

Amaranthine Triptych

Wilhelmina Broad

In deciding upon a topic for my final piece, I had initially considered focusing on a medium that I hadn't studied before, such as sculpture or ceramics. However, with the introduction of a new light table to my classroom, I decided that I wanted to work in illustration. I had considered this before but had felt I would be unable to achieve the level of detailing I desired in a piece without added equipment.

I knew that I wanted to illustrate a book – specifically, a narrative with rich imagery that would be hard to conceptualize, as often found in the sci-fi or fantasy genre. I settled on *The Promise of the Child* by Tom Toner, because it is a story that means a lot to me; I also felt it was appropriate as Toner has spent much time in Australia, and I saw much of the imagery present in *The Promise* as being inherently Australian.

I enjoyed the developmental process for my major piece as it allowed me to study many illustrators, animators, and stylists that I admire, such as Keith Thompson, Hayao Miyazaki, and Eiko Ishioka. Because Toner's characters are so varied in appearance, I wanted my designs to be as diverse as possible. Within my folio, reflections of many different cultures can be seen, in particular costuming unique to East Asia, Medieval Europe, and Northern Africa.

In order to further this experimentation, I explored different mediums, utilizing oil paints, gouache, coloured markers, and chalk/oil pastels. I felt that any of this media would have been suitable, but ultimately decided to stay true to my own aesthetic by using fine liners and brush-tip pens. I feel that my trialling of other mediums was not useless, however, as it allowed me to get a better feel for the characters and settings, and improved my skills as an artist.

I very much relished the opportunity to use the light table, as it gave me both the ability to refine and reduce the time spent on my major piece, as I did not have to worry about the smudging and lack of detail inherent to layering. I made sure to incorporate designs I had created during my development process whilst also experimenting with scenery and perspective.

I found it difficult to imbue the triptych with the dark undertones essential to Toner's narrative, as I was and still am struggling with issues of mental illness. I often entered periods of depression wherein I felt that focusing so strongly on my artwork was becoming detrimental

to my health. However, the finalization of my major piece turned out to be extremely cathartic in terms of emotional release. I feel inherently connected to Toner's narrative and its correlation with my own growth as an artist; his characters often struggling to find direction in their lives, and despite this overcoming seemingly insurmountable odds – something I relate to intrinsically. I feel that I have achieved all that I can with my major piece, and am very proud.