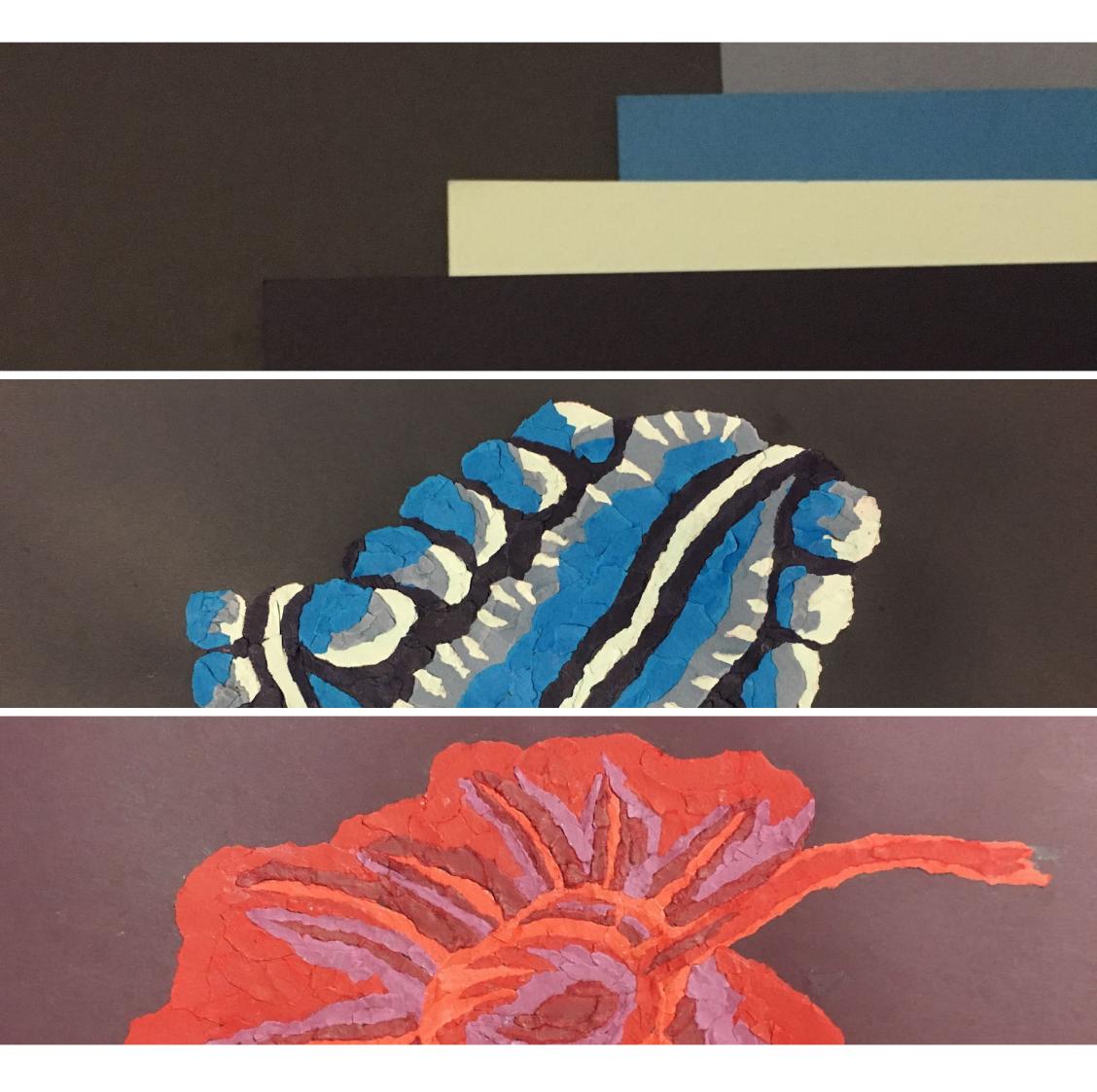


PROCESS OF THE CULL

After trying to demonstrate the concept of changing our outlook on meat from supermarket meat to culled rabbit I need to demonstrate the process of the cull. I need to do this by introducing an educational level to my collection. The idea that if you wanted to eat meat you need to understand where the meat came from and how to butcher the animal yourself in order to understand the mortality of the animal.

