

Practitioner's Statement

Shaye

Yolande Heaney

My interest in art originated when I began to explore its figurative side. I have always had a passion for viewing and drawing works that revolve around the human form and the emotions these works can convey, however, for this practical I wanted to move beyond the portrait and instead explore the human figure. I wanted to focus on a *genuine* figure and record what I saw honestly, as I was not interested in depicting a superficially beautiful form presented in a flattering pose. Alternatively, I aimed to capture an unpampered body with its natural hair, bruises, creases and general 'imperfections', therefore the size or shape of my model was irrelevant as I wished to communicate that all bodies are beautiful.

I appreciate artists who are able to record their subject in a way that captures subtle details, while also vibrating life. Contemporary artist, Daniel Maidman, is an exceptional life drawer who is able to freely yet precisely portray figures in unique concepts that often use cropping and close-ups. The exploration of his work and experimentation with his style allowed me to extract ideas and knowledge that I could use in my own work, inspiring me to present a cropped section of the body in my painting. Placement and stance of the model was important, so after asking the model to swap poses several times I am pleased with the outcome and the positioning of the body.

I decided to use oil paint in this piece because I was longing to strive outside of my comfort zone as an artist. Inspired by the works of traditional painter, Lucien Freud, who often depicts his subject with loose, patchy painting techniques while using an expressionistic approach to skin tone, I was able to enhance life from my subject by employing a similar style. Although, I aimed for a more realistic depiction of the body, by using more distinct blending to achieve a softer finish.

Originally, I had intended for the background in the top left corner to be unoccupied and simply painted with a pale or dark colour to emphasise the palette of the figure. However, after experimenting with this, it was visible that excluding the naturalistic background deprived the figure of context and depth. Instead, I decided to paint an out of focus background, which features a bookshelf and a bed. In addition to the painting, I decided to add another element to my final, by including the preliminary drawings that I completed as preparation for the painting, in order to become familiar with my subject. These are presented to the left of the main piece.

Through completing this practical, I have both challenged myself and banished my fear of this once intimidating medium, and as a result, have become more confident in using oil paint in future works. I was able to quickly adapt to the idea of replacing pencil with brush and am pleased with the outcome, although further practice with oils will of course be beneficial. Nevertheless, I think I have managed to arrive at a successful end product and I am pleased with the productive experience I have gained in creating it. #