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# INTRINSIC

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*Creative Process Journal*

Tan Shi Qi, Andrea

BAFAN6A

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I feel I'm getting too close to the topic of trauma, I think I'm ready to let it go for now.

Everything I've been doing feels like I'm doing them for the sake of it, and this became an emotional detachment from art. It has felt very tiring and tedious to create; I want to regain my **passion**.

Everything that's happened in 2020 has been depressing and giving me anxiety more often. I want to have **fun**, enjoy the process, and find **joy** amidst the chaos in the world.



Financially limited, I wanted to avoid spending money on my mediums for this project.

Uninspired and unable to stand not working on something, I rediscovered my leftover copper plates from my diploma years and begun scratching out an image without much thought.

What started out as random curves and lines began to take on the form of corals and seaweeds.



I went along with that and built on the underwater theme. This process brought back good memories of my diploma years, when I felt accomplished creating incredibly laborious, detailed work.

I do enjoy the contrast of the glinting copper against the dark black ground,  
so I'm hesitant to remove the ground and turn it into an etching plate.



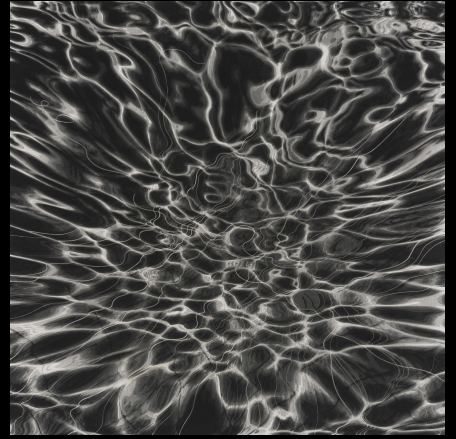
How does this relate to me, or to any of my research and practice?

*I've always been drawn to the water and ocean  
They are my 'Happy Place'*



# 陳 Chen Qi

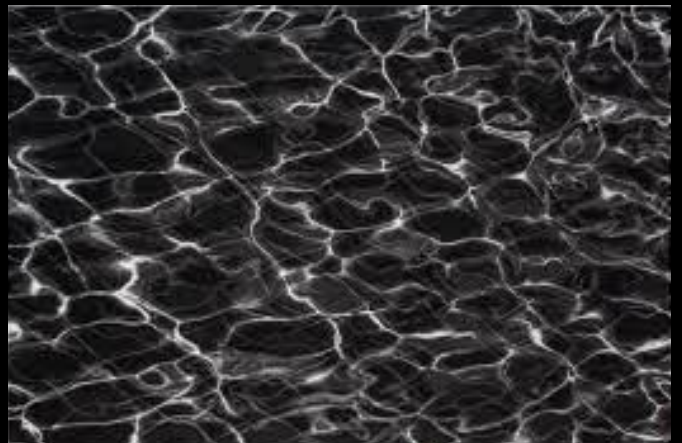
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Suggested by Ruobing, Chen is an artist who exhibited at the Chinese Pavilion in the 2019 Venice Biennale.

Chen has made many prints of water which overwhelm with their scale, size and details.

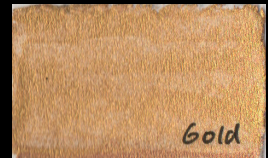
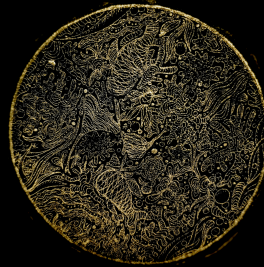
The contrast in his water prints are striking, something I would like to explore with my copper and ground.



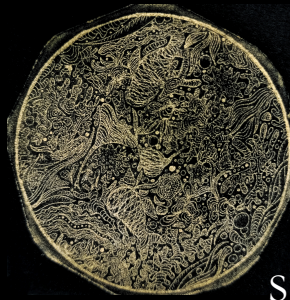
Experimentation to achieve similar metallic effect as copper itself.

These printed quite well, though it was not producing the metallic effect I wanted that could mimic the copper. I also tried 3 different colours to see how it would turn out, and what differences colour could potentially make.

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Schmincke Gold



Schmincke Gold + Copper



Schmincke Copper

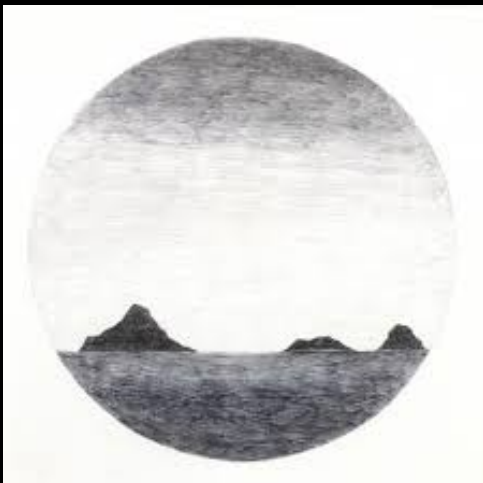


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The copper plate after using it to print now looks very unassuming, plain. I do not like what it has become.



# Russel Crotty



My attraction to circles and lines reminded Jeremy of Crotty's practice, especially in the process of mark making.

He uses lines simplistically; obvious yet subtle, and there's a very lonely sense of emptiness amidst serenity, despite seemingly isolating the viewer in an empty, foreboding realm. The negative spaces seem to soften the tensions between land, sea and sky.

## Conscious-unconscious

Unconscious imageries and ideas based on memories retranslated into conscious abstraction of underwater landscapes and elements.



Prefer singular lines that don't cross

Lines like a topography map are interesting

*There is no focal point.*

From afar, the entirety is the focal point; up close, there is nothing distinctive except the intricacy of the work.

# Ashley Yeo 楊奕佳



Ashley Yeo has been an artist I look up to for her detailed works that always seem fragile beyond the actual fragility of paper, regardless of drawing, paper-cuts, or sculptural pieces.

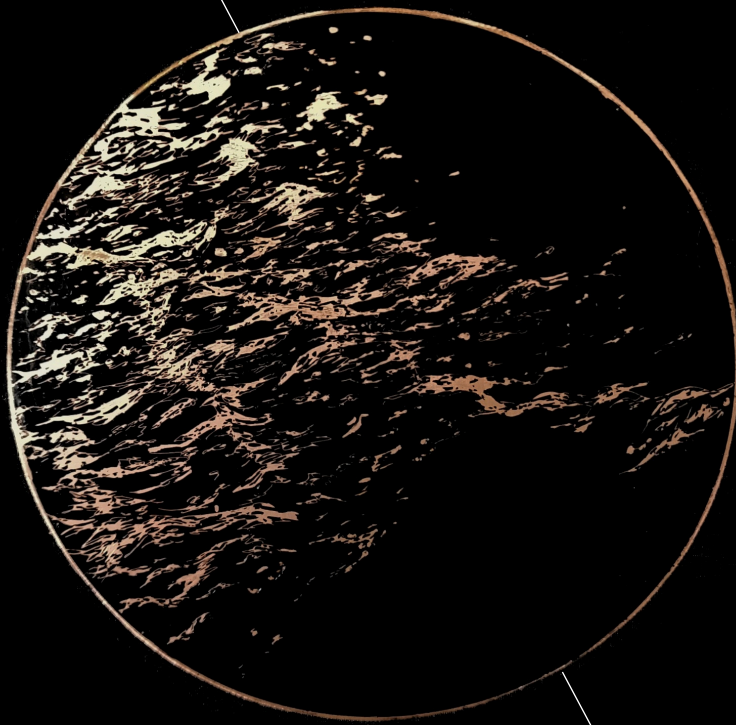
Her drawings are, to me, beautifully lonesome, bearing an enveloping silence that compels you to stare from a distance. The subtle use of colour is light, faint. Her phantom-like works give me the sense of impermanence, or a trace of what once was.





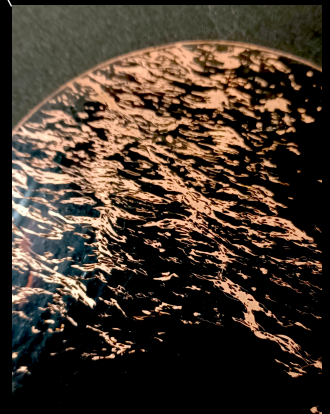
Positive-Negative Spaces: Finding **balance**

Using the copper tones as highlight areas,  
similar to 'inverse' drawings.

