

Practitioner's Statement

To My Grandfather

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In August, my Grandfather passed away after battling cancer for two years and this artwork is my way of honouring his legacy. *To My Grandfather* is a large scale portrait of my Grandfather, using watercolour and acrylic paint as the predominant mediums.

Artists Agnes Cecile and Tomasz Mrozkiewicz were of exponential influence when creating this artwork. I wanted to explore their artwork and techniques while also injecting my own artistic touch. When researching and observing their work, I was drawn to Cecile's use of watercolour and to Mrozkiewicz dominant, bolder forms. It was my intention to merge the two styles and create a unique and powerful contrast.

In my folio, I experimented with a range of media and techniques that reflected those of Cecile and Mrozkiewicz. As my initial thoughts rested on a basic watercolour portrait, I began practising some exotic designs using a fork and black ink. It became apparent that traditional forms of portraiture can be distorted and abstract when applying different techniques. Through further experimentation with watercolour, I came to realise the challenge of using watercolour and creating a seamless blend between the strokes. I found that control is unfeasible when it comes to using watercolour as it can often have a mind of its own.

Fusing Cecile's and Mrozkiewicz styles meant that I had to push beyond my comfort zone. I decided to attempt arial painting of my Grandfather, using watercolour painting on canvas. Purples, pinks, blues and earthy browns were chosen as my colour palette. I employed an unconventional colour scheme as I felt that they reflected aspects of my Grandfather's personality: loving, funny, bubbly, authentic and courageous. Wet on wet effects were used in and around his face and neck, while a dripping technique was scattered across my Grandfather's shirt. A black marker was used to highlight the delicate details of the face and add structure to the image. A textured background of lavender and white was applied for depth and contrast. Pink became a predominant colour in my artwork, I used this colour to portray the poppy flower, which is a symbol of when my Grandfather fought in the Borneo campaign.

There were many challenges I faced while creating my trial portrait. The biggest challenge I encountered was sketching my Grandfather. Perhaps because I knew him so well and wanted to get each detail of his face perfect, I created emotional barriers for myself. Eventually, I overcame this obstacle and began seeing the portrait more abstractly. Using watercolour on canvas and also finding depth and harmony between the background and the foreground proved to have its challenges.

After my trial, I developed a sense of what I wanted to achieve for my resolved practical. In my resolved portrait, I decided to stick to watercolour and use a thick black marker for highlighting features of my Grandfather's face. Earthy browns and soft pink hues fill the majority of the portrait, along with turquoise blue and chartreuse green for highlights. I continued with the idea of the drips, as I wanted to show some rawness and vulnerability in the artwork. The background is a crisp white. I felt that by exposing the rawness of the canvas it would allow my portrait to speak for itself.

Through this portrait, I wanted to create a positive image of my Grandfather and how my family remembers him- before the pain and suffering; the grandfather who raised my mother and who taught me about the importance of family.