I started in summer by trying to produce a representation of the organs of a rabbit through a cut out layered book. This book showed each layer as you turned the pages which, I hoped, would produce a way to see how the rabbit is butchered.

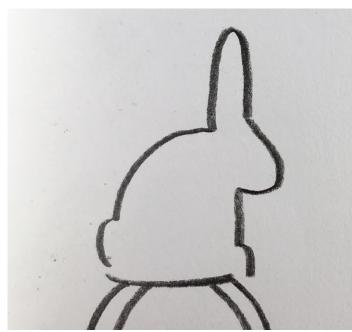
However, just understanding this would not have helped anyone who theoretically wanted to eat a culled rabbit. I needed to demonstrate how to harvest the organs as well as ensuring all the parts of the rabbit were used in order to encourage people not only to think about the meat but also how much you can take from the death of the rabbit.

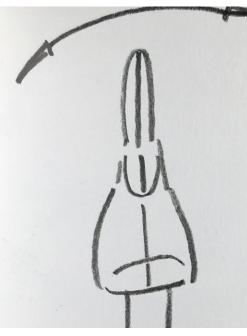


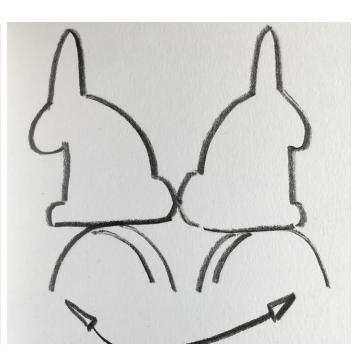
RABBIT BOOK

After creating a collection of layered coloured collages experimenting with colour palates in relation to the organ I was trying to recreate. I wanted to replete this idea of the layers of the bunny and the organs that can be collect for consumption in some of my pieces.

I needed the layers of the book to show the concise manner in which the organs, which are considered consumable in a rabbit, are removed in a particular order. I have had to try a few methods of representing this as there where some issues with the processes I was using within these designs specifically the pressed ring design

















Drawings of the original pressed ring design and the cut out mould I created to press the copper sheet into. The bottom two images are the pressed rabbits, which I thought were lacking in definition to the press.

PRESSED RABBIT

The pressed rabbit ring would, when open as a cross section, be seen to contain cast silver organs set in red resin. It would then closed to produce the shape of one rabbit. The pressed rabbit shapes would then be hinged together and mounted on two flat rings. This would mean that when the user was wearing the two rings on one finger the rings and the rabbit shapes would join to create one 3d rabbit. When the ring was removed from the finger it would be able to be open to a hinged cross section of the rabbit containing the organs and resin.

However, I found some issues in the pressing process. Once I had made the outline to press into I would apply pressure in the hydraulic press with layers of steel and rubber to push the metal into the mould. The pressed rabbits I was producing were not detailed as much as the mould itself, with the press being shallow and undefined around the ears. I could have increased the size of the rabbit mould meaning a bigger rabbit shape but this would have affected the design of it to be a closing ring.

This led me to rethink how I was demonstrating the idea I was trying to convey, what I wanted the piece to say and how it worked and moved. A book like item made more sense in trying to demonstrate layers in which the organs are removed, each metal page turning to the next layer. By using the moving flipbook as inspiration I also thought I would be adding an educational level to the design of the item.

Reflection

I think the book was a more successful way to show each individual organ clearly to the viewer. Instead of being sunk into resin the organs would be in order and clear when pierced out of each sheet. I would in the future return to the previous pressed design and attempt to make the definition a creatable feature.





















