

AFTERSHOCK

By Emma Ware

Aftershock is an interactive artwork about the earthquakes that afflicted Turkey and Syria in February 2023 and how it changed people's lives (Omer, 2023). It explores the damage these earthquakes caused to buildings and the people, as well as hope that some people experienced in the midst of grief, such as finding out their family member is alive.

Aftershock utilises watercolour and black ink on watercolour paper to help express these themes. Ink creates a scratchy texture making it look harsh, while watercolour is soft and flows together very well. By using these two juxtaposing mediums I created an artwork with contrast and where audiences can think about how the earthquakes brought forth a lot of different emotions from those impacted by the earthquakes. I utilise movement by creating an inactive art piece to help guide the viewer through an obvious narrative of a city before and after the earthquakes. However, it also allows me to show the change in emotions of the people before and after the earthquakes. On the first panel there are only silhouettes of people as a way to communicate how they take their everyday life for granted. On panel two the people now have faces and are all in pairs. Showing how after the earthquakes people have realised how much they once had and how much other people mean to them. Even though two panels does convey my narrative I would have wanted to create a third panel which shows the inside of a destroyed building with all the things that people left behind. This would allow viewers to further see all the things people lost in the earthquakes.

The reason there is no third panel is because when coming up with my idea I was too ambitious. I was trying a lot of new things in this artwork, so it became difficult to complete all three panels. Cutting the paper for the panels took a very long time out of my process as I had to make lots of prototypes to make sure the pieces would fit together and then measure and cut out the paper for the final artwork. I also used two-point-perspective for the first time in this artwork and even though it added to my overall narrative by making it look like the buildings are opening up into the second panel I made a lot of mistakes which could have been avoided if I had a better understanding of perspective. As a result of all these setbacks I had to remove panel three. If I were to complete a similar artwork therefore, I would make sure what I wanted to do was achievable in the time period and to my skill level.

Incorporating a narrative into my artwork was not that hard because anything can be a narrative. The challenge for me was to make one that had actual meaning and made viewers think. To achieve this, I tried to have an obvious story and an underlying one. When opening my artwork, you first see only the destruction in the middle of the panel. This plays into the narrative that most viewers will expect as earthquakes cause a lot of destruction. However, on the side panels there are signs of hope. Some are overt such as the 'tent city' on the right side, while others such as a family reuniting are covered with flip outs. I choose to do this because I wanted to make an artwork where the audience had to think to understand the full meaning of there being hope in the destruction.

One of the major issues with my artwork is its lack of depth. Although it is a perspective artwork there is basically no shadows or highlights in the final piece, making the overall artwork look flat. This occurred because I did not pick a light source for my artwork so I had no direction of where the light would go. If I was to do a similar artwork I would pick a light source to fix this issue. One of the other issues is that the different parts of the artwork do not match up correctly. To fix this I would create further prototypes so I could cut the paper in a way that allows for the whole art piece to be on one part of paper.

I have learnt that when doing a big piece of art, I should plan it out so that I don't run out of time and that narratives can be complex and simple at the same time.

Reference list:

Omer, S. (2023, April 17). *2023 Turkey and Syria earthquake: Facts, FAQs, and how to help*. <https://www.worldvision.org/disaster-relief-news-stories/2023-turkey-and-syria-earthquake-faqs#:~:text=Where%20did%20the%20February%206%2C%202023%2C%20earthquake%20strike%20in%20Turkey,hosts%20millions%20of%20Syrian%20refugees>