

My Father's Healing Hands

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The significance of adversity and hardship in shaping and developing me personally is portrayed in "My Father's Healing Hand" after I have developed a relationship with God and learnt to recognise that God's love is healing, and he has a plan and purpose for all experiences – with my spiritual relationship being formed as a result of my father praying for me. The title "My Father's Healing Hand" signifies and refers to the connection between my earthly and heavenly father's hands through prayer and figuratively both contributing to my healing and individual growth. Moreover, the use of gold leafing on the cracks nearest to the hand has been done in reference to Kintsugi, the Japanese practice of repairing broken pottery with golden adhesive. The philosophy of Kintsugi supports the ideology that despite failure and breaking there is a future similarly to how the broken objects are made valuable once again after being repaired. This symbolises the beauty and growth God created through the utilisation of hardships and adversity and also the healing nature of his love.

The idea of incorporating cracks into my portrait was inspired by Taisuke Mohr's utilisation of cracks to challenge reality and leave viewers questioning reality and fiction. As I experimented with the appearance of cracks on the face of my portrait subject, I developed my own reasoning and significance for cracks which was that they were symbolic of the impacts that hardships have had on me. Moreover, Alessandra Maria's use of gold leaf throughout her portraiture creates another layer of depth and adds a substantial amount of interest to her portraits. I trialled several ways to apply gold leaf to portraiture that would be relevant to my message of growth and healing. After doing a trial of gold leaf cracks I learnt about and researched Kintsugi which enabled me to combine the element of cracks with gold leafing as it added a significant amount of symbolic relevance to my artwork.

Moreover, one of the artists that initially inspired me to integrate symbolic elements such as patterns or cracks into the skin of my subject was Marco Grassi. Grassi intricately paints patterns onto the skin of his portrait subjects in a highly meticulous manner that enables the surreal component to look as if it was a part of the subject's skin. Although I steered away from patterns similar to those of Grassi's, I applied their compositional ideology of integrating symbolic elements within the skin rather than surrounding the subject alternatively with cracks.

Where the hand of my father rests on my shoulder in the portrait gold cracks are emerging to signify how his hand aided in my healing and growth which was a process and is why only the cracks nearest his hand are golden. Additionally, the reasoning in leaving the cracks visible similarly to the art of Kintsugi is to portray how hardships and adversity have positively left an impact in shaping me and supporting to my own personal growth.