

Hannah Yeomans

Practitioner's Statement

Ludovico Einaudi

My subject, Ludovico Einaudi, is a creator of music that is a fusion between classical and contemporary orchestral compositions. Einaudi's piano music stealthily seeps into our collective consciousness as his compositions are featured in a multitude of international films. I chose Einaudi as my sole subject for my study of portraiture. I wanted to capture and explore his candid and humble persona through a repetitious series of portraits and experimentation with a variety of materials in the attempt to do justice to the man who has influenced my life so greatly.

I discovered my love for music at an early age. As I was a shy and reticent child my parents eagerly fostered a relationship between music and me. I experimented with a range of instruments throughout my early years of schooling and my family recognised my potential to succeed. I gravitated towards the piano at my grandparent's house, and found much solace in playing the notes and eventually learning to read the sheet music.

During my turbulent teenage years, I struggled to express my emotions. I was caught in a cycle of repetitive practice, piano examinations and songs. I found no passion, playing the piano felt like an involuntary experience. Although I loved the instrument I needed to find a different way to re-ignite my initial joy of the piano. I discovered the infinite boundaries of classical music while viewing the French film 'The Intouchables'. Einaudi was the sole composer of the film, and this led me to an obsessive interest in his musical world. As my curiosity grew, I was consumed with the idea of mastering his music which encompassed both highly skilled techniques combined with touching emotive qualities.

As my schooling progressed, my obsession with Einaudi's authentic sound grew. Heading into my final year of schooling, I contemplated my final art project. With Einaudi's sheet music still sticky taped to my bedroom walls, I recognised the major influence he had had on my life. In that moment, I felt compelled to honour his impact on my personal development, and I needed to pay respect to his great continuous presence in my life. I decided to create a tribute towards the man behind the artistry that led to my ability to communicate my feelings. I decided to dedicate myself to a body of work which I felt represented my personal connection with Einaudi.

Enthused with the idea of developing my understanding of portraiture, I directed my research towards Archibald Prize finalists, and local artists such as Ahn Do, Robert Hanford, Chris Orchard and Louise Hearman. I also researched historical artists such as Kathe Kollwitz, Michelangelo and Lucian Freud to achieve a further understanding of techniques. Through the influence of both contemporary and historical artists, I could experiment with a range of materials which lead me to further develop my skills in my chosen medium of graphite and charcoal. Chris Orchard captured my attention in the 2017 SALA exhibition due to his dedication of depicting a fictitious character that he continues to be consumed by. Orchard's repetition of his avatar character inspired me to aim to master my subject as he did.

The predominant feature of repetition within my art piece is directly related to the concept of rhythm, as my series of portraits represents a visual tempo and beat. This design principle of visual rhythm refers to the recurrence of formal elements of lines and shapes which create movement within my piece of art. I have shaped movement within my artwork which I feel emulates Einaudi's range of musical tempos. Some portraits demanded large amounts of time to achieve delicacy in their lines and soft edges, others were quickly sketched, bold in their nature, and opposite in their tonal contrast. I was drawn to Einaudi's subtle variations in his compositions, 'Oltermare', 'Divenier' and 'Nuvole Bianche'. He has mastered the ability to create subtle variations within the same theme. I have attempted to mimic his musical style of subtle variation in my own work, using different materials while drawing the same image. After progressing through many portraits, I realised the scale of my piece required contrast to maintain the interest of the viewer which I achieved through using mixed media. My intention within this body of work was to clearly demonstrate the development of my drawing skills and uncover the true persona of my subject. Drawing the fifty-five smaller portraits challenged my ability to capture Einaudi's essence, as he is gentle yet determined in nature. After working within such small boundaries, I decided to take a risk by completely changing my direction of approach. Whilst remaining with the same theme, I drastically enlarged the scale of my diptych. I worked toward mastering two images which in my opinion encompass Einaudi's character. The large diptych enabled me to be free with my artistic expression particularly my mark making technique.

In a similar way to Einaudi's music which is not easily categorised, I too believe that my art aesthetic is expressed through multiple forms of style and technique which is ever developing. By discovering local artist, Chris Orchard and his ability to focus on a character which sustains his art practice, I too have tried to emulate this dedication to my subject, in my body of work. I consider my tribute to Einaudi as a homage to his ability to provide me great comfort and inspiration during my adolescent years. My body of work has uncovered the multiple layers behind both Ludovico Einaudi's music and his public image to reveal to the viewer and to myself his true intrinsic nature.