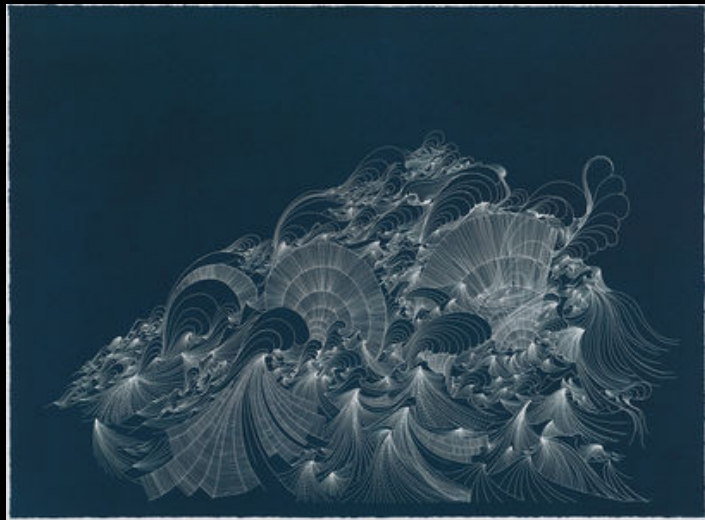


Resembles an eclipse from afar. Waves were hard to look realistic, they initially looked very planned and stiff. I was able to use a needle instead of my awl, and this allowed me to create some finer lines and details.

*I really miss the sea now*



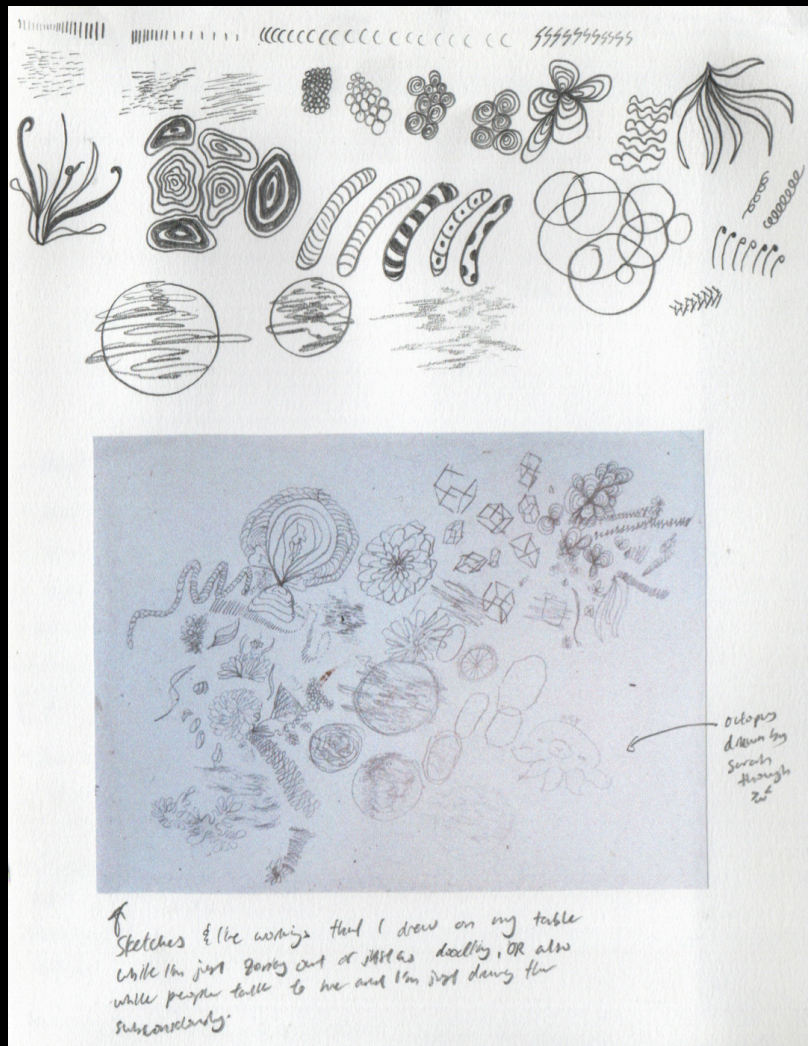
# Sandra Cinto



Also recommended Jeremy, Cinto creates works that are very organic in form, with fine lines and interesting contrast. Her beautiful execution of line quality and mild use of colour are more than enough to create a strong, stunning visual. Her subject-matter is also inclusive of the ocean, which makes for an even better reference.



The voice in my head keeps telling me to try going smaller and further. I complied, stuck a sewing needle into an eraser and started scratching out an illustrative reef. I only managed to pull this off with the help of a new magnifying glass.



Greater variety in line thickness > better direct the eyes around the work

Increase in design variation > maintains visual interest

I did away with complicated, crossed lines, and I decided against filling up the circle to see how this composition would work. I quite like this, there is balance, and there is an illusion of fading.

**W**e are all so preoccupied by all the negativity and stress around us that we don't realise what's going on inside ourselves.

We are so busy being unhappy we forget to put ourselves first, we forget that we can still be happy.

We cannot have happiness without inner peace, and we cannot have inner peace until we learn to let go, until we learn to filter out the negativity.

*A conversation with the self*  
*A conversation with the [sea](#)*



The Japanese concept of 'Ma'

- relates to all aspects of life
- a pause in time, an interval/emptiness in space
- fundamental time & space that life needs to grow
- 門 (door) + 日 (sun): crevices in doors through which sunlight peeps in
  - a door opens to light: enable growth, speaking creativity, permitting freedom
  - very Confucian concept of *space between edges* (between beginning & end), the space & time in which we experience life
- filled with nothing but energy + feeling
- Speaks of *silence instead of sound*, of *lack instead of excess*
  - momentary pause in speech needed to convey meaningful words
  - silence between notes that make music

Intuition and feeling often determine the outcome of actions over pure logic and reasoning.

- clarity of words not always necessary: reaching intuitive understanding in a silent pause is considered highly intelligent & sophisticated
- attentive listening & thoughtful observation
- quiet time is needed to truly think & feel the quality of an experience
- Sincerity of feeling conveyed more effectively with silent expression/gesture
- reminds all to slow down, fill time & space with meaning & purpose

# 無

The Japanese concept of 'Mu'

- nothingness
- Bears connotations to religion and/or philosophy
- Buddhism: the state where absolutely no things or phenomena exist
- Zen Buddhism: the pure state of consciousness before any experiences or acquisition of knowledge.
- Shorthand name of first Koan in a collection 'Gateless Gate/Gateless Barrier' (無門関)
- Generations of Zen teachers find Mu an especially useful tool to break through the conceptual fog most of us live in

Realisation of Mu often sparks an enlightenment experience.

I thought I would have filled this in completely, but I did not feel I should, so I stopped here. I think it looks good as it is, and I do not wish to overwork this and ruin it. I feel like this shows how fleeting emotions come and go when I'm working solely by instinct and feelings.



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Based loosely on the previous wave references, I thought about figuring out a pattern that could mimic the waves, while still fully using my mental knowledge of wave structures.

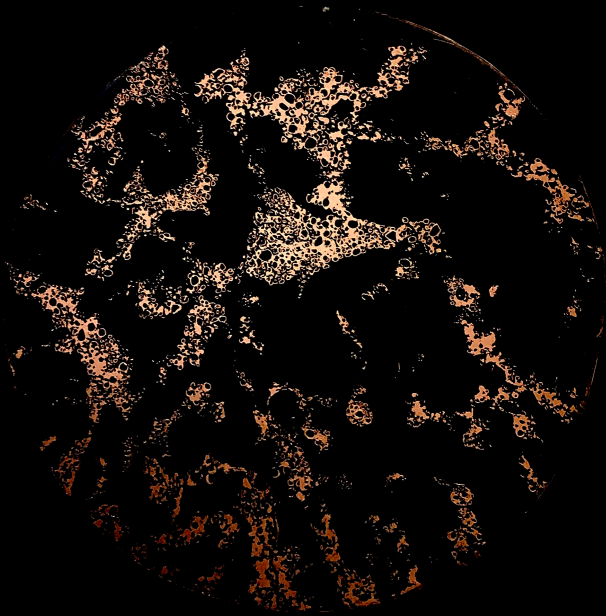
It looks alright from afar, but up close I think I could have done better. The waves look much stiffer, and a clear contrast is lacking. I am also looking for ways to cut small circles without denting the metal, as well as to round them better.



