

Practitioner's Statement

Stana

Amelia Paterson

My main artistic influence within the piece was the work of realistic pastel portrait artist Graciela Bombalova. Her angelic and soft depictions of her subjects intrigued me to begin to explore works in pastel—a previously unfamiliar medium. I also researched the famous artist Edgar Degas, who used some unusual techniques within his vibrant pastel works. Degas' pastel pieces are full of movement and liveliness; however, I wanted my work to be more static, with energy and emotion displayed in the facial features of the subject. The bright colours of Annette Bezor and Marion Bolognesi's works also acted as inspiration, as I wanted to achieve a very bright and striking look, taking full advantage of the pure pigments in pastel. I also attended Bezor's exhibition at the Hill Smith Gallery and was taken aback by the scale, but also the detail in her large portraits. Bezor's more recent work depicts celebrities and their effect on society and vice versa, and this prompted me to look into depicting a celebrity, of such, within my own work.

I chose the actress Stana Katic as the subject of my pastel portrait as her enigmatic nature, passion, and zest for life act as an inspiration to me. I first discovered Stana's work through the television show *Castle*, which is very close to my family's heart. *Castle* acts as an escapism from the troubles of life, and the viewings have strengthened integral bonds within my family network. Stana's character within *Castle*—Kate Beckett—is also one of my inspirations, and I can most definitely relate to her flawed nature. I am also interested in pursuing study within the field of Criminology, and there are many characteristics within Detective Beckett's character, such as her strength, determination, and emotion, that I strive for within my own life.

As I couldn't photograph the subject myself, I chose a photograph of Stana taken by Tyler Parker, as the angle, lighting, and overall feel of the image appealed to me. The original photograph was very pale and washed out in colour; I therefore edited the photograph, enhancing the saturation and contrast mostly, which achieved a surprisingly pleasing effect and vibrancy in colour. Once I had decided on the shade of pastel paper I wanted to use, I faintly drew the features and outline of the image, making sure to get every detail as true-to-life as possible; this made the final pastel working easier and created the realistic image I desired. I had some trouble working with pastel as I had only done a few previous trials in the medium before beginning this artwork; nevertheless, I was able to work through the difficulties on the paper and I was happy with the work as a whole.

On the surface my final work is a classic portrait, but I feel that the vibrant colours reflect the subject, and thus, the work acts as a statement when viewed for the first time. I would think that audiences can appreciate the image from both a distance, but can also enjoy the detail upon closer inspection. Viewers are also invited to not only interpret the work on its surface value, but to delve deeper into the things that give them inspiration within their lives, and hopefully awaken their own creativity.