

## PRACTICAL 2: "LAYERS OF LUCY" (MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS)

Why do artists make self-portraits? This artistic representation can encourage artists to look beyond their physical attributes, to portray their innermost emotions and in the process, reveal more (or less) of themselves to the viewer.

I explored the works of several artists who had produced self-portraits. I took particular interest in Ben Quilty's large impasto works that were painted immediately following his time as a war artist and the wildly surrealistic drawings by Brett Whitley exploring his own distress and imaginings with his life. An understanding of these works assisted in my own realisation that a self-portrait is more than the artists' face and that by producing one of my own I could discover more about myself and enable others to potentially see me in a different light too.

I have found myself drawn to artists using mixed media and layering effects producing a textured finish. The expressionistic and semi abstract techniques of Christina Pelouquin's multi-collaged works appeal to me. Her choice and use of materials is broad and the layering creates actual and simulated texture that changes the painting surface. Painting over these collaged areas allowed some parts to be further revealed and some were barely visible. I used copies of vintage maps, material from my childhood bedding, Harry Potter memorabilia paying homage to my collection of books and sheet music of a song regularly played to me by my father. I did this in a bid to express the notion that as I mature with broader life experiences, I am becoming more aware of the growing number of layers to me. Some areas were collaged whilst I employed a transfer process using impasto gel medium on others.

Ed Fairborn's works feature an innovative use of maps and given travelling is an ambition of mine, the inclusion of these seemed very appropriate. A local street map provided a framework for the initial layout, the lines of which can be seen like veins in the completed portrait. I applied other maps signifying places of importance to me and then drew over these to tenuously connect and balance the overall composition. I stencilled and wrote my name and a poem "*Lucy Locket*" over some areas of the background to further reflect my identity.

The foundation of both the portrait and background was achieved using an action painting style I had seen when working with muralist Henry Jock Walker. This resulted in broad areas of colour, dripping and included non-traditional methods of applying paint with fingers, spray bottles, dropping and spilling the paint on to the canvas. I drew with pastels, charcoal, conte and pencils to define the features and planes of my face, particularly in the areas around my mouth and eyes. The eyes form the dominant aspect of my work as I consider them to be one of my assets. The direct nature of the drawing media enabled me to have more control in achieving a realistic quality and three dimensional form.

I intentionally painted a fluid white area symbolising the unknown that is still ahead for me.

I feel my intention to produce a contemporary self-portrait has been achieved. The translucent painting techniques and use of mixed media reveal and disguise my many layers.