



Curtis-James Doherty, *Aleida's*, 2015, wood, silk, tulle, porcelain, paper, projection film.

Curtis-James Doherty is a Montreal-based artist specializing in studio arts and film in the Bachelor of Fine Arts program at Concordia University. He finds inspiration in manicured and natural landscapes and in the concept of home. Doherty explores the weight, form and texture of textiles, juxtaposing their physical sensations with their function as home décor. He is also influenced by the life of his maternal grandmother and her experience living with Alzheimer's disease, and has produced documentary films, silkscreen prints and installation pieces about her.

*Aleida's* (2015) by Doherty features a small bundle tied to one end of a long wooden stick containing various *objets trouvés* from his grandmother's house, including trinkets such as a teapot and saucer, marbles and a notepad with her writing. The handkerchief holding these items is covered in a floral pattern replicated from the wallpaper in his grandmother's kitchen. The bundle and stick are set on a light table, accompanied by a silent documentary video of his grandmother's house. Filmed over the course of a year and showing various scenes of each room, the artist documented the home where he lived with his grandmother before they moved. Doherty filmed the house from the perspective of someone with Alzheimer's to reflect how his grandmother would have seen the house. He sought to create a degree of separation between himself and his home in order to evoke a sense of nostalgia and reminiscence. Doherty's grandmother is no longer able to recognize their home, even when she is in it. She constantly repeats phrases such as "Take me home" and "I want to go home tonight," showing that home is no longer a specific place and has now become somewhere she feels most comfortable. A bundle attached to a stick is commonly associated with nomads and homelessness; the one in *Aleida's* represents a mobile home, or something the grandmother could keep with her as a reminder of home. This work was inspired by Shary Boyle's (b. 1972) *Snowball* (2006): similar to the way in

which the porcelain figure is engulfed in flowers, Doherty's grandmother's precious objects are wrapped in a floral package. But whereas the flowers stifle the movement of the figure in *Snowball*, the floral pattern of the handkerchief in *Aleida's* signifies the artist's grandmother's nurturing and caring gestures towards her family in their home. The suffocating effect of the flowers also relates to Doherty's grandmother's past struggle with the sudden loss of her husband, which left her as a single mother and caused her to question her religious beliefs. In this work, the artist ruminates on how his grandmother's past and present hardships have shaped her identity and her understanding of home.

Cecilia Erica Blume