

This exhibition explores ideas about decay, conceptually and as a visual technique. My work originally focused on machinery and its distortion of color and light, but this developed into a focus on the decay of reality into abstraction. My later work focuses on this shift, creating deliberately incomplete artwork that blurs the lines between abstraction and realism.

My early Grade 11 pieces examine how metal manipulates light through different formal qualities: tone in *Monochrome Engine*, color in *Pastel Construction* and *Escalator Study*, and form in *Abstractions in Metal*. However, I reached a conceptual turning point with *Perfect?*, which challenged me to depict intangible ideas and how these change over time. To do so, I incorporated elements from Yuichi Ikehata's surrealist sculptures that juxtapose hyperrealism and raw wire to convey various stages of decay at once; this helped me realize how materials could be used to guide the narrative of decay. My later work uses mixed media and rough textures to communicate this narrative, beginning with *Aix-en-Provence*, my first mixed media piece. Ernest Pignon-Ernest's street art on dilapidated walls prompted me to use collaged newsprint as a base, integrating backgrounds into the piece to further emphasize a dilapidated look and blur the transition from realism into abstraction. This is echoed in *Into the Pages*, again layering figurative detail onto broken backgrounds. Decay is also considered using incompleteness in composition: many of my pieces feature one section drawn in extreme detail and eventually devolve into abstraction further away to create movement across the piece, a choice inspired by John Piper's semi-abstract war paintings. *Pastel Construction* and *Escalator Study* split this gradual abstraction into stages as one is a more abstract image of the other, extending the illusion of decay over time. Finally, decay is considered conceptually through subject matter: *Blue Relic* and *Aix-en-Provence* both depict dilapidated monuments, which explore decay over time through a historical lens as well as through texture.

My exhibition is laid out in an elongated alcove, with one main entrance on the left so the viewer experiences my work linearly from left to right. The linear layout follows the chronological development of my art style from polished machinery to mixed media works, transforming the experience of the viewer itself into another decay into abstraction. Pieces alternate between greyscale and color, creating a natural rhythm that encourages the viewer to continue moving forward. The audience begins with my mechanical works grouped on the left side. These are in close proximity to each other, encouraging the audience to approach them up close and appreciate figurative detail. This also reinforces their similarities in color scheme to help link the pieces thematically. *Perfect?* is a transition point between my pieces, introducing broken imagery to mark my conceptual shift in style towards abstraction. This leads into my more experimental works that explore texture and incompleteness: *Aix-en-Provence* and *Blue Relic*. These are displayed with greater surrounding space so the audience appreciates their large scale as well as their textured, dilapidated look from afar. Finally, my exhibition culminates with *Into the Pages*. This is displayed on an adjacent wall, outside of the alcove. This is so the audience may experience the work independently of my previous pieces, making it one of the focal points of my exhibition and a natural finishing point. With textured backgrounds, figurative detail, and incompleteness, *Into the Pages* also communicates the main motifs of my exhibition to other viewers who may have not yet seen my earlier works.

My exhibition aims to evoke beauty in the destroyed and the incomplete, challenging the traditionally negative connotations that decay carries. My use of uneven textures and mixed media illustrates the dynamic quality of abstraction, making my pieces more compelling than a purely representational image. Through selected focus in my work, I want to encourage the viewer to complete the image themselves in their heads: in this way, I aim to challenge the audience's idea of what a "finished" piece is.