

Practitioner's Statement

Welcome

Abbey Miller

For this work, I created a mixed media piece featuring an Islamic Woman wearing a Niqab, a traditional garment that covers the whole body except for the eyes. The background displays a simplistic version of Islamic tiles, visually giving the audience an insight into the subject's heritage. Language is apparent around the perimeter of the inside circle linguistically conveying citations explaining people expressing their opinion about Islamic headpieces; discussing the controversy and stigma around the Niqab's, Hijab's and Burka's. Quotes such as "I don't need to be naked to be free" and "Hijab, Burka and Niqab is faith not fashion" promote the rights of Women who wish to wear their Niqab and therefore Western countries should respect that. Contrastingly, quotes are also apparent discussing negatively why women in 3rd world countries tend to wear these headpieces. "I was forced to wear the veil and I wish no other woman had to suffer it" states an anonymous women's experience, and the pressure she felt in her society as a woman to cover herself. Additionally, the last quote "If you ask a Muslim woman why they cover up, ninety-nine percent of them will say it's to avoid arousing men..." by Michael Muhammad Knight. The quotes convey the controversy around why women wear the Niqab's and other head garments, whether it's forced upon them by their fate or significant other/family or due to their own personal beliefs, which ultimately in my opinion Western societies should respect, including Australia.

Artists which influenced my final piece were Sally Smart and Alphonse Mücha (creator of Art Nouveau). Researching Smart, I discovered that through mixed media, she portrays her political views and visually discusses issues that are apparent in our society. I decided to incorporate an issue today that is relevant to Australia, regarding the acceptance of women wearing Islamic headpieces in public places. Mücha gave me inspiration regarding how I set out the varying media. The majority of his works are based around women and nature, specializing in naturalistic forms. He commonly makes their long hair encircle around a detailed sphere in the middle of the piece. This inspired me to make the woman's Niqab flow around the middle circle, creating a sense of circular direction in the piece.

The focal point of this artwork is the woman wearing the Niqab, as the bright colour's in the background contrast sharply against the bright white garment. Traditionally Niqab's are black not white, and while trying to refrain from appearing racist towards the Islamic women, I strongly believed the colour white would contrast against the background more, creating a more diverse piece. It is not racist, but artistic control. The colour white additionally conveys innocence and is the opposite of evil, therefore positively representing those who decide to wear these garments. The repetitive shape of triangles creates a consistent, complex yet balanced piece. The paper cut Niqab with repetitive shapes similar to those in the background is cut in a complex fashion, yet overall appears simplistic due to the textured appearance. The direction of the artwork begins at the face of the woman, and carries down towards her clothing. The viewer instinctively follows the movement of her Niqab and flows around the inner circle as they read the quotes discussing women's experiences with Islamic headpieces.

Through the influence of Sally Smart's political mixed media pieces being my ultimate inspiration and admiring Alphonse Mücha's detailed yet clever placement of the subject and circular shape I have successfully created a mixed media piece full of contrasting colours and symbolism while politically bringing light to a current issue in our society.