

## Practitioner's Statement

### ***Miss me – but let me go***

Shelly Fricker

My artwork represents my Grandmother's recent passing away, and portrays her gentle, kind nature. I have fond memories of being warmly welcomed into my Gran's home. The house had a floral scent which matched the old fashioned paisley patterns of the furniture. Gran's gentle personality is exposed in my artwork through the faint, delicate use of colour and the thin transparent watercolour application. I chose to focus on portraiture as a subject and watercolour as a medium as it replicates the softness of vintage photos and embodies the gentle and peaceful nature of my grandmother.

Through experimenting with different colour schemes, I found that soft vintage blue and pink hues reflect Gran's gentle temperament, and remind me of her unique faded dress sense. I aimed to create something which reflects my grandmother's life experience, while still producing an artwork which is beautiful in today's modern era.

Contemporary artists, Silvia Pelissero and Paula Bonet, use watercolour to explore human emotion in a semi-abstract theme, and have been extremely influential in the production of my final piece. I was able to draw inspiration from Pelissero's artwork '*Garden in the Ceiling*' when attempting to modernise my artwork. The addition of the abstract splash extending from the side of the face is derived from this piece. It added a contemporary feel to the vintage portrait, and the softer tones of the face worked with the values of the hues in the splash. I am drawn to the eyes in historical artwork '*Girl with a Pearl Earring*' by Johannes Vermeer and '*Mona Lisa*' by Leonardo da Vinci as they convey deeper engagement by the viewer. I have tried to re-create Gran's eyes as the key feature in my work, influenced by techniques in both of these artworks.

I found myself experimenting with ways to relax the abstract splash so that calmness was portrayed. Butterflies were instantly brought to mind as they depict both calmness and beauty. This seemed the perfect addition as it also reveals Gran's love of nature. The butterflies balance the portrait as the similar palette to the iris of the eye enhances the facial features and draws the viewer's eye across the artwork. They symbolise my grandmother's presence fluttering away after her death.

To strengthen the meaning and emotion attached to the work, I included the poem '*Miss me – but let me go*' as it was chosen by my Grandmother to be read at her funeral. The poem reflects her thoughtfulness and the way she was always thinking ahead to make things easier for others. The text tells the anticipated story of her passing to the viewers, and combines all elements.

By outlining colour variances with white ballpoint pen, I was able to add fine detailing and highlight sections within facial features such as the eyes and lips to create reflections. The features are detailed and realistic, and express the innocence of my Grandmother's youth. The final piece ultimately conveys the evolution of life and Gran's soul gracefully drifting into heaven. This is symbolised in the title by the phrase '*...let me go*'.

Throughout the production of my artwork I have developed skills in smooth and controlled watercolour application, and how to balance elements of colour. I am now familiar with how to portray different emotions in art through facial expressions, colour, composition and technique.