

Practitioner's Statement

Untitled People

Lexi Mathews

My Body of work explored four global themes; *Terrorists and War*, *Harmful Protests*, *Domestic Abuse* and *Poverty*. Many people know the existence of these issues, but not necessarily understand fully them. You can see it on the television, the newspaper, the Internet – these tragedies and heart breaks are experienced every day but are featured through the media. This is the problem. I want to show a deeper understanding about these issues, bring them to light and out of the shadows. They make me question today's society. *Terrorists/ War* and *Harmful Protests* (LGBT+ rights) are only ever mentioned when conflict, such as a massacre, happens and it's the media's 'theme of the week'. What about the bullying and abuse received daily or the constant fear of those people who live in terror zones? Domestic abuse and poverty are barely shown by any press, why is it not a big enough issue? This has inspired me to create visual artworks to represent what I believe is an accurate representation of those without a voice.

I created four digital artworks that captured the real effects. I want to raise awareness about what happens, who it affects and for healthy first world people to realise just how lucky we are. I don't have a specific targeted audience. However I want the audience to look deeply into my artworks, exploring the whole composition.

I created visual similarities between each artwork. The main feature replicated throughout all four artworks was a young female and in particular her expression. I feel that the expressions are what really make or break each artwork. It was essential that the same feeling was conveyed. One of sadness but also anger to express the pain and fear experienced daily. This woman will be the only one to have full detail, any other figures will be significantly less detailed. These people will have their eyes scratched over. This symbolised that these people are often un-named and ignored by the media. It also represented that some members of our society are blind to others and to the world they live in.

While I had the basics of creating digital artworks, I expanded these digital skills. Through experimentation and research, I learned successfully how to draw environments to convey atmosphere and mood. I used my Wacom Intous medium tablet to create soft and harsh lines to create digital artworks that represented what I was hoping to achieve, a voice for those who have none.

Artists that have influenced my work were Steve McCurry, DestinyBlue and Aquasixio. McCurry's iconic photograph of the Afghan Girl captured the eyes so powerfully. I was determined to obtain the same effect. DestinyBlue's digital artworks featured heavily around the eyes but also with her use of colour to create dark and depressing atmosphere around her figures was inspirational. I drew inspiration for my background from Aquasixio. His compositions are much more intricate than mine, I learnt perspective and the use of light and shadow being a powerful way to convey my message.

'Poverty' has been around for hundreds of years, yet it still occurs today. Many families suffer from poverty. It's not always third world countries as featured on the news. Poverty is all around us.

My school has thirty nine families in the area who are currently living in poverty. My school raises money and food goods for them periodically. My poverty panel depicted a lady carrying a newborn child wrapped in a blue blanket. They are standing in a passage way of buildings. I mixed the two backgrounds of third world countries with first world with dirt pathways and style of clothing, I modernised the building constructions. I did this to recognise that poverty doesn't just happen in one place. The blue hue represents purity of the child. A child that has yet to grow up in a world where constant hunger is normal.

'Harmful Protests' are thankfully slowly becoming a thing of the past but they sometimes still occur. For example, Adelaide's Pride March 2016, amongst the people enjoying themselves were small groups with signs, yelling unspeakable things to the marchers. Thankfully they did no harm except with their words and were contained by police. With that experience, I learnt how people feel when yelled at and belittle because of who they are by people that cannot see what harm they are causing. Specific colours used included purple on the girl to represent peace and red to symbolise the anger and danger.

'Terrorists and War', a tragic way to inflict harm on others. This theme can be easily seen within Afghanistan and through ISIS. I depicted a younger girl sharing the same face and eyes as the other works. She is holding onto a teddy whilst in the background features grey skies and an army truck. Initially, I had no rain however, I felt that many people have died from this and wept over lost ones that this should be represented. Yellow is prominently featured and represented hope from a child that one day this will all be over.

'Domestic Abuse' isn't new and is an issue that can't be solved. This panel depicts a young girl with bruising to her face, holding herself standing in front of a door. This door has no handle, representing that the victims of domestic abuse cannot always escape from the danger. Picture frames, cracked and blurred, are hanging precociously from the cracked and dirty wall. These pictures show typical family poses with scratched out eyes. The family portraits represent how domestic abuse can tear apart families and leave mental effects on the victims. This simple composition created an emotional contrast between the other three panels as domestic abuse.

I believe the message portrayed throughout the four panels is successful for effectively capturing the emotion through the backgrounds and featured woman. My manga style artworks pulls away from hitting too close to home but also leaves the effect that the digital artworks don't depict an accurate representation of the crises as it's bigger than these artworks.