

Shiverpeak Mountain Owl Griffin

Jade McCord

Exploring the early mythology differences in my folio based upon dragons, I studied their habits and behaviours even the cultures specific to that creature. I discovered the aesthetics attached to rogue dragons, which directed my research towards Griffins, (half bird and half cat), with their unique and dynamic poses. I understood the need for subtle twists in form and the fall of light to capture tension and textured variants so began my journaling key features to enhance my understanding and conceive my own aesthetic. Examining a species of owl and domesticated feline I drew upon their forms as Ashley Lee does to personalise their characteristics.

I developed the owl griffin based upon the merging of a snow leopard and barn owl torso. With pale white and grey coloured references sourced from snow tipped mountains my snow creature emerged as an opposite version of an ordinary Griffin. The refinement of this alchemy revived my fantasy element I envisaged as I practised their proportions, poses and movement of both creatures prior to a merge in order to achieve a high sense of realism, which would stand up against time.

Griffin Owl's successful watercolour detailing, and spatial awareness is as striking as Olivia Lomenech Gill who purposefully reduces background elements to showcase the creature and draw attention to the detail. Working in a similar method I intentionally kept most of the original sketched lines for the smaller creature to ensure accurate details in the finished painting as this rough sketched line enhances the sense of discovery as I envisaged a rougher design, much like artist Jennifer Miller griffin. I introduced warm realistic tones and successful washes layered to strengthen detail. My softened focus between background and create enabled me to successfully sharpen the owl griffin's details like illustrator Bente Schlick. Our simplified backgrounds, romantic lit angles and tonal values make our unique creatures appear quite mysterious and so likeable.

The fantasy creature concept culminated in a delicate watercolour I attribute to my interest in J.K. Rowling Harry Potter series and the fantasy creatures which inhabit these narratives. The atmospheric aesthetics and watercolour washes technique reveal the silence of their environment and flight. Shiverpeak Mountain Owl Griffin unveils their natural habitat of snow-capped peaks and wind-swept valleys. The telescopic view discovers the male partner soaring high in the distance looking out for dangers or prey metres below. With wings spread, hind legs retracted, and tail swept to one side the mother comes into land ready to look after their youngster who's sunbathing to warm up before taking flight. Their delicate muted grey and brown tonal washes define the wings' chevron patterns and similarly leopard spot tones camouflage their feline bodies.

I would like my art to inspire others to be hopeful of new beginnings as art speaks to the times and says a lot about our attitudes about family and sense of belonging. We age but there are always young birds for the future. These birds are unique as we are and for me have become personal symbols of the ongoing cycle of life, how the new replaces the old.