

## *It's in your Hands*

### **Bridie Marshall**

My artwork is the result of an effort to capture mood through figurative portraiture, in which the aesthetic aspects support the portrayal of this eery yet calming mood and provoke a particular response from the viewer. I wanted to create a work that was interesting within the concepts of life and death, and the way that life plans out is in the hands of people and their choices. The figure within my work is just a torso, moving the focal point to the skull, reducing any emotion that may be drawn from the face of the figure. After trying to find a person to use for my final work, I decided on painting one of my close friends creating sentimental value to my piece.

I was inspired by the human form and how muscles look strong yet gentle in art. The use of tone contoured and enhanced specific features of the body. As a result, a large portion of my media exploration included a variety of different approaches to represent contrast while maintaining unity in my artwork.

After researching and experimenting with different styles I decided on creating a simplistic styled work utilising blending techniques to create a smooth texture. I was inspired by Vincent Fantauzzo as he focuses on hyper realistic paintings capturing his subject's mood and emotion. I was also inspired by Robin Eley as he encases diverse and unusual concepts through realism. I communicated this within my artwork through the use of colour, blending and tonal value which captures both Eley and Fantauzzo's techniques.

Despite how simple my work may seem, many art elements and ideas are applied throughout. My choices of neutral colours, shadows and highlights, shape and gradients have particularly impacted the mood created in my work. The dominant colours are natural "skin" tones that contrast with the monochromatic background and skull, creating significant interest. This and the soft blending techniques creates a sense of calm whilst keeping the work intriguing, as there is tension created between harmony and chaos. What ties my piece together is allowing harmony amongst the chaos through deep tonal variation with no flat colours. The blue/black scheme keeps my work simple. The eye follows these colours and techniques drawing the viewer into the artwork.

I experimented with several media to best capture my intended idea. I tried a range of paints, oil, acrylic, water colour and gouache. I also experimented with oil pastels, pastel pencils, posca pens, charcoal, lead and coloured pencils. This helped me make my decision to use oil paints as I intended a specific blending technique that was individual to my work. Taking my own photographs added a personal level to this work. A variety of photos from diverse angles allowed me to choose an image that worked best for me. I also used this technique with finding the best angle for the skull to be held in and adapting my drawings to fit the figure. Overall, I believe this work to be successful as it captures the intended mood as well as inviting the viewer to interpret the artwork in their way.