

Eclipsing

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'*Eclipsing*' was inspired by the concept of creating an artwork that uplifts and expresses the empowerment of women by creating an authentic, multi-dimensional portrayal of womanhood. Growing into womanhood, I have felt undermined and misunderstood. Being taught that I have to condense and shrink myself, being silenced and not listened to or taken as seriously because I am a woman inspired me to create a piece that was bold, defiant and freeing.

I was particularly inspired by practitioner Frida Kahlo, as her captivating self-portraits depict her in a bold, authentic and vulnerable way, which were qualities I wanted to display in my final piece. Kahlo's use of nature and symbolism to enhance the rich meanings in her pieces further influenced the idea to incorporate flora and a heart in my practical. The heart was used to symbolise the love and compassion women hold, and the vulnerability and adversity women are faced with. I was drawn to practitioner Nadia Waheed's ethereal depiction of her feminine subjects, which influenced my use of the starry and gold halo illuminating my subject's head, highlighting my subject in a powerful and goddess-like way. Practitioner Gisella McDaniel's textured, busy, vibrant and flourishing natural environments that reflect the uniqueness of her subjects inspired me to create a nature filled oasis for my subject to bask in, and to use varying mediums to create depth in my practical.

My first painting was of two women, both covered in flowers, surrounded by tropical leaves. However, after completing this mock up I found that there was not enough negative space to emphasise the subjects, and the focus of the piece was directed to the busy patterns of flowers. From this, I decided that I would paint a close-up portrait of one subject, focussing more on their facial expression to create a bold, strong piece. I liked the idea and aesthetic of the leaves and flowers in my previous mock up and incorporated them in my final practical, but making sure to not add too many, as I wanted the subject to be the focal point. From this process, I learnt the importance of creating enough negative space to enhance the focal point of my piece.

I used a combination of oil and acrylic paint to develop my personal aesthetic and achieve varying effects and textures. Using oil paint on the subject's face allowed me to create realistic facial features and a smooth quality, whilst using acrylic for the rest of the piece allowed me to create vibrant colours and chunkier textures, creating a sense of contrast, vibrancy and dimension, and prevented it from becoming too stagnant. Whilst the piece takes inspiration from Kahlo, Waheed, and McDaniel, it displays my own unique art aesthetic through the expressive but still facial expression my subject is portrayed in. I wanted to draw particular attention to the subject's face, displaying an expression of calm confidence and resilience to convey the subject's power. '*Eclipsing*' is vibrant, bold and illuminative and communicates a feeling of unwavering feminine divinity, defiance and power to the viewer.