Practitioner's Statement

Beauty Bone Deep
Alliah Khzam

For my first practical, I created a large scale charcoal portrait that explored the juxtaposition between inner beauty, and society driven concepts of physical beauty. The concept for this piece was decided on throughout the research I conducted in my folio, with particular inspiration from Mohammed Hindash and his work to do with the expression of beauty.

My research began by looking at mainly black and white photography which led me to discovering Hindash's work. His beauty portraits provided great inspiration for me and I really love his style and his fascination with "perfection", which adds an amazing dimension to his art. I also conducted research into an area of interest, face charts. This stemmed from my interest in makeup and provided me with a greater knowledge of facial and bone structure, which I was able to utilise in my resolved artwork.

During my preliminary research when I was looking for inspiration, I also became intrigued by a number of artworks, as well as photography involving skulls, or aspects of them. I wanted to incorporate this somewhere into my final idea from an early stage, but it only came together when I found a picture of a glamour model, which I decided would be perfect to amalgamate with a skull, as the image for my final piece. Using Photoshop many different combinations of the skull with the face were created, however one of these was particularly striking, and I felt perfectly encapsulated what I had intended for it to.

My artwork explores ideas of societal made beauty concepts, as well as the toll this can have on young women in today's society. The skull element of my work is designed to show that beauty and vanity do not possess the importance that we place on them, as underneath we are all the same. I have attempted to make this message clear by drawing a very beautiful model as the other half of the face, to show the juxtaposition between these two ideas.

After much experimentation, I chose to create this piece using the medium of charcoal. I believed that the concept for this portrait would be best expressed using only black and white tones, in order to show the 'black and white' mindset of our society, in relation to beauty standards. Although experimentation with paint was conducted, I find that drawing has always been my strong point, and hence I chose to use charcoal, which I think was very effective in terms of the depth that I was able to create with the blackness of this medium. It contributed to the boldness of not only the artwork, but also the meaning behind it. As well as this, using this medium, I was able to increase the grunge appeal and overall theme of the artwork.

To conclude, I am incredibly pleased with the outcome of *Beauty Bone Deep*, and believe that it is very pleasing, aesthetically. Although my skills with charcoal can still be refined, I have gained so much artistic experience and knowledge throughout the creation of this artwork. I learned about drawing facial structures accurately, as well as about shading and highlighting to create a realistic piece.