

# Impasta Syndrome

Alice Sartori



To my Papa.

Mauro Sartori (1962 - 2018)





My project focuses on the fragility of memory and the idea of grief and longing.

At the start of my first year at Michaelis, my father unfortunately passed away in an accident. This traumatic experience has since followed me throughout my years of studying. I finally made the decision to dedicate my fourth year to create this body of work about my loss, not only in honour of his memory but also as a therapeutic initiation of sorts; to commence the healing process, which I had hesitated to start for so long.

My art is an exploration of my personal experience of grief; the loss of the nostalgia of happy family memories and the disconnection between my identity in relation to my father. My father was Italian and his death meant that I had not only lost my father but also, I lost the connection to the part of myself connected to him; to his language, to his family, to his culture and to his history. Through the medium of food, these memories are revealed from their respective archives and introduced again to the outside world, but through my own perspective, the perspective of an observer of one's own history.



In contemporary Italy, the act of 'having the family meal' and eating together is highly valued and prioritized. Cooking provides the framework for cultivating intimacy and closeness within Italian family dynamics. The foundations on which Italian society and its deep respect for food and family are based, rest upon this framework.





My father's way of showing his love and affection was to provide various acts of labour. He took care of us by living the majority of my life overseas, separated from his family to work and send back money. When he was home, he cooked and fed us.

My attitude and approach to food was cultivated by my father, who had in turn, learned it from his own mother, despite him having to live apart from his family for many years. This is the same method of showing love and affection that I adopted when he passed and I took up the mantle of cooking for and feeding my family. Food is a method of self-expression for individual families and communities; with each region, neighbourhood and household having different iterations of recipes shared across the country; meaning each family is likely to have few key dishes that are passed on and enjoyed by its members. My family is no different; My grandmother's minestrina, my father's risotto bianco and gnocchi made in my family home during the summers in Italy.









These memories were built around the dining room table on the family farm. The meaning and importance of these meals and foods were elevated by the surroundings they were made in; exploring and visiting the family farm on school holidays; helping my grandmother gather chicken eggs and vegetables from her garden; riding my grandfather's tractor; pressing grapes from the family vineyard beneath my bare feet; playing with the cousins and eating gelato and pizza from the village. A repeated process of overcoming an initial culture shock and language barrier from being away for so long, only to be re-immersed in the familiarity and comfort of my place within the family. All these moments finished off with dinner at the very end of each day, only possible due to the lineage and connection to my father.

At the beginning of the year, I had planned my graduate exhibition around the themes previously mentioned (losing my father and finding a way, through art, to honour his memory, while also exploring and reconnecting with my Italian family and heritage). In order to express these ideas, I asked my family for photographs and family stories to use as inspiration or references for the projects. In using these photographs, depicting the family before and after I was born; I was able to discover information about my Italian family and its history, which I have now realised that I knew very little about.







Through various mediums and experiments, I decided to rework all my previous ideas to one that I felt better represents my visual language, while also having clear cultural and visual ties to the subject matter I am exploring. This involved the process of grieving the lost relationship between my father and myself, as well as the lost relationship between myself and Italy. Pasta is a medium which is both a nod to my Italian heritage, in the sense that it ties in with the stereotype of an 'Italian culinary brand', while also symbolically representing the language of affection between my father and I. This language of affection, spans generations and is the same means of communicating affection that my grandmother uses. The act of making, cooking and serving pasta is a staple of my childhood experience, which I also recognise to be a stereotypical indicator of my 'Italian identity'. Homemade pasta was the solution to the uncertainty surrounding my choice in medium and how I wanted to represent the themes and topics.











In my opinion, the first act of grieving and dealing with loss is to acknowledge it. I see this exhibition as the start of a process on a journey of healing, rather than it being an all-encompassing conclusion to my feelings and my journey of loss.

These images were specifically chosen due to their subject-matter and association. All the images are a connection to my father and Italy; captured memories and moments from the family farm and from the time spent in Italy with my family and father.

My project consists of a series of painted images imprinted onto the surface of pasta slabs. These images are specially chosen from the collection of images given to me by my family and from my own personal archives. Some of the photographs are old, from a period of family history before I was born. Some of the photographs I selected are of events and people I can only witness as a third person, though these photographs and through the stories my family share with me. The other photographs are more recent. Due to the nature of memory, they have faded from my mind over the years, resurrected by a reminder in the form of these transformed pasta images.



The pasta sheets are made by hand with a combination of flour, liquid (water or egg) and occasionally using a third ingredient to manipulate their colour when necessary, such as egg yolk, tomato paste or beetroot etc.