# Consultation Notes:

- research more on doodling
  - There is a lack of boundary in carrying out the action of doodling, but it is also very careful and limited within the constraints of the copper discs
  - Doodling in terms of art therapy?
    - something very child-like (inner child?)
- research on drawing
- Finding your own method: use your own method to find happiness
- Functions of doodling?
  - **Habit as a medication:** a process of **self healing**
  - Essence of art therapy in which creation of art becomes similar to the function of antidepressants/anti-anxiety medication
- How 3D-ness, tactility is mapped out
  - Mapping 3D into 2D
- Illusion
- Play between light and shadow
- Converting reality into abstract OR turning an abstract mental space into reality?
- A play on perception
- Focus on object that's being made
- Implicit but not direct
- Biographic details?
- **Abstraction vs Representation**





As I took photos at the beach, I found receding foam to be very interesting. They remind you of the ocean, but their forms are even more abstract than waves themselves. I was interested in knowing how this would be interpreted on copper.

Despite how painstakingly detailed this was for me to do, I enjoyed it very much and I love how it turned out. It strayed a little from the original reference, but I do like how it looks almost bacteria-like, very alien, but still somehow familiar.

When I edited the photos previously, I made sure the lighting was even and got rid of the shadows, but with this, I think the shadows gave the image more depth, and it makes me wonder if I could do anything with the photographs I take.



# Seminar Notes:

- go for an intertidal walk, look at the creatures between shallows & deep sea as research
- possible to make large prints with the photographs
  - enlarge to show the texture
  - contrasting a high level magnification of the intricate details that would allude to the scientific imagery
  - circle format in decreasing size
  - like photographs of planets vs photos through a microscope
- material & technique have their own affective quality
- emotional connections made to the material, gesture of making, intricacies, attention to detail, repetition. How can this convey your emotions to the audience?
- broaden material selection; working with limitations

As previously suggested by lecturers, I decided to try another medium and in a larger scale to help me better figure out what kinds of limitations I want to set for my works. For this, I am adopting another printmaking technique: woodblock. I also attempted to try a more abstract and illustrative style of rendering rolling waves as they crash onto the sand.



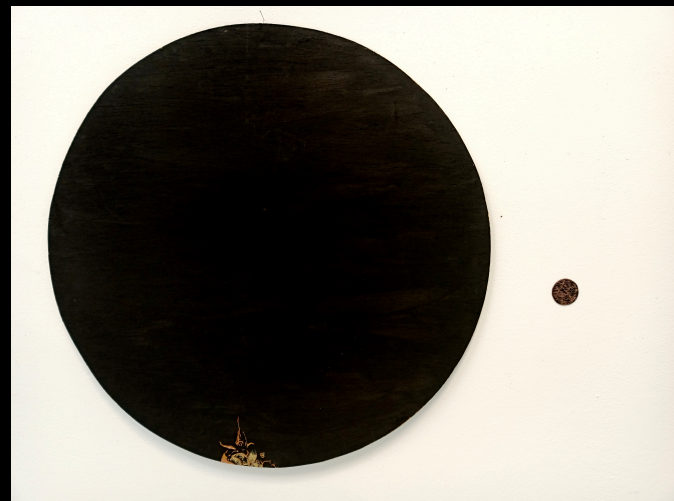
I start out by carving, and at some point I decided the wood was too pale and 'lifeless', so I went to paint the cut grooves with gold.



Unfortunately, the gold is quite yellow, so I tried to tone it down by adding a layer of copper over it.



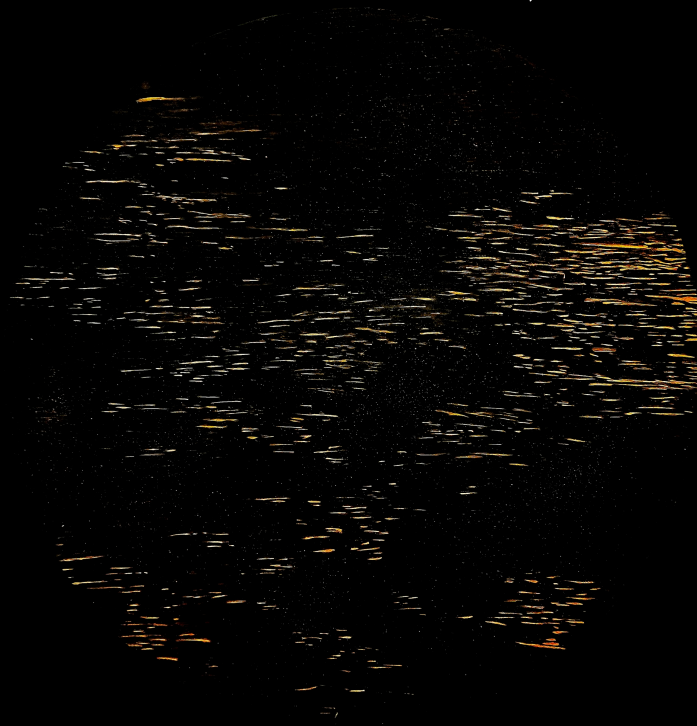
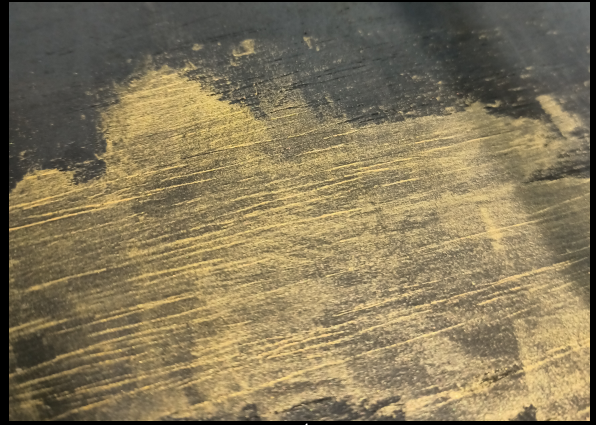
Due to the plywood I was using, I was unable to achieve good, curved lines, so I began to integrate using markers to add more dynamic to the carving and make it look a little less stiff.



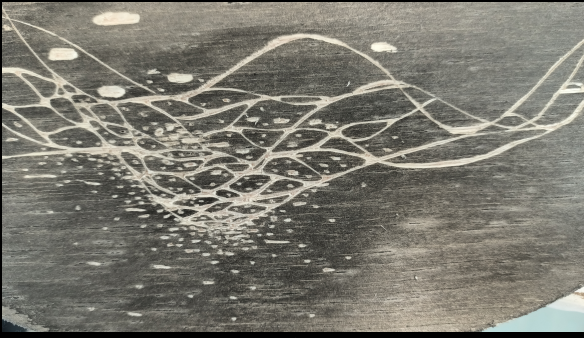
This was a scale comparison against the smallest copper piece I worked on.