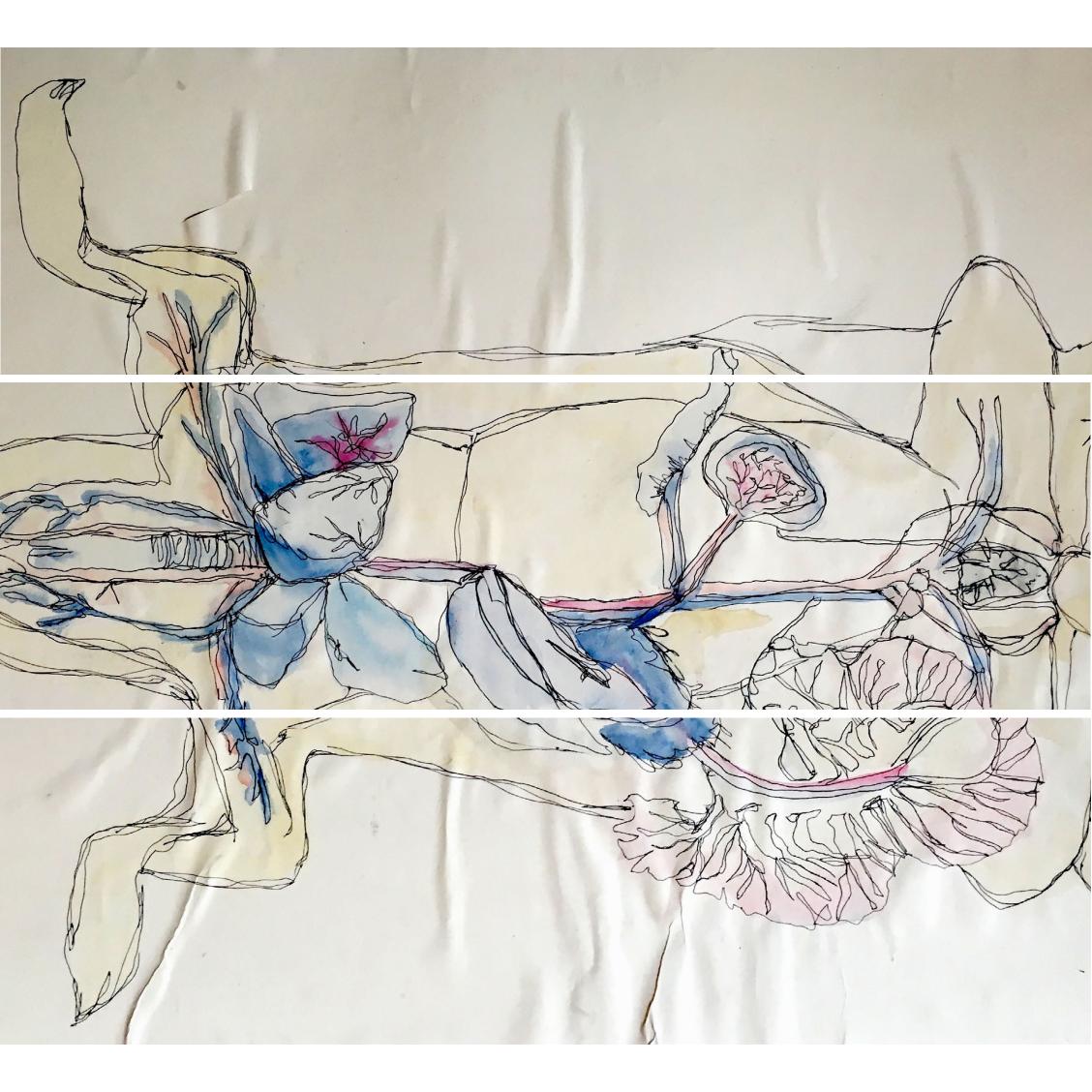
This is a Selection of images form the day of making showing some of the end products and the processes. The final two images are the pieces that Jemima and I put into the silver exhibition.

