## My Creative Response

## Quing dynasty jade mountain on wooden stand, Unknown artist (1644-1912), carved jade with wooden plinth, Durham Oriental Museum, Durham, UK



PLAYLIST (10 SONGS)

1. '#3' – Aphex twin
2. 'Night Song'- Lei Qiang
3. 'Instrumental 3' – Florist
4. 'Home among the swinging stars' – Mapache
5. 'Hatachi No Koi'- Lamp
6. 'Mystery of Love [Instrumental] Live'- Hannah Stater
7. 'Yume Utsutsu'- Lamp
8. 'Old Samurai'- Ho Si Qiang
9. 'Clouds'- Various artists (Yin Weihe, Jin Bo, Shang Ji)
10. 'The Song of The Four Seasons'- Ming flute ensemble

**‘A LIVING LANDSCAPE’**

Audience: A family member uninterested by art

At first glance you may think that it's just a decorative stone, but the object I chose shows a beautiful Chinese mountain landscape, resting on a highly decorated and detailed wooden stand. When you look closer, you notice tiny carved figures riding horses, climbing winding paths and carrying out daily tasks among spiralling trees and small buildings carved directly into the cliff. This object is made from jade, a pale green almost translucent gemstone, creating this dynamic image of a frozen landscape, displaying this whimsical moment in time.

In terms of my creative response to this object, I chose to do a playlist of ten songs, rather than doing a poem or a short story, as I felt music could explain the object better than words. Although it is just a carved gemstone with wood, but when you look at this object with a depth, it has this calming and dreamlike effect, displaying this tiny world in a moment in time. What inspired me the most about the sculpture was the tiny detail and smoothness of the jade. The winding cliff path, with tiny figures slowly venturing, creates this peaceful image, so I chose gentle calming songs like ‘#3’ by Aphex twin and ‘Instrumental 3’ by Florist. They both create a serene and quiet quality, which reflects the themes of the object. ‘Night song’ and ‘Old Samurai’ reflects the East Asian setting of the carving, whilst capturing the idea of zen, protruded by the artwork. All these songs are quite slow and tranquil, reflecting on the quietly passing time of the figures on the path. I wanted the playlist to feel like a journey, showing the way your eye travels from one side of the sculpture to the other, as if you were riding alongside the figures. At first, I actually considered drafting a poem, however I struggled to capture the calm, mediative quality of the object through words, and began to write only what I saw. Although I am happy with the songs I have chosen now, I had to change lots of the songs on the way, as I found it difficult to find the balance between sad and reflective. During the process of the playlist, it went from being this magical carved stone to an atmosphere, which was able to hold this patient and calming mood.

Overtime, my understanding of this object changed. At first, to be honest I mainly noticed how impressive and expensive the object seemed, however the more I looked at this object, I began to see it as a storytelling device, following this journey up the mountain. The use of jade made me appreciate the object more, as it is a super durable material and hard to carve, therefore showing the hours of patience, due to the intricate work. It felt as if I were stood in front of this luxury object, just as something decorative and valuable due to the use of jade. What seemed like just a precious ornament, gradually became a story of nature, landscape, and movement. The way the journey starts from one side to another, feels as if you are travelling along with the figures. I also began to realise that jade isn’t just any stone in Chinese culture, it represents wisdom and loyalty, making the sculpture feel even more meaningful, not just beautiful. I realised that even the wooden base, which I thought was just practical, adds to the story by grounding and elevating the peace. Overtime what seemed like an ornate object became something symbolic and thoughtful, showing themes of nature and peace.

597 words