

The Whiteboard

Madeline Cole

The Whiteboard is a large scale (200cm x 250cm), abstract expressionist piece that depicts my life journey. Driven by the works of Cy Twombly and Pablo Picasso, I was inspired to use abstracted fragments of paint, as the medium's qualities helped assist in creating a sense of depth and tactility. Each line and brush stroke is a symbol for the experiences and memories I have accumulated during my years as a child and young adult. Moreover, I wanted to link concepts and techniques found in the work of abstract-expressionist artists like Ash Holmes and the late Jean-Michel Basquiat to illustrate an emotional driven and vibrant artwork.

As I am currently finishing school this year, the pressure of achievement and final outcomes has played a large part in my life and, initially, I was determined to creatively portray these different "demands". However, while exploring different concepts in my folio, I decided that I would take an alternate approach and instead focus my practical on the simple, optimistic journey I have had. By creating mind maps, I was able to determine specific milestones in my life and how I could incorporate these memories into my final piece. I discovered that the majority of my life has been dominated by my education and lessons I have learnt inside and outside the classroom. With this era of my life closing and a new one on the horizon, I wanted *The Whiteboard* to be a joyful expression of this chapter.

In my folio, I conducted several experiments consisting of different colours and abstract concepts. Towards the final pages of my folio, I mostly used pastel colours as the lighter tones radiated a softness and calmness. When mixing and applying the pastel tones to the background, a sense of tranquility assisted in easing stress and any angst I had concerning the future. Furthermore, the colours also denoted a sunset which is symbolic of my home, King Island. The soft pink and green tones embody the love and appreciation I have towards the beautiful beaches, the farm and my friends and family there. In the final stages of creating my artwork, I added white paint mixed with impasto to emphasise that the piece is emblematic of a whiteboard. The impasto contributed texture and depth to the piece, creating a sense of tactility: as students, we were always drawn to cheekily writing and scribbling on the classroom whiteboard. Additionally, the impasto's effect suggested the notion that "bumps and obstacles" will be dominant in my life journey. Using turquoise and magenta hues, I illustrated continuous line faces; some represented my loved ones and others were me. The technique of dripping paint suggested that some of the faces were crying, noting that sad memories can lead to happy moments.

I chose to work on calico fabric as the softness and texture enabled the smooth application of the acrylic paint. Due to the large scale, I had to lay the fabric on the ground. With bare feet, I was required to walk on the fabric to reach each corner; in turn, this created a feeling of intimacy as I was connected through touch. Additionally, whilst painting the fabric, the grass and sticks underneath added unique patterns to the artwork, which became a visually interesting element.

I included bold text, such as "WHAT NOW", which implies my uncertainty on where to go and what to do from here. The question "what are your plans now?" is frequently asked, and I have always been more frightened of my response rather than the question itself, as not knowing is overwhelming. In spite of this, not only have I pushed my artistic boundaries, but I have managed to accept my fear of the unknown and translate this through an artwork that hopefully strikes a chord with peers and adults alike.#