

The Fig Tree,
Matilda Cathcart
Oil on canvas and Collage elements

The aim of this task was to create pieces that explored narrative cohesively together, and I decided to take a more literal sense of the task and appropriate a pre-existing text. In my interpretation of the task, I looked at the fig tree analogy given within the book *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, in which she describes her life as a branching fig tree with each fig symbolising a different career or path in life. However, she finds them to all look too good and can't pick just one, subsequently each of the figs rots and falls to the ground. This message resonated with me at this time in my life where it seems like everyone wants me to pick what I want to do with my life as I become an adult. The use of distinct brush strokes and layering paint creates texture within the rotted fruit, adding dimension to the piece. Oil paint allowed for smooth blending and a glossy appearance in the piece which helps to create deeper contrast. I used collage as a tool to subtly reference the subject matter whilst also allowing the piece to speak for itself, adding photos to explore the sense of freedom and excitement that is generated about the future when you're young. While Kathleen Ryan helped to inspire my use of texture in the fruit depictions, it was Frida Kahlo that I took the most inspiration from. Her subject matter and the way she explores her emotions in her piece were what helped me generate not only the idea but also the composition.