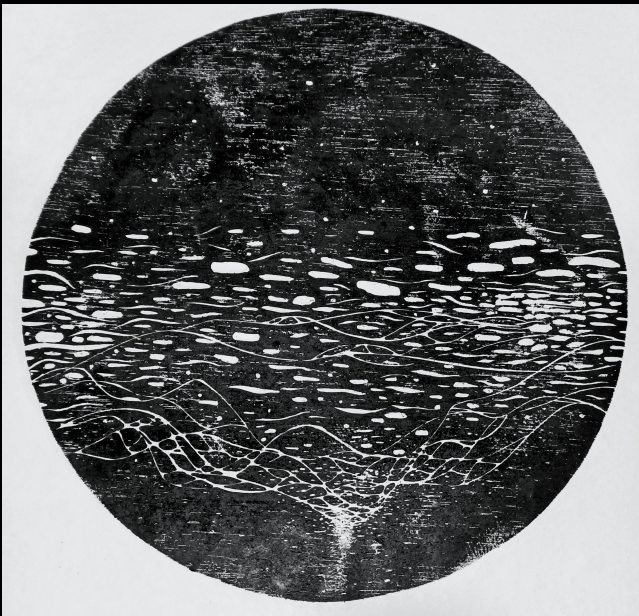
Plywood grains look a lot like simple water surfaces, so I thought it would be interesting if I were able to fill the grain with colour while the rest is painted black. To fill the grain, I squeegeed paint into the wood, but I did not realise that would affect the black and I wouldn't be able to paint the black over again since the gaps are now levelled with paint.



In the end I decided to hand paint the lines instead. To add some extra texture, dimension and shine, I sprinkled them with copper dust I collected from filing the copper.



I decided to try a 100% freehand carving on plywood that will be very illustrative.

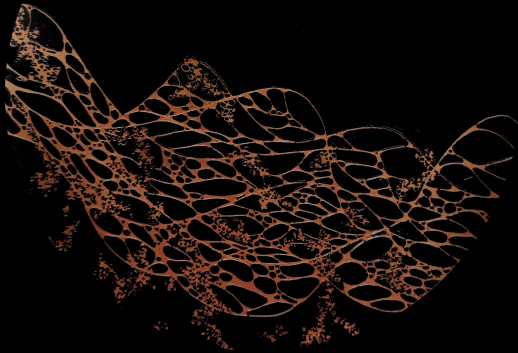


I pulled a few prints before I started painting the grooves just to see what it looks like, and if there was potential to develop from there. I was not particularly happy with it, but it was a good study nonetheless.

I figured I would paint in the carved grooves and roll on the black over it. For the paint I used gold and copper paint interchangeably, and mixed in some areas.





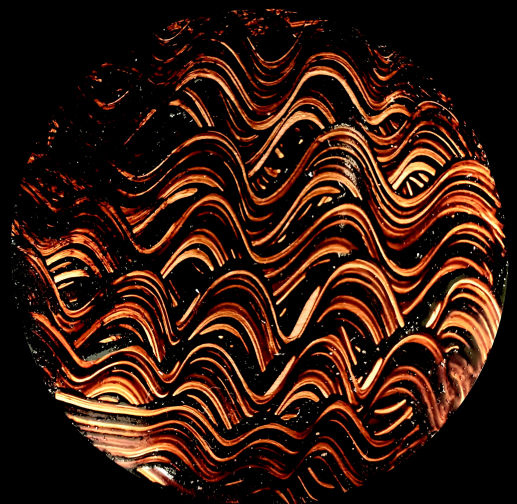


Inspired by the earlier woodcut. This style is quite addictive, creating these organic cells that are also reminiscent of acrylic pours and slime.

I wanted to experiment with **layering** to create depth, perhaps something similar to layering with resin. However, I did not consider it impossible since the liquid ground would simply re-mix with the newly applied layer, and its viscosity was not ideal either. As a backup plan, I used tissues to tap on the surface to create some texture, but I did not like it at all.



Frustrated, I did whatever came to mind/ felt right, and I created these lines. The different tones in a single stroke reminded me a lot of sand painting, and though completely different from the others, this does have a beauty that attracts.



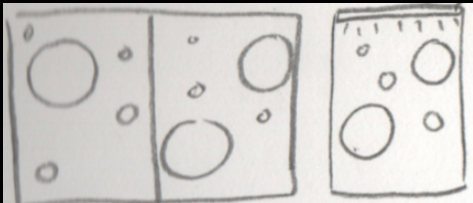
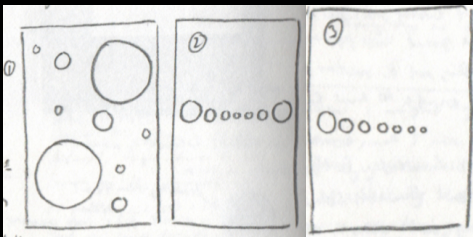
# Informal Group

## Critique:

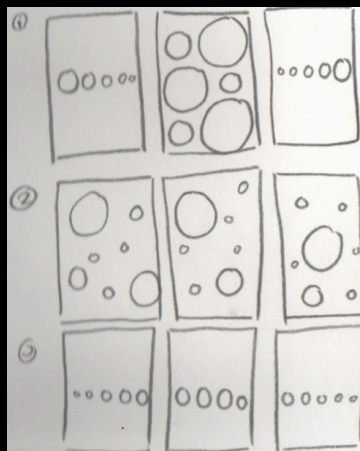
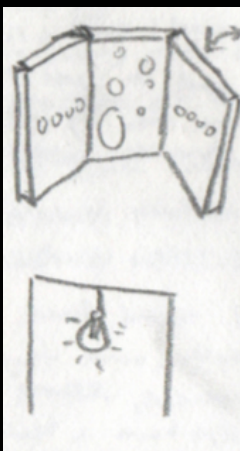
- lighting
  - angles
  - type of light (warm, natural, white, coloured)
  - type of light source



Classmates helping me with the lighting angles and distance from the work

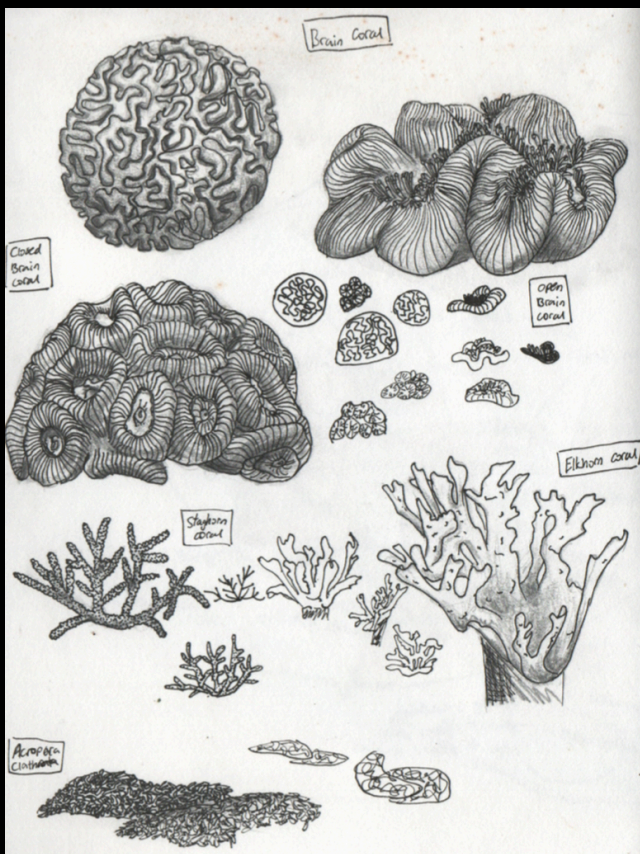
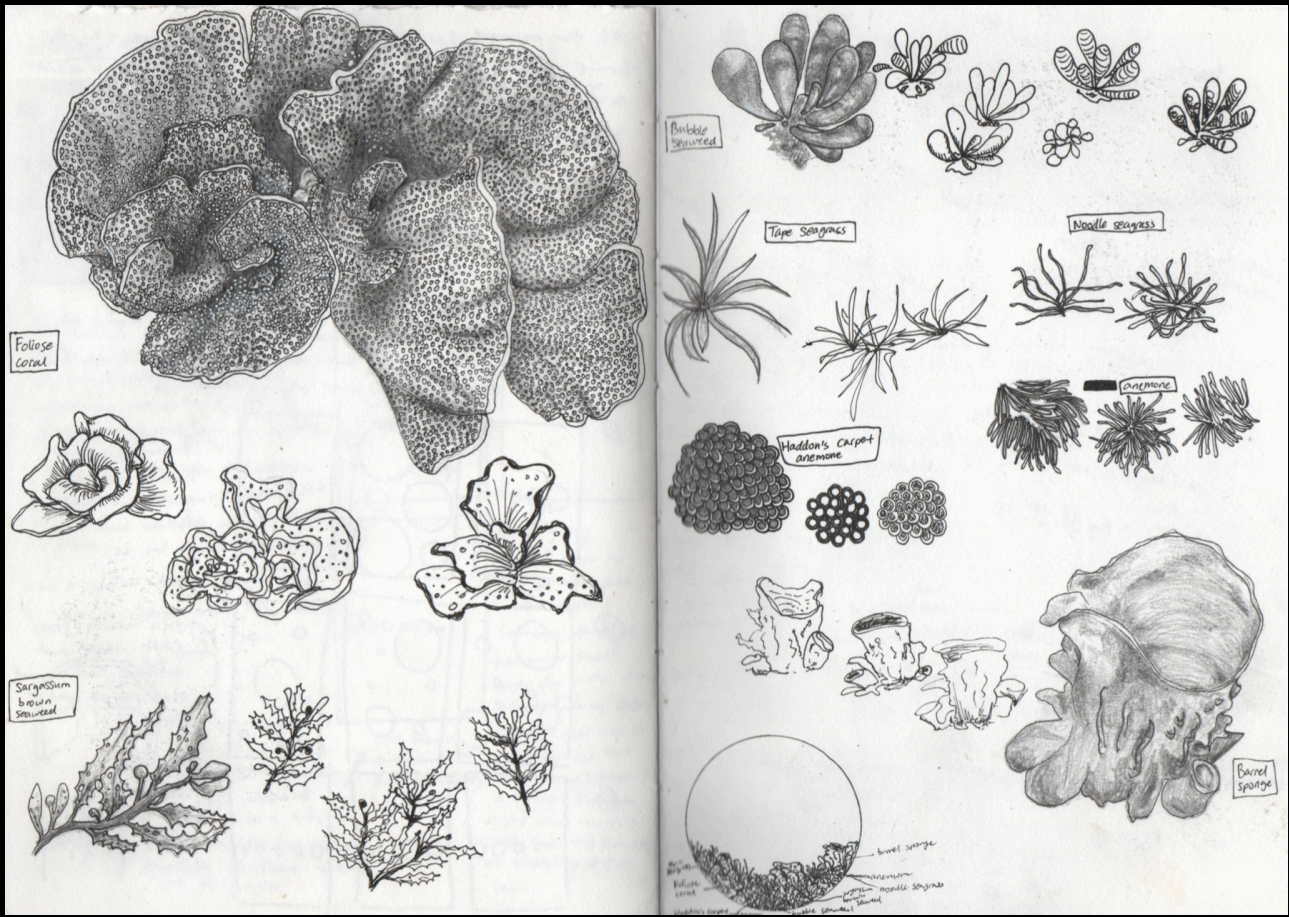


