

Practitioner's Statement

Expectations

Oil on board

My artwork reflects the all-consuming feeling of pressure, from both internal as well as external sources. As humans, we put immense amounts of pressure on ourselves, which often forms into an unhealthy cycle of self-destruction, when we do not achieve what we had aimed for. This piece reflects a journey of self-love and allowed me to reflect upon my habits and mindset regarding the standards and expectations I held for myself. The pressure I put on myself, this year in particular, led to an extreme decline in my both my mental and physical health, but through changing my perspective, I was able to accept that perfection is not always obtainable.

The artist who stood out to me was Denis Sarazhin, due to the rich expression and emotions he creates through his incorporation of hands throughout his pieces. This inspired the use of hands in my piece, to physically represent the feeling of pressure. Sarazhin's style is unique, incorporating aspects of realism along with abstract features to create compelling artworks. Similar to the colour schemes seen in Sarazhin's work, I chose to include deep purple and blue hues to create depth and depict feelings of pain and sadness.

The composition of my work produces a sense of balance and calmness despite the dominant and forceful nature of the hands. This was done intentionally as I wanted to show how at peace, we as humans are when we find ourselves stuck in the cycle of self-doubt and pressure. Too often we are blinded by the convenience of our self-destructive habits and don't realise the control this has over us. I chose to use realistically rendered skin tones in order to draw the audience in and allow them to see a reflection of themselves in the figure and resonate their experiences with the pain the subject feels. Viewers are immediately drawn to her as a focal point and the uneasiness of her expression is felt instantly. I originally planned to incorporate a more varied range of colour in the background along with organic linear details and patterns. But through experimentation, I decided that in order to create a dominant focal point, the background needed to remain simple.

I chose to paint the background using an abstract technique, to create contrast with the realistic figure. The expressive brushstrokes create a fast-paced sense of movement, representing feelings of distress and chaos. Oil paint was my chosen medium due to its smooth texture and easiness to blend, and I achieved the level of realism I aimed for. A challenge I faced was painting the hands, as I struggled to achieve the same level of realism as seen in the face. Due to this I spent a lot of time redoing different details and adding multiple layers of paint to eventually reach an appearance I was happy with. Overall, I believe that my artwork successfully portrays ideas of pressure and control, through the powerful composition and dominant hand placement. My artwork successfully provokes thought among the viewer and allows them to interpret its meaning in any way that resonates with them.