Personal Confirmatory Study Statement of Intent

**Section 1:**

Before starting on Foundation, I often saw my politics and my art, not necessarily that of others, as inhabiting separate spheres. However, the ‘first term’ developments in my working process have made my work much more cerebral, bringing in my previously detached critical thinking into my art. I once believed the breadth of my artwork was realist, plein-air landscape painting, but I have since realised how I can apply the observational skills I learnt from that practice to projects which I have a broader, philosophical interest in. More specifically, I have become acutely interested in the way that architecture and the dynamics of public space can be linked to political aims or social strategies. I greatly enjoyed the general drawing days of the first term because I could experiment playfully with my ability to arrange mass in space within these spatial drawings. In trying out other disciplines too, I found myself gravitating towards the compositional arrangement of shape and space, whether that was in screen-printing, or the fashion-orientated basic design exercise ‘dressing sticks’ where I focused on construction over decoration.

**Section 2:**

I chose to specialise in architecture within 3D for the pathway projects because I saw it as the best avenue to express both my artistic interests in space and my political interests in people and community. Fine Art was an appealing option as a political outlet within art, but I am most interested in outcomes that have a wider impact than the traditional artwork-viewer relationship delivers. I wanted my work to be more than just a political message; I maintained that something people use and experience has more direct political influence than anything displayed on a gallery wall. I would suggest that all of my work in specialism has demonstrated this intersection of interests, with my views on human social nature informing my approach to public space, and vice versa. The topic I selected for ‘Essay 2’ was comparing two social housing solutions in the Modernist 1960s, studying the emphasis on the shared social spaces within the estates and the socialist/ communitarian motives behind that from Labour London councils. Regarding my longer term aspirations, I am ambitiously pursuing work in political policy generation. I have found the creative outlet at Foundation to be extremely valuable, presenting a new frontier for my own thinking and research into the notion of how society functions. Especially when viewed on a societal scale, as I often prefer to, I see my understanding of architecture as complimentary to the politics I am most interested in. I would assert that a ‘Final Project’ in this area means something to me on multiple intellectual levels.

**Section 3:**

For my Final Project I wish to explore the dynamics and characteristics of politically charged public spaces, with the aim of conceiving my own communal space celebrating ‘coming together’ during an era of tribalism that has poisoned politics globally and locally. I am convinced that in doing this I must not create another memorial, monument or monolithic column that applauds the antiquated ‘commemoration’ of empire, monarchy or hierarchy. Instead I wish to embody almost the opposite, and create a vision for a public space that creates an egalitarian, positive space that encourages discourse in our divided political culture. Also, I cannot be binary in my choice of virtues to embody. I do not wish to create something hollow or vapid which merely rebels against certain principles whilst not presenting its own ideas; I need to be progressive in my thinking and work. My choice of pathway in architecture has bolstered my opinion that political work like this is most effective when it is experienced as a public space by the people. In that vein then, I wish to create something with physicality that allows mass interaction, preferably promoting discourse. Without a fixed view of the end point of this project, I have room to investigate tangible conduits through which political themes are expressed on the people experiencing spaces. I wish to research a variety of existing structures and their subliminal or even overt impact on the users of the space, so I can decide which features I want to reject or incorporate. For example, the walls of Belfast, Berlin, Israel and Trump have certain connotations obtrusive to discourse in more ways than the literal, or New Labour’s Millennium Dome and its references to a new era. I would like to build on the work I have done looking into the Post-Modernist Architect’s use of symbolism as a means to help convey certain encouraging values within the space. I think this approach will also prevent my work from becoming too literal, a line which I have crossed before to the detriment of my work. During specialism I have extensively explored the movement of crowds through space, and I will be continuing this emphasis in this next project, paying close attention to desire lines and people flows. My working process so far has been characterised by experimentation in 3D space by quickly-assembled models, followed up by worksheets considering layouts, human interaction and the general spatial dynamics of my designs. I will continue to do this, but shall eventually focus more on the finish of the models I create because they will be presented to convey my ideas to viewers. They will no longer just be tools for my own experimentation, as in shorter projects. I also may use sample sections to showcase the materials, scale and physicality of the conceived communal space. My project will be reliant on rigorous experimentation, backed up by research, so I will need to spend a substantial amount of time researching existing spaces. I will record this research separate to my documentation of models and accompanying notes, giving it space to extend beyond current designs ideas.

**Section 4:**

I have been effective so far in managing my time in specialism, maintaining a high level of productivity right through the day. I think that I will be able to sustain this level of work day to day if I use a planned timetable (see attached sheet). Another way that I can keep on top of the workload of this next project is to use weekly summary pages in my sketchbook, which I already use for documentation of the 3D work I create and noting down my ideas for what to do going forwards. I will apply the same approach of summary sheets or sketchbook pages to these entries, where I can clearly layout a visual representation of my ideas to someone following the project’s progression. I will be reviewing the outcomes of the Personal Confirmatory Study in note and visual documentation form either in a sketchbook or on sheets. This shall be done by comparing my display to the general vision outlined in ‘Section 3’, to “[conceive] my own communal space celebrating ‘coming together’ during an era of tribalism”. I believe the project will be successful in itself if it seems to portray the kind of political vision of unity I hope for and not the themes which I look to reject, and does this in a way which is tangible for the users of that space. Personally, I will find it successful if it opens my eyes to original means of shaping political public space through research and experimentation.