- arrangement/layout
- increasing-decreasing/same sizes
- combination of wood + copper/only copper



- distance between each piece
- will they be in a straight line or randomized?
- amount of works to show





Some drawings based on actual image references or corals and sea grass, plus my own simplification and abstraction of these forms.

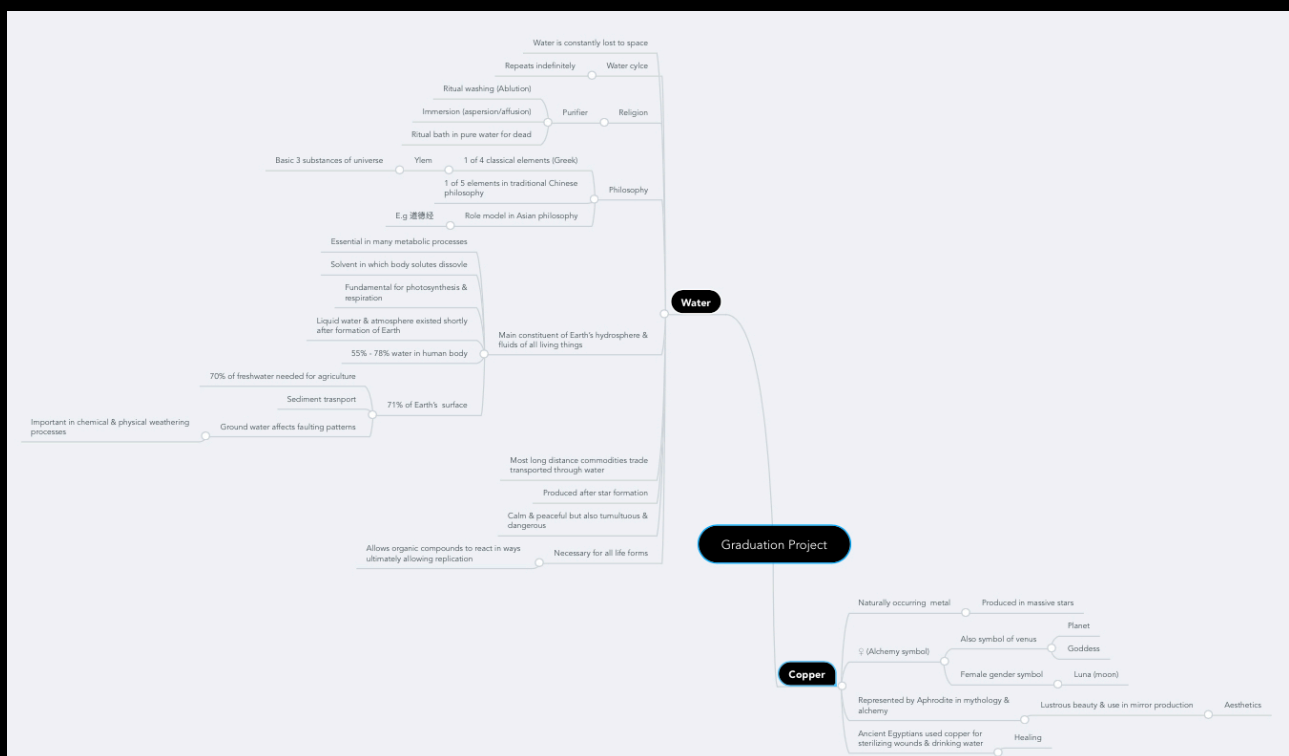
Within the circle above are all the elements in the first 2 pages.

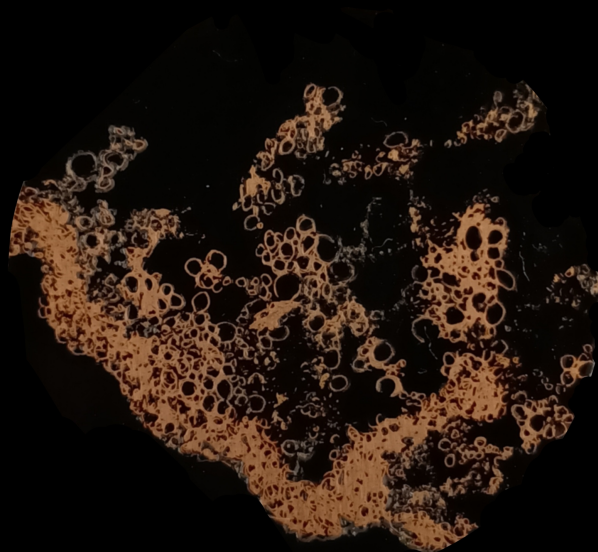
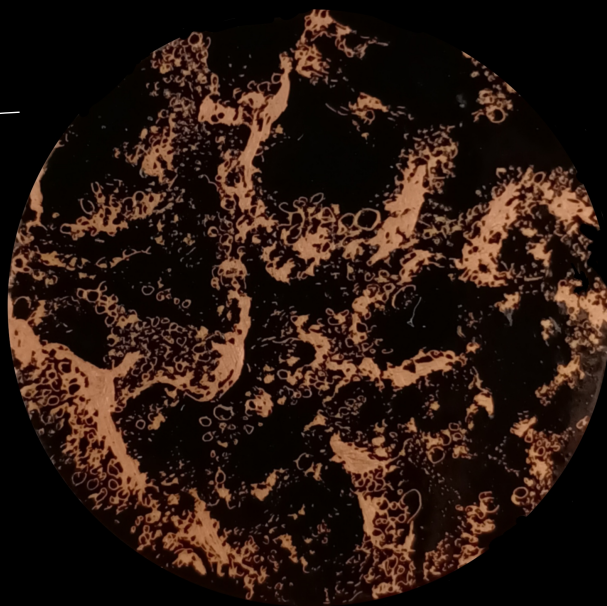




