

Reflections of Childhood

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Turning 18 this year had influenced me to create a final piece reflecting on the joyous and memorable times of my childhood, I wanted to evoke the feeling of child-like innocence once again. "*Reflections of Childhood*" was a result of that, showcasing the innocence and vulnerability of being a kid. Starting points for this piece began with watching a 2022 short film named "*Skinamarink*". This film sparked intrigue into the isolation and vulnerable feelings of being alone as a child. I then delved deeper into how I could portray this subject matter into an art piece. Ken Currie was a big influence on my final piece as lots of experimentation was done from his oil paint portraits, and his style was heavily applied into my second triptych. His subject matter made the audience feel intimidated and isolated, being what I needed to portray the vulnerable quality of being a child.

Even though I already had ideas for my second triptych I wanted to begin looking into the theme and subject matter of the first. The first triptych, I wanted to imply contrasting subject matter and tone to the second triptych. Its goal was to feel vibrant and lively, showcasing symbolic moments and objects that now feel nostalgic for me. Towards the beginning, the aim was to research and experiment with different styles that implement lots of colour and stylistic features to represent the creative nature of being young. This was when I found Sangyoon Jeong whose coloured pencil studies incorporated the vibrancy and chaotic style I admired for the first half of this piece. Although for the final piece I didn't use the hatching and block colouring he uses, I still tried to incorporate the random choice of colour to bring vibrancy to the work.

For the first half of "*Reflections of Childhood*" the purpose was to express what I considered to be nostalgic. The use of childlike drawings/items mixed with the subject matter of memorable moments from my childhood, I wanted to create an overall atmosphere of innocence and childlike joy. For the second half there is an obvious contrast. I wanted the audience to feel isolated and by using perspective, placing themselves into the shoes of the child being tormented. By having it in a triptych format, I intended to build anticipation and uneasiness for the audience. Ultimately for this piece, I wanted to share the great and horrible memories of being young.

Overall, I believe the first triptych is noticeably stronger when it comes to the skill and techniques used. Since I'm more experienced with coloured pencils my subject matter had a lot more detail and tone in comparison to the pieces, I did in oils. While I was happy with my level of skill applied to the first triptych, I wish I incorporated more of the vibrant colours that Jeong uses. I believe I did this as I only experimented with portraits and forgot to try using the same technique on object studies. Additionally, I also went into lot of experimentation regarding collaging. Although some aspects were riddled throughout the first three panels, I could have done more layering with different mediums, possibly adding real pictures from photo albums to help build the atmosphere. Again, even with the negatives this first triptych was well assembled as it was cohesive in colour pallet and reflected a lot of significant items from that point in my life. I believe I effectively portrayed the creativity of the child's mind as the

composition of all the subjects are similar to how a child would arrange them. Although it may look cluttered, I did this to imitate how a child creates and explores with mediums.

In comparison to the first, the second triptych appears flatter and lacks depth due to my limited skill in oils. Additionally in the second half there was also an absence of trying to achieve the feeling liminal art has, being expansive and isolating for the viewer. I wanted to take inspiration from liminal art as it evokes similar feelings of waking up in the middle of the night when being a child, feeling exposed to the dangers of the child's mind. Ferdinanda Florences pieces were great in the fact that they created similar feelings of vulnerability in the audience unlike my pieces which didn't. It may be due to adding extra objects within the foreground and background or that I didn't execute my perspectives well enough to be considered realistic from the viewpoint of the audience. Although there are a multitude of negatives, I believe I effectively applied Ken Currie's style into the middle panel. The use of light and colour was used beneficially as the subject seemed to be engulfed by the darkness whilst looking unrealistically pale. The use of values in the subject face was also effective as it still looked like the texture of skin even regarding its sickly appearance. Whilst different subjects were debated to use within my final, I believe this was the best as it's highly intimidating and creates the feeling of uneasiness due to the uncanny valley nature. The purpose of this subject is to visualise the dangers of the child's creative mind, whilst it can be an amazing tool it can also be considered a weakness.

As a whole, this piece appears to be two separate works due to the subject matter but because of the composition it creates cohesiveness within the heptptych. By placing the 'face' in the middle of the second triptych this creates unity through an implied triangle with the other lighter areas in the top of the composition. This also occurs within the top middle panel and the side panels on the bottom. Due to the placement of the figure in the middle with the bottom two panels containing the angular beds creating a second implied triangle.

Overall, I do believe this piece has a great juxtaposition. It contrasts within its colour pallet, tone, and subject matter. Ultimately, I believe this piece has come out well, capturing some of the highlights from my childhood. Some being filled with naïve play and silly phrases such as "sharing is caring" and the guttural fear I had because of my own wandering mind.