

Now and Then

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Growing up is often a vexatious process, which inevitably contains setbacks, failures, hesitation, and hardships. Some people would even suggest that the cost of growing older is the incessant progression of losing one's authentic self, one that is childlike with the joy of naive happiness.

The artwork *Now and Then*, depicts the form of loss that is often overlooked, buried upon the routine of life and the interminable pursue for 'happiness' in a materialistic world. I was influenced by the self-realisation of falling into a vicious cycle of comparison to attain apparent successes, which is represented through the prosperous lives of those around me. Hence, I reciprocated the sense of loss found within this realisation after travelling through waves of grief, where I began to recognise the transient nature of childhood reflected upon the feeling of desolation in the search for social acceptance and worldly gains.

The painting is created with oil paints, objectively depicting a young woman and a teddy bear within a spaceless void, highlighted through an extensive white background to retain an enthralling form of realism. The woman is seen dressed in work clothes, representative of monetary stability, though the impassive gaze of her eyes depicts a sense of discontentment. To accentuate this, the colours of the subjects are restrictively chosen; the woman appearing in black and white portrays a sense of dullness that underlines a discouraged character, contrasting the distinct colour of the teddy bear, representative of life's vivacity which can become increasingly difficult to possess when stepping into adulthood.

Whilst developing my final artwork, I was able to discover potential aesthetics and conceptually similar artists. **Claire Harvey's** works extensively depicts isolated figures placed within a vast illusionary environment, suggesting unfamiliarity and lack of navigation. This inspired the composition of my artwork, where my subjects are positioned in a distanced manner, reflective of the burden for endeavour fulfilment within the unfamiliarity of adulthood. In addition, **Lai Wei-Yu's** works explore the pressure that surrounds society's pervasion of success, which influenced my use of detachment and nostalgia upon the realisation of losing one's innocence. **Emma-Leone Palmer's** use of oil paints where her smooth brushstrokes establish depth that generates realism and enhances the painting's atmospheric feeling of seclusion was also another scope of inquiry. I have employed **Cristina Troufa's** significant use of negative space in her works within my own, in order to solidify a sense of contemplation to reconcile with one's inner child without excessive distractions.

As children, we all longed to grow up swiftly, but unconsciously disregard the endurance of difficulties beneath the veil of adulthood. On the journey to obtain our anticipated life, we can become attached to the idea of persuing materialistic success at great expense without realising the loss of an imperative value embedded within everyone that is inimitable, that is, the uncomplicated happiness of childhood innocence, a kind of joy which is so close, yet often goes unnoticed, diverted through the progression of life. The significance of the death of your childhood is a grief that pervades your adult life.