

Practitioner's Statement

In honour of my Grandparents

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For my second major art piece I went back to my favourite part of art which is drawing faces. I wanted my piece to contain a message. Brainstorming a few ideas, I looked at the concept of portraying people with mental illness, or the common problem of stress disorders which can effects our behaviour. I also looked at ideas of postures and compositions which could express the human emotion and feelings.

The first artist I explored was Alexa Anton. She creates realist pencil portraits in which she uses the eyes and facial expressions to convey a mood. Acrylic

Elise Reid was another artist I was inspired by. She works in a genre of using dripping watercolours to create girl's faces. She presents them at different angles enabling her to capture their most inner thoughts. After conducting some experiments with watercolours I decided I found it too limiting for what I had in mind. I then looked at work and practiced the style of Tamara de Lempicka whose soft tonal work sensual to the eyes and the suggestive poses created strong sexual overtones in the work.

Finally, after considerable experimentation I came across the work from Elly Smallwood. I was captivated by her painting technique and presentation of the human face. Smallwood's art expresses human emotion through her use of warm colours and the raw placement of the paint on the canvas. While experimenting with her style, I began painting aged and weathered faces. This finally took me closer to what I was after.

I finally came up to the conclusion that I would paint my grandparents. I have a close relationship with them and I wanted to create something that I could remember them by. I thought of creating a collage around a portrait of them to represent their personalities and their heritage. I took a great deal of photos with them sitting for afternoon tea, resting in the lounge and in their garden.

After exploring compositions, I decided to stay with painting on a canvas. Instead of having a background of pasted images describing my grandparents, I would paint something about their birth country. I chose an image of a house that looked similar to the one they lived in in England. The painting of my grandparents was painted in a similar style to Elly Smallwood's. The house in the background was painted in tones of grey to create a contrast to the strong foreground colours. The flowers in their garden are textured through the use of impasto. The light captured in the flower petals creates an element of movement in the composition. The one challenge I had was creating the pattern on the white jumper. This was achieved by stencilling through a starched doily. The central image is meant to be a photo, I achieved the clean lines using masking tape.

I am happy with the end result. I think the composition is a lot more than just a portrait. It captures my grandparent's love for each other and the happiness they share. The lovely spring garden and house in the background tells us something about them.