ONE DAY SILVER PROJECT

The one day silver project allowed me to experiment further with a more loose style of making. It was a great way to look at silver and scrap silver when we were given small bags to produce items to be shown in an exhibition. Jemima and I decided to change our way of making to try to work together and remove ourselves from singular projects. This provided a great way to rethink silver and our expectations as regards creative outcomes.

We made a selection of videos from the day and the links below show some of the ways we manipulated the metal through the day.

silver project video : https://vimeo.com/218457501

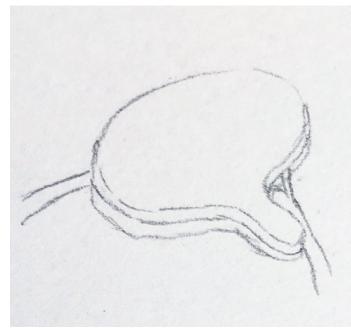


R A B B I T O R G AN S

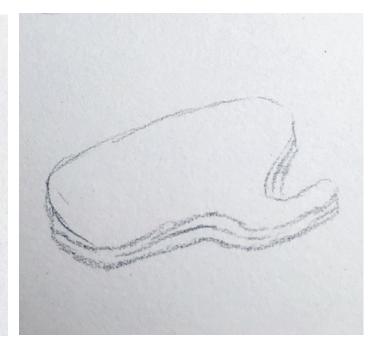
With the layered rabbit book creating a map or guide for the organs of a rabbit, which could be butchered and collected to be eaten, I needed to find a way in which this process could then be transferred to a home environment.

The idea of a collection vessel came to mind during the cull I took part in. My idea was to concentrate on collection of the rabbit's organs in containers and the process of taking these objects into the home to cook with the meat and organs. I wanted to find a way to make the containers educational in their appearance as well as mimicking the movement of the rabbit book to link the different parts of the project together

My initial idea involved opening rings, which could contain each organ on the hands that removed them from the rabbit. I hoped with some development I might even be able to find a way to colour the objects red to represent the blood in the cull. I did however find that making a ring of the correct proportions and with a functioning hinge difficult as the delicacy of the work required a more skilled process then I had tried previously. I changed these rings instead into two fixed claw settings on the organ to hold it and then used them to test resin as a method to colour my pieces. However the resin would bubble when drying creating a pockmarked surface, which I could not polish. This coupled with the difficulty in fabricating the ring made me re-think my design.

















The first line shows the Organ locket drawings showing my planning behind the later pendent. The second row of images shows the start of the ring design, which originally housed the organs that I then later used to test the combination of silver and resin.

ORGAN LOCKETS

My revised design focused on using lockets worn as necklace in order to demonstrate the organ to the body relationship. The process of creating each locket was complex and took time to become accustomed to a very precise way of making. Looking through my previous drawings and linos I found three collectable organs I hand focused on as examples of usable organs namely the heart, the lungs, and the kidneys.

I started recreating these organs by shaping rectangular bar into the desired outline and using this as my locket outline. It allowed the locket to indicate what should be collected and placed within each necklace to be used later to cook with. Each locket can swivel open forming two halves and revealing a space for the chopped organs. The link in the use of woven red embroidered cord is repeated once more in these pieces creating a link not only between the colour of blood and the object but also the educational and process tones of my project.

Reflection

With the difficulty of the rings I think the lockets still demonstrate the collection that I was trying to illustrate. However, even though I gained the relationship between the body and organs I missed the link with the use of the hands in relation to the cull which I was able to demonstrate in my handkerchiefs.















