

This year, Salford University presents its degree show in the impressive New Adelphi Building, showcasing not only the work of the graduating class, who have spent their first and final year in the building, but also their new facilities. Across two floors of the mint fresh building, visitors can explore an impressive array of work from the School of Arts and Media.

Drawing inspiration from Wolfgang Tillmans, the photographs from the Fashion Image Making and Styling exhibition are hung in clusters on boards painted in a soft pink. **Konstantino Zarveri** presents images of masculine fragility through soft focus close up pictures. **Ellen Roberts**, meanwhile, disrupts our view by covering statues in sheets, bringing into question whether the way in which we present ourselves is who we really are. Curated by similarities in theme or colour rather than by the artist, the exhibition is an exploration of how image, visual culture and clothing can be used to convey a lifestyle and aesthetic identity.

Culture and identity are also issues explored over in the Photography graduate showcase. **Abigail Bleasdale** draws focus on the representation of 21st century lesbians via portraits of women on Manchester's Canal Street. Conversely, **Joe Gregory** chooses not to show his subjects but instead explores them through the staff of the private members club they attend, investigating what success looks like. By not revealing his subjects, Gregory maintains the hierarchy that naturally comes with wealth and success: between

the staff who serve to look after the members, us – the viewer – as outsiders, and the subject, who are elevated high out of the photograph.

Round in Visual Arts, **Elliot Flanagan** takes a look at Northern identity and the representation of the working class. His film, which takes the form of found archive film footage and video by the artist, is housed in a stage prop ginnel and successfully portrays a distinct portrait of Northernness. More introspectively, **Helen Woolstencroft** looks at her own past through family photographs, which are reproduced in a handmade book and screen-printed on to a child's dress. The garment, a reproduction by the artist of a dress worn by her grandmother in one of the photos, acts as a totem: a symbol of the family's migration and a narrative about how the artist sees herself as a mother, daughter and granddaughter. Similarly, **Lubna Ali's** prints draw on her heritage using Islamic geometry to produce contemporary minimalist prints.

The things we consume and the objects we own are also part of what forms our identity, but for Visual Art students **Mark Backhouse** and **April Smith**, objects have become part of their visual language. Discarded objects become mark-making tools for Backhouse, which he uses to create fragmented reliefs. Smith, meanwhile, takes a softer approach by transforming items of clothing and fabric into tall bulking human-like forms. These strange but familiar shapes perhaps explore how our identities are formed through

the things we consume.

In the work of **Claudia Alonso** and **Daniel Wiltshire**, the construction – or deconstruction – of form is a process driven by materiality. For Alonso, her textile sculptures celebrate form and show an admiration for the material and process she uses. Whereas for Wiltshire, it is the deconstruction and abstraction of digital images that take centre stage, with glitching and bending data used to create a mesmerising video.

Downstairs, Interior Design students look towards solutions for migration. **Asia Aliwa** has conceptualised the *Hexad Shelter*, an environmentally friendly, temporary dwelling for refugees displaced due to war or environmental disaster. Where Aliwa's project looks at how to solve problems today, **Eszter Romsics** looks to the future, creating an accommodation pod to support human life on Mars. Using an emotional approach towards design, Romsics' shelter draws on geometry found in nature to create a space that is fitting for its environment.

Over in Graphic Design, **Tara Collette** uses words found on her course and presumably from her colleagues and tutors, and turns them into slogans and mantras. Lines of text-Risograph printed on to fluorescent paper beam out at you, and you can almost hear someone saying it: 'There's more to life than Risograph and G.F Smith.' Banners are traditional folk art used by marching trade unions, but here Collette uses them to lead her fellow students saying, 'FUCK

THE GRADE.' Also exploring traditional craft in Graphic Design is **Katie Riddle**. Using needle felting she has produced a quilt featuring all the flags of the EU member countries; a sight of comfort amid the complete mess that is Brexit.

Other standout work comes from **Amrit Randhawa**, who uses a DIY aesthetic to dismantle and reconstruct well known consumer logos, and **Callum Dawes**, who takes us down the rabbit hole with his reworked *Alice in Wonderland* book – the artist's approach is to manipulate Lewis Carroll's lines into surreal forms, making it almost impossible to read.

It could have been disrupting for these students to move into new studios and workshops in their final year, but their work speaks volumes: they clearly took the upheaval in their stride. Throughout the artists demonstrate a strong visual language: they have shown themselves to be a determined cohort of creative practitioners. It will be exciting to see what the future holds for them.

As a postscript, it will also be interesting to see how future students use the New Adelphi Building. Will all the students being under one roof help create a cross pollination of ideas and skills? Hopefully now the School of Art and Media has found a permanent home, it will only lead to good things.