

The Beat of The Heart

Julia Cromer

My pieces are called 'The Beat of The Heart' and was originally a broken guitar that was going to go in the bin. However, I decided to use it in a way to connect my artwork and my music as those are my two favourite subjects at school and what I want to pursue later in life. I wanted to focus on reducing and reusing in my piece and therefore the majority of items used to create new work is from something that was already around the house or school that wasn't being used or was going to end up being thrown away. For example, I used old and no longer used clipboards for the album covers that were displayed in front of my guitar. Originally, I was going to use glass photo frames that my teacher had supplied from an op shop. Therefore, still reusing and reducing.

My final pieces came out so much better than expected, I believe that my guitar piece is one of the best works I have ever produced and evokes much emotion once the meaning of it is understood. The guitar represents my growth as a student, a human, a musician and an artist and I showed this by including flowers and vines, items that are typically associated with growth. Year 12 has been one of the toughest years for me with getting diagnosed with depression, anxiety and ADHD which all massively impacted on my schoolwork and personal life. I found that music and art were avenues that I could calm down, release or have something to put my focus into, that would be helpful for me. Some things that I found particularly helpful is music when I'm studying, I would also focus quite well when completing my artwork for school while there was music on. I made this connection between art and music and thought I would also incorporate something musically that I don't see much awareness of, which is synaesthesia. I am a synesthete, meaning I see and associate numbers, letters and music with colours and it has been something I have always lived with and has helped me with remembering things (such as piano notes) or creating art that is perceived in my head in very vibrant colours. I wanted to show how music is displayed in my head, through my art and chose to paint reinvented album covers on some plastic squares, which were meant to be glass but were changed due to the fragility of the glass and inability to cut the glass clean enough. On these plastic squares I painted what the songs on the album appear as in my head. I would listen to every song, and I would keep painting what I saw until the square was filled up. Once they dried, I wrote in white POSCA on the album cover, the album name and I replicated the font that was also used. Looking at all the squares put my brain at ease as they are the colours "they are supposed to be" in my head.

I knew from the beginning that I wanted to incorporate a heart into my piece as I wanted to show how much music means to me, so much that it keeps my heart beating. The larger broken in half heart is connected by 8 strings which relate to the 8 key functions that the heart possesses. I wanted to include something holding the halves together to show that music is what keeps my heart in the right place and keeps me from falling apart on days that my depression is really affecting me.

A range of mediums were used to create my piece, I used a lot of air-dry clay, plastic from reusable clipboards, paint, flowers and vines, artificial moss, paint pens, aluminium foil and paper mâché. The clay shows the lumps and bumps of an anatomical human

heart which help bring my piece to life with added realism and the squares made from the clipboards are the perfect size and thickness.

I was particularly influenced by Wassily Kandinsky as he also had synaesthesia and used it to display his creativity. It was comforting to see someone else who creatively dealt with the craziness of constant colours appearing in their head.

I definitely believe there is a strength in my acrylic painting and ability to shade and create texture as shown in the face of the guitar, however an element of this I did struggle with is colour theory and finding the correct colours to shade and highlight with and to add tone variation in as well. I found the paper mâché process quite challenging as I did not work quick enough and over the course of a few days the balloon inside the paper mâché had deflated and shrunk inwards but had also pulled the still wet paper mâché inwards as well. It was a long process to try and bring it back into shape and prevent it from falling apart if layering clay on top. To battle this, aluminium foil was taped to the whole outside of the sculpture to ensure there would be no mould and the piece would not fall apart.

I want my artwork to have a positive impact on someone's life, like music does for me. I want my artwork to be engaging and create thoughts that would later wander into a individuals' mind if they were ever feeling low. Music and art are some of the greatest human inventions, I don't know where I would be without them, and I believe that they both have the power to always keep me going when life gets tough.