

PRACTITIONERS STATEMENT

The symbiotic relationship between humankind and dogs has always been an interest of mine. People have the power to take a homeless or sick dog in, care for it, and watch as the dog develops positive habits. Likewise, a dog can also change a human's life as even the saddest person can experience happiness again through a dog's vibrant infectious personality. I wanted to explore this concept in my work.

During my investigation into artists, I was influenced by the work *Big Mother* by Patricia Piccinini, a hyper realistic surrealism sculpture portraying a mother baboon holding a human baby. The piece communicates differences between two species but the loving bond that binds them. I explored the connection between humans and dogs in my own work, displaying the positive affects they can have on each other's lives. Piccinini evokes emotion in her sculpture through touch and embrace. I replicated this in my own piece, using hands to symbolise this emotive connection. *Parallel Lives*, a diptych by Jackson Thilenius was also a work of great inspiration, using the separation of two canvases to emphasise the contrast between the two lives the dogs have led; one traumatic, the other joyful. The raw emotional depth in his paintings connected with me and my love for animals. I wanted to represent my concept in a similar way. Andy Warhol's bright use of colour in his Pop Art print entitled, *Archie* motivated the use of colour in my own work. I wanted my work to convey an emotive message using bright splaying colour to show emotion.

To create my work, I took first hand photographs of animals at the local vets, which led to the development of my concept; the exploration of human impact on a dog's life and vice versa. I found acrylic paint was a good media for my theme as it allowed bright and vivid colours to be applied, representing emotions and the canine's personalities. My piece is a diptych; one canvas depicts a sad dog in the centre, miserable eyes and a sagging head, a dull grey background in water colour surrounds him, portraying his mood. A youthful, strong hand is coming from the left, holding potential for the sad dog, shown through bright colours splaying out from the hand. This represents power that the person has to change the sad dog's life. The second canvas shows a happy pug sitting tall and proud, colours emitting behind him representing his happiness. An old worked hand is coming in from the right to touch the dog, this showing that the happy dog has the power to change the old, tired person's life.

I feel my work has been successful in portraying my message through the use of emotive colour. The dogs, central in composition are the focal point and the colours used depict the light and love being emitted from each individual. The two canvases placed side by side represent the comparison between two lifestyles. If I were to create the work again I would alter the strong hand's shape as I feel it needs more definition, whereas on the sad piece I would alter the detail in the hand to create more wrinkles and calluses to ensure that the idea of tired and worked is presented to the viewers.