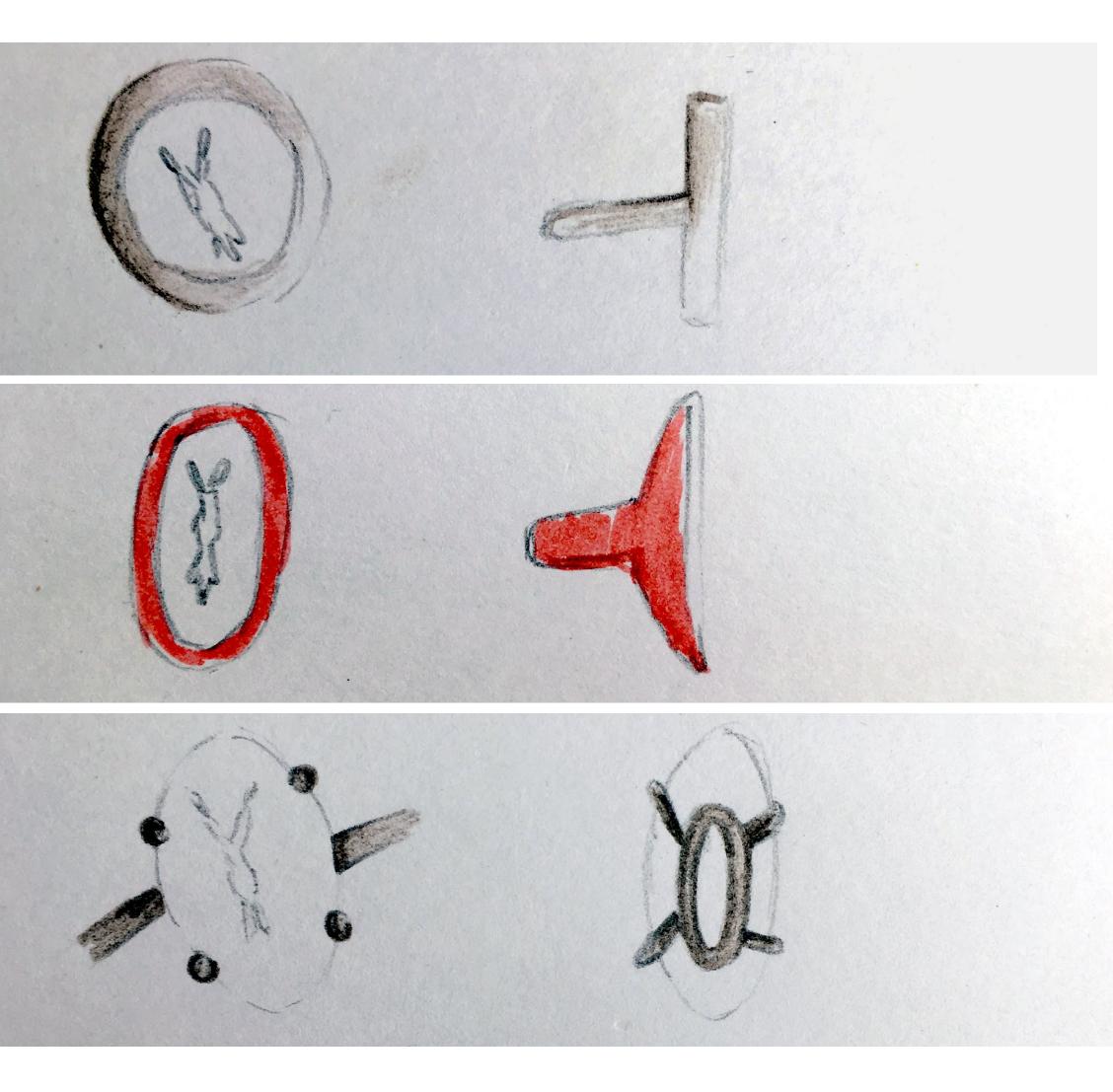


From first to last image this is an image process of the making of the lockets and the steps behind each stage of making from the shaping to the hinge.









STAMP RINGS

After demonstrating how to gather the organs and meat of the rabbit I then considered how I had illistated in the 'for the pot necklaces' the importance of using the entire animal, by using fur I had preserved myself. In using the entire animal wherever possible would this not show the animal more respect by not wasting any part of the cull? I have been trying to create an educational tool to help anybody to understand the method behind a cull.