By using the materiality of the pasta to my advantage, the sheets are left to dry uninterrupted, not only to give respect to the material's nature but to also let go of the control I had tried to implement, which had hindered the development of my process in the beginning. Due to the fact that the images are representative of memories, the cracking and brokenness of the surfaces when dried, make the memories intangible as well as present at the same time. The dough is then pressed through a pasta maker, creating sheets on which I can imprint monotypes, a technique yielding one or two good impressions of an image which is painted onto a prepared plate. The selected sheet of dough is then passed through the pasta machine once more, along with the painted plate to transfer the image - turning the pasta into a template to store memories and to also display them.

The memories printed on the pasta's surface are activated through being viewed, purposefully presented for the spectatorship of the audience but the images are incomplete and fragile, mere ghostly imprints of the past. They are futile recollection of places and people that the audience haven't experienced or recognize. The audience thus takes on my own perspective







The pasta prints are presented on wooden boards and plates, with the pasta waiting for an audience. In my mind; if the presentation conveys a convincing performance of the 'awaiting' pasta, ready to be cooked and served, then it gives the illusion that it will be consumed. Through the process of this consumption, the more Italian I become in the audience's eyes; the more authority and confidence in my personal identity I can derive from this association, and the more secure the connection between my past and my present will become. However, this pasta cannot be consumed, so the connection is tenuous and superficial.

Due to the fact that this is a deeply personal body of work, the intended audience is both myself and those who have suffered the same or a similar kind of loss; perhaps members of my own family or anyone who has experienced loss may feel such resonance. My work here is first and foremost, a love letter to my father. If he was here right now, this would not only be a very different project but he would have wholeheartedly supported me and loved this experience.

These pieces are a way for me to relive memories of my father vicariously, to honour him, as well as to live and reexperience my relationship with him through the artwork. I am viewing these memories imprinted on the material through my own perspective, coloured by a mixture of nostalgia and imagination, not only to force the memory to become tangible and present, but to also acknowledge their fragility and the mortality of what they represent – the places, emotions and people long since passed.

















Pasta 1.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 2.

Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 X 230 mm





Pasta 3.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 4.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 5.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.

