

Pain Within

Emily Koch

Pain is inflicted mentally and physically on individuals who are affected by cancer and their families. The intent of my artwork was to show the mental pain that has been put on a person who's been affected by cancer, not personally, but within their family. The concept was developed through personal experience with a recent loss of a family member to cancer, and how the mental pain affected me.

My artwork titled 'Pain within' is a 91 x 120cm, mixed media painting on canvas. It features myself facing away from eye contact, with a blank facial expression, portraying the way emotions can be affected after experiencing a loss. Symbolic of the passing I placed wings on the figure, however rather than making the subject look angelic, I referenced the feelings of isolation and the way the pain from cancer can engulf people and their mindsets.

Throughout my research I discovered Tahlia Stanton who paints mixed media images depicting how much she loves life. Although this idea contradicts the intent of my artwork, I could see elements of Stanton's works, including line and colour contrasting that I thought I could include in my own piece through the multiple medias. I wanted to add the sad and dark element to my painting, so I utilised this symbolically through the colours and particular elements.

I was challenged whilst utilising a similar art style to Stanton as I want to be extremely methodical with my process. I felt I needed to let go and attach to my inner emotions to allow them to be portrayed amongst my final artwork. Painting my portrait was also challenging as I don't particularly enjoy painting portraiture, but I felt this was the only way to suitably portray the emotions I feel.

Kate Revill, Sid Pattni, and Ivana Besevic are artists that also influenced my piece with their elements of colour, linework, and realistic human emotions. Revill's use of colour matching was influenced in my use of strong bold colour in the wings, although I used darker colours instead of bright ones. Pattni's use of lines over his work is what influenced the wing placement and meaning behind it. Besevic's emotions in her artwork influenced the facial expressions and body positioning for my reference photo.

I decided to experiment throughout this artwork, with as much texture and media as I could. Using Matisse acrylic paints, I utilised layering techniques on the face and body of the subject and a series of washes in the background, and to create depth of colour throughout other elements. Oil pastels and Prisma coloured pencils enabled me to get the depth of colour into the artwork where it was perhaps too difficult to use paint. In adding this depth of colour, the warm and cool tones in elements like the wings and body were married together, rather than looking like two separate images.

I was pleased with how the emotion was portrayed throughout my final piece; subtle pain that's recognisable once you look for it, predominately in the style of Tahlia Stanton.