

Practitioner's statement

Reflections

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This body of work began with the idea of 'unusual perspectives', seeing the familiar from an unfamiliar perspective. I was interested in the moment of flux, the very instant that construes and captures a time and place. Artist M C Escher, Josep Moncada and Claire Elan, and photographer Marad Osmann were my main sources of inspiration. As artists they all defined moments from unusual angles.

Escher explored illusions of what's real and what's artificial through reflection and Claire Elan portrayed poignant moments when life is in flux. Moncada demonstrates a sense of awakened consciousness spiritually through the translucency and the fluency of water in contact with the human body in various angle of perspectives, whilst Marad captures spectacular moments of his travel around the world in one point perspective with his girlfriend holding his hand from behind in the photographs.

Initially I explored this idea through photography allowing my eye to see the world from many different viewpoints. Inspired by these artists to search for the element of intrigue and wonder. Studying the photographs I had taken, I realised most of them incorporated some kind of reflection. Similar to Escher, I have relied heavily on reflective surfaces to generate interest. The portrayal of the real world through a reflection, a perspective we don't often focus on significantly. With this fundamental idea in my mind, I acknowledged the physical properties of subjects that reflected and explored possible methods and media that had the ability to imply reflection such as water colour, oil paint and acrylic paint. These medium's all have the same ability to be thinned. Through experimentation I found oil paint was the most successful as its versatile nature allowed me to create both the realistic forms as well as the reflective surfaces. Oil paint can be applied thickly to create a sense of volume and opacity as well as thinned down using liquin to suggest transparency.

Photographs were initially taken to capture the frenetic pace of busy urban life. The locations selected were of Adelaide's significant public places. Places such as, China Town, Rundle Mall, Victoria Square and North Terrace. Selecting three compositions resulted in three locations; Rundle Mall - Malls' Balls, the new Water Feature in Victoria Square and the Lavington Bonython fountain in front of the Museum of South Australia. Deciding on the photographs that best visualise my ideas I realised they all depicted iconic places of Adelaide defined by the sculptural works I used to employ my reflective theme. Using appropriation of other artists work in my own pieces I felt gave my work more aesthetic depth and assisted in the visual recognition of place. Key artworks are The Spheres (Mall's balls) created by Bert Fugleman and Lavington Bonython Fountain originally created by Hossien Valamanesh and was later altered into 14 individual pieces.

The approach to my final paintings relied heavily on realism owing to the subject matter having a slightly distorted quality due to the visual nature of reflective surfaces. Inspired by Clair Elan's work for her use of a dominant foreground that makes the observer more aware of the negative space generating an uneasy atmosphere, I exaggerated aerial perspective. By placing a strong emphasis on the foreground and reducing the size of the buildings in the background I ensured the focal point was on the image depicted in the reflective surface and created a dramatic sense of depth. The juxtaposition of real against reflection is apparent because the solid forms are depicted using strong, geometric shapes, concentrated colour and intricate line work, in contrast to the reflective forms depicted of distorted figures and forms involving organic shapes, free flowing lines and less concentrated/ translucent colours. A dominant monochromatic colour was used for each work to unify the compositions. Tonal differentiation in the artwork emphasises the contrast between light and shadow giving dimension to forms accentuating the reflective theme.

Because the focus of my body of work is reflection with the theme of unusual perspectives, the use of dramatic and large foregrounds which incorporate the reflections created a sense of unity in the body of work as a whole allowing the viewer to engage with each image individually as well as collectively.

I painted three canvases for my body of work, each work portrays a significant land mark of Adelaide to allow the viewer to see the familiar in a different light, in an unorthodox way, another perspective, I wanted to depict a moment of our frenetic city lifestyle in a state of flux – which I feel generates a sense of silence because you are seeing it through reflection. Using reflections as the medium to depict public places allowed me to explore the power of the overall composition to arrest the eye and generate interest. Using familiar places but depicting them unusually gives my work a sense of fun. Hopefully, it arouses curiosity in a 'wheres wally' kind of way. Encouraging people to appreciate the world from different perspectives and seek visual pleasure beyond the actual forms we engage with.