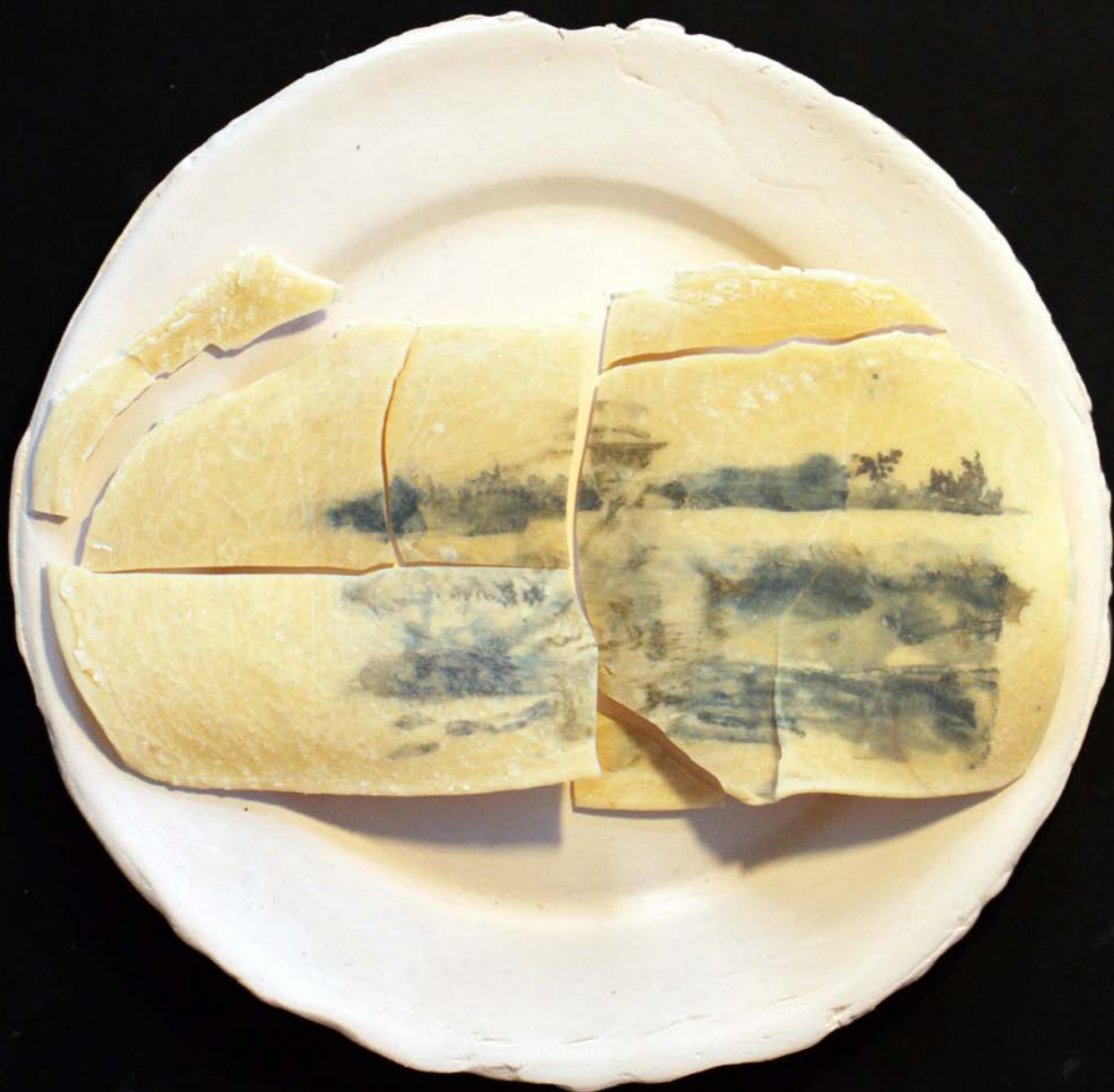




Pasta 6.

Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 7.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 8.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 9.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 2030 x 230 mm.





Pasta 10.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 11.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 12.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 13.

Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm.





Pasta 14.  
Ceramic, Pasta & Watercolours. 230 x 230 mm





Pasta 16.  
Wood, Pasta & Water colours. 320 x 170 mm.





Pasta 17.  
Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 390 x 190 mm.





Pasta 18.

Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 270 x 190 mm





Pasta 19.

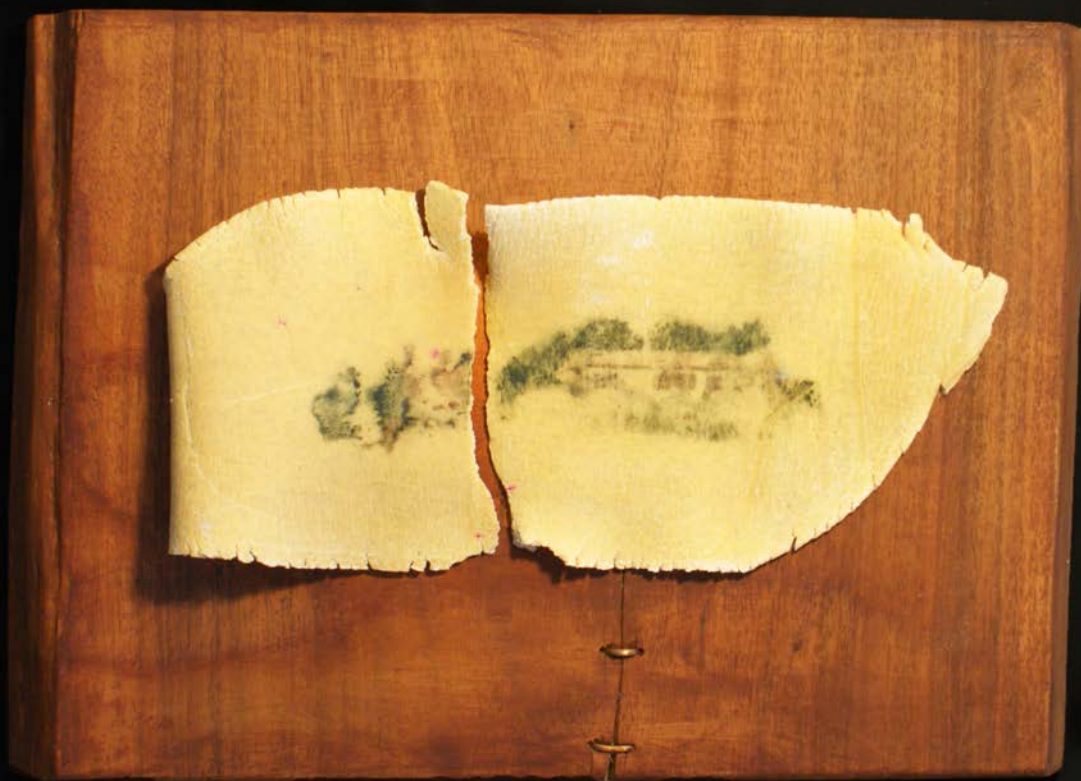
Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 280 x 190 mm.



Pasta 20.

Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 385 x 180 mm.





Pasta 21.

Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 340 x 265 mm.



Pasta 22.

Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 340 x 220 mm.





Pasta 23.  
Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 345 x 240 mm.





Pasta 24.  
Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 360 x 485 mm.





Pasta 25.

Wood, Pasta & Watercolours. 265 x 345 mm.



































