

One with Nature

Laura Fox

This work expresses the connection between human kind and the natural world. The expression of this connection became the main source of inspiration for the process I undertook. After attending the Sally Smart studio workshop held at the Art Gallery of South Australia, I began to explore further with the idea of experimenting with the cutting and pasting technique. I applied these ideas to my own work by experimenting with layering different textures, shapes, colours, and tones in order to express the colour and energy in nature. As I progressed, my investigations led me to discover the renowned illustrator, Camilla Perkins. Perkins exotic, brightly coloured, and highly patterned portraits inspired me to create a self-portrait as my major work.

I was particularly drawn towards creating a portrait as my major work as I saw it as a vehicle to visually communicate a story about me, about my life and my connection with nature. In doing this I aimed to create a work that expressed the colour, happiness and joy in my life. With this idea, I took multiple photographs, experimenting with different camera techniques and lighting. Using the images taken, I began to synthesise my work, experimenting with utilising the materials of watercolour, markers, lino printing, as well as experimenting in Photoshop in order to create a portrait which captured the colour, happiness and joy in my life.

From previous learning in the Visual Arts I have developed skills in printmaking, with Lino printing being a specific area of focus. As part of this visual process, I have incorporated these skills and combined them with other exploration of media such as collage work. Combining these techniques presented challenges as I have a tendency to want things to be perfect. This was particularly challenging whilst printmaking as it was difficult to control the media. Carving and printing is time consuming and requires so much patience and persistence; This was challenging for me because I want everything be as it should be.

The use of bright vivid colours was a representation of my conceptual direction and is reflective of who I am and my connection with nature. I make decisions about colour almost without thinking but the reality is each choice I make about combining colours, images, areas of detail and families of shapes all come from what I have learnt along the way. The contrast of the black ink of the lino prints against the brightly assorted colours of the collage works, work harmoniously to create a unified composition.

When I started this process, I was so captivated by collage techniques and the impact of working with this media. As I progresses throughout my study I combined this idea with my

love for lino printmaking, however I never thought I would rely on digital techniques to create my works. Due to the time-consuming nature of printmaking and collage work, I began to scan my creations, allowing me to explore various Photoshop techniques.

Working in Photoshop allowed me to clean up the prints making the lines thicker and cleaner, as well as making the colours of the collage works brighter and bolder. This was particularly helpful for my work as I like for things to be clean and sharp. However, having said this I am aware that creatively, the cut and paste nature of the media which I utilised throughout my work allowed me to be creative and instinctual.