

Practitioner's Statement

Self Portrait

Olivia Moriarty

For my first practical, I created a suite of self-portraits based on the idea of movement and emotion. In my folio I first decided upon this concept by researching artists who used movement or emotion strongly in their works. Artists that I was influenced and inspired by include Zin Lim, the collaborative work of Cara Thayer and Louie van Patten, Kwangho Shin and Valentino Quijano. I was influenced most by the work of Lim and Shim as their work focused around blurred portraits, frozen in an action, thus inspiring me to look further into creating the appearance of movement in my own artwork. I also worked to appropriate the techniques of all of these artists in my folio so as to gain skills and inspiration in both technique and composition.

I researched how emotion has been achieved by artists historically. Work by artists such as Van Gough, Munch, Picasso, Renoir and others were analysed under the categories of positive emotion and negative emotion. By doing this, I was able to gain well-rounded knowledge of the techniques involved such as the use of colour to influence the viewer's emotions, facial expression and body language. A range of techniques for portraying movement in a static image were then explored and tested. This includes motion blur, tableau, contours and overlapping frames. This exploration was extremely helpful as I was able to successfully transfer many of these techniques in to my practical as movement and emotion are portrayed through the use of the smudged paint, anguished facial expression and harsh body language.

Before deciding to use oil stick for my practical, a range of other media were explored including acrylic paint and charcoal. I completed a small artwork in the same style as my practical in each of these mediums in order to determine which I would use. The medium chosen was oil paint stick, because of its malleable nature. The bold, painterly technique that I used in my portraits successfully utilised this medium as I was able to achieve a fast moving appearance by using a piece card to pull and smudge the paint. This gave my portraits a rough, abrasive texture and a motion blur effect, thus reiterating the emotionality of the movement.

Each of the three portraits uses a different colour, using shades of this colour to create tonal variation. The use of a range of colours contrasts the portraits against each other, whilst the style and technique links them, making the suit varied and interesting.

Overall I believe that my practical was very successful as I was able to incorporate aspects of the techniques of the artists I explored in my folio, whilst still making my artwork original and interesting. Both movement and emotion were also successfully incorporated into my portraits as the fast, blurred painting technique, paired with the angry and distressed facial expressions and body language of the portraits successfully portrays intense negative emotion through both movement and expression.