

A Family Portrait

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My family is like a jungle. Crazy, dramatic, messy, loud, and honestly a little cracked, but somehow every element of this jungle comes together to create an enriched and united ecosystem. For my body of work, I wanted to explore portraiture, but in a different way; a way where I do not recognise a person solely on their appearance but appreciate them for their personality. Thus, my body of work is a portrait of my family, a portrait of how I view each family member and how they contribute to this crazy jungle of a family.

As my family has six members, there were six stages within my body of work—each step exploring a family member and how they could be portrayed within the resolved practical. The first instalment of my body of work depicts the personality of myself and my three sisters. Through analysing the personalities of my sisters and me, I drew connections between different botanical species and our personalities. My sister, Caitlin, is innovative, beautiful, accommodating and understanding. Thus, I conveyed her personality to the water and its luscious and elegant movement. Caitlin's feature is displayed at the top of the body of work as she is the eldest sister in our family. To better understand how to depict movement through brushwork, artists Katie Over and Vincent van Gogh's fluid, painterly techniques were explored to represent Caitlin's personality traits.

The second instalment was for my sister, Emily. Emily is independent, vigorous, wilful, and devoted, and I relate her personality to the hearty and robust jungle greenery. Emily's feature is on the left-hand side of the body of work and exploring artists Henri Rousseau and Frida Kahlo helped me understand how to express more profound meaning through jungle scenery.

Thirdly, Victoria. She is an attention-seeking, bright, expressionistic, and loving person, so I knew her element had to be vibrant in colour and stand out from the rest of the instalments. After analysing Victoria's personality, I decided that her aspect for the artworks should be flowers as they are often bright, noticeable, and beautiful. From this, I researched the works of Claude Monet to acknowledge how brushwork could be used to enhance how I portray the delicateness and whimsicalness of flowers.

From here, I moved on to exploring my personality. This was difficult for me as I am unsure how others perceive my qualities and me. I do think that I can be dependent on others, especially my family; I can also be indecisive but peaceful. From this, I planned to make my contribution to the final to be fungi, as they often rely on hosts and are undecided in their growth patterns. To better understand how to portray the beauty of fungi, I analysed the works of illustrator, Beatrix Potter.

After analysing each sister, researching different artists, and exploring techniques and trials, I created a triptych for each sister displaying their personality and qualities through environmental aspects of water, greenery, flowers, and fungi. After completing these four separate triptychs, I moved on to the main canvas that Mum and Dad share. Mum and Dad's artwork is featured within the centre of the four triptychs as they are the family's core. Dad, being the withstanding and patient person, is portrayed as an old temple that has endured the growth of the surrounding jungle.

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To help me improve my understanding of how I should display the jungle temple, I explored the works of Gilbert Gorski.

From this, I finally reached the last instalment of the body of work, the Mums feature. Mum is an untameable and fierce person, and I wanted to represent the vibrance of her personality through the feature tiger sitting centre stage of the temple. Its poised position and golden eyes let the audience identify the tiger as the family's heart. To gain a better perspective of tigers within artworks and I could potentially portray this feature, I explored the works of artist, Liu Jiyou, within my folio.

It is through such observations and perceptions of each family member's personality traits that I am prompted to complete a work that is different from what I have done before, ignoring the common perception of portraiture, and creating a body of work that represents a topic that is personal and profound to me. I have used acrylic paint combined with wooden canvases to express this body of work. Using wooden canvases has enriched the organic and earthy quality of the practical. The addition of gold within each triptych and the opulent gold leaf within the large canvas enhances the connectedness of the body of work. The use of gold within the body of work symbolises that even though each element is different, unique, and separate, they are united as one.

To conclude, my family is one hysterical bunch, and to have the opportunity to show others how I identify each family member's personality and qualities, through this unusual interpretation of a portrait, was exciting. From creating this body of work, I have gained an appreciation of the importance of symbolism, interpretation, exploring artists, and the development of the folio, to create an artwork I can share with everyone.