Practitioners Statement

## *Solitariness*
Tiana Belperio

*'Solitariness'* depicts a realistic, oil painting of my sister, Siena. Although the portrait appears to be devoid of details, its significance is far more profound. *'Solitariness'* symbolises, contrary to the title, the positive effects of solitude allowing a person to discover and form their true identity without outside influences or distractions.

I was captivated by the concept of positive solidarity after reading a quote by Albert Einstein which stated *'The monotony and solitude of a quiet life stimulates the creative mind.'* I wanted to evoke this idea within my work as I was able to personally relate to it through my own experiences of self-awareness through the notion of solitude. My choice of subject was my younger sister Siena. I am extremely protective of my sister and the artwork represents a personal awakening for me that in order for Siena to grow and develop as an individual she needs to experience life unaided by my constant presence and protection. I felt that Siena would be the ideal candidate for my art piece as I believe her expression, particularly when she is deep in thought, adequately depicts the collective emotions of determination, wonder and uncertainty which I wanted to portray within my artwork.

Investigations into candid photographs of various people, and the power these images had to capture the subject's true identity and emotion, fascinated and inspired me. Likeness was a factor I wanted to capture about Siena and I wanted to represent her in a realistic manner. Therefore, being able to render the main visual features was important in order to show an accurate depiction of my subject. It is in the minor details that I believe I have truly captured the essence of Siena. For example, the creases at the corner of her mouth, the freckles and moles on her face and neck and the correct shape of her hairline. My initial research into the portraiture of Roy Lichtenstein was useful in investigating expressions and the different ways of communicating ideas. This research also encouraged me to look at the role of colour in portraiture and in particular the psychology behind different colours. The colour red rendered in the background of the artwork is symbolic of our family's love and support that will always surround Siena throughout her life. The visual contrast of this striking colour against the realism of the bold flesh tones, acts as a statement from an emotive point of view that, although we will always try to protect her, we need to allow her the freedom to explore the world unaided and make her own decisions.

*'Solitariness'* is painted with oil paint using a wet on wet technique. This technique allowed me to build the different values of the flesh tones, in order to replicate Siena's skin colour as accurately as I could. The sfumato technique, evident in the work of Leonardo da Vinci, was also a main technique I wanted to show in my portrait. I used this technique as I wanted the finished product to appear soft and without harsh lines so that the central focus was the expression of the subject over the execution of the painting. Texture is also incorporated throughout the artwork within the fine detail of the hair, eyelashes and eyebrows along with the background, whereby large brush strokes were used in a spontaneous way to create movement within the solid, vivid red.

Through my exploration I found that many traditional and contemporary portraits, were painted on rectangular shaped frames. I was adamant on using a square canvas for my composition as I wanted my artwork to be unique and by using the rule of thirds I was able to create balance and flow. Additionally, I wanted to paint my artwork on a large canvas to achieve the visual impact I had imagined in the early stages of refining my work. Overall, I am extremely content with my artwork as I believe that it embodies the meaning that I wanted to portray. The inconsistent drying times of the oil paint was one of my main challenges, however, by adding a final sheer layer of skin colour over the dried paint I was able to achieve a well-blended finish.

*'Solitariness',* the noun of solitude, is defined as a state of being alone without being lonely in order to discover oneself, and I believe the simplicity of this word and its meaning accurately explains my portrait of Siena.