

004 - VISUALISATION & ARTICULATION – CLAIRE & LESLIE

Visualisation and articulation are important activities in achieving what we want from the future; it helps to try and be specific about what things look like, what things feels like. Looking back can also be helpful as it can enable us to identify the things we want to take on the journey, and the things we'd prefer to leave behind.

As such, try to take some time out to reflect on the following exercises. Give them serious attention and jot down your thoughts and feelings for each one. When completing them, please follow these guidelines;

- This kind of reflective activity takes time. There are five key exercises - try to set aside 30-45 minutes each day to answer each one, and 45 minutes to an hour for the fifth/ concluding exercise.
- Choose a time of day that best suits you (early birds vs night owls), find a place that you enjoy sitting in, get a glass of wine, cup of tea, make yourself comfortable.
- If music helps, put on a CD.
- Don't read things you've written in response to one question when answering others. Try to be disciplined about this as it's important to try and let the subconscious speak – if similar words emerge across all of the exercises, they're words that want to be heard, things that want your attention.

Here goes...

1. You're already on a journey in terms of the textile work you undertake. But you're now seeking some new direction, some new place, some new vision, some new voice... and if not new, then perhaps different;
 - what do you want to experience on this journey
 - what does your (next) destination look like (and remember that you may not stay in this place forever, it's just your next stop)
2. Choose 3-5 words that describe the work you'd like to make - you won't be held to these, as they may change during/as a result of any work/exercise you do when trying to get there.
3. Describe your current work;
 - build a list of words that describe the positive aspects of the pieces you make, the things you're happy with, pretty sure about and want to keep
 - build a list of words that describe the things you're unhappy with about your work, not sure about or that you'd like to see change or develop
4. Think about process. Many of us engage in more than one process to realise our work; wet work such as dyeing, printing, discharge and so forth. Dry work such as cutting and piecing, hand and/or machine stitch. Ask yourself;

- of the processes I engage in, what do I truly, truly love the most?
- of the processes I engage with, what do I find a bit of a pain – in other words, I do it because it has to be done, not because I necessarily enjoy it.

Now ask yourself how much time you spend in the 'love it" and 'put up with it' zones. Is this an area that could do with some tweaking?

5. Assuming you've now completed the previous four exercises, it's time to go back and review/ reflect on your answers and consider the following;
 - have certain words been repeated, is there a key message emerging (but don't worry if there isn't!).
 - what new thoughts/feelings do you have as you read; jot these down too.
 - ultimately, what conclusions can you reach as a result of this reflective activity?

So, having reflected, extracted lessons from the past and forecast thoughts for the future, consider the conclusions you've drawn and start planning how you're going to move forward.