# Research Mind Map

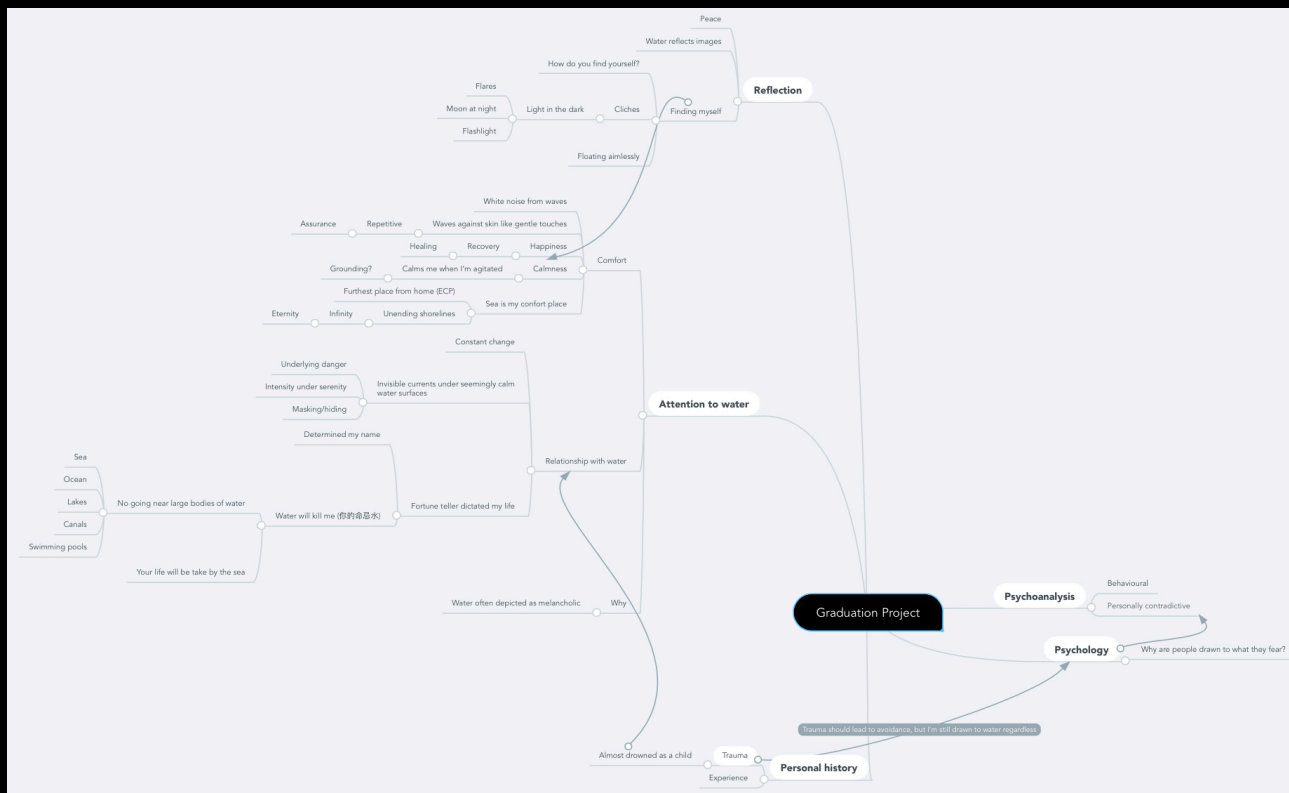
Based on water and copper

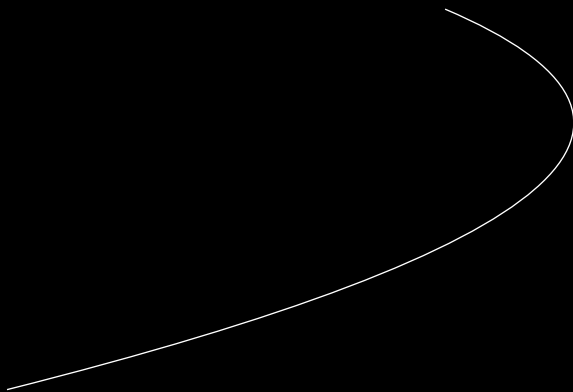
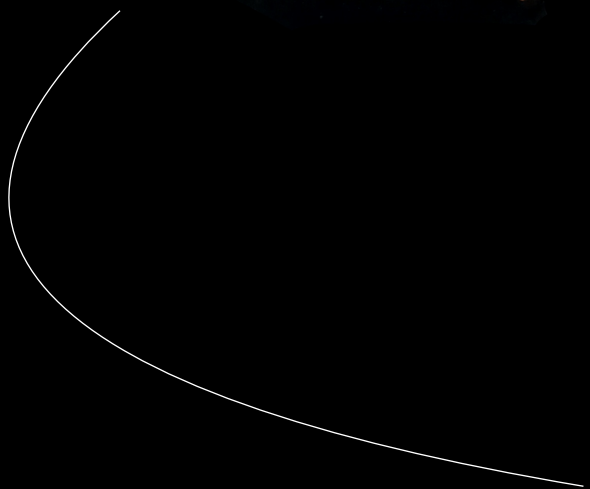
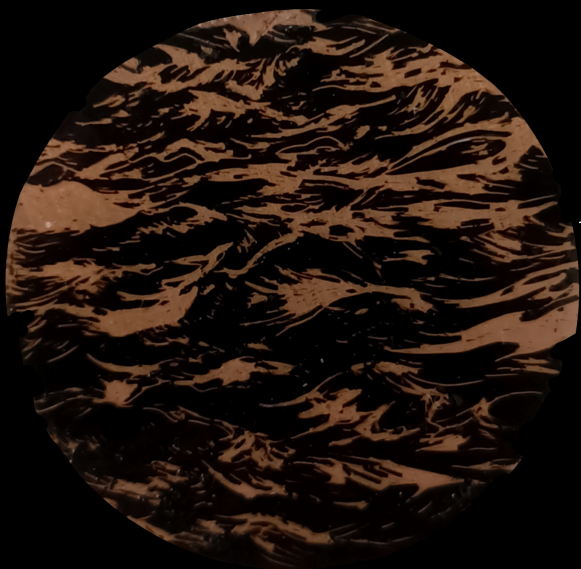
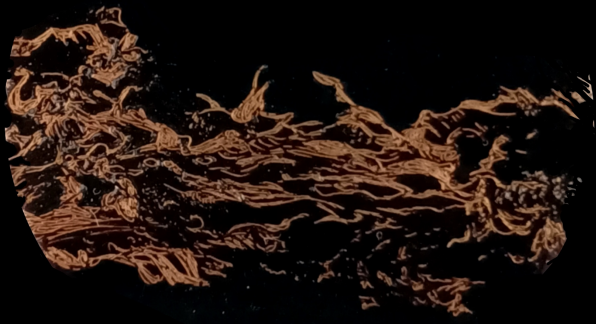




