

Portraits of my Identity

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My final artwork 'Portraits of my Identity' is a water-based oil piece set on multiple canvases (90 x 120 cm) presented in a layered format. I wanted to explore how societal pressures are expressed through art, specifically the challenges women face to attain unrealistic beauty ideals. After exploring this theme both visually and in written form, I felt it to be too impersonal. After further development my concept became focused on expressing my personal identity using a self-portrait. The exploration stages of my folio aimed to recreate the visual and conceptual works of artists Lucian Freud and Anh Do. Their application of unique styles, diverse colour palettes and technical abilities influenced the overall tone of my final piece.

Lucian Freud's integration of realism within expressionism influenced my style, which I refined to compliment my technical abilities. The subjective interpretation of my identity was inspired by Anh Do's deeper understanding of how colour can portray the unique personality of an individual. I've aimed to utilise all the techniques I have developed to convey my identity to the viewer. The decision of splitting and layering my portrait over three canvases stemmed from the conceptual aspects of my folio. Each portrait represents a different perspective of my identity which I chose to express through the application of varying colour schemes, textures and artistic styles. To express the introverted aspects of myself that are not so often seen, I utilised cooler tones within the background. To juxtapose the despondent mood, I applied vibrant tones to my face and hair which I feel portrays how I present myself to others.

I employed Windsor and Newton Artisan Water Mixable Oil Paints to maintain a sense of realism within my piece and to demonstrate my technical skill. I used the #1 liner and #6 round brush throughout all stages of creating the figures and the 1" flat brush for the backgrounds for efficiency. The #6 round brush blocked most of the major aspects of my portrait and by applying impasto techniques, I was able to delicately apply and blend paint onto the canvas. This allowed me to skilfully create smooth curvature and form.

I encountered several obstacles throughout the creation process, such as forming the hair and relating my artistic intentions to my concept. With the help of insightful videos and taking the time to reflect on the personal development of my piece, I was able to overcome these hurdles with efficiency. The finer details of my artwork, such as the eyes were another challenge. Working in the impasto style required thicker placements of paint which created problems for smaller aspects. By using the #1 liner, I was able to achieve this detail on a smaller scaler. I believe each portrait displays aspects of my identity few people see, and aspects I would not normally acknowledge. The portrayal of me in a vivacious mood, colligates with the melancholy aura emitted from the background. Upon completing this piece, I feel I have successfully developed my own unique style of impasto painting. Although, I should have expanded on my understanding of realism and its properties, but overall, my final piece was successful in portraying my perspective of my own identity.