

## *Under the Spotlight*

### **Isabella Laurendi**

My painting, titled "In the Spotlight", is an oil on canvas artwork depicting a younger version of myself surrounded by the eyes of significant people in my life. My personal aesthetic has always revolved around realism, with the intent to create depth and tonally challenging pieces. I was particularly drawn to the style of Adelaide based artist Anna Platten due to the tonal accuracy she achieves within her work. Jeff Huntington also inspired the quality of my work as he uses similar youthful subjects imbuing them with realistic features. For the focal figure, being myself, along with the circular eyes in the background, I used water mixable oil paints, as the ability to blend tones is facilitated by their inherently slow drying time.

The choice of oil paints further enabled me to increase realism through the wide range of colours available. The technique of blocking out colour in the initial stages of the painting process allowed me to assess how the completed work would look. Constant colour-matching against my source imagery assisted in the creation of a wellresolved realistic portrait.

The composition and content of the background was selected to evoke a surrealist quality. The placement of the eyes highlights the central figure while having symbolic significance. Each eye represents somebody in my life who makes me feel pressured to perform well either academically or socially. On the left side, commonly referred to as the logical side of the brain, each member of my family has been featured; my parents are towards the top, with my sister and brother being underneath. I feel academic pressure from my parents, mainly in the form of comparisons between me and my siblings who I view as being very intelligent. The right side of the canvas, the creative side of the brain, contains the students in my art class; I feel pressure to achieve well in comparison to others. My art teacher, although creative, is placed on the left side, to symbolize authority and the need to excel.

By including my six-year-old self, I have highlighted the stark contrast between childhood innocence and the need to live up to other's standards. The direct stare from my younger self features me on my first day of school. It is symbolic of the past where I lived for myself, without the influence of others. The choice of a flat, orange background was deliberate to compliment the dynamic blue of my school shirt. Lighter shades of orange were used to colour a number of the circles in order to create a balanced, harmonious composition.

I am extremely satisfied with the product, as it not only accurately depicts the innocence of youth but also acknowledges the pressures that those important to me place on me. I have realized that their concerns come from a place of love and care.