

My Life or Yours

Violet Pye

My art series titled *'My life or yours'* consists of 18 framed acrylic paintings (30cm x 30cm). Each work depicts an item symbolic of a year of my life, spanning from childhood to adulthood. This theme of growing up was inspired by the transformative phase of approaching adulthood, marked by my graduation. I was fascinated by the aesthetics and styles of still life, figurative, and graphic art, which I drew influence from through the study of local artist, Billie Thompson and American artists, Wayne Thiebaud and Peggi Kroll.

My study of Peggi Kroll aimed to help me decide whether I wanted to depict figurative memories or literal objects in my paintings. However, I came to the realisation, through her figurative pieces, that my personal artistic inclination leaned towards portraying items rather than scenes. Kroll's ability to simplify and exaggerate forms left a significant impact on my own works. Additionally, Thiebaud's bright, whimsical depictions of objects influenced my colour palette and childlike depiction of items, aligning with his aesthetic. Furthermore, Billie Thompson's portrayal of objects influenced my composition and the decision to frame each piece.

To create this work, I explored my personal history, identifying items that carried significance and symbolised each year of my life. Subsequently, I photographed each of these items, allowing me to create authentic source material and enhance my still life painting skills. However, sourcing some of the items proved to be difficult, therefore I had to use some secondary photographs, such as the scooter. When painting each item in acrylic with a simplified aesthetic, they convey a sense of innocence, inviting viewers on a retrospective journey into their own life from childhood to adulthood. The title itself invites viewers on that journey.

I chose to frame the paintings individually, rather than consolidating them within a single large frame or directly affixing them on the wall to impart a sense of importance upon each piece, whilst also creating a cohesive presentation for the entire series. Arranging the frames in a 3x6 grid format organises the years chronologically, creating a natural progression and enhancing the storytelling aspect of the artwork. The choice of a long grid over a wider grid, alludes to a body, implying that the works collectively represent me.

The decision to paint objects rather than scenes of memories was driven by the desire to create a clear and universally relatable portrayal of growing up, through iconic items like Barbie dolls and L plates. Employing items ensures viewers can personally connect with the artworks, thus enhancing their engagement.

I am very happy with the outcome of my artwork, as I believe I have successfully captured the concept of transitioning from childhood to adulthood, drawing inspiration primarily inspired by artists, Billie Thompson, Wayne Thiebaud and Peggi Kroll. Moreover, I've noticed a significant improvement in my painting skills and shading techniques through my exploration of each artist and the final 18 paintings.