

## *Final Five: Acts 1-2*

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The creation of my body of work, and the narrative of Final Five, is a personal passion project spanning about four years. I have spent many hours coming up with narratives for these characters but have never, until this year, visually created their story. It is incredibly meaningful and personal to be able to create a substantial piece using these characters who have been part of my journey through adolescence.

My initial artistic influences were sequential art, or comics, and illustrations, originating through a years-long interest with narrative-based illustrations and graphic novels. Their recognisable humour and blend of smooth, witty writing and expressive artwork were elements that inspired my initial storyboarding process. I was additionally influenced by both historical and contemporary Japanese manga and its artistic conventions, such as their differences in speech bubbles and ways of drawing emotion. I studied and implemented techniques and visual elements from all influences into my personal style to effectively tell the story of my characters.

Final Five: Acts 1-2 is presented as an enlarged graphic novel page, incorporating many mediums such as inks, watercolours, cotton thread, and digital drawing throughout its individual panels.

The more traditional hand drawn panels were inked using a dip pen nib, with a careful focus on smooth, expressive linework. Watercolours were kept simple and desaturated, to purposefully contrast with the vibrant digital panels. These digital panels took advantage of the versatility of the medium and used a wide range of saturated colours and textures to achieve illustrations that would visually engage the audience and add to the narrative. Both 'pages' have their own distinct colour palette, with variances between the traditional and digital mediums. Act 1 has a warm tone, with a focus on browns and oranges to portray feelings of nostalgia, warmth, and contentment, supporting the intended narrative. In contrast, Act 2 is cool and desaturated, with a closer focus on internal experiences and emotions, and a greater number of monochrome inked panels. The variety and combination of media employed has allowed me to fully and richly express the narrative behind my work and subject matter.

My artistic inspiration for the structure of my work include long running webcomics Never Satisfied (Taylor Robin), Cucumber Quest (Gigi D.G.), and Paranatural (Zack Morrison). Robin's work in Never Satisfied has been significant for my art, especially his depiction of magic in a grounded and practical way. His use of vibrant colour and connection of hue to characters has been heavily influential and inspired my use of colour and shape, especially in the creation of a unique visual style for each character's magic. A key element of Morrison's Paranatural is the slick perspective switches, especially notable in their expressive, dynamic fight scenes. This was an artistic device I attempted to emulate through Act 1 and Act 2. Morrison also uses a variety of stylised onomatopoeia to push movement and sound in their pages. I took inspiration from their techniques and added several small words to portray sound in my own art. This adds a sense of reality to my character's movements and implies a world and senses outside of their page.

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While all my panels were specifically storyboarded to effectively portray a narrative, slips of hand-inked dialogue were additionally used to make my majors flow cohesively. Multiple colours were also used in the dialogue to emphasise the importance of certain phrases, and to draw the eye of the viewer.

My body of work's narrative covers key moments from the full story of Final Five, a narrative I have created. Act 1, my first major, focuses on an action scene where three of the "Five" – Nadine, Quinn, and Ethan – are experimenting with their magic bands and participating in a mock fight. In contrast, my second major Act 2 covers an emotional turning point for another of the "Five", Chester, where she has lost everything in her life and is desperately trying to regain control, by re-activating her own magic bands. My major's meaning bases itself around growing older, and the expectations that arise when you begin to mature. These are both the expectations you have for yourself, and the ones that others have of you. Final Five explores what happens when you meet these, but more importantly, when you don't meet the expectations of your abilities – and how regardless, you will be loved.

An challenge with the resolution of my body of work was its composition and how all individual panels would be arranged. This required many sketches and pages of planning for both visual content and narrative content, to ensure that the story line was effectively illustrated and could be successfully navigate by an audience. The different panels and media used bring out the richness of the narrative, engaging viewers. The variation in size and media make different parts pop out at different times, and place emphasis on narratively significant panels. Another challenge faced during the creation of my body of work was keeping my character designs consistent between both changes in panels and changes in mediums. This was overcome through repetitive inking of multiple panels in one go, allowing for better consistency.

Throughout the creation of my folio and body of work, my personal style and artistic ability has developed and evolved. Due to my subject matter being focused on people, much of my work was devoted to understanding movement and anatomy and fitting it into my style. The constraints of the graphic novel form pushed me to develop my narrative both visually and textually, ensuring that it could be easily understood and making it interesting and dynamic. These are both skills I have successfully developed throughout this assessment.