

Brief Bio:

Kate Murdoch was born in Cambridgeshire to an English mother and a Scottish father. She lives and works in London.

Murdoch works predominantly in the medium of assemblage and sculpture, which centres around a lifelong passion for collecting. Found objects and images are modified, transformed or placed together so that they retain a sense of their original function, but also assume new meaning and open up opportunities for more personal and political discussion. Wider themes of loss and remembrance run through Murdoch's work and reflect her fascination with the permanence of objects versus the fragility of human existence.

Proposal:

I propose to build on an existing body of work, 'Nana's Colours' which was inspired by the small collection of things that I gathered from my grandmother's home when she was finally forced to leave it after some 70 years. In the five years since my Nana's death, I have combined the various items I rescued from her home with others from my extensive lifetime collection to create small assemblage works.

The source material is diverse - china, glassware, fabrics, soaps, powders, paper, plastics and so on – but the objects selected are all steeped in social history and speak volumes about my Nana's identity, age and social standing and of course, my relationship with her.

The small celebratory assemblages are an ongoing testimony to the relatively simple existence my Nana lived in a small Cambridgeshire village. She lived until the grand age of 102 and the work demonstrates how much life has changed over the past century, particularly in relation to the things we own nowadays - the things we have in our homes and make use of.

Examining my late Nana's objects in this respect is extremely poignant, homing in on deep-rooted childhood memories around family and relationships - love and loss. The objects still exist - my Nana sadly, no longer does. The subject of our mortality is one that has always fascinated me - the fragility of life versus the permanence of objects, in particular. The objects live on, our emotional attachments projected onto them, and become enriched with the assorted narratives and stories surrounding them.

The Museum for Object Research touches on a recurring theme in my work around the question of value and worth. What is an object 'worth?' How do we put a price on certain items? As it stands alone, a used powder puff has no monetary value. If however, it's one that my Nana used, then it becomes imbued with a highly personal history and narrative. Its emotional value is enormous - it's worth an awful lot to me. People pay thousands of pounds for John Lennon's glasses, or even Elvis's hairdryer. Shouldn't objects that belonged to 'ordinary' people be celebrated too?