

## **Art Inspiration in Lockdown**

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Spring, which is a time of new beginnings and growth, has arrived, and this ignites in me a desire to reflect on the developments in my artwork that came through exploring new and challenging techniques and processes during lockdown. I thoroughly enjoyed developing my creativity during this time, experimenting with a variety of mediums.

Lockdown and its restrictions have been miserable for most of us for many reasons and everyone is looking forward to a time when life returns to some form of normality. Strangely enough, however, in terms of my artwork, the restrictions (especially those over the summer period) have been beneficial to me.

Before the restrictions, painting was my main medium but as I couldn't go to university, work in my studio there and use my usual materials and equipment, I was forced to change the direction of my artwork and take a different path, using the few materials I had at the time. I began responding to things I saw every day in my home, in the garden and on walks, including common materials such as stone, wood, fabric and light. Inadvertently, the content and direction of my work changed when exploring these things. I experimented with photography, my phone, video and audio, and I created works I wouldn't have created had the restrictions not been in place. I enjoyed creating these works and was pleased with the end results.

#### **Image 'Chain I'**

One of the first pieces I created was *Chain I*, created in response to the fact that I was restricted at home and felt frustrated. But this frustration was a challenge and I tried to respond positively to the feeling. The piece is digital collage, which was my main medium at this time.

#### **Image from sketchbook**

Sketchbooks have been an essential part of my work during the restrictions and a way to react quickly to things that struck me. Going for a walk was something I did regularly, and I was inspired by things that had never struck me before and which I might not have considered 'artistic', including cement, wire, grass and sand. I enjoyed recording these in my sketchbooks, changing the context of the materials.

#### **Image 'Terrain'**

*Terrain* is a combination of painting and sculpture that responds to the boundary between painting and sculpture – something that fascinated me at the time. The piece is a digital collage, containing details of paintings, sculptures and images from my studio. Although this is a digital piece, I wanted to convey balance, depth and weight.

After months of working from home, however, it was good to return to the university studio in September. Since then, my work has responded to the works I created during the summer and to the situation of having to look at the world in a different way. Through paint, collage, sculpture and digital media, I continue to respond to everyday things including photographs, landscapes, reflective light and shapes and forms. I am also interested in the idea of layering, unravelling and changing the context of images.

I'm grateful for the opportunity I was given during the restrictions to change the direction of my artwork and which led to other interests and inspirations. I know my current artwork would not be what it is without the restrictions.