# Research Mind Map

Based on theoretical/conceptual ideas

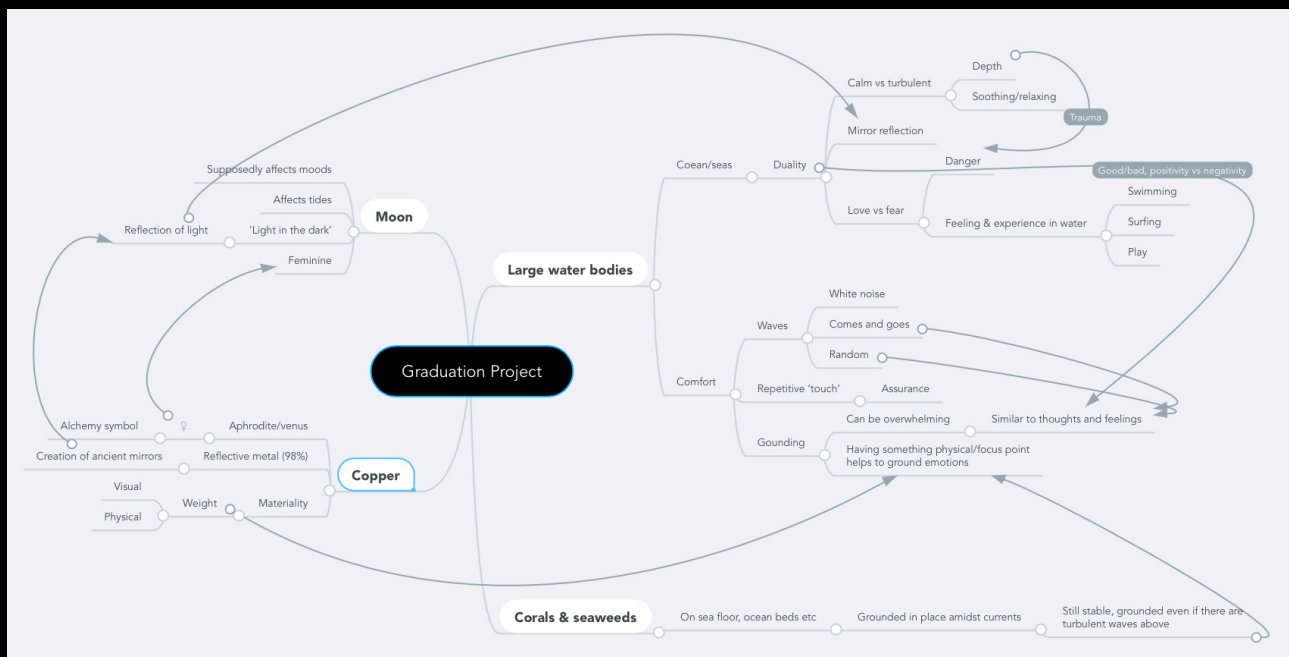






# Research Mind Map

Combination and summarized of earlier 2 maps

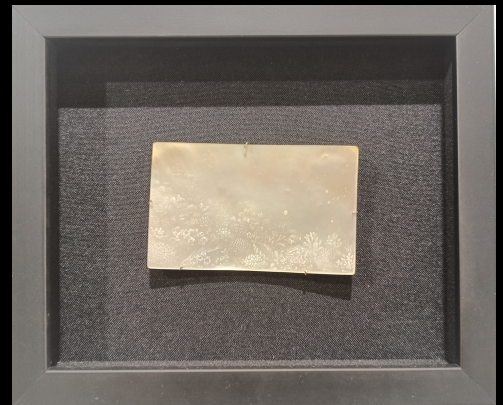


# Gregory Halili

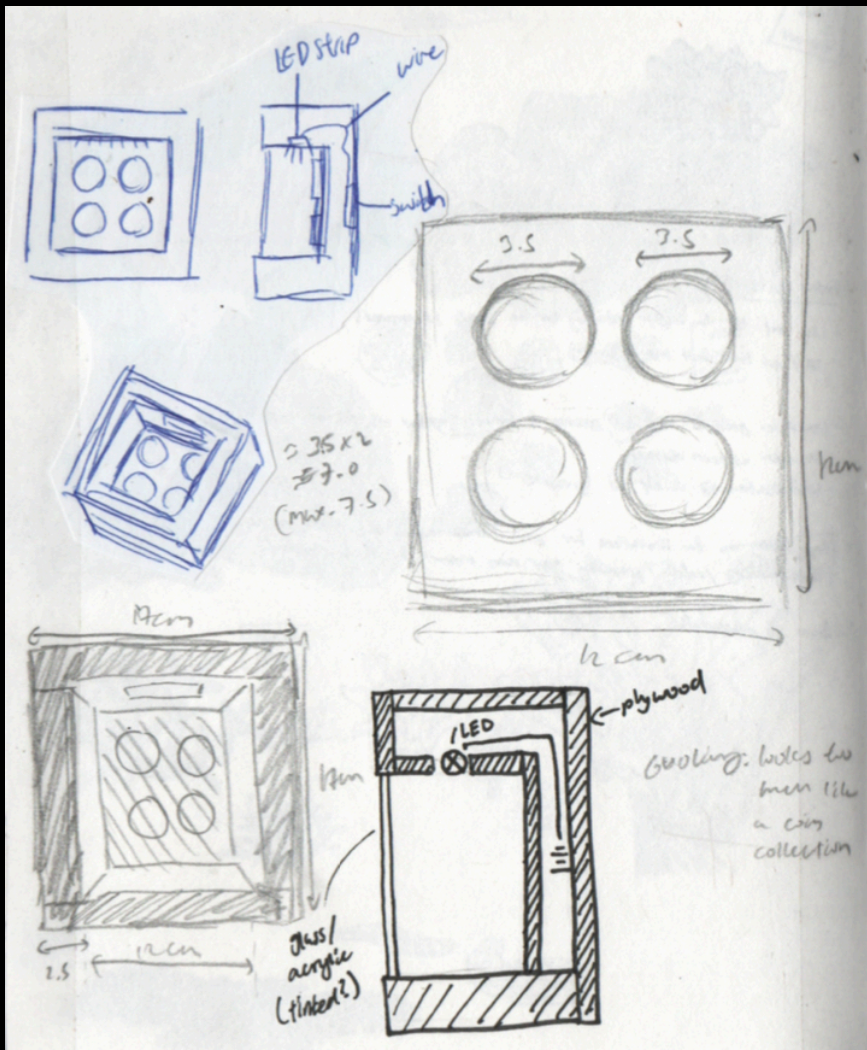


Halili was suggested to me by Guoliang as a presentation reference. I actually remember Halili's work that showed at the Singapore Art Biennale a few years ago vividly; the miniature eyes etched onto pearl shells. Coincidentally, he was exhibiting at SAW 2021 at S.E.A Focus, and I managed to take some photos there.

Halili used a shadow box and bent pins as support to hold his work in place just seemingly floating above the back of the frame. At different angles, the images in his work 'appears' and 'disappears' due to the lighting reflecting off the material, and the material's physical quality as well.



Drafting sketches for setting up and display of works.



I thought about a custom shadow box, such that it would be black all around, and there will be a recess groove for an LED strip to be hidden.

Because wiring will be quite hard, I designed the back of the box to be hollow, to fit the wiring and battery, so the whole box itself will be a very clean and simplistic

I was not too sure about the square/angular look of the frame though, because my works are all circular and it didn't seem to quite make sense to suddenly incorporate an angular box as a frame.



