

The British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi
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Rationale:

Growing up I realised that femininity is primarily viewed through the male gaze. It seemed that the only way femininity could exist, was through the validation of the masculine. In my work I wanted to showcase femininity through different lenses - starting from my internal identity and then projecting it further, exploring the feminine in general. I decided to showcase my pieces in a way that would highlight stereotypical ideologies of femininity in a physical manner. Adding objects such as vases and toys to make the viewer aware of how gender identities are enforced.

Bloom and *Wither* highlight associations of natural beauty and fragility within the feminine figure. The title suggests how young girls are expected to *bloom* into women, but also how they *wither* from prejudice and gender inequality. One of the flowers is painted, whilst the other is stitched on, the artificial flowers represent a falseness to beauty. This facade can be torn away to reveal vulnerability, hinted through the incomplete portrait. The other flower is painted and permanent, symbolising a sense of completeness, however, both flowers silence the women, by covering her mouth. We are expected to be beautiful and charming, but not be bold or outspoken. The vases placed below each painting hint at the domestic roles of women across cultures.

Inday is a Visayan term that acts as an endearment for girls within a family or a group of friends. This piece is a social comment on issues that exist within the equal rights movement. The mask is simultaneously a protective shield and the subjugation of one's voice. The colours represent inclusivity as rainbows symbolise hope and social change. Being wrapped around the mouth is a way to voice out what cannot be said through words. I wanted to create a piece that shows support and awareness and by using the term *Inday* I wanted to showcase that being loving to those who feel unheard can be powerful.

As the name suggests, *Juxtaposition* is a piece about typical gender stereotypes and how they are perpetuated through clothing, toys, and everyday items. It juxtaposes perpetuated biological genders and how they can co- exist within one identity. Separated by frames and positioning, there is no gap for integration between the two. The frames are a representation of confinement and objectivity. If stereotypes were to be continuously perpetuated, there can be a dangerous suppression of the identity.