It was my intention to show how to skin a rabbit in order to use the skin as leather, similar to cow leather used in the making of shoes and bags. With this in mind I created a series of drawings based on similar bovine diagrams and my experience in the process. I then thought about how I could use these drawings when on site to skin a rabbit which led me to produce laser cut stamp versions of all my drawings. This resulted in a set of stamps illustrating a five step process to skinning a rabbit. The notion was that I would be able to print the patterns using blood from the cull and printing onto wooden stakes.







First row shows some linocut samples of stamps, which did not contain enough detail, so were not used in the final design and were only used as organ outlines. Onwards from this the images show the casting process with the original rings and the moulding process.

R ESIN RINGS

I wanted to keep the red colouring in the stamp rings so rethought about the material I wanted to use to make them. I thought resin would work well as a base for a signet type ring to mount my stamps on.

I started by carving the ring out of wax but found it was too difficult to mould into the clean shape I wanted to fit the rings. I then rethought how I would make the original to cast from and started a new ring using a ring with supersculpy to mould around it. I then cooked this ring to harden it to make it sturdy enough to be used to create a mould.

Due to the rings inlayed face instead of a two part I had to create a three-part mould as shown in the pictures opposite. I could then pour into the mould with layup, dyed red to make the rings, which I then stuck the laser cut rabbit stamps into.

Reflection

The resin was hard to create a clean ring out of due to air holes in the rings which created an indent near to the ring base. I may make this in silver at a later date but at the current time this would be too expensive an object to create. The rings however do suit their purpose with the red colouring.







The top row starts with the laser cut stamps and the imprints they create on pieces of card, sat alongside an image of my final mould. The final two images show a selection of my cast rings before being finished.





PRODUCE OF THE CULL

In this section I explore further the educational side of the cull and what can be made from the meat and the possible future of the practice that I am trying to establish.

I am covering the use of the rabbit meat and the future of the process of the cull in two sections. The first section shows how I have made some simple recipes and turned them into a cookbook, I hope that with the modern and current recipe styles it could encourage people to see rabbit as appealing meat once again.

The second part of the produce of the cull is following up on how the culling and selling of rabbit meat could become a fashionable and popular trend in markets and further promote thoughtful buying. I produced promotional material containing images from the cull in the hope that it would become a recognisable and acceptable practice. My promotional output includes bracelets, stickers and bags which all show supporting imagery relating to the cull. I think it's important to take the future into consideration, as it is one of my main tenets that re-use of culled animals become acceptable and common practice.



COOK BOOK

The cookbook I have produced works to encourage the use of rabbit in everyday recipes. I produced a number of videos whilst cooking the recipes wearing my cast rings bringing the cull and cooking together, the link below directs to the videos.

I feel that the cookbook provides a vital link between the cull of the rabbit and how we should and could be using the meat. By making it possible to cook rabbit in simple usable recipes I hope that the public will be able to firstly see the ease and normality behind using rabbit as well as demonstrating the use of the rabbit meat in connection to understanding the mortality of the rabbit. I hoped the book created a deeper level

of respect for the rabbit in the demonstration and encouragement of eating the meat.



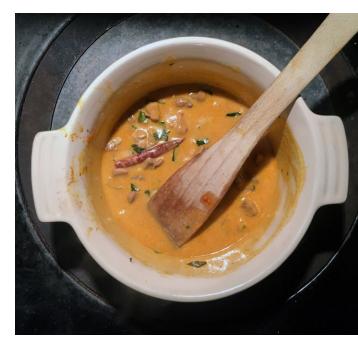














Stills from videos of the cooking process and individual photos taken whilst butchering the meat of the rabbit

BUTCHERING

I started by butchering the rabbit in order to strip the rabbit of all the meat I could from the carcass. Whilst doing this I thought about the layout of my cookbook. I wanted to start each recipe with an explanation the meat used in the meal, this allows for the user to develop a deeper understanding of the meat they have butchered in relation to the recipe they are cooking.