# Phi Phi Oanh



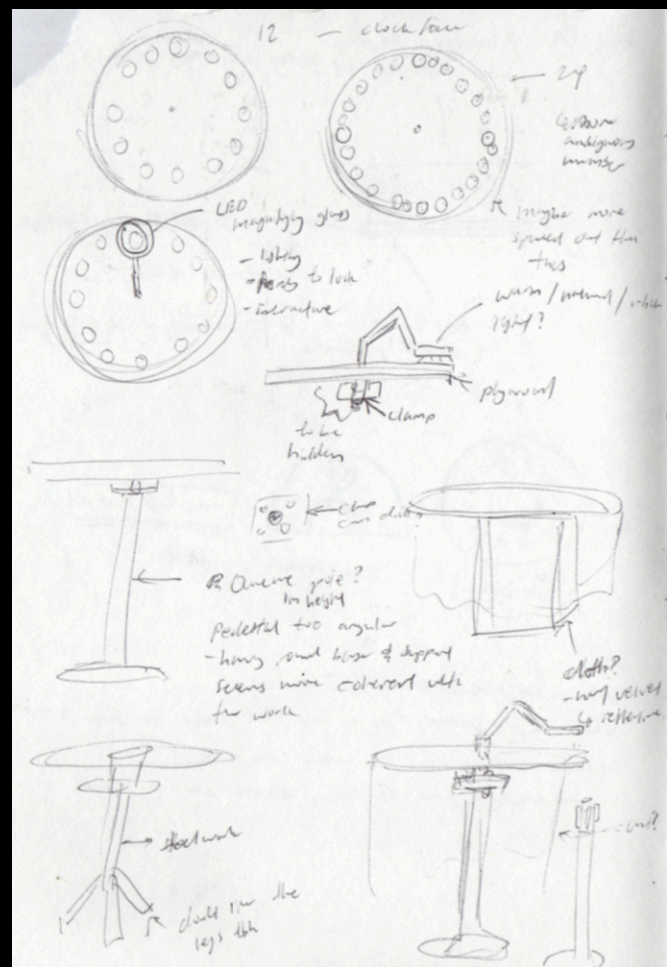
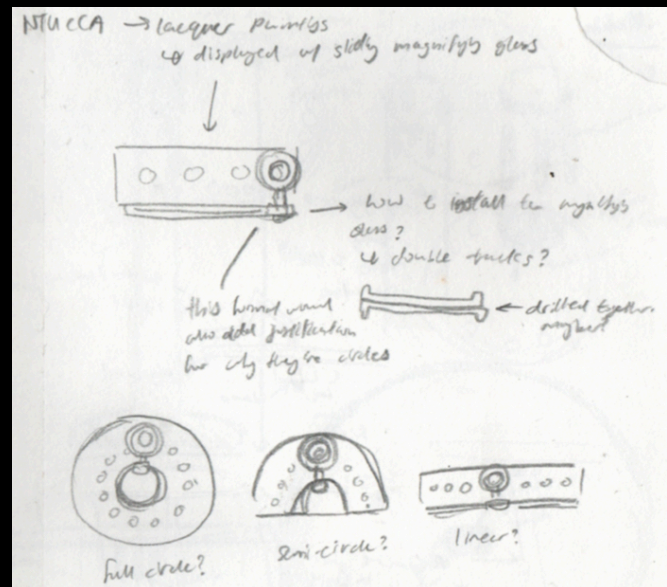
A few years ago as well, I saw Oanh's work at NTU CCA's Trees of Life exhibition during a class trip there. I remember her works very clearly because they were small, and her set up was very unique to me at that time. She was displaying her miniature lacquer paintings in a boxed table, and there was a couple of magnifying glasses that were installed onto tracks so that they could be moved across the length of the table.



This would become more relatable for me, since I was also using a magnifying glass for my work, but there would be lots of configuring and engineering work I would need to consider.

## Considerations for final set up

- how do I install the magnifying glass?
  - double tracks?
  - what kind of table/surface?
- looks a lot like something movement/flow related
  - how do I present it in a way that shows flow + movement?
  - similar to film stills/stop motion frames?
    - needs a good transition between pieces
- how many pieces am I displaying? Does number matter?
- what kind of table am I looking for? Does it already exist, and is it cheap to get? If not, can I DIY one myself?





Building a table with plywood and a queue pole.



Credits to Kwang Wei for helping me with the cutting of the plywood.





Mock installation of magnifying glass on the built table



The tabletop turns a little when the magnifying glass is moved, as the prongs of the pole cap has a slight buffer gap between the slits and the cap itself.

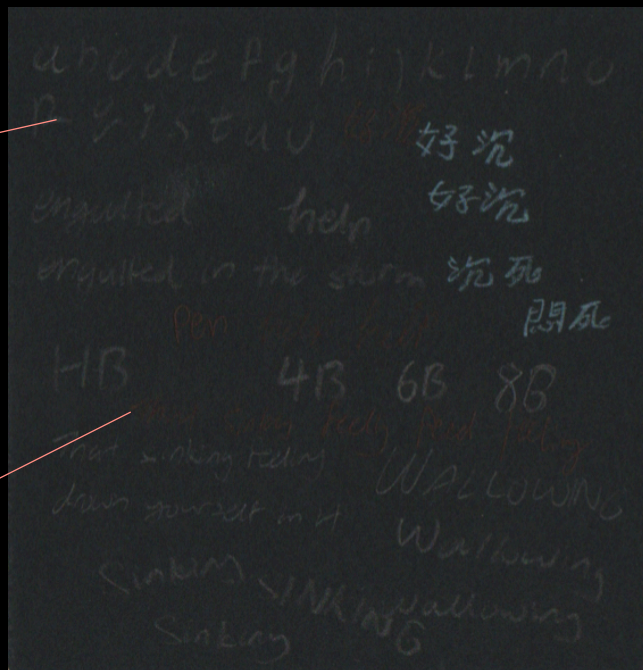
# Final Seminar Notes:

- consider incorporating text into the presentation of works
  - May provide an entry point into the work and a guide
  - Narrow down the scope of interpretation so that it becomes less vague. It allows the viewer to go into the work which was born from a personal place.
  - Could become something more intimate and familiar
  - Writing on the table?
  - Other forms of text such as audio guides
- If text is used, think about the format of it. Is it also circular, or random etc.
- working with sounds may add another dimension to the work
- Water is everywhere, in bodies, in places that are invisible and not immediately obvious. Sounds need not be so literal, what's important is to be conscious of its presence. The sounds do not need to be a direct reminder of water, they can be abstract too.
- The work is journalistic but it is not apparent in the work currently
- Find the middle ground between how close I am to the work (uncomfortable with it being displayed) and how much to provide for the viewer to experience and connect to the work.

Experimented with writing on black paper to test the qualities of black pencil and pen against black. I also used blue mechanical pencil lead.

The graphite of the pencil gives the markings a bit of shine, it is also a little warm in tone, a little brownish even. It is not somewhat obvious, and the sharpness of the pencil does make some difference.

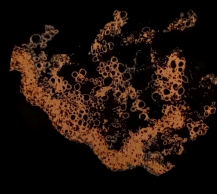
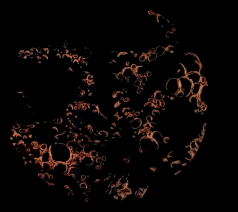
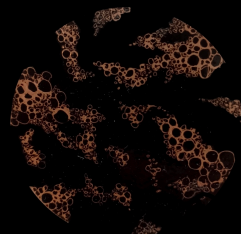
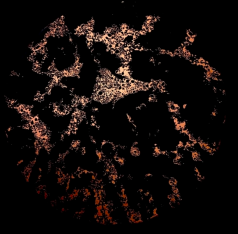
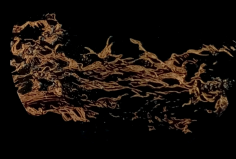
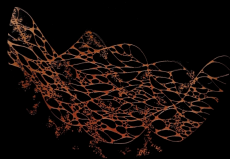
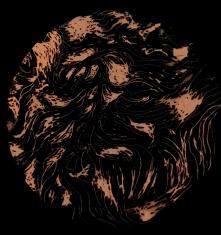
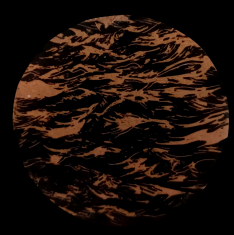
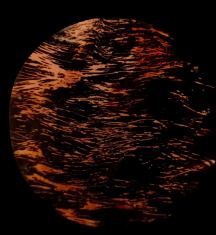
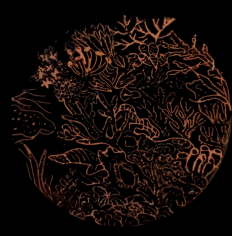
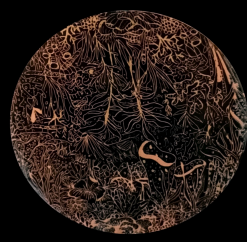
A black ballpoint pen was tried, it is much less obvious than the pencils, but it also looks much more like a dark copper tone, and the reflection of the ink seems metallic as well.





*Do I even want the text?*

This question bothered me till the day of assessment itself. I felt I had to, but I had nothing particular in mind I wanted to put out. I didn't think I wanted any text. I think I simply felt an obligation to, because I sought affirmations out of habit.



I made a compilation of some of my works, as I thought it may look good as a possible tapestry of sorts. I did not make it a reality, because I had neither  
time nor money.

For now, I am content just for people to **enjoy** my works simply.

Perhaps someday I'll print a massive poster or tapestry.

Perhaps never.

Who knows?

*Life is as unpredictable as waves and currents in the vast ocean.*