

The Joys of Growing Up

Lottie Prowe

The 'Joys' of Growing Up is an acrylic self-portrait that serves as a commentary on my differing attitudes towards the future as a child, in comparison to a young adult. It expresses how all of the opportunity and excitement that comes with a growing sense of independence can become overwhelming. This idea is communicated by the juxtaposing asymmetrical images which draw a direct contrast between the two attitudes. Furthermore, this theme is demonstrated by expression, and consequently displays a worried, anxious expression alongside a happy and excited one. The dark background, with a lighter gradient towards the childhood, in addition to the contrasting hues of blues and more natural red tones are all symbolic of the pressure and anxiety in comparison to excitement and happiness.

The piece takes inspiration from a range of different portraiture artists, including Sam Mckinniss, Philip Geiger, Cho Gi-Seok, and Alex Garant. Sam Mckiniss, Cho Gi-Seok, and Alex Garant, informed the vibrant surrealist style, including the colour palette with deep blue and red hues, whilst the technique for paint application was informed by Philip Geiger in relation to the small, quick brushstrokes that were utilised. This range of artistic influences helped to develop my artistic style, which is a mixture of realism and surrealism. The expressions were informed by taking photos of myself for the present portrait, and photos of my childhood that others had taken and passed on to me.

I feel that the artwork successfully ties together the opposing emotions of joy and distress towards the idea of gaining complete independence in life. This was achieved using superimposed images, opposing - vibrant colour schemes, and the inclusion of a childhood portrait – side by side with a present-day portrait. Consequently, expressing how I feel at this juncture in my life as year 12 comes to an end and I enter the “real world”. Hopefully this piece resonates with viewers who may be experiencing the same inner conflict, or have experienced it in the past.

The 'Joys' of Growing Up is the culmination of constant experimentation with my personal art aesthetic, that tends to settle more on the side of abstraction than realism. This piece reflects the way that art is a medium for self-expression, which can be utilised to develop a deeper understanding of self, through the constant refinement and simplification of the artistic themes, which results in a finished artwork. As a result, this process is meditative and serves as an example of the importance of art in providing curative agency to psychological unrest.