I took photos and videos of the stripping as I thought this would provide a good base for people to work from as an explanation on how to cut each part of the rabbit. This would allow people to take part in the butchering at home when they may have little knowledge of how to strip a rabbit beforehand.

I then produced a layout for a cook book dressing the recipes in my own cook ware to show its relation to home cooking and then printed it in a published format to create a professional look to the cook book.

videos of cooking found at : https://vimeo.com/218455996

Refection

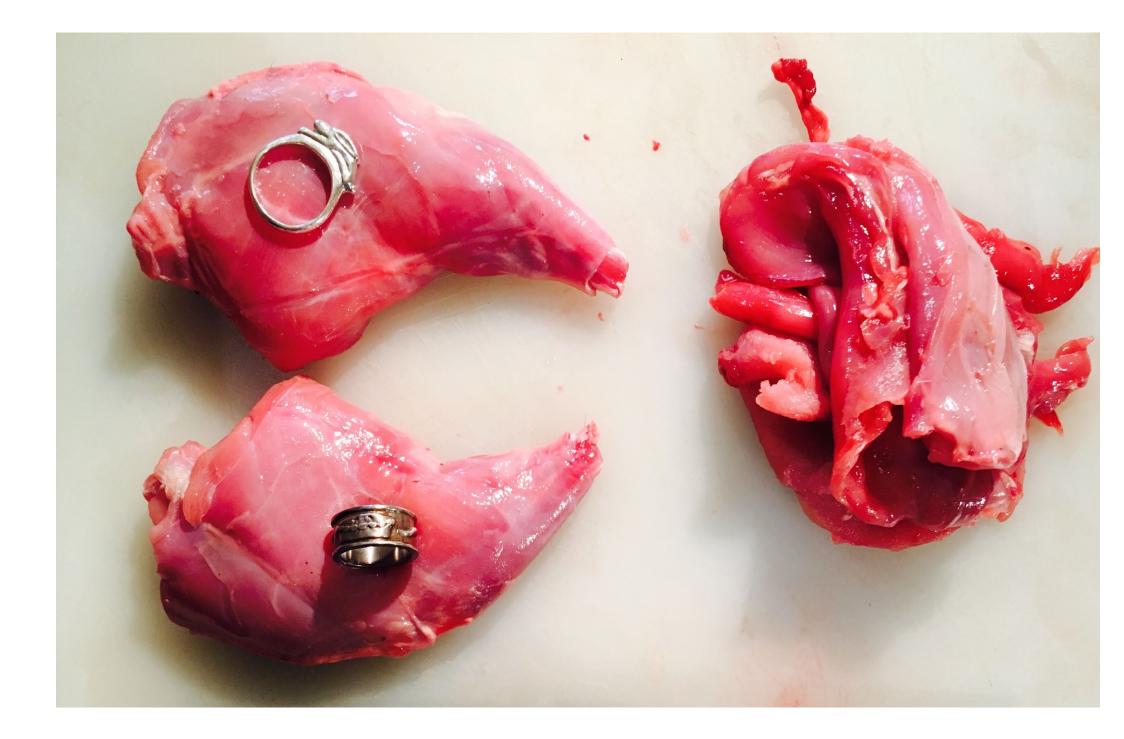
The cookbook was successful at demonstrating how to cook with rabbit and establishing simple recipes, which could be used by most people. I would have liked to include some more high quality videos of cooking but found it difficult with the lighting and also the space available in the kitchen.







Images of the pages set up of the cookbook, the first row consisting of the introductory images and the second consists of images of the recipes cooked in the book. The last image is from the front page a wide page spread of the front cover.









RECOGNITION

Just as there are recognisable signs for organic food or fair trade I wanted to create a theoretical symbol for the buying of culled meat. The running rabbit being a theme throughout this year's work and well as the plain rabbit outline both I thought could be recognisable symbols used to encourage and also show the support for a more thoughtful process of producing meat.

I have from this made a range of merchandise for the 'tools of the cull' project as a way to conclude how I could in future encourage and support the practice that hope I have explained through the creation my jewellery.



