

Cuttlefish

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Ever since a child I enjoyed spending time at the beach with my family, specifically at our family shack where I would spend most of my time looking in rockpools, swimming and going fishing with my dad. My love for the ocean and sea life has ever grown as a child and I became more experienced with snorkeling and swimming. I would find myself spending more time at the beach as I grew older, admiring the sea life and surroundings. I wanted to create this piece to show the beauty of the animals that live below the surface and reflect the amazing colours and alien-like detail within them.

In 2020 I did a three-day course with my dad to get my scuba diving license. I then began practicing diving and allowing myself to experience the ocean from much closer as I grew more experienced as a diver. I soon came into contact with a friend of my mums who is an underwater photographer, she began teaching me the basics of underwater photography. I started practicing using the camera while diving primarily at jetties where I experimented with lighting and became comfortable with using the camera. The image that I chose to paint was one that I had taken myself which I captured during a dive at Whyalla beach during cuttlefish breeding season.

I created my painting using oil paints and liqen. I began creating the image using a variety of blended colours on the body ranging from light yellows to blues and optical blacks. The body of the cuttlefish is covered in small light-colored lines in a variety of shapes and colours. The majority of these shapes were a light green colour while the edges were more vibrant or darker. The bottom edge of the body was a bright electric blue with highlights of white. The small, detailed shapes were created using a large amount of liqen and an extremely small brush to allow for each stroke of paint to have smooth edges and be placed easily. When creating the background, I used a dry flat brush to create a feathered effect within each strand of seaweed. Much of the background was blurred and this effect was created by using a dry brush to blend a large amount of the background to create the blur.

Throughout the creation of this piece, I've learnt about the beauty of the underwater world and how alienlike some of the species found in the ocean truly are. I believe that these species should be valued, respected, and protected much more as they are intelligent and incredible creatures. I have developed my skills and have experimented using techniques that I have not previously used. The skills I have developed during this piece have inspired me to pursue a career in this area as it is truly one of my passions and talents.