

Safe

Oil on canvas

This artwork is a self-portrait influenced by my childhood and the objects from it that I still hold on to, many of which are artefacts of the childhoods of various members of my family. I wanted to convey the sense of nostalgia and safety that familiar objects can bring in transporting me to a simpler time, evoking memories which have the distance and calmness of a dreamlike, sleepy state which is also evident in my use of a soft, desaturated colour palette.

I was highly inspired by contemporary realist Teresa Oaxaca's complex and crowded compositions as well as her use of scattered objects which influenced my choice of subject matter. Oaxaca's compositions inspired my own in which the figure is dwarfed by the mass of toys surrounding her, signifying a feeling of being overwhelmed by nostalgia. Although this painting is highly personal to me as each item pictured has personal or familial significance to me, I also want to comment on the universality of nostalgia and yearning to return to childhood.

The process of making this artwork required me interrogate my own sentimentality as I searched through boxes looking for subject matter, eventually realising that the objects that held the most meaning to me were the ones that had accumulated a collective significance from being passed on from my aunts to my mother and finally to me. I was intrigued to communicate in my artwork the way in which objects shift over time to be vessels for memory and sentimentality and become more than just their physical form; they can deliver a feeling of safety.