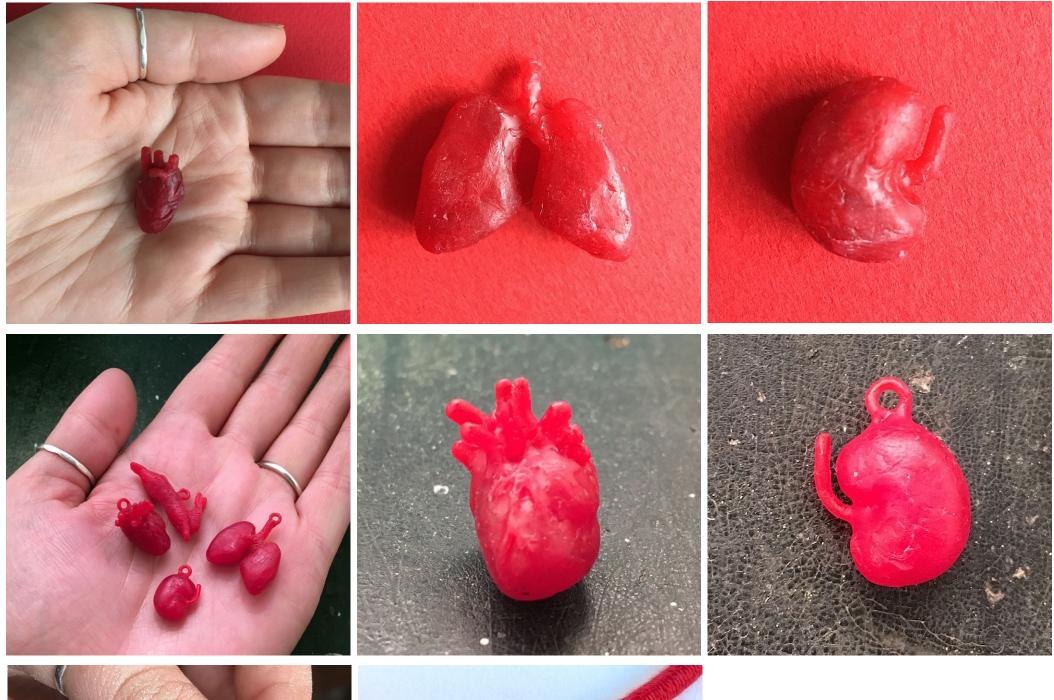
CHARM BRACLET

I wanted to show how important jewellery could be both in its visual imagery and associated symbolism to show ones beliefs. The reasoning behind my work being focused on the body is due to my belief that jewellery can be a powerful and important way to show ones individuality and thoughts. It can be an outward symbol of the societies' beliefs and causes which people support.

I created my charm bracelets due to this belief in the use of jewellery as a powerful symbol. Each bracelet contains an organ and a running rabbit on a hand woven cord. It could be an emblem of the support people have for a moral and thoughtful way to be a carnivore.

Reflection

I believe that these bracelets are a successful way to communicate the support that the project could have in the future. I hope that these could develop further as time progresses with more organ selection and maybe by developing a way to personalise the charms such as a charm depicting the areas in which rabbits are culled.





The images above show the wax carvings that I lost in the process of casting I produced two sets, as the first set was too large and needed to be more delicate.





FUTURE SUPPORT

I hope that this project continues to develop as I feel there is truly a need to reconsider how we recognise meat and think about its values. I have produced a theoretical range of items, which could be used to show support for the underlying principles of this project using items which currently are fashionable and appropriate for the project.

Some of the items shown opposite in a market environment include a bag printed with the rabbit outline from the rabbit book and a selection of stickers I have made for the project. I hope both of these items would become recognisable and understandable in the future. I feel there is a true need for this consideration behind the consumption of meat and hope that this year's work may be able to demonstrate the cull, develop understanding behind the cull and most importantly a morality for the animals we eat to